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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

Club refurbishment thrills



We are thrilled with the results of the RAAFA Club refurbishments at Cambrai Village and hope you will be too.

The project started back in 2021 when a proposal was put forward by the Residents Committee for the refurbishment of both the Cambrai Village Club and Piccardy Room. Following the formation of

a working party, an interior designer was contracted to assist with colour choice, design, furniture and artwork selection.

The extensive project included the removal of the existing stage which was unsafe, new cabinetry, bar upgrade, painting, new functional furniture and artworks. The dance floor was sanded and lacquered to a

mirror-like finish and a state-of-the-art AV system installed providing live streaming across both rooms to cater for larger events.

Electronic doors have replaced the old heavy doors and a new portable modular stage is now available.

At the re-opening celebrations held in August, Chief Operating Officer,

Tonia Zeeman thanked Resident Committee past chairperson, Pat Hassett for being the driving force behind the project.

The refurbishment provides a fresh, relaxing place for residents, members and their guests to savour each day and live their best life.

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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 AM

50th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War

Having been called up for National Service in 1968-69 it was a great honour to attend the 50th anniversary service at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on ANZAC Parade, Canberra on Long Tan Day on 18 August.

It was a damp and cold morning, but that did not stop the enthusiasm of 2,500 people turning out to recognise the contribution of over 60,000 Australian service men and women who served our Nation during the 10 long years of that conflict and honour the 521 who lost their lives. In his message His Excellency General the

Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor General proudly announced, "Your contribution to the ANZAC legacy and the modern Australian Defence Force should never be overlooked".

It was an honour to stand in 'acknowledgement' before the Federation Guard to the applause of the thousands of people present and to share in the emotional and never-to-be forgotten service.

The official Air Force Association (AFA) wreath was solemnly laid by our National President Carl Schiller OAM, CSM and Lance Halvorson (past editor of Wings magazine) who both served with the RAAF in Vietnam. I was delighted and honoured to lay the wreath on behalf of the AFA of Australia.

"You were given an impossible job, and you did it well. And you looked out for your mates, every step of the way. Fifty years from now, generations yet unborn will see those names enshrined on our national memorial, and they will know your story," said Minister Matt Keogh.

Battle for Australia Commemoration

One hundred people assembled under the Lancaster in the Aviation Heritage Museum on the Battle for Australia Day to recount conflicts that engulfed our Nation in northern

Australia, Papua New Guinea and the oceans of the Pacific during WWII. It was a marvellous service conducted by students from All Saints' College, music by their senior wind ensemble and closing entertainment by the jazz saints. The ode was recited by staff member Vanessa Kirkham and prayers by the Chaplain of All Saints' College the Rev. Liz Flanigan.

Wreaths were laid by the British Consul-General of the United Kingdom Maria Rennie and students from All Saints' College. Members of the Defence Forces, the Australian Air Force Cadets, representatives from ESO's, retirement villages and members laid crosses. Go to our Facebook page (RAAFWA) to see photos.

National Conference, Perth 2024

I am disappointed to advise that the planned National Conference in Perth next year has been cancelled. The National Board, after a number of meetings with our planning group, requested that it be delayed until a future time. There was concern by the National Board that as this was to be the first national conference after a long absence, it might be best held on the east coast.

Whilst we in WA were confident that a successful conference could be organised, there was some

apprehension around attendance necessary to make it a successful event. I would like to thank all our members that offered support for this venture.

Remembrance Day, 11 November

This is an important day in the national calendar. Services are to be held at all of our retirement villages and I ask you to follow up a ceremony near you. The Association will be participating in the official ceremony at King's Park.

Personal remembrances have also been shared in this edition. I hope you enjoy.

Annual General Meeting Friday 27 October

Registration for the 2023 Annual General Meeting opens at 9.30am at the RAAFA Club, in Bull Creek with proceedings commencing at 10.30am.

Agenda papers and financial report will be available from Central Support Office and in each village prior to the AGM. The Annual Report will be available at the AGM. The Club will be open from 9.00am for those wishing to kick-off the day with a cup of coffee with friends. Nominations for the Division Council and Notices of Motion have now closed. I encourage all members to attend.

RAAFA Annual General Meeting 2023

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

By Norm Waldie,
Secretary
Friday, 27 October 2023

Registration commences at 9.30am with the meeting commencing at 10.30am at the RAAFA Club, Bull Creek. Morning tea will be provided.

Nominations for Division Council positions and Notices of Motion have now closed.

If you would like to stay for lunch after the AGM, the Club will have the following meals available for purchase for \$20 each:

- Grilled fish served with fries and salad
- Beer battered fish with fries and salad
- Loaded vegetable quiche with fries and salad
- Pie of the day served with fries and salad
- Roast of the day served with roast potatoes and vegetables.

Staying informed

Residents at RAAFA Challenger Court enjoyed the opportunity to get together and have morning tea while staying informed at the August general meeting.

The team discussed various new initiatives including possible intergenerational opportunities with a local primary school, starting a

social group and future event ideas as well as the creation of an art committee.

Chief Operating Officer, Tonia Zeeman attended, answering residents' queries, which was well received by the residents who really appreciated the open discussions.



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Air Mail story
deadlines

3 November for December / January
5 January for February / March
8 March for April / May

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

Message from the CEO



By Michelle Fyfe

Communication

R U OK day on Thursday, 14 September was a good reminder to take a moment to stop and think

about how we communicate with others. Stopping and taking the time to ask this one question shows that you've noticed, connected, and that you care.

Asking R U OK is one question that can change a person's life. You don't have to have all the answers, you just need to make it known that you are there to listen and to start the conversation.

George Bernard Shaw said, "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

Most of us think that we communicate well and that people understand what we are trying to say. But, while much of communication is about speaking, it is also about listening and seeking to understand.

RAAFA is an amazingly diverse organisation that has been great at sharing information for many years. Over time, we have grown into a complex entity that is now catering to many different needs and this means that we must evolve, make changes and do it better.

In the coming months you will see changes in the way we communicate with everyone, including our members and residents, our staff and to the broader community.

Good communication is always a two-way street. It is about supplying information as well as listening, engaging and valuing others' opinions whilst conveying the views of the organisation.

Part of effective communication is seeking to understand, being open

to new ideas and being respectful of other people's opinion. Conveying information based on truth using facts and data rather than gossip and rumors.

And sometimes, you may find that you don't like what you are hearing and that's okay. It is the opening of a respectful and kind dialogue.

