

DS

August 2019



**Newsletter
of the
RAAF
STAFF COLLEGE
ASSOCIATION Inc**

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The 2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

12:00 hours

Friday 11 October 2019

at the Royal Canberra Golf Club, Yarralumla

to be followed at 12:30 pm by a luncheon

Speaker:

The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson, AO

Director of the Australian War Memorial

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

From the President

This end-of-year edition of DS comes to you a little earlier this year, both because we have reverted to aligning the scheduling of our last lunch for the year with the RAAF Retired Officers dinner, (after learning the lesson from last year's experience of trying to run our lunch in the early part of the silly season), and because I want to take advantage of the services of our hard working Secretary before he heads off on well deserved leave.

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 Carey Lander and her team at the Royal Canberra Golf Club.

Recycling the remarks I have made around this time for the past few years, 2019 saw us continue our well-established formula of three lunchtime seminars at the Royal Canberra Golf Club. There we receive excellent support and while your committee sees no reason to fix something that apparently is not broken, we are not closed to suggestions from members about making changes to this format. For example, should we hold one of our lunches at the Australian Defence College? One thing I can say with some certainty is that the meals at ADC won't come anywhere near the standard we have been enjoying at RCGC although the cost might be lower.

Cost is certainly one of the factors that we need to consider. As you will see in the Auditor's report contained in the AGM pack accompanying this newsletter, the RAAFSCA ran at a loss of some \$450 for last financial year. The arithmetic behind this outcome is simple. The RCGC charges RAAFSCA \$45 a head for the meal, and you are charged \$60. That leaves \$15 to cover our guest speaker's costs, wine gifts, and drinks. Guest speaker costs are about \$3 per head, wine gifts are another \$3 a head, leaving \$9 to cover pre-lunch drinks and a couple of wines with the lunch. We can't make ends meet at \$9 a head, particularly if our guest is accompanied by a staff officer or ADC. (You may have noted that we have avoided having had that occur this year. But it does mean we also have not had the ADF's most senior currently serving leaders speak to us.) The wines we enjoy nominally cost \$45 a bottle, or say \$7.50 a glass. Most of us would have a pre-lunch drink (\$5 to \$10), plus one or two glasses of wine with the lunch. Say around \$20+ per head in drinks.

One option would be for the RAAFSCA to run down its cash reserves. The accounts show we have about \$13,000; this could be progressively run down to say, \$5,000. There's no need to make this decision immediately. We could run a trial for three years and see how we go.

And no, your committee doesn't think we should drop our standards. We are not advocating that we move elsewhere, nor do we see asking members to be abstemious being successful. Changing either would bite right into the camaraderie of our lunches and ruin the atmosphere.

In making this decision, issues to consider include:

- With the fall in interest on term deposits, our interest income now falls way short of our current trading losses.
- We don't want to keep our lunches at the current price, then have a huge leap once we have run down the reserves. There may need to be incremental increases as well.
- What funds does the RAAFSCA need in reserve for itself?
- Will extra funds be needed for anything, such as the RAAF Memorial Grove on the Federal Highway?
- What do you see as the natural life span of the RAAFSCA as our members' age?

As usual we want to keep the AGM to no more than 15 minutes, so there will be little time for discussion. Please email your views on the proposal, by email, to David Wade, (who will be our acting as secretary in Frank's absence on leave) at: DandMWade@grapevine.com.au. A summary of the views expressed will be circulated immediately prior to the AGM.

On a separate matter, there has been a suggestion that the RAAFSCA should increase its joining fee. At the moment, the joining fee is \$10, and that is the one and only expense as there aren't any annual membership fees. Is our Association 'valued' when it offers such a modest joining fee? The suggestion is that \$10 is very generous, especially if all functions are subsidised, and the fee should be increased to \$50 or so. Again, emailing in your views to David would be appreciated.

As alluded to above, 2018/19 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. Starting last November our three speakers over the past year were recently retired CDF, [Air Chief Marshal Binskin AC \(Retd\)](#), then recently returned Deputy J5 Regional and Multinational Assistance, US Indo-Pacific Command [Air Commodore Phil Champion](#) in March, and most recently, in July, Air Force 2021 Liaison Officer, [Group Captain Ernie Walsh](#) spoke to us about planning the RAAF's Centenary 2021.

Continuing the commemorative theme our speaker at our next lunch will be the Director of the Australian War Memorial, [The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson, AO](#). Noting the recent announcement of Dr Nelson's forthcoming retirement from this role, and the many other obligations that he must address before departing one of, if not the most sacred of Australia's memorials, we are very fortunate that he has made time to join us on 11 October. As always, members are very welcome to bring a guest to this lunch and for Dr Nelson in particular, I would expect many will wish to attend, even if this means having to first sit through our AGM. Still, this has worked before, particularly those who have travelled with their partner to attend the RAAF Retired Officers dinner the next day. Just as those partners were a very welcome addition to our gathering, Canberra-based members should also know that their partners are very welcome to attend our lunches, and of course this next lunch to hear Dr Nelson speak in one of his last public addresses before stepping down as the Director of the Australian War Memorial.

Finally, I want to draw your attention to the [RAAFSCA website](#). As well as publishing the earliest advice about future speakers, and other items of general interest, the website also promotes other events likely to be of interest to members, such as the [2019 Sir James Rowland Seminar – Australian Aviation Culture and the enduring Air-minded approach to Air Power](#) on 28 August, the [37th annual retired officers dinner](#) on 12 October, and [Lest We Forget - A Dedication](#) - Canberra Wind Symphony's annual dedication to all who have served in uniform on 11 November.

Once again, I look forward to seeing you and your guests at the Royal Canberra Golf Club on Friday 11 October, by which time I trust Canberra will have emerged from the Antarctic chill that is currently adorning the Brindabellas with a dusting of [snow](#).

Regards,

Ian Pearson

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