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RAAFA

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RAAFA set to make a powerful difference



LtoR Pat Hall, Clive Robartson, Ian Craig, Kylie Russell and John Murray



Catherine McMahon and Matt Granger from Legacy

More than 120 members of RAAFA's extended community, including friends, associates, partners and colleagues, gathered in mid-February at the South of Perth Yacht Club for the official launch of the Andrew Russell Veteran's Living (ARVL) program in Western Australia.

Modelled on a highly successful program established in South Australia in 2016, the ARVL initiative not only provides transitional housing for veterans at risk of homelessness, it also connects them to professional support services, followed by appropriate and affordable permanent housing.

The program itself is named after Sergeant Andrew Russell who served with the Perth-based Special

Air Service Regiment in Afghanistan. Tragically, when the long-range patrol vehicle in which he was travelling struck a suspected anti-vehicle mine on 16 February 2002 – exactly 20 years from the launch of the Perth program which bears his name - he became the first ADF member to be killed in action in over 30 years. Andrew was survived by his wife Kylie and daughter Leisa, both of whom are highly supportive of the program, and indeed have been instrumental in its success.

Speaking at the launch event, RAAFA CEO, John Murray, acknowledged that homelessness amongst the WA veteran community had become an increasingly desperate issue that required immediate action.

"We know veterans experiencing homelessness are often facing a suite of complex needs as a result of their service experience and that no one in Western Australia is currently providing a specialist housing response to this group", he said.

"It is our hope that through ARVL we can give veterans somewhere to live, while they get support and find their way back into permanent accommodation."

Statistics are unavailable to establish how many veterans are homeless every night in WA, but what is known is that this cohort experience homelessness at nearly three times the rate of the general population, and are more likely to be homeless for longer.

Clive Robartson, RAAFA State President, added that the issue is one which RAAFA could not walk away from.

"The tragedies facing these service men and women is, in part, our responsibility," he said.

"It is time to give something back and certainly the support in the room from everyone who attended the launch showed us that we are not alone in our commitment to supporting these men and women who have given so much."

More can be learned about the program by going to www.raafawa.org.au and a donation page has also gone live, which can be accessed from the RAAFA website.

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with music

PURPOSE

Pursuing excellence in care and heritage

VALUES

Respect; Care; Honesty

APPROACH

Creating RAAFA communities open to all

THE RAAFA WAY

President's view



By Clive Robartson

A few weeks ago, I was privileged to be part of the launch of the Andrew Russell Veterans Living program, that as you know is a recent initiative of the Association.

Following this event, the Association received a number of congratulatory responses from supporting groups who had attended the launch. The

strong response from these groups was one of encouragement of the Association's impressive leadership and commitment to the vulnerable in our community.

One of the respondents was James McMahon DSC, AM, DSM, a long-serving member of the Australian Defence Force. James said, "It's very apparent that the program is built on a solid basis of respect, compassion and a drive to do something extremely positive to help the most vulnerable in our society".

John Murray in the CEO's Perspective presents four positive examples of how CARE and RESPECT can impact on our lives and those around us. These two values, along with HONESTY define the culture of RAAFA. On an almost daily basis, I read in the press of the failure of large

corporate organisations, and all too often government departments, to maintain the values they have set and this in time leads to a betrayal of their culture.

I see the culture of RAAFA being lived out every day as we seek to serve our members and the people in our care. There are some very challenging decisions and opportunities ahead of RAAFA in WA, as we seek to discover our role among the tensions and complexities of the contemporary.

Change is inevitable. To quote Barack Obama, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the change we seek".

ANZAC Day

I have received an invitation from RSLWA for RAAFA to participate in the events planned for ANZAC Day

2022, the Dawn Service (5.50am), March (8.30 for 9.00am march off) and Commemoration Service (10.45am).

As you know these events were cancelled in 2021 and 2020. However, we did not forget our fallen comrades and many smaller ceremonies were held in our retirement villages in their memory. I encourage you to continue these events. However, for those that are able, I encourage you to attend the PARADE. Numbers have dwindled in recent years. A reasonable roll up this year will determine whether we continue to assemble as an Association in future years.

Details on where RAAFA is to assemble or any changes due to COVID restrictions will be advised by RSLWA closer to the event and we will do our best to inform you.

Your Division Councillor – Dr Kylie Russell

Dr Kylie Russell was appointed to Division Council in October 2021.

Kylie is a Registered Nurse and leads a dynamic team in the School of Medicine at the University of Notre Dame Australia.

Her qualifications include - Bachelor of Nursing, Graduate Certificate in Human Resource Management, Master in Health Science (Education), and a PhD; in addition, she is a graduate/member of the Australian Institute of Company Director's and Women's Leadership Australia Executive Ready Program.

Kylie has received numerous research grants, focusing on the health workforce, presented at international conferences, published, and supervises research students. Kylie sits on a number of committees reviewing research (St John of God Healthcare; Notre Dame University), research grant applications (WA Nurses Memorial Charitable Trust), and is a mentor to overseas nurses to support the advancement of global nursing leadership (Sigma Theta Tau International).

Kylie is passionate about educating the next generation of health professionals, and supporting the workforce to enable best practice in the delivery of care and services.

In December 1999 Kylie volunteered as a nurse in East Timor, and was awarded the Australian Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal. On her return she joined



the Australian Army 13th Brigade as a Lieutenant, Registered Nurse (reservist).

Kylie is passionate about supporting veterans in need. This passion stemmed from her own personal experience, her husband SGT Andrew Russell being the first Australian soldier killed in action in Afghanistan (2002). Kylie is working with the RAAFA Clear Skies team to establish the Andrew Russell Veteran Living (ARVL) program.

Kylie is the proud mother of Leisa, partner to Malcom, and owner of Luca (Mastiff x) from a local refuge. Her retirement dream is to own a small plot of land and take care of animals in need, and in 2021 she completed a Certificate II in Animal Studies. In her spare time Kylie loves reading, walking, and trying to learn Auslan.

Collaboration at our core

RAAFA is committed to developing relationships with other groups and organisations which, in turn, also provide support for Australian veterans and their families.

One such organisation is Open Arms – Veterans & Families Counselling (Open Arms).

Members of the Open Arms team were invited to the launch of RAAFA's Andrew Russell Veteran's Living (ARVL) program in mid-February, a new initiative unveiled during an event at South Perth Yacht Club which is set to support veterans at risk of homelessness.

Paul Blakey, Director of Open Arms WA, says the organisation has highly valued its relationship with RAAFA over many years.

"Our organisation, originally known as Vietnam Veterans' Counselling Service (VVCS), was established by the Australian Government in 1982," he says.

"Since then, our services have been extended to veterans of all conflicts, their families, and to all serving and ex-serving members of the ADF."

"Both RAAFA and Open Arms are focused on providing care and support, albeit in different ways, to

members and former members of the Australian Defence Force and their families through the provision of various support services within Western Australia."

Open Arms provides free and confidential services to anyone who has served even just one day in the Navy, Army or Air Force, as well as their families. These include counselling, complex case coordination, group programs and community and peer programs.

"All of our services are completely confidential, so anyone accessing them can be assured of absolute privacy at all times," Paul adds. "Our focus is on making it easy for those who are eligible for our services to gain support for themselves or someone they care about."

Further information about the services available at Open Arms can be found at www.openarms.gov.au or 24/7 support on 1800 011 046.



