

# "WATER OFF"

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS'  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA  
(VICTORIAN BRANCH) INC.



May 2016 Vol 20 No 2  
Inc/No: A16839F



## MFB celebrates 125 years serving Melbourne

### Change of venue for Xmas Function

Christmas function this year will be at Pier 14 instead of the Malvern Town Hall. More modern venue. We needed somewhere bigger. The date is the 12<sup>th</sup> of November for the Christmas Luncheon.

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Image: Courtesy of FSM of Victoria.

# “GENERAL MEETING”

Notice is hereby given that the next General Meeting will be held at the Burnley Complex 450 Burnley Street Richmond.  
**1030 Hours, Wednesday 18th May 2016**

## AGENDA ITEMS.

Minutes of last General meeting  
President’s Report  
Secretary/Treasurer’s Report  
Guest Speaker; Edith Martin, Director Life Activities Clubs Victoria Inc.  
General Business

Allan Roberts  
SECRETARY/TREASURER  
Address all correspondence to:  
The Secretary  
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Please come along, bring your partner and have your say in the running of the Association. Join in the fellowship of your old friends and make new ones.

**Lunch available.  
Please join us!**

### **Non financial Members**

Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2015 that means you have not paid your subs since 2014 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/17 your name will be automatically removed from the mailing list. If, for whatever reason any member is unable to meet this request please do not hesitate to call the secretary, (confidentiality is assured)

## **OFFICE BEARERS**

**President:** Alex Shepherd  
**Vice President:** Colin Harris  
**Sec./Treasurer:** Allan Roberts

### **General Committee:**

Arthur (Sam) Capes  
Mike McCumisky  
Ian Geddes  
Kevin Hede

### **Auditor:**

Mike Enticott

### **“Water Off” Editorial Staff**

Colin Harris  
John Laverick

## **Valē**

Ted Bond MFB  
Damien Burke MFB  
Clarence Guthrie MFB  
Kenneth Murphy MFB  
Jack Ormrod MFB  
Ron Rae MFB  
Jack Sheridan MFB  
Joe Trickey MFB  
Joyce Plant MFB

We offer our condolences to the families of these members who have gone on to a higher duty.

### **SICK LIST** (\* In Nursing Home)

Don Brennan  
Stan Cameron  
Huew Campbell\*  
Keith Dumas  
Eddie Gilbertson  
Clarrie Hart  
John Cotter (CFA)  
Bob Horgan  
Murray Jelleff  
Brian Whittaker  
Harry Mitchell  
Dave Defonte  
Gary Spicer

We wish these members a speedy recovery

**Note:** If you know of any member who may be ill please notify a committee member. We endeavour to keep you informed, but can only do this with your help.

### **Diary Dates 2016**

General Meeting May 18th Burnley Complex  
General Meeting August 17th CFA Station - Corio  
UFU Christmas Luncheon November 12th  
Annual General Meeting November 16th Burnley Complex

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Congratulations to the United Firefighters Union in the incorporation of the Retired Members Division, last month saw the first general meeting of the division where the inaugural members of the committee elected. Congratulations to Eddie McMullin elected to President and to Bruce Smith elected to Secretary. These two gentleman were tireless workers for the Union and their fellow firefighters so it was no surprise in their putting up their hands to get the Division off the ground. We now have two groups representing retired firefighters in their endeavours in retirement, I'm sure both the Retired Firefighters Association and the Retired Members Division will work together to ensure retired firefighters are well represented and looked after in all matters and welfare of their members. I for one look forward to working with both Eddie and Bruce and the respective committees in representing retired firefighters and their families in good health and a happy life.

Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars.

President Alex Shepherd

## **Retired Members Division Annual General Meeting Trades Hall 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

**A meeting was held at 10.00 a.m. whereupon approximately 75 members attended for the Annual General Meeting of the group. An election of office bearers was held after nominations were received.**

### **Representatives of the Committee of management elected:**

Kevin Vaughan – Injured Firefighters Rep  
Bruce Smith - Secretary  
Eddie Mc Mullen – President  
Eileen Rudd Comms Centre Rep  
Leon Trembath RFA Rep - elected  
Barry Cole CFA Rep  
Rod Knowles – MFB Rep  
Rob Clayton –Aviaton Rep

## **SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT**

The committee have been busy over the last 12 months with meetings at the UFU for the Retired Division which is progressing, the first AGM was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016. Office Bearers Elected:- President: Eddie Mc Mullin. Secretary: Bruce Smith

**Special thanks** to Angela Brennan for the commitment to the Water Off and filling in until we acquired someone to take over as Editor. Also a big thanks to John Laverick for his ongoing help to Angela and Col Harris with Water Off also mail out by email.

Angela we hope that you and the doctors keep on top of your health.

I have to report that Colin Harris will be supplied with a computer and software to produce the Water Off. This computer will belong to the RFA.

The RFA website has been running for 20 Months and seems to be getting plenty of hits.

I would like to thank John Berry for the Excellent Job putting together the GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, as I would not be able to do this as the list this New Year has been many of our members going to the biggest Fire Station.

I the secretary of the Retired Firefighters Association, Allan Roberts, express my thanks and gratitude for the support that MFB Burnley staff collectively provided to the RFA members at their BBQ's following all our Meetings.

I have been informed that Barbara McCumisky will assist Colin and John with photographs. I sincerely thank Barbara for her knowledge and help.

John berry is still a great help to me with his knowledge and contacts Thank you John

### **TREASURER'S REPORT.**

Closing Balance. 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2016 Running account S1 = \$6872.31.

