

MINUTES of NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETING
on 02 March 2020.

Present: Mark Campbell, Marcus Peake, Paul Norris, James Caldwell, Dick Martin and Terry Hetherington.

Apologies: Phil Carey and Dave McKean.

The President opened the Meeting by informing the members that this meeting had been called to discuss the following matters:

Membership Decline
Membership Numbers
National Welfare Officer

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

Moved: Marcus Peake

Seconded: Paul Norris

“That Minutes as read be adopted”.....Carried

Business Arising from Minutes of National Executive Meeting dated 16th January 2020.

PATRON (To remain on Business Arising)

Correspondence:

In:

- a. Numerous emails re: membership/change of address/Slipstream.
- b. FAAA Welfare Rep Discussion Paper
- c. Presidents reply to WA President on his queries on the Wellbeing Centres
- d. Adso Welcomes Appointment of an Independent Commissioner Into Veterans Suicides
- e. ADSO MEDIA STATEMENT: DVA - "Need for Constructive Dialogue, Not Ill-Considered and Inaccurate Criticism"
- f. Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia (Inc) Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) “National Welfare Officers And Committees Guidlines”.
- g. Discussion Papers from Marcus Peake, Paul Norris and Dave McKean on “Membership Decline and numbers”

Out:

- h. Numerous emails re: membership/change of address/Slipstream
- i. Cards of Condolence to departed members families.
- j. Presidents reply to WA President on his queries on the Wellbeing Centres

Note *As this Meeting was called to discuss three major items verbal reports from Office Bearers will be acceptable*

Reports

President's Report:

The President informed the committee that in the absence of Vice President Phil Carey the discussion on the National Welfare Officer will have to be deferred to the next meeting. (Phil has been responsible for relating all the discussions on the Welfare Officer).

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer's Report is attached at the end of these minutes

Moved; D Martin

Seconded: P Norris

"That treasurer's Report be received".....Carried

Secretary's Report:

The Secretary gave a verbal report to the meeting informing them that the changeover of Secretaries should be completed by the end of March.

Moved: M Peake

Seconded: P Norris

"That Secretary's Report be received".....Carried

Webmaster's Report

The Webmasters report is attached at the end of these Minutes.

Moved: D Martin

Seconded: P Norris

"That the Webmaster's Report be received".....Carried

Database Manager's Report

The Database Manager's Report is attached at the end of these Minutes.

Moved: D Martin

Seconded: J Caldwell

"That the Database Manager's Report be received".....Carrie

General Business:

Membership Numbers in the Association/Membership Decline

Three discussion Papers had been received from the following Committee members Marcus Peake, Paul Norris and Dave McKean. This resulted in a lengthy discussion as follows:

Marcus Peake tabled a discussion paper on membership numbers and addressed the main points of the paper. He said that over the last three years our numbers had declined by about 13%, which itself was of concern, but has more recently been exacerbated by a collapse in the number of new people joining the Association – applications down by over 70% in the last 12 months. This downturn, together with our inability to retain sufficient existing members, has put us on a trajectory that will see the demise of the Association in the medium term unless we can reverse it.

He reminded the Executive of the various recruiting initiatives that had been tried, including a single advert in Navy News (that hadn't resulted in any marked result); various schemes to offer free membership to groups such as technical and aircrew graduates (which had resulted in nil net long term gain); and various sponsorships or prizes to individuals with a similar outcome. Past appeals to COMFAA had helped on one occasion, when CDRE Di Pietro had made a particular effort on our behalf, but not in more recent years.

He continued to say that concern over our diminishing numbers has been raised at several past Federal Council Meetings, but no tangible action had resulted. He suggested that, notwithstanding this is an Association-wide issue, strong leadership is required from the National Executive if there is to be any chance of successfully reversing the downward trend.

Marcus then went on to discuss the two issues of Recruiting and Retention, which are central to our current membership decline.

Recruiting

As noted above, our ability to recruit new members has slumped over the last year, for no discernible reason. Recruiting is a vital part of healthy membership figures, however, and must be revitalised.

From experience we know the most effective recruiting strategy by far is by word of mouth: that is, individual members convincing their mates to join the Association. If just 10% of our members recruited just one person each this year, the downward trend would reverse; if every member persuaded one person to join, our numbers would double.

Marcus suggested one-to-one recruiting effort should be the major focus of our strategy. This will require each Division to engage and motivate their members in the achievement, to the full extent possible.

He went on to say that we also know the period of time between a member applying and receiving a reply (to advise cost etc) is critical, as this represents a 'cooling off' period we need to avoid. An immediate response to applicants is desirable. A day is acceptable. Any longer and there is an increasing chance the applicant won't follow up with a payment. (The ratio between the number of applicants and the number who subsequently pay and become members is known as the 'conversion rate').

