



Australian Special Air Service Association of Western Australian (ASASA WA) Presidents Report

The objectives of the ASASA WA Association are :

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- (a) To perpetuate the close bonds of comradeship and esprit de corps created by past and present members of The Australian Special Air Service and other Special Forces units (hereafter referred to as the SAS) by providing the means for contact.
- (b) To provide support to the Regiment.
- (c) To preserve the Regiment's good name and guard its interests; and
- (d) To provide advice and assistance to past and present members of the SAS and/or their families.

As we approach the end of this challenging year, I am delighted to present to you the annual Australian Special Air Services Association of Western Australia Presidents Report. Reflecting on the remarkable journey the committee has embarked upon together during 2022/23. Despite the numerous obstacles we faced, it is with great pride that I share with you the considerable successes we have achieved as an association.

Over the past year, the Australian Special Air Services Association of Western Australia has navigated through uncharted waters, adapting and responding to the ever-evolving landscape especially in Advocacy and Wellbeing services. Through our collective determination and unwavering commitment, we have not only overcome the challenges but also emerged stronger, more resilient, and more united than ever before. Together, we have charted a clear course, ensuring a bright future for our association.

Throughout the year, our dedicated team has worked tirelessly to steer the association towards new horizons and build the membership base. We have made significant strides in achieving our goals, as evidenced by the numerous accomplishments we can proudly celebrate. From fostering a sense of camaraderie among our members to organizing successful events and initiatives, our collective efforts have laid a solid foundation for continued growth and success. I have acknowledged these within the sections of the report below.

With a clear vision in mind, we have set forth on a transformative journey that has redefined our purpose and direction whilst always remembering where we came from. Our commitment to excellence and innovation has led to the implementation of strategic initiatives that not only enhance our membership experience but also empower us to make a positive impact on the wider Australian Special Air Services Associations, SAS Family and community. Through these endeavours, we have strengthened our position as a leading force within the Australian Special Air Services Association and SAS Family groups , setting a benchmark for others to follow.

A Special General Meeting (SGM) is to be held to endorse a new constitution that updates the registered ASASA WA version at the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety in 2001. The proposed Constitution conveys ASASA WA into line with current legislation within West Australia . This will also allow Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status under our legal governance to be applied for.

1. MEMBERSHIP

YEARLY REPORT – MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY 2022-2023

NEW MEMBERS

During the 2022/23 Financial year, **(18) Eighteen** new members were accepted into the Association. Membership Approved for the previous 4 years were :-

2021/22	27
2020/21	14
2019/20	11
2018/19	8

MEMBER STATISTICS

As at the 18th July, 2022, the membership statistics were :-

FINANCIAL – FEE PAYING MEMBERS

Ordinary Members	293
Un-Financial	60
Affiliate Members	24
Un-financial	2

TOTAL 379

Ordinary & Affiliate members only

MEMBERSHIP TYPE – ALL MEMBERS

Ordinary Members	467	87.5%
Affiliate Members	26	4.9%
Widow Members	30	5.6%
Honorary	6	1.1%
Life	5	0.9%

TOTAL 534

AGE OF MEMBERS (with DOB supplied)

Under 30 – 0	0.0%
30-45 <u>36</u>	<u>7.0%</u>
45-65 <u>192</u>	<u>37.1%</u>
65-75 <u>119</u>	<u>23.0%</u>
75-85 <u>135</u>	<u>26.1%</u>
85-100 <u>35</u>	<u>6.8%</u>

REGIONAL MEMBER NUMBERS

North West/Mid West	18	2.9%
Perth/Metro	387	70.6%
South West/Grt Sthrn	65	11.9%
South East/Goldfields	6	1.1%
Other States	52	9.5%
Residing Overseas	22	4.0%

These figures show the average age of the Association is **67.3** This clearly indicates an older membership base. These figures are as the Membership records show, however with some members not providing their DOB they may be skewed. The figures show that most members are in the 65 plus age bracket.

