

COMMENTS ON PRESIDENTIAL YEAR - 1981

1981 was a year of quiet activity, rather than spectacular highlights. The corporate spirit of Legacy in Victoria was enhanced and strengthened by frequent visits between Melbourne Central, the branches and groups of Melbourne Legacy and the other Victorian Clubs. In particular, the excellent liaison between Sydney and Melbourne Clubs was enhanced by close contact between Presidents and past-Presidents of both Clubs.

Manpower was given high priority, and continuing recruiting enabled the active strength of Melbourne Legacy and its Groups to be increased slightly over the year. Regrettably, the number of new Legatees from post-World War II conflicts remained small, though there were useful discussions with younger Legatees on the best method of attracting their fellow ex-servicemen into Legacy.

The changing nature of the Legacy workload was acknowledged and action was initiated to reassess the number of widows and children in Legacy care. A comprehensive survey initiated by Contact Activities Council indicated that the actual number of Legacy widows was some 20% less than previously estimated, but that the number was still increasing each year. This matter should be followed up in 1982 to further confirm and define the task ahead.

The work of the Pensions Committee and the Pensions Office continued to increase, in the aftermath of the Law and Foulger cases, coupled with the ever-increasing number of new cases. Successful seminars were held on Pensions issues and more should be conducted in 1982, with the aim of having at least one Legatee Pensions officer in each Branch and Group to ease the load on the Pensions staff at Legacy House.

The fastest growing area of Legacy activity was that of the Handicapped Dependents' Contact Committee. HDCC had a very successful and stimulating year, and the widows and children it serves were greatly appreciative of the specialist service provided. The work of the Committee will increase in the future. It should be supported by Legacy, as it typifies the spirit of Legacy service to a special group of dependants of our departed comrades in a field not adequately covered by government agencies.

A special study of the budgetary situation was made in order to identify future funding problems and to fix targets for future fund raising in the light of current assets and anticipated future needs. This study should be updated annually in the light of changing circumstances and decisions on the future of Legacy.

The continuing high cost of administration as a proportion of total expenditure continued to cause concern.

The Legacy House staff work hard and most enthusiastically, but a time must come when it will be necessary to reduce the number of full-time staff and make greater use of Legatees and voluntary helpers. Administrative costs must be kept under review.

Finally, one must record the privilege and pleasure of leading the Legacy team for a year. It is a demanding task, but it is made easier by the constant support, encouragement, comradeship and cheerful criticism of fellow Board members and other Legatees. The Victorian Clubs, with their splendid service over great distances and their marvellous hospitality; the Groups of Melbourne Legacy, with similar hospitality and their fierce independence within the Melbourne family; and the Branches with their local characteristics and their watchful eye on the President and the Board; these are the essence of Legacy. While ~~that~~ cheerful, irreverent and unselfish spirit remains in us, we need have no fears about the future of Legacy.

Ken Green 1981

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