

AIR MAIL



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RAAFA

Don't forget, for more photos and to keep up to date with what's happening at RAAFA WA, check out our Facebook page 

Animals spark a trip down memory lane



Hilary and Robert Ferguson

Residents at McNamara Lodge had a 'Royal Show' experience recently - without even having to leave home.

That's because the RAAFA therapy team organised for a host of farm animals to visit residents at the Meadow Springs McNamara Lodge, including goats, chickens, rabbits, geese, piglets and even a baby alpaca.

Viktoria Szasz, Lifestyle Coordinator, said that residents as well as staff had been excited about the 'country

visit', which was made possible as a result of money being raised from various raffles at the Lodge.

"The experience was hugely enriching for our residents who really enjoyed spending time with the animals," she said.

"We know that engagement with animals can offer many therapeutic benefits, which is why we wanted to arrange the visit, and I think our residents definitely felt they were attending a scaled-down version of the Royal Show, which was wonderful to see.

"The day enabled many residents to take a trip down memory lane and reminisce about the past, as many had lived on farms during their younger years, and the majority of our residents had been surrounded by animals during their lifetimes."

Resident Monica Morath, who was given the opportunity to spend time with the animals, said she had enjoyed the experience very much.

Fellow resident Ellen Wilkes also expressed her joy following the visit.

"Spending time with the babies really

reminded me of growing up with animals in the backyard," she said.

And seniors Hilary and Robert Ferguson also agreed, saying: "Both of us enjoyed it very much. It was so lovely to see the animals and we really appreciated the opportunity."

We also have it on good authority that the two hours residents spent with the animals instigated lots of lovely conversations. By all accounts, everyone involved can't wait to welcome the fur babies back.



Monica Morath



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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

I recently heard a very interesting talk about 'boundary breaking'. During the presentation the speaker referred to the difference between breaking borders and breaking boundaries. Today we are ever mindful of the current world situation where borders have been broken and destroyed resulting in human tragedy beyond belief.

Breaking boundaries is quite different. I first learnt about boundaries as a young boy from my mum and dad. They set very clear boundaries for me, and I soon

learnt the consequences of stepping outside of those boundaries and I am ever grateful for their guidance in early life. In our rapidly changing world, I think that our children and grandchildren will have to grapple with ever-changing new and unforeseen boundaries that will challenge their years ahead.

The Air Force Association has strong boundaries that we have set over many years around camaraderie, fairness and a sense of oneness. These boundaries have set in place our culture and I am convinced that this is why we have so many members and long waiting lists of people wishing to come into our retirement living and care accommodation.

In early May I attended the first face-to-face National Executive meeting for almost two years. The greater part of this meeting was set aside to address the future of the Association and what structure is required at the National level to assist the State Divisions. A report by the Constitutional Review Team (CRT) entitled "Proposal for a Change for Good" was presented

to the meeting to assist their deliberation. The paper provided background to proposed changes aimed at developing a more cohesive and effective organisation.

The three major issues addressed were the need to formalise the arrangements between the peak body and the divisions to give a better organisation. Secondly, the need for a more effective and efficient federated organisation and finally, to develop a better system of governance.

The level of development that has been achieved in Western Australia for the Association over the past 30 years places us in a good position to be able to assist AFA at the national level. As the largest Division of AFA in Australia, I believe we can help in achieving these goals.

The past few months have been very busy and demanding for the Association in WA with a number of major developments that include the establishment of the Andrew Russell Veterans Living centre (ARVL) in Cannington, the Stirling residential project on AFME, the arrival of the Imperial Gift Tornado

GR4 to the Aviation Heritage Museum and the management of the recently acquired retirement village, RAAFA Challenger Court at Rockingham.

We continue to work away at these projects despite the demanding impact of COVID-19 on our staff resources. I congratulate the senior team for the dedicated time they have given in organising our COVID-19 response programme and for the commitment of the many staff working in our care facilities who have shown outstanding love and dedication to the people in our residential care and retirement living facilities.

As we move towards a new financial year we grapple with a very tight budget given the impact of COVID-19, inflation and increasing consumer costs. The retirement living budgets for each village have been prepared and will be presented prior to 30 June to each village as required under legislation.

Planning is underway for the AGM and details are provided below, noting the new timing.

Helping wishes come true

The Make-A-Wish charitable foundation received a donation of over \$1300 recently, thanks to the generous support of residents and visitors at RAAFA's Club at AFME and fast-food chain Hungry Jacks.

The initiative came about as a result of Angela Townley at the estate office, whose daughter-in-law Alice is a district manager at Hungry Jacks, which has been raising money for the charity.

"Alice asked if we could put a fundraising tin for Make-A-Wish at the RAAFA Club counter, and when

I asked Simon, the manager, he was very happy to oblige," explains Angela.

"When we came to count the amount that had been donated, it totalled \$655.90, a figure that Hungry Jacks then matched dollar for dollar, to make a total of \$1311.80, which was donated to the charity.

"As you can imagine, everyone was thrilled with that, it's a great result all round," she says.

For those who may not have heard of it, the Make-A-Wish

children's charity creates life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses and relies on supporters to help make those wishes come true.

Penny John, estate manager, says she wasn't surprised that such a significant amount of money had been raised.

"Our community really cares about others, so I'm not surprised at all that the donation tins were full in no time," says Penny.



LtoR Simon, Nat, Angela and Penny

"Even small amounts of loose change add up when so many people donate, so this is a wonderful result for the children who are helped by Make-A-Wish, and the fact that Hungry Jacks matched the money is really the icing on the cake."



Annual General Meeting 2022

Air Force Association (Western Australian Division) Inc. trading as RAAFA

New Day

By Norm Waldie, State Secretary

Friday, 28 October 2022

Registration commences at 9.30am with the meeting commencing at 10.30am at the RAAFA Club, Bull Creek.

