

# "WATER OFF"

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



November 2019. Vol. 23 No.4  
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## "Gone but not Forgotten"

Don Brennan a Community Minded Family Man



He was first a carpenter as was the great son of God  
Our Don Brennan became a great firefighter  
With Nancy and family he had a great life  
Sailed the seas and rock and rolled in the caravan  
On the many Aussie trips they did  
Never angry, except when hammer hit finger  
Always on the move, he didn't linger  
A generous man with so many people  
Raised funds for the poor, the needy and more  
His family came first as it always should  
A Bombers supporter he was through and through  
Was a prize winner daily with radio stations on air  
A great speaker, so many words with a flair  
Never a swear word, never a drop of booze  
Did pass those determined ruddy lips of his  
He loved his fishing, he loved the past fires  
He loved his firey mates from  
yester-year

He was a man's man without fear

His slow demise was painful to bear  
His family - Nancy, Angela, Darren and many  
others  
Through thick and thin were up to the task  
Of doing their best for the great man  
He's now gone and kicking Bomber goals in the sky  
And just waiting for another Premiership year  
We'll miss the big man and his words of wisdom  
Of past great work for Brigade and Union  
He won't be forgotten - our big as life Don

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Padden

Col Harris

# “ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING”

Notice is hereby given that the next Annual General Meeting will be held at the Burnley Complex 450 Burnley St. Richmond.

**1030 Hours, Wednesday 20th November 2019**

## AGENDA ITEMS.

**Minutes of last General meeting  
President’s Report  
Secretary/Treasurer’s Report  
Guest Speaker;  
General Business**

**Allan Roberts  
SECRETARY/TREASURER  
Address all correspondence to:  
Allan Roberts  
Unit 158 Mernda Retirement Village  
89 Galloway Drive  
Mernda Vic 3754  
Telephone: Mob: 0433 007 720  
Email: rfavic1@gmail.com**

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.  
All wives and partners welcome  
Please join us!**

### Diary Dates 2019

**November 16th Christmas Luncheon  
Wed. 20th November; Annual General Meeting**

### **Non financial Members**

Members be advised if your newsletter has an expiry date of 2/1/2018 that means you have not paid your subs since 2017 therefore if no remuneration is received by the 2/1/19 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:** Sam Capes  
**Sec./Treasurer:** Allan Roberts

### **General Committee:**

Arthur (Sam) Capes  
Mike McCumisky  
Len Manning  
Ian Geddes  
Kevin Hede  
Colin Harris

**“Water Off”  
Editorial Staff  
Colin Harris  
John Laverick**

**Auditor:**  
Mike Enticott

### **MFB /CFA Valē**

Don Brennan	Geoff Norley
Lance Phillips	Steve Phillip
Bruce Weaver	Neil Poulton
Malcolm Dabb	Russell Lightfoot
Barry Langley	Barry Gavin
Barry McBrearty	Jim McDonald
Trevor Logan	Don Robertson

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

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

John Bellis	Alan James*
John Brown*	Archie McLachlan
Bob Brunning	Harry Mitchell
Bob Cameron	John Orange
Stan Cameron	Dick Prendergast
Harold Connell	Gary Spicer
Stan Devlin	John Schintler
Tom Driscoll	Alan Sugg
Jack Etherton*	Bob Tottle
Ian Fowler	Laurie Trewin
Jim Gibson	Ray Wellard
Eddie Gilbertson	John Williams
Bill Grant	Tom Williamson*
John Hancock*	
Noel (Dutchy) Holland	
Bob Horgan	

We wish these members a speedy recovery

**Note: If you know of any member who may be ill please notify a committee member.**

**Don’t forget the RFA website  
[www.rfav.com.au](http://www.rfav.com.au)**

“Water Off” is edited by Colin Harris, 2 Gowar Avenue, Camberwell 3124. Phone 0432 302 414. Email: retiredfirenews@gmail.com  
All articles accepted for publication by the editor are done so in good faith and no responsibility is accepted for any inaccuracies that may occur.  
Signed; Colin D. Harris (The views expressed by the editor of this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Victorian branch of the RFA)



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The time just flies along these days soon it will be Christmas and we'll be celebrating 2020. Sometimes I wish time would slow down

a bit.

