



REVEILLE

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RAAANT Newsletter – March 2020 Edition.

President's Message

Hello again from a hot and steamy East Point, Darwin.

I trust this edition of *Reveille* finds you and yours happy, healthy (and wealthy) and that year 2020 has treated you kindly and continues to do so. I find it hard to believe that one quarter of the year has gone already and that Easter is just a week or so away. It's also hard to believe the impact of the corona virus (COVID-19) has had on Australia and other parts of the world – including our little bit.

It is with much regret and sorrow that I begin this message on a sad note as I recall the passing of our long-time friend and colleague John (JOC) O'Connell. JOC passed away on Monday 2nd March with his funeral being held at Thorak Regional Cemetery, Darwin on Tuesday 10th March. The celebration of John's life and his farewell was well attended by family, friends and colleagues of many years. JOC was a great friend of, and worker for, the Association and the Darwin Military Museum and is sadly missed. Our deepest sympathy and condolences go to Bev and the family at this very difficult time. RIP JOC.

Continuing on the 'downside' of our 'news report', it is saddening and most disappointing, but understandable, that the Darwin Military Museum has been forced to close due to the COVID-19 situation. We have been forced to stand down five very good people who were working with us as Customer Services Officers, but have given them a pledge that they will be offered work as soon as this 'thing' blows over. We have retained three staff members, the Museum Director, DMM/RAAANT Administration Officer and the Grounds/Facilities Officer to 'keep the ball rolling' and are dealing direct with NTG regarding reducing operating costs associated with DDE. We are also in the process of applying for various Commonwealth and NT government business continuity grants to offset some of the costs, keep people employed and (hopefully) re-engage some of the staff we have stood down.

As you know, ANZAC Day services have been cancelled across Australia and the RAAANT MC cancelled the planned members' Kapyong Day commemoration on 24th April. We had a request from one of the volunteers for a small ANZAC Day dawn gathering at DMM, but in the best interests of everyone's safety that request was not approved. These are hard times emotionally, psychologically and financially – but we will win through and we will be ready to open the DMM, (press the green button as my little brother says) and get the show back on the road the moment we are allowed to do so.

The first quarter of 2020 was busy up until mid-March when the impact of COVID-19 hit the Darwin Military Museum hard in terms of reduced visitor numbers and then forced closure. The closing of the DMM means nil income during the dry season to be followed by another 'visitor poor' wet season 2020-21. It is going to be a long, hard road but I am sure we will still be standing when COVID-19 has been blown away.



On a brighter note, I'm pleased to report that all is well within the Association and that we keep moving forward in terms of the sustainability of the Association and the Darwin Military Museum. As I mentioned in the last edition, (and the one before that I think) we continue to work through what often appears to be a never-ending agenda, and again, I am pleased to report that we are making headway on all fronts.

Year 2020 to date has been productive and progressive for the Association with us holding the strategic plan 'think tank' day in early February. The three-hour session was well attended with all attendees participating and contributing ideas for future development, feedback on existing displays and plans for future events and displays. Many thanks to local tour operators John and Nerida Hart and David Leck, City of Darwin Council's General Manager Innovation and Development Joshua Sattler and Darwin Audio-Visual Projects Managing Director Max Di Toro for participating and providing sound, technical advice.

From the 'think tank' session we have produced the Association's strategic plan for the years 2020-2025. We have included the plan in this edition of *Reveille* in place of the historical article as we think it of vital importance that the members of the Association are fully aware of the plans and that they have an opportunity to comment and make suggestions regarding the plan. Having said that, please feel free to forward your comments to the Management Committee via our Secretary, Christine Cates, at RAAANTsecretary@darwinmilitarymuseum.com.au

It is pleasing to report our financial situation remains strong, regardless of the state of the NT's economy and the impact of COVID-19. We were hoping for a good 'tourist season' this year and plans are well progressed on several activities throughout 2020, but most of those initiatives are on hold now.

In February I attended the Chief Minister's Toward 2020 presentation session and heard of the government's plans to 'kick start' the economy. As you would expect it was low on detail but high on expectation – if not promise. Sadly, there was little mentioned regarding financial support for the military tourism sector, although the NTG did host a workshop on the industry in February that I attended. Again, all NTG budget considerations are focussed on supporting established businesses in order to help them through the virus crisis.