Connection and creating strong communities are a core part of RAAFA and we have extended the distribution of this publication to include those who have expressed interest in living on one of our amazing estates. It is designed to keep you in touch with the latest news and provide an insight into the RAAFA lifestyle. If you wish to opt out, simply email membership@raafawa.org.au.

McIntosh inducted into the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame



We are both excited and proud to be attending the induction of Lieutenant John Cowe McIntosh AFC into the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame on 21 October 2023.

Since its inception in 2011, the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame has honoured 51 Australians who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of aviation and aerospace in this nation. We are delighted that John McIntosh has been inducted and to be able to continue his legacy.

John McIntosh was a British-born Australian aviator, born in Scotland in 1892, and later immigrating to Western Australia. At the outbreak of WWI John enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Corps, serving with the 4th Field Ambulance in Gallipoli and France, where he reached the rank of Corporal. In 1918, John transferred to the Australian Flying Corps and commenced flying training in England. He was promoted to Lieutenant a year later.

After the end of WWI, the Australian government offered a prize of £10,000 for the first flight from England to Australia, with six crews entering. John joined forces with Ray Parer and although leaving well after the event had been won by a twin-engined Vickers Vimy flown

by Ross and Keith Smith, arrived in Darwin on 2 August 1920.

Their aircraft was a modified Airco DH-9, G-EAQM (known as 'PD'), and was the only other entrant to successfully complete the race. John and Ray Parer were both awarded the Air Force Cross (AFC) for this feat on 23 November 1920, receiving £500 prize money each.

The flight took 208 days, with the aircraft in the air for 168 hours. It was the first single engined aircraft to complete the 20,800km flight and you can see the aircraft on display in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Tragically John McIntosh was killed in an aircraft accident in 1921 at Pithara, 240km north of Perth. It was the first fatal aircraft accident in WA.

Following his death, the people of Western Australia rallied together to raise funds to bring his wife and child over from UK. The leftover funds were used to create the McIntosh Memorial Scholarship Trust which was originally held in the Soldiers Children's Scholarship Trust. Following several changes, the Trust was transferred to RAAFA in 1983 to manage. We are proud to have been able to use these funds to help further education.



LtoR Ray Parer and John McIntosh

McIntosh Scholarship

Now Open

The McIntosh Memorial Scholarship is open to descendants of persons who have and/or are enlisted for service in any branch of the RAAF and Commonwealth Air Forces. These could be your children, grandchildren, or even great grandchildren!

The McIntosh Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund was established in 1921 by the people of Western Australia to perpetuate the memory of WWI flyer, Lieutenant John Cowe McIntosh, AFC. He was killed in an aircraft crash near Pithara, WA on Easter Monday 1921.

The Award for the 2024 academic year will be \$5,000 and is usually used by students to help defray the costs of equipment, books, or activities associated with their studies.

Persons must be undertaking a first course of tertiary education full-time, in any year of that course, and must reside in Western Australia to apply for the scholarship.

Application forms and information on the scholarship are available on our website: raafawa.org.au

Applications close on 15 November 2023

Pausing for Vietnam Veterans' Day

On 18 August, RAAFA commemorated Vietnam Veterans' Day, a day that coincides with the Battle of Long Tan, which was fought in 1966.

On the day, a moving ceremony was held at AFME to recognise the service of all Australians who served in the Vietnam War, and to honour the sacrifices that they and their families made. Go to our Facebook page (RAAFWA) to see more photos from the day.

Organised by the Combined Defence Force Support Association (CDFSA), the event remembered the sacrifices of those who died and honoured the almost 60,000 Australians who served during the 10 years of our involvement in the Vietnam War.

David Cocks, President of CDFSA, said the ceremony - which included a lone bugler who played the Last Post and a RAAF fly past in a Pilatus PC-21 at 11.00am - was a fitting tribute to those who served Australia selflessly on the field of battle when their nation called.

"Quite appropriately, on Vietnam Veterans' Day, we paused to recognise the men and women who served in the Vietnam War, 50 years after it ended," says David, who served in the Navy himself for over eight years.

"The Vietnam War was era-defining, and the longest conflict Australia

was involved in during the 20th century.

"Some 60,000 Australians who served in Vietnam deserve our utmost gratitude and respect; 521 gave their lives in the conflict and over 3,000 were wounded.

"At that time in Australia there was growing opposition for the war, and so upon their return, our Vietnam veterans did not always receive the acknowledgement they were due. However, today they form the backbone of our veteran community."

Vietnam Veterans' Day is held on the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, the costliest single encounter fought by Australian troops during the war. The Battle of Long Tan was one of many actions, large and small, in which Australians fought in Vietnam.

Did you know?

The Combined Defence Force Support Association (CDFSA) is an independent voice for Australian Defence Force members, veterans, and their families.

The organisation advocates to government on matters affecting the welfare of this group of Australians, in areas including: ADF pay and conditions of service, rehabilitation of injured veterans, compensation for service injuries, retirement and superannuation,



improving service delivery and veteran recognition.

Fast facts: Vietnam Veterans' Day

Commemorated on 18 August every year, the day was originally known as Long Tan Day, chosen to commemorate the men of D Company, 6RAR who fought in the battle of Long Tan in 1966.

On that day, 108 Australian and New Zealand soldiers fought a pitched battle against over 2,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops in

a rubber plantation not far from the small village of Long Tan.

The Australians prevailed, but only after fighting in torrential rain for four hours. They were nearly overrun, but were saved by a timely ammunition resupply, accurate artillery fire from the nearby Australian base, and the arrival of reinforcements by armoured personnel carrier.

Eighteen Australians lost their lives and 24 were wounded, the largest number of casualties in one operation since the Australian task force had arrived a few months earlier.

Remembering on Remembrance Day

For nonagenarian and RAAFA Challenger Court resident, Bevan Larkin, Remembrance Day is always significant and brings back memories of his days as a seaman in the Royal Australian Navy.

"I always spend the day at the Navy Association in Rockingham," says the father of three, grandfather to eight and great grandfather to 10.

"I was in the Royal Australian Navy for 12 years and the Naval Reserve for five and I also had two brothers-in-law who survived WWII, but one was a prisoner of war with

the Japanese and the second was captured by the Germans. Both survived, but I had many mates who died, many of them in Korea, and so Remembrance Day is very important to me."

At just 17 and a half years old, in November 1948, Bevan was sworn in as a recruit seaman with the Royal Australian Navy. Two months later, he boarded a train to Melbourne and joined HMAS Cerberus to commence his seamanship training, which he describes as 'very intense'.