Fix Term 6 Months L1 Account = \$6794.31.

Allan Roberts Secretary/Treasurer.

## **WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS**

DARYL PENMAN.  
STEPHEN GARBETT.  
MICHAEL. (MICK) COOMBES.  
PETER MOLONEY.

GREG STEPHENSON.  
WILLIAM MOORE.  
COLIN SHELL.  
CHRIS O'LEARY.

## Minutes of General Meeting - February, 17th 2016

### President

Alex Shepherd -

### Secretary/Treasurer

Allan Roberts

### Minutes

Ian Geddes.

Present – 42

Apologies - 8

First Attendee – Bill (Jock) Moore – Northern, Supt.

Sick List – Bob Horgan looking better, Dave Dafonte attended meeting on walking stick.

Minutes of previous Meeting read - Moved - Ken Heddle, Seconded – John Howe – Accepted.

President's Report – Alex Shepherd.

Funeral of S.S.O. Damien Burke (Northern) – great attendance.

Pat Cameron (Don's wife) in Donvale Hospital.

Members are needed to help at functions (Ozanam House, Bunnings Barbeques etc.)

Great to see so many new R.F.A. members joining.

Correspondence – Allan Roberts.

Letter from Chief Officer re Damien Burke's service.

Geoff Plunkett (Let the Bums Burn) has not requested financial assistance from Brigade – Trevor Reed to speak later.

M.F.B. 125 Anniversary Ball, (July 2<sup>nd</sup>) – rfav.com.au

Morgan Fairchild (Employee Assistance Officer) to have B.B.Q. lunch with us today.

Moved – Noel Pinnell, Seconded – Doug Overton – Accepted.

Secretary/Treasurer's report- Allan Roberts.

General Account - \$5,776.51. Term Deposit - \$6,794.34

Out – Water Off Postage - \$332.83,

Ozanam House Food (11 helpers served 250 lunches) - \$357.23

Biscuits - \$3.79.

Donations – Jason Clymo - \$500.00, Prostate Cancer - \$500.00

Berry Street - \$500.00, M.S. Society - \$500.00, Computer repairs - \$530.00.

In - \$100.00 from Clarrie Guthrie's family. Yearly Subscriptions.

Moved – Rod Nixon – Seconded – Harry Floyd, Accepted.

Almoner's Report – Ian Fowler.

Harry Mitchell, Bob Brunning, Ian Cotter, Murray

Jelleff, Dave Dafonte, Brian Trembath (in Bairnsdale Hospital), Lindsay McCurdie, Hughie Campbell, George Prentiss, Archie McLaughlin (at home in Mortlake) – contact Ian Fowler for more details 97492606.

### General Business –

John Berry spoke about the R.F.A. and R.M.D. – the R.F.A., in late '80s started well but lost momentum and went down to only 30+ members in early '90s now there are 550+ R.F.A. members. Some of the initial "setter-uppers" of the R.F.A. are now assisting with the R.M.D. involvement. The Retired Members Division has more far reaching capacities into such matters as Financial Advice, Legal Assistance, Money – saving discounts, interstate/overseas connections. The R.F.A. and R.M.D. will proceed together.

Trevor Reed- "Let The Bums Burn" (Author Geoff Plunkett) 50 Year Anniversary is in August 2016. Hopefully a plaque at William Booth Lonsdale Street site will become a Memorial to Australia's worst building fire.

Bob Thompson, Noel Taylor and those present commended the effort.

Phil Cleary - Website is 2 years old, full of news, reports, old Water-Offs, discounts.

It is 40 years since firefighter Dave Griffith drowned in Gardiners Creek, a B.A. Course got caught in flooded drains and Dave drowned – the rains were MANY kilometres away, and roared along the drains unexpectedly.

A.C.F.O Ken Brown spoke about the present E.B.A.'s under way.

Brian Jackson can arrange a Prostate Cancer speaker.

C.F.A. lunch at Gateway Hotel – 5<sup>th</sup> April.

Col Harris is now Editor of Water-Off.

Brendan Clymo –at No 10 Station. Brendan's son Jason fell 3 storeys off a building in November 2014, breaking his spine and putting Jason in a wheel chair. The R.F.A. donated \$500.00 for rehabilitation. Jason is now driving and looking forward to his second year at Uni studying medicine.

Ian Fowler – Southport Reunion – Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2016

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**Meeting finished at 12.30 hours  
with a B.B.Q. in rear yard.**

# MFB celebrates 125 years serving Melbourne

In 2016 MFB is proud to celebrate 125 years of serving Melbourne.

The Metropolitan Fire Brigade is one of the Melbourne's oldest organisations, evolving from a fragmented group of volunteer brigades to a world-class fire and emergency service.

In its first year MFB reported a staff of 59 permanent firefighters, 229 auxiliary firefighters, four steam fire engines, 25 horse drawn hose carts and 58 hose reels. There were only 33 horses and 48 stations in 1891, and the brigade attended 816 calls and 485 fires, of which 188 fires were classified as serious.

Since then it has grown to a work force with more than 2,200 employees, 47 fire stations and 147 fire and specialist appliances. In 2014/15 MFB attended 36,923 calls and assisted with numerous deployments outside the Metropolitan District and even interstate.

MFB firefighters now play a variety of important emergency roles including Emergency Medical Response (EMR), High Angle Rescue (HART), Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), hazmat, heavy rescue, marine and more.

