

AIR MAIL



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RAAFA

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A lasting symbol of peace arrives at RAAFA Merriwa Estate



The Peace Pole at RAAFA Merriwa Estate. From left: Estate Manager Ash McGlashan, Rotary Mindarie's Brian Butterworth, MP Tracy Roberts, RAAFA COO Lauren Meredith, Mayor Linda Aitken JP, MP Mark Folkard, Harry Turnbull, President Elect of Rotary Mindarie

RAAFA Merriwa Estate marked a significant milestone in June with the installation of a Peace Pole, gifted by the Rotary Club of Mindarie as part of a nationwide initiative promoting peace and unity.

To celebrate the occasion, a special ceremony was held in the Estate's main clubhouse, bringing together residents, Rotary representatives, community leaders and distinguished guests. Among those in attendance were City of Wanneroo Mayor Linda Aitken, Members of Parliament Tracy Roberts and Mark Folkard, as well as representatives from Rotary clubs across Western Australia.

A Global Message of Peace

The Peace Pole project was launched by the Rotary Club of Canberra in 2021 to commemorate 100 years of Rotary service in Australia. The original goal was to donate 100 Peace Poles to communities across the country. That target has since been surpassed, with more than 500 Peace Poles now installed nationwide.

RAAFA Merriwa Estate holds a unique place in this growing movement, becoming the first retirement village in Western Australia to receive a Peace Pole.

Peace Poles can be found in almost every corner of the globe, from schools, parks and places of worship to internationally significant sites such as the King Hussein Bridge between Israel and Jordan, the War Museum in Vietnam and Moscow's Gorky Park. Each serves as a reminder of humanity's shared desire for harmony and understanding.

The concept originated in Japan in 1955, following the devastation of the Second World War. Created by philosopher and spiritual leader Masahisa Goi, the Peace Pole movement centres on a simple yet powerful message: "May Peace Prevail on Earth." Today, more than 250,000 Peace Poles stand in over 200 countries, symbolising a universal commitment to peace.

A Meaningful Community Ceremony

Despite wet weather forcing the event indoors, the ceremony remained a moving and memorable

occasion. RAAFA Merriwa Estate Manager Ash McGlashan served as Master of Ceremonies, guiding proceedings that included speeches from Mayor Linda Aitken, Rotary Mindarie representative Brian Butterworth, residents and RAAFA staff members.

Guests then gathered for morning tea, providing an opportunity to reflect on the significance of the Peace Pole and its message.

A Unique RAAFA Tribute

While traditional Peace Poles display the phrase "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in four different languages, RAAFA Merriwa Estate chose a design that reflects both its local community and its strong connection to Australia's veteran community.

The Estate's Peace Pole features the message in English, Noongar and Māori. In place of a fourth language, RAAFA Merriwa's Peace Pole's fourth side is dedicated to remembrance, displaying three symbolic poppies, a first for any Peace Pole:

- **The Red Poppy** honours those who lost their lives in war



The RAAFA Merriwa Estate Peace Pole

and recognises the service of veterans.

- **The White Poppy** represents peace and commemorates all victims of conflict, both military and civilian.
- **The Blue Poppy** raises awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and the invisible wounds experienced by service personnel, first responders and others affected by trauma.

The Peace Pole will soon be permanently installed in Merriwa Estate's gardens, where residents, visitors and staff can pause for reflection. Standing as both a symbol of remembrance and a beacon of hope, it serves as a powerful reminder that the pursuit of peace transcends borders, cultures and beliefs.

For the residents of RAAFA Merriwa Estate, the Peace Pole represents more than a monument—it is a lasting expression of community, respect and the shared aspiration for a more peaceful world.

PURPOSE

Pursuing excellence in care and heritage

VALUES

Respect; Care; Honesty

APPROACH

Creating RAAFA communities open to all

THE RAAFA WAY

President's view



Have you gone off listening to, or watching the news on radio and TV? Have you stopped reading the various newspaper reports that contain either lots of “Trumpisms” or are full of ads for all those things you don’t need anymore?

The world is going through one of its periods of economic dilemmas and while we have been able to ride through the previous ones, this one seems to be a bit harder to adjust to.

Petrol has gone through the roof although it is settling back to the level of the rafters for the moment, food and other groceries keep increasing every time you go to the shop. Size “shrinkflation” is rampant and now our friendly state and federal governments have brought in new styled budgets to help our offspring meet the challenges, which only serve to provide us with bigger ones.

Unfortunately, these cost increases are also having a strong effect on the services that RAAFA WA provides for our Members and Residents. While our organisation is based on the concept of “Not for Profit”, we, like all other businesses, cannot survive on an operating loss in income for very long. So if you see costs starting to rise a little over the next few months when you visit the Club at your estate or if some of the other services we provide cost more than they used to, remember that we, like you, are trying to keep the books balanced and the bank account in the black.

Speaking of RAAFA WA Membership, we currently have 2234 Ordinary (full) Members, including 1124 Residential

Associate Members, as well as 789 Ordinary Members that don’t live on our various estates. Each year, in October or November we hold our AGM and as part of that process we also nominate, and if required vote for Ordinary Members to be elected to the AFA Limited Board.

This year there will be three members up for election and I would ask that all eligible members of RAAFA WA give consideration to who should be elected to fill those positions. If you know of an Ordinary Member who would be able to add merit to the Board, please ask them to consider nominating for a position. All details regarding nominations will be published in Air Mail prior to the AGM.