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Please email articles to airmail@raafawa.org.au (preferred)
or post to **Julie Stearne, 18 Bowman Street, South Perth WA 6151.**

CEO's perspective



By John Murray

The ability for communities to respond to threats is directly related to the commitment they make to each other to care and protect one another. This week as I write, I reflect on four examples that show the positive impact of these commitments to each other.

Firstly, the launch of the RAAFA initiative to develop the Andrew Russell Veterans Living program (ARVL) to support veterans at risk of homelessness saw commitments by many in the Perth community to have this development commenced and operational as soon as possible.

The preliminary report into veteran's suicide identified that the risk of homelessness was a key risk in

veterans taking their lives. When Kylie Russell, widow of Andrew Russell, approached Peter Tinley to seek support to replicate the RSL Care SA, housing program RAAFA took on the challenge. I commend the work of Ian Craig, Head of Clear Skies and Kylie Russell, Division Councillor appointed member to progress this project.

Kylie was interviewed by Christine Layton on ABC, WA Afternoons on 1 March and the recording of this interview can be found on the ABC web site should you wish to listen to the story behind Andrew and the housing initiative. The interview commences 1hr and 08mins into the program and I highly recommend for your listening www.abc.net.au/radio/perth/programs/wa-afternoons/wa-afternoons/13766182.

The **second** example of the coming together of community is the Ukrainian response to the threats of the Russians on their borders. The leadership shown by the President and the joining together of the population to defend their country is inspiring even when the odds of success are potentially so difficult to achieve.

The important element this highlights is the impact of war on families being separated, leaving their stable lives, work and homes. The nature of our daily challenges

slip into insignificance when measured against the realities of the Ukrainian people's lives.

The **third** example was seen with the floods in my hometown of Lismore in northern NSW. I was an 18-year-old living in a flat above the main street of Lismore in 1974 when the former "big flood" came up to the floorboards underneath the awnings over the shops below. I experienced the devastation that occurred in that flood and saw the community respond to re-establish the stability of the district.

This flood has taken records to another level, with an additional 2 meters of water above the height in 1974. I would have been in water up to my chest if I was still in that flat. The community working together saved many lives with volunteers working way beyond exhaustion to help others. The devastation of floods and the clean-up will take years to be fully completed.

The **fourth** is relevant to all of us with the ongoing threat of COVID-19. The community of WA has worked with the guidance of State and Federal governments to respond to this serious health risk. The community's response to have their vaccines, respect the need to isolate when infected and wearing masks to reduce risk of virus transfer are all examples of the

community respecting each other and working together for the good of all.

The commitment of RAAFA's employees, development of plans and subsequent implementation have been an important part of our role in protecting those within our community.

These examples brought home to me the underlying principle that is important in our lives. I see at times the motivation some people have to drive their self interest or views that are not consistent with the wider community, and we often see this in the context of political conversations.

I am very grateful for the common sense most show when contentious views are raised. Democracy is an important element of a society that allows us to express our views and importantly for it to work well, requires all information related to decisions to be heard so that a balanced decision can be made. When communities trust there is equity in these discussions the culture is more likely to be about supporting each other in times of crisis.

Thank you all for your contribution to the wonderful communities that we are part of.

New program a 'living memorial' according to ex-SAS Commander

Before successfully transitioning to civilian life, James McMahon DSC, AM, DSM had a long and illustrious career in the Australian Defence Force, which spanned more than two decades and saw him personally awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) and the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) for his command and leadership in action in Timor-Leste, Afghanistan and Iraq.

But when it comes to recent examples of impressive leadership, a commitment to the vulnerable in our community and a drive to do good, the newly appointed Member of the Order of Australia (AM) and ex-SAS Commanding Officer cites RAAFA's recent launch of the Andrew Russell Veteran Living (ARVL) program as an example of outstanding forward-thinking by an organisation that is committed to making a powerful difference.

Having always felt a keen association with RAAFA, initially as a youngster growing up in Ardross who vividly remembers the iconic aircraft stationed at the organisation's Bull Creek site, and then, more recently, as a result of his Board positions with the Australian War Memorial, SAS Resources Trust

and RSLWA, James was invited to the launch of the ARVL program as a valued associate within the wider military services community in WA.

Modelled on a successful program established in South Australia just over five years ago, the initiative seeks to find solutions to homelessness amongst the veteran community. It is named in honour of Sergeant Andrew Russell who was killed in Afghanistan in February 2002, which saw him become the first member of the Australian military to die in action since the Vietnam War more than 30 years prior.

Guided by Andrew's wife Kylie, the program will see RAAFA develop a network of service providers which will offer specialist support to assist veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

"It's very apparent that the program is built on a solid basis of respect, compassion and a drive to do something extremely positive to help the most vulnerable in our society," says James, who was also awarded the title of Western Australian of the Year in 2019 for his service to the community.

"I left the launch feeling incredibly humbled and also great pride given something so meaningful has been borne out of such a tragedy; this initiative is nothing short of inspiring and it's a great example of what makes our state and country so wonderful. Those involved should be very proud of what they are setting out to do."

Having been officially launched in mid-February, the ARVL program will be specifically tailored to WA veterans, in addition to being aligned with the objectives of RAAFA and its charitable purpose. A new addition to RAAFA's proven history in veteran accommodation, it will see the organisation spearhead individualised solutions for any veterans experiencing homelessness.



"I don't believe this program would go ahead without RAAFA's expertise and the many wonderful people who make up the organisation and who know how to get things done," adds James.

"To me this initiative is a living memorial to Andy, and also a testament to Kylie's drive, commitment, respect and compassion. It's very powerful indeed."

Padre's piece



By Padre David

“Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love”, I guess this old hymn/song by John Fawcett (1782) will be quite unknown to many of you and even those who are regular churchgoers will have to dig deep into their memories. But when I was growing up it was the hymn we regularly used at the end of all sorts of meetings, not just church services. It was a reminder that we belong together, that there are ties that give meaning to our lives. We are reminded of the experiences we have shared.

However, time passes, we get older, and some of those ties loosen. It can be like that with families and friendships. I am lucky that I still have my sister and brother alive and well, living in England. However, when I examined my Christmas card mailing list this year, I realised that I've lost all links bar one with my friends and colleagues with whom I trained for the ministry and all the members and friends I had in my first three church appointments in the UK and in Hobart and Sydney.

And the loosening of ties is also the experience of ex-service friendships.

I have no ex-RAF links left from the 1950's. Frank Purser in the opening couple of paragraphs to his history of our Association “Per Ardua” tells how the 75 or so returned West Australian men of the Australian Flying Corp, by 1929 began looking how the sharing of reminiscences, the good fellowship, the spirit of solidarity, and their comradeship could be more formalized and began to consider forming an Association.

But that was over 90 years ago and although there has been WWII, Korea, Vietnam etc. and on discharge RAAF veterans have joined our Association, the passage of time is breaking the ties.

I remember the RAAFA PAF Branch but I wonder how many of our present members do. We used to have branches located in particular towns and suburbs. The Mandurah Branch and the City of Perth Branch both had a great history of good times and camaraderie, but they are no longer.