Anyway I went over to China for the World Police and Fire games held in Chengdu this time around before arriving in that city my wife and I took in the sights of Shanghai and Beijing and we had a large dose of cultural shock so different to what we expected and experienced before but we got on ok with the locals who treated us like movie stars!?.

Highlights were the Great Wall and the Forbidden City and to think they were built and settled before the Great Southern Land was found. The games

was organised and run like we thought they would be and some of the Chinese competitors were very creative in their scoring and place getting but that's another story. The team from MFB did OK with serving Robert Foote doing very well in the medal count.

On a sad note we lost a great shift mate in Baz McBrearity while we were away and he will be sadly missed, our thoughts go out to his FAMILY and Friends.

Last week we also lost our Founding member and President Don Brennan who also was a great help in the creation of the RMD, he was a mentor to me when I needed help and my thoughts go out to Nancy and Family.

Alex Shepherd

## SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Please give your family and friends details on contacting the RFA so we may be able to help you or your family members with support if required. The meeting at Corio Fire Station was chaired by Sammy Capes owing that Alex Shepherd being away at the fire games and myself having a new knee fitted on the 6<sup>th</sup> August and unable to get to the meeting, thanks very much Sammy.

UFU CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON 17<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER. UFU SEND OUT INVITATIONS.

Special thanks to John Laverick, for his ongoing help to Col Harris with Water Off.

Thanks to Colin Harris, Kristina Starnawski and Mark Carter for helping out with **Gone But Not Forgotten.**

**For your information Russell Hawthorn is looking after all bereavements for me and if you need anything special required for you please contact Russell on: 0409 187 945**

Please make sure that your family knows how to get in touch with the RFA for any assistance.

**PLEASE NOTE: WHEN PAYING BY CHEQUE MAKE OUT TO RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION. NOT ALLAN ROBERTS OR YOU WILL RECEIVE IT BACK.**

## RFA MEMBERS REQUIRED WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN SEVERAL BBQ MILL PARK DATES.:

**3<sup>rd</sup> November 2019.**  
**December 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and may be 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**On behalf of all members I express our thanks and gratitude for the support that MFB Burnley staff collectively provided to the RFA members at their BBQ's following all our Meetings.**

Allan Roberts Secretary.

### TREASURER'S REPORT.

Closing Balance: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Running account S1 = \$2,550.49.

Fix Term 6 Months L1 Account: = \$7,332.90.

Allan Roberts Treasurer.

### New Members:

Steve Draper  
Ron Haines  
Geoff Robbins  
Don Jenkins  
Rob Kirkman  
Mick Goland

### Retired Members

Keith Millar  
Peter Hall  
Greg Lewis  
Neil Provis  
Shane Harding  
Paul Crellin  
Richard Zanko

# Minutes of RFA Meeting, Corio 21<sup>st</sup> August 2019

Meeting commenced at 1030 hours:

Present: Nine (9) members

Apologies: Allan Roberts, Ian Geddes, Russell Hawthorn,  
Brian Jackson, Len Manning

Vice-President Sammy Capes opened meeting and welcomed all attendees.

Previous Minutes – Moved Peter Lang - Seconded Eric Daffy.

**Correspondence** (various including two new members) – Moved Eric Daffy – Seconded Alan Boyd  
Almoners Report (Nil) other than it was mentioned that Archie McLaughlin, in bad way and in re-hab in Camperdown. Trevor Reed who was sick is going well. Barry Gavin passed away and private funeral.

**Treasure’s Report:**

Access Account: \$2,670.25 Term Deposit: 7,332.90.

Moved John Chambers – Seconded Alan Boyd

**General Business:**

Suggestion from Peter Lang that the Corio RFA meeting should be moved back to Burnley

complex, due to the fact that only 2 members live in Geelong area and the rest have to travel from Melbourne to attend meeting. The two members are willing to travel to Burnley if this change is made. (Committee to discuss).