I attended the USS *Peary* ceremony on 19th February but due to interview and tour commitments throughout the remainder of the day. Those commitments were in relation to filming interviews at the Adelaide River War Cemetery with McLachlan Battlefield Tours and the Dept. Tourism officers in an effort to booster military history tourism in the NT. This meant I was unable to attend the City of Darwin ceremony at the Cenotaph and the Chief Minister's reception. Many thanks to Jim Wright for attending that ceremony and presenting the military history book in my stead. I was however able to host the visiting WW2 veterans at a City of Darwin Council function at DMM late on the 19th. They were the most important 'official' events/activities during February I think and it was my pleasure to represent the Association at them and again I offer my thanks to Jim Wright for his assistance.

Possibly one of the biggest, and best, surprises (and good news stories) so far this year was MAGNT advising they approved our 'application' to install the two WW2 6" guns in the DDE forecourt – albeit said 'approval' was 'in principle' and on proviso. We are currently working through the approval process with staff of Dept. of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and have hopes the department might fund the engineer drawings and approvals. Our plan is to have the guns in place by the end of April 2020. I/we will keep you informed of progress.



On the downside, I regret to advise that our membership numbers have fallen with some 12 members not renewing their membership prior to the AGM or prior to this edition of *Reveille* going to press. As you would all be aware, a strong membership base is imperative if the Association is going to survive into the future, let alone grow and develop. Having said that, I ask that each member encourage others, (i.e.; friends, family, work colleagues etc.) who/whom they consider would be good, suitable members to join up.

I wish to once again pass on our deepest sympathies and condolences to Bev O'Connell and family following the passing of our friend and colleague of many years, John O'Connell (aka: JOC). JOC was great friend and supporter of the Museum and the Association having been at various times a volunteer, paid employee and Management Committee member. JOC's contribution over his ten years or more of involvement was significant and he is, and will continue to be, sadly missed.

In closing, I offer my/our thanks to the Darwin Military Museum staff and volunteers for their untiring efforts on the Association's behalf. Without them, and the effort they contribute, it is doubtful the Association and Museum would be in the situation and condition they are. Again, many thanks and I look forward to working with you all throughout the year.

Regards and best wishes for a terrific 2020.

Norm Cramp
RAAANT President

Secretary's Observations

Hello everyone.

It's been a very busy few months since we last 'spoke' via *Reveille* and I'm glad I can report it has all been positive and productive – until COVID-19 arrived. The Management Committee continued to meet on the third Thursday of each month with very good attendance and a lot of business being transacted. Unfortunately, I haven't been 'on deck' as much as I had hoped due to some health issues. I can assure you though, that Norm keeps me well informed and I hope to be back in full strength once my treatment is over.

Although I was unable to attend, it was pleasing to see the MC review the Association's Strategic Plan (SP) in early February in order to (attempt to) see into the future and to make the necessary plans to take the organisation forward. The plan is signed off by the MC members, but as Norm said, please feel free to make comment to the MC via me at RAAANTSecretary@darwinmilitarymuseum.com.au. I think the plan is realistic, focussed and achievable (and easy to read as you'll see later in this edition of *Reveille*) and I'm sure the document will remain dynamic and flexible from 2020 to 2025. Congratulations and thanks to all who participated.

As I said in the December edition, our plan is to remain involved with the ADF and its family and community networks again this year and provide what support we can. We participated, once again, in the ADF's Welcome to Darwin Expo in February and played our part in the Bombing of Darwin activities. We also retained our chair in the City of Darwin Council's Bombing of Darwin (BoD) Committee which has allowed us to voice our opinion on matters related not only to the BoD activities but the promotion and presentation of our rich military history.



On the downside, we were advised in late January that there will be no activities like the Territory Tribute programme last year. As a team we continue to do our best to tell the story of Darwin and the NT's military history and to promote military history tourism in Darwin and across the NT. On top of that ANZAC Day activities have been cancelled and it is doubtful our Kapyong Day commemoration will go ahead.

I'd like to welcome our new members, Steve Asher, Jayden Kearney, Rob Harbort, Jana Konkolova and Steve Martin and thank them all for their volunteering efforts as well. It's great to have new members with us, but as Norm (Hawk) said, we need more members and I support his request to you all to try and encourage friends, family etc. to 'enlist'. We will continue our membership recruitment drive this year, as we all know attracting and retaining members and volunteers is hard and becoming harder each passing year – if not month! As such, if you know of anyone you consider a 'suitable person' for membership, please have them complete an application form (no fee attached) and forward same to me. On that note I'd like to welcome back Mr. Ron Roberts, who has 're-enlisted' again post-AGM. Welcome all – it's great to have you on board!