"Once I had completed my training, I was drafted to HMAS Shoalhaven for sea training, and late in 1949 the ship was sent to Japan as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF)," Bevan explains.

"Then on 25 June 1950, news was received that North Korea

had attacked South Korea. At that time our ship was in Japan, so we were ordered to sail from Sasebo, a city on Japan's Kyushu Island, to escort an American troopship to South Korea, where we arrived on my 19th birthday."

Bevan recalls that the ship's duties at that time were mainly escorting other vessels and making sure they had safe passage, or shelling strategic coastal positions.

Then, at the end of his tour of duty, the Shoalhaven returned to Australia where Bevan disembarked and undertook a torpedo anti-submarine course at HMAS Rushcutter, after which he was drafted to HMAS Warramunga, which then sailed back to Japan and North Korea.

It was as a result of the active service that Bevan and his comrades experienced at that time, in particular coming under heavy fire by the Chinese, that the ship's company was awarded the South Korean Presidential Unit Citation, though regulations at the time prevented them from accepting or wearing the medal.

And understandably, it was his time spent serving in Korea that made 27 July 2023 all the more special - the day of the Perth Korean Memorial dedication ceremony at Kings Park.

"It was incredibly special to be there on the day and see the memorial, which is dedicated to all the West Australians who served in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953," explains Bevan.

"It is a magnificent memorial which includes the names of all the West Australians who served in Korea, a total of 1923, of which only 88 veterans remain today.

"The day also marked the 70th anniversary of the signing of the peace treaty, so it really was a monumental day in so many ways.

"For me it is very much up there with Remembrance Day, an incredibly important day to remember those who served and those who lost their lives in the line of duty."

Lest we forget.



Looking out to sea, remembering

Erskine Grove's latest resident, Jill Green, says she couldn't be happier with the move she made just two months ago, into what she refers to as the most friendly and delightful village.

"It's just so easy to make friends here," says the octogenarian who has both a fascinating and somewhat tragic life story.

Jill hails from a naval family - she was born in 1940 to parents Marjorie and Lieutenant William Langford, who was nicknamed 'Scrub' by his mates due to his very smart appearance.

But tragically, Jill never got to meet her father, as he lost his life on 27 November, when his ship - HMAS Parramatta II - was torpedoed in the Mediterranean off the North African coast, the third Australian warship lost to enemy action in WWII.

The Parramatta, which was in company with a British escort destroyer, was escorting an ammunition ship, SS Hanne, westwards towards Tobruk. Early on the morning of 27 November, as she was escorting the SS Hanne with emergency supplies of ammunition, the Parramatta was torpedoed by a German submarine at a range of about 1500 metres.

Another almost simultaneous explosion occurred, and the ship rolled over and sank within minutes. Her commanding officer,

Lieutenant-Commander Walker, gave the order to abandon ship, but few of the men managed to get away. Only 24 of the ship's company of 162 were saved. Sadly, Bill and all of Parramatta's officers were amongst those lost, together with eight members of the Royal Navy travelling on the ship.

Heartbreakingly, Bill was actually very close to returning to Australia, where letters to his wife confirmed that he couldn't wait to meet his daughter for the first time.

But despite the tragedy of never meeting her father, Jill has gone on to lead a full and rich life, marrying her husband Kevin and having her own children, a son and a daughter, and now four grandchildren.

And very touchingly, on 17 June 2004, almost 59 years after her father's death, Jill was invited to launch the new ANZAC frigate, HMAS Parramatta IV, at the Williamstown Dockyard in Victoria. In her speech she spoke of meeting some of the survivors from her father's ship and of the collection of her father's letters to her mother which she still treasures today.

"They were a very touching and remarkable record of life on board the Parramatta which helped me to appreciate the character and personality of the father I never knew," she says.

Significantly, Jill always felt there

should be a memorial to the Parramatta in Fremantle, from where it sailed on 29 June 1940.

"I started campaigning for the memorial and then a lovely chap on the Fremantle council heard what I wanted to do and really helped the memorial to become a reality," she explains.

"And so we raised the money needed, around \$10,000, and now we have a memorial to the Parramatta on Memorial Hill in Fremantle.

"It's really a wonderful achievement of which I am very proud, and it's where I spend every Remembrance Day - looking out to sea and remembering."

A brief history

HMAS Parramatta II was the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) second Parramatta which served in the Far East, Red Sea and the Mediterranean during WWII.

HMAS Parramatta II was built by Cockatoo Docks and Engineering Co Ltd at the Cockatoo Island Dockyard, Sydney. She was launched on 10 June 1939 and commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy on 8 April 1940, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Jefferson H Walker MVO, RAN.

Parramatta began her journey on 29 June 1940, leaving Fremantle to



sail to the Red Sea, where she spent nine months in torrid conditions undertaking escorting, patrolling and minesweeping duties. In 1941, she took part in operations against Italian Eritrea, East Africa, and later transferred to the Mediterranean station, escorting supplies to the Allied Forces besieged at Tobruk, thus gaining the nickname 'Tobruk Ferry Service'.

On the morning of 27 November 1941, HMAS Parramatta II was hit by a torpedo launched by the German submarine U-559. The vessel was sunk off Tobruk and, tragically, only 24 crew members survived.

Celebrating 90 years

Like many members of our RAAFA community, Norman Ashworth has had a full and accomplished life, though it's probably fair to say that not many RAAFA members have had a mountain named after them.

But for the new nonagenarian - Norman celebrated his 90th birthday with his 90-year-old partner, Barbara, and around 100 family and friends just a few months ago - Mount Ashworth, as it has been named (which lies a short way in from the coast of Antarctica, due south of New Zealand) is now very much entrenched in the mapped area of the southernmost continent.

Norman Ashworth was born in Sydney and moved to WA with his family when he was just 12 years old.

He went to Perth Boys School and then Perth Modern, before joining the Air Force when he was 17, an idea spawned by his mother after she went to an Air Force recruitment event and enquired if her son could study meteorology, something he had shown interest in but ultimately did not pursue.

And as a result, Norman went

on to serve 37 years in the Royal Australian Air Force where he lived all over Australia, and also spent two years in Jakarta as a military attaché. In 1962 he met and married his wife, Margaret, and the couple went on to have three children, a daughter and two sons.

"We loved living in Jakarta, it was a fascinating place," says Norman, who recently moved from his home of 32 years in Wembley Downs to the Orion Terraces apartments at AFME," adds Norman.