Suggestion from our guest speaker Mark Sinkinson (CFA Operations Officer) that the RFA have a Gmail email account for CFA information e.g. CFA retirements to be publicised for all RFA members to view this information.

**Guest Speaker:**

Operations Officer Mark Sinkinson – Belmont CFA.

Mark put on a slide show of incidents he has attended, his role as an Operations Officer and discussed the coming of the amalgamation of fire services into the one Victorian Fire and Rescue Service.

At the end of the talk, Mark was thanked and presented with an RFA BBQ Apron by Vice President Sammy Capes.

Meeting closed at 12.05pm.



*Sam Capes with CFA Operations Officer Mark Sinkinson at Corio meeting.*

## How to ... keep your mind sharp

### How to avoid a sluggish mind or bad memory!

While mild memory loss may be a natural part of ageing, there are simple changes we can make to improve our brain function, according to [MoneyTalksNews](#). Here are 13 ways you can take control of your memory and keep your mind sharp.

**Meditate**

According to the ECO Institute, meditation not only improves your focus and slows ageing, but also helps your working memory and brain function.

**Have a laugh**

Both laughter and friendship have been linked to improved memory. So grab a mate and have a chuckle or throw on a comedy classic if you want to sharpen up your mind.

**Get your Vitamin D**

Seniors who have dementia have [been found](#) to have lower levels of vitamin D than those with normal memory or mild cognitive impairments.

**Regular exercise**

Along with just about every other organ in your body, exercise helps your brain health, in turn improving your memory.

**Manage your blood pressure**

Hypertension or high blood pressure can reduce blood flow to the brain, which may be linked to developing cognitive delays.

**Stay hydrated**

Being hydrated can help you maintain focus while dehydration has been [linked](#) to poorer memory retention.

**Eat some berries**

A [study](#) has shown that berries such as blueberries and strawberries help prevent memory decline in women.

**Eat a Mediterranean diet**

Packed with vegetables, fish, olive oil and whole grains, the Mediterranean diet may help with age-related cognitive decline a [study](#) suggests.

**Stress less**

According to [moneytalksnews.com](#) stress and holding a negative outlook on ageing itself is likely to accelerate ageing and damage cells in the body.

**Daydream**

You may not think it, but [research](#) has shown that taking small breaks, as short as 10 minutes, can help with your recollection.

**Quit smoking**

As we all know by now, smoking isn't good for your health, and the same goes for your memory. A [study](#) showed smoking can make you lose some of your everyday memory. Luckily, upon quitting, your memory is likely to be restored.

**Sleep soundly**

While you're dreaming, your brain is busy replaying and filing away your days' worth of memories. If you don't have enough sleep, your brain misses out and this may worsen your memory.

**Keep learning**

The results say that learning shouldn't stop at school. Learning new information and skills throughout your life can help with brain function and improve your memory.

Source; Liv Gardiner, Your Life Choices.

## World War II torture—not forgotten

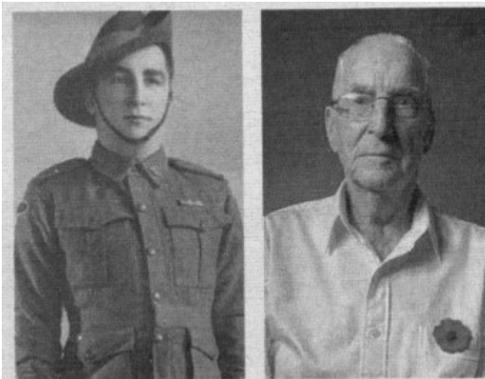
### Jim's memory still fresh after many years long gone

In light of the memory of the horrors of war when Remembrance Day comes along this year on the 11th of November, a story was written by Brittany Goldsmith - Moorabbin Leader newspaper some time ago about our very own retired member Senior Station Officer Jim Kerr.