There have also been squadron associations, the Airfield Construction Squadrons and the Sunderlanders for instance. Are there still ties remaining? The WRAAF Branch manages to maintain its meetings, but an attempt to organise a monthly get-together of those of our Meadow Springs residents who have had Defence Force service struggles to get more than three or four. Of course, it's a matter of age and ex-service ties, like all ties, must loosen.

In the last Air Mail our CEO, John Murray launched the new RAAFA Way. There has been a lot of thought and discussion put into it. It speaks of who RAAFA is as an organisation today.

It speaks of preserving heritage and traditions but our purpose, our values and our approach are no longer based on ex-service camaraderie but much more on care and respect for the individuality and the diversity of our community (ex-service and non ex-service members) through to the end-of-life process, as one facility manager says.

When ties break there is always grief and a sense of loss. Now within days of reaching my 90th birthday I guess I am grieving, but I am also so grateful for the ties I have had over my 21 years as a resident here at Meadow Springs and for the occasional opportunity to still be part of an ex- service gathering or ceremony.

Shalom

Celebrating remarkable RAAFA residents on International Women's Day

It's fair to say that RAAFA's Amity Village Albany residents Leigh Sheldon and Dot Price blazed a trail for other women in WA's education sector during their own lifetimes.

With more than 70 years of combined experience as teachers and educators, the two women both reached the top of their field as Principals of various schools throughout the state.

For Leigh, forging a highly successful career in education was not completely unexpected given her family's history. Her grandfather was a headmaster in rural New South Wales who was recalled from retirement due to a Principal shortage when he was 83 years old. Her great aunt was also a headmistress, as they were called at that time, and her sister-in-law and several cousins were teachers.

“I was always interested in education, so I did a teaching degree at UWA and then decided to focus on primary school teaching which I had really enjoyed in my prac teaching experiences,” explains Leigh, who has lived at Amity Village for nearly three years.

“I always loved classroom teaching and did so from 1973 until 1989. Then one day, my principal asked why I'd never applied for promotion, and I said I never really thought I was good enough. I have a lot to thank him for as he mentored me from that day and, as a result,

I gained my first principalship at Karlgarin Primary, a delightful small country school in the Wheatbelt – and what a joy it was.

“Since that time, I have led a number of schools and worked in other management and leadership roles in the Education Department, all of them very different. I've always been keen to learn new skill sets in the different environments in which I've found myself. Since retirement, I've maintained my connection with children and schools, mostly as a classroom volunteer in Albany where I work with some very special children, which I find so rewarding.

“As a woman, I would encourage other young women to follow their passion and grasp every opportunity on offer that really appeals to them. Do the hard work and, unlike me, never doubt yourself.”

Coincidentally, Leigh and Dot's professional lives intersected when Leigh was working in the Selection Unit at the Education Department's central office and Dot was a panellist for a principal selection process.

“Although I didn't know her prior to that time, I remember being very impressed with how intelligent and sharp she was,” recalls Leigh.

Born in Kalgoorlie, it was no surprise that Dot, like Leigh, followed her passion for education given her sharp mind and the fact that she

‘absolutely loved school’, despite her father having an attitude that girls were never as capable or as bright as boys.

“I loved everything about learning, being at school fascinated me and I relished being busy and involved in the classroom,” says Dot, who was one of six children.

“I worked in many different schools over the years and then thought to myself, I can do more, so I applied to become a principal and the rest, as they say, is history.

“The highest priority for me has always been the kids. No two children will ever be the same, so it's about understanding how they learn and being flexible in your teaching methods.

“I think both children and parents know when you strive each day to be a good teacher. It's been a priority for me to ensure that children enjoy learning, that way if they're having a good time in the classroom, they are far more likely to take in what they're being taught.

“I loved my career in education and being able to make a difference to young minds and young lives. My father had an attitude that being a girl meant you were never as good as a boy, but I'd like to think that I very much proved him wrong.”



Dot Price

International Women's Day is marked annually on 8 March. It's a global celebration of the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. It's also a time to reflect on women's progress, to call for change and to celebrate the achievements of ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in their communities.

Clearly women like Leigh and Dot, two unassuming and yet extraordinary women, have undoubtedly played a vital role in the lives of many young West Australians.

Enjoy the ride

Give your all to life and you'll get a lot back, according to Gordon Lodge resident and retired Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) Sergeant Dot Clarke.

"Life really is up to you to make of it what you want, but I've found that if you give a little, you can get a lot back in return."

There are decades of experience behind those wise words from 92-year-old Dot, who joined the Air Force back in 1955 when there was no other work around and she'd had enough of sewing for a living.

"I was making curtains for a hotel and seeing an Air Force guy at the time and he suggested that I join, which was news to me as I didn't even know that they let women in," Dot recalls.

"The next thing I knew I was on a train to Perth to join up and then I was travelling across the Nullarbor with a bunch of people I'd never met, heading to Melbourne to do my basic training at the RAAF Academy at Point Cook.

"It was a bit scary as I didn't know anyone and I'd never left Perth before, but I was really looking forward to being posted to one of the big cities, though it ended up that I was sent to RAAF Base Wagga," she laughs.

Dot spent 12 years and nine months in the WAAAF, during which time she undertook a number of positions and spent time in the transport section as a driver, where she drove staff cars, ambulances and small trucks.

"Everybody was worried that I was working in transport and I was told I'd end up smoking, drinking and swearing, but that didn't happen," she chuckles.

"It was all just really interesting to me, but I must say I've found all of my jobs very interesting. I've always been curious, and I think you can learn lots and get meaning out of any job. And as for the men, well I always found them respectful, there was a general feeling of mutual respect even though there remained a culture of doing what you were told."

Much to her delight, Dot was one of the dozens of women who attended the inaugural Women in Air Force centenary celebrations late last year, where she had the opportunity to chat to many young RAAF women about the range of opportunities available to female recruits today.

"From the conversations I had, it seems that things are even better today than when I was there so many years ago," she says.

"I was so impressed by these really smart women, they were Corporals and Sergeants and they were very sharp. I was so pleased to hear of the opportunities they had open to them and that more and more women are deciding on a career in the services.

"I would say to any young girls considering a career in the Air Force to

find out what's on offer, get as much advice as possible and then go for it. I found that there were so many opportunities and so much to learn that you could try different things and work out what you wanted to specialise in when you're there.

"You'll make mistakes, I certainly did, but that's what life's is all about - that and making sure you enjoy the ride and have lots of laughs along the way."



Leadership in homelessness welcomed by Alliance

The fact that a highly respected not-for-profit organisation like RAAFA is standing up and saying we've got to do better when it comes to homelessness is a fantastic step forward for the WA community, according to John Berger, the Executive Officer of the WA Alliance to End Homelessness.

"In my view the launch of the Andrew Russell Veteran Living (ARVL) program is a brilliant idea and a great initiative to combat the issue of homelessness in the veteran community," says John.

"It's a sad reality that many groups have turned a blind eye to this difficult issue, so to have RAAFA come on board and become part of the solution is incredibly positive for those of us already working in the sector."

The WA Alliance to End Homelessness has been involved in initial discussions in relation to the new program, with John saying his organisation is looking forward to assisting RAAFA with the initiative in the future.

"Veteran homelessness is a worldwide issue and an ongoing challenge, and I think it's important to focus on holistic solutions and ultimately helping people to transition into permanent housing,



John Berger, Kristy Brown Dept. of Defence

as there is a great deal of evidence about what is effective and what isn't," adds John.

