**Vintage Reds of the Canberra Region: Retired Progressive Trade Unionists**

**Dickson Tradies Club, Badham Street, Dickson ACT on 15 September 2015**

**Convenor’s Report to the Second Annual General Meeting**

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It is my pleasure to present this report to the Vintage Reds, at our second Annual General Meeting.

**Membership:**

The Vintage Reds have continued to grow! We have approximately 85 members on our mailing list, another half dozen who do not have email; many on our email list are also couples, so we can be comfortable in saying that we have more than 90 members and we are nearing the 100 mark. We can also identify more than 55 members as “Activists”. They are members who have been to something or done something. All at this meeting are identified as Activists.

During the year we lost one of our esteemed members, Vic Adams. Vic was passionate about life; he was energetic and devoted to many causes; these included his military career, his foray into party politics, the trade union movement, and writing letters to The Canberra Times.

**Meetings:**

The Vintage Reds have continued to hold our monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of the month at 11.00am on the Dickson Tradies Club. We thank the CFMEU for this continued support. We have had a guest speaker at every meeting except the December meeting when we adjourn for lunch.

During the year our meetings have been addressed by the following speakers: Libby Hay from the CPSU to discuss their Medicare Campaign; Alex White from UnionsACT regarding the NSW State Election and the ACTU Build a Better Future Campaign; Richard Dennis from the Australia Institute spoke about how multinationals are avoiding tax in Australia; Jon Stanhope ‘s address was about Christmas Island and the plight of Australia’s second class citizens; Elizabeth Reid about “Maintaining the Rage”; and Dr Ken Johnson on “where the f\*\*\* are we?”; Steve Allday from the Chief Minister’s Department discussed the options being considered by the Government for the light rail project. Most recently, Kelly Bowman, AEU organiser for Eden-Monaro spoke about Gonski. It has been the intention of the Committee of Management to focus on trade union and other relevant community based issues.

**Vintage Reds Committee of Management:**

In 2014 we elected our first Committee of Management. The members have been Anne Gunn, Dennis Gazlay, Doug Melvin (resigned in August and replaced by Adrian Cameron), Helen Sutherland who has been our Secretary, Rene Cooper who resigned in and replaced by Janice Flaherty) and Jane Timbrell (Convenor). Pauline Westwood who came onto the Committee when we realised we should have seven members!

We have been most fortunate with our CoM members who have been very hard workers. There is much that goes on behind the scenes to keep our little organisation on track. The time is right for us to now survey the membership. We need to better identify both what the members would like out of the Vintage Reds as well as what we can reasonably achieve. The survey should help us to become more strategic in our activities as we grow.

**UnionsACT and the ACTU:**

The Vintage Reds continue our commitment and association with UnionsACT where we are affiliated as a community based organisation. We attend the quarterly UnionsACT Council meetings and we participate on the Campaigns Committee which is responsible for driving the Build a Better Future Campaign in Eden-Monaro and the Fair Go for Canberra Campaign which is about to hold a Community Summit of Progressive Organisations. UnionsACT is also the Territory based branch of the ACTU. We therefore have indirect affiliation to the ACTU who are continuing the process of establishing RUN (the Retired Unionists Network). Retired Unionists have been identified as an untapped resource of committed and experienced trade unionists who hold corporate knowledge and are street wise in dealing with the politics of Australia’s conservative governments.

**Involvement with Unions’ Campaigns:**

We are always willing to attend Union rallies in the Region. However, our major contribution from here and most likely over the next 12 months, is staffing the Build a Better Future Campaign Office at 60 Monaro Street, Queanbeyan from 10am until 4pm, Monday to Friday. This is a significant achievement that requires all the VR activists to assist.

**Vintage Reds Website:**

The website has been overseen this year by Anne Gunn, Dennis Gazlay, Jane Timbrell and Rene Cooper. Rene left for warmer parts during the year and is much missed. She experimented with what was for us all: ‘the unknown’ Nationbuilder, and achieved some great results before departing.

The website is acting as both a record keeper and a diary of coming events. Visitors to the website can find details of all the speakers we have had, many of the actions and rallies we have been involved with, some of the Vintage Reds social activities, and of course, Don’s invaluable guide to what is on in the Canberra Region. Anyone can leave a comment on the contents of the site, and we also see contributions from members being posted onto the website.

**Vintage Reds Submission to the Productivity Inquiry:**

The Productivity Commission Inquiry was required to “assess the performance of the workplace relations framework including the Fair Work Act supposedly focusing on key social and economic indicators which of course, have been nothing other than a witch-hunt against unions and working conditions, out submission can be found on the Commission’s website and our website. Special thanks to Penny Rogers, Pauline, Doug and Anne for their outstanding contributions to the project.

**Vintage Reds Submission to the Senate Inquiry:**

We also made a submission this year to the Senate regarding the Trans Pacific Partnership to the Senate Inquiry. We forwarded a copy to Labor and Green Senators and to the DFaT. A copy of our submission is also available on our website. Thanks for this submission go to Pauline who is our resident expert on this matter.

**Local Labour Heroes Projects:**

Writing a history about some of the union movement’s local activists is a new project for this Committee of Vintage Reds and could see this group engaged in research and writing for many years. Some in the group will be attempting oral histories of those still with us. Others will be confining themselves to the remnants of lost heroes in archives.

Finally, to all the Vintage Reds, you are what makes us the Vintage Reds. In unity,

Jane Timbrell (Convenor)