Available Division Council positions:

- State President
- 1 x Division Councillor

Apply using the Nomination Form, attaching a brief CV not

exceeding 300 words and a current photograph for promotional purposes. Nomination Forms are available from the State Secretary (state.secretary@raafawa.org.au) or www.raafawa.org.au.

Please be advised that all applicants will be required to complete applications for National Police Clearance, Directors ID and Bankruptcy Check as part of the nomination process.

Return nominations to State Secretary, Central Support Office,

18 Bowman Street, South Perth 6151. Nominations close on 29 July 2022.

Candidates must be a RAAFA member entitled to vote and must carry out due diligence with the State President and Chief Executive Officer prior to acceptance of nomination.

Notices of Motion

Any Notices of Motion must be in the hands of the State Secretary by 29 July 2022 at Central Support Office.

Voting Procedure

Postal voting papers for any Motions and the Division Council election will be sent to all eligible members under separate mail out.

Returning Officer

The Division Council will appoint a Returning Officer to supervise any ballots for the vacant Division Council positions and for the counting and custody of the voting papers.

Air Force Association
(WA Division) Inc.
Trading as RAAFA

18 Bowman Street, South Perth WA 6151

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Air Mail
Enquiries Julie Stearne
E airmail@raafawa.org.au

Air Mail story
deadlines

1 July for August / September
2 September for October / November
28 October for December / January

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

COVID-19

The preparation undertaken by RAAFA's extraordinary team in readiness for the arrival of COVID-19 within this State has enabled us to minimise the impact within our villages and care facilities.

Over recent weeks with community daily cases of up to 17,000, the ability to continue to operate and provide care within our care facilities has been a priority and has proved very demanding on our staff. In many cases the cooperation and commitment of our care teams, clinical and senior managers, has enabled us to minimise the impact on the operations of all the facilities.

The biggest challenge has been ensuring we have the staff due to the number of team members who also have COVID-19. At the time of writing, 88 age care facilities in WA have positive cases. To all our staff, volunteers, residents, and families, I thank you for your support and

understanding whilst we work through these challenging health issues.

The Association continues to respond to the ongoing broader needs of the community we support.

Andrew Russell Veterans Living centre (ARVL)

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has granted funds towards the furnishing of the ARVL centre. The seeking of funds to support the construction of the facility is ongoing with positive indicators of potential support being provided by government and private individuals.

RAAFA Challenger Court

RAAFA has made an offer to purchase an existing retirement village in Rockingham. The City of Rockingham has a very large ageing population with a sizeable proportion having military service backgrounds. The City sought to engage with a provider such as our selves to take over the operation and support of residents. They recognise that the provision of retirement living is not their core business and the increasing compliance requirements needs a professional team with specific industry knowledge to support the operations.

We have been working closely with the City of Rockingham to take over the ownership and management of Challenger Court retirement village, located in the heart of Rockingham. The village comprises of 50 one-bedroom units.

A project team has been working behind the scenes for the past six months and the legal documents were finalised on 20 May 2022. There will be a changover period for RAAFA to take over full responsibility of the village and we anticipate a smooth transition into RAAFA operations.

Meetings are planned with the current residents in coming weeks where we will begin building trusted relationships. We will be providing more information in the coming months.

Government funding

The current election activities have had a major focus on aged care funding and how this will influence the electorate is not yet clear. The reality is that more than 60% of residential care facilities across Australia are currently operating in a cash negative position.

The unions are seeking a 25% pay rise for all care staff, inflation has rapidly risen and the new funding structures for the care of residents is predicted to reduce our funding.

This proves to be a very negative background for the development of our aged care budgets for the coming year with a large amount of change in legislation with unknown impacts. Compliance continues to be an increasing cost on providers.

Constitution changes

The increasing focus on governance requirements from State and Federal governments and in particular our compliance with the requirements to operate as a

charity, has meant that we have had to review our constitution. This is underway and we will be seeking the members support to make the appropriate changes to reflect the current requirements. It will also provide the opportunity to expand our membership categories providing greater choice for new and existing members.

A full explanatory document will be provided soon.

Final Padre's piece

The last of the Padre David articles is in this edition of Air Mail. A man of great faith and commitment to this organisation has decided that its time to hang up the quill.

I came across an article he penned in June 2016, which I believe captures some of the essences of his writings.

"Spirituality is, above all else, a personal experience that cannot be imposed by church or religious dogma. Human existence has a dimension to it that goes beyond what can be physically explained. We live in a wonderful and mysterious universe. In life's experiences we can find depths within ourselves that we were never previously aware of. For instance, dealing with grief and finding the calm that comes unsought in a time of sorrow."

David your wisdom on these pages will be missed and thank you for being present to many in their time of need.

Importance of a good fit

By now, we all know how important face masks are in keeping us COVID-19 safe, in addition to other crucial measures like vaccinations, hand hygiene and social distancing.

And in the event of an outbreak within any of RAAFA's residential care facilities, our team members who care for residents are required to wear additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which includes respiratory protection in the form of 'N95' masks. When these types of masks are required, it's important that they are not only worn properly, but that they're also a very good fit.

With this in mind, RAAFA has ploughed significant resources into a mask fitting program over the past few months. This has seen all relevant staff working within RAAFA's residential care lodges, undergo mask 'fit testing'.

'Fit testing' ensures that staff are using the most effective N95 mask, one that provides the most effective seal for their face, and this has been assessed using a special machine

that measures air leakage through various mask designs.

Carol Dickson, RAAFA's Quality & Clinical Governance Manager and Jenni Davidson, RAAFA's Health Safety and Risk Manager, have headed up this project alongside occupational health and safety specialists Compound Services.

And as Jenni explains, the project is focused on ensuring masks offer the absolute maximum protection to all RAAFA staff.

"Safety legislation requires that, if a member of staff needs to use respiratory protection such as an N95 mask to protect their health, the employer must ensure correct selection, fit and use of the mask, and this is supported by the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare," she explains.

"With this in mind, we have individually tested all relevant staff with various N95 masks to ensure they know which mask to use and how to use it, wear it and fit check it.