Further to the general operations that we undertake on behalf of our homeless veterans through the RAAFA WA Advocacy Services, Sir Valston Hancock House accommodation and the ARVL Project under construction, we have been asked by Hancock Prospecting at the behest of their Chairman, Mrs Gina Rinehart, to work in conjunction with them to open a further Crisis

Accommodation site in Perth. This is a part of the commitment made by Mrs Rinehart prior to Anzac Day to make \$200 million available for Veterans Crisis Care. It’s important to note that RAAFA is not a direct beneficiary of this \$200M amount. Mrs Rinehart has committed to that funding for capital acquisitions, and has indicated that they would like RAAFA’s support in managing these facilities.

Since opening in September 2024, Sir Valston Hancock House has demonstrated both its impact and the scale of the need for this program, which has delivered thousands of nights of safe accommodation, supported veterans into employment, reconnected individuals with their families, and most importantly, helped people rebuild their lives. Behind every number is a human story; veterans who have moved from living in cars or uncertainty to having a safe place to call home, often for the first time in years.

With Mrs Rinehart’s generous commitment, we will continue our work to ensure that no veteran is left without support, without connection, or without a place to call home.

A decade of care celebrated at Alice Ross-King Care Centre

Residents and staff at Alice Ross-King Care Centre (ARK) recently marked the facility’s 10th anniversary with a morning tea, recognising a decade of care and community at the Bull Creek home.

Held on 1 May, the celebration brought together around 50 residents and 30 staff members, with live music from the Evergreen Melodies Trio providing entertainment throughout the morning as guests reflected on the centre’s history and growth over the past decade.

A number of long-serving staff members shared memories of their time at ARK, highlighting the relationships formed with residents and colleagues over the years.

Senior nurse, Louise Tremble, one of the first staff members to join the care centre when it opened, spoke about her experiences over the past decade, and the changes she has witnessed within the home. Clinical Care Manager Jennyfer Ramos, who joined ARK as a Registered Nurse in 2016, also

reflected on her career journey and the connections she has made through working at the beloved home.

Fittingly, the specially made anniversary cake was cut by resident Gresham, who moved into ARK six months after it opened. Speaking during the celebration, she reflected on the sense of community she had experienced at ARK and the friendships she had formed with both residents and staff.

Residential Aged Care Manager Alison Ramsden acknowledged the significance of the milestone and recognised the contribution of residents, families and staff in shaping the centre over the past decade.

And in another lovely touch, the anniversary celebrations also coincided with the presentation of service awards recognising team members who had reached five and 10 years of service with RAAFA.



Ten years young: The Alice Ross-King Care Centre team marks a decade of care

Opened in 2016 at RAAFA’s Air Force Memorial Estate, Alice Ross-King Care Centre was named in honour of decorated Australian military nurse Alice Ross-King. The 102-bed residential aged care home was designed to provide contemporary accommodation and specialised dementia care and was recognised with the Aged and Community Services Australia Excellence in Care Award

for Innovation and Best Practice shortly after opening.

The anniversary provided an opportunity to reflect on the centre’s first decade and acknowledge the residents, families and staff who have been part of its story since opening.

Air Mail Notice

As part of RAAFA’s commitment to its members, RAAFA reminds our readers that **the Air Mail publication is created for RAAFA Members exclusively. As such, RAAFA will no longer be mailing printed copies of Air Mail to non-members going forward.** This allows us to keep Air Mail content relevant to our members only. For any queries, please contact marketing@raafawa.org.au

Message from the CEO



Over the past few months, there has been a strong sense of momentum building across RAAFA guided by our purpose and, most importantly, by the people who make up our community: our residents, members, staff and volunteers.

A key milestone we are approaching is the launch of our refreshed brand. This has been

a thoughtful and collaborative journey shaped by conversations across the organisation, reflecting what RAAFA truly means to those who are part of it. Together, we have explored the values, experiences and sense of belonging that define our community, and used these insights to shape a renewed purpose and identity for the future. In the coming weeks, we look forward to formally launching our refreshed brand and sharing it with you. Importantly, this will not just be an announcement, it will be brought directly to our communities, with presentations at each estate so that residents and members can experience, understand and connect with this next chapter of RAAFA. We are excited to share this with you and invite you to be part of the journey, so stay tuned.

We are also continuing to strengthen how we connect with you. Our ongoing marketing and engagement efforts are focused on telling the stories that matter,

highlighting the lived experiences of our residents and members, sharing the impact of our services, and ensuring there are meaningful ways for people to stay connected with RAAFA, and we look forward to continuing to share what matters.

We are also continuing to build stronger connections beyond RAAFA. Through community events, partnerships and wider engagement, we are increasing awareness of the important role RAAFA plays and strengthening our ability to advocate for those we serve.

A recent highlight has been the support shown by our community through the HBF Run for a Reason. With 102 donations received totalling \$5,564, this effort reflects the generosity and commitment of those connected to RAAFA. All funds raised will go towards supporting our Veterans Services, helping us continue to provide meaningful support to veterans and their families. It was

wonderful to see our community come together, whether by participating, donating or offering encouragement, in support of such an important cause.

