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

**Tradies Club, Badham Street, Dickson ACT 19 September 2017**

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

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

It is my pleasure to present this report to our fourth Annual General Meeting.

**Membership:**

We continue to sit at about 100 members on our mailing list. In our annual return to the Office of Regulatory Services we report our “official” membership at 30 June 2017 as 50; that being those who have filled in the membership form, since then we have recruited a further two members. We remain delighted that we usually have 20 members or more to each of our meetings. This is a very healthy and respectable level of activity.

**Meetings:**

We are very fortunate that in this part of the world we have a rich pool of talented people who we can call upon to be our guest speakers on political and social issues that are dear to our hearts. The past year has not been different we have had 10 meetings, having abandoned any suggestion of a meeting in December or January. We had a Christmas lunch at the National Botanic Gardens.

Throughout the past year we have had Dr Sue Wareham, Vice President of the Medical Association for the Prevention of War; our comrade Penny Lockwood discussed the political and professional life of her father Rupert Lockwood; we had an an informed address from Diana Abdul-Rahman of the Muslim Women’s Network; Michael Moore of the Public Health Association; Academic Dr Matthew Stokes discussed pumped hydro and storage; Dr Helen Watchirs regrading Human Rights in the ACT; Professor Frank Bongiorno about Labour History in the 1980s; Dr Pete van Ness spoke of the lessons of Fukashima; and most recently, Lyndall Ryan from United Voice discussed the Penalty Rates Campaign after the draconian Fair Work Commission decision.

**UnionACT and the ACTU:**

As everyone is probably aware, we are affiliated with UnionsACT as a community based organisation. There have been changes to UnionsACT Constitution which means that their Council meetings (where the VR normally attend) are no longer being held on a quarterly basis and most of the decision making issues are dealt with at the Executive meetings. Therefore, we wrote to UnionsACT in August (last month) and requested that UnionsACT change their rules to allow the Vintage Reds to have a seat on the Executive. At the time of writing this report we have not yet heard back from UnionACT. Otherwise, the Vintage Reds continue to participate in the teleconference hosted by the ACTU with the other retired unionists groups from around the country.

**Vintage Reds Committee of Management:**

Our Committee members have all been excellent in their respective roles on the Committee. Anne Gunn manages our website and acted as Convenor for a couple of months earlier in the year; Helen Sutherland has been an excellent Minutes Secretary; Janice Flaherty has carried an unfair load being our Public Officer, Treasurer and Ephemera Manager; meanwhile Pauline Westwood has been our Research Officer; Jude Dodd has been our Assistant Treasurer, Minutes Secretary and Twitterer; whilst Adrian Cameron has been our recruitment manager and grounds us with NSW matters. If the Committee is re-elected, I would anticipate that some roles might be slightly re-distributed to better balance the workload.

**Involvement in Union Campaigns:**

The nature of our campaigning work has changed in a year without a Federal, ACT or NSW election. We have continued our untiring efforts to assist local unions in their campaigns, and in particular assisted United Voice. This has included Jane representing United Voice on some Selection Committees and Appeal Committees in accordance with the ACT Government Enterprise Agreements.

**Vintage Reds take on the Camino:**

What was decidedly different in the last year was Penny Lockwood offering to take a group of Vintage Reds along the Camino in France and Spain; this is the subject of a presentation at the September meeting. The walk included meeting with the CGT (Congress of General Workers) in Paris and the CCOO in Santiago de Compostella. CCOO loosely means the Confederation of United Workers.

In September 2017, (only last week) and arising out of connections with the CGT, the Vintage Reds delivered a letter to the French Ambassador in Canberra regarding the proposed changes to French industrial landscape by the newly elected Macron Government called the El Khomri Laws which will see changes to the hours of work, enterprise bargaining and redundancy provisions for many French workers.

**Local Labour Heroes Project:**

Our local labour heroes project has had a rest this year. However, and in line with our interest in Labour History a number of us went to Goulburn in August to join in the commemorations of the 1917 strike which began in the NSW rail and tramways unions. This was the largest strike ever recorded in Australian history and is an interesting even to have taken place during WW1. The VR gave $100.00 to the Merv Flanagan Appeal to fund a memorial for Merv who was killed during the strike.

**Conclusion:**

Our year has been a little quieter than other years, but as a small group of retired unionists, the Vintage Reds continue to punch above our weight!

I commend the report to the meeting. **Jane Timbrell, Convenor**