As at the 3rd June, 2023, there were 127 members who were to become un-financial at the 30th June. All those members were contacted, and as at the 26th July, 2022, this figure has been reduced to 34 un-financial members. This is an ongoing process now of chasing up membership renewals.

This year has seen an increase in new member applications, and this is most probably due to the recruiting drive by the committee within the ASASA WA. There has also been an increase in patronage at the Happy Hours and planned events. This is most pleasing.

The Rendezvous Magazine was sent out in hard copy to all members of the ASASAS WA membership. The sending of the hard copy has been welcomed by all who received it. This will be an ongoing arrangement in the coming years.

2. ADVOCACY AND WELLBEING

The advocacy and wellbeing section of the ASASA WA operates from within the Frank Skyes room within the, The House of the ASASA WA. The room has been set up to accommodate areas for advocacy volunteers to engage with the clients. Future BEST grant funding will enhance this set up.

- Advocacy and Welfare group of the WA Branch of the ASAS Assn consists of:
 - Compensation Advocate Level 3 (located in Broome),
 - Compensation Advocate Level 2 at the House,
 - 3 x Trainee Compensation Advocates at the House all completing E-Learning Level 1,
 - Wellbeing Advocate Level 1 at the House,
 - 2 x Trainee Wellbeing Advocates at the House registered for but haven't commenced E-Learning Level 1 at the House,
 - Training activities continue at the House each week before scheduled interviews are commenced.
- Mentors for trainees are John Burrows at the House, Rosalind Howat RSL Perth, Nick Russon when available and informally John Newton.
- At this time, the House is averaging between 4 and 6 client interviews a week at the House with ongoing contact with clients being conducted by Advocates in their own time.
- Several contacts are being made to Advocates out of hours through informal connections, claims, applications are being compiled and submitted and advice is being passed on with best intentions.
- The most clients are three Acts and require a lot of discovery and appropriate planning to ensure that the veteran and his/ her family are not disadvantaged.
Numbers of clients by Acts in this calendar year are:
 - VEA – 86*
 - DRCA – 54*
 - MRCA – 51*
 - Combined VEA/ DRCA/ MRCA – 135
 - Appeals – 2
 - Reconsiderations – 3
 - Wellbeing Activity/ widows – 5

Note: * indicates stand-alone claims/ DVA applications
- We are now dealing with the illnesses and deaths of the Vietnam era veterans and currently have 4 widows receiving support through our wellbeing advocates.
- In addition to a Advocacy Forum that was conducted in January of this year with 8 attendees, the Assn has conducted:
 - A “You and You White Card” Information Session for Assn members, for approximately 30 people and very graciously supported by Peter King, DVA Deputy Commissioner DVA WA .
 - An Advocacy and Wellbeing Forum from 28th August to 1st September attended by 21 accredited and trainee compensation and wellbeing advocates from Perth RSL, RAAFA Advocacy Group, Bassendean, Claremont RSL and ASASA WA. It was a review and learning forum supported by ASASA WA volunteer Advocates, Brodie Medi link, Tresea Lonergan White Oak Homes and a team led by Gary Edgeley from the DVA Perth Office. It was a successful event enjoyed by all with a great exchange of information and opportunity for networking.
 - A “You and Your White and Gold Card” information Saturday 7th October Session for the 7RAR Assn for approximately 50 veterans, mainly wife's/ partners and family. It was very appreciated in view of the topics covered included Service pension and Widow/ partner entitlements. Again, Mr Peter King, graciously attended and gave the activity considerable credibility and authenticity.
 - It intended to conduct another information session on White and Gold Card for ASAASA Members before the end of this year.
- The ASASA WA is endeavouring to recruit more Wellbeing advocates to cater for what we believe will be an increasing need with the ageing Korean, Malaysian/ Borneo and Vietnam era veterans and their families. There is also a believe that the Mogadishu/ Timor/ Afghanistan/ Iraq/ Border Protection/ Aceh/ Peacekeepers and veterans who have assisted in natural disasters will soon start to submit their

requests for medical and financial support and will create a Second Wave. Just as occurred in the First Wave being the Vietnam Veteran's since the mid-90s. A part of this Second Wave will be a resurgence from the Vietnam era.

