

# DS

September 2017

## The 2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

12:00 hours

*Friday 6 October 2017*

at the Royal Canberra Golf Club, Yarralumla

to be followed at 12:30 pm by a luncheon

*Speaker: Vern Gallagher*

**General Manager Communication & Client Relations**

**Defence Housing Australia**

*'Innovation at DHA is more than just solar panels'*

*(Please see separate notice and meeting papers included with this newsletter.)*

From the President

After a series of lunchtime seminar presentations that have largely focussed on operations, Defence equipment and technology, it was a question to our last speaker about accommodation for Defence members that has prompted the selection of our next speaker. I also have an ulterior motive, but more about that later in this newsletter.



**Newsletter  
of the  
RAAF  
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2017 has seen us continue with the well-established formula of meeting three times annually, enjoying good speakers and each other's company in an excellent venue at a price that has remained unchanged. Our three speakers over the past year starting last September with Air Commodore Margot Forster, Commandant of the Australian Command and Staff College, then Chief of Joint Operations, Vice-Admiral David Johnstone in March, and Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal 'Leo' Davies in July have kept us up to date with a variety of topics of interest to our members.

Despite having excellent speakers, we continue to be challenged by the ability to achieve a respectable presence at our mid-year (mid-winter) lunches, many of you having left Canberra for warmer places, (and after this winter, who could blame you)! These more modest attendances have prompted suggestions that we abandon our mid-year meetings. On the other hand, why shouldn't those who brave Canberra winters be 'rewarded' with the option to attend a mid-year lunch? What do you think? Meanwhile, at this year's mid-year lunch two of our members defied the trend by travelling considerable distances from warmer climes to hear Chief of Air Force speak. Ian Ashbrook took the opportunity of being down south looking after his son's farm at Berrima to drive to Canberra to attend our lunch. Coming further still, Bill Collins took advantage of Qantas' winter timetable to attend our lunch after making the round trip from Sorrento (Gold Coast, Queensland) in the day. Now there are a couple of dedicated members!

As always, I acknowledge the ongoing commitment and efforts of your committee members (who I understand are happy to continue), Paul McMahon, Frank Kelly and David Wade, and of course our very diligent auditor, Russ Walls. I also acknowledge the excellent ongoing support we receive from the staff at the Royal Canberra Golf Club, and thank both them, and Association members, including past Presidents Ken Tuckwell and Noel Wainwright. Though their Club membership we are all able to enjoy the RCGC's excellent facilities.

Finally, a brief introduction to Vern Gallagher, our next guest speaker. A graduate of the RAAF Academy, Vern joined Defence Housing Australia in 2009 following careers in Air Force (predominately in maritime flying duties), and then in defence industry. All of us have likely had, or at least heard horror stories about married quarters in days gone by. My own married quarter experience as a junior officer propelled my early entry into home ownership. Today the story is very different, both in terms of what we are hearing about the difficulties facing those aspiring to first home ownership, and on the other hand the quality, quantity and location of Defence accommodation. Vern's membership of the DHA executive and in particular his appointment as General Manager Communications and Client Relations make him particularly well qualified to bring us up to date with Defence Housing and perhaps to give us a preview of future plans. And that ulterior motive: with Vern being an Association member and a regular attendee at our meetings, for once I won't have to disrupt our AGM by leaving, mid-meeting to welcome our guest speaker!

I look forward to seeing you at the Royal Canberra Golf Club on Friday 6 October, by which time I trust Canberra will have emerged from the artic chill we are currently 'enjoying'.

Regards,

Ian Pearson

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