The Museum Director and our Grants Secretary, Mr. Peter Ingman, continue to work hard at securing grant funding from a wide range of entities including Federal, Territory and local government bodies. Since the beginning of 2020 grant applications submitted for funding have been for the DMM's Military Muster and for a replacement utility. We are also awaiting confirmation on applications that were submitted in 2019 and I applaud the effort gone into submitting the grants and following them up!

In closing, I echo Norm's comments and send my deepest sympathy to Bev O'Connell and family. I also offer many thanks to the Management Committee members, the DMM staff and volunteers for the great job they are doing and have done. It's great to be a part of it and I look forward to the next three quarters of 2020.

Regards and all the very best for 2020.

Ms. Chris Cates
RAAANT Secretary



Museum Director's Report

Greetings and salutations everyone, wherever you may be.

I echo what the President and Secretary have said in terms of hoping you and yours are well and happy and that the year so far has been safe and enjoyable, albeit the virus outbreak has made life somewhat difficult. Let's hope we can get COVID-19 under control real soon and that we all stay safe and well in the meantime. Now that the first quarter of 2020 has come and gone, and the dry season is looming large, it's time to bring you all up-to-date with the 'goings on' at DMM in the recent past and what's planned for the future.

Firstly, with respect to the DMM's trading record, although we traded well enough in 2018-19, the visitor numbers overall were down, but were seeing an increase in visitation numbers since October/November last year. The trend continued to March 2020 when COVID-19 really hit and as a result the NT effectively shut down. There are a couple of new tour operators (players) in the game in Darwin now and they appear to be campaigning hard to attract visitors be they from Darwin, the NT or elsewhere. We funded a radio advertising campaign with Community Radio 104.1 through the period January to March, which we believe did attract visitors.

As you are aware, one of the highest operating costs is the power consumption via the air conditioning requires of the NT government. This cost has been sitting at approximately \$200,000 since we installed the solar power system but we're hoping for a significant reduction in those costs as a result of the AC chiller unit being replaced. The old unit has been replaced by two, smaller, more powerful and more economical package chiller units at NTG expense. The new units were commissioned in late January/early February and we saw a reduction in power costs of well over \$2000 per month by mid-March.

As the President mentioned, DMM hosted a function for WW2 veterans and their families on 19th February (BoD Day). The function, with the Lord Mayor of Darwin officiating, was well attended and well received by the invitees and their guests. We were planning a members' afternoon on 24th April to commemorate the battle of Kapyong, Korea in 1951, however, this has been cancelled due to COVID-19 and the closure of DMM. We are still planning for the Military Muster on 15th August and a members' function to commemorate the battle of Long Tan on 16th August.

Our volunteers and staff have been plenty busy on various curatorial projects, notably the refurbishment of the Korean War Jeep ambulance, refurbishment of the WW2 US Army mobile workshop, refurbishment of the 3.7" anti-aircraft gun and its transportation trolley, weed eradication and planting out of Gun Emplacement No: 2, the ongoing updating of the collection database, documenting all maritime artefacts, identifying and listing all badges and medals to mention but a few projects. On top of that we were gifted a military Bailey bridge by the NTG along with a Vietnam War-era Bedford truck (used by the ADF in that conflict) donated by Mr. Brian Measey of Thrifty car/truck rentals. ICER has pledged to construct the bridge and our volunteer Curators will tackle the truck when the dry season arrives.

Planning for the Darwin Military Muster in August is well progressed and I send my thanks to Rhonda and Sue for their efforts with this project. To date we have prepared a budget for RAAANT MC approval, have approval from CoDC to utilise the grassed area across the road for whatever purpose we chose (as long as we don't disturb the wallabies), have submitted an application to ADF's JOSS for military involvement and have a number of private collectors who will set up a 'show and tell' or 'show and sell' stall on the day (15th August) and have commitment from MVEC for a military vehicle display.



We were working with the Back to the Track 2020 (BTTT2020) organisers to have some of the 140 military vehicles doing the track convoy to be placed on display at DMM on the day, but that event has been cancelled. Regardless, we are pushing ahead with our plans to host the Darwin Military Muster.

