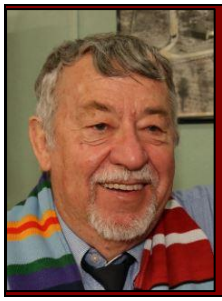


Out in the shed with Ted.

Ted McEvoy

DVA Grants.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Dan Tehan, advises that a new grants opportunity has been announced and which is called the "Supporting Younger Veterans (SYV) grants program."

The SYV grants program is being established to support the needs of younger veterans as they leave the Australian Defence Force and integrate back into civilian life, with all the challenges that accompany that unique transition.

There is no maximum or minimum amount that can be sought for this grants program; however, all applications will be assessed on their merit and subject to a cost benefit analysis.

Funding can be used for initiatives that:

- develop capability within the veteran community that services the unique needs of younger veterans;
- support the development of well researched and tailored services for younger veterans;
- fund organisations that can sustainably deliver services to younger veterans now and into the future;
- increase collaboration amongst organisations to expand services and harness existing expertise; and/or
- increase awareness of younger veteran issues and or services within the Australian and veteran communities, where doing so would benefit younger veterans.
- The SYV grants program provides $4.25 million over five years to Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) to encourage partnerships that will deliver innovative and sustainable services for younger veterans and build community capacity to meet the needs of younger veterans. The grants will also help raise awareness of the important issues faced by younger veterans.

Applications for a $250,000 special round of SYV grants will close in late May 2017 with successful applicants announced in June 2017.

Future rounds of the grants which will allocate $1m each financial year, will open on the 1st July each year, commencing 2017, and will close on the 1st September each year, until 2021.

Applicants can apply for grants through the DVA website HERE. There is ample information on how to apply and a form which applicants can download and fill in.

DVA staff members are available to assist with the development of applications. For further information, please contact the Grants Section in DVA's National Office on 1800 026 185 or email DVA.Grants.Processing.Team@dva.gov.au.

NASA's robot Curiosity landed on Mars. Early pictures show no signs of empty VB cans, old car bits, cigarette butts, playboy magazines, dirty washing or unmade beds. This makes it very clear that men are not from Mars.

Red wine is good for you!

A wealth of research says red wine keeps your brain younger and healthier.

Red wine might be good for the heart, but it kills off brain cells, right? Researchers have known for a while that red wine can delay the onset of neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's – meaning that it actually protects against brain-cell death. If this sounds counterintuitive and perplexing, the scientists could only agree. Until recently, they weren't sure what was going on. The celebrated health-giving antioxidants in red wine are assumed to play a part by reducing oxidative stress – where your body struggles to detoxify dangerous chain reactions at an atomic level – but scientists know that other factors are at play, because more significant destructive processes are also being curtailed.

Recently Dr Adelaida Esteban-Fernández from the Institute of Food Science Research in Madrid published an exciting paper in the journal Frontiers in Nutrition that offers new clues as to how red wine stops brain cells from dying.
They found that metabolites in the wine protected the cells from dying – acting as a block to the stress conditions. The metabolites were active at different stages in the cell, signalling cascade or collapse that was leading to cell death.

It appears there are compounds in red wine that combat the building up of protein plaques that clog neural pathways (responsible for the confusion and loss of memory in Alzheimer's); suppresses neuroinflammation, modulates (keeps steady) signalling pathways and decreases mitochondrial dysfunction. The mitochondria is the powerhouse in our cells; if it goes out of whack, the cell dies.

Recently, it was widely reported, that scientists from Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute had significantly slowed brain ageing in mice after giving them a substance called resveratrol which is found in grape skins. Tests on elderly mice showed the compound preserved synapses called neuromuscular junctions, which relay movement signals from the brain to the muscles. Mice who had been given resveratrol from one year of age had more youthful neuromuscular junction synapses at two years old than those who had not.

"I believe that we are getting closer to tapping into mechanisms to slow age-induced degeneration of neuronal circuits," said the study's primary author, assistant professor Gregorio Valdez.