- Finally, for advocates the introduction of the new Act in 2025 will place a great deal of added responsibility on the support for and the training of them to navigate and provide the appropriate information so that the transition is as smooth as it can be. ESOs have a great responsibility and commitment during this period so we don't have a repeat of the introduction of MRCA.

3. CALENDER EVENTS AT THE ASASA WA, THE HOUSE FOR 2022 /2023

A solid year of events, activities , wakes and forums has occurred . The use of the, The House by Ex Services Organisations (ESO's) Such as;

- Legacy
- Military Art
- RSL Sub- Branches.
- Presentation of interest – i.e., Operation Thunderbolt –Rami Sharman
- Advocacy and Wellbeing forums

Major Events at the ASASA WA , The House

- Christmas in July held on a weekend.
- ANZAC Day
- Australia Day
- Presentation of Vietnam Medallions and Certificates by the Governor General of Australia
- Chaplain Breakfast – Governor of Western Australia
- Reunion of SASR Corp, units and battles.

Example of Calendar Events from August 2023 – February 2024

Date	Day	Event	Invited Guests
12-Aug-23	Saturday	Wake for John GRIFFITHS	Family and friends of John
16-Aug-23	Wednesday	Spreading of Ashes	Melva Ruffin
23-Aug-23	Wednesday	Legacy Ladies Meeting	Tracey Hamel Matthew Granger
25-Aug-23	Friday	Happy Hour - August	President
27-Aug-23	Sunday	Mil Art Program	Liza Howie
28 Aug-1 Sep 23	Mon-Fri	Advocacy Training	Various
1-Sep-23	Friday	1983 REO Reunion	Mal Howie and Invited Guests
22-Sep-23	Friday	Gov Gen visit - Viet Vet Medals presentation	Viet Vet membership and Unit Exec
24-Sep-23	Sunday	MIL Art Program	Liza Howie
4-Oct-23	Wednesday	Z Force Families Museum Lunch at House	Z Force Families and Shirly Mooney
7-Oct-23	Saturday	7 RAR Gold Card Presentation	7 RAR Veterans
27-Oct-23	Friday	October Happy Hour	Membership
29-Oct-23	Sunday	MIL Art Program	Liza Howie
5-Nov-23	Sunday	Special General Meeting	President Dave Thomas
22-Nov-23	Wednesday	Chaplaincy Breakfast (30 pers)	Josh Bouzanquet and all Religious members
24-Nov-23	Friday	Happy Hour - Christmas/End of Year	Committee
25-Nov-23	Saturday	Peter Fitzpatrick's 80th	Kath Fitzpatrick
26-Nov-23	Sunday	MIL Art Program	Liza Howie
1-Dec-23	Friday	SAFERIGHT Xmas Party	Macca McCormack
2-Dec-23	Saturday	Army Golf WA Xmas Party	Mark Salmon
3-Dec-23	Sunday	Childrens Xmas Party	Children of the Regt
7-Dec-23	Thursday	Committee Xmas Dinner - Al Fornetto Restaurant	Committee and Partners
Committee Christmas Break 2023			
15-Jan-24	Monday	BCM to discuss/organise Australia Day	Committee
26-Jan-24	Friday	Australia Day Celebrations	Committee and Members and invited guests
24-Feb-24	Friday	February Happy Hour	Committee and Membership

3.1

GOVERNOR –GENERAL VISIT FRIDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER 2023.

The Governor-General, General the Honourable David Hurley AC, DSC (Retd) paid tribute to Vietnam veterans when presenting commemorative medallions and certificates this month for the 50th anniversary of the end of ADF operations in Vietnam.