A series of events and activities are planned throughout the year to commemorate the anniversary:

## **Student Film Competition**

Open to Victorian students from Foundation/Prep to Year Ten. Create a 30 second film for their age group include fire safety messages, such as Stop, Drop Cover and Roll and Get down low and Go, Go, Go.

Film can be live action, animation, computer generated graphics, stop motion or a mixture of styles. Entry is free and closes on 5 August. Learn more at [www.studentfiresafetyfilmcomp.com.au](http://www.studentfiresafetyfilmcomp.com.au).

## **125th Anniversary Commemorative Board Meeting - Tuesday 26 April**

MFB will be holding a commemorative board meeting in MFB's original board room, located in the Fire Services Museum of Victoria, on Tuesday 26 April.

The meeting will cover not only MFB's long history, but will also recognise the valuable work undertaken by museum volunteers to preserve the



broader history of Victoria's fire services. This event is not open to the public.

## **Newport Workshop Open Day - Saturday 7 May 10am to 4pm**

The Fire Services Museum of Victoria will open the doors to their Newport Workshop on Saturday 7 May. Bring along the family and view the lovingly restored vintage fire appliances. Entry is a gold coin donation to the museum and a barbecue will be available on the day.

## **125th Anniversary Gala Ball - Saturday 2 July**

Tickets for MFB's 125th Anniversary Gala Ball are exclusively on sale to all current and retired MFB employees! The black tie event includes a three course meal, beverages and entertainment.

**Saturday 2 July 2016**

**6:30pm – midnight**

**Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre  
1 Convention Place, South Wharf**

All current and retired MFB employees can purchase tickets at a discounted rate of \$95.00 per person or \$850.00 for a table of ten.

To book a ticket, visit <http://bit.ly/MFB125BALL> and enter the promo code: **MFB125**.

For a table of ten, enter the promo code: **MFB12510** (You will need to enter the name and dietary requirements of your guests when you book the table.). For more information, contact [MFB125@mfb.vic.gov.au](mailto:MFB125@mfb.vic.gov.au)



## GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

The quote by **Marcus Tullius Cicero** *The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living*, Unquote. The RFA committee believe the preceding quote encapsulates the reason why it is important we take a moment to reflect and remember the great contribution the following members made in their endeavour to protect the life and property of the community.

### Clarence .J. Guthrie 'Clarrie' 1920-21/01/2016



Clarrie, I have been told, would often boast that his only claim to fame was that he went through recruits with a future Chief Officer of the MFB (Neville VanEvery). Well let me tell you whilst it is true, it most certainly is not his only claim to fame. There is not one bloke in the MFB that knew him who would stop singing his praises.

Clarrie was one of the old school types no bulls#\*t get in and get the job done. He played footy for Preston in the Association back in the days where if you lost the game, you made sure you won the fight! For all you football aficionados Clarrie was built on the same lines as Lou Richards (Collingwood). I have heard from the blokes that saw him play; they would state he also had similar traits to Lou.

I first met him at a further assistance job at one of the shoe manufacturer factory fires. (Obviously a hazardous industry and we had a number of them catch fire over the years). I was not long in the job at this time when he started telling me the intricacy regarding the use of a jet of water on a fire. If I remember correctly I think I may have been doing it wrong by the gestures he was making.

**Good Times!** No political correctness back then. On our way out to his service at the Crick Chapel, Fawkner Memorial Park I heard from another fire that he also was very frugal with the equipment off his station's appliances when at a fire or whatever; he would instruct them to make sure you always use the gear off the closest appliance not their own which would be parked well upwind of the job.

On a serious note Clarrie was not only a gentlemen but also a top bloke and firefighter a joy to be stationed with and /or coming on in a big red truck. Unfortunately in retirement the love of his life passed away a number of years ago and then he developed an age related memory condition needing him to go into full time care. His late wife's niece made sure his every need was catered for. Clarrie was 95 when he passed away. **Mate on behalf of all the Firies thank you.**

### Joseph. H. Trickey 'Joe' 1931 - 27/1/2016

Joe (Junior) would be best described as a thoroughbred, He was one of a pure breed from a firefighting family. His father Joseph McKinley, was a Station Officer, his

two younger brothers also were firefighters. Add to that uncles and a nephew fire. You wouldn't need to be a Rhodes Scholar to know what the topic of conversation would be when the tribe got together? There would be that much water splashed around, Mum would surely need the old bucket & mop handy at the gatherings.

In my case I not only had the privilege of knowing most of them but also attending fires and/or incidents with some of them, and I must say I was more than happy to have them backing me up or knowing they were the backup station crew.

One retired fire, Bruce Thornton, was stationed with him in the old 'D' district said both Joe Senior & Junior were top firefighters/workmates and a pleasure to be around. I am not sure if most would know Joseph Henry who joined and left the MFB twice for a total of 15 years. He then joined the Queensland Fire Service which he was member of for 32 years and retired with the rank of Station Officer.

I called to see him a couple of times a number of years ago when he was on duty during the family sojourn to the Sunshine state. During the meetings it was very obvious he had not changed, the only difference he was now a Queensland Firefighter, what is that old saying. "You can take the man out of Victoria, but you cannot take Victoria out of the Man" Both Queensland & Melbourne Firies had a funeral service for him. The Melbourne one was at the Fawkner Memorial Park where Joe was laid to rest in the family plot Monday 8/2/2016.