"This forms part of our COVID-19 management plan and is focused on providing staff with the best possible protection when they are assisting residents who have tested positive."

Erin Dawson, Occupational Health and Safety Practitioner at Compound Services has been involved with this initiative, alongside the team at RAAFA for the past couple of months.

"It's been a great pleasure to work alongside RAAFA to ensure the safety and protection of their staff in regards to respiratory mask fit testing," she says.

"The team are now in a strong position to protect themselves against COVID-19, and consequently the seniors for whom they care have been given a greater level of safety and protection through the testing that their carers and support workers have received."



Padre's piece



By Padre David

“So Long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Good night”. So sang the von Trapp family at their last concert as they fled Austria on the eve of the Anschluss in 1938; and yes - this will be my last Padre's piece.

It was on 28 March 1991 I received a letter from Tom Scully, then State President of our Association, inviting me to accept the position of

Honorary Chaplain. That's 31 years ago, and I have so many memories from over those years.

Tom's letter stressed that the position did not require me to become involved in pastoral work but that the role was rather advisory and ceremonial. I've had a hand in things like the development of our five estate chapels and the growth of welfare work within our Association as well as personal advice and pastoral ministry that I have been asked for from time to time.

There have been lots of ceremonies on ANZAC and Remembrance Days and lots of other occasions at Bull Creek and the other estates, at the Museum and in Kings Park. It was a privilege to share with groups as diverse as the national reunions of the Sunderland Association and the WRAAF's. The first ceremony at Mokine that I attended was in 1995 with the rededication of the Memorial Cairn and I have been part of the Mokine ceremony every year since.

Just recently I have informed our State President, Clive Robartson, that the Association should look either for a new Chaplain or for an alternate way of providing for the religious care that is part of spiritual care as it is set out in the 2016 National Guidelines for Spiritual Care by Meaningful Ageing Australia and to which our Association is committed.

The Padre's piece first saw light of day in August 2001 in Air Waves - the A4 duplicated newsletter of the fledgling RAAFA Estate Meadow Springs and continued right through to March 2016 by which time the newsletter was named The Mercury.

However, in December of that same year 2001, Colin Mounsey who was editor of Air Mail asked if the Padre's Piece could become a column in our RAAFA State communications medium. In those days it too was an A4 duplicated production, nothing like today's modern newspaper. Now after 123 "Pieces" it is time to say a farewell.

Thanks for the words of appreciation I have received from time to time from places as far away as the Gold Coast, Queensland and as close as friends who are resident on our Meadow Springs Estate.

I have on occasions been taken to task for something I have written, but throughout the 123 "Pieces" I have tried to look at everyday life and experiences through the lens of my faith in God. Maybe not the God some consider as the God of the traditional institutional Church but the God I see in Jesus and whose loving, compassionate Spirit I see around me in family relationships, in the happy times and the sad times. It's the divine Spirit I see in community issues such as how we care for each other in these COVID-19 times and it's the Spirit I see in the camaraderie of service life.

So, I conclude wishing you all the broadest and deepest of blessing that the word "Shalom" holds.

Shalom



Making the most of life at Merriwa

From art groups to craft groups, painting groups to card groups, indoor carpet bowls to regular bus outings, tennis to lawn bowls, movie nights, quiz nights and bistro nights - if you are keen for an active social life, RAAFA Estate Merriwa is the perfect place to live.

"Our residents are very active and we have a great reputation as a very cohesive and happy community," says Karen Huyton, RAAFA's estate manager.

"There are many different activities happening on the estate throughout the week, so whatever your interests, the chances are that you'll be able to continue your hobbies, as well as find new ones.

"Having said that, people who join us here as new residents can also live a quieter life if they prefer, basically you can do as much or as little as you want to.

"We are essentially here to support you in pursuing a happy and fulfilled life, whatever that may look like for you."

For anyone thinking about making a move into retirement living, RAAFA's Merriwa Estate currently has a number of units available.

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

"For for those who would like to 'try before they buy', we have four short stay motel style rooms available for rent on the estate, all of which have an ensuite, kitchenette, tea and coffee facilities and TV in the lounge area.

"For \$75 per night, they are a great way for people to have a short term stay with us to 'test the waters' and get a feel for retirement for a short time, as well as get to know the locals and our on-site amenities."

With a reputation for manicured gardens, wide streets and a friendly atmosphere, the 240-unit retirement village offers seniors an enviable lifestyle, situated 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.

To find out how you can make Merriwa Estate your new home, contact Karen on 08 9400 3400 or via khuyton@raafawa.org.au.

Air Force anniversaries remembered

Despite there being no official celebrations planned, SQNLDR Paul Falconer-West RAAF Ret'd decided to honour the recent 101st anniversary of the RAAF and the 104th anniversary of the RAF in his own way.

The RAAFA member and Aviation Heritage Museum guide commemorated the two anniversaries by taking a Pearce Flying Club aircraft for a 54-minute flight. Taking off from Jandakot, Paul flew to Mulla Point, up to Joondalup RSL Memorial Arch at Ocean Reef, then down to Hillarys and back to Fremantle, where he flew over the war memorial to pay tribute to those who served and made the ultimate sacrifice.

The flight held great significance for Paul and his co-pilot, Blair Fruin, an army reserve veteran whose father was in the Air Training Corps and a RAAF veteran himself.

Paul explains that he joined the South Australia Squadron Air Training Corps in 1965, along with his twin brother Peter.

"In 1969, both my brother and I joined the RAAF as aeronautical engineering cadets at Diploma Cadet Squadron (DCS) RAAF Frognall, Victoria.

"We both had a successful career in the RAAF, with Peter also doing a few years with the

RAF and Army Aviation Regiment.

"I'm now very aware that, in my 70 years, I have worn the RAAF uniform for five decades, which equates to half of the RAAF's centenary."

Paul is particularly thankful to the RAAF for the opportunity to serve in the reserves at 25SQN, something that he attributes to 'saving his family' after his wife Robyn died in 1998, leaving him to raise six children.