Jim was just a boy when he enlisted to fight in World War II and in 1942, on his 17th birthday, he was in the Malaysian jungle searching for food with five other 4th Anti-Tank Regiment soldiers. An ambush on the Japanese had gone wrong, leaving 19 survivors of 45. Plans to steal a boat and sail to Sumatra were abandoned, leaving the group with only one option—surrender.

Before he was shaving, Jim became one of the Japanese army's 22,000 prisoners of war, where he spent the next 3.5 years. Speaking on the 80th anniversary of the start of the war, Mr Kerr said he was forced into labour camps including Singapore's Changi Prison and hellish work including constructing the 415km Thai-Burma "Death" Railway alongside 9,500 other Australians.

He said one of the army's favourite punishments was to make captives kneel on broken rocks—holding one of them above over their



*Jim Kerr in his army uniform in WWII and today at Dingley Village. Below:*

*The brutal conditions sustained by prisoners of war on Burma Railway camps.*

railway. He remembers the putrid stench wafting from the ulcer ward next door, where soldiers were treated for maggot-infested gashes. "The orderlies would come around with a sharpened spoon and scrape the putrid flesh away," he said. "When the ulcers got bad they would have to chop a lot of fellows' legs off...a lot of legs were lost on that railway."

"Dingley Village's Jim Kerr, 94, said the key to survival and keeping morale was by "looking out" for his mates.

**Images courtesy Moorabbin Leader**

## The superannuation fund that tops the Shonky list

Reputation is everything. And two products preferred by many retirees have just suffered a huge hit to theirs after the 14th Shonky Awards were announced this week.

The banking royal commission exposed many banks and super funds for their dodgy behaviour, but none more so than a range of AMP products.

AMP's superannuation arm was left in tatters after the royal commission found more than a million 'zombie' super accounts. AMP's bad behaviour included charging dead customers for consultancy fees and live customers fees for no service, as well as inhouse tactics pressuring staff to sell unsuitable products to customers.

"If your superannuation is with AMP, chances are you've had your retirement leeches off to fund its executives' lifestyles," said **Choice chief executive Alan Kirkland**. "Managing people's retirement funds isn't your average business – there's a higher moral standard to meet when it comes to people's security and comfort in older age, and AMP has failed this standard."

Australia's private health insurance industry is also under fire and rising premiums and diminishing cover are leading many people both young and old to dump the system in favour of free public services.

Choice awarding Medibank 'Basic' Cover health insurance for 'failing the basics' will also do the industry no favours in its pursuit of credibility.

The federal government's introduction of new Basic, Bronze, Silver and Gold private hospital cover tiers were meant to make health insurance simpler and more appealing.

However, the system is as confusing – and expensive – as ever and, as Choice warns, rip-offs are still common, singling out Medibank's 'Basic' Cover as an example. Not only is Medibank's 'Basic' cover more expensive than the cheapest Bronze options in NSW, ACT, NT, SA, WA and Tasmania, but its level of cover is 'thin', to say the least.

"2019 is the first year that private health insurance has topped the list of financial worries in Choice's regular national surveys and it's easy to see why," said Mr Kirkland.

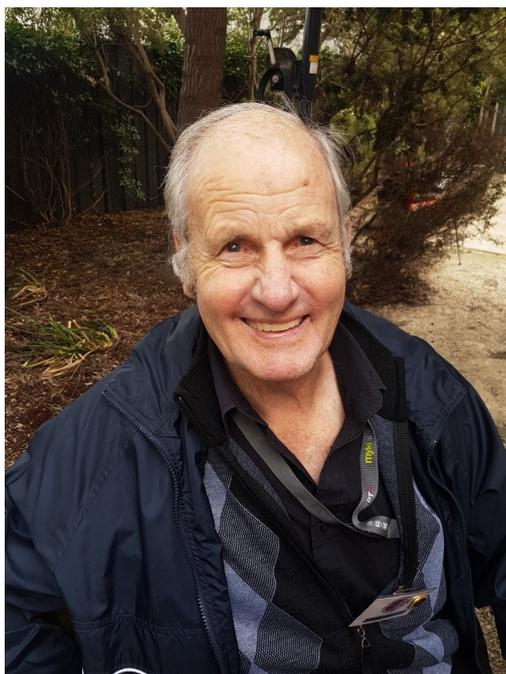
"A new system that was meant to make things simpler has turned into a mess, thanks to rip-offs like those from Medibank."