**On behalf of both state Fire Services, thank you for allowing Joe to be part of our families.**

### John Sheridan 'Jack' 1931- 3/2/2016

Interesting fact, both Joe and Jack were born in the same year, both started at the MFB in 1952. In Jack's case, he stayed in the MFB for 35 years. Being factual my knowledge is not as good as Rod Knowles who gave the eulogy at his funeral; the following is combined data from us.

I first met Jack back in the fifties when he was the firefighter/typist on one of the shifts at Eastern Hill. I was on a different shift and would only get to see him if I had changed shifts. He was one of the type of people you could not help but notice - big & tall with a deep voice with a great deal of firefighting skill, the type that was a great advert for the job. A number of years later he became a very successful Employees Representative on the MFB Board.

Rod had a lot to do with him because of their close relationship with the United Firefighters Union. Jack became its President. Rod, in discussion with me, stated he was a very good one and said that his work with the late Bill Webber, the Secretary, was brilliant. They were like a well-oiled machine moving the conditions forward for all.

Jack, because of the work he did on behalf of the members was made a Life Member of the UFU. The unfortunate part is, much of the great work they did, whilst recorded in the minutes of the union, is only known by very few people.

Jack in his retirement was one of the foundation members of the RFA and also the first "Water Off" editor.

This is not the only role he took on during that period. He became a councillor for the City of Keilor and later became Mayor.

Yes, there were many upsides for him in his retirement, however, there were also down sides. His wife's health and his own personal health needed medical monitoring. He then lost the love of his life a number of years later.

Jack would from time to time call into the St Albans Fire Stn, No 41 and say hi, but he was similar to other retirees, in that they never really got over the loss of their partners.

The big bloke, passed away on Wednesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. It was very fitting that his funeral was held at the old Sunshine Fire Station, now a Funeral Parlour for Tobin Brothers on the 10/2/2016.

**Jack you cast a big shadow not only over the MFB but also the City of Keilor. We are indebted to you for your support of all fellow firefighters and the community you served.**

### Ronald 'A' Rae 'Ron' 1938-18/2/2016



Ron was the type of person every society needs for it to function. My association with him when I was in the brigade was very limited. Different shifts, location or whatever. I think the only time we would have passed would be at a brigade and/or union function. It was not until I retired that we became more involved and

it was then I realised just how lucky we were to have him as a participant on any project.

The two 'Rs' Ron & Rod Knowles (Both Life Members) who were closer than brothers virtually threw themselves into any project that was going to benefit the UFU members and their families. I do believe if we sat down and worked out just how many hours they gave up for the good of others it would run into years.

Another interesting fact about Ron was his knowledge on the transport of livestock by air. One of his neighbours had a business of transporting thoroughbred animals all around the world and he was often invited on the trips. I remember one day he was explaining about the many destinations he had travel to. He was not bragging or anything like that, it was just a matter of fact type of conversation but to me it was like I was being taken on a world trip without leaving the seat I was sitting on.

Unfortunately, his retirement was not always the peaches & cream that he most certainly deserved as he was struck down by a life changing stroke. During this time he showed the true strength of his character, by not letting it beat him. During the rehab we would email and /or phone one and other and during the phone calls he would have me in hysterics with his descriptions of all the different exercises they had him doing. Here is a bloke faced with an unenviable task but still cracking jokes etc, He was not going to let a thing like a stroke beat him.

Life seems at times to be so unfair and not always go the way one would hope. Ron who did so much for others and the community gets knocked down again but this time

Ron was not able to beat it but he made sure it would never take away his love for his family or his humour. **Fact:** He was still making light of things right to the very end.

Mate I hope you were looking down on your celebration of life service; it had all the things you loved and supported. Family, friends, UFU banner, fire services personnel, Carrum Bowling Club members, big red trucks, Carlton theme song and not a dry eye in the place.

**Judith and Family. On behalf of all firies and the community, thank you for sharing your Ron with us!**

### Kenneth 'G' Murphy 'Ken' 1926-16/3/2016

Ken was the son of a Firefighter and you could almost say he was born at Eastern Hill Fire Station. His parents lived in quarters there. In fact their quarters were built on the site of an old hotel and still had incorporated into the

structure was the hotel cellar.

His mother, when he was due, went to the Mercy Hospital in East Melbourne and a few days after his birth they returned to the quarters. Hence his knowledge of brigade life started way back in 1926.

The RFA did run what one could call a series on the Murphy family which we ran over a period



*Ken Murphy with Museum Curator Toni Paynter during a visit to the FSMV.*

**Image: Barbara McCumisky**

of five newsletters, the basis of each article being supplied by Ken.

For people who do not know, he became a career member of the MFB service back in 1949 and by the time I joined in 1956 he was a Sub Station Officer in single men's quarters at the station that he grew up in. His parents had raised a well-educated son who found the IFE exams a breeze. This of course lead to rapid promotion.

Add to that, his maritime knowledge which he gained as a Petty Officer (Eng'r) in the Merchant Navy. Many of us felt that following in his father's footsteps into the brigade, may not have been his best choice, this proved to be correct.

Ken had already reached the rank of a District Officer and no doubt would have progressed further in 1967 he resigned from the job to seek other goals. The first couple of ventures proved unsuccessful, he then applied for and was appointed to the position of Chief Fire Officer of the BHP maritime fleet. This no doubt was the role he enjoyed the most, travelling the world and being involved in the maritime industry; he then retired to New South Wales. Unfortunately like many other firefighters in retirement he was afflicted with that (insidious) cancer.