Behind all of this is the dedication of our people. Across RAAFA, our teams continue to find new ways to support one another, build capability and create opportunities for growth. This not only strengthens our organisation but ultimately enhances the experience and care we provide to our residents and members. As we look ahead, our focus remains firmly on you, our residents and members. Everything we do is guided by a commitment to creating places where people feel connected, supported and valued. It is this shared sense of purpose that continues to drive us forward.

Thank you for the role you play in our community and for being part of RAAFA's journey.

Veterans' Support Centre honours longstanding advocate

RAAFA has officially opened its new Veterans' Support Centre, recognising the contribution of veteran advocate and former State President Graeme Bland OAM, whose decades of service have helped countless veterans access support and entitlements.

The centre was formally opened last month by RAAFA Chief Executive Officer Michelle Fyfe APM and Graeme, a Life Member, former Division Councillor and four-term State President of the organisation.

Located at RAAFA's Air Force Memorial Estate, the Veterans' Support Centre has been established to provide assistance to veterans and their families as they navigate services, employment pathways, advocacy support and available benefits.

The facility is dedicated to Graeme's longstanding and unwavering commitment to the veteran community.

A former Royal Australian Air Force Warrant Officer Engineer, Graeme served for 23 years

before retiring from the Air Force in 1980. He later became heavily involved in RAAFA, volunteering for more than three decades across a range of roles including museum volunteer, Division Councillor, veterans' advocate and mentor.

Graeme's involvement in veterans' advocacy began in 2003 and, a few years later, in 2008, he helped establish the first Veteran Support Centre at Bull Creek, alongside representative advocates from all three ADF branches. The service subsequently assisted both serving and ex-serving personnel with claims and entitlements through the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

"I always remember the first young person I helped. Initially, he couldn't look anyone in the eye, but he reached out for assistance with his entitlements claim to DVA and I was really happy to support him," recalls Graeme.

"One day he came into the office and looked me straight in the eye and shook my hand. I really saw in that moment what great progress



Veteran Support Centre opening: Veteran Advocate Graeme Bland OAM, with RAAFA CEO Michelle Fyfe APM

he'd made and the possibility of how I could make a significant difference to another person's life.

Although it was many years ago now, that young man really stands out in my memory, and was the impetus for me carrying on with my work within the veteran field over the years."

Today, after 23 years of assisting ADF veterans and sharing his knowledge and experience, Graeme has finally hung up his advocacy hat and retired.

The Veterans' Support Centre builds on Graeme's legacy, providing a dedicated point of contact for veterans and their families seeking guidance, support and connection to services.

For RAAFA, the centre represents both recognition of one individual's contribution and an ongoing commitment to supporting current and former Australian Defence Force personnel through the challenges that can accompany the transition to civilian life.

ANZAC Day commemorated across RAAFA



Kings Park Dawn Service

ANZAC Day was commemorated across RAAFA through a series of services and gatherings that brought together residents, staff and members of the wider community to reflect on the service and sacrifice of Australian and New Zealand defence personnel.

At Gordon Lodge, residents and staff gathered for an ANZAC Day ceremony that included moments of reflection and remembrance. In the lead-up to the service, residents and staff worked together to prepare rosemary sprigs, a traditional symbol of remembrance, and create a display of poppies in recognition of the occasion.

At Air Force Memorial Estate, residents, staff and community members attended a dawn service featuring reflections and readings from former pilots and members of the residents committee. Wreaths were laid in honour of those who had served, with attendees gathering at sunrise to mark the national day of remembrance.

Meanwhile, residents and staff at Alice Ross-King Care Centre also participated in an ANZAC Day service, which provided an opportunity to reflect on the experiences of servicemen and women and acknowledge their contribution and sacrifice.

RAAFA President, Norm Waldie, attended the Dawn Service at Kings Park, where a wreath was laid on behalf of RAAFA in recognition of veterans and current serving defence personnel.

For many RAAFA residents, including veterans and family members of those who served, ANZAC Day remains a significant occasion. The commemorations provided an opportunity to remember those who served in conflicts and peacekeeping operations, and to acknowledge the enduring legacy of their service.

Lest We Forget.

ANZAC Day around RAAFA



Alice Ross-King Care Centre



Alice Ross-King Care Centre



Gordon Lodge



Air Force Memorial Estate



Air Force Memorial Estate



RAAFA releases 2025 Impact Report

RAAFA has released its 2025 Impact Report, outlining key developments and initiatives undertaken during the past year.

Among the major milestones highlighted in the report are the commencement of construction on new accommodation at Air Force Memorial Estate in Bull Creek, preparations for upcoming aged care reforms, and the release of the Veteran Report, which has contributed to greater awareness of the experiences and needs of veterans in Western Australia.

The report also details RAAFA's ongoing work to support veterans, older Australians and the broader community through its housing, care and advocacy programs.

The 2025 Impact Report also provides an overview of the organisation's activities, achievements and priorities as it continues to invest in services and infrastructure to meet future community needs.



Scan the QR code to view the full Impact Report.

New perspective with a familiar purpose: Meet Troy Pascoe-Webbe



RAAFA's new Chief Property and Infrastructure Officer, Troy Pascoe-Webbe

Just a few weeks into his role as RAAFA's Chief Property and Infrastructure Officer, Troy Pascoe-Webbe is already immersed in some of the organisation's biggest opportunities and challenges.

