

PENSIONS REPORT – 2008

The past year has seen a steady stream of activity with quite a number of claims being submitted. The DVA turn around for claims remains quite lengthy, often being in excess of 100 days.

One of the highlights for the year was the receipt of two Building Excellence in Support and Training (**BEST**) Grants. The aim of the BEST Program is to support the role of pensions and welfare practitioners and advocates. The BEST program assists by providing monetary support and IT equipment to practitioners. The grants which were received were as follows:

- \$2,700 for a laptop computer and a laser printer, and
- \$2,000 for travel and consumables.

An application for \$4,000 for part-time administrative assistance was unsuccessful.

During the year I attended the following training courses:

- Advocacy (Level 3), and
- Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation Scheme (VVRS)

I expect to be undertaking further DVA sponsored training in 2009, including MRCA and SRCA.

The Pensions Statistics for 2008 are attached for your information. It will be seen from those statistics that there continues to be extensive contact with veterans within our catchment area.

While the Sub Branch has a responsibility towards all ex service persons, their widows and their families within our catchment area it is interesting to note that there are 174 veterans/war widows in receipt of entitlements within the Cooroy, Pomona, Cooran and Eumundi areas. The breakdown of those veterans is as follows:

- WWII - 55
- Vietnam - 52
- Other veterans - 17
- War Widows - 50

John R Simmons

Pensions Officer / Advocate

28 January 2009