"As a sector, we know that we need to do things differently and we are keen on looking for opportunities to see how we can work collaboratively with new organisations to bring different systems together and ultimately move away from temporary solutions to the problem.

"We are very encouraged that RAAFA is playing a leadership role in this area, and we are looking forward to offering support, education and learnings to assist in this program's success.

"There is great wisdom to be had in working together in unison, and our Alliance is very thankful to Ian Craig and those involved in the program for involving us and wanting our collaboration."

Accolade accepted with some embarrassment

AFME resident Gwen Staggs was presented with the Senior Community Citizen of the Year award at this year's community awards, held by the City of Melville at the Australia Day Citizenship ceremony in January.

Gwen, who has volunteered for the Melville Citizens Relief Fund *Community Foodlinks* program for more than 15 years, and who also participates in the 'Shoe Box of Love' program run by Operation Christmas Child in Australia and New Zealand, says although she was a bit embarrassed to be singled out for the award, it was hugely appreciated.

"I'm really happy to volunteer for the program as I think everyone involved has witnessed a greater need in the community, with people struggling even more at the moment to pay bills and their rent, particularly people who are unable to work for whatever reason," says Gwen, who moved into AFME just over four years ago.

"I find volunteering extremely rewarding and I've always been keen to make a difference. It's very similar to the wonderful people here on the estate who volunteer, I think there is around 180 in total and our community just wouldn't operate the way it does without them."

In fact Gwen has volunteered her time in various capacities, including in recent years on a number of AFME committees, for the past two decades, since she stopped working when she turned 60 years old.

"My friend Clive asked me to assist with the food program, and I started helping to pack and distribute the food, and also driving around to do the drop offs. In total, we pack around 250 boxes a year, all of which go to locals experiencing financial hardship.

"At the end of the day it's very much a team effort, with all of the items donated, and many other local people helping to collect the food and deliver it to us for packing.

"I know first-hand that there are plenty of charities that badly need volunteers, whether that's reading to kids at the Children's Hospital, helping out an animal shelter or even spending some time having a cuppa with someone in an aged care home.

"There's lots of need for volleys out there and it's very rewarding, you really do get what you give."

Congratulations on your significant achievement Gwen, from all of your friends at RAAFA and AFME.



Home sweet home

Volunteering as a bus driver, playing bowls for the first time, going to the gym, using the pool, popping along to Happy Hour and becoming regulars at morning coffee catch ups - these are all the activities that Alex and Marlene King have been involved in since they moved into Erskine Grove back in July last year.

"There are so many activities and events to choose from," says Marlene, who met husband Alex at Luna Park when she was on holiday in Melbourne in the late 1960s. "Trying new things has been great fun and has also helped us to make new friends which we've loved."

Indeed, one of Marlene's first impressions of the estate was how friendly and welcoming everyone was.

"We had lived in Merriden for seven years and decided that we wanted to move closer to Perth and also my sister in South Yunderup, so we started to do some online research and found RAAFA Erskine Grove. We flicked through all of the photos and thought it looked great and then we went to see a display home, we just thought wow, this is fantastic.

"From there one of the residents, Bob Smoothy, showed us around

the village and the amenities and we were so impressed that we went home and put our house on the market. Fortunately, it sold very quickly and, at the same time, we found the unit that we're currently in and it was pretty much plain sailing from there. The team at the office were fantastic in communicating with us at every step of the way, and the whole moving process went very well."

And the couple, who have three daughters and 11 grandchildren, are quick to cite a simple but very meaningful example of the community spirit on the estate.

"Not long after I moved in I had surgery on my foot and was in a wheelchair for a little while before starting to walk again," explains Marlene.

"Everywhere I went I had neighbours and people I hadn't even yet met come up to me and ask how I was. The people here are just so friendly, it seems to me that everyone looks after everyone else and that's just a lovely thing."



And so, as relatively recent residents, do Marlene and Alex have any tips for anyone who is considering making the move into a retirement village?

"I'd say do your research and get out and about and have a look at a few display villages," says Marlene. "I even think it's a good idea to find out when the next coffee morning is or happy hour and ask to see if you can come along to meet people for a chat. It's a great way to find out

what village life is like.

"Alex and I are just loving living here and are looking forward to our future together on the estate. We're even enjoying getting involved with the consultations around the refurbishments and colour schemes for the new clubroom and community centre, after all we're the lucky ones who are going to be enjoying these facilities into the future, as we can well and truly call Erskine Grove home."

Winter wonderland for Christmas

If Erskine Grove resident Johanna Van De Peppel had a nickname, it would probably be Mother Christmas.

That's because the Dutch-born 73-year-old certainly brings the festive spirit to the popular retirement estate, spending five weeks each year turning her home into a winter wonderland for everyone to enjoy.

And for the first time this year, Johanna opened her beautifully decorated home to the Erskine Grove community in a bid to raise funds for the Cancer Foundation,

which saw her collect close to \$300 for the worthwhile cause.

"It makes me feel really good to see everyone enjoying the decorations," says Johanna, who has been decorating her home each Christmas for many years.

"I got the idea when I was traveling the west coast of Canada with my brother and his family. It was there that I saw a Christmas shop with beautifully decorated houses and, when I returned to Australia, I saw an advertisement in a craft magazine for similarly decorated Christmas homes which I just

thought were delightful. That was when I started collecting things, which was over 20 years ago now.

"Since then my Christmas displays have got more intricate every year. I make things myself and also buy ornaments and trinkets in op shops, and I also get given Christmas decorations by my neighbours and friends.

"As you'd guess, my displays just keep getting bigger and bigger, though I've been told my house is getting too small for it now," she laughs.

Johanna says decorating her home with a wintery Christmas theme takes her back to her childhood in Holland, her birth country which she left in 1983 to migrate to Perth with her then-husband and three children.

"I remember the first Christmas we had in Australia just felt horrible, I was terribly homesick and we sat outside in the heat for Christmas lunch, there were mosquitoes everywhere and all the traditions of home like Christmas Eve supper and midnight mass just weren't there."

Fast forward a few years however and Johanna is the first to admit that she loves her adopted country, particularly living at Erskine which she has called home since November 2009.

"I initially looked at Cambrai Village which I really liked, though I was told I needed to have a service background, which I didn't have. But then the manager at the time said that homes were available at Erskine and, after chatting to the kids, they thought me moving to the estate was a great idea.

"So I came to have a look at a couple of units with a friend and I was really impressed with the estate. I can remember standing across the road from what would become my new house and being very emotional, it meant everything to me to have my very own home and I completed the paperwork immediately.

"When I first moved in I didn't know anyone, but then I started to use the pool, I joined a few groups and made lots of friends that way. It's a safe, quiet community, I have lovely neighbours who are very helpful and in fact we all help each other.

"I thank God every day as I really am very happy here and, after almost 40 years, I've definitely got used to Christmas being sunny and very hot," she laughs.



Commitment to volunteering recognised

Erskine Grove volunteers Margaret Cunningham and Vi Blenkinship were recognised in the lead up to International Women's Day on 8 March.

Margaret, who moved into Erskine in August 2003 when only four or five people had moved into the estate, has been an incredible volunteer throughout that time, from cooking meals at events, driving the estate bus, supporting the Mavericks social group and making beautiful table decorations for functions, among many other things.