Mr Kirkland encouraged Australians to "escape the industry marketing" and visit quality health comparison sites "to see if they even need these junk policies at all".

# In his Own Words – Ken Heddle

42, 44, 45, 46, 50 and No.2 Station. He spent some time at the old Control Centre in the old No.1 Station. Ken remembers Rod Ashton and Bruce Barrett working there as well.

I first met Ken Heddle when I was living in the Footscray Fire Station quarters when I was stationed at North Melbourne (48 Stn), back in 1974. I had joined the job in '73. My parents kicked us out as it was time for them to retire in sunny Sorrento, so the remaining siblings had to leave the nest and find a new home. To keep my sanity on my days off, I used to mow the station lawns out the front and at the rear of the station and I received reduced rent when living there. A 3 x bedroom unit on top of the men's mess for very cheap rent – what a bargain! It was here that I came across Ken while mowing the grass one sunny morning.



Ken was born in Werribee and stayed most his life there. It's only in recent years that he and Carol have moved up to "gold country" - California Gully near Bendigo.

Ken had his schooling at Werribee Primary School and then Werribee High School – he was a true "westie". From School his first job was at London Stores in Melbourne at the age of 14 years, working in the sports department. After leaving that job, he became a "moulder" in a steel works foundry, closer to home - (Mason & Cox, Yarraville). He worked here for almost 7 years. He joined the MFB in 1967.

I asked Ken why he joined the MFB He said he knew it was going to be an excellent job with security, excitement and good pay and conditions. There were others from Werribee who also joined – Brian and Pat Toohey, Alan McKenzie, Lou Daniels and Carl Anderson.

After recruits, Ken was rostered to Footscray (47B) and spent a fair bit of his career here. He also worked at

Some of the great officers he worked with are as follows: Ted Harrison, Maurie Foster, Claude Selby, Wells Hitchcock. Some of the notable characters he worked with were Kevin Hede, Jack Coburn, Alwyn Carlan, Ron Young and Peter Adamson.

Footscray was a very busy station in those days and as such, the fires, rescues and incidents Ken attended are far too many to remember.

In 1974, Ken decided to retire after 22 years (he took his money and ran!) and drove trucks for Westgate Logistics and then Linfox.

In retirement, Ken and Carol have joined Probus at Eaglehawk, have travelled far and wide to places such as the U.K., including Scotland and Ireland. With the MFB Running Club, Ken went

around Australia twice. b raising money for various charities. One of the runs took 51 days, back in 1991. Ken was also treasurer for the club.

Ken has been a member of Fire Services Museum (20 years) and helps out whenever he can. Ken is also on the RFA committee and was a CFA volunteer at Werribee for 58 years. At Eaglehawk these days, Ken is an inactive CFA volunteer (he makes a good pot of tea/coffee and carries out various other duties when required). Carol and Ken love to holiday in Porepunkah and Bright.

Thanks Ken! You have earned your stripes and have been a great contributor to both the MFB, Fire Museum and the CFA. Well done mate!

**Col Harris**

## **From the Past**

Going through some old issues of "Water Off" I found this little gem below that you won't get from todays Fire Service!

Some officers had a habit of leaving humorless little notes about the station giving instructions for staff to do this and that. D.O. Jack "Yorky" Shaw, was a prolific memo writer but he had character, style and a great sense of humor with a flair for the written word.... Here's a sample;

MEMBERS OF OFFICERS MESS PLEASE NOTE Following Mr Chamber's working bee each member will

- (a) Walk across ceiling to avoid marking floor.
- (b) Turn out by rope line from bedroom window to avoid marking floor.