"The decision to move was easy. During my married life in the Air Force we lived in 17 different homes, so moving was not a problem.

"However, I must admit that downsizing did entail a few difficult choices. Having reached the age of 90 I decided now was the time to sample the delights of retirement estate living. That I was offered an apartment in Orion Terraces was an added bonus, as I spent the peak of my career in the Air Force flying maritime patrol aircraft like, and including, the P3 Orion."

Norman explains that while he was serving in the Air Force, he flew a

seaplane along the coast over two summers to help map Antarctica.

"At that time there was a lot of mapping being undertaken in the area and lots of new features to name, so that's how Mount Ashworth came about," he says.

Norman was living in Canberra when he retired in 1988, with the rank of Air Commodore, and his late wife suggested the couple move back to Perth where they both enjoyed the warmer climate.

"My wife decided that she wanted to live somewhere where frangipanis would grow, and also our daughter was living in Perth so we moved to the west," explains the father to three, grandfather to seven and great grandfather to two.

"In early retirement I also got very involved with RAAFA and served on the Division Council throughout the



90s, including 12 months as Division Vice President. During that time land was being acquired to build Merriwa, Meadow Springs, Cambrai and Erskine estates.

"It was a significant period of expansion at RAAFA and a very exciting time to serve on the Council," he adds.

"And it was during that time that I realised what fantastic estates RAAFA operated, so I knew I would be very pleased to call AFME home myself one day."

Celebrating 25 years at Meadow Springs

It's fair to say that RAAFA's Meadow Springs Estate resident Allan Elliott has a long history with the popular community, given he largely project-managed its construction back in the 1990s.

At that time, Allan was the General Manager of RAAFA (WA Division), before stepping aside from the role and taking on the responsibility of project manager for the new Meadow Springs estate in 1998.

"When I started in the job it was all just bush around here," says Allan, who has been a resident at the popular estate along with his wife Clorene for the entire 25 years it has been around.

"You can't imagine it now, but back then there were lots of kangaroos and rabbits around, and no houses at all.

"And then I was here when the first bulldozer came in, it was actually very hilly ground so the first thing that needed to happen was for it all to be flattened right out."

As the project manager, Allan watched the very first home to be constructed at the estate, and also nearly the very last.

"It was such an interesting project, we started building house number one and then when I retired house number 240 was just being completed," Allan recalls.

"In those days the building time was around 14 or 15 weeks, but then we started having a shortage of tradespeople and construction of the new homes started to slow, meaning it could take anything up to five months to finish a home.

"But the homes were still as popular as ever, and as soon as one was finished residents literally moved straight in, pretty much immediately."

One standout memory for Allan was when the first office assistant on the estate, a young woman named Vanessa, found she had a bit of time on her hands.

"At that time, a trench needed to be dug to connect the power from what is now the wellness centre to Portrush Parade," recalls Allan.

"It was quite an unusual sight to see Vanessa and her work colleague Mel working knee-high in a trench and digging," he laughs. "But they did a great job and, sure enough,

soon after they finished the trench the electricity and telephone was all connected up."

According to Allan, working on the project was a bit like putting together a huge jigsaw puzzle, as the main road - Portrush Parade - wasn't at that time constructed, nor was any of the estate's infrastructure, including the clubhouse.

"When Clorene and I moved in, we first lived at the wellness centre, which was going to be the caretaker's cottage, but after six months we moved into house number 58," explains Allan, who has been married to his wife - the love of his life - for more than 66 years.

"Back then there was a gate on the road over the bridge for the golf course which was locked at night



and the builders would unlock in the mornings.

"And even at that stage, there were kangaroos and rabbits to deal with when securing the gate," he recalls.

"Even since those first early days, this estate has always been a really friendly, welcoming community. Clorene and I have always loved living here, and to know all of the history as we approach the 25th anniversary is really pretty special too."

Variety is the spice of life

By any stretch of the imagination, one of Meadow Springs most recent residents, Marie Agrifoglio, has led a full and rich life, having lived in England, Australia, Malaysia and America during her 87 years.

The English born octogenarian started out life in 1935, when she was born in Southend-on-Sea just a few years prior to WWII.

"I was actually evacuated to Derbyshire all on my own when I was a small child, but it was only for a short time as I remember going back home before the war ended. We used to run out to the dugout when we heard the bomb sirens," recalls Marie, who has one son, two grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

In 1965, Marie and her four-year-old son became £10 Poms, migrating to Australia, where they moved around extensively, living in various different states and towns included Broken Hill and Cape Lambert.

Fast forward to 1985, and Marie decided to go on an adventure to America, where she met her second husband, an ex-Vietnam veteran, in Hawaii. The pair got married a couple of years later, after which they settled in Texas for over 15 years, with Marie finding herself immersed in the local veteran community.

The couple were married for over 30 years, but when Bob passed away in 2017, Marie decided to move back to her home country of England to live, though after two years she decided to return to Australia.

"My late husband and I used to visit family in Perth every couple of years and we became members of RAAFA which enabled us to stay temporarily in the short stay accommodation units at both Meadow Springs and Bull Creek,

which we very much enjoyed," explains Marie.

"So, when I decided to move back to Australia, I was very familiar with Meadow Springs as a retirement estate, and my granddaughter was very good to me and generally chauffeured me around. She brought me to visit the estate again and when I walked into my new house, I knew it was the one. It's really lovely, like a brand-new home, and I feel very safe here, plus the people are really welcoming and friendly."

By her own admission, Marie says she is always keen for a new adventure, and is leaving to go back to America later this year, where she's looking forward to catching up with her stepdaughter and her family in Texas, as well as attend a number of the veteran committee meetings that she was integral to setting up many years ago.

"I've always considered life to be an adventure, I certainly don't think of myself as anything special or that I've had a particularly interesting life, but I have enjoyed moving around and living in different countries and also different places in Australia.

"I guess they say variety is the spice of life, and I'm lucky enough to have lived in some interesting places, and have enjoyed a few adventures along the way."



Bowling season open

The Meadow Springs Bowling Club members couldn't wait to get out on the green and start the 2023-24 season.

The opening highlighted the tradition flag-up ceremony with the foundation members and an enjoyable afternoon tea. Following opening and welcome speeches the season kicked off with the first bowl delivered by Jade Lund, Office Coordinator.

CEO, Michelle Fyfe provided the keynote speech, making special mention of our inspirational foundation members. She went on to add that the replacement of the bowling greens can be expected early in the new year.