His Excellency addressed veterans and widows at the Australian Special Air Service Association WA Branch headquarters in The House at Campbell Barracks, Perth, recalling his days at RMC Duntroon in 1973–75.

He addressed the assembly to say, “Can I just say to Vietnam veterans: I grew up in your shadow, you were my leaders, mentors and trainers,” he said.

“We were well taught, we were well drilled ... we looked to you, which is why I thank you from both a personal and professional perspective tonight, not just as your Commander-in-Chief but as someone who as a young lad you trained.”

His Excellency recalled a general salute by the Federation Guard in Canberra on August 18th this year for Vietnam Veterans Day.

“I thought that was one of the finest things that we could have done for you, to say to you, ‘Thank you from the current defence force for the gift you gave us in your service,’” he said.

“It is so important that your efforts are recognised here tonight as well. The country is thankful for what you gave for many years afterwards; you gave enormous service that many people did not understand.

“So thank you for what you did, and for who you represent here tonight. You should be enormously proud of what you gave.

“Being your Commander-in-Chief, here tonight, it is a real privilege to be able to say thank you.”

Over 26 medallion and certificates were presented to Vietnam Veterans who are members of the ASASA WA, including widows and family accepting on behalf of their father.

The visit by the Governor General and Mrs Hurley was the only visit to a defence establishment in Western Australia, during their recent visit. It was a great privilege to host their Excellencies at the ASASA WA, The House.



3.2 CHAPLINS LUNCH – WEDNESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER – GOVERNOR OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

As the ASASA WA, The House is the spiritual home of the ASASA the resident SASR Chaplain, Josh Bouzanquet is working with ASASA WA to host a Chaplain’s Prayer Breakfast at the House on 22nd Nov 23. The Governor of Western Australia shall be in attendance.

The purpose of the breakfast

- To bring like-minded members of the Regiment’s wider family together for a time of fellowship and prayer while sharing breakfast.
- The keynote address will aim to encourage, strengthen, and promote spiritual resilience among the Christian community at the Regiment.
- This event occurs during the HOTO for the incoming chaplain and would serve as a key networking opportunity as he commences his time at Special Air Service Regiment in 2024.

4. GRANTS

4.1 SAS TRANSITIONING CENTRE – Grant Opportunity \$200K –Pending.

The RSLWA along with several ESO and partners , ASASA WA was one of the partners , was elected to deliver the business case for the South West Metropolitan Hub for a total grant of \$5M . As part of the grant application \$50K was allocated to deliver a business case for the S/W Hub. The business case was submitted on Friday 20th October 2023. There has been no decision at this stage on the grant funding.

ASASA WA as part of the consortium has applied for a spoke to the S/W Hub to be set up at Swanbourne Barracks near the ASASA WA , The House. Seed funding applied for is \$200K . It is estimated that a total funding amount of \$1.5m is required to see the Transitioning Centre into an operational unit.

Transitioning from the defence force to civilian life can be a challenging and complex process. The Defence Transitioning Centre (DTC) This centre is to provide a structured and comprehensive support system to help individuals navigate this transition effectively. It recognizes the unique experiences, skills, and challenges faced by veterans and aims to address them in a holistic manner.

One of the key benefits of the DTC is the provision of practical resources and guidance. It offers career counselling and job placement services, helping veterans identify their transferable skills and find suitable employment opportunities in the civilian sector. Additionally, the centre can provide training and educational programs to enhance existing skills or acquire new ones, ensuring veterans are equipped with the tools they need to succeed in their post-military careers.

Another crucial aspect of the DTC is the focus on mental health and well-being. Transitioning from a highly structured and intense military environment to civilian life can be emotionally challenging. The DTC offers counselling services and access to mental health professionals who understand the unique experiences and potential difficulties faced by veterans. This support is invaluable in helping individuals effectively manage the emotional and psychological aspects of the transition.

The DTC also fosters a sense of community and camaraderie among veterans who are going through similar experiences. It provides a platform for networking and connecting with fellow veterans, creating a support system that can provide understanding, encouragement, and shared experiences during the transition process.