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7)

Late last year he advised me by mail that his Radiologist was happy with the last X-Rays but unfortunately in the new year he found he was having problems with balance etc, Some weeks later his nephew rang to say he had fallen and injured his head causing a bad bleed on the brain from which he didn't recover.

**Ken, I have no idea about your new posting; I imagine they will slot you into the maritime group.**

**Thomas James "Tom" Wishart. 1931-21/03/2016.**

The morning of the 22nd of March I received a phone call from RFA member Jack Moore, advising me that he had just been informed that one of our members, Tom Wishart, had passed away. Jack, who had been stationed with him at the old 38 Station South Melbourne, had maintained a close friendship with him since then.

During the conversation regarding Tom, it was very evident that he had, over the preceding years, not enjoyed the best of health. In fact, one could say it would have been a very frightening time for him, with the severe depression that goes with the deterioration of intellectual performance etc.

On a lighter note we both started reminiscing about the good times we both had shared with him. In my case it was just after I had joined the job back in 1956 that I came in contact with Tom. Factually, I thought if the brigade were looking for a firie to promote the job, he would had filled the role perfectly. He was great at a fire or whatever, a top driver with an intimate knowledge of the city and metropolitan area, capable and very fit and able to take on the role of Senior Man in the old Eastern Hill Watch room.

In Jack's case his knowledge was much greater, not only as Officers stationed together but also as close friends in and out of work.

As previously mentioned regarding the health of Tom, Jack would visit him and keep me informed regarding same and the effect it was having on Tom's family. There

is no doubt the term I have heard mentioned in just such cases the "Long Goodbye" to me describes it perfectly.

**Tom, we the Community, thank you for giving the most productive years of your life for our protection.**

**Patricia Mary "Pat" Cameron. 1939-24/03/2016.**

Foundation Member & Travel Guide for the RFA Pat, and her late husband Don, as most of the older members would know, did the "Travelling with Silver" article in the "Water Off" newsletter. The following is a small example from one of their articles.

**We would like to suggest a weekend away at the "Hotel Canberra", now run by the Hyatt people. No Doorman like "The Colonel" spitting all over you on arrival, no food the likes of "Holten's House of Dysentery", which I believe collapsed on his leaving. (The quantity of grease and fat melted in the summer heat and it fell over).**

You can see from this small example both Pat & Don did like to give the reader some very insightful comments and comparisons to help guide you.

Another small example is the care and consideration they gave when booking sitting arrangements when we dined out with them. Regularly my wife and I would find when we arrived at a restaurant or hotel, there would be three chairs and a high chair for me. (I will admit we did become the topic of conversation amongst the diners when I sat in the high chair!).

Pat & Don complimented one another with their great sense of timing and humour. Like all, she never really got over his passing. She would say like most, "I am adjusting to it."

**Pat, the two of you together again upstairs. I can only imagine the skulduggery you are going to get up to! We of course are going to miss you down here.**

**John Berry**



**"What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?"**

In our senior years, we need to ensure we eat plenty of greens, plenty of roughage, drink at least a litre of water per day and of course a balanced diet in regard to vegetables and meat.

A glass of red wine, so the doctor says is ok as well.

Throw in an annual health check with your doctor, a blood test, cholesterol check etc to ensure we live to a ripe old age. "You have earned it!"

St. Kilda Road Medical Services look after many retired personnel.



## O.A.M Recipient Ronald Barker

### Citation For service to cultural heritage, particularly the history of fire services

**R**on, who was awarded The Order of Australia medal in 2014, continues the great work he and the fellow volunteers of the Fire Services Museum of Victoria (A decommissioned MFB Head Station) do to ensure the Fire Services history/story remains as relevant today as it was when the premises was functioning in its heyday as a busy No.1 fire station.

Let's take a walk down memory lane. Ron joined the MFB in 1961 (W.T. Aldridge was C.O. at the time) and retired 31.5 years later with the National and Fire Brigade long service medal. His compatriots from the Special Service Department knew that he would never leave the fold as he was already heavily involved in the historical side of the Fire Service. One member, the late Russ Coulter, would in our regular phone calls comment about the enthusiasm Ron showed towards the recovery and maintenance of old firefighting equipment. Russ would say when I drop off the perch, make sure Ron and his mate Geoff Annal are not around as they would have me stuffed and on display as an early firefighter circa late 1940's in no time and then never dust me, just to get even for all the pranks I played on them..

Ron's enthusiasm for the Melbourne Fire Museum (Now the Fire Services Museum of Victoria) has never waned since that first meeting back in 1972 in a room at the back of the old North Melbourne Fire Station No 48. Here it is, well over 40 years later and he is still hard at it. He more than likely would have been required at one time or another to have filled most positions on the FSM board when times were tough. Even now he is still used as a sounding board to insure any new innovation is suitable and workable.

I had the opportunity the other night to see an old 2007 edition of an ABC television show called the Collectors. In the show he was being interviewed about historical firefighting equipment that was being exhibited and the panel were amazed with the items and his knowledge. One panellist at the end of the show remarked again about the exhibits they had been shown during Ron's presentation.

I know we have a number of philatelists amongst the RFA members. I wonder if any have the Historic Fire

Engines collection and/or our O.A.M member Ron's stamp (exhibited above). This I believe is a first for the Museum. A stamp of this type or should I say stamps of this design showing an O.A.M winner.

We all know that Mike McCumisky's band of merry volunteers do a magnificent job in promoting the past Victorian fire services with a Fire Safety message, however most would not realise just how much people like Ron and his ilk do with their constant research of every lead they receive about by-gone days.