The great majority of applications comes through the website and the webmaster is tied to conventions as to how he deals with them, as follows:

Applicants for	Webmaster Action
NSW Division	

ACT Division	Webmaster has been approved by the Division to respond to the applicant directly, <u>within 24 hours</u> , advising of cost and payment details. Payment made to respective Division directly.
QLD Division	Due to past difficulties, the National Body processes QLD applicants. The webmaster responds to the applicant within 24 hours. Payment is processed into the National account. Once complete, the member and the appropriate subscription is transferred to QLD Div. This is labour intensive for the National Treasurer, but dramatically has dramatically improved QLD 'conversion' rates.
SA Division	Webmaster forwards the application to SA Division. He has had difficulty in the past in getting acknowledgement/response during the process.
WA Division	Webmaster forwards the application to the relevant Division, who are very efficient at following up with the applicant.
VIC Division	
TAS Division	

Marcus suggested that each Division be invited to review its process to see if it wished to use the NSW/ACT model, as this saves time and, for those Divisions with a slower administrative process, can improve the 'conversion' rate. Every applicant is precious.

Recruiting Members who are leaving the ADF

Recruiting new members from those who are about to leave the ADF was also discussed at length. The ADF has established a new Joint Transition Authority (JTA) under the direction of Captain Mark McConnell, and ways of tapping into that were debated. We know that to do so we must make it easy for JTA to assist us, and for potential members to join, and various ways of doing this were considered.

Decision

The following actions were agreed in regard to Recruiting:

- The National Executive will promulgate a recruiting strategy for the consideration of Divisions;
- Word of Mouth (one-to-one) recruiting should be a major focus for all FAAA members, encouraged by their respective Divisions.
- Notwithstanding one-to-one is regarded as the most effective strategy, all other strategies to recruit members should be aggressively pursued by each Division. This might include advertising, targeting groups who may be eligible, phone-arounds and so on.
- Print media will be produced by the National Executive (posters and business cards) to assist Divisions.
- Divisions will be asked to review the process they use when an electronic application is received though the website.
- Divisions will be asked to report on their efforts in their regular quarterly reports to Slipstream;
- Marcus Peake will investigate the price of commercial advertising (eg four editions of Navy News), to see if it is a cost-effective way of getting our message out.

- Marcus Peake will run 'Join the FAAAA' pages in FlyBy and on the website.
- Paul Shiels will be asked to run similar page(s) in Slipstream, commencing with the June edition.
- A Flyer will be printed and inserted in the March Slipstream (and possibly later editions).
- Marcus Peake will look at the on-line application form to make it quicker and easier for applicants to fill out, without compromising the information we really need.
- Mark Campbell will contact Captain Mark McConnell to ask if the FAAAA can be given visibility in the ADF Transition process. This would probably be by means of a 'pack' that are given to leaving FAA personnel, extolling the virtues of the Association as a means of 'staying in the family' even though they are leaving the ADF. The JTA pack would have a simplified 'one stop shop' process. This would be through Marcus Peake (who currently handles 99% of existing applications anyway).
- CO Albatross be approached to allow FAAAA notices to be placed on Squadron notice boards.
- Mark Campbell will continue engagement with COMFAA and his Chief of Staff, to promote the Association amongst serving members.
- Mark Campbell will write to all Divisions regarding Joining Fees. Currently some charge this fee and some do not. Any expense that can be reduced for potential applicants is a good one.

Retention

Aside from members who cross the bar, about 30-40 members per annum fail to renew their memberships. Very few of them formally resign: most simply don't pay their subscription, either because they feel the Association no longer provides what they expect, or because they are unaware (or forget) that their subscriptions have expired.

When a member does not renew his membership, there is an inconsistent effort across different Divisions to encourage them to do so. Some are very good at timely and ongoing reminders, whilst others are not so. The webmaster cited several examples of people in an East Coast Division who, during discussions about other matters, were surprised to be told their subscriptions had elapsed some months earlier.

It is important that members are given clear and timely advice when their subscription is due. Some Divisions are very good at this – others, not so much. The National Executive noted that the process of renewal reminders also varies. One Division uses sporadic emails to those that have them, and a patchy phone around to those that don't. Others use newsletters, and for some there appears to be little concerted effort.

The Executive accepts that management of members is generally a matter for each Division, and where this is done efficiently and effectively it has no desire to intervene. Where there are apparent inefficiencies however, there may be opportunities to improve. This might be, for example, by standardising a renewal/reminder process (e.g. NSW uses the December 'Slipstream' mailing to include a reminder slip...perhaps other Divisions might do the same?)

Termination of memberships

Marcus advised the committee that the criteria for cancelling memberships in the case of non-payment varies between Divisions. Some strike members off their mailing list if payment is not received within 90 days, whilst one in particular has retained people on its books who have not paid for over 15 months. This hardly seems fair to other members who have paid their subscriptions on time.