Joining RAAFA at a time of significant growth and planning, Troy brings more than nine years of experience in the aged care and retirement living sector, most recently with a leading not-for-profit provider on Australia's east coast.

And so, while he's new to Western Australia, he's no stranger to the conversations shaping the future of ageing.

"I've come on board at a really interesting point in RAAFA's

history," says Troy, a born-and-bred New South Welshman.

"RAAFA has some significant sites, some exciting opportunities, and a real willingness to think about what aged care and retirement living might look like over the next 10 to 15 years."

Troy's role spans both property development and facilities management, overseeing the maintenance and operation of RAAFA's existing assets while helping guide the long-term vision for future developments.

A key focus is understanding how changing community expectations, evolving legislation and demographic shifts are reshaping the sector.

"Seniors in our community want to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible," Troy says.

"The traditional view of residential aged care as the last chapter is very much changing. People want more choice, more flexibility and services that support them to continue living the lives they want."

For providers like RAAFA, that means thinking differently about retirement living communities and the services that sit around them.

"The reality is that we're seeing greater emphasis on care delivered in the home and changing funding

models, as well as the challenges of rising construction costs," he says.

"All of those factors create an environment where innovation becomes important. The question is: what does the next generation of retirement living and aged care look like, and how do we design what our community genuinely wants?"

Troy believes RAAFA is well positioned to explore those questions, particularly through several strategic landholdings that provide opportunities for future development.

"Some of these sites are effectively a blank canvas," he says.

"That gives us the opportunity to think carefully about what RAAFA members and future residents may need, not just today, but decades into the future."

While the strategic work is substantial, Troy says the motivation remains simple.

"This sector is incredibly rewarding because what you're ultimately doing is helping people live their best lives as they age," he says.

"Being able to contribute to that, and to help shape environments that support people's wellbeing, is something I'm very passionate about."

Whilst currently immersed in his day job, outside of work Troy and his family are embracing a new chapter of their own.

Originally from Sydney's southern suburbs, Troy has relocated west while his wife Casey and sons Oliver and Jacques prepare to join him later this year. The family are enthusiastic sailors, fishers and divers, and have already begun planning adventures around Western Australia's coastline.

An Exmouth trip is booked, a family sailing boat may soon be making the journey west, and Troy's search for a new home base has already led him to South Perth.

"We're an adventurous family," he says.

"We've always wanted to spend more time exploring the west coast, and when this opportunity came up, it felt like the right one to take."

But for now, Troy is focused on listening, learning and helping shape RAAFA's next chapter.

"It's an exciting time to be here," he says. "There's a lot of great work already underway, and I'm relishing the opportunity to build on that foundation."

International visitors discover WA's Aviation story

Representatives from the U.S. Consulate General Perth recently visited RAAFA's Aviation Heritage Museum, continuing a long tradition of engagement between international diplomatic representatives and one of Western Australia's most significant aviation collections.

U.S. Consul General Colleen Altstock and Public Engagement Director Leigh Dawson toured the Bull Creek museum, accompanied by RAAFA Chief Executive Officer Michelle Fyfe APM and Museum Manager Trent Norris. The visit provided an opportunity to explore the museum's extensive collection of military and civilian aviation artefacts and discuss the role aviation history continues to play in fostering international understanding.

Among the exhibits viewed during the tour was the museum's F/A-18 Hornet A21-101, the final aircraft in a heritage project undertaken by Boeing to preserve retired F/A-18 Classic Hornets for display at RAAF bases and aviation museums

across Australia. The aircraft serves as a reminder of decades of cooperation between Australia and the United States in defence, aerospace and aviation technology.

The Aviation Heritage Museum houses one of Australia's largest collections of aviation artefacts, with more than 30 aircraft and thousands of items documenting the development of military and civilian aviation. Since opening its doors in 1979, the museum has become an important educational and historical resource, attracting visitors from across Australia and overseas.

The museum has also played host to a number of international dignitaries over the years. In 2015, the Consul General of Japan visited the museum to view the historic "Flag of Peace", an artefact linked to early reconciliation efforts between Australia and Japan following the Second World War. The visit highlighted the museum's role not only as a repository of aviation history but also as a custodian of stories that



From left: RAAFA Chief Executive Officer Michelle Fyfe APM, U.S. Consul General Colleen Altstock, Public Engagement Director Leigh Dawson and Museum Manager Trent Norris

reflect international relationships and shared experiences across generations.

Today, the museum continues to preserve and interpret Australia's aviation heritage through its aircraft displays, artefacts, volunteer-led tours and educational programs. Visits such as that of the U.S. Consulate General Perth provide an opportunity to share these stories with a wider audience

while recognising the enduring connections between aviation history, defence cooperation and international friendship.

RAAFA thanked Consul General Altstock and Leigh Dawson for their visit and acknowledged the contribution of the museum's volunteers, whose knowledge and dedication help bring the collection's stories to life for visitors throughout the year.



RAAFA

SAVE THE DATE

SOMETHING'S COMING...

RAAFA is unveiling a refreshed brand identity this July, and we'd love for you to be part of the celebration.

14 JULY

Air Force Memorial Estate | Alexandra Village
Cambrai Village | Merriwa Estate

15 JULY

Challenger Court | Meadow Springs | Erskine Grove

**Exact times and locations to be
announced closer to the date.**

What makes a brand worth believing in?

By Aaron Crowther, RAAFA Chief Customer & Community Officer

Over the coming months, you will see some subtle changes when it comes to RAAFA's brand. These are small but specific, born out of the idea we need to be true to our community's feedback, but also that we can't sit idle because we know good things come from contesting whether there are better ways to function and communicate.

“Change rarely flows in a straight line, but without forward movement the purest water doesn't stay fresh.”

These changes have been deeply considered and the byproduct of wide consultation to synthesise a contemporary way the organisation can confidently step into the next century, as it approaches the milestone of its first 100 years. As RAAFA WA refreshes its brand, it's helpful to reflect on what really sits behind the logos, colours and words.

Think about the brands you trust most in your life. Chances are, it's not because of a clever tagline or a flashy logo. It's because of how they made you feel. Respected. Understood. Like they were genuinely on your side.

That's no accident. The organisations people keep coming back to — the ones that earn real loyalty over time — share something in common. And it has very little to do with advertising.

They know their reason for being

The best organisations don't just focus on what they do. They're crystal clear on why they do it. For RAAFA WA, that's never been complicated: we exist to serve veterans, their families, and others who share this value — a community of people who deserve dignity, community and care. When that purpose is genuine — not just words on a wall — it shapes every decision, every interaction, every service. People feel the difference when an organisation truly means it. And they can just as easily tell when it doesn't.

They're real, not just polished

There's a temptation, when refreshing a brand, to make everything look perfect. But the organisations people trust most aren't necessarily the most polished — they're the most honest. They admit when things are hard. They celebrate real stories, not manufactured ones. They show up the same way whether the cameras are rolling or not. That kind of consistency is rare, and people recognise it.

They attract goodwill, not just customers

There's a big difference between someone who uses a service and someone who genuinely believes in it, or volunteers for it. The organisations that do this well don't just broadcast messages — they have real conversations. They listen. They involve the people they serve in shaping their future. For our members, residents and



volunteers, that means your voice isn't a nice-to-have; it's part of how we get better. And it becomes magnetic to partners who want to support brands in their pursuit of benevolence and improved social outcomes.

They add value to people's lives

In a world full of noise, the brands worth your attention are the ones that make your life a little better, easier or more meaningful. Not every message has to be important — but it should never be pointless. Every time RAAFA WA communicates with you, the question we should be asking is: does this actually matter to the person reading it?

They're consistent — everywhere

A brand isn't just a website or a brochure. It's the way a phone call is answered. The warmth in a

hallway. The tone of a letter. The best organisations understand that every single moment of contact either builds trust or chips away at it. There are no small interactions.

When you see the changes rolling out across RAAFA WA — new visuals, refreshed language, updated materials — know that it isn't change for the sake of change. It's us making sure that what the world sees on the outside genuinely reflects what we know to be true on the inside: an organisation that has always put people first, and always will. It's a commitment to staying alert to the changing needs and expectations of our community, by consistently applying a lens that keeps our people at its centre and our name as a symbol of warmth and welcome. It's best practice, worth believing in.

Merriwa gym gets a major refresh

Residents at RAAFA's popular Merriwa community now have access to an expanded gym following the completion of a recent upgrade aimed at improving fitness and wellbeing facilities within the village.

Previously, the estate's gym consisted of just three pieces of equipment, which were stationed in a former motel room. But, as part of the upgrade, a former doctor's surgery located opposite the reception area was converted into a dedicated gym space. The project included the removal of a non-structural wall to create a larger and more functional layout.

The new facility includes three cardio machines, three weight machines, a multi-cable machine and a designated stretching area, providing seniors with a broader range of exercise options.

RAAFA Merriwa Estate Manager Ashlee McGlashan, said the upgrade had significantly increased the range of equipment available to residents.

“Prior to the upgrade, I must admit that the estate's gym was looking a bit old and tired,” Ms McGlashan said.

“But by converting our former doctor's surgery into a dedicated gym space, we've been able to create a far more functional area that offers residents greater opportunities to stay active.”

To support seniors in using the new equipment, RAAFA has partnered with Edith Cowan University to deliver gym inductions. The sessions are designed to help residents become familiar with the equipment and ensure it is used safely and effectively.



Fit for purpose: RAAFA Merriwa Estate's upgraded gymnasium

Residents have also been able to access one-on-one sessions to assist them in working towards their individual fitness goals.

Ms McGlashan said the inductions and individual support sessions had helped seniors at the estate build confidence in using the new equipment.

The upgraded gym forms part of the Merriwa Estate's ongoing efforts to provide facilities and programs that support residents in maintaining an active lifestyle and living as independently as possible, for as long as possible.

Five generations celebrate Jean Patterson's centenary

■ Jean Patterson marked her 100th birthday on 25 March 2026, celebrating with friends and surrounded by a large family spanning five generations.

Born in Fitzroy, Victoria, in 1926, Jean moved to Western Australia as a young child. She left school at an early age – as most youngsters did at that time – and entered the workforce, later finding a role as a nurse's aide at Bridgetown Hospital, where she met her future husband, Fred.

Jean and Fred married and went on to have three children Margaret, Douglas and Ronald and Jean now has four grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren.