Congratulations to RAAANT MC members and DMM staff for a very smooth, efficient, practical and productive 2020-25 Strategic Plan development session. I attended of course and was very impressed with the free flow of ideas, the friendly and good-natured interaction and the positive focus on the future. It all augers well for the Association as long as we can maintain the membership base and have good people step up to the MC 'plate'. So, as already said, please encourage people to come along and think about nominating for a MC position at the next AGM. Like Chris Cates, I think the plan is achievable and I'm sure that all involved will work toward that outcome.

Sadly, the COVID-19 outbreak has caused the Museum to close until further notice. While this is sad/bad news for all involved, the DMM is well-positioned financially and with good staff and volunteers to battle its way through this – and that is exactly what we plan to do. We are working on applications for business continuity grants from the Commonwealth and NT governments, so hopefully we'll have some success in that regard. I sat in on NTG-hosted COVID-19 Crisis Seminar for tourism and event owners on Monday 30th March. I came away with more information on what type and level of support is available to us and we will be pursuing that support.

While the DMM is closed to the public we are working through our maintenance programme and should any members wish to lend a hand, please give me a call on 0418844682 as, even though we'd welcome your support, we need to keep numbers down and execute the work through the week when others are on site. We also need to be mindful of the social distancing requirements and avoid crowding any work station/site at DMM.

As a result of the virus situation, my planned visit to Canberra in late March was postponed. The NTG-sponsored trip was to carry out research at the AWM regarding the book I am writing on behalf of the RAAANT was postponed due to concerns I may not be able to return home, or have to quarantine myself for 14 days if I did get home. The book is an extension of the **Worth Fighting For** booklet regarding Indigenous men who saw active service from the Great War to Vietnam. As mentioned, the trip has been postponed and advice to hand from the NT government is that the grant period will be extended without penalty to allow the research to take place. Many thanks NTG!

Speaking of grants, DMM staff and volunteers have almost completed all work on the various grants allocated so far in the 2019-20 financial year. A HUGE vote of thanks to volunteers Gaynor, Sue, Marina and her husband Chris, Peter Blackadder, Peter Nuyens, Rob, Roger and Josh and employee Jayden for their efforts in this regard. It is amazing what they have achieved and continue to achieve. Job(s) well done everyone – but I can promise you more 'interesting' tasks lay ahead!

DMM participated in the annual ADF Welcome to the Top End Expo that was held on Saturday 8th February at the Darwin Convention Centre. We joined forces with the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club (MVEC), Darwin, this year to assist ADF in 'filling the gaps', but also to reinforce our close working relationship with MVEC. The half-day expo was a great success and I thank Sue and Peter Blackadder for their assistance with this project.

On the staffing scene, we had a few changes to the DMM guard since the last *Reveille*, that being Nhormanne Alfaro returning to the fold in early 2020 to help us with a shortfall of staff due to festive season commitments, and resigning in early February to take up a permanent, full time position in Melbourne. I thank Nhormanne for his efforts whilst employed with DMM and returning to give us



the assistance we needed and I wish him every success with his future endeavours. While Nhormanne departed, Veronika Smith and Tracey Archer joined our small band, although we were forced to stand them down when the DMM closed.

Other activities and development projects for 2020.

Some of the 'matters' that have our attention as we move into the second quarter of 2020 include;

- Complete the restoration projects currently underway
- Present the inaugural Darwin Military Muster at the Darwin Military Museum in August
- Develop new exhibitions based on sound and light and App technology
- Continue our close working relationships with MVEC and all NT government departments
- Continue our close alliance with Darwin RSL, Legacy NT and Veterans Australia etc
- Maintain and expand our volunteer base
- Seek additional artefacts that not only have military history significance, but visitor attraction appeal as well
- Seek additional specific project grants from all levels of government

As can be seen, it will be another busy year at the RAAANT and the DMM!

In closing, I also offer my sincere thanks to the DMM team of Rhonda Purcell, Jayden Kearney, Jana Konkalova, Rhonda (Ronnie) Cavanagh, Ethan Ashburton, Michael van Birkel, Veronica Smith and Tracey Archer. Thanks also to DMM/RAAANT volunteers Gaynor Lovett, Marina Lach, Peter Blackadder, Roger Harvey, Peter Nuyens, Steve Asher, Steve Martin and Rob Harbort. Thanks also to the RAAANT Management Committee members and Grants Secretary Peter Ingman for your support and efforts on behalf of the DMM. It can't happen without you!

