

Custodes

The Official Journal of the Association Issue 3 2020



Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices

*The peak membership body for Victoria's
Justice of the Peace and Bail Justice volunteers*



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Facebook.com/
honoraryjustices



www.rvahj.org.au

From the President's Desk

Dear fellow Justices,

Thank you to all the JPs and BJs who are doing their best to refrain from witnessing and hearing activities during Covid~19. We know that many of our members are frustrated by not being able to help their local communities as they have loved doing for many, many years.

Equally, we thank those JPs and BJs who are finding ways to continue volunteering their time. We are hearing of BJs being exposed to the virus in the course of their duties and our hearts go out to them and to you all.

At the Association, we are using this "down time" to focus on setting the team up for long term success and growth just as soon as we possibly can:

- We've embarked on a program to update the Constitution and Branch By Laws to be more outwardly community focussed
- We've established a significant training capability - RVAHJ Academy - with both "in person" and online streams to our members stay up to date amidst all the changes
- We are building stronger ties with our stakeholders and partners including HJSS, Attorney General, Police, YRIPP, Office of the Public Advocate and many more
- We are modernising our use of technology in all aspects of Association life. Zoom meetings, Facebook and email are now standard fare in our communications armoury
- We're looking to celebrate our more experienced members as "Honourable Persons" and recognising their depth of knowledge, experience and value to the community

We are really excited about a major event planned for March 20 next year. We are combining the Annual Dinner & Awards evening with Training Updates for JPs and BJs during the day. We've moved the event to a Saturday to make it easier for our country colleagues to join us. The Department of Justice and Community Safety has offered to help sponsor the day - we sincerely thank them for this because it means we can keep costs down and encourage as many members as possible to attend.

Please stay safe and feel free to reach out to the Association if we can help in any way.

Paul Mracek
PRESIDENT



Paul Mracek JP
MIEAust, CPEng, NER, APEC Engineer
IntPE(Aus), FAIM, GAICD, FRVAHJ

Welcome to Custodes Issue 3 2020

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COVER

This issue's cover features Hon. Jill Hennessy MP the Attorney General of Victoria. Check out Jill's message to Justices of the Peace and Bail Justices on page 4

For Your Calendar:

- Special General Meeting Thursday 1 October 2020 at 7.30 pm (see Page 11)
- Annual Dinner & Presentation and Training Day Saturday 20 March 2021 (see Page 13)
- Nominations for RVAHJ Board positions close at 4pm on 29 January, 2021 (see Page 11)

From the Attorney General



Dear Honorary Justices

There is no doubt we are facing extraordinarily difficult times.

Many aspects of our lives have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, both at home and in the workplace. But despite these challenges, our Honorary Justices have consistently demonstrated their dedication and ability to adapt.

The work undertaken by our Honorary Justices is essential to help build a stronger and safer Victoria. I have every confidence the Honorary Justice community has the skill and passion to continue to deliver vital services, right across the state.

The safety of volunteers and their families is paramount. Now more than ever, we need to rally together and support each other, particularly those who have been forced to temporarily withdraw from volunteering.

I recognise that many Honorary Justices need to purchase materials to volunteer in this current environment. As part of our efforts to support Honorary Justices, the Government established a reimbursement fund, and the first round has now been processed.

We also developed guidelines to support Justices of the Peace to provide remote signing and witnessing services, as per the changes introduced by the COVID-19 (Emergency Measures) Act 2020.

And because the Government understands the value and importance of your services, we are recruiting more Justices of the Peace across four key local government areas that we know need more support. These are Melton, Hobsons Bay, Wyndham and Greater Dandenong, with further priority areas to be targeted in 2021.

While we navigate this challenging year, I will continue to work closely with the Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices (RVAHJ) and all Honorary Justices.

I want to sincerely thank everyone for your incredible commitment and dedication.

I would also like to acknowledge the RVAHJ, for its ongoing support of its members.

I look forward to the time when I will be able to meet you all in person.

Together we will overcome these challenges.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill Hennessy".

Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Workplace Safety



Everybody's an Advocate

The term "singing off the same song sheet" describes a situation where a group of people using common language and common arguments synchronise their story together. It's a really useful way of building a unity of purpose and a strong message over time. It's something that all HJs and the Association as the peak body really needs all to do.