In 1958, Jean was among the first women to take on a job as a bus conductress, collecting fares on Perth's public transport network. During her career, she worked alongside several family members, including her daughter Margaret, her two sisters, her daughter-in-law and her son-in-law. The family

worked together at the Causeway Bus Depot in Perth, before Jean retired in 1979.

Following her retirement, the born and bred Victorian moved to Denmark, where she volunteered with Meals on Wheels and assisted at the local golf club. She also devoted time to knitting and sewing, donating many handmade blankets to people in need over the years.

She then returned to Perth in 1996 and spent 17 years living independently in a unit on the Merriwa Estate. During that time, she drove the estate's Mustang buggy and helped with community fetes and activities.

In October 2020, Jean moved into RAAFA's Karri and Tuart Lodge where, right up to today, she continues to enjoy the company of fellow residents and staff.

Congratulations on your centenary Jean, from all of your friends and also the staff at Merriwa Estate.



Jean Patterson celebrates her 100th birthday in style

A century of memories for Merriwa resident Lavinia Latham



Lavinia Latham proudly celebrates her centenary

■ Family and friends gathered at RAAFA's Blue Gum café in Merriwa a few weeks ago to celebrate a significant milestone for much-loved resident Lavinia Latham, who turned 100 on March 30.

Known to many as "Venie", Lavinia was born in 1926 in the Goldfields town of Burbidge (now a ghost town), and was one of seven children. Her family later settled in Guildford, where she attended primary school, and then went on to become a pupil

at Midland High School.

After leaving school, Lavinia trained to be a secretary and worked in office administration at Wesfarmers, using her shorthand and typing skills.

The born-and-bred West Australian met her future husband Ralph while growing up in Guildford. The pair had known each other since childhood and married at the local church in Guildford on April 26, 1947, shortly after Ralph returned from service in the Royal Australian Air Force.

Together they raised two children, Noela and Greg, and built their family home in Bassendean. Fast forward to today, and Lavinia's family now includes four grandsons and two great-grandsons.

Throughout her life, Lavinia remained active in both sport and community activities. She enjoyed tennis, golf and dancing, and was involved in volunteer work with the Red Cross in Two Rocks. She and Ralph were also two of the founding members of the Sun City Golf Club in Yanchep.

About 30 years ago, the couple moved into RAAFA's popular

Merriwa Estate, where they were among the early residents.

Lavinia's 100th birthday was celebrated with around 60 family members and friends at a beautiful morning tea. Among those attending was her younger sister Lola who, at 87 years of age, travelled all the way from Scotland for the occasion.

Needless to say, the gathering brought together several generations of family, including grandchildren, great-grandchildren, cousins, nieces and nephews, many of whom had not seen one another for years.

Described by her daughter Noela as a happy person who has always valued family and community, Lavinia was, by her own admission, overwhelmed and overjoyed by the celebrations marking her 100th birthday.

Her special day was also commemorated with a birthday cake and lots of photos, which were later turned into a commemorative photo book created by her great grandson Cameron and his mum Jodie, which captured all the memories from Lavinia's celebration of her centenary.

Recognising RAAFA Nurses on International Nurses Day

RAAFA marked International Nurses Day on 12 May by celebrating the dedication, expertise and compassion of nurses across its Residential Aged Care homes and home care services.

To recognise the occasion, RAAFA's People and Culture team coordinated a range of appreciation initiatives across the organisation. Nurses were thanked with personalised cards, gifts, meals and activities in recognition of the important role they play in supporting residents, clients and colleagues every day.

Observed annually on the birthday of Florence Nightingale, International Nurses Day recognises the vital contribution nurses make to the health and wellbeing of people around the world.

Across RAAFA communities, nurses provide expert clinical care, manage complex health needs, support resident wellbeing, coordinate multidisciplinary care and mentor care teams, helping residents maintain their independence, dignity and quality of life.

RAAFA Chief People Officer Lisa Hawkins, said:

"The impact of nursing extends far beyond clinical care. It is seen in every moment of reassurance, every act of advocacy and every decision that improves the wellbeing of those we serve."

"Our nurses make an invaluable contribution to the lives of our residents and clients, and we are proud to recognise and celebrate them on International Nurses



Nurses at RAAFA McNamara Lodge

Day. As part of our ongoing commitment to their professional growth, we look forward to bringing our nurses together at RAAFA's first

Nursing Conference in July to learn, connect and continue building the knowledge and skills that support exceptional care."



Alice Ross-King Care Centre



Gordon Lodge



Vivian Bullwinkel Lodge



Karri & Tuart Lodge

LIMITED EDITION AAFC 85TH ANNIVERSARY PORT



🍷 South Australian 5 Year Old Tawny Port, rich & warming with depth, balance, and character

✉ Free postage to your unit, 7WG HQ RAAF Base Pearce, RAAFA Merriwa or RAAFA Bull Creek



👉 Password: wacellars
Scan or click on the QR code

Any questions, please contact SQNLDR(AAFC) Josh Haliday:
josh.haliday@airforcecadets.gov.au

NOTE: This is not to be shared with cadets

Over \$5,500 raised to support veterans community



The RAAFA Runners: A small selection of over 100 generous RAAFA staff who ran for veterans this May

RAAFA staff have raised an impressive \$5,564 through this year's HBF Run for a Reason, with funds going directly towards our charitable purpose of supporting veterans and the wider community.