One day whilst I was visiting the museum he took me on a tour of his latest project. In this case, it was an



area in the basement of the old station, one I remembered as the battery room. The room of course no longer has any of the batteries that were required for the closed metallic alarm system, however it has become an area for intense investigation/research into associated firefighting equipment etc, by Ron.

Another of the projects he is very involved with is the reproduction of Fire Marks used in bygone days by Insurance Companies to have exhibited outside of buildings which they insured. This of course

was back in the days when the various companies had their own fire crews. Just imagine you rolled up with your steamer and crew, see that it is not one with your fire marks and you just return to station and let it the building burn.

The year 2016 is an important year for the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade as it has reached the grand age of 125 years and I have been informed it is being promoted on the various internet social pages. I wonder if people like Ron and Mike's band of volunteers from the Fire Services Victoria Museum and /or the various other departments of the brigade are given as equal billing as the rest of the family.

On behalf of the members Retired Firefighters Association of Australia Victorian Branch, **Ron we thank you and your better half Joy for your continuing support to the cultural heritage of the fire services.**

**RFA committee.**

## Blow for Self Managed Super Funds

Trustees of self managed super funds (SMSFs) will need to be extra vigilant when choosing high return investments after a decision by the Government not to offer compensation following its review of the Trio Capital collapse.

Responsible for losses of approximately \$180 million, Trio Capital collapsed in 2009 following the largest superannuation fraud in Australian history. Managing more than 20 investments, the largest fund was the Astarra Strategic Fund, which was generating incredibly high returns. This attracted the attention of a fund manager who alerted the authorities and the fraud was uncovered.

Those who had invested in Trio Capital through large superannuation funds were covered under the Government's Superannuation Compensation Scheme. This scheme is operated under the Superannuation Industry Supervision Act and covers super funds that are regulated by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA), however, when theft or fraud occurs, the Government rules on whether compensation should be paid.

In what was seen as a test case for SMSFs, the Government agreed to review the previously dismissed claims for compensation from those who manage their own investments. It found that financial regulators had carried out their roles and responsibilities diligently and therefore it would not pay compensation to any SMSFs.

Although there was previously little doubt that the Government compensation scheme **did not cover SMSFs**, the ruling serves to reiterate to those managing their own funds that they have to be incredibly vigilant when making investments.

### Do you have what it takes for an SMSF?

Do you have what it takes to manage your own super fund? It's a really simple question that anyone considering an SMSF needs to ask themselves and answer honestly.

SMSFs are becoming increasingly popular with nearly 600,000 self managed funds in operation in Australia. People are opting to manage their own retirement future rather than leave it to others and, with the continuing cases of poor practice and fraud at large financial institutions, who can blame them?

However, the responsibilities of an SMSF trustee are onerous and shouldn't be taken lightly. It's not just about trading shares or buying property. Keeping records, appointing an auditor, valuing the assets in the fund and lodging annual returns all take time and a certain amount of knowledge and experience and this is in addition to the challenges of choosing the right investments.

The reality is also that, regardless of how vigilant you are about choosing an investment, if someone is hell-bent on committing fraud or theft, they'll find a way to do it. Just ask any of the big banks how difficult it is to ensure everyone complies with the law. Unfortunately, when the fraud or theft involves a person's life savings, the result can be disastrous. Some people were caught up in the Storm Financial crisis during the GFC and are still fighting to rebuild their lives.

The decision by the Government not to compensate SMSFs who lost money to Trio Capital is indeed a blow for those involved. However, it was only ever going to be a last grasp at receiving some compensation. The rules after all are very clear.

Do you feel competent enough to manage your own investments? Do you think you may as well give it a go since the large financial institutions seem to be riddled with bad financial planners? Or are you more comfortable to have someone else handle your financial affairs? And, if you do set up your own SMSF, is it a question of having a professional, trusted and experienced accountant?

Source; Debbie McTaggart - "Your Life Choices"

## HOME SWEET HOME

## FOR SOME!

*Retirement homes often promote themselves as offering residents independence, choice and comfort, but unfortunately some residents don't always get what they bargained for, according to Consumer Action Law Centre's Gerard Brody.*

Living in a retirement home can have its advantages: community living, low-maintenance units, manicured grounds, scheduled activities and common facilities. However, our centre receives numerous complaints every year from residents who have found a very different story behind the scenes. Below are some of the most common complaints we receive.

### Fees and charges

Retirement housing contracts are often very complex and may include a number of hidden fees and charges. The most significant fee is paid when leaving a village. This fee can be up to 35 per cent of the sale price of your unit. These fees may not be able to be quantified when you move in, which can leave you with a nasty shock when you look to move out of your unit. Residents may also be unable to afford to move into a new home after they have lost such a huge percentage of their sale proceeds.

**Financial transparency and accountability**

Residents pay significant amounts of money in fees and charges, which they expect will fund shared facilities. However, residents report that they can be kept in the dark about how much money managers are collecting and how much is spent on things that benefit residents.

**Unbuilt facilities**

Retirement homes may promise impressive shared facilities to prospective residents, even if these haven't been built yet. It is important to view site plans and other evidence that construction will actually go ahead before you decide to move in. Some of our clients have been waiting over seven years for promised facilities to be built, and feel like they are living on a construction site.