Red wine contains more resveratrol than white wine because it is fermented with the grape skins, however, while the compound has pharmaceutical potential, it's not clear if red wine contains enough resveratrol to be beneficial, let alone ward off old age.

But before you start downing bottle after bottle of red, remember alcoholic dementia and they myriad other dangers of excessive alcohol consumption. Drink responsibly.

My sex life is like a Ferrari…….I don't have a Ferrari!

How Australia bungled its $36 billion High-Speed Internet rollout.

The New York Times

BRISBANE, Australia — Fed up with Australian internet speeds that trail those in most of the developed world, Morgan Jaffit turned to a more reliable method of data transfer, the Australian postal system.

Hundreds of thousands of people from around the world have downloaded Hand of Fate, an action video game made by his studio in Brisbane, Defiant Development. But when Defiant worked with an audio designer in Melbourne, more than 1,000 miles away, Mr. Jaffit knew it would be quicker to send a hard drive by road than to upload the files, which could take several days.

“It’s really the big file sizes that kill us,” said Mr. Jaffit, the company’s co-founder and creative director. “When we release an update and there’s a small bug, that can kill us by three or four days.”

Australia, a wealthy nation with a widely envied quality of life, lags in one essential area of modern life: its internet speed. Eight years after the country began an unprecedented broadband modernization effort that will cost at least 49 billion Australian dollars, its average internet speed lags that of the United States, most of Western Europe, Japan and South Korea. In the most recent ranking of internet speeds by Akamai, a networking company, Australia came in at an embarrassing No. 51, trailing developing economies like Thailand and Kenya.

For many in the US, slow broadband connections are a source of frustration and an inspiration for gallows humour. One parody video ponders what would happen if an American with a passion for Instagram and streaming “Scandal” were to switch places with an Australian resigned to taking bathroom breaks as her shows buffer.

It’s funny, you can see it HERE.

But the problem goes beyond sluggish Netflix streams and slurred Skype calls. Businesses complain that slow speeds hobble their effectiveness and add to their costs. More broadly, Australia risks being left behind at a time when countries like China and India are looking to nurture their own start-up cultures to match the success of Silicon Valley and keep their economies on the cutting edge.

Deloitte Access Economics

“Poor broadband speeds will hold back Australia and its competitive advantage,” said John O’Mahony, an economist at Deloitte Access Economics. A 2015 report by Deloitte valued the nation’s digital economy at $58 billion and estimated that it could be worth 50 percent more by 2020. “The speed of that growth is at risk if we don’t have the broadband to support it,” he said.

The story of Australia’s costly internet bungle illustrates the hazards of mingling telecommunication infrastructure with the impatience of modern politics. The internet

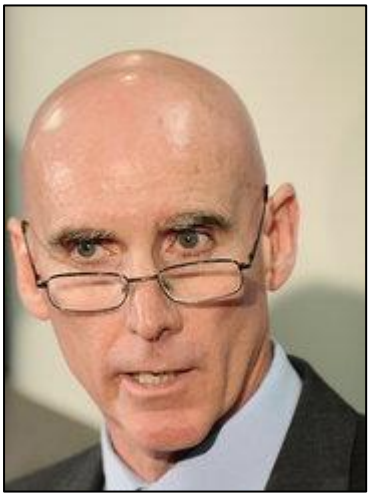
modernization plan has been hobbled by cost overruns, partisan manoeuvring and a major technical compromise that put 19th-century technology between the country's 21st-century digital backbone and many of its homes and businesses.

The government-led push to modernize its telecommunications system was unprecedented, experts say — and provides a cautionary tale for others who might like to try something similar. "Australia was the first country where a totally national plan to cover every house or business was considered," said Rod Tucker, a University of Melbourne professor and a member of the expert panel that advised on the effort. "The fact it was a government plan didn't necessarily make it doomed. In Australia, we have changes of governments every three years, which really works against the ability to undertake long-term planning, and the long-term rollouts of networks like this."

Australia poses natural connectivity challenges. It lies oceans away from other countries, and any network would have to connect far-flung cities separated by its sparsely populated interior. Still, Australia had high hopes for its ambitious internet project. Started in 2009, the initiative, known as the National Broadband Network, was intended to bring advanced fibre-optic technology to the doorstep of just about every home and business. It was initially estimated to cost 43 billion Australian dollars, shared by the government and the private sector.

"Years of failed policy have left Australia as a broadband backwater," said Kevin Rudd, then the prime minister and leader of the Labor Party. But the government share of those costs quickly climbed until taxpayers were responsible for all of it. The technology was slow to roll out, in part because of negotiations with Telstra, Australia's big telecommunications provider, over installing the fibre. (A Telstra spokesman said the company did not believe the talks added to delays.) The government-funded effort drew fire from the Liberal Party, the opposition at the time, which said the job should have been left to the private sector.

After a Liberal-led coalition was elected in 2013, that party looked for ways to contain costs and speed up the rollout. They focused on what in the telecommunications industry is called "the last mile" — the wires that connect a home or business with the broader network. While the National Broadband Network initially envisioned high-speed fibre connecting homes and businesses directly to the network, the Liberal-led effort compromised by connecting them with existing copper wire, basically, the same technology used in the earliest days of the telephone.



The result, critics say, was slow speeds that still did not stop rising costs. "Australia had an aggressive, forward-looking, visionary government project to build a fibre network," said Mike Quigley, (left) who was chief executive of the project until 2013. He added, "that opportunity's been absolutely lost because of bad judgments,

ideologically and politically driven."

A spokeswoman for the Liberal Party said that under its stewardship, the initiative was connecting more new users than the Labour Party ever did. But neither party placed fixing the internet high on their campaign platforms in national elections last year, perhaps indicating how difficult the problem will be to solve. Average speeds have more than doubled since 2013, according to Akamai, but other countries are connecting their populations faster, meaning Australia's lag with the rest of the world has grown. Big businesses can opt to pay for fast connections, but the cost can be considerable for smaller companies.

GO1, an education technology company near Brisbane, spent about $22,000 on a speed upgrade in September 2015. It now pays nearly $1,000 a month for its high-speed, 100 megabit connection. "As a software company, our two main costs are internet and staff," said Andrew Barnes, the chief executive and co-founder. "If the former was lower, then we have more to spend on building up the team."

Mr. Barnes said that employees in Ho Chi Minh City, in Vietnam, had far fewer issues joining the company's weekly webinars. "Vietnam's one of those countries where you look out the window and the telephone wires are just a mess," he said. "But somehow, despite the obvious infrastructure problems, the internet there is much, much better."

The video game industry in particular has pushed for better speeds. "Right now, we are all on dirt roads," Ben Britten, chief technology officer at Mighty Games Group, said at a Senate hearing last year on his industry's future. "We are trying to push huge semi trucks down dirt roads, and we just need to have some highways."

Others, for their part, look for ways around the barriers — including old-fashioned radio.

Nick Lorenzi, who lives in Cairns, in northeastern Queensland, was frustrated with his copper-wire speeds, especially since a friend just a few miles away had a much faster fibre connection. Investigating online, Mr. Lorenzi, 25, an information technology worker, found out how to bum bandwidth from the friend using two transmitter dishes that cost $440 total. "I just knew that the internet was rubbish where I was, so I thought, what else can I do here?" he said. "I'm up really high on a hill, so I can take advantage of that."

Mr. Lorenzi has since moved, and he says his copper-based connection speed once again is "just rubbish." "For a country as far along as we are, our internet's just not aligned with that at all," he said. "It's just pathetic, really."

Bullying.

A recent report by the Dept. of Defence Inspector General's Office states that allegations of "a culture of widespread bullying and brutality" within Defence are, in the most part, unfounded. The audit team travelled to major Defence establishment across Australia and abroad and interviewed staff from all services and few cases of unfair treatment and bullying within the Army and Navy, however the Air Force told a different story. Complaints came from a total of 3,555 Air Force members. While this statistic is alarming in its own right, it becomes horrific when one considers that each complaint represents a sad story of abuse, mistreatment and neglect. Examples of the some of the more disturbing cases are shown below:

- One young pilot told of having to spend two nights in tented accommodations, despite the fact that there was an empty five-star hotel just one mile away.
- Another said that he had been forced to endure a gruelling fitness test every year since he joined in 1997.
- One airwoman alleged that she had been overlooked for promotion on numerous occasions, simply because she was fat, lazy and stupid.
- An aircraft maintenance technician stated he had been refused permission to wear civilian attire to work, despite the fact that his uniform clashed with his eye colour.
- Another had been forced to wear uncomfortable safety boots for periods of up to eight hours straight.
- A clerk could not understand why she had been sent to work in a Joint military headquarters, "I have been forced to work for horrible Army people who just don't comprehend what the military is all about. I feel the Air Force has victimized me by forcing me to do this...I will be seeking compensation..."
- Shockingly, Air Force senior ranks are also subject to mistreatment. One SNCO stated, "I was deeply upset when I was addressed as 'Sergeant' by an officer. He knew my name was Robert. It was just horrible - I have never been more humiliated in my life." A senior officer advised that "the officer in question has been moved on...".
- A number of personnel complained of having to attend courses that were not relevant to their jobs, such as rigorous ground combat courses and drawn-out lectures on occupational health and safety. To add insult to injury, a young corporal was even ordered to pack up chairs in the classroom after one such course.

The huge backlash against treatment of Air Force personnel should provide senior officers with a vital clue with regard to the massive retention problems experienced by the RAAF in recent times.

ANZAC Day.

I'm currently on the nomad trail, back in Feb I drove east from Perth to "work" at the Avalon Air Show, after which I spent a few weeks touring Tassy. I was in Launceston on ANZAC Day and as I normally march I looked around for a group with which I could join. I contacted the local Vietnam Vets association and they made me more than welcome. Thanks Lonny.

Click the pic below to see the Vietnam Vets march in beautiful Launceston. Video provided by the Examiner Newspaper.

L-R: Hennie Ebbelaar, Yours (Radtech extraordinaire), Viv Hinds.

Vietnam veterans, Warwick Luttrell of Wynyard, yours truly from Perth W.A and Raymond Monery from Riverside (suburb of Launceston) preparing to lay a wreath.

Why does salt make you thirsty?

When you eat a salty food, the salt passes through the wall of your small intestine and enters your bloodstream and making the salt content in your blood rise. As saltier-than-normal blood zooms through veins and arteries, the body senses an imbalance. When there's more salt in the fluid surrounding the cells than in the cells themselves, the sodium-rich fluid attempts to pull even more fluid out of the cells. It's a condition known as hypernatremia, and it's a red flag that sends the cells' chemical messengers rushing to the brain to report the high salt levels in the fluid around the cells and decry their potential dehydration. "Water! Water! Water!" signals the brain and — voila! — you're thirsty.

The "thirst centre" in your brain that compels you to reach for a tall glass of water is located in the hypothalamus, which also helps regulate sleep patterns, appetite and body temperature. When sensors in the thirst centre receive signals that there's too much sodium in the

bloodstream because you binged on salty food, the hypothalamus sends out an SOS: "Drink now." And bingo. You're thirsty.

Age and disease may inhibit the brain's ability to compel you to take in fluids. In other words, people can lose their sense of thirst, which is a dangerous condition considering the body is about 70 percent liquid and needs adequate hydration for its internal organs to work properly. Proper hydration also aids the regulation of body temperature and helps ensure that vitamins, hormones and other substances get where they're needed.

Whether you're about to munch on some sodium-laden cured meats, a salty snack or an extra sprinkling of salt, get ready to grab a big glass of water. You're about to get really thirsty.

One good deed??

Back on January 9th, a group of HELLS ANGELS, South Carolina bikers were riding east on 378 when they saw a girl about to jump off the Pee Dee River Bridge . So they stopped.

George, their leader, a big burly man of 53, gets off his Harley, walks through a group of gawkers, past the State Trooper who was trying to talk her down off the railing, and says, "Hey Baby . . . whatcha doin' up there on that railin'?"

She says tearfully, "I'm going to commit suicide!!"

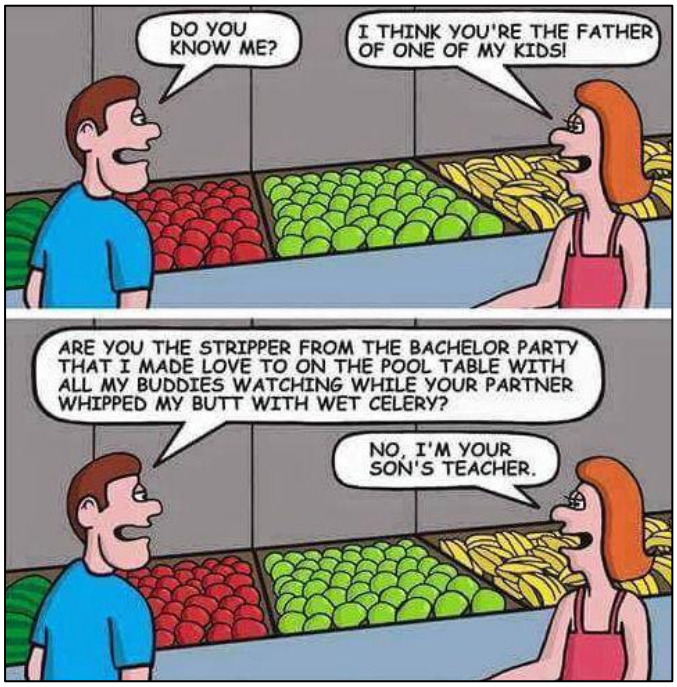
While he didn't want to appear "sensitive," George also didn't want to miss this "be-a-legend" opportunity either so he asked . . .. "Well, before you jump, Honey-Babe . . .why don't you give ol' George here your best last kiss?"

So, with no hesitation at all, she leaned back over the railing and did just that . . .and it was a long, deep, lingering kiss followed immediately by another even better one.

After they breathlessly finished, George gets a big thumbs-up approval from his biker-buddies, the onlookers, and even the State Trooper, and then says, "Wow! That was the best kiss I have ever had! That's a real talent you're wasting there, Sugar Shorts. You could be famous if you rode with me. Why are you committing suicide?"

"My parents don't like me dressing up like a girl."

It's still unclear whether she jumped or was pushed.



Silicon Valley discovers aviation – but for how long?

AIR FACTS
the journal for personal air travel—by pilots, for pilots

You have to pay close attention these days to keep up with all the breathless news about “flying cars” and “disruptive aerial vehicles.” The great and the good from the technology world have fallen in love with aviation lately, and their various startup companies have been launching aviation projects at an unprecedented rate in 2017. More than modifications to existing airplanes, each new design seems to be more fantastical than the last.
Here are just a few stories that have made news in the last month:

- Google co-founder Larry Page is behind Kitty Hawk, a company that took the wraps off its “flying car” this week with a sexy video. It looks a whole lot more like a flying jet ski than a car, and it’s actually a Part 103 ultralight so it won’t require a pilot certificate.
- Not to be outdone, Google’s other co-founder, Sergey Brin, seems to be building a large airship at the NASA Ames Research Center in California. Plans for commercial introduction are still unclear at this point.

- Skype founder Niklas Zennström also showed off his big idea this month. Lilium, an all-electric flying car with vertical takeoff and landing capabilities, made its first flight in Europe recently and promises some impressive performance numbers.
- At the swanky Top Marques Monaco event this week, Slovakia-based AeroMobil opened the order book for its supercar-with-wings, which is the closest thing to a real flying car yet. It's priced at $1.5 million, and requires a pilot – for now.
- Proving that flashy headlines aren't just for startups, Boeing and JetBlue announced an investment in ZunumAero, a Seattle company that thinks it can build an electric, short-haul airliner that will cut airfares by 50%.

What precipitated this mad dash into concept aircraft? There are as many theories as there are startups right now, but the most likely ones are also the most mundane. A lot of the gold rush mentality is just the way the venture capital-fueled technology industry works these days. Everyone is paranoid about missing the next Facebook and being left behind, so interest and money quickly shift from trend to trend at the first sight of change. Since one of the hottest trends in recent years has been drones, many of these flying projects can be viewed as basically grown-up versions of quadcopters. Plus, for billionaire founders and dominant companies, a $100 million bet on a crazy aviation startup is about like you and me dropping $10 on a lottery ticket.

Uber's push for airborne taxis by 2020 is driving a lot of the headlines right now.

But perhaps the most important driver of flying car startups has been Uber. The fast-growing, money-losing company has made no secret of its plans to take its taxi service airborne, forever changing urban commutes with a vast fleet of unmanned vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft. This effort seems to have brought a lot of hobby projects into the daylight, and a conference hosted by Uber this week shows just how pervasive the drone fever is right now. A diverse group of companies took the stage to announce radical designs and make increasingly bold predictions, including Embraer, Bell Helicopter, and a Mooney-Carter partnership.

Such attention is downright exciting for pilots, who have long made do with minor upgrades to 60-year old airplanes. Finally, the best minds in the world are talking about truly new aircraft and bold ideas! While the buzz certainly is intoxicating, it's almost guaranteed that this bubble – and it is a bubble – will burst. At least three forces are acting against these aviation startups: regulation, technology, and attention span.

The most obvious obstacle for these aviation startups is the regulatory environment. Tech firms use catchy phrases like, "move fast and break things" to signify their casual disregard for the

rules, and that's often successful (as Uber has rather spectacularly proven). As these companies will soon find out, though, aviation is quite different. Unlike many areas of the technology industry, the rules are well-established – perhaps too well-established – so there are few gray areas to hide in.

One of those rules involves powerplants. Almost all of the recently-announced aircraft use electric motors, which are nearly impossible to certify right now. Strapping eight of them to the wings and then tilting them for takeoff can work, but don't expect a type certificate for such a design to appear overnight.

On top of the electric motors, the business models for these airborne Ubers depend on autonomous flight if they plan to make money. While the FAA has released final rules for small unmanned aircraft, these only apply to aircraft under 55 lbs. There is a long way to go before a comparable rulebook is in place for 5,000 lb. drones that carry passengers. One key issue to solve is "sense-and-avoid," the ability for an unmanned aircraft to avoid a mid-air collision with an airplane. There are various ideas for tackling this issue, but formal trials won't be complete until at least 2020, with the final decision probably even later. For perspective, consider that Europe allowed commercial operators to use single engine turboprops on IFR flights *last year*, and only after decades of debate and study. Why will autonomous Part 135 or 121 operators move so much faster?

An all-electric, unmanned Slowed Rotor Compound aircraft should be easy to certify, right?

Perhaps most importantly, unmanned air taxis will have to do battle with a single, nationwide regulator for aviation. While Uber is no stranger to legal battles, until now they have benefited from the fractured nature of their opponents – San Francisco Board of Supervisors here, the state of New York there. When it comes to flying cars, there can be no jurisdictional arbitrage; if the FAA doesn't approve, it's not going to happen.

Beyond the legal challenges, there are big technical problems to solve, too. Electric motors, lightweight batteries, tilt rotors, and autonomous flight controllers may not be science fiction at this point, but they're hardly mature technologies. Many of them depend on continuing development in the smartphone and electric car industries. While the critical components will eventually get made, the key questions are: at what price and on what timeline? In particular, the schedule for these new aircraft is incredibly aggressive. Uber plans to launch its Elevate service by 2020 – a mere 32 months from now. That is nearly unthinkable given the current state of technology, regulation, and public perception.

It's also worth considering how well these aircraft will solve the problems they hope to take on, notably traffic congestion. As Zennström said recently, "The way we deal with transportation today is broken. There are congestions and to get from East London to West London takes forever. There is pollution in our cities with carbon dioxide so we get climate change."

VTOL aircraft certainly do eliminate the restrictions imposed by road infrastructure, but they hardly eliminate the idea of traffic. Crucially, Uber isn't so much solving the capacity issue as it is moving where the problem exists. Take a commonly-used example: New York on a Friday afternoon, when thousands of people want to get from Manhattan to JFK Airport at 5pm. Right now the only real option is an hourlong car trip through heavy traffic, but the cheerleaders suggest that could be cut down to five minutes in an Uber Elevate. In flying time it certainly could, but where will all of these aircraft land? At 4-6 people per Uber, it would take hundreds of drones to satisfy demand. They may be able to fly their own routes, but they will eventually need a place to land. As we've learned in aviation, the real bottleneck is often the number of runways, not the airspace.

Uber is working with real estate developers to address this issue, but I suspect they haven't considered how vocal the NIMBY crowd can be when aircraft are involved. Cars are a part of everyday life; tilt rotor aircraft are not. Even if the neighbors do go along, this will be a very capital-intensive effort. Uber (or its partners) will have to own a lot of land for vertiports, and have a large fleet of aircraft. Neither of those exist in the company's current business model, which is the ultimate "asset light" strategy. Indeed, one of the key breakthroughs for the company now is making use of existing capacity (garages and cars) that is sits idle most of the day. Building a network of facilities and aircraft from scratch is a different story altogether.

Will investors like Larry Page simply lose interest?

Regulation and technology are perpetual enemies of aircraft development programs, but the third reason for skepticism is less common in this industry: investors will simply lose interest and move onto the next idea. For anyone used to rapid development cycles in software, aviation must feel utterly unbearable with its lengthy testing programs and mind-numbing certification rituals. In fact, the attitude it takes to run a successful technology company is almost the exact opposite of the one it takes to bring a new aircraft to market. It's easy to see how, after a few years of being stuck in the mud and wasting a few hundred million dollars, billionaire investors will simply punt. That's not necessarily a criticism, it's just the way their business works. Technology investors know they will strike out far more often than they will get a hit, but it only takes a few really big hits to win. When it's clear that a flying car isn't going to be the next multi-billion dollar company, it will disappear.

None of this is to suggest that autonomous flying cars won't exist someday. I look forward to riding in one before I die, but the outrageously ambitious schedule being promoted right now is a publicity stunt, not a realistic plan. I suspect most of the people involved know this, but keep up the charade to fuel the hype cycle.

It's not all doom and gloom. When this bubble pops, there could be some very real benefits that trickle down to general aviation pilots. It seems increasingly likely that the future of recreational aviation, if perhaps not cross-country flying, will be electric. If general aviation manufacturers can free-ride on some of the advances in electric flight and autonomous technologies, we could end up with a new generation of bugsmashers. That's something to look forward to, no matter what you fly today.

So I welcome our new visitors to the bizarre world of aviation, but I recommend we all keep our hands on our wallets and our eyes on the FAA. When it's over, maybe we'll have something to celebrate.

Constructive meeting.

Rick Ryan.

With a number of other veterans we met up with Dan Tehan, MP, Minister for Veterans Affairs, John Carter OAM, DCM and Andrew Hastie MP, at the North Dandalup Tavern recently to listen to Dan Tehan give us the details on just what the extra $350m allocated to his portfolio would be spent.

I had recently attended a meeting of ESOs at DVA HQ in Perth where the subject was on the transformation of DVA in the future hence my reason for sending this email. DVA is finally moving into the digitalisation era. The concept is that anyone who joins the Defence forces will have their service details relayed to DVA from day one. Over their service career, should they travel overseas on operational duties, receive injuries or illnesses then all of this information will be transferred to DVA. This is to assist the service member in that when any claim is made then DVA will have all their details and service history readily available.

Other aspects of the transformation process is for quick claims processing. Dan Tehan indicated in his speech to us that not only would the afore-mentioned occur but there would be an amalgamation of information from Defence, DVA and Comsuper whereby the necessity to go to various doctors and specialists when a claim is made would be reduced significantly. For example, if you were being treated by Defence doctors, specialists for injuries, then you would not have to go through the same hurdles with DVA or Comsuper. In other words, the determinations by your doctor/specialist in Defence would be accepted.

No doubt there would have to be a fair bit of streamlining and cohesion between all departments involved but I can see the claims process times being reduced dramatically.

Most of the above will not affect us as we are in our twilight years but for the younger service men and women it should be a blessing.

Dan also spoke about the Gold Card being given to atomic testing veterans and of course the acceptance now of all mental conditions for those who have served. You do not have to jump through any hurdles you can just go and get treatment for your mental problems.

L-R: Dan Tehan MP, Minister of Veterans Affairs, Rick Ryan, John Carter OAM, DCM and Andrew Hastie MP (ex- SAS). Andrew Hastie Federal MP for Canning (WA) and of course with his military background quite easy to talk to.

I have given only a brief narrative of what this meeting was about. If you want any further information about the direction that DVA is heading then speak to representatives of your ESOs. Suffice to say that I was very impressed from my meeting with DVA on just what is being proposed for the future of the department.

At the time of the meeting DVA were anxiously awaiting the outcome of the Budget release. Well the government has allocated $150m of the $350m for the transformation.

Dan Tehan is a country lad and in my opinion I see a bright future for both him and Andrew Hastie in politics. They both have a greater understanding of veterans than I have seen in previous occupants. Andrew is involved in a number of Committees that revolve around Defence and veterans, so I consider us to be in good hands.

Foreign Aid.

In the financial year, 2016-17, your Australian Government gave the massive sum of $3.8Billion dollars of your money to overseas countries in the form of Aid. (See HERE)

This $3.8Billion of your dollars was firstly borrowed from other countries so your government could give it away. You then go to work, pay your taxes which then goes to pay the interest??

Some of the countries that received a part of those funds are below: You can check these figures by clicking each link.

Amount	Receiving Country	Link
$110M	Iraq	Here
$10M	Yemen	Here
$84.5M in 2016-17, then $80.9M 2017-18	Afghanistan	Here
$82.9M in 2016-17, then $85M 2017-18	The Phillippines	Here
$78.0M in 2016-17, then $66.4M in 2017-18	Myanmar	Here
$547.1 in 2016-17, then $546.3 in 2017-18	PNG	Here
$57.6M in 2016-17, then $57.9M in 2017-18	Bangladesh	Here
$89.1M in 2016-17, then $87.4M in 2017-18	Cambodia	Here
$86.6M in 2016, then $84.2M in 2017-18	Vietnam	Here
$50.7M in 2016, then $47.1M in 2017-18	Pakistan	Here
$29.0M in 2016-17, then $27.7M in 2017-18	Sri Lanka	Here

In the 2017-18 financial year the figure will rise to $3.9Billion yet we have Ex-ADF personnel who are suiciding due lack of care, we have 105,237 people in Australia living on the streets and we have farmers, business people and families waiting on disaster relief after Cyclone

Debbie. We're running out of Electricity, some of our roads are goat tracks, our natural gas is far to dear and seriously ill people can wait for months, sometimes years, for aid.

But!! We can stump up $3.9Billion for people overseas???

Something's definitely wrong!!

Blessed are those who are cracked,
for they are the ones who let in the light!

Ok, Ok!! – I'm going back to my room now!!