Advocacy that is targeted is what is needed and the Association has developed a common "song sheet". A listing of the key points we recommend members focus on whenever you encounter the opportunity to talk about the role and challenges of Honorary Justices in Victoria.

Whether talking with friends or acquaintances at a BBQ or having an in depth discussion with your local Police or Member of Parliament, these are the key messages to get across. If we all stick to the same message and drive home the same concerns, it improves our chances of achieving positive change for all members of the Association over time to the benefit of the community in Victoria.

The RVAHJ Advocacy Song

PIERAMENTE

If all J Ps and B Js stick to - geth - er we can a -

-chi - eve all the Co - mm - u - nity needs us to a - chie - ve



JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Help more than 575,000 Victorians each year
Sign more than 2.3 Million documents each year
More than 580 different types of documents
Free up 400 full time Police Officers
Save the community \$37M each year
Experts in witnessing, certifying & attesting
Support 99 Document Signing Stations
Volunteer 600,000 hours each year
Free community service

Victoria needs at least 5,000 more JPs:

- 1901 => 3,700 JPs in Victoria
- 2020 => still only 3,700 JPs in Victoria
- Increase in demand from community
- Increase in document complexity
- NSW has 90,000 JPs; Qld has 70,000 JPs
- Even South Australia has 7,500 JPs

BAIL JUSTICE

After hours Bail/Remand Hearings
Children, Aboriginal Persons & Mental Health Support for children at risk (IAOs)
High bar for entry to the role
Well trained and knowledgeable
Protect the community
Protect the human rights of people "at risk"
Experts in after hours bail/remand
Free community service

Victoria needs at least 375 more BJs:

- Demand from Police for BJs not being met
- Demand from DHHS for BJs not being met
- Offenders go free because not enough BJs
- No new BJs since 2016
- Only 125 Bail Justices for the whole State
- Proper coverage needs 500 BJs

It would be a terrific idea to explore each of these points at your next Branch meeting. If anyone would like to learn more about the comprehensive business case we have developed in support of these talking points, please reach out to the President or any of the other Board members.

RVAHJ ACADEMY

As we continue to build out our training capacity, the Association has developed an Online Learning Platform. We call this platform the RVAHJ Training Academy.

The RVAHJ Training Academy will be available for all members and is a terrific way to keep up to date with latest best practices for all things related to your Honorary Justice activities.

The Academy is an adjunct program to support the "in person" training capabilities provided by the RVAHJ Training Team. Branches can request "in person" training by contacting Cathy at the Office.

We plan to extend the online RVAHJ Academy to other certified witnesses in Victoria, such as nurses, chemists, engineers and so forth, on a commercial basis in the near future.



Independent, Trusted, Respected

Learn from Industry Experts

The Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices is the peak body for Honorary Justices with over 200+ years of experience to call upon for practical learning to the community.

[View Courses](#)

- Practical Training**
Wide range of training modules based on a wide range of practical scenarios.
- Interesting Quizzes**
Engaging quizzes based on real case examples to facilitate learning.
- Premium Resources**
Simple and easy to follow resources for use in service to the community.

Our Most Popular Courses

The range of courses offered provide all authorised witnesses the foundation to quickly and easily understand what is needed to process documents in line with a range of guidelines.

How to Access Courses

RVAHJ Members have free access to the online courses at RVAHJ Academy. To sign up for a course, go to:

www.training.rvahj.org.au

You will need to register on the system. You will need a special Coupon to access the courses for free. You can get your coupon from Cathy by sending an email request to admin@rvahj.org.au

We recommend watching the "how to" video on the site:

www.rvahj.org.au/rvahj-academy-information/

RVAHJ Academy Courses

We are regularly adding new courses to the Academy. Here are those currently available:

- Certified True Copies
- Statutory Declarations
- Assessing Capacity
- AHPRA Document Witnessing
- Voluntary Assisted Dying
- COVID-19 Staying Safe for Authorised Witnesses

*** These Courses are FREE for for RVAHJ Members**



Unlock savings and convenience.



AS A MEMBER OF THE RVAHJ YOU HAVE ACCESS TO MBA'S COMPLETE END TO END CAR PURCHASING SERVICE THAT PUTS YOU IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT.