**Maintenance and repairs**

Sometimes disputes arise about what ongoing maintenance and administration fees actually cover. It can be unclear from a residents' contract who is responsible for what repairs and maintenance. We have seen disputes over everything from fences and tree

lopping, to drainage and paving. You should clarify in writing before you move in for that which you will be responsible for, and what your ongoing fees will cover.

**Dispute resolution**

Often residents don't understand their legal rights when a dispute arises, and specialist legal advice can be hard to find and often costly. While retirement homes may have an internal process to deal with complaints about management or disputes between residents, some residents say that they face threats and intimidation by management or other residents if they make a complaint. If a resident cannot resolve their complaint with management, they can make a complaint to their local consumer affairs regulator or take the matter to a court or tribunal. If you are having a dispute with your retirement home manager, contact your local consumer affairs office or community legal centre for advice.

For more information visit [www.consumeraction.org.au](http://www.consumeraction.org.au).

## **FIRE SERVICES MUSEUM of VICTORIA OPEN DAY AT NEWPORT SATURDAY MAY 7, 2016**



**Be a part of 125 Years of the Metropolitan Fire Brigades celebrations.**

Come and visit the display of historic fire services appliances.

The Display will be open to the public from 10.00am to 4.00pm

Open to all members of the public, entry is by donations of a gold coin to help our Volunteers continue their work.

Location: Fire Services Museum's Workshop,  
Champion Road, Newport, - Melway: 55, K, 6



## **ON THE GOLD COAST**

**28TH JULY 2016**

**To all fire fighters & family where-ever you may be!!!!  
A luncheon is held at the Southport Yacht Club on the LAST  
THURSDAY every year in JULY**

**The luncheon has now been held for over 26 years – so come  
and join us**

**Lunch is available at discounted prices**

**All drinks at Member prices**

**Situated on the lovely broad water at Southport – Gold Coast  
Catch up with old friends, work mates and even meet some of  
the Queensland Fire Service firies as well.**

**SEE YOU AT 11.00AM**

**NOTIFICATION BY 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2016**

**Please contact: Ian or Gail Fagernes**

**On 07 5522 4321 or Ian: 0417 382 935 or**

**Gail: 0431 485 141 should you need further details.**



## Retired MFB Superintendent receives Order of Australia Medal



Retired firefighter John Berry has dedicated his life to the community and fire prevention and has been awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) as part of the 2016 Australia Day Honours.

The Order of Australia is an order of chivalry that recognises Australian citizens and other persons for achievement or meritorious service.

John's service includes:

- Secretary and Treasurer, Victorian Branch, Retired Firefighters Association of Australia (RFA), 1999-2014.
- Contributor to the RFA magazine, 'Water Off'.
- Superintendent, Metropolitan Fire Brigade, 1985-1988. District Officer, 1979-1985.
- Station Officer Grade 1, 1976-1979.
- Station Officer Grade 2, 1963-1976.
- Pioneered report into the prevalence of cancer in firefighters and submitted it to the Public Bodies Review Committee, 1991.
- Member, State Management Committee, United Firefighter's Union, no dates.
- Member, Lower Plenty Progress Association, no dates.
- Leader, Lower Plenty Scout Group, Scouts Victoria, no dates.

All members of the RFA congratulate John on his Australia Day Honours Award and thank him for his dedication to our members over many years.

## ACFO Ken Brown awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal



MFB Assistant Chief Fire Officer Ken Brown has been awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal, which recognises distinguished service by members of Australian fire services. It is awarded by the Governor General on the recommendation of the responsible Commonwealth, state and territory ministers.

The full citation for Ken's award is as follows:

Mr Brown has 32 years' experience at MFB and is known for his strategic operational leadership skills which were vital in the support of the development and implementation of the Fire Service Enhancement Program.

As Assistant Chief Fire Officer, he has provided exceptional leadership to the MFB in two key areas, namely marine response and operational emergency incident management.

## SO Ian McKenzie awarded Mitchell Shire Citizen of the Year



Station Officer Ian McKenzie, A platoon at Somerton Fire Station (FS09), has been awarded the Mitchell Shire Citizen of the Year for his work as an ambassador and 'Wishgranter' for the Starlight Children's Foundation, as well as his work as an ambassador for the

### Daniel Morecombe Foundation.

Ian has been involved with the Starlight Children's Foundation for the past 12 years and as a 'Starlight Wishgranter' he has helped to grant once-in-a-lifetime Starlight Wishes for seriously ill children. He has worked with more than 100 families, including some in his local community,

The RFA members congratulate Ken and Ian.

## An Update on the Employee Support Program (ESP)

As people may be aware, the profile of mental health and wellbeing issues within the workplace has increased substantially over the last few months. The ESP has been incredibly busy, both in providing support and services to our staff and their families, as well as consulting and planning for the program's future.

People may be *less* aware, however, of what is going on "behind the scenes", and so we thought we would take the opportunity to provide a big picture update on the ESP.

### What we're doing:

Some of the things that have kept us really busy in the last few months include -

Fairlie Morgan started as the new Employee Assistance Coordinator in November 2015. In a very short time she has had the privilege of going to many stations and departments, and hearing about people's support needs and program ideas. Fairlie is working on an ESP Strategic Action Plan that would encompass as many of these as possible.

We're expanding the Peer Support program, and have just finished a massive Peer recruitment and interview process. We will start the Peer Training Program, which will be done in two blocks, May (with the second block happening in July).

Given the high work load, we have brought on the new Peer Coordinator (who will be taking over from Sandy Hearn) early. We are really pleased to have Scott Darcy start working with us. Like Sandy and Fairlie, he can be found across Burnley and Eastern Hill, and other locations as required.