"The support of that squadron really did save my family," he says. "And reflecting on all of the friends and acquaintances I've met, I'm enormously thankful."

Following the commemorative flight, Paul went on to have lunch with fellow RAAF veteran Dianne Peet.

Reminiscing on the RAAF's 101 years and how important the organisation has been in their lives, as it has to countless others.



Paul Falconer-West and Dianne Peet

ANZAC Day

ANZAC Day holds special meaning for countless Australians and it is especially so for many residents across RAAFA where special small dawn services and

ceremonies were held at our estates and our care centres. The ANZAC spirit was especially alive at McNamara Lodge, where

residents in isolation received special care parcels from their fellow residents, which included freshly baked ANZAC biscuits, a sprig of rosemary and beautiful little notes.

From everyone at RAAFA, we will remember them. For more photos check out our facebook page @RAAFWA



Amity Village - John Edmonds



Amity Village - Bill Hawkins



Meadow Springs - Willie Beresford



McNamara Lodge - Bob Porteous



Cambrai Village



Merriwa Estate



Meadow Springs



Cambrai Village



McNamara Lodge - Fay Mott

Ready to rebuild!

We are so excited that the Tornado GR4 arrived safely from the UK and has landed safely at the Aviation Heritage Museum. Everyone is super eager to start the rebuild and plans have been finalised for the specialist (JARTS) team from the RAF UK to arrive in late June. They will be undertaking the rebuild from 13 to 21 June at the Aviation Heritage Museum, so why

not come down and take a look at history in the making. Like or follow our museum facebook page - @AviationHeritageMuseumWesternAustralia - to keep up to date with all the latest news about the rebuild and watch it come to life.



Everyone belongs

Cultural diversity and heritage was celebrated on Harmony Day by staff and residents at Gordon Lodge, who organised a concert and a multicultural lunch which included traditional dishes from around the world.

The AFME residential care home has a team of carers who hail from more than a dozen countries, including Thailand, India, Mongolia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Africa and England.

Angela Lowe, Facility Manager at Gordon Lodge, said Harmony Day – which is held each year on 21 March – provides a great opportunity to celebrate cultural diversity within the aged care community.

“Our cultural diversity is one of our greatest strengths and is at the heart of who we are,” says Angela. “Not only does it make Gordon Lodge, and indeed RAAFA as a whole, a great place to live and work, but it also makes Australia a wonderful country for us all to call home.

“Our residents, along with our staff, embrace Harmony Day. All people

who migrate to Australia bring with them some of their own cultural and religious traditions, as well as taking on many new traditions. Collectively, this diversity has enriched our nation, and has certainly enriched our own community.”

Harmony Day celebrates Australia’s cultural diversity and promotes values of inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone, which aligns with RAAFA’s values of compassion, respect and teamwork.

Shurenbolor Khandsuren, a carer at Gordon Lodge who originally hails from Mongolia, said the team at the facility, as well as the residents, had a wonderful day.

“Harmony Day was so amazing because it was all about respecting different cultures,” she says.

“I was so excited to share my culture in front of all of the residents and staff and it has encouraged me to be proud of where I come from and to share my culture’s beliefs and customs.”

Angela agrees, adding Gordon Lodge is almost like a small United

Nations, where the team totally respects the reasoning behind Harmony Day.

“At Gordon Lodge, we think it’s important to create opportunities

for our staff and residents to experience other cultures in a fun and inclusive way,” she adds. “And that’s exactly what happened on Harmony Day.”



RAAFA looks to the future

RAAFA is set to expand its facilities, having finalised the acquisition of an existing retirement village in Rockingham.

RAAFA Challenger Court is a small retirement village consisting of 50 one-bedroom units, which has been successfully purchased after lengthy consultation with the City of Rockingham.

The acquisition reflects a continued investment in the West Australian retirement sector and one that reflects our goal to create vibrant communities where residents can connect with one another and live the life they choose.

John Murray, CEO, says the purchase represents RAAFA’s desire to provide quality accommodation

options and an enviable lifestyle to support the increased independence, mobility and security of older West Australians.

“After working closely with the City of Rockingham for many months, RAAFA is delighted to have been successful as the chosen provider of Challenger Court,” John says.

“We are very excited by this purchase and to have the opportunity to include RAAFA Challenger Court in our family of estates.”

We are at the start of a transition process for RAAFA Challenger Court and if you have any questions please contact Sandy Komen during business hours on 0490 424 703.



Relocation complete for redevelopment

At the time of writing, AFME’s Sivyer, Harris, Ingram and Fraser units are about to be demolished now all the previous residents, who called the buildings home for many years, have been relocated to other homes at the estate.

At the same time, the initial design of the new Stirling apartment block, which will be built on the same site, has now been completed and the planning application has been submitted to the City of Melville.

What follows is the detailed design phase, which has just begun and will take around six months to complete.

Penny John, AFME Estate Manager, says the next design stage will see the architects go through the building design with a fine-tooth

comb, while working alongside the RAAFA project team.

“This phase looks at the entire fit out, so for example the size of the various apartments and their configuration, right down to the cabinet and counter sizes and what types of doors will be installed,” she explains

“To date we are very pleased with the progress of this project, it’s on track and we have had very good feedback from residents who have been pleased with how they have been supported during the relocation process.”

Watch this space for future updates on the progress being made on RAAFA’s new Stirling apartments.

Wheelie great day

Whatever your age, few things in life feel quite as good as going for a bike ride and feeling the wind in your hair - as residents at RAAFA's Vivian Bullwinkel Lodge in Merriwa will attest.

The thrill-seeking seniors were able to take part in the activity as a result of a partnership with the not-for-profit charitable organisation Cycling Without Age, which connects people who are no longer able to ride bikes for themselves with their community and the outdoors by giving them free rides on trishaw ebikes, piloted by volunteer cyclists.

