



VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

VICTORIAN BRANCH (INCORPORATED)

ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTION NUMBER 19

PROTOCOLS FOR RESPONDING TO MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Introduction

1. The purpose of this AI is to provide advice of the protocols for dealing with media enquiries.
2. From time to time media organisations may seek comments and explanations from Vietnam Veterans on a range of issues including the welfare of veterans generally, the Department of Veterans Affairs, other ex-service organisations, government policy regarding veterans to an opinion on non-veteran related matters.
3. Particular care needs to be taken when responding to any requests to ensure that personal opinions are not reported as Association policy and do not involve the organisation in arguments or disputes not related to the welfare based objectives of the Association.

Detail

General

4. In general terms, responding to media enquiries would be the responsibility of the President of the Sub-Branch with respond to local matters and the State Branch or the State Executive Member appointed as the Media Spokesperson on matters other matters.
5. For the purposes of this AI, media is defined as a newspaper, magazine or other literary publication, a radio station or a television station or an individual employed by one of those entities.

Adversative Comments

6. Experience shows that adversative comments or responses do not promote the welfare principles of the Association.
7. When an adversative comment occurs, we need to turn that adversative comment into a positive for the Association. For example "that is unfortunate but I can tell you that the Association is doing all it can to assist with the welfare of veterans".
8. If unsure, advise the other party "may I have your contact details please and I will ask our State Executive to respond to you" and immediately contact the State Branch (03) 9655 5588.

Individuals

9. Although each veteran has the right to offer their point of view or opinion on any subject, an Association member must restrict their comments to personal views and must also emphasise that the comments being offered represent personal views and must not be quoted as being the official policy of the Association or an official response on a particular matter from the Association.
10. Other than expressing a personal view on the matter, the media representative should be referred to the Sub-Branch President or his delegate to respond on behalf of the Sub-Branch on local matters.

Sub-Branches

11. The Sub-Branch President or his delegate are the only persons that may provide an official response to a media enquiry at a local level (eg local newspaper distributed locally or a local radio station) on matters that effect the Sub-Branch in the local area.
12. If the response requires official comment from the Association on policy etc matters, then the media organisation or representative must first be referred to the State Branch – (03) 9655 5588.
13. The Sub-Branch President or his delegate may refer any media enquiry or matter to the State Branch if they so desire.

State Branch

14. The State President or the State Executive Member appointed as the Media Spokesperson is responsible for responding to media enquiries at a state level (eg from state based media organisation or representative) or media enquiries referred to the State Branch by a Sub-Branch.
15. Past State Presidents or past State Executive Members who may have been appointed as the Media Spokesperson should refer any media enquiries to the current State President or the current State Executive Member appointed as the Media Spokesperson for official comment.
16. If the media enquiry is received from a nationally based media organisation or representative, the enquiry must be referred to the National Secretary.
17. The State President or the State Executive Member appointed as the Media Spokesperson may refer any media enquiry or other matter to the National Secretary if they so desire.

Conclusion

18. A veteran is able to express his personal point of view on any matter. The veteran must advise the media representative the comment is the personal view of an individual and is not official comment from the Association.
19. Proper use of the media can be highly beneficial to the Association in terms of gaining positive publicity and placing the Association issues before the public. On the other hand any ill-informed or incorrect comments can do great damage to the Association and its objectives. It is therefore essential that the protocols provided in this AI be adhered to.