Whilst differences in ‘termination’ practices won’t necessarily improve our numbers, it is nevertheless something that might be addressed to improve and standardise our processes.

Engagement

Feedback from members strongly suggests that many do not feel ‘engaged’ by the Association. Some Divisions are good at offering regular meetings, social gatherings and newsletters. Others, from their members’ perspective, simply take their money each year and offer little in return in terms of engagement.

Some Divisions are very good at engagement: for example, WA and VIC Division. Others may not be as good, with patchy communications and processes.

The National Executive discussed some ideas, but no firm outcome was reached. The general feeling was that engagement was a Divisional matter (aside from publication of Slipstream and FlyBy).

Fees and Charges

The subject of finances and fees was also discussed in depth. Such fees essentially comprise three elements:

- Annual subscriptions, which are the mandate of each Division to set as they see fit, and which are levied on paying members on a calendar year (or pro-rata) basis. Fees vary widely from a total of \$50.00 pa to \$20.00 pa, depending on which Division members join and what ‘Slipstream’ format they elect to receive.
- Joining Fees, which are also the mandate of each Division and can be levied, altered or waived by them. This varies from \$15.00 pa (eg QLD, NSW, ACT, SA) to zero (TAS and WA), depending on their individual policy. Of note, however, a \$10.00 per head fee is still charged by the National Body irrespective of what any Division might choose to do regarding joining fees. (Joining Fees only apply to new people who have not previously been members of the Association).
- The ‘Capitation Fee’, which is essentially a levy paid by each Division to the National Body once per year. It is currently (and has been for many years) set at a figure of \$5.00 per head per annum for each member who is on the books as of June each year. Any change to the Capitation Fee process or quantum will require the agreement of the FA AAA’s Federal Council.

The National Executive was very mindful of the mandate of Divisions in the above matters and would not wish to suggest changes without proper consultation. It may be possible, however, to standardise and perhaps simplify some of these fees, and certainly the processes behind them, to the benefit of all parties – for example, do away with capitation fees and cover the income by a small increase in both hard and softcopy Slipstream charges. This will be the matter of further consideration and, when firm proposals are available, consultation with every Division. This would be addressed in the letter we intend to send to Division Presidents.

Identity

David McKean made a particular point about 'identity': that is, a primary motivation for joining the Association is a desire to remain in the FAA 'family' of people who, like them, served in it. Maintenance of this identity is important: a sense of belonging through the provision of news about mates and events, the ability to attend gatherings of like people, and the provision of objects such as FAA caps, shirts etc. which offer identity with their past. The corollary is that if the Association doesn't offer such identity, people either won't join or will drift away.

The National Executive agreed with the sentiment of this proposal, and the associated suggestion that we ensure the Association has merchandise for sale (we do). It was also decided to send a 'free' FAAAA cap to all new applicants from now on, until stocks run out.

David also suggested publishing the names of all members so mates could contact one another. The committee was not in favour of open publication as it may breach members' rights to privacy. It noted, however, that any paid-up member can log onto our website where a list of members' names and email addresses is kept behind the firewall. It also noted that from time to time office bearers are asked for personal contact details of other members and a protocol was being followed (ie advise the member that someone is trying to contact them, and leave it to them to respond).

David's suggestions regarding regular articles in 'Slipstream' or 'FlyBy' were also discussed. Features such as regular profiles and 'Where are they now?' certainly have merit and the respective editors of each magazine will be asked to help. Similarly, his suggestion that free membership be given to graduating pilots/AvWOs/Aircrewman and Air Technical sailors was discussed, but noting it was trialled last year without any positive result, this initiative remains on hold.

Mr McKean also raised several issues regarding Welfare Officers, both National and in Divisions. This remains an ongoing issue, particularly as he (Mr McKean) has resigned from his position as National Welfare Officer since the meeting, due to ill health.

Decisions

The following actions were agreed in regard to the retention of members.

- a Recruiting Flyer will be inserted in the March edition of 'Slipstream';
- the National President will write to each Division raising the subject of ongoing member retention and suggesting strategies/ideas they may wish to consider to help improve this factor;
- the National Executive will consider this matter further, with a view to raising various Motions at the next Federal Council Meeting;
- renewed effort to make Divisions aware of the capabilities of the National Database and how it can assist them (eg sending out renewal reminders, newsletter mailing lists and the like);
- assuming responsibility for trying to get 'lost' members to re-join, after a set period of time (say three months);
- offering to broker a deal whereby the members of one particularly struggling Division were transferred to another. (The Division would then effectively become a 'social annex', with appropriate funding being given to enable them to perform this role);
- in its letter to Divisions, the National Executive will also promote a 'retention' strategy for the consideration of Divisions – particularly those who struggle to provide a consistent process;

- the National Secretary will send a free FAAAA cap to all new members, subject to stock.