And supporting her is Vi Blenkinship, another volunteer who is the official photographer at the estate's seniors' lunches. Vi takes wonderfully professional shots which capture Erskine residents out and about enjoying themselves during their regular outings.

Both ladies were nominated prior to International Women's Day for their voluntary work by Erskine Grove's staff members, Angeline Carleton and Caroline Henning.

Although known as being extremely humble and shying away from any limelight, Margaret admits that she very much enjoys looking after people at the estate.

"If I can do anything to help, I'm always keen to," she says. "I love being busy and helping to make people smile, and making sure others enjoy life is something that I very much enjoy too."

Angeline Carleton, Retirement Wellbeing Officer, says Margaret and Vi were wonderful examples of the many unsung heroes of the Erskine community.

"Margaret treats her volunteer work like a job, it gives her great satisfaction and a sense of purpose," she says. "She takes great care in planning the menus, making sure the meals are wholesome and on budget, and she also makes beautiful, themed table settings as well as supervising other volunteers who help with our events."

"She has also helped to build up a great rapport with Meadow Springs Estate because she is there so much and works closely with their food and beverage manager, Trish Jenkins, as part of her volunteer work with the Mavericks group."

"Vi also takes the most beautiful photos, and we are very fortunate to have such committed and dedicated volunteers, like Margaret and Vi, who are willing to go the extra mile for our residents"

"Volunteers make an invaluable contribution to RAAFA estates and



LtoR Vi Blenkinship, Angeline Carleton, Margaret Cunningham

International Women's Day gave us a great excuse to recognise both ladies for their generosity of time and their big hearts."

Sandy Komen, RAAFA's General Manager - Connected Living, adds that Margaret, in particular, has been a 'giver' on the estate from the day she moved in.

"Every time I go to Erskine I see Margaret as she is always doing something to help others," she says. "Whether it's picking up food, driving the bus, making up an invite or dressing tables beautifully,

Margaret is always busy making a difference.

"In the early years of Erskine, I know that she even took on the responsibility of emptying the rubbish as there was no proper rubbish collection service at the time. I think that's how she developed the affectionate nickname 'Margo the Garbo'," Sandy chuckles.

"Regardless, Margaret is an absolute treasure, and we would be absolutely lost without her."

Proud to be Australian

Australia Day is widely acknowledged as a day to reflect, respect and celebrate the Australian spirit and the best of our country – our mateship, our sense of community and our respect and care for each other.

And nowhere was this more on show than at Erskine Grove, where over 70 residents joined together on Australia Day morning for a breakfast, some bush poetry and a bit of fun.

David Lloyd, President of the Branch Resident's Committee, explains that the morning started with a traditional raising of the flag ceremony accompanied by the national anthem, followed by a hearty breakfast, the reciting of a number of bush tales 'tall and true', a best dressed competition and the presentation of the democratically-elected Resident of the Year award.

"Put simply, the morning was an absolute hoot," says David who is in his first year as President. "It was a real combined effort and so many people were involved to ensure it all went very smoothly and that everyone was able to have good fun and a great laugh."

"A special shout out must go to the 'Best Dressed Sheila' on the day,

which was awarded to Paula Loser, and our 'Best Dressed Ocker', which was taken out by Bob Day, along with everyone else who dressed up for the occasion, whether that was by wearing their Aussie barbecue apron, a hat with corks, or thongs and shorts and a face full of zinc."

During the event, the Resident of the Year award was also presented, which this year also went to Bob Day.

Bob is a much-loved resident at the estate who has headed up the liaison committee for the past five years and is also responsible for maintaining the estate's iconic dolphin fountain each week, as well as lending a general helping hand whenever and wherever needed.

And despite being a very popular resident at Erskine, Bob was his usual self-deprecating self on learning of his award.

"It was really pleasing to be recognised, though there are so many people at the estate who volunteer and are always there to help others out," Bob says.

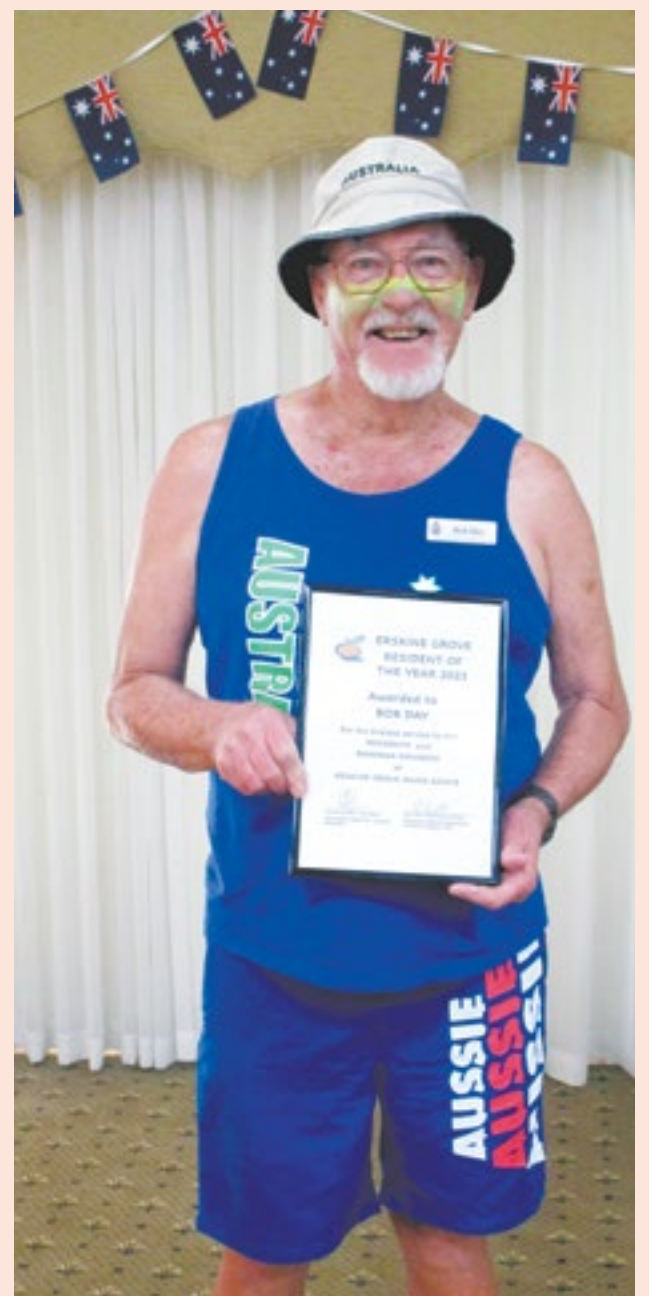
"But yes, it was a real honour when my name was announced, and I was very humbled to receive the award."

According to David, Erskine's residents are well known for lending a helping hand and being there for others, just like Bob always is.

"There's also a rich culture of diversity on the estate, with many individuals born overseas," adds David.

"I think Australia Day gives us a good reason to celebrate our identity and culture and express how proud we all are to be Australian and to call this wonderful country home, while also being respectful of other people's culture and heritage."

"And as well as congratulating Bob Day, a huge thanks also goes out to Bob Smoothy for formatting the programme and acting as MC for the day's activities, as well as everyone else who joined in to make the event the success it was."