In summary, the Defence Transition Centre is an essential resource for individuals transitioning from the defence force to civilian life. It offers practical resources, guidance, and support in areas such as career counselling, job placement, skills development, mental health, and community engagement. By recognizing the unique challenges faced by veterans during this transition, the DTC plays a vital role in ensuring a successful and fulfilling transition to civilian life. Professionals will be engaged and a designated chaplain to SASR is in place for spiritual guidance and family welfare. The ASASA WA has two (2) voluntarily wellbeing persons in place.

The transitions unit is anticipated to be located across the road from the SAS Auxiliary. The ASASA WA association is working closely with the SAS Auxiliary and this partnership is providing mutual benefits to both organisations. Watch this space in 2024.

4.2 DVA VWG 2023 – Grant –\$291K – Applied awaiting a decision.

The project aim is to secure a Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) "Veteran Wellbeing Grant" (DVA VWG) for a project to upgrade the Australian Special Air Service Association of WA (ASASA WA) facility located at Campbell Barracks Swanbourne in Financial Year 2023 to 30 June 2024.

Objectives.

The project objectives in priority order are:

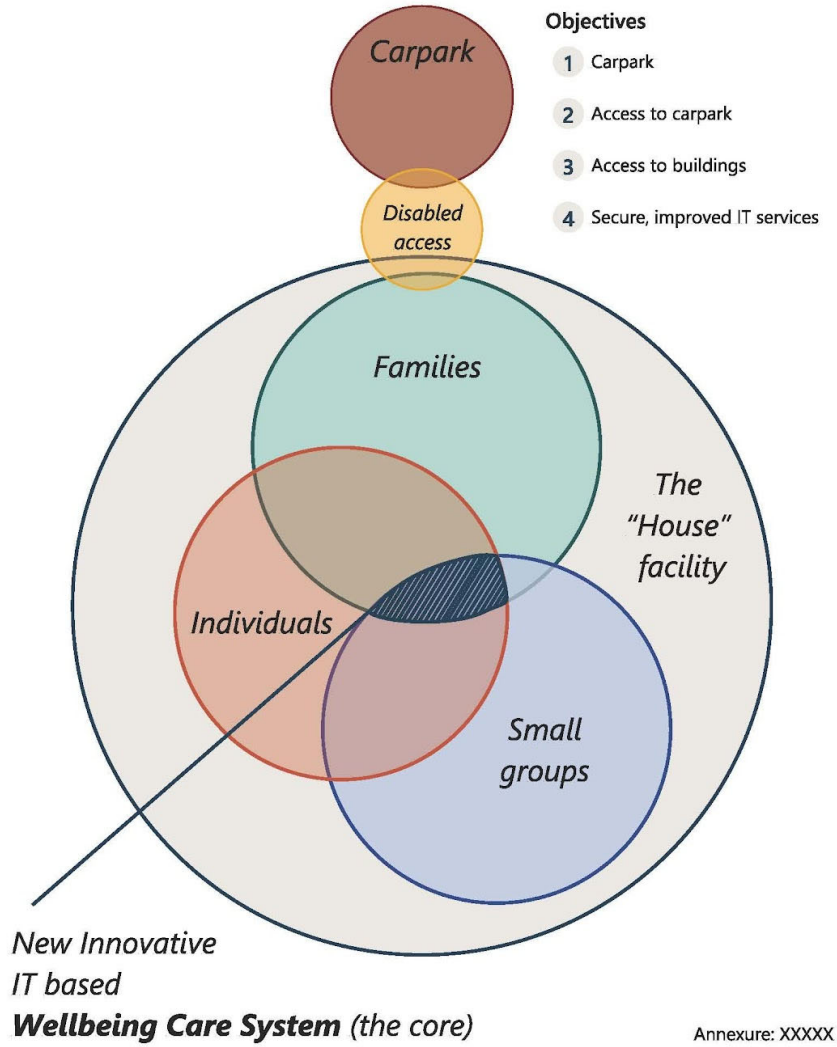
- **Carpark.** To provide a sealed carpark adjacent to the Association facility and safe access and mobility, for disabled and aged patrons.
- **Safe Access.** To provide safe pedestrian and wheelchair access to the Association facility from the sealed carpark to the existing wheelchair access.
- **Stairs and Weatherproofing.** To upgrade and re-align the existing access stairs access with weather-proofing over the stairs , the existing personnel lift and verandah.
- **Workstations.** To provide and install five (5) internal workstations for well-being and advocacy interviews, to better utilize new purchases of IT communications equipment and work stations for the advocates and wellbeing volunteers.