Should you wish to contribute to *Reveille*, please forward the script to me at, norman.cramp@darwinmilitarymuseum.com.au

**Norm (Hawk) Cramp,
Director, Darwin Military Museum**



SPECIAL ITEM by Norm Cramp

A TRIBUTE TO JOHN DAMIAN LEE O'CONNELL (JOC).

On 2nd March 2020, a great friend of, and worker for, the RAAANT and the DMM passed away after a two-year battle with cancer and heart problems. That person was John Damian Lee O'Connell, better known to us in Darwin and at the DMM as 'JOC'.

JOC was born in Melbourne, Victoria on 22nd October 1954 and grew up in the suburb of Chelsea doing all of those things that boys did then, like surfing, playing football and cricket and later, chasing girls. He graduated from Chelsea High School and decided upon a career in the Royal Australian Navy, following in the footsteps of his father and uncle.

JOC was a 'below decks' sailor and proud of it. He had a healthy cynicism regarding officers in general, not only RAN types. He often mentioned that, in his view, they earned his respect rather than gained, or expected, it due to their rank or position. He sailed the world with the RAN and had plenty of tales to tell us at DMM during our smoko/coffee breaks. His tales were always funny, nothing bad about anyone in particular, except maybe for a few (generally) unnamed officers!

After leaving the RAN and coming to the Territory, JOC joined the NT Police Force and did his fair share of remote location postings. He served at Pine Creek and Nhulunbuy (Gove) amongst other places and had tales aplenty – tall and true. He served as a Police Prosecutor during his time in the Police and did some private investigation work once he had signed off from the force. He also served as a Commando in the Army Reserve and had many a tale to tell about training recruits, exercises gone wrong and the bloody higher echelons.

I first met JOC in 2009 when he both 'signed on' as volunteers at DMM. There were three of us in that 'intake' being JOC, Garry Tucker (deceased) and myself. I remember we would meet at the house/workshop facility, that Alan Ogden so eloquently called the 'Residence', every Saturday morning to set about our allotted tasks. Sad to say the museum and its precinct was in pretty poor condition back then so there was an unlimited amount of work to do in every facet of the place. With the help of others, usually our own friends, and some of the RAAA Committee we slowly but surely started to get things in order and focus on new displays etc.

JOC was a masterful modeller and set about creating a model of East Point circa 1944/45 complete with gun emplacements, sheds, huts, vehicles, guns and aircraft overhead – friend and foe alike. The result was/is an amazing model that is still proudly on display at the museum today. He started another, smaller version but unfortunately time was not on his side with this one and it remains incomplete.

Over the ensuing 11 years, JOC was to continue volunteering at DMM but also became a paid employee (Supervisor Retail and Operations) and a member of the RAAANT Management Committee. Through his hard work, passion and commitment, he turned the museum precinct into the beautiful and peaceful garden environment that it is today. His energy and input to developing new exhibitions was almost immeasurable, the results of which can be seen all around the museum. But it wasn't all hard work!

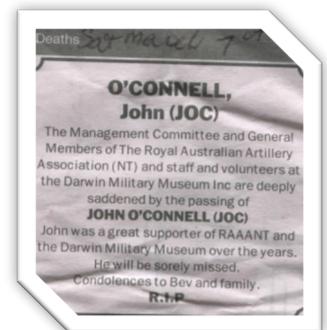
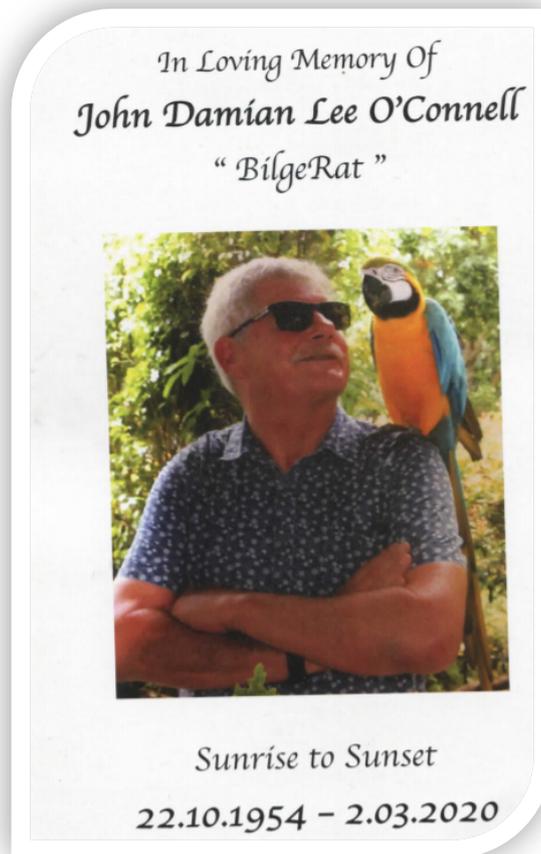
JOC was a man of many talents – one of them being storytelling. He was always ready to tell a tale and even if we had heard it/them before we all enjoyed listening as much as JOC enjoyed telling