RAAFA's Therapy Assistant at Vivian Bullwinkel Lodge, Genene Hewitt, says the residents thoroughly enjoyed their time on the bikes, with

some loving it so much they asked for a second ride.

"Although some were nervous at the start, everyone who participated enjoyed the experience immensely," says Genene.

"Each of those who went for a ride said the joy of feeling the wind in their hair was a wonderful experience, and they also loved being out and about and seeing more of the village while having great fun.

"Several of the residents were able to enjoy the experience with their spouses, and this too was heart-warming as we were able to see a more playful side to them."

What they said...

Resident Pamela, who was able

to enjoy the bike ride with her husband, said: "We enjoyed the ride very much."

Residents Jocelyn and Dawn also admitted to thoroughly enjoying their adventure. "It was something very different than walking around the village," she said, while her friend Dawn confirmed that the whole thing "was a lot of fun."



Len loving life at 101

He may just have celebrated his 101st birthday, but there is no sign of Karri and Tuart Lodge resident Len Snell slowing down anytime soon.

After celebrating his milestone birthday at his daughter's house surrounded by his family, which included his grandson who flew all the way from Darwin, Len then celebrated all over again with his friends at his home at RAAFA's popular residential facility.

And the war veteran is very clear about his secrets to a long life.

"Have a beer and a glass of port every night, and make sure you have a positive outlook on life," he says. "It's all about seeing the glass half full rather than half empty."

The incredibly active war veteran, who has lived at the RAAFA Merriwa Estate since 1996, was based at Darwin's Noonamah Barracks from 1941-1943 where he was a postal dispatch rider in the 43rd Battalion.

The then 20-year-old has clear memories of the day now known as The Bombing of Darwin, because of a serendipitous stop off to 'spend a penny' that saved his life.

"I was running late that day because I had to answer a call of nature and those few minutes saved my life.

"I heard droning in the distance, at the time we had no idea it was Japanese bombers but we ran to the cliffs in panic and disbelief, when I then made it back to the post office it had been bombed to the ground killing the post master, his wife and daughter and several others.

"The time was 9.51am on 19 February 1942 and I'll never forget that day. I still clearly remember the horrific scenes of death and destruction and the enormous feeling of helplessness when we saw the town being destroyed, later discovering that more than 240

Australians had been killed and over 400 injured."

Len, whose father was a WWI survivor, went on to see extensive action in Borneo and New Guinea, but admits his memories in both countries could not match the horror of the Bombing of Darwin.

"Only one other post officer survived the attack and everyone else I worked with was killed, in fact many of my mates thought I had died too and when I eventually got back to the barracks that day there was a huge cheer when they all saw me," he said.

Len was discharged from the army in February 1945 after which he moved to Adelaide, where he worked as a roof tiler for many years before starting his own business. He later retired to Perth in 1982 to be with his two daughters, moving into the RAAFA estate in 1996.

"I've had an eventful life, but I've been very lucky," he laughs. "Some people have got to be lucky I guess, and I've always said it's better to be lucky instead of being rich, and I guess that's me."

Congratulations on your 101st birthday Len, from all your friends at RAAFA.



Competition bowls over competitors

Over 100 lady bowlers from seven northern suburbs bowling clubs converged at Merriwa on 12 April to compete for the Wanneroo/Joondalup Perpetual Bowling Trophy.

And according to Lynette Sibson, Ladies Captain at Merriwa AFA Bowling Club, the competitive spirit was alive and well throughout the day-long competition, which saw Sorrento Bowling Club presented with the winner's trophy, beating the RAAFA Merriwa team by only two points.

And to add to the highlights of the day, Tracey Roberts, the Wanneroo Mayor, paid the competitors a visit and gave a short talk, while the

Joondalup Mayor, who was unable to make it, sent a representative.

"All in all, everybody had a great day," says Lynette. "All the ladies know each other pretty much, as they play pennants with each other every week, so it was a very social occasion and everyone had a lot of fun."

Congratulations goes to all of the 112 ladies who took part from Quinns Rock, Sorrento, Warwick, Wanneroo, Joondalup, Yanchep and RAAFA Merriwa bowling clubs.

And a special congratulations to the team at Sorrento Bowling club for taking out the annual perpetual trophy.



Living the sea change dream

■ A born and bred West Australian, 86-year-old Gwen Wellstead started life at Midland Junction, though has lived in rural locations throughout her life.

“I’m a sixth generation Australian and have been a farmer for most of my life,” says Gwen, who left school at 15 to go and work on her grandfather’s farm at Tambellup, in the Great Southern.

“But oddly enough I don’t miss having lots of land, my beautiful home at RAAFA’s Amity Village really is ample for me, it’s perfect for one and I absolutely love it.”

Gwen explains that she met her husband working on the farm as a result of her auntie being married to his uncle.

“There are photos of us together as kids, we really were lifelong friends

and we got married at 20,” says Gwen, who moved into Amity in September last year.

Gwen and her husband Jim ran the farm in Tambellup from 1957 until 1988, after which their eldest son took over and they bought a smaller farm in Narrikup, located between Albany and Mount Barker.

“We were farmers all of our lives, but when we retired we travelled lots and did all sorts of things, we had a fabulous life, but then Jim had a stroke and I cared for him until he passed a few years ago,” she explains.

Gwen says the decision to move into RAAFA’s popular village was made in consultation with her three children.

“I discussed it with my family and also had a few conversations with

Cheryl and the staff at Amity, all of whom have been really wonderful,” adds Gwen, who now has nine grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and another two on the way.

“I’m still driving and I have a lot of interests outside the estate, so life is very busy and I have plenty to do. But what has struck me so far is that everyone here at the village is incredibly friendly, I’ve had some lovely dinners and morning teas, and I’m looking forward to getting to know more people as time goes on.

“The biggest thing for me is that I’m close to lots of amenities, including the local hospital, and I feel right in the centre of things,” she adds.

“Plus my home feels like it’s brand-new, it’s absolutely spotless and I



really enjoy living in it, more so than I ever thought.”