ASASA WA was one of two (2) ESO's asked to apply for the grant in Western Australia.

ASASA WA Wellbeing Project

Functional Relationship Diagram

Providing easier access for individuals, families and small groups to access a range of *wellbeing and care services*.





4.3 Our Veterans Forge <https://www.facebook.com/OurVeteransForge/>

Considerable refit to the under croft of The House has taken place and moving closer to an opening in early 2024.

To assist SAS Veterans and serving members who are under medical supervision in the transition from military service to reintegration into the community. Enabling them to engage in blacksmithing and other activities with other Veterans who have served at the SASR.

Seed Funding had been provided by several organisations including SAS Resources Trust, Claremont RSL Sub-Branch, private benefactors, The Jarrahdale Sporting Shooters (JSS), and ASASA WA funds from raffles at Happy Hours.



Our Veterans Forge (OVF) are a Not For Profit Organisation set up by veterans to help other veterans with PTSD "Post-traumatic stress disorder" and other associated medical issues after discharge from the ADF "Australian Defence Force".

The OVF set up under The House will provide a finishing area for the forged items including bowls, knives and axes. A forged knife made by the OVF members is presented to each new reinforcement member of the regiment at the Beret Parade each year.

- 4.3 **BEST Grant** - building excellence in support and training - this grant will provide the necessary upgrade and further expansion to conduct Advocacy and Wellbeing support at The House.

BEST grants are an important part of the Government's commitment to support ex-service organisations (ESOs) in providing compensation and welfare advocates and to support veterans and families seeking compensation and other assistance.

Wirth support from National Executive the ASASA WA secured a BEST grant valued at \$13,732.50, to assist with the provision of advocacy services. This has provided the necessary upgrade of equipment and other necessities for the ASASA WA Advocacy volunteers to provide the best possible assistance and advice available to those who require support.

This grant was applied for as the only ASASA that operates an Advocacy and Wellbeing section at the spiritual home of the ASASA WA within the , The House.

5. FINANCIAL

The Australian Special Air Service Association WA Inc is in a sound financial position.
As at 30 June 2023

6. IN CONCLUSION.

As the President for the ASASA WA I have been invited to be part of the following working groups;

- SAS Family roundtable – conduct by SASR -COMD
- DVA Consultative Committee – Held by the DVA Duty Commissioner Peter King– Held monthly.
- 13BDE ESO's Round Table= Held by Brigadier Brett Chaloner – Held quarterly.

As we progress into the future, let us continue to embrace the challenges that lie ahead with unwavering determination. With a shared sense of purpose and a steadfast commitment to our mission, we can confidently navigate the path that lies before us, confident in our ability to overcome any obstacles that may arise. Together, we will continue to uphold the objectives, values and principles that define our association and drive us towards even greater achievements.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the volunteer ASASA WA committee and those members who has contributed to the success of the WA association during the last 12 months. We have achieved much, but a journey to go. Your dedication, passion, and unwavering support have truly made a difference, and I am honoured to serve as your President. Let us walk forward into the future, united in our purpose, and be inspired by the remarkable achievements that await us.

I would also like to acknowledge the Vice President, John Easlea , of the WA association who has been a stalwart on progressing the association forward for the future and steering the association to seek better processes, procedures, grant applications and working on strategic design for the future.

Regards,

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