NOTE: Post this meeting the National President directed that all Recruiting/Retention strategy initiatives as discussed here be placed on hold as a result of the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 health crisis. The strategy will be rolled out once the crisis passes.

Any Other Business

Marcus Peake tabled comments from WA Division that will appear in the next 'Slipstream', to the effect that 'FlyBy' is a threat to the continued success of Slipstream (particularly in hard copy format), and the two publications should be combined.

He suggested that a simple YES/NO survey be conducted via the next FlyBy to determine if WA Division's views are shared by the broader community. The committee agreed with this approach.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1210 EST.

NEXT MEETING TBA

M. Campbell
President
02 March 2020

D. Martin
Secretary
02 March 2020

WEBMASTER'S REPORT FOR THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETING OF 02 MARCH 2020

1. Our website is now fully functioning again, after a significant problem with the Log-In function over the Christmas period. The technical crew at 'Webics', who are normally excellent, couldn't fix the fault (it was a skeleton crew for the holiday period) so they just deferred it until early January when the company returned to work. Their communication with me was not good, and I have since alerted Webics and received an apology.
2. Work has started on a major feature on the Sea King helicopter, which will take some time to put together.
3. Nothing else to report!

Marcus Peake. Webmaster

NATIONAL DATABASE MANAGERS REPORT 02 MARCH 2020

Membership Database Activities since Last Meeting

The period since the last National Executive in January has mainly been concerned with updates to members financial status, as and when the various Divisions provide advice on membership renewals, updating personal details and raising new member records.

Membership Statistics

As we are currently in a state of flux with the changeover to the new membership year, it is not possible to give a true picture of the current membership. However since the last meeting our total membership has declined by 7 members. We lost a total of 13 members through either resignation or cancellation due to non-payment of subscriptions and one member who passed away. This was offset by 7 new members, 4 of whom were previous members re-joining 2 of which were previous 'non-members' who became full members, and two brand new members.

Current membership statistics as at 24th Feb 2020 are detailed in the attached report

Future Activities

The next Australian Post Sort Plan to cover the six-months from 28th Feb 2020 will be downloaded and any changes will be incorporated into the membership database in time for the March Slipstream post out.

Paul Norris. FAAAA Database Manager.



Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia

MONTHLY STATISTICAL REPORT for 24 February 2020

	ALL	NSW	ACT	VIC	TAS	SA	WA	QLD
Current:	553	276	60	54	16	5	66	75
Expired:	237	106	6	10	3	36	20	56
Pending:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Extinguished:	235	114	22	21	2	8	8	58
Deceased:	103	42	1	12	7	7	13	18
Associate:	22	0	0	9	0	6	0	6
Honorary:	6	2	0	3	0	0	2	0
Life Time:	36	11	0	4	0	5	12	4
Perpetual:	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Widower:	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Email%	79.6%	73.0%	101.5%	65.6%	68.4%	12.2%	84.9%	87.8%
Web%	49.0%	44.8%	60.6%	48.4%	52.6%	41.5%	58.1%	51.9%
SS Soft%	30.1%	22.8%	69.7%	34.4%	42.1%	17.1%	38.4%	26.0%

Current: Members who are up to date financially or are Hon. Lifetime or Perpetual Members. Note that Expired Members are NOT included.

Expired: Members who were current but who are technically late for payment. Excludes Extinguished, Deceased or Pending members.

Pending: New applicants yet to pay and be admitted to membership.

Extinguished: Previous members who are no longer financial or have resigned from the FAAMA.

Deceased: Previous members who have died.

Associate: A member who is admitted as an Associate Member.

Honorary: A member who is admitted as an Honorary Member.

Life Time: A member who has had Life Time Membership construed upon him/her by a Division.

Perpetual: A member who has had Perpetual Membership construed upon him/her by a Division.

Web%: The % of Current + Expired members who have registered for Web Access.

[Print Report](#)

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FLEET AIR ARM ASOCIATION of AUSTRALIA

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 Jan 2020 (in Aust Dollars) (cash basis)

<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>	
Cash and Bank Accounts	
FAAA (Aust) General Account 10003851	\$ 4357.03
FAAA (Aust) SS Account 10003850	\$1320.66
FAAA (Aust) Fixed Term Deposit 70004864 (Matures 01 July 2020) @2.05%	\$18750.23
Total Cash and Bank accounts	\$36311.92
<u>TOTAL ASSETS HELD AT BANK</u>	\$36311.92
<u>LIABILITIES & DEPOSITS</u>	
Less Liabilities (nil outstanding cheques)	\$ 750.54
Plus Outstanding Accounts and Deposits	\$ 2261.00
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY</u>	\$37826.38

James E Caldwell
Treasurer
FAAA (Australia)