Bob Day

Fitness first for Ann

■ The old adage 'use it or lose it' is definitely something that RAAFA's Erskine Grove resident Ann Graydon subscribes to.

Just over 12 months ago, the grandmother of five had so much pain in her hips that she could hardly walk around her local shopping centre.

"I just had no energy and I knew I had to do something," says the 80-year-old who has lived at the popular village for more than 17 years with husband Ken.

"So I decided to buy a treadmill and it's honestly the best thing I've ever done. It's set up in the lounge and it doesn't matter what the weather is doing, I walk every morning and afternoon for 15 minutes. It's just routine now and it's made the world of difference, I wouldn't be without it for anything."

During the summer, Ann also walks a hundred laps in the pool twice a week and says that her legs have strengthened enormously and that she is no longer in pain.

"When I started out I made sure I did things properly, I have a good pair of shoes and supports on my knees and ankles. I've never really been into exercise and I certainly have never been a walker, but now

I've seen the benefits of regular exercise and I've realised how crucial it is to my wellbeing, as well as eating a really good diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables."

Ann is also the first person to admit that age is 'just a number' and mental attitude has so much to do with overall health. It's this foresight that explains why she and her husband opened their home up at the start of the COVID-19 lockdowns two years ago to give friends and neighbours a space every week to catch up and have an opportunity to socialise.

"We realised what everyone would miss most during the shutdowns was connection, which is why we opened up our garage every Friday for an hour and a half, so that our whole street could get together for a catch up.

"We've only missed one session in two years; it's been so popular and we all enjoy it. It gives us all an opportunity to connect and we have a bit of a laugh, and we're also all in a lotto syndicate which adds another fun dimension."



Ann, who emigrated to Australia from Harlow in Essex back in 1969, readily admits that one of the main reasons why she and her husband have loved living at Erskine is because of the people at the estate.

"We are blessed not only with the people who live in this village, but also the people who live on our street. Everyone cares for each other, and we really are always here for each other and can have a great laugh. Ken and I love it here, there's no way we would want to be anywhere else.

"Just like walking is keeping me mobile and pain-free, socialising and catching up with friends and neighbours is keeping all of us on our street young at heart."

Love is in the air

■ On Valentines Day at Gordon Lodge you could feel the love in the air as the residents sat back and enjoyed a delicious high tea whilst enjoying the music.

Louise Anton provided the entertainment and there were smiles everywhere. What a beautiful morning.



Biggles dream fulfilled

■ Back in the 1940's a little boy read dozens of Boys Own and Biggles adventure books and dreamt of being a Spitfire pilot.

Fast forward to 2022 and that little boy, aka resident Murray Adams, had his dream fulfilled thanks to winning Amity Village's raffle provided by RAAFA's provider of monitored personal alarms, Tunstall Healthcare, which saw him gain the chance to fly in an open cockpit Tiger Moth.

After being kitted out with a flying helmet and goggles and given some pre-flight advice by Pilot Tim Berryman, it was off to the Royal Aero Club's 1937 de Havilland vintage Biplane.

After squeezing in - a tight fit according to Murray - there were some instructions and drills and then the propeller was tugged. What followed was a roar from the engine, in addition to a sudden blast of wind, and the aircraft started to taxi to the runway for take-off.

"As we lifted into the wild blue yonder there was the comforting and lulling sound of the engine drumming and propeller whirring," recalls Murray.

"It felt reassuring to me to actually feel and see something taking us through the air. I never really trusted large jet planes as I couldn't see any moving parts that kept all of



those hundreds of tons airborne," he explained.

"We sortied along at a sedate 65 knots at 1000 feet, taking in the marvellous views of Perth, Cottesloe and down the coast toward Freo where we saw the ships in Gage Roads. Then it was time to turn back to Jandakot Airfield for a gentle landing."

And according to Murray, lots of pictures were taken to remember and prove his 'aged adventure'.

And so, the burning question from many friends and family once he disembarked was, if he could, would he do it again?

"With my shonky legs and a small cockpit, removing myself from the plane was concluded with great difficulty," he laughs.

"But with some help to exit the Tiger, I certainly would!"

Congratulations on winning the raffle and a big thanks to Tunstall for making such a wonderful prize available to Murray!

It's arrived!

■ We are excited to announce that the Tornado GR4 has hit our shores after it's long journey from the UK and is being unloaded from the ship as we go to print.

Unfortunately, the rest hasn't gone quite to plan. With the changes to WA's scheduled boarder opening in February, we had to make alternative arrangements and the Tornado will now be transported to the RAAF Base Pearce for storage until we can confirm new plans for the rebuild and ceremonial handover to RAAFA.

The rebuild of the aircraft requires a specialist team to come from the RAF UK.

We can't wait for reconstruction to begin and although we don't have a timeframe yet, we will let you know as more information is received and arrangements confirmed.



A life dedicated to nursing

Like many women of her era, Gordon Lodge resident Vivienne John trained to be a nurse in the early 1950s when she was just 18 years old, though for Vivienne the passion she felt for her chosen career saw her dedicate close to 50 years of her life to caring for others.

Vivienne Driscoll, as she was then, commenced her nursing studies at Royal Perth Hospital in 1952, after which she completed her midwifery training at King Edward Memorial Hospital.

Along with two fellow nursing friends, she embarked on her first career-related adventure soon after she qualified, travelling to Thursday Island, located approximately 39 kilometres north of Cape York Peninsula in Far North Queensland. There she gained valuable nursing and midwifery experience – in fact a major highlight for her was

delivering the doctor's baby, who wanted a qualified midwife to assist in the birth rather than just her husband's involvement!

On returning to Western Australia, Vivienne undertook several country postings, including at Williams, where she met her husband-to-be, Brian John, who was a farmer from Boddington.

After marrying in 1962 and moving to the farm with her new husband, Vivienne worked at Boddington Hospital as a nurse and midwife, eventually assuming the role of matron. She worked there until she retired in the late 1990's.

Penny John, Vivienne's daughter and also Estate Manager at RAAFA's AFME, recalls that her mother was dedicated to nursing, working full time and always being on call, as there was a direct line between

the hospital and their home.

"Mum had two young kids at the time, myself and my brother David, and I remember she very successfully managed to juggle parenting with work," says Penny.

"On many occasions, our family would have Christmas lunch in the hospital staff dining room because mum was working, that's how dedicated she was."

After their retirement, Vivienne and Brian relocated from their farm to RAAFA's Meadow Springs Estate in 2010 where they lived for 10 years, after which Vivienne, who



sadly lost Brian in 2019, moved to Gordon Lodge. There she continues to enjoy life, while also receiving dedicated nursing care, which hallmarked her own career.

Celebrating a Centenary

McNamara Lodge resident Bob Porteous reached his Centenary on 11 February and was happy to share his advice for living a healthy and happy life.

"Don't smoke, do everything in moderation and just take each day as it comes," says the father of two, who also has seven grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

"That's how I've lived my life, and I've been fortunate that it's been a happy and long one. I've been very content."

By anyone's standards, Bob has had a full and adventurous life. Born in Kalgoorlie, he moved to a house on William Street in Perth with his family when he was still very young. After a time, the family relocated again, this time to North Perth where Bob attended Perth Boys School, before he secured his first job at the Post Office as a telegraph boy.