As your advocate we take the stress and hard work out of purchasing your new car. Experience the MBA Car Assist difference and see how we can help get you behind the wheel. Contact MBA Car Assist today!



1300 119 493
mbacarassist.com.au



GOLCONDA GROUP
—YOUR COMPLETE WEALTH SPECIALISTS—

Your Friend the Financial Advisor

Dear Fellow Justices,

As volunteer JP's & BJ's, you collectively contribute more than 385,000 hours each year of your time to support your local community. As a fellow volunteer and JP, we at Golconda Group would like to acknowledge your contribution by offering to help support YOUR future.

Today, Golconda Group supports in excess of 1,300 clients with their financial future and journey to achieve their goals. We now wish to extend this offer to yourselves as volunteers and key members of your community.

As part of this offer we introduce to you [full access to our financial services priced to recognise the role each of you play in our communities](#). We are also building a network of Financial Advisers throughout Victoria that are equally as inspired and will honour this offer so that you can deal with someone closer, if distance is an issue for you.

Please give us a call on 03 50330109 to discuss or visit www.golconda.com.au to see what we can do for you.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan McKenzie

Brendan McKenzie

Director/Financial Advisor

Adv. Dip. FS (FP), CFP, SSA™ Authorised Rep: 243177



Making a REAL difference to our clients and our community!

Swan Hill BRANCH NEWS

There has been so much great stuff happening for the team in Swan Hill that we had to dedicate a whole page to them. Well done to the whole Swan Hill and district team!!

Do you have a story from your local branch that you would like to share? Send in your ideas to Cathy at custodes@rvahj.org.au.

Swan Hill Scores Grant Funding

The Swan Hill and Region branch Chairman John Van Heumen JP, BJ (Retired), FRVAHJ was presented with a certificate by the Federal Member for Mallee, Dr Anne Webster MHR, to congratulate the branch for being successful in its application for the Community Volunteers Grant.

John and the Branch Sec/Treasurer Brendan Mc Kenzie JP applied and were successful in obtaining a grant of \$5000.

Dr Webster MHR who has also spent most of her life community volunteering, said she appreciates how much the community relies on JP's and BJ's, for the diligent services they provide so willingly.

The branch would also like to thank President Paul Mracek JP and the RVAHJ for their advice and guidance in completing the application. It was extremely helpful as other applicants would no doubt agree.



photo courtesy of Swan Hill Guardian Newspaper



Swan Hill DSS Shop - WOW!!!

In a first for Victoria, the team in Swan Hill officially opened their new Document Signing Station on 3 August. The new centre, provided to the Branch free of charge, has been made possible by the generous donation of the Board and CEO of the Murray Mallee Training Company.

The air conditioned facility features a large front counter and two desks - one featuring a computer and photocopier, all supplied by the Company. The new shop provides better privacy than the local library, together with dedicated office space and storage. The DSS has prominent window signage, along with a Teardrop and an "A frame" sign.

Signing services are offered throughout the region by Justices in outreach locations as far as 60-100 kms from Swan Hill. The Branch, and the whole RVAHJ wishes to thank the Training Company for their donation and acknowledge and thank the Swan Hill Regional Library for their previous support and location.

Visit the new Swan Hill DSS at 345 Campbell St, Swan Hill.

Queens Birthday Honours

Ian R Symons AFSM JP

Drouin - For dedicated service & commitment to the CFA & to the safety of the Victorian community.

Ronald M Alexander OAM JP FRVAHJ

Mount Macedon - For service to local government & to the community of Greater Bendigo.

Domenica M Tamburrino OAM JP

Pascoe Vale - For service to the community of Moreland & to the Australian Labor Party.



Robert Winther Carries the Flag for Austin Health DSS

The Document Signing Station at Austin Health (comprising the Austin Hospital, Heidelberg Repat, the Royal Talbot Rehab Centre and the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Centre) has been closed due to coronavirus. But that hasn't stopped stalwart JP Robert Winther OAM JP FRVAHJ from helping people. Robert is the Veteran Liaison Officer at the Repat which keeps him very busy and in his "spare time" is carrying the flag as the only JP available across this massive health facility.

Robert Winther OAM JP FRAVHJ, up until October 2016, was the only on-site working JP. His register number is 9522 and his 30th anniversary comes up next year. If he had even 10c for every document he's signed at any one of the four campuses that come under the Austin Health umbrella, he may well have retired years ago!