The fundraising effort was made possible through the generosity of donors and the dedication of over 100 RAAFA staff participants. A special acknowledgement goes to Shauna and Amy from the Cambrai Estate team, who raised nearly \$2000 combined thanks to the

incredible support of residents at Cambrai Village.

The HBF Run for a Reason provided a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of RAAFA's mission while generating vital funds to help us continue delivering meaningful support to veterans in need.

Thank you to everyone who donated, participated and supported RAAFA. Your generosity will help us continue making a positive difference in the lives of those who have served.

Little visitors bring big smiles at McNamara

Residents at RAAFA's McNamara Lodge recently welcomed children from a local day care facility for one of their regular fortnightly visits, continuing a program that brings together older and younger generations for an enjoyable few hours.

The visits include singing, games, storytime and other interactive activities, providing opportunities for residents and children to spend time together and build connections.

The most recent visit coincided with Easter celebrations and featured a special Easter egg hunt organised by the Lifestyle team. Residents expertly hid small eggs

containing gifts for the children, who then searched the grounds before performing a musical for residents and staff.

The visit also brought plenty of fun and laughter to the home, with singing and clapping echoing throughout the corridors.

Intergenerational programs are increasingly recognised for their ability to foster social connection and community engagement, with benefits for both seniors and children. At McNamara Lodge, the fortnightly visits have become a regular feature of the calendar and are a firm favourite which are welcomed by residents and staff alike.



A Life in Colour: The art of Resident Noellene Foster

Residents and guests at RAAFA Gordon Lodge recently enjoyed a remarkable exhibition by resident artist Noellene Foster, whose collection, *The Road to Art — A Life in Colour*, offered an intimate glimpse into a lifetime shaped by creativity, resilience and self-expression.

The exhibition showcases more than 140 artworks and tells the story of an artist whose journey began in childhood adversity and blossomed into a lifelong passion for art.

For much of her early life, Noellene battled severe bronchial asthma. During her first ten years, she spent up to six months of each year confined to bed. It was during these long periods of isolation that she first discovered the power of creativity.

"I began drawing birds and gifting my sketches to classmates from Year 3 through Year 6," Noellene recalled.

What started as a pastime soon revealed a natural artistic talent. By Year 6, she was already leading creative projects with

her classmates. A futuristic city design she helped create was photographed and featured in the *Daily News*, while a year later she led a collaborative Beatles-themed collage project — early signs of the imagination and leadership that would become hallmarks of her artistic career.

Today, Noellene's work explores the resilience of the human spirit and the many emotions that shape our lives. Her paintings range from beautiful and uplifting to thought-provoking and confronting, reflecting the complexities of the human experience.

Each artwork begins with an idea, but as the creative process unfolds, intuition and imagination take the lead.

"Whatever I create, I aim to reveal my inner world — what I see, feel and sense in living," she said.

Colour plays a central role in her work. Vibrant, spontaneous and emotionally charged, it serves as a language through which she communicates her experiences and perspective. Through her art, viewers are encouraged to discover



From left: Clinical Care Manager Thanisha Sivanathan, Lifestyle coordinator Yi-Chieh Chien, RAAFA COO Lauren Meredith, RAAFA CCCO Aaron Crowther, Artist and resident Noellene Foster, RAAFA CEO Michelle Fyfe, Therapy Assistant Yuki Chua, RAAFA CPO Lisa Hawkins, Facility Manager Binu Thomas

colour in unexpected places — woven through nature, hidden within expressions and illuminating everyday moments.

More than an art exhibition, *The Road to Art — A Life in Colour* is a celebration of perseverance, reinvention and the enduring power of creativity. Each piece stands as a testament to survival, while every brushstroke reflects a life lived with courage and determination.

In attendance were members of RAAFA's Executive Leadership Team, Gordon Lodge staff and residents. For these visitors, the exhibition offered not only an opportunity to admire exceptional artwork, but also to share in the inspiring story of an artist whose journey continues to unfold in vivid colour.



Air Force Memorial House and Veterans' Support Centre officially opens

■ The next chapter in the history of Air Force Memorial Estate began on 7 April 2026 with the official opening of the refurbished Air Force Memorial House, which incorporates the new Veterans' Support Centre.

Located within Air Force Memorial Estate in Bull Creek, the redeveloped facility brings together modern meeting rooms, office spaces, the bright and welcoming Café 1929, and a dedicated Veterans' Support Centre designed to support former service men and women.

The project has transformed the original building into a contemporary community hub, creating spaces for meetings, social connection and veteran support services, to provide an important amenity to the RAAFA community.

The official opening was marked by a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by residents, staff and invited guests. RAAFA Chief Executive Officer Michelle Fyfe formally opened the facility alongside RAAFA President Norm Waldie, and former RAAFA President Graeme Bland.

Guests then gathered for a morning tea to celebrate the occasion and mark the completion of a project that has been eagerly anticipated by the wider RAAFA community.

A key feature of the redevelopment is the new Veterans' Support Centre, which provides a dedicated on-site space focused on supporting veterans and helping connect them with services, information and assistance when needed.



Chief Executive Officer Michelle Fyfe and President Norm Waldie opening the Air Force Memorial House

The opening marks an important milestone for RAAFA, with Air Force Memorial House now bringing together a host of facilities under one roof. The

building is set to play a central role in the life of AFME, providing a place for residents, veterans and visitors to meet, connect and access support.

