

DS

January 2020



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

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**** LUNCHEON SEMINAR ****

Friday, 28 February 2020

at the Royal Canberra Golf Club, Yarralumla

Speaker: Hugh White, AO

Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies

School of International, Political & Strategic Studies

at the Australian National University

**'Defending Australia Alone:
Might we need to, and could we do it?'**

(nominations via separate Luncheon Notice & Registration Form)

From the President

Happy New Year – I hope! I sincerely trust that you, your family or friends have not been directly impacted by the national bushfire emergency and if you or they have been, the thoughts of all Association members (and no doubt tangible expressions of support) are with you.

Ordinarily I would be hesitant about sending DS out so early in the year. After all, it is the time when Canberrans in particular are part of that great exodus from the cities to the coast. Clearly not this year. Hopefully the promise of an earlier than usual start to our year of luncheon seminars and the prospect of yet another particularly interesting speaker will give you something to look forward to and perhaps briefly take your mind away from the fires and the ever-present smoke.

Before shifting from the fires though I thought it would be appropriate to direct you to at least one source of authoritative advice about what the ADF, and in particular, our Air Force has been doing as part of the national effort. The Operation BUSHFIRE ASSIST 2019-2020 [website](#) provides updated advice on what the ADF is doing to contribute to the national effort, noting that contrary to some media reports and public activism about the apparent absence of 'boots on the ground', **ADF support to the current bushfire crisis has been provided since 5 September 2019.** More recently that has involved recalling many ADF members from leave, a requirement acknowledged by Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Mel Hupfeld and the Warrant Officer of the Air Force, Fiona Grasby in their (attached) joint email sent to all RAAF members over the weekend. Also enclosed with this edition of DS is a [montage of bushfire photos](#) provided by our Secretary, Frank Kelly. Frank's younger brother is the Deputy Captain of the Kiola Rural Fire Service and has spent the past eight + weeks on the firegrounds. As Frank has correctly observed, 'We owe these guys a whole lot'.

2019 ended for the RAAF Staff College Association on a particularly high note. Not only did we have an excellent turnout for the address by Dr Brendan Nelson, in what was one of his valedictory addresses before retiring as the Director of the Australian War Memorial, following a very kind invitation from Dr Nelson we had an even larger turnout for the private tour of the Memorial's reserve collection. I can't promise such field trips after every luncheon seminar, but on this occasion at least I can promise an outstanding speaker to start our year.

[Professor Hugh White, AO](#) will be well known to most of you, if not from having worked with him during your Service careers, or from his particularly insightful commentary in the media. Currently Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies, School of International, Political & Strategic Studies at the Australian National University, Hugh will talk to us about the arguments set out in his book, 'How to defend Australia', which was published last year. Hugh's readings of our national security circumstances are always worthy of our attention, perhaps no more so than the topic he has chosen for his address to us on 28 February.

Last time I signed off I indicated that I was looking forward to end of the Antarctic chill that was then gripping Canberra. This time I trust that I won't be hoping for too much if I say that as always, I look forward to seeing you and your guests at the Royal Canberra Golf Club at the end of next month **in clean air!** Stay healthy and join us for what looks like being an excellent occasion on Friday 28 February.

Regards,

Ian Pearson

Mobile: 0407 561 080

Enclosures:

1. [CAF and WOFF-AF message of 11 January 2020](#)
2. [Bushfire photo montage compiled by Frank Kelly](#)