For those of you who don't know, Robert has worked in various capacities at Heidelberg Repat for more than 50 - yes, fifty - years (so OK, he's getting on a bit, but you wouldn't think of it to look at him!).

Robert has reverted to being the only on-site JP and his figures attest that he has been very busy indeed. At the moment, he's handling all those certified copies of documents required by nurses from India who are wanting to submit papers for ongoing training, and we all know how much fun they are!! Thank you Robert, for your service.



Mr. Robert Winther OAM JP FRAVHJ

A Warm Welcome to our New Members

Sam Chester JP - ST KILDA

Stephen Deitz JP - NARELLAN NSW (Associate)

Mia Spizzica JP - BULLEEN

Nagamuthu Wickiramasingham JP - DANDENONG NORTH

Anthony Wratten JP - CHIRNSIDE PARK



THE TALE OF THE HULKY SEARCH WARRANT

Loretta Cormack JP BJ(Retd) FRVAHJ

One New Years Eve my late husband and I had been invited to a fancy dress New Year's Eve party, Bill decided to go as the Hulk wearing one of my wigs, sleeves torn out of a shirt, his jeans were given the same treatment and he had theatrical green paint on his face, I thought it was a pretty good job. My choice was as an Indian, feathered headdress and all, a child's bow and arrow finished off the outfit

Just as we opened the front door, we came face to face with two constables from the local police station, for a moment there was complete silence, then with a completely straight face one of them handed me paperwork for a search warrant.

No explanation was asked for no explanation was given.

I'll bet there was a great story to tell when they returned back to the station.



RVAHJ COVID-19 RESPONSE



COVID-19 Stay Safe Training for Authorised Witnesses

An online training program developed by RVAHJ specifically for those who are able to act as 'Authorised or Independent Witnesses'. It takes you through the best practices for staying safe while providing services to the general community.

COURSE CONTENT

- Introduction
- Authorised Witness Stay Safe Overview
 - Covid 19 and Authorised Witnesses
 - Covid 19 Basics - what you need to know
 - Steps on How to Stay Safe
 - Practical Tips for Your Protection While Witnessing
- Covid 19 Myth Busting
- Key Messages for Authorised Witnesses



The Online Course Makes Learning Easy and Fun!

RVAHJ RECOMMENDATION

RVAHJ recommends that every JP and BJ take this course. It will help you look after yourself and the people who need documents witnessed.



Short Videos Explain what you need to know



Quizzes Help You Lock In the Learning

To take the course, visit

www.rvahj.org.au/rvahj-academy-information/

or choose RVAHJ Academy from the Training Menu at www.rvahj.org.au

This online training course is provided by RVAHJ as a free community service for RVAHJ Members, Non-Members and all Authorised Witnesses in Victoria

Document Signing Station Statistics

With many of our DSS closed due to Covid~19, we are not publishing DSS Stats this edition. We thank all those who are following the rules and staying at home and those who are in a position to still be providing service.

Stay Covid Safe



Notice of Special General Meeting

Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices ACN 004 226 448

Notice is given that a Special General Meeting of Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices will be held on Thursday, 1 October 2020 at 7.30 pm AEST at 53 Broadway, Elwood. Due to current COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, the Elwood venue is not available for the meeting. This session will be by video conferencing only. RVAHJ members who wish to participate in the meeting may do so online using Zoom or by telephone, details provided after registration.

Registration is required to join the Special General Meeting virtually through Zoom using the following details:
Register in advance for this meeting at <https://tinyurl.com/yxw8joys>

As noted, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Please contact the office by email admin@rvahj.org.au or call by phone if you are in need of any assistance.

Business of the Meeting:

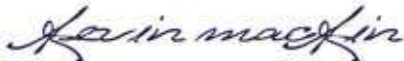
- 1) To consider and, if thought fit, adopt changes to the Constitution of the Association which modify the Objects of the Association (Clause 3) to be more in keeping with the current direction and other minor changes to add clarification.
- 2) To consider and, if thought fit, adopt changes to the Branch By Laws of the Association which add the capacity for Branches to conduct online meetings, addition of a members behavioural statement and other minor changes to add clarification.

The proposed changes to both the Constitution and the By Laws can be viewed online at:
<https://www.rvahj.org.au/special-general-meeting-proposal/>

If you would like a hard copy of the proposal sent via mail or email, please contact the office by email to admin@rvahj.org.au or call by phone.

Proxies must be received by the Admin Officer at least 48 hours prior to the commencement of the meeting. Proxy forms are available from the office.

Dated: 21 August 2020



Kevin Mackin BJ
SECRETARY



PRELIMINARY NOTICE OF THE 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Members for 2021 will be held on Thursday, 27 May 2021 at 7.30 pm at 53 Broadway, Elwood 3184. Members will also be able to attend via electronic means (details to be advised).

2021 Biennial Election of the Board

Under the Constitution, at least half of the 11 Board members retire every two years but are eligible for re-election.

Any Ordinary Member or Life Member of the Association may accept nomination in the prescribed form obtainable from the office and all nominations must be lodged with the Returning Officer, C/- PO Box 317, Elwood, 3184 no later than 4.00 pm on Friday, 29 January 2021.

Nominations must be signed by the proposer and seconder who shall in each case be a Life Member or an Ordinary Member of the Association who is not in arrears with his/her subscription. The consent in writing of the person nominated shall be endorsed on each nomination.

Should the number of nominations exceed the number of vacancies on the Board, then a ballot shall be conducted.

Our Board is a "working board" - we need people with good skills and time available to actively participate in the day to day running of the Association. There is a lot to be done. We strongly encourage members willing to work as part of the team to nominate. If you would like to explore this role further, please contact the President.

Contributory First Mortgage Investment

Variable rates between 7.00% p.a. and 8.50% p.a.

(Dependent on loan purpose and conditions)

- > **Security** Registered First Mortgage
- > **Security Type** Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Rural, Vacant Land, Subdivision and Construction
- > **Loan to Value Ratio** Up to 66.66%
- > **Interest** Paid monthly directly into your bank account
- > **Locations** Predominantly Victoria
- > **Valuations** All security property is valued by professional registered valuers
- > **Minimum Initial Deposit** \$10,000
- > **Loan Term** Up to 3 Years
- > **Fees** There are no fees charged to the Member
- > **Remarks** There is a strong demand for funds
- > **Choice** Investment in specific Sub-Scheme(s) RMBL will require your approval prior to investment of your funds



Please call (03) 9708 8938 to speak with a fellow JP in the first instance to make an introduction.

59 years of mortgage management experience.

Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices



Annual
DINNER
and Awards Presentation
Featuring
Hon. Jill Hennessy MP
Attorney General

Plus **TRAINING**
in the afternoon

SATURDAY 20th MARCH 2021

open doors 6:30pm | dinner starts 7:00pm

JUST OFF THE FREEWAY - FREE PARKING

Encore Events Centre

80 Derrimut Road, Hoppers Crossing

www.rvahj.org.au



The Bail Justice world is continuing during the Covid~19 pandemic. BJ's report that many alleged offenders are suspected to be carrying the virus. Police are taking a lot of care to help protect our members.

Police Support BJ Numbers Case

In discussions with senior Victoria Police members, concerns over the availability of Bail Justices to conduct Bail/Remand hearings, especially for children was discussed. VicPol are understandably worried that many youth alleged offenders are having to be released due to the lack of a BJ to hear the case.

In some regions more than 30% of requests for a Bail Justice go unfulfilled. This leads to young offenders being released because Police can only hold these youths for 24 hours.

This is no surprise to our Bail Justice team - we have been under-resourced for many years, but it was good to be able to quantify the impact of the situation. VicPol have reviewed the Association's "Case for 375 More Bail Justices" across the state and support the RVAHJ methodology and recommendations. With Police now supporting the push for more BJs, we have renewed confidence that progress will be made.

BJs Caught Up in Covid~19

At least 3 Melbourne BJs have been sent for testing for Coronavirus after coming in contact with alleged offenders whilst in the course of their hearings duties. Thankfully all have since returned negative test results. The Bail Justice Committee recommends BJs consider wearing a face shield as well as a mask to further reduce the risk of infection.

Bourke Street Coroners Findings Update

The latest advice we have is that Coroner Hawkins is planning to hand down her findings into the Bourke Street tragedy some time in "the next three months". We assume this is a slippage from the previous August time frame due to Covid~19.

Bail Justice Advisory Panel Update

HJSS advise that the Bail Justice Advisory Panel is on track to be finalised by the end of August with the first meetings to be held during September.

Bail Hearings Online Trial

HJSS are conducting a series of online bail/remand hearing trials in Heidelberg, Sunshine, St Kilda, Werribee and Bendigo police stations in August/September. The RVAHJ BJ Committee is supporting the trial with advice and guidance to HJSS to help ensure that Bail Justice needs are taken into account during the trial and as part of the evaluation process. We have expressed a number of concerns especially around an absolute conviction that the online hearings processes must provide at least the same level of justice for accused persons as "in person" hearings and that this justice must also be seen to be done.



We're in this together - BJ Peer Support = Any Time

www.rvahj.org.au/bj-peer-support-network/



Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices

ACN 004 226 448

Chief Patron: The Governor of Victoria

Patron: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Melbourne

AGM July 2020 – Presidents Report

Paul Mracek JP FRVAHJ

Acknowledgement - Traditional Owners of the Land

Thank you to all for attending and I'd like to begin this evening by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet, and also the land where our Head office is located, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation. I pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Environmental Conditions

As President, it gives me great pleasure to give my 1st Presidents Report at this, the 2020 Annual General Meeting.

Looking back over the last 12 months it has certainly been one of great change with external world issues creating challenges for our Association as well as for many others in Australia and around the world. We have all had to become more resilient and adaptable in adjusting to the changes that have been thrust upon us individually and as an Association. These of course have been needed to ensure the safety of all members, the community as well as the viability of our economy.

Recognitions

This has required greater participation with our key stakeholders and also that we take a leadership role in communicating with our members and Honorary Justices community as a whole when possible. This would not of been possible without the support of all Directors who have assisted in implementing a range of initiatives to help all our members. A special thanks to the executive team Rod Lavin, Vice President; Geoff Legge, Chief Fiancial Officer & Immediate Past President; and Kevin Mackin, Secretary who has provided new thoughts and direction for RVAHJ; thank you all for your continued loyalty, support and guidance.

Likewise, my thanks to Cathy Owens, Adminstration Officer for her dedication and contribution to RVAHJ; I know that your knowledge and experience is greatly appreciate by our members especially now as we all work our way through the COVID-19 restrictions. In addition I would like to thank Kim McAliney BJ JP who has provided great input and support for Bail Justices and the association. My final thanks goes to my wife who has been very understanding and supportive over the last 12 months.

The role of President as those Past Presidents on the call know, has many and varied demands on time and resources. I have had many a calls and emails from members late at night about various challenges looking for guidance and support. I have enjoyed my first term as your President and thank you all for the honour and privilege in doing so.

I also would like to offer my apologies to those whose Branches where I have not been able to attend meetings with the current restrictions and hope that I will be able to recify this over the

next year in person. In the meantime, I have greatly appreciated the comments and feedback from all Branches through the online video conference calls for Branch Chairs / Secretaries and members from our first call in November 2019.

Key Stakeholders

Our relationship with the Honorary Justice Services Support (HJSS) / Department of Justice and Community Safety has started the transition towards being acknowledged as a industry expert.

One willing to support and advance the role of Honorary Justices for the community that we all serve. In addition over the last 12 months we have reached out to our Chief Patron – Governor of Victoria and Patron – Lord Mayor of Melbourne and as you would have seen in our last Custodes to engage their support for the role of Honorary Justices.

Key Activities and Achievements over 2019-20

Over the last 12 months a number of initiatives have been taken to improve the public image of Honorary Justices (HJ) and the Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices (RVAHJ or the Association). It is important that HJ are focused on providing authorised witnessing services to their local communities throughout Victoria, which provides value to all while remaining relevant in todays constantly changing world.