Harmony Day brings cultures together at Gordon Lodge

■ Residents and staff at Gordon Lodge marked Harmony Day with a range of activities to recognise the cultural diversity of its much-loved community.

National flags were displayed throughout the Lodge, representing the various countries of origin of team members, and which prompted conversations between residents and staff about people's backgrounds, life experiences and traditions.

A staff fashion show was also a fun feature of the day, with team

members wearing traditional clothing from their home countries. The parade provided residents with an opportunity to learn more about the cultural heritage of staff and the traditions associated with their home countries.

Impressively, around 20 countries are represented across the Gordon Lodge workforce, and Harmony Day provided a great opportunity to celebrate diversity and the contribution it makes to life within the Lodge community.



Residents and staff at RAAFA Gordon Lodge



RAAFA

Leave a lasting legacy for the support of future veterans



By leaving a gift in your Will to RAAFA, your lasting legacy will be to ensure our veterans are supported and honoured, our future leaders are empowered, and Australia's proud aviation history is preserved.

It is a powerful way to honour the past and support the future.

To learn more about leaving a gift in your Will to RAAFA, please email us at bequests@raafawa.org.au or phone 08 9288 8400.

CAMBRAI CLUB 9304 5400

Weekly specials

Tuesday | Darts, happy hour and bar snacks available 4.00pm

2nd Tuesday | Parmi night. Bookings essential.

Wednesday | Morning tea, coffee and cake from 10.00am

Wednesday | Carvery roast dinner. Happy hour from 4.00pm. Bookings essential.

Thursday | Bar open 3.30pm - 6.30pm. Bar snacks available

Friday | Lunch from 11.30am, no booking necessary

1st and 3rd Friday | Sundowner and happy hour from 5.00pm

MEADOW SPRINGS CLUB 9582 5375

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

Weekly specials

Monday | Roast corner - 1 course, choice of 2 roasts

Tuesday | A la carte - main meal with glass of house wine or middy

Wednesday | Club night buffet - chase the ace, bingo and horse racing

Thursday | Happy hour, 4.30pm to 6.30pm (Summer hours)

Friday | A la carte - main meal with glass of house wine or middy

BULL CREEK CLUB 9311 4460

Weekly specials

Monday to Friday | Light breakfast 9.00am to 10.00am

Monday to Friday | Lunch 11.00am to 2.00pm

Monday and Wednesday | Happy Hour 4.00pm to 5.00pm

Tuesday | Fish and chips

3rd Wednesday | A la carte night

Friday | Dinner and raffles 5.00pm to 7.00pm

Saturday | New opening time 2.30pm to 6.30pm

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

1st and 3rd Tuesday | Club night parmi or pasta.

Includes beverage. Bookings essential.

Wednesday | Roast lunch

Wednesday | Happy hour from 4.00pm

Thursday | Morning tea from 10.00am

Thursday | Lunch specials

2nd and 4th Friday | Bistro night. Bookings essential.

3rd Saturday | Sundowner bar opens 4.00pm

Introducing the Charles Learmonth Award



Wing Commander Charles Learmonth DFC and Bar

Charles Learmonth was born in Portland, Victoria in 1917 and attended Geelong Grammar. After training at Point Cook, he was posted to RAAF Pearce, flew Hudsons with No. 14 Squadron, and took part in the search for HMAS Sydney. In 1942 he was posted to Nhill and Sale, Victoria, as flying instructor on Hudsons. He married Perth girl Marjorie Chapple in March 1942. He was then posted to 22 Squadron in Port Moresby, New Guinea, and he was lucky to survive his first action. 'Flak shot away his starboard aileron, punctured his port tyre, damaged his elevators, and broke his rear gunner's arm. The ground crew counted 73 bullet holes in his Boston.'

Charles was also an incurable romantic and wrote to his wife Marjorie almost every day. These letters, combined with his diaries and log book, take us back to those never to be forgotten war

years. Charles and the 'Boston Boys' fought in the skies over Lae, Salamaua, Buna and New Britain, and took part in the decisive Battle of the Bismarck Sea. Charles Learmonth completed 159 sorties with No. 22 Squadron, and was awarded the DFC and Bar. His Citation stated: 'He has displayed tactical ability amounting to genius.'

After his return from New Guinea, Charles Learmonth was appointed CO of No. 14 Squadron, Pearce. He was killed on 6 January 1944 when his Beaufort bomber crashed into the Indian Ocean north-west of Rottneest Island. Before diving to his death, he radioed vital information that helped solve the mystery of the Beaufort tail trim accidents. In recognition of his bravery, an airfield in Western Australia was named in his honour.

Today, Learmonth is an important RAAF base, and the gateway to Exmouth, the Naval

Communication Station Harold E Holt, as well as Ningaloo Reef, and Coral Bay. There is a memorial cairn at Learmonth Airport, and a memorial plaque and tree at the front of the Aviation Heritage Museum, Bull Creek. His medals are displayed at AWM, Canberra.

This award is in line with the policy of giving more meaning and heritage to the award names. This Award replaces the Leadership Award established in 2019. The Award is open to No. 7 Wing Australian Air Force Cadets and Staff.

Two awards will be presented: Most Improved Cadet and Most Valuable Contribution by 7 Wing Staff. Each recipient will receive \$500 in cash.

Selection is made by 7 Wing and the first awards were made in April 2026.