them – or ‘holding court’ as we used to say. I recall so many of JOC’s tales and his ‘favourite’ sayings that there are far too many to relate here, except maybe his saying ‘if you sit on the bank of the river long enough you’ll see the bodies of your enemies floating passed’, him addressing the matter of ‘frustrated entitlements’ or, a classic I thought, of his good advice to his best mate who was getting married. JOC, being the best man, leaned over to his mate (as the bride entered the church) and said, ‘I think you’re making a big mistake mate, let’s get out of here and go to the pub’. JOC, his mate and his mate’s ‘bride’ and Bev O’Connell remained very close friends for the rest of JOC’s life.

JOC is, and will be, sadly missed at the Darwin Military Museum, but he and his memory live on by way of the many, many things he achieved while being involved here. Every time I/we look at the firearms display in the Command Post, at the East Point model in Gun Emplacement Two, the workshop display or take the time to enjoy the beautiful gardens here we will think about, and remember, him and the wonderful times we spent together – some not-so-pleasant but by far the majority being in the very pleasant category.

Our deepest sympathy to Bev, Kate, Erin and the whole family.





Royal Australian Artillery Association (Northern Territory) Incorporated

T/A DARWIN MILITARY MUSEUM

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

Our Purpose	Our Aim
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To advance culture principally by operating a museum, or museums, of military history and activities in or affecting Northern Australia, Asia and the Pacific region.

is for the Darwin Military Museum to be the *best military museum in Northern Australia with a focus on the military history of Northern Australia, especially 1942-1943, and the Asia/Pacific Region.*

Our Strategic Directions	Our Focus Areas	Actions
 <p>Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to all legal, annual requirements Draft and implement policies and procedures to ensure good governance Provide regular (monthly) financial and management reports Monthly Management Committee meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a current copy of all Annual Reports, Guidelines, Policies and Procedures are stored on the RAAA/DMM file (hard copy) are located in the Administration office DMM, East Point as well as on the DMM network drive Ensure all staff, volunteers, committee members are aware of and provided with, a copy of all relevant governance documents.
 <p>Profitability/ Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract Corporate Sponsors and DGR donors Reduce operating costs Increase revenue Living and learning history Review operating hours Review digital marketing strategy Volunteer engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philanthropy Australia Reduce running times and DDE segregation for AC Introduce on line ticket sales and online store Introduce 'find a relative' computer kiosk Investigate Virtual reality/Light and Sound display and laser firing range Investigate development of App including augmented reality Investigate bivouac – living history experience - tourist overnight stays Develop Children's play area (Kids HQ)
 <p>Membership</p>	<p>Recruitment, Maintenance and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase member numbers Introduce member benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise membership opportunities on Website and Social Media Develop membership card and Introduce membership benefits Conduct two member educational functions per year
 <p>Charitable activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 8/12 Regiment, ADF Cadet Family Fun Days ADF Family and Member Mental Health Day Military Muster learning and fun day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage regiment and parents of cadets to join the RAAANT Review Children's educational support Continue to participate in ADF Mental health activities (Grant) Seek 8/12 and cadet involvement in Military Muster Discuss bivouac and history learning opportunities for Cadets
 <p>Alliances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Military Heritage Australia Group, Tour Operators, City of Darwin, NT Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research opportunities and implement Work with City of Darwin on inclusion in App they are developing
 <p>Succession</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer Museum Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop from current Management Committee (MC) Advertise following recruitment guidelines Open to all MC members