We are doing a large amount of training across the organisation, with some

key areas of focus being Recruits, EMR Retention and Recertification, and Retirement Readiness.

We have updated the MFB Wellbeing Checks, and have trialled the new version at a number of stations/workplaces. Please see the box below for more information.

### What we're working towards:

A large number of amazing ideas have come out of our consultations and discussions, and whilst we don't want to make promises with regards to timelines just yet, we are working on -

Making it easier to report mental health concerns, and seek support if required  
Improving the ESP information available on the intranet

Refreshing our ESP brochures and advertising, as well as our mental health literature

Finding ways for MFB staff to voluntarily "share their stories" about mental health, in order to challenge stigma and increase awareness

Training programs in key areas of Post-Traumatic Stress and Post Traumatic Growth, and Mindfulness and Resilience

Collaborate with other organisations, such as *beyondblue*, to make sure we are working towards delivering the best ESP we possibly can

You will hear more from us throughout the year, and as the program continues to develop. We welcome peoples' ideas, and passions, about how to drive our service. However, you won't *always* hear about what we are doing, and that is because a large amount of the work we do is highly confidential, and confidentiality is integral to our program.

**The ESP is open to all retired MFB employees. Note: Contacts at left.**



### This is us (from LEFT to RIGHT in photo):

**Sandy Hearn** – Peer Coordinator - [shearn@mfb.vic.gov.au](mailto:shearn@mfb.vic.gov.au) – 0417 538 289

**Fairlie Morgan** –Employee Assistance Coordinator - [fmorgan@mfb.vic.gov.au](mailto:fmorgan@mfb.vic.gov.au) – 0407 665 174

**Scott Darcy** – Peer Coordinator – [sdarcy@mfb.vic.gov.au](mailto:sdarcy@mfb.vic.gov.au) – 0429 771 849

## “Water Off” Deadline To Submit Copy for Publication

Due to the possibility of Australia Post going to a 3 day week delivery and other factors, we find that we have to set closing dates for acceptance of copy for Water Off.

The members need at least 2 weeks notice prior to both annual and general meetings and the editor requires time to edit copy and set photographs then send off to printers who require at least a week to print.

**August 2016 edition deadline for copy is 24th July .**



# BELLS BY THE BEACH

HOLIDAY HOUSE • OCEAN GROVE



Proudly operating since 2006

Your hosts:  
Jan and Lin Bell (ex-MFB)

**M: 0403 221 737**

Office phone: 03 5255 3839  
(note our new number)

## Pet friendly holiday house, 500m to beach

24 Roditis Drive, Ocean Grove

- New self catering kitchen, cosy lounge & dining area
- Gas log fire, large screen TV, DVD, CD player with radio, books and movies, air conditioning
- Central bathroom, spa bath/overhead shower with rail
- Queen & single beds, electric blankets, pillows & doonas, linen & towels for hire, or supply your own
- Laundry and clothes line, and an extra toilet as well !
- Secure fences, garden, pets can stay & sleep indoors
- Ocean Grove Hotel, golf and bowls clubs, cafes, supermarkets, fresh food Bellarine Taste Trail
- Brochures and more information available

**2015 nightly rates - up to 6 guests - pets stay free!**  
Winter \$170, Spring/Autumn \$195, Summer \$220

*(We offer 5% discount for all firefighters)*



[www.bellsbythebeach.com.au](http://www.bellsbythebeach.com.au)  
email: [bellsbythebeach@bigpond.com](mailto:bellsbythebeach@bigpond.com)  
[facebook.com/bellsbythebeachholidayhouse](https://facebook.com/bellsbythebeachholidayhouse)



## Geelong Firey's Muster

**C.F.A. – M.F.B. – SHELL - AVALON**  
**Serving & Retired – Staff & Volunteers**

**Smorgasbord Lunch**

**On the 4th Tuesday of March & November**  
**@ 1130 hrs**

**GATEWAY HOTEL**

**218-230 Princess Highway – CORIO**

**Members, Wives, Partners,**

**Family & Friends**

**Contact:**

**Peter Lang 5275 6039**

**To receive Mail out notification**

## Recent Retirements

**John Taylor FSC**  
**Tony Ciavarella**  
**Con Patralis**

### MEMBERS INTERESTED IN RECEIVING THEIR "WATER OFF" VIA EMAIL.

To those members with easy access to email and would like to have their copy sent by this system, please send your email address to our editor John Laverick. "Water Off" will be sent out in a PDF format.

John's address - -  
[retfire@bigpond.net.au](mailto:retfire@bigpond.net.au)

Before you send your email, click on 'tools' at top and click on 'request receipt'. This will reply to you and verify both email addresses are working correctly.

# MFB Gala Ball

## 125th Anniversary Gala Ball

Tickets for MFB's 125th Anniversary Gala Ball go on sale to current and retired MFB employees on Monday 4 April!

The black tie event will be held on Saturday 2 July 2016 and current and retired MFB employees can purchase tickets at a special discounted rate.

Tickets to this not-to-be-missed event will be exclusively available to current and retired MFB employees for four weeks before being opened to the general public.

A charity auction will be held on the night, with all proceeds going to support beyondblue. Further details including the entertainment line-up will be announced on Monday, so keep an eye out!

**PRINT POST No. 100002647**

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If undelivered return to;  
**The Secretary**  
Allan Roberts.  
50 Cameron Parade,  
Bundoora Victoria 3083

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