In the middle of WWII, in 1942, the 20-year-old joined the RAAF and was sent to Royal Air Force Mildenhall, a RAF station located in Suffolk, England. He qualified as a navigator and joined 622 Bomber Squadron which saw him fly bombing raids over Germany "more times than I care to remember."

"I have many memories of the war, but I've tried to forget them, they weren't good," is all Bob will say about those years.

After the war ended, Bob was sent on to Japan where he became part of 67 British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF) Squadron and was responsible for transporting people and supplies.

"Then I had news that my stepfather had died, and I decided to get demobbed to go back home to make sure my mum was okay," says Bob, who has lived at McNamara Lodge for the past 15 years,

following his eyesight failing which has rendered him 'legally blind'.

"When I got home my mum said that she didn't want me under her feet, so I went off to the BP refinery and got a job. They sent me to Scotland to train for six months and learn how to run an oil refinery, and then I came back to Perth and began work at the refinery in Kwinana where I remained for the next 22 years."

Bob left the company when the workforce was downsized after his more than two decades of service, and ended up buying a number of properties, including two lunch bars and a newsagency.

"I've definitely lived a full life and am very happy that I've made it to 100 years old," adds Bob.

"I enjoyed celebrating with a morning tea and it was special to have my daughter and son-in-law there, as well as my grandchildren.

"Even the Mandurah Mayor turned up which was a lovely gesture. He looked very young though, but I suppose at my age, most people do, don't they?"

Huge congratulations to Bob on reaching your Centenary, from all your friends at McNamara Lodge.



Merriwa lifestyle

There seems to be a general acknowledgement amongst real estate pundits that now is a really good time for retirees to sell their larger family home if they're looking to downsize.

And that trend has certainly been seen at RAAFA's Merriwa estate where there are a number of properties that are currently being snapped up on the standard lease for life basis that all residents at the popular estate are familiar with.

And the good news is that there remains over a dozen units which are currently available for purchase, starting from just \$275,000.

"We have a great reputation as a wonderful community, so we're experiencing a lot of interest in our available units, particularly as it's such a good time for people considering moving into a retirement village to sell their family home," says Karen Huyton, RAAFA's Estate Manager.

"All of the units we have available are renovated, which makes them very popular."

Hallmarked by manicured gardens, wide streets and a friendly atmosphere, the 240-unit retirement village offers seniors an attractive proposition, which includes a lifestyle close to beautiful beaches and a range of amenities including cafes, restaurants, shops and all the services that come with living just 11kms from Joondalup.

Prices start at \$275,000 for a two-bedroom unit, rising to \$310,000 for a three-bedroom unit. Homes also include reverse air conditioning in the lounge area and a gas hot water system.

Similar to other RAAFA villages, Merriwa offers a RAAFA Club with bar service, affordable meals and function rooms, caravan and boat parking facilities which appeal to the lock up and leave nomadic lifestyle, and an estate bus which is available for local shopping outings.

A Wellbeing Officer is also on-site part time to provide links to home services and health and well-being activities and events.

"Our friendly team is always on hand to assist our residents and ensure that their relocation experience is as seamless as possible, as well as being part of a RAAFA community ensures a great lifestyle."

Facilities at RAAFA Merriwa also include a therapy and outdoor pool, a BBQ area, chapel, bowling, greens, library, tennis courts, a hobby workshop and fully licensed club, plus plenty of activities to suit everyone, as well as great opportunities to make new friends.

Give Karen a call today to find out more about the RAAFA lifestyle and available units, on 08 9400 3400 or khuyton@raafawa.org.au.

Lodges were alive with the sound of music

The sound of the most exquisite music could be heard at RAAFA's Gordon Lodge and Alice Ross-King Care Centre in early February, as residents were treated to mini concerts as part of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra's (WASO) community outreach program.

More than 35 residents, and a number of lucky staff at Gordon Lodge, were captivated throughout the 45-minute performance, which saw a spectacular string ensemble perform an intimate concert of exhilarating and joyful music, from Beethoven to jazz and a number of popular classics which sent seniors on a trip down memory lane.

Alena Tompkins, WASO Executive Manager - Community Engagement,

explains that the organisation runs a program of concerts within Perth's aged care centres to bring music to older people who ordinarily wouldn't be easily able to access it.

"As the State Orchestra, we are dedicated to reaching as many West Australians as possible with our musical experiences, from concert halls and classrooms to hospitals and aged care," she says.

"Our aim is to bring joy and nurture participation in our community, because we believe everybody deserves the opportunity to experience live music, and our professional musicians are always very happy to perform in aged care homes. Performing at Gordon Lodge was particularly fulfilling

for them as they were so warmly welcomed."

The musicians who performed included Jane Serrangeli and Sunmi Jung on violin, Kierstan Arkle-Smith on viola and Tim South on cello.

And according to Gordon Lodge Occupational Therapist, Tory Ludlam, residents not only enjoyed it, they absolutely loved every minute of the concert.

"The performance was very well received, it was a huge treat for residents and they thoroughly enjoyed it," says Tory, who confirmed the performance was also a first for one staff member who had never experienced the thrill and joy of a string quartet before.

"We had some residents swinging their hips and others who live with dementia extremely animated and joyous, our seniors were totally captivated and I think they could have listened to them all morning."

Gordon Lodge resident Dot Clarke attended the concert.

"I haven't got the words to explain how much I loved the music and watching them play, I even had tears in my eyes as the whole experience really moved me," she says.

"I was so enthralled I didn't want them to stop, their music was just so heartfelt and exquisite, and I couldn't help but think how wonderful those young people and WASO were to give that incredible experience to us."



Scenic drives a joy

Seniors from RAAFA's McNamara Lodge are still zipping around the southern suburbs, as a result of the regular bus outings organised by the lifestyle team.

And thanks to a specially adapted bus being hired for the fortnightly outings, half a dozen residents in wheelchairs can also enjoy the trip, as well as up to 15 more mobile seniors.

Viktoria Szasz, McNamara Lodge's Lifestyle Coordinator, explains the regular outings form part of the facility's resident's engagement program, which is focused on maintaining stimulation and enriching senior's lives.

"Despite COVID now being a reality in Perth, we're still maintaining the bus trips which residents love, though we now take morning tea with us and our seniors stay on the bus to stay safe," she explains.

"Even with these additional safety measures in place, our seniors love the trips. We often go to the coast or to the estuary and everyone enjoys looking out over the water, and even spotting dolphins which make a frequent appearance.

"We also regularly go out to Pinjarra and Waroona where there is so much farmland, everyone really enjoys that too, particularly when we can watch the horses and

other animals, it's a thoroughly enjoyable outing for everyone."

One of the residents who enjoys the regular trips is Terry Rumens, who has lived at Meadow Springs for close to 20 years.

"It's really wonderful to go for such a lovely, peaceful drive in an area that has changed immensely," he says. "Everyone thoroughly enjoys it and looks forward to it every other week."



WRAAF Branch for women of the Air Force

Gwyn Braun
glb3au@hotmail.com

Upcoming events

Tuesday, 5 April, General meeting, 1.00pm, Meg Olive Room

Easter is on its way so bring along your ideas and an Easter treat to raffle on the day.

If you come early join us for lunch in the RAAFA Club. RSVP, 31 March to Gwyn as lunch times are busy.

Monday, 25 April, ANZAC Day march, 9.00am

At the time of writing the ANZAC Day parade through the city is proceeding. If interested in participating, please let me know so I can keep you up to date with details. For uniformity, please wear a pale blue shirt with navy skirt/trouser and jacket.

