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20 February 2024



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

GPO Box 1204 Canberra ACT 2601

www.raafsca.org

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LUNCHEON SEMINAR

Thursday 28 March 2024

at the National Press Club

16 National Circuit, Barton

Speaker: ROBERT PARKER

Founder - Nuclear for Climate Australia

'Avoiding an energy blunder down under'

From the President

A belated happy (Gregorian) New Year and, noting how many of us have served throughout Asia, and that Lunar New Year celebrations don't end until the Lantern Festival on 24 February, a very happy Lunar New Year to you and your family. May the Year of the Wood Dragon be good to all of us.

As members know, our Constitution lists the objectives of the Association as:

- to foster friendship, communication and understanding between members;
- to maintain the unique bond of professionalism and camaraderie established through Staff College participation; and
- to promote a continuing awareness within the RAAF and elsewhere of defence issues and of aerospace power in particular.

Commendable as these objectives are in providing the rationale for ongoing contact with the RAAF Staff College Association, it was a recent lecture by noted ANU psychologist, [Professor Kate Reynolds](#), that focussed my thinking on the central benefit we all receive from belonging to such groups as our Association:

'Over the last few years there is a growing body of research that has shown that the process of joining a new group and feeling that you belong to it, is good for health and well-being.'

While many of us may have instinctively considered such a link between our RAAF Staff College Association with each other, and our well-being, it is encouraging to see our suspicions confirmed by academic research. Good health and well-being, both for ourselves, and our fellow RAAFSCA members is not to be taken lightly. To the extent that your membership of the Association contributes to those positive outcomes, I encourage you to maintain your links with the Association, encourage others to join, and where possible, continue to participate in our scheduled activities. If that is not an option for you, retain contact with the Association, and benefit from any sense of well-being that generates, by visiting our [website](#).

Continuing with the objectives of our Association, my view is that in our 'more interesting' strategic climate, the reference to 'defence issues' might be too narrow to fit our broader outlook. Perhaps an amendment is appropriate, using language that refers to 'national security', which, according to the [Prime Minister and Cabinet website](#), 'is about protecting our territory and institutions, and ensuring the safety of all Australians'. Extending beyond the traditional notion of safeguarding the nation against military attacks, the broad range of threats to our nation, and our people encompassed by 'national security' include food security, cyber security and energy security. Apart from anything else, such a broader consideration of our security requirements opens our lunches to a broader range of speakers.

To that end, our speaker for our next lunch, on 28 March will be engineer, [Robert Parker](#) who, having founded the [Australian Nuclear Association](#), will be speaking to us as the founder of [Nuclear for Climate Australia](#). Clearly the issue of whether we do, or do not take up nuclear power in Australia has the potential to divide. As does the issue of climate change, whether that change is real and if so, whether it is caused by natural variations outside our control, anthropogenically or a combination of both. Irrespective of our views on these issues, we are all aware of recent power outages that have arisen from tired infrastructure, and the impact those changes have had on affected populations. Notwithstanding the obvious political dimension that now accompanies the debate on nuclear power, the presentation by Robert Parker will see you better informed, and hopefully will encourage you to undertake further research to ensure that your opinions on the issue are based on verifiable facts.

As with our days at staff college, I encourage pre-reading prior to our next lunch so that you arrive with questions ready for our very well credentialed speaker to answer. I have already heard Robert speak on this subject and learned much from his presentation. I commend his forthcoming address to you and look forward to seeing those of you who can attend on Thursday 28 March.

Stay well,

Ian Pearson
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