

'More than a band aid' is our statement of providing pre-hospital care to every person in Tasmania and also those who visit this state. This statement comes from a project – *'More Than a Band Aid'* -initiated by the VAOAT to define and implement strategies for training, uniform, vehicles, recruiting and retaining volunteers.

In this room today there are 75 volunteer ambulance officers (vao's) who are part of the ambulance service which provides this valuable care for people. These vao's may be giving a couple of days or a couple of weeks or even a complete month on their vao roster.

We no longer provide 'band aid' care, because we are better than this, we are an essential part of the Tasmanian Ambulance Service, which is a leader of ambulance services in Australia. We are proud to work alongside our volunteer and salaried colleagues.

The last twelve months have been exciting:

- DVD launch on vao work and their commitment to Tasmanian communities. Excellent coverage by the electronic and print media outlets.
- Award for excellence to David Godfrey-Smith (vao at Bridgewater) at the Council of Ambulance Authorities conference in New Zealand. The first time a volunteer has received an award from CAA.
- Another Gathering here at Gumleaves and planning is under way for the next Gathering on King Island. Considerable funding is needed for this Gathering.
- Further advances with vGate (volunteer gateway – www.vgate.net.au) which assists vao's to check rosters and training plans.
- An online forum for committee members to discuss issues and vote on them.
- Port Sorell Gathering at Camp Banksia was an enormous success due to the large attendance and the planning work from the committee. The themed dinner about blood donations was hilarious and showed different aspects of some vao's. Lara Giddings – Deputy Premier congratulated all vao's on their roles in the operation of the ambulance service and their commitment to fellow Tasmanians.
- A \$35,000.00 grant from Emergency Management Australia to develop and implement E-learn computer modules. David Godfrey-Smith demonstrated the E-learn concept at the recent CAA conference.

All of these and many other achievements have been achieved through the dedication, hard work and determination of many volunteers and TAS staff.

My thanks to the following for their support of the VAOAT:

Volunteers Ambulance Officers – you contribute an astounding 500,000 on call hours to the Tasmanian Ambulance Service every year.

You attend 16,000 cases annually as support crew to paramedics and attend in excess 2800 cases on your own.

Volunteer families – the amount of time dedicated to the pre-hospital care of people means time away from partners, children and friends. Without their support, understanding and care this vital ambulance service would be threatened.

Cheryl Wilson – Vice President

Last year I asked Cheryl to consider being President, but Cheryl declined for personal reasons, but stated –I'm more than willing to be Vice President. Cheryl has taken on this role with enthusiasm and supported me. Cheryl continues to be active in sourcing grants and seeking recognition of vao's.

Dianne Coon – Secretary, Publicity Officer, Public Officer

Di continues to work tirelessly for the VAOAT organising meeting schedules, meeting minutes, liaising with media personnel and being interviewed by local and national media outlets. At the Australia Emergency Management Volunteer Forum Di represents all vao's across Australia at the Federal Government level.

Marg Dennis – Treasurer

Manager of finances, VAOAT website mistress, editor of First Response and with an incredible amount of assistance from her husband Phil, they contribute, set out, proof read, print, staple and post out your copy of First Response.

Grant Lennox

Grant retired in April 2009 to a life of sleeping in, late breakfast with time to ponder the days activities, plan a couple of pleasant jobs for the day and play golf at least four days a week. Nice thoughts Grant, because he knows that Joan shares his retirement days and together they do the planning. Travelling has now become the priority. Thank you for your valuable assistance over 12 years.

Dominic Morgan

The VAOAT is pleased to have Dominic in the position of CEO and we have briefed him on the role of vao's in the ambulance service and we look forward to further meetings. Dominic's career in ambulance services commenced as a vao in 1985 at Hobart.

Committee members – Lesley Blackburn, Pam Fanning, Collette Harrold, George Hudson, Keitha Munro, Jack van Tatenhove, Sandi-Lee Squires, David Godfrey-Smith

Their support to the VAOAT is invaluable, because they research and develop ideas, source grant funds, plan and organise Gatherings and attend meetings.

Area reps – Pam Fanning, George Hudson, Cheryl Wilson, Collette Harrold, Toni King, Lorraine Gardener, Monica Kursawe, Dianne Coon

These reps contact volunteer unit coordinators to obtain information on their unit's activities, so the committee has information on the celebrations and problems affecting units.

TAS committee reps – Helen Reynolds and George Hudson attend the meetings for fleet, equipment review, uniform and OH&S and report back to committee meetings. The ERC meets on a regular basis and the other committees meet on an as needed basis.

Volunteer coordinators – these volunteers are the link within their own groups and Tasmanian Ambulance Service involving administration, equipment, training and uniforms.

CPEU and volunteer educators – Steve Moore, Les Bain, Peter Mulholland, Vince Gregory and many BSO'S and other salaried officer who travel to volunteer units to impart clinical knowledge; answer questions on both medical and operational situations and share an enormous amount of on road wisdom.

Superintendents, supervisors, operational support officers, administration staff – each of these people contribute in many ways by providing support and looking after the welfare of VAO's

I'm very grateful for all the assistance given to vao's and in particular the work done by VAOAT committee members.

Our future:

- in 2010 the creation of a new position within TAS – Volunteer Support Officer with a focus on volunteer management.
- vGate on line rostering – encourage all vao's to logon and use the system
- VAOAT to have direct consultation with TAS at the Senior Officer's Group meetings.
- develop and put into operation the E-learning modules
- greater recognition from State Government – inclusion in the budget papers the hours provided and the dollar savings from all emergency service volunteers.

The new committee will actively and constructively engage with TAS and the State Government for the best results of all VAO's, but I want to stress that, if we are to make any major decisions about the future of the VAOAT, we need the support of all vao's.

The VAOAT is more than just the committee, it's ***ALL OF US***.

Leaders of groups are important, but without the determination of those working with you the system may be doomed to fail. As my term of President comes to a close, my appreciation and thanks are extended to every one of the VAOAT and TAS.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be President over the last twelve months and I feel privileged to have lead this remarkable group of vital and enthusiastically dedicated volunteers and I believe that the VAOAT will continue to be an essential part of the Tasmanian Ambulance Service, as it has been for the last 13 years.

Enjoy your Christmas and New Year- be safe on the road whether enjoying some family time or 'on the job' as a volunteer ambulance officer.

Wayne Doran
President - VAOAT