The State ANZAC committee are encouraging participation in local

Dawn services as Kings Park will be invitees only.

Tuesday, 3 May, Afternoon tea, 1.30pm, Meg Olive Room or RAAFA Club Bull Creek.

Celebrating the life of key women in our lives. This is an opportunity to celebrate the life of our patron of 16 years, Squadron Officer retired Gibbney (Beryl Black) who recently passed away on 5 March.

Please send photos of Squadron Officer Gibbney (young and old) by 20 April to Gwyn Braun, for a visual show of her life both service and civilian.

Tuesday, 7 June, getting ready for Christmas in July and December, 1.00pm, Meg Olive Room

Bring along craft ideas to share and also start thinking about nominations for positions to be filled at our July AGM.

Club Bites

CAMBRAI CLUB 9304 5400 or if unattended 0417 922 658

Weekly specials

Tuesday and Wednesday, Happy hour 4.00pm
2nd Tuesday, Chicken parmi \$12.00, 6.00pm to 7.00pm Picardy Restaurant (bookings essential by 12noon Friday prior)
4th Tuesday, Pasta night \$12.00, 6.00pm to 7.00pm Picardy Restaurant (bookings essential)
Wednesday, 2 course Roast dinner \$22.00, 6.00pm Picardy Restaurant (bookings essential by 12noon Tuesday)
Wednesday, Morning tea, 10.00am to 11.00am
Friday, Bar/Bistro lunch, 12noon
Friday, Happy hour, 5.00pm (when function on)

Events (check Club for details)

2nd and 4th Fridays – generally sundowner or function, 5.00pm



St Patrick's Day

MERRIWA CLUB 9400 3640

Blue Gum Cafe

Pop down for one of our daily specials or sample something off the menu. Now open Wednesday and Thursday, check Club for details.

Weekly Specials

Wednesday, Roast lunch \$15.00
Wednesday, Happy hour 4.00pm
Thursday, Morning tea from 10.00am
Thursday, Chicken parmi lunch \$15.00



MEADOW SPRINGS CLUB 9582 5375

The Beaufort Restaurant located in the RAAFA Club is a relaxing space to enjoy lunch with family and friends or groups.

All bookings for lunch or dinner can be made at the bar.

Weekly specials

Monday, Roast \$14.50
Tuesday, Fish and chips lunch \$15.00
Wednesday, Club night – meal \$15.00, chase the ace, bingo & horse racing
Thursday, Happy hour, 4.30pm
Friday, 8 April, Lambs fry and bacon special
Friday, 6 May, Dining night
Friday, 13 May, Lambs fry and bacon special

Function facilities

Available for hire to all RAAFA members. Choose from the Beaufort Restaurant and Middleton Hall, with fully integrated audio and visual system, dance floor, cash bar and commercial kitchen ready to cater for any special event. For more information or to book, contact the Club.

Short stay accommodation

Time to get out and wonder out yonder!!!! Why not come down to beautiful Mandurah and enjoy the great outdoors, staying in one of our fully equipped short stay accommodation units. Bookings at the Club.



BULL CREEK CLUB 9311 4460

Open for light breakfast and lunch Monday to Friday and dinner every Friday. Check Club for details.

Weekly specials

Monday to Friday, light breakfast 9.00am to 10.00am
Monday, Roast \$15.00
Tuesday, Fish and chips \$15.00
1st and 3rd Thursday, Asian special of the day \$16.00
2nd and 4th Thursday, Lambs fry and bacon \$16.00
Monday and Wednesday, Happy hour 4.00pm



Chinese New Year

RAAFA Wellbeing Team

CAMBRAI VILLAGE

Vanessa Priestley
9304 5280

RAAFA ESTATE MERRIWA

Suzanne Free
9400 3778

AFME

Bruce Carstairs
Nancy Proctor-Read
9311 4562

ERSKINE GROVE

Angeline Carleton
9586 4309

RAAFA ESTATE MEADOW SPRINGS

Mischa Matthews
9582 5369

RAAFA AMITY VILLAGE ALBANY

Ceridwen Fitzpatrick
9841 8311

Merriwa Estate

Many of our motivated residents have eagerly taken up the wonderful opportunity presented by Stacey Scott and her team, from the ECU Exercise Right for Active Ageing Program.

This in-house offering has the additional benefit of a pre and post course assessment, which brings

validation to the participants of the benefits received through regular exercise, reminding us that exercise is possible at all ages, and all fitness levels.

There are so many benefits to regular exercise and maintaining strength, flexibility and fitness, including the social and emotional gains.



AFME

We have either cancelled our intergenerational and other events or made them virtual in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19. We have also alerted social clubs on the Estate that morning teas present a high risk whilst having your mask off and being close to others while chatting.

RAAFA is well placed to deal with this current surge with mask mandates, a 2 square metre rule,

staff not entering homes (in most cases), temperature checks every day and regular RAT checks.

Please stay safe everybody – reduce your level of risk as much as possible. Understand that shopping centres are key sites for transmission of the virus. Catch up with just a friend or two at a time in an outdoor setting with takeaway coffee for food.

We will all emerge on the other side stronger, more bonded to life and each other.

Erskine Grove

Our COVID-19 information booklet has been created to answer some of your commonly asked questions

and assist with your preparation and planning. It includes links to local suppliers, COVID-19 symptoms and who to contact when. If you missed out, reach out to Angeline.



Meadow Springs

RAAFA has teamed up with Golden Pharmacy with regular pop-up stalls for Meadow Springs residents to obtain their free RAT tests and

purchase masks, hand gel and other COVID-19 essentials.

Also working with Active Ageing Australia to provide new exercise programs including chair yoga, Pilates and gentle exercises.



RAAFA Connect Home support highly regarded

AFME resident and keen tennis player Stewart Elston has used RAAFA Connect services for more than three years, and he has enjoyed the continuity of the same person helping and supporting him and his late wife during that time.

“Meng Meng (pronounced Mo Mo) from RAAFA Connect helped to care for my wife during her illness when we lived in our own home in Shelley, and then after Maris passed away and I decided to make the move to Cirrus Apartments, she pretty much transitioned with me,” explains Stewart.

“Now she comes every Tuesday morning for an hour and a half and cleans the house thoroughly. She mops the floors and does the

vacuuming, and gives the bathroom a good clean to keep the mould away, and if there’s washing to be done she’ll put that through the machine for me as well.

“She really is excellent, she does a great job and keeps the place much cleaner than I think I would keep it if I did it myself,” Stewart laughs.

RAAFA Connect’s in-home support division offers clients a range of individualised services which see nurses and support staff work together to improve a person’s ability to stay at home. They do this by listening carefully to people’s needs and, as a result, coordinating a personalised, tailored service.

“If there’s anyone out there who could do with some support and

assistance, but is perhaps unsure of asking for help, I’d say get in touch with RAAFA Connect and have an initial chat,” adds Stewart.

“I found them particularly helpful in regard to the ACAT process and accessing government assistance too, all the staff were great and I can only speak very highly of everyone I’ve had contact with.”

Would you like to find out more, or have an initial chat about how the RAAFA Connect can help you stay at home? Contact the friendly team on 9288 8470 or connect@raafawa.org.au.

