

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

**Dickson Tradies Club, Badham Street, Dickson ACT on 18 October 2016**

### **Convenor's Report to the Third Annual General Meeting**

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

#### **Membership:**

The Vintage Reds have continued to grow, but our pace has slowed a little. We have 91 General Members to whom we regularly email items of interest! We have 81 members on our Activists mailing list, and another half dozen who do not have email. Many on our lists are also couples, so we can be comfortable in saying that we are nearing the 100 benchmark.

#### **Meetings:**

The Vintage Reds continue to hold our monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of the month at 11.00am on the Dickson Tradies Club. We have had a guest speaker at every meeting except the December meeting when we also enjoy a special Christmas lunch.

During the year our meetings have been addressed by the following speakers: Lyndal Ryan from United Voice to talk about the Clean Start Campaign; John Minns who spoke about refugees; Jenny Miragaya from the ANMF to discuss the nurses' campaign; Kris Klugmann and Bill Rowlings from CLA focusing on the Sue Neill-Fraser Case; our own Humphrey McQueen who spoke about unionism; Kathy Ragless from Companion House spoke about Refugees surviving here in Canberra; Rachel Bahl, the new NTEU Secretary, spoke about the impact of our conservative government on academia; nurse extraordinaire Sandra Mahlberg spoke about the Rotary project helping the children of Oceania; John Falzon spoke on the plight of the disadvantaged in our community; and most recently, Allan Foskett talked about some local Canberra history. It has been the intention of the Committee of Management to focus on trade union and other relevant community based issues when inviting guest speakers.

#### **UnionsACT and the ACTU:**

We have maintained our affiliation with UnionsACT as the only "Community Group" in the ACT and we have continued our affiliation with Fair Go for Pensioners (FGFP), and RUN (Retired Unionist Network) under the auspices of the ACTU. In many ways, this has been the most informal but most constructive. Through RUN, the Vintage Reds along with other retired unionists groups have been lobbying for the ACTU to establish retired unionists organisations across the country.

#### **Involvement with Unions' Campaigns:**

It feels like the Vintage Reds have been campaigning all year. And indeed we have!

Federal Elections: We commenced staffing the "Build a Better Future" Campaign Office in (Queanbeyan) Eden-Monaro on 31 August 2015 until the day before the Federal Election on 2 July this year. We were also involved in staffing Pre-Poll in Queanbeyan for 3 weeks and also in Cooma; come election day, we staffed two polling booths in Queanbeyan and two in Tumut. The dastardly horrid Hendy fell in Eden-Monaro; and in no small part thanks to the work of the ACTU marginal seat campaign, UnionsACT and the Vintage Reds, he has disappeared into the sunset.

Territory Elections: Over the past few weeks and months, many of us as individuals helped to hold back the ugly tide of a possible Hanson Government in the ACT. Vintage Red Jude Dodd was the star

of the UnionsACT media campaign which saw Jude speaking about the implications on our local health system should there be a change of Government in the ACT.

For our part, the Vintage Reds surveyed all the candidates running in each of the Canberra seats. The results were most interesting and were forwarded to all Activists and unions and our website.

We do of course, continue to be a resource for any local unions particularly when it comes to protesting in the streets, or staffing the booth at Floriade; more recently, Jane has been representing United Voice and sitting on selection committees for Building Service Officers in the ACT Public Service. It was a much bigger project than any of us realised with some 30 interview panels.

### **Local Labour Heroes Project:**

The Local Labour Heroes Project has effectively been suspended with the all the campaigning throughout the year. Unfortunately, many of us have been very busy elsewhere. It is now a good time to revamp the group and invite any Vintage Reds members who are interested in writing a local labour history, to join us in our project.

### **Vintage Reds Committee of Management:**

We have had a great committee working hard for the past twelve months. Helen Sutherland has been our Minutes Secretary, and has been missed particularly by me and Anne Gunn when she takes leave to go travelling. Anne is the Deputy Convenor and web mistress; and a very reliable proxy for any of our works. Janice Flaherty is our extremely hard working Treasurer and Public Officer with a fine eye for doing everything correctly and on time. Throughout most of the year, Jude Dodd managed our QBN roster and our Twitter account; she is also a great editor and a force of energy on the Committee. Adrian Cameron is another great traveller; he is involved in promoting the Vintage Reds and this will become a greater role now that we have some money to spend. Pauline Westwood is our researcher and continues to pay detailed attention to the TransPacific Partnership, as well as drafting most of our submissions to Productivity Commission and/or Senate Inquiries.

I would like to particularly thank the following members whom we have co-opted to perform various tasks; Don Dwyer for his unfailing attention to "What's on in Canberra" for us; Lucille Rogers who acted as our Auditor; Sandy Thomas who has been our Returning Officer; Jannette Morgan who assists Anne with managing the VR website; and Fred Pilcher and Suzanne McGhie who do our "Facebook'!! I cannot name all the VRs who participated in the QBN roster, pre-poll and election day.

### **Change Is Coming:**

Firstly, and on behalf of everyone, I would like to acknowledge the support of the Dickson Tradies' Club Board who have continue to provide us with in-kind support with the provision of our meeting room, and recently provided us with a generous \$3,000 donation to assist us in our work. The Committee is proposing to spend this money on some advertising and promotional materials.

The arrival of a donation has brought some real changes, including the establishment of a bank account and an auditor. Further, it has meant that we do need to formalise many of our processes including having a Membership Register. It may also require us to charge a membership fee in the future. We will also be streamlining our notices to members about campaigns, notices or whatever.

### **Conclusion:**

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to congratulate and thank everyone for another wonderful year of the Vintage Reds!

In unity, **Jane Timbrell, Convenor**