The scope and complexity of what is asked of authorised witnesses continues to increase, requiring HJ and the association to be able to adapt and be resilient in meeting these demands. RVAHJ has been providing HJ services to the community for over 110 years and the following achievement over the last 12 months reflect the focus of the Association to constantly evolve and remain relevant in our community:

- Developed JP Top 12 Strategic Objectives
- Recruitment of 200 new JPs
- Regular meetings with Key Stakeholders – HJSS, Attorney General's Office, VicPol
- Funding of Personal Protective Equipment for JPs
- Establishment of HJSS Bail Justice Advisory Panel
- Revamped, more professional Custodes
- Rebranding and modern "look and feel" for the Association
- Updated and revamped Web Site
- Establishment of RVAHJ Training Team
- New range of RVAHJ Merchandise
- Bail Justice Committee
- Bail Justice Peer Support Group
- Updated model for RVAHJ Honours & Awards
- Developed BJ Top 12 Strategic Objectives
- Facebook Pages
- YouTube Channel
- LinkedIn presence established
- New IT infrastructure for Head Office
- Member Database Update program
- www.findajp.com.au set up
- Branch Resources Collection
- RVAHJ Online Training Academy
Created training modules for:
 - Certified True Copes
 - Statutory Declarations
 - Voluntary Assisted Dying
 - Assessing Capacity

- Births, Deaths & Marriages no longer restricted to Police Stations
- Extend support services for mental health to include JPs
- Membership of Volunteering Victoria
- Funding to support next Annual Dinner
- Developed White Papers for supporting - 5000 more JP's & 375 more BJ's
- Developed eLogbook for Qld Docs & DSS data recording
- Over 60 short videos created for information, safety and training
- Created tag line *Independent, Trusted, Respected* to drive brand recognition
- Increased communication with Patrons
- AHPRA Document Witnessing
- Standardised new presentations for use by all – HJ's & RVAHJ
- Text message program
- Established regular communication sessions for COVID-19
- Established Branch Chair communication sessions
- Applied & approved as Google non for profit association - RVAHJ emails
- Set up committee for Sponsorship & Funding opportunities
- Hosted ACJA conference in Victoria
- Repaired & upgraded Elwood facilities: NBN – Internet & Phones; IT systems

All of these activities have been achieved while we have been operating within the confines of COVID-19 restrictions. It is clear that this could not have happened without all of you and the support members have shown and given towards each other, and my thanks to you all.

Next 12 months Focus

Looking forward to the next year will of course be dependent on what happens over the next few months with the current health challenge. I know that we are all looking forward to being able to once again have all DSS's open and Honorary Justices being able to be active again.

We have a number of activities that are in progress that we will be completing over the coming year that builds on the achievements to date, i.e.:

- Creating revised '*New Members Kit*'
- Creating an '*Honourable Persons*' recognition page on the RVAHJ website
- Review of Constitution and Branch ByLaws to support legislation changes for COVID-19, etc.
- Create COVID-19 Authorised Persons Training module
- Reviewing '*Roles & Responsibilities*' for key association positions
- Update of accounting system (to Zero) to be able to participate in COVID-19 funding initiatives

It is important that the RVAHJ continues to improve communication and regain the standing and reputation with our key stakeholders; as well as being recognised as an Association that works to constantly build and provide benefits to the community of Victoria, i.e. a partner that is ***Independent, Trusted and Respected*** by all.

Over the coming months we will continue to advocate with the Department of Justice and Community Safety on the findings from the release of the final report of the Bourke Street Coronial Inquiry and what this means in real terms going forward for all Bail Justices.

Our aim is to continue to reivew and expand our training framework to include other Authorised Witnesses that is self sustaining and funding while improving the quality of services that is being provided to the community. In parallel the association will continue to lobby the Department of Justice and Community Safety to review our paper on the need for 5,000 more JP's and 375 more BJ's so that their are sufficient Honorary Justices to meet the future needs for Victoria.

In parallel we will be advocating a change in the current training model that is more flexible and collaborative to the changing environmental demands and hopefull increased numbers of appointed Honorary Justices.

As we all know one of the certainties in life is "change" and we have to continue to improve and build the Associations resilience and abiltiy to adapt, through additional training, supportive infrastructure, funding and more resources (people).

Finally, thank you to all our you our members for your countless hours of volunteering and dedication to your communities.

We are at a time of 'Unknown Change' - it can be both a challenge and an opportunity and I am certain that with your help, the board will be able to steer our way through to the benefit of all.

Paul Mracek JP FRVAHJ
President, RVAHJ

NOTE: Minutes from the 2020 AGM are available online on the RVAHJ web site or by requesting a copy from the Elwood office



Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices

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