- (c) Partake of meals on malthoid landing to avoid marking floor.
- (d) Proceed to malthoid landing by walking on hands to avoid marking floor.
- (e) Wash at cold water tap in yard to avoid soiling hand basin in bathroom.
- (f) Clean teeth on return to private residence to avoid soiling hand basin.
- (g) Use urinal in station yard to avoid soiling bathroom lavatory.
- (h) In fact after Mr Chambers has cleaned up - lie down and die!

## The Retired Eric Daffy – His Story!

Eric Daffy retired nineteen years ago after being in the job for 27 Years. A most personable man, gentle in nature but hits that golf ball with gusto!

I remember Eric when he was in the MFB's Fire Protection Department, which of course these days comes under the umbrella of Fire Safety.

Eric was born at the Royal Women's Hospital, Grattan St, Carlton. He had one sibling and grew up in Edithvale, Collingwood and Noble Park. Schools Eric attended were Edithvale primary school and Caulfield technical school for his secondary education (this is currently one of the many sites of Monash University).

Eric left school aged 14 years and started work at a food machinery company in South Melbourne. He had many varied jobs such as office boy, telephonist, railway porter and locomotive fireman before becoming a professional firefighter with the MFB.

The question was asked why did you join the MFB? Answer, better money and better prospects than working for the Victorian Railways. I might add here that Eric probably saw the advertisement, at right, which was running in the Melbourne newspapers at this time.

Recruits were held at Eastern Hill Fire Station. And some of the people he fondly remembers are Ken Wilson, Bill Travis and many others. One of the people he worked with who had a great sense of humour was the late Jerry Martin.

Some memories here include spending three years at Surrey Hills Fire Station with Huey Torney who was a champion Essendon footballer. The hose carriage at 21 Stn was open topped as were many other hose carriages in those days.

Some further fond memories of Christmas functions at Eastern District fire stations with his children and then in the evenings dancing and dining with wives and partners and merriment with fellow firies from all shifts. Eric remembers dancing was easy on the highly polished red concrete floors. The music on those nights was by a small band coming onto the station on many occasions.

When stationed at Carlton at one time in his career, Eric saw the introduction of the MICA ambulance at Royal Melbourne Hospital and the introduction of the Hertz Power Tool on the Rescue Van at No.3 Stn.

Eric retired in 1989 and has been married for close on 58 years. He and his wife had 4 children and they have 11 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren!

In retirement these days, Eric still does some fire safety lectures for the MFB and his community, that being the Seniors Fire Safety Program. Loves playing golf and caravanning. His favourite holiday destinations are Warragul (Gippsland) and New Zealand. Eric has been a magnificent volunteer in his community where has been helping the Red Cross (22 years) and was assisting in delivering a Victorian Ambulance initiative called "CPR Champion".



*The* **FIRE BRIGADE** *has brought us*  
**SECURITY and HAPPINESS**

How do *you* compare with this young couple? Can *you* turn on a similar smile and feel equally confident about *your* future? That sort of confidence comes from the feeling of security that an interesting, reliable "job-for-life" brings – a career that pays good money and provides the essentials for the happiness of you and your family.

*Why not you?*

**CHOOSE THE SECURITY AND COMRADESHIP OF A BRIGADE CAREER AND REALLY START TO LIVE.**

This is a golden opportunity for any man between the ages of 21 and 28 to establish himself permanently in a grand job – a job unaffected by industrial unrest and economic instability.

Here you can share an interesting life in the company of real men – enjoy all the wonderful amenities for which the Brigade is famous and receive liberal leave, free uniform and excellent pay.

If you're of good physique and character and within the eligible age group act **NOW**.

Get the full interesting details by calling personally between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. **ANY DAY**.

ALSO Women and Girls, including Apprentices, urgently required for the Tailoring Department. Why not inquire now?