Like (grand)father, like daughter

■ Albany local Amy Trouchet is most certainly following in her grandfather’s footsteps.

18-year-old Amy has been accompanying her grandfather, Robert Hickling, every Wednesday when he volunteers at RAAFA’s Amity Village as the regular weekly bus driver.

And as well as providing assistance to the residents while they are shopping by helping carry the bags and also giving them a helping hand on and off the bus, she admits she enjoys having a good chat with everyone too.

Amy says she was inspired to help out after seeing her grandfather volunteer his time at the village every week, and remembering how much she loved volunteering with her grandmother a few years ago.

“I used to volunteer at the Red Cross with my grandmother when I was younger, and it made me realise how much I love helping others,” says Amy, who graduated from Year 12 last year.

“I absolutely love volunteering at Amity, all of the residents have got a great sense of humour and

always have such big smiles on their faces, they make me smile too and spending time with them is honestly the highlight of my week.

“Volunteering with my grandpa is just the best thing and although the residents say they enjoy my company, they have no idea about how much joy they bring me too.”

Amy’s grandfather, Robert, a born and bred Albany local, has been volunteering regularly at Amity for over six years and, as well as helping out every Wednesday, sometimes fills in the gaps when other drivers aren’t available.

“I love taking the residents out, they are all lovely people and they seem to like me too,” he laughs.

“I think they see me as a careful driver who is pretty placid and has plenty of patience, and on top of that I’ve always loved driving so volunteering as a driver has always been something I’ve enjoyed.

“And now I get to volunteer alongside my granddaughter Amy each week, which really makes Wednesdays the best day of the week.”



Strategies for stopping the spread

■ There are many terms that have increased in popularity over the last two years as we have lived with COVID-19, from ‘pivoting’ to ‘social distancing’, ‘shielding’ and most recently, the words ‘donning and doffing’, which are now on everyone’s lips at RAAFA estates.

The phrase has been given to the COVID-19 outbreak management training which has been rolled out across all RAAFA sites, and refers to the work undertaken to ensure staff are properly putting on – donning, and taking off – doffing, their Personal Protection Equipment, often referred to as PPE.

Louise Maton, Learning and Development Specialist, explains that an absolute priority at RAAFA is to keep all residents and staff safe, which is why a consistent training program has been rolled out across the organisation, from the two estates in Perth’s north – Merriwa and Cambrai – to Amity down in Albany, and everywhere in between.

“For us it’s about making sure everyone is prepared for any COVID-19 outbreak,” explains Louise.

“Our donning and doffing training

program is focused on ensuring our staff put on their PPE in a safe manner, and importantly, also take it off to avoid any contamination, and to do this we ensure they have a colleague to watch them and do what we call a buddy check.

“The training has taken the form of small groups across our organisation, where staff have learned about the correct application of PPE, in addition to infection control measures and COVID-19 precautions, all of which are strategies to contain and minimise the occurrence of the virus.”

As part of the training, staff have learnt how to appropriately apply their gowns, masks, gloves, eyewear and face shields to ensure they are fitted correctly, and taken off without any risk of contamination.

One staff member who has recently undergone the training is Ceridwen Fitzpatrick, Amity Retirement Wellbeing Officer, who said the course was extremely comprehensive and informative.

“It was relaxed and entertaining whilst covering important content in a very approachable way,” she says.



LtoR Jo Eade, Belinda Coultate, Ceridwen Fitzpatrick, Cheryl Clark and Andrew Cotton

From one charming town, to another

■ The stunning Scottish village of Plockton, often referred to as the 'Jewel of the Highlands', is known for its breathtaking scenery, secluded bays, coral beaches, islands, panoramic views and the possibility of seeing an array of marine life at close quarters. And for new RAAFA Amity Village resident Seonaid (pronounced Shornet) Mackay, her much-loved hometown reminds her very much of Albany.

"I miss Scotland at times, I used to go back every couple of years but of course, because of coronavirus, that hasn't been possible, though I'm very much hoping to go back next year," says Seonaid, who moved into Amity back in November.

"But I find that Albany very much reminds me of my hometown and I absolutely adore living in my new home."

Seonaid explains that she made the decision to move into the popular RAAFA village after her husband was diagnosed with dementia and needed to be moved into an aged care facility close by.

"I made an appointment with Cheryl the manager who showed me two houses here in the village. And I think I pretty much immediately said 'right then, I'll have that one. This is where I want to be'.

"I knew two or three people here already and I loved the location, it's so handy for town. It's a decision that I was certain of at the time, and it's been the right one for me, the people here are so friendly and I'm very settled already."

For 83-year-old Seonaid, who worked as a teacher for many years in both Scotland and England, making the move from the UK to Western Australia back in 1989 wasn't a particularly big deal.

"My husband was a pilot and when the pilot shortage occurred in Australia in 1989, he volunteered to help out and came over to Perth for a month. Well the rest, as they say, is history and he never went back; my son and I followed him out the following year in 1990 and we fell in love with the place too."

Fast forward to 2003, and the

couple moved from Perth to Albany after retirement.

"We frequently came down to Albany for caravan holidays and just loved it," Seonaid explains. "My husband was a keen golfer and really enjoyed the playing down here, and of course I just loved being around the hills and the sea."

And so, as a relatively new resident, does Seonaid have any advice for older women like herself who are considering the move into a retirement village?

"I would thoroughly recommend it," she says.

"There's a happy hour every Friday at 5.00pm which I love going to, and I'm really enjoying getting together with the singing group on



Monday afternoons. Plus, I've been making the effort to go to the pool every morning which really gets my day off to a good start.

"Put simply, I don't think I could be in a better place, I just adore living here."



Sunday roasts popular

■ The Sunday roast continues to be very popular at Amity Village Albany with happy diners enjoying a delicious roast meal prepared by chef Rudi. A recent menu included roast duckling with gravy and apple sauce, brussel sprouts, peas and carrots Parisian style, delicious red cabbage and potato fingers followed by chocolate mousse.

Rudi and the social group are also hosting a Thursday 'International

Lunch' once a month and residents are invited to try flavours from around the world, such as chicken maharani, Swiss casseroles and Asian noodle salads.

The lunches are available as takeaway too in case you can't make it down to the club or if you don't feel like cooking dinner.

We can't wait for the next one!

103 not out

■ He may have recently celebrated his 103rd birthday, but Meadow Springs resident and retired sportsman Ben Shom is still sharp as a tac.

"My sister is going to be 106 in August, so I've got pretty good genes," says the ex-servicemen, who was bestowed the highest honour in Australian baseball back in 2018 when he was inducted into the Baseball Australia Hall of Fame.

"I haven't really got any secrets to living to a ripe old age, apart from to live a good, healthy life and to keep on breathing," he laughs.

Ben began his baseball career in 1936, the inaugural year of baseball in WA. And, at the age of 17, he was picked to represent WA just a few years later, in 1939.

Unfortunately, the war interrupted things, but from 1946 Ben resumed

the sport and played for the next two decades. The keen sportsman became captain and coach of Victoria Park, where he led his team to their first premierships in 1946. He then went on to captain the 1949 and 1950 WA state teams.

During his time in the WA State League, he was known as an outstanding shortstop and a feared batter. He also played for a team called 'Boans Battlers', which was sponsored by Boans department store where he worked for many years, eventually becoming an Associate Director.

Then, in 1952, Ben became coach of the Northern Suburbs Club where he continued to dominate the competition both in the field and at the plate. In fact his most memorable year was in 1952, when not only did WA win the Claxton Shield, but he also won a place in the Australian team.



Besides baseball, Ben has played cricket and was wicket-keeper in an East Perth pennant winning side, and is a self-confessed mad sportsman.

But perhaps one of Ben's proudest life achievements is his long marriage of over 60 years to his now late wife Jeanie. The couple

were two of the original residents who moved into Meadow Springs after they left their home of 39 years in Wembley.

Congratulations Ben on reaching 103 not out, from all your friends at Meadow Springs.

101 candles for Norma

McNamara Lodge resident Norma Maguire celebrated her 101st birthday on Wednesday, 30 March, while openly admitting she's had an incredibly full and interesting life, and still enjoys her lifetime hobbies of reading, knitting and socialising.

And in a century that's seen two World Wars, the landing of man on the moon and, just recently, adventurers being blasted into space, as well as a myriad of other world-shaping events, Norma puts her longevity down to having good genes.

"I come from a long line of tough old goats, we've always lived to great ages," laughs Norma, who was born in Melbourne in 1921 and grew up in Hawthorn.

"I had a pretty rough childhood and upbringing, but I'm happy to be here to tell the tale."

Describing her life as a little 'weird' at times, Norma ran away from home when she was just 14 years old, signing up as a new army recruit just prior to WWII breaking out.

"I put my age up and got in, and off I went to Darwin, where I found myself during the bombings, and then travelled on to New Guinea," she explains.

"They were challenging times, but I

reached the rank of Staff Sergeant, and I guess to a certain extent I was following in the footsteps of my father, who was in the navy and who served in WWI."

Norma went on to marry one of her childhood friends, with whom she grew up with in Melbourne.

"We lived in the same street and were pretty much always together when we were growing up," she explains. "He was in the navy and I was in the army, but as soon we could we got married and it was a good, happy marriage."

Norma and her husband, who were married for 60 years, went on to have three children, Ray, Lesley and Allan. Today Norma has nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, all of whom are dotted around Australia.

Known by all at McNamara Lodge as an incredibly kind and caring person, Norma celebrated her birthday with a morning tea at the not-for-profit home, which of course included birthday cake.

McNamara Lodge Manager, Susan De Klerk, says Norma is an inspiring lady who still enjoys knitting regularly and, incredibly, doesn't need glasses or hearing aids.

"Everyone at McNamara Lodge likes and respects Norma very much



and we're all delighted that she has reached this major milestone; we'll be making a big fuss of her on her birthday, and we'll also make sure she does some of her favourite things," she says.

"Maintaining good health throughout life is a key factor

when it comes to ageing well, but things like continuing to enjoy lifelong hobbies and maintaining relationships with family and friends are just as important to positive ageing, which we place a strong emphasis on here at McNamara Lodge."

Going for gold

They may not be Olympians – or even tri-athletes – but residents at Erskine Grove in Mandurah took part in their own mini-Olympics recently.

The brainchild of David Lloyd, President of the Branch Resident's Committee, the two-day event involved 32 official competitors, with dozens more enjoying the fun and fellowship that was part and parcel of the event.

And it's fair to say that the competitive spirit was very much alive and well on the estate, with residents taking part in darts, pool, carpet bowls, bocce and quoits games, to name a few, with others cheering along from the sideline.

David explains that the event took almost six weeks of planning and organising, with the main objective to create some fun and friendly rivalry, where residents could get to meet others on the estate and make new friends.

"We also wanted participants to experience the thrill of being part of a sporting team again, whilst enjoying social interaction and an element of competition," he says.

And at the end of the fun-filled weekend, a closing ceremony was held where the teams lined up to march into the venue, led by Australian flag-waving (and

temporarily wheelchair-bound) resident Peter Nicolay, who represented the Para-Olympians.

David explains that an invitation was sent to the head of the Commonwealth to present the winning medals at the end of the competition, but he was advised that the Queen was unfortunately, not available.

"So we invited the next best person, the very English and proper Mrs Hyacinth Bouquet (a role played by Denise Nicolay), who graced us with her presence on stage and awarded gold, silver and bronze medals, to the lucky winners and runners-up," he says.

"I'm pleased to report that, at this point, the audience really got into the spirit of things with lots of cheering, hooting and blowing of whistles," David laughs.

And we have it on good authority that the photos of family members holding their medals have subsequently gone viral, having been sent all over Australia, and indeed the world.

"There's certainly a few grandchildren out there who never expected to see their grandparents win an Olympic medal, and that, in itself, is gold isn't it?" adds David.

"Everyone really did take the whole thing in good spirits and the general



consensus was that the weekend was a real tonic."

The event wrapped up with a sausage sizzle and some drinks,

which were also very well received. So congratulations to everyone at Erskine who joined in the fun. The team at RAAFA think you're all winners!

Club Bites

CAMBRAI CLUB 9304 5400 or if unattended 0417 922 658

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)
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



BULL CREEK CLUB 9311 4460

Open for light breakfast and lunch Monday to Friday and dinner every Friday. Check Club for details.
Check out our winter menu.

Weekly specials

Monday to Friday, light breakfast 9.00am to 10.00am
Monday, Roast \$16.00
Tuesday, Fish and chips \$16.00
1st and 3rd Thursday, Lamb shanks \$22.00
2nd and 4th Thursday, Lambs fry and bacon \$16.00
Monday and Wednesday, Happy hour 4.00pm



Mavericks and Erskine Grove residents' lunch

Shamrocks and shenanigans

They may not have Irish heritage, but that didn't stop members of the Erskine Grove Branch Committee organising a St Patrick's day dinner that charmed pretty much every resident on the estate.
The traditional estate St Patrick's day meal was cancelled due to Covid precautions, which led to celebrating the 'luck of the Irish' in a different way.

Members of the committee worked with Erskine's caterers to create a special Irish dinner which, proved more popular than a four-leaf clover.
Plus, it was delivered to residents' homes by a band of leprechauns, otherwise known as Bob and Hazel Smoothy and David and Shirley Lloyd.

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 \$15.00
Tuesday, Fish and chips lunch \$15.00
1st & 3rd Wednesday, Asian lunch special \$16.00
2nd & 4th Wednesday, Indian lunch special \$16.00
Wednesday, Club Night – meal \$15.00, chase the ace, bingo & horse racing
Thursday, Happy hour, 4.30pm, Kelly's pool from 3.30pm
Friday, 10 June, Lambs fry and bacon special \$15.00
Friday, 17 June, Dining night
Friday, 8 July, Lambs fry and bacon special \$15.00

Events

Sunday, 5 June, Queen's Jubilee High Tea
Friday, 22 July, Christmas in July

Function facilities

Available for hire to all RAAFA members. Choose from the Beaufort Restaurant and Middleton Hall, which have a 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 wander 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.



Easter Club Night

MERRIWA CLUB

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.



LtoR David Lloyd, Hazel and Bob Smoothy

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

Easter fun

Easter fun and indulgence was enjoyed by residents. What better combination than Easter buns, chocolate, and the company of friends.

RAT testing

Many residents are feeling much more confident in how to do a RAT (Rapid Antigen Test) following a personal step by step tutorial with Suzanne, the Wellbeing Officer. If anyone remains concerned about how to do a RAT, they are more than welcome to contact Suzanne for assistance.



Amity Village

Dementia awareness

An opportunity to learn about dementia from three different perspectives was provided with information from Di from Pillars of Support and two residents.

Di works with people diagnosed with dementia, their family, and carers to better understand the disease and to better meet the needs of the individual. Di spoke about risk factors, what dementias

are, what they can look like, and how we can support each other when someone has memory issues.

Dot Price has lived with Alzheimer's disease for several years, and spoke about the frustrations, triumphs, and journey of the condition. Dot has found Amity Village to be a wonderfully understanding and supportive place to live.

Tony Cusack presented a prepared statement about his experience as a carer for his wife.



Cambrai Village

RAT testing

The past months have seen many residents completing a one-on-one RAT test demonstration with Vanessa Priestley.

"Many had not had the need to complete a RAT test before, with some unsure of how to complete the test accurately", says Vanessa.

The demonstration consisted of a short educational video from the Department of Health on how to complete a nasal RAT, followed by a practical one-on-one demonstration, learning how to accurately complete the test and read the results.

Residents were provided with a simple step-by-step guide to follow at home, along with contact numbers to report any positive



readings to the Health Dept with many saying "that they now feel more confident to do their own RAT tests in their own home if need be".

Erskine Grove

Mavericks

The Mavericks and others from Erskine Grove enjoyed a trip to the RAAFA Club at Bull Creek for lunch. The fish and chips seemed to be the popular choice for the day and we were joined by Sandy Komen, Graham Bland and a friend who volunteers at the museum.

With the use of the Meadow Springs bus everyone was delivered back to

their front door after a very pleasant day out. Thanks to the volunteers and Meadow Springs Estate for helping us make it happen.

Easter egg run

The Easter bunny was busy this year at Erskine Grove, hopping around the estate sharing some Easter cheer and eggs to the fanfare of fun tunes as residents were out and about in their gardens, enjoying a coffee and also a few village artists in the craft room.



Meadow Springs

Pop up shop

It was that time of year again when local business The Shoe Box paid a visit with their new range of Homyped shoes. Residents snapped up some bargains and comfy slippers ready for winter.

Meet and greet

Mischa facilitates a new residents meet and greet every 3 to 6 months. It's a great opportunity for our new residents to meet each other as well as an informal introduction to the staff that work across the estate by partaking in fun activities.

Easter fun

With restrictions reduced the estate was alive with bunnies and activities.



AFME

Mateship

Given we have heard about COVID-19 for what seems like an eternity, I will turn to a sense of mateship and caring that is well demonstrated on AFME daily.

In the office we have a sense of family and team and mateship that I have not seen to this degree in my work life before. I believe this environment lends itself to one family and genuine mateship.

It seems everybody has the time to stop and share some news, perhaps a laugh, and always an ear.

Volunteers take my breath away with their selfless service to others. Neighbours get sick or die and everyone rallies around with a deep sense of shared concern or grief.

The wildlife we are so lucky to have with our creek and lake are a source of much joy and peace in our daily meanderings.

In the spirit of "Are you ok?" I think it behoves all of us to reach out to others in times of need.

I always think, "There but for the grace of God go I".