New members are welcome and if you would like to find out more, contact the club office or President Mike Lee 9582 5373 or 0422 442 260.



Maintaining firm friendships

Friends are important at every stage of life as RAAFA's George England and his firm-friend Stuart Krachler will attest.

And despite being a centenarian and a nonagenarian respectively, George and Stuart continue to meet every Friday for a coffee catch-up, something they have been doing for over a decade - rain, hail or shine.

The firm friends originally met via George's neighbour, and then serendipitously realised that their mothers were good friends when they lived close by in Albany over half a century ago.

"My parents moved to Albany where dad was a baker, and I'm not sure how they met but they became very close friends with George's parents, and when I chatted to my mum and dad over the years they would often talk about Mr and Mrs England," explains Stuart, who has just turned 92 years young and whose son and daughter take it in turns to drive him to have coffee with George every Friday.

"And then one day, I was catching up with a friend of mine who lived in

Booragoon, and he introduced me to his new neighbour. When he told me his name was George England, I asked if his parents were Mr and Mrs England who lived in Albany, and when he said yes, I said that I had heard all about them.

"That was a long time ago now, we have both lost our wives since that first meeting, but over the years we have developed a firm friendship and we catch up regularly. Everyone needs good friends and I'm so glad to be able to call George a close friend of mine."

George, who turned 100 earlier this year and still lives independently at home in his Mirage Terraces apartment at AFME, said he couldn't agree more.

"We regularly meet at the RAAFA Club every Friday and always have so much to talk about," explains the centenarian who, by his own admission, is still living life to the full and only gave up driving last year at 99 years of age.

"We're both retired bankers, Stuart worked for the Commonwealth Bank and I worked for Westpac,

so we had our careers in common when we first met and talked a lot about banking.

"On top of that, we're both still very interested in the share market, so often spend our Fridays talking about its ups and downs and what's worth buying and selling.

"Of course, we chat about family too and current affairs. I've known Stuart for over 30 years and our catch-ups every Friday are still one of the highlights of my week."

George's daughter, Jane, said it was a delight to see Stuart and her father's friendship continue on as strong as ever, despite them both been in their later years.

"Age can sometimes erode friendships but not in dad and



LtoR Stuart and George

Stuart's case; it really is heart-warming to see the companionship they share after so many decades of friendship," says Jane.

"We all know that having a friend with whom we can share our thoughts and ideas can significantly improve our mental health and outlook on life, so both families feel very fortunate that dad and Stuart can still take the time to meet and have a chinwag every week. It really is wonderful."

New taste sensation coming

We are excited to announce, the launch of a new taste sensation coming soon to a local RAAFA Club near you.

The RAAFA team has been working hard with local Indian Ocean Brewing Company. Together they have been striving to reach a common goal. To provide residents and members with a high quality locally sourced beer and cider.

Head brewer at Indian Ocean Brewing, Tom Flay, has been in the brewing business for over ten years. Using this experience, he has developed a methodology of brewing beer that is both cost effective and sustainable. The outcome is an amazing quality beer

that is both accessible in price and variety.

So come down and try the new taste sensation, which you will start to see available on tap at RAAFA Clubs soon.

Also, we wanted to share some other exciting news. Phil Campbell has taken over the stoves at the RAAFA Club in Bull Creek. Phil comes to us with vast experience having spent time running Frasers Restaurant and function center, Red Rock catering as well as the award-winning Salt Restaurant in Dunedin.

We look forward to seeing you at a local RAAFA Club near you.



Ditched plane finds a new home

The light plane that ditched into the ocean just off Perth's Leighton Beach in North Fremantle earlier this year has a new home, at our Aviation Heritage Museum in Bull Creek.

The Piper PA-28-181 Archer II landed in the water just after 5.00pm on 20 April, at the same time as beachgoers were enjoying a sunset swim at the popular beach. Pilot Michelle Yeates and her son Jacob both miraculously escaped serious injury after the plane experienced engine failure.

Trent Norris, museum manager, said the team at the museum was excited to receive the aircraft, complete with all of the dents and scratches it sustained as it hit the ocean.

"It's not often that a plane makes an emergency landing on a local Perth beach, so this aircraft already has some notoriety," says Trent.

"We have placed it on a paved area outside the museum and next to the RAAFA Club, and it is already receiving quite a bit of interest.

"The incident was certainly quite a significant news item back in April and most Perth locals are familiar with the incident and how the pilot was praised for expertly landing the aircraft in the circumstances. So we think having the Piper here at the museum represents an inspiring story of aviation survival."

Commercial pilot, Michelle Yeates, says she is very happy that the aircraft is getting a second life as an exhibit at the museum.

"I'm really excited that she will live on, so to speak, and hasn't died at the bottom of the ocean," says Michelle, an experienced commercial pilot who had been on her way to Jandakot Airport from Carnarvon with her son, when the aircraft's engine cut out.

"I hadn't actually visited the Aviation Heritage Museum before, but I'm very pleased to see her at her new home, we certainly shared a pretty hair-raising experience, and have both survived to tell the tale."

Loving life at Erskine

Like a lot of people who move into a RAAFA estate, Colin and Karen Bell say they wish they'd made the move much earlier.

"It's a common theme that we have heard a lot of people say," says Colin, who was born in Lancashire and served in the British Royal Navy for 24 years as an electrical engineering officer.

"It's so much better to be in a friendly estate like Erskine Grove, where you have so many people around and so much to do, rather than living on your own or not mixing with others because you're in the wider community and everyone around you is off to work every day."

Rewind a fair few years and Colin recalls the exact date he met his future wife Karen - it was 5 July 1979. He was on one of 12 warships that docked in Perth, Australia after serving in Borneo, and there was a cocktail party on the ship that first night.

"Karen came on board with a friend and we've pretty much been inseparable ever since, and that was

43 years ago," explains Colin, who was awarded the Borneo Campaign Medal during his time in the British Royal Navy, where he reached the rank of Chief Petty Officer.

As a result of that fateful meeting, Karen, who grew up in Katanning in the Wheatbelt and qualified as a nurse at Royal Perth Hospital, moved to England with her two young children, where she settled in Lancashire and where the couple got married just a few months later, in December 1980.

"When I ended my naval career I joined the police and served as a police officer for four years," explains Colin.

"And then we came on holiday to Australia and fell in love with the country all over again, so I returned home, retired from the police and we immigrated to Perth to live. I settled immediately but Karen was a little homesick for England, though we settled into life 'down under' soon enough.

After making the move, the couple lived in a few different suburbs in Perth over the years, including



Erskine, where they became involved with the bowls club.

"Then we did our research and decided to put our name down for the estate, and before we knew it we had a home to move into," says Colin.

"Since then, we haven't looked back, we've found the estate to be incredibly friendly and we just love

our house which feels brand-new.

"When we've settled in a bit more, we're really looking forward to giving everything here a red-hot go. And just like so many others have said as we've been chatting to our new neighbours, we're kicking ourselves that we didn't make the move to RAAFA much earlier."

Go Red Devils, go

Drum roll. A hush fell over the recreation centre and it was time to announce the winners of the Live Lighter Aged Care Games.

And the crowd roared as the RAAFA Red Devils were announced in 3rd place. Yoo hoo, what a wonderful achievement.

So, back to the beginning. Following many months of training, eight enthusiastic residents from Vivian Bullwinkel Lodge competed in the Seniors Recreation Council of WA (SRCWA) Live lighter Aged Care Games in early September.

They competed across four sports, being hockey, bean-bag toss, passball and skittles, against 14 other North-Metro Residential Care facilities.

Hoping to beat previous years scores they surpass all expectations. The team also enjoyed lunch together, providing an opportunity to talk tactics and how they can improve for next year.

Such an amazing outcome for the team and the new members who had never been before. Congratulations!



Secret women's business

Secret Women's Business is an eclectic group of women, based in Western Australia who through the medium of song, story and cheeky antics bring alive music from the 60's, 70's, 80's, gospel and more.

Their music and lyrics cover life's ups and downs, love, loss, infidelity, friendship, dieting, dreams, shopping, sex, strength, weakness, vulnerability, men, food and ageing,

though not necessarily in that order.

Sound like a hoot? Well, the crew that saw them at RAAFA's Merriwa Estate Club recently thought so.

We have been told that the performance lifted spirits, caused laughter and happiness, resulting in people leaving with a smile on their face.

What more could you ask for.



Toe tapping music

We all know that food is better enjoyed with great company and lively entertainment and this is exactly what happened in early August when the residents at RAAFA's Amity Village Albany celebrated soup day.

The Perrins Country Music duo provided the toe tapping music for everyone to sing along with, plus, there was a special cameo performance by resident Brenda Tink.

It was wonderful to see her up on stage joining her old friends Ronda and Don.

Thanks everyone for another great event providing an opportunity to get together



LtoR Don, Ronda and Brenda

Dining experience chopped and diced

Variety is the spice of life, so they say, and culinary diversity is certainly something that seniors at RAAFA's residential care homes are experiencing, thanks to a new program focused on the importance of good nutrition at the organisation's residential care homes and commercial kitchen facilities.

The initiative has come about as a result of RAAFA wanting assurance that its meal service offered high quality, inviting and nutritionally balanced meals, which residents not only love, but also cater for their individual dietary needs and preferences.

And so, the residential care and hospitality teams engaged a dietetic service to complete a comprehensive food and dining review, which included site visits to Meadow Springs, Bull Creek and Merriwa's commercial kitchens, in addition to RAAFA's residential care homes - Alice Ross-King Care Centre, Gordon Lodge, Karri and Tuart Lodge, McNamara Lodge and Vivian Bullwinkel Lodge.

The review also included a 'Dining

at RAAFA Experience', which has ultimately set the standard for dining room presentation, including table settings, condiments, menu displays and surrounding ambience, in addition to the standards of crockery, table linen and meal presentation.

"We have always prided ourselves on the nourishing and healthy food we prepare at RAAFA, however we were also prepared to acknowledge several opportunities for improvement that were identified through the review," explains Carol Bartlett, General Manager of Residential Care.

"We're committed to enabling residents to choose their meals on any given day, as well as ensuring we consistently offer a wide variety of dishes to meet residents likes and dislikes as well as supporting cultural diversity.

"Put simply, we want to ensure that our food smells and tastes wonderful and also that it's presented beautifully and exceeds our residents' expectations."

As part of the initiative, the 'Dining Experience' project aims

to encourage opportunities for further improvements through resident feedback, with RAAFA currently seeking representatives to have ongoing input - an opportunity available via each facility manager.

Brad Hatfield, Manager of Hospitality Services, says the initial response from RAAFA's domestic kitchen teams has been incredibly positive.

"The dining room experience is about providing and promoting a healthy, happy environment and a place where residents eat well, live well and feel well," he explains.

"Eating in our dining rooms should be a meaningful and gratifying experience, with a real focus on sensory and social stimulation, with



more autonomy and choice with each meal.

"RAAFA believes delicious, fresh food that is also visually appealing is critical for the health and well-being of residents, in addition to mealtimes being an important opportunity for seniors to socialise.

"And we absolutely want our residents to be involved in this process and to give feedback to our chefs on various dishes - after all mealtimes should be a source of joy and the proof is pretty much always in the pudding."

Music in the air at Mandurah

Dulcet tones can be regularly heard at a local Mandurah residential care home, as residents are treated to a musical trip down memory lane thanks to a plethora of 50s and 60s songs being played by ukelele enthusiast and Erskine Grove resident, Lyn Taylor.

Lyn, who has been visiting her husband at Mercy Place Mandurah since he moved from Erskine Grove almost two years ago, explains that she had been learning the ukulele and was keen to bring her love of music and her newfound talent to the appreciative seniors at her husband's aged care home.

"I've been really enjoying going to ukulele lessons, the songs we play are so uplifting and feel good, and so, when I asked if the care team would like me to play for the seniors, it was a definite yes," says Lyn, who has been married to husband Peter for over 55 years.

"The residents seem to really enjoy my music, even though I'm certainly no professional. I play songs from the 50s and 60s, like Creedence Clearwater and Bill Haley, and many of the residents will have a good old singsong with me."

Mercy Place Mandurah General Manager, Simone Baxter, says music was often wonderful therapy for seniors and, in fact, all generations.

"We are very thankful to Lyn for regularly volunteering her time and performing for our residents," she said.

"Hearing her old-time songs uplifts not just our seniors, but also our care staff, and we always look forward to her visits, particularly when she has her ukulele in hand."



Lyn and Peter



Aged care expo at Amity excelled

The aged care expo held at RAAFA Amity Village Albany during mid-September attracted dozens of residents, who said it was informative, educational and helpful.

Held on Tuesday, 19 September, the event saw a host of not-for-profit and government-funded providers of aged care services, including Alzheimers WA, Chorus Home Care, Albany Community Care Centre, BaptistCare, Carers WA and Albany Community Hospice, to name just a few.

And during the popular event, three seminars were also held on elder's rights and elder abuse, how to navigate the aged care system and 'demystifying' aged care.

Ceridwen Fitzpatrick, Retirement Wellbeing Officer at RAAFA's Amity Village, said the expo was organised to enable local service providers to

meet residents and explain to them what services they were able to offer.

"It was also a great chance for our residents to have all of their aged care and future planning questions answered, straight from the provider's themselves," explains Ceridwen.

"The expo grew from an idea for our Dementia Action Week which took place from 18-23 September, so that residents could gain an understanding of the breadth of aged care services accessible in Albany.

"The stalls we had really covered everything from how to first engage with My Aged Care, through to hospice and residential care, and the feedback we received following the event was exceptionally positive."

Prostate support group available at AFME

A diagnosis of prostate cancer can mean men and their families are faced with daunting decisions about what to do next.

Many men initially are shocked and may feel angry, fearful or depressed, and most have very little knowledge of the condition and treatment options.

But the reality is that men and their families who have been affected by prostate cancer can feel reassured by sharing in the experiences of those who have been through it themselves. To be able to talk about their situation in a relaxed, empathetic environment is very helpful, and members are usually surprised how much their attitude improves and confidence increases.

And for all those reasons, a prostate cancer support group was started at AFME back in 2019 and is still going strong today, meeting on the fourth Thursday of each month from 6.30pm to 8.00pm at the village day club.

Joanne Oliver, Retirement Wellbeing Officer, explains that once visitors are welcomed and any official business is over, the meetings normally take the form of a DVD presentation on a relevant topic.

"We may also have a guest speaker who specialises in their own relevant area, or one of our members may share their own personal journey with the group," explains Jo.

"That's usually followed by a group discussion, where new visitors are invited to introduce themselves and seek any information they might need, all in an informal and private setting of course.

"We strongly encourage partners to come along too as they are very much part of the journey. They are also affected and can play a significant role in helping their loved ones get through the physical and psychological impact of the disease, by being involved and staying intimate."



LtoR Richard and Joanne

After the meeting there is time for tea and coffee and a chat, providing an opportunity to discuss and arrange a follow-up for any specific needs.

"We have a library of books, DVD's and brochures on the many aspects of prostate cancer, its treatment options, side effects, and rehabilitation programs," adds Jo.

The support group is open to everyone, and details of special topics or guest speakers can be found in the local community newspaper the week prior or by contacting the convenor, Richard Flannagan from the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia on 0418 858 003.

New role for Carol

In her new role as General Manager of Retirement Living, Carol Bartlett says she is looking forward to meeting residents on all of RAAFA's retirement estates and developing close working relationships with those on the residents' committees. And she's also keen to hear residents' feedback, especially about what works well and what could be done better.

"I'm really looking forward to meeting as many RAAFA residents as I can, gaining their opinions and working collaboratively with them to make RAAFA estates the best they can be," says Carol, who has worked for RAAFA for close to seven years and who has moved into her new role from General Manager of Residential Care.

Starting her career as a speech pathologist, Carol has worked across multiple health settings including hospitals, rehabilitation facilities and residential care, in addition to working in management roles for over the past 20 years.

"I love working at RAAFA and thoroughly enjoyed working in my previous role. However when an opportunity arose to move into retirement living, I was excited to take on a new challenge and learn more about the wider RAAFA business," explains Carol, who



has two adult children and has also recently added to her family by adopting two rescue cats from the Cat Haven.

"I'm confident that my general management and health care experience background can add value to the retirement living business; I have a lot to learn but am incredibly lucky to be able to work with the well-established, very knowledgeable and dedicated teams already in place."

In her spare time, Carol says she loves to read, stay in close contact with her extensive family in the UK, and enjoys anything involving water, particularly sailing.

"I also love travelling and my goal for years has been to venture somewhere different every year, taking one of my children with me," she says. "It's a great way to have an adventure and also gain some quality time with either my son or daughter."

Turning tea into a good yarn

Anyone at RAAFA's Erkin Grove estate who has a friendship with resident Johanna Van De Peppel knows there's a few strings attached.

That's because art and craft extraordinaire Johanna is an absolute whiz when it comes to making something out of nothing, as exemplified by her outstanding creation - a beautiful, handmade shawl made out of... wait for it... tea bag strings!

Johanna spent two and a half years on the shawl and admits that she can't accurately guess how many tea bag strings it contains, though she knows there is exactly 1,080 used on the tassels that decorate two of the edges.

"A friend gave me the idea a few years ago and so I started collecting the tea bag strings and then asked a few friends and neighbours to save them for me, which they kindly did and for which I'm extremely grateful," says Johanna, who is also currently working on a detailed quilt for her daughter's silver wedding anniversary, which so far has taken over seven years.

"I started to knot the strings together during the evenings and then roll the string into a ball, and from there I began knitting in front of the TV.

"I love doing craft things and I really have to do something with my hands while I'm watching TV, otherwise I fall asleep," she laughs.

According to Johanna, the shawl is pretty warm and came in handy over winter given it is in effect, 100 percent cotton.

"It's actually really soft as well after I hand washed it and rinsed it in fabric conditioner," Johanna says.

"Now it's finished I really enjoy wearing it. And I'll no doubt set my sights on another project soon, I've actually still got all of the tags from the tea bags, so you never know, I might do something with them next."

And to that we say good luck Johanna, that new project sounds just like your cup of tea!



Club Bites

Proof of membership may be required when using facilities available to you, please have your card available. Non-members are required to be signed in by a member. Want to join? Applications and details available on our website.

MEADOW SPRINGS CLUB 9582 5375

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

Weekly specials

Monday, carvery corner - 2 course, choice of 2 roasts \$19.50

Tuesday, tapas - choice of 3 tapas \$18.00

Wednesday, Club Night - meals from \$15.00, chase the ace, bingo and horse racing

Wednesday and Friday, special day - main meal with glass of house wine or midday \$19.50

Thursday, Happy hour, 4.00pm to 6.00pm

Function facilities available to all RAAFA members for hire. Includes Beaufort Restaurant, refurbished Sports Bar and Middleton Hall, which include a fully integrated AV system, dance floor, cash bar and commercial kitchen ready to cater for any special event. For more information or to book, contact the Club.



CAMBRAI CLUB 9304 5400

Check out the fresh new look

Weekly specials

Tuesday, Darts and happy hour recommencing shortly, 4.00pm

2nd Tuesday, Parmi night, \$15.00. Bookings essential

Wednesday, Morning tea from 10.00am

1st & 3rd Wednesday, Roast dinner, with dessert \$24.00 Bookings essential

2nd & 4th Wednesday, Carvery roast with dessert \$25.00 Bookings essential

Wednesday, Happy hour 4.00pm

Friday, Lunch from 11.30am, no booking necessary

1st and 3rd Friday, Sundowner and Happy hour from 5.00pm



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 day \$18.00

Tuesday, Fish and chips \$18.00

Wednesday, Pie day \$17.00

1st and 3rd Thursday, Lamb shanks day \$23.00

2nd and 4th Thursday, Lambs fry and bacon \$17.00

Friday, Chicken parma day \$20.00

Monday and Wednesday, Happy hour 4.00pm

A la Carte night 4th Wednesday of every month



MERRIWA CLUB 9400 3640

Blue Gum Café

Pop down for one of our daily specials or sample something off the menu. Now open Wednesday 11.00am to 2.00pm and Thursday 10.00am to 2.00pm.

Weekly specials

2nd Monday, 2.00pm to 3.00pm Devonshire afternoon tea

1st and 3rd Tuesday, Club night \$16.00 parma or pasta. Includes beverage (bookings essential)

Wednesday, Roast lunch \$16.00

Wednesday, Happy hour 4.00pm

Thursday, Morning tea from 10.00am

Thursday, lunch specials \$16.00

2nd and 4th Friday, Bistro night (bookings essential)

3rd Saturday, Sundowner bar opens 4.00pm



Short stay accommodation

Time to get out and wander out yonder!!!! Why not have a change of scenery and stay in one of our fully equipped short stay accommodation units at Meadow Spring, Bull Creek or Merriwa. For information and bookings contact the relevant estate office or Club at Meadow Springs.

High tea success

What a great success Merriwa Estates High Tea turned out to be, with organisers saying that it was well worth the effort.

65 guests were welcomed by organisers, Brian Luckhurst and Ros Doyle. As a special touch of nostalgia, a copy of a 1935 high tea article recently found amongst Ros' late mother's recipes showed what to serve and created a great talking point.

Guests were served a savoury selection and a dessert plate which included a selection of seven petit

fours. Being a high tea, teapots and fresh leaf tea abounded with a choice of other flavours or coffee also available if desired.

The festivities included a short quiz, door prizes and a raffle, with people commenting that it was "the best high tea they've ever had."

A special thank you to everyone involved.



Cambrai Village fete

Sunday, 29 October
9.00am to 12noon

Come down and pick up a bargain.

Includes books, jewellery, homewares, plants, craft, toys, preserves, cakes, sausage sizzle, morning tea and much, much more.

RAAFA Wellbeing Team

CAMBRAI VILLAGE

Vanessa Priestley
9304 5280

RAAFA ESTATE MERRIWA

Suzanne Free
9400 3778

AFME

Jo Oliver
9311 4562

ERSKINE GROVE

Angeline Carleton
9586 4309

RAAFA ESTATE MEADOW SPRINGS

Mischa Matthews
9582 5369

RAAFA AMITY VILLAGE ALBANY

Ceridwen Fitzpatrick
9841 8311



Meadow Springs

Moment in time

Always on the lookout for interesting ways to connect and share a laugh, we recently held a competition and afternoon tea called a 'Moment in Time'. Residents brought in a photo of themselves between the ages of 1 and 20 and everyone had the opportunity to guess who was who. We also popped in a few staff pics for a bit of fun and it was a great afternoon full of laughs.

Getting dead set

On 8 August we held a very successfully 'Get Dead Set', Dying to Know day event with great guest speakers and interesting ideas including a visit from Heavenly Ride and Ashes to Ashes fireworks funerals. If you missed the event, pop in and have a chat with Mischa.



AFME

Foodbank drive

We were thrilled with the remarkable success of the recent food drive held at AFME. The outpouring of generosity from estate residents, including those from Gordon Lodge and Alice Ross-King Care Centre, as well as various social groups, and even some contributions from off-estate businesses, was truly overwhelming. We provided 348 kilos - 648 meals to Western Australians who are doing it tough and need a helping hand to access good quality food.

This will be a yearly event. We just never know what people are going through and kindness goes a long way.



High-five to the hobby shop team

You may remember in the last edition of Air Mail we reported on a combined community project, spearheaded by Rotary Mindarie and supported by Bunnings Mindarie, which saw a range of unwanted children's furniture restored to its former glory by the talented team of hobby shop members at RAAFA's Merriwa estate.

The trailer load of tables, chairs, bookcases and easels had been donated by Edith Cowan University, and the hobby shop team took on the project of sanding down, staining and repairing the furniture with gusto - all with the aim of donating the items to the children at Quinns Beach Primary school.

And we are delighted to report that the magnificently restored furniture is now being put to good use by the tiny tots who attend the playgroup at the local school.

Karen Huyton, Merriwa's Estate Manager, said she felt privileged to attend a presentation last month,

where the collaborative project was recognised by the school community.

"I was so proud to attend the school event to recognise our team's work and their involvement in this wonderful community collaboration project," says Karen.

"The project was headed by Rotary Mindarie and supported by Bunnings Mindarie, and our hobby shop members Noel Cahill, John Stoneman, Peter Young, Maurice Jung, Kevin Brown and Andre Du Plessis who all did a magnificent job of restoring everything and giving them a new lease on life.

"It really was a joy to see the children using all of the furniture, this project has just been a marvellous example of what can be achieved when the community pulls together, it really is a win-win for everyone involved."

After meeting with Andrea Folkard, Rotary Mindarie Community Engagement coordinator, and Brian

Butterworth, President of Mindarie Rotary, Karen reports that several other potential ideas and projects were discussed that could involve Merriwa estate residents.

"By being involved with the community and supporting various local early development centres and schools, we have the potential for many more fantastic opportunities to get involved with, which will ultimately benefit local youngsters," she says.

"We're currently discussing how these projects would not just involve the hobby shop members, but could extend to other activity groups on the estate, such as the craft group.

"We know that there are many community-minded individuals on the estate who would love to become involved, and we are looking forward to creating more opportunities for many more of our residents to take part in future initiatives."

So, watch this space for more

details, and congratulations again to everyone involved in helping to turn a whole array of unwanted furniture into a windfall of much-needed and valued furnishings for Merriwa's local youngsters.