**EASTERN HILL  
FIRE STATION**

VICTORIA PARADE (OPPOSITE ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL), MELBOURNE  
F.B.2.33

Being a keen golfer, Eric is a member of the MFB Golf Club, Eastwood Golf Club and the Australasian Fire Brigades Golf Club. Eric has attended over the years, three World police and Fire Games including, France, Las Vegas and Edmonton – Canada. **WELL DONE ERIC!**

**Col Harris**

## REUNION AT SOUTHPORT YACHT CLUB JULY 25<sup>TH</sup> 2019



This July we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> year that retired 'fries' have been coming to the Southport Yacht Club for a lunch to catch up. Although, I did bugger the year up as it should have been in 2018 we still finally got to celebrate it!

Before I start I would like to say thank you to a great group of people that made the day a little special. Apart from all the people I annoyed in the MFB trying to drag things up to QLD, I think the following people must be honored. Russell Hawthorn (I drove him mad), Dep. Chief David Bruce, Alyson Leech and of course the two 'old farts' Allan Roberts & Eddie McMullen.

Because of the generosity and hard work from all these people Ian & I did up 'show bags' for all attending. That night we received a phone call from Tony Hynson saying that he loved his 'show bag'. He hadn't had so much fun since having one when he was only a kid...oh and ate all the lollies we shoved in. The only thing that I was very disappointed in was the wagon wheels they don't taste like they used to.

I also rang around local business in the hope of getting a few things extra like pens for the bags. I want to state now that I hope you don't drink anything from CUB – because they knocked me back! I think Ian has also forgotten the ban after me advising him not to drink beer anymore!

I couldn't believe I would get a rejection from them for the brave firefighters who had served the community for so long. Your choice fellas!

As usual the weather was picture perfect however, our group has finally made the grade and we were placed in the 'Compass Room' where weddings and the like are generally held. Great for the 'fries' - we didn't have to compete with the riff raff down stairs – and we even had our private bar.

We had a choice between steak or fish both with chippies and salad then either Pavlova or cheesecake for dessert. We chose a ticket I made of what we wanted to eat then placed it in front of our seating, waiters then did what they call a 'drop plate' service affair. Fast and efficient. Meals were hot and yummy.

I can only go on the number of people that 'did' sign in and that figure is MFB 90. QFS had 10 people attend. Total 100 - not bad eh? Congratulate your selves for a great effort.

I had down for 107 but those few did not make it.

Allan Roberts first spoke and thanked Peter Coulson in turn presenting him, on behalf of the RFA a man's ring, apron and cap in appreciation. Eddie McMullen then also offered a few words again to Peter and presented in addition from the UFU, a statue of a fire fighter and a MFB T shirt. Ian & I also received gifts which were a lovely surprise. A UFU statue, RFA earrings for me and Ian received a RFA ring. Thank you to all.

Yes we ran the raffle and made some money so I can spend it again next year for things for the luncheon. Also, drawing out 2 registered members numbers each received \$30.00 from the kitty of the raffle towards their costs.

At around 3.00 pm it was time that we moved out of the Compass room as another function was being held and it was time for clearing and cleaning up our mess to set tables. It was more the fact that the bar closed at 3.00 pm that we got the message to head out so we did! Down the stairs and 'one for the road', to say good bye to a few more people. Finally at around 4.00 pm Ian and I headed home.

Knowing that many were staying in reasonably close proximity to the Yacht Club I guess helped that no-one had to drive and there were no NEWS flashes of fireman having to be rescued at Southport, that gave Ian & I reassurance that all got home safely.

Thank you to all who made the trip from Victoria, Queensland and NSW – hope to see once again in 2020 on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July for the 32<sup>nd</sup> year (always the last Thursday in the Month).

Ian & Gail

## Whilst holidaying in Portugal — I came across a famous bust!

My wife and I were recently in Porto, Portugal for a five day stay. This was the culmination of a 4 week holiday including Spain, a cheap Mediterranean 7 day cruise and a quick look around Lisbon and Porto in beautiful Portugal.

We loved Spain and Portugal. The food, wine and people were terrific!

While waiting for my wife to tizzy herself up after a 35 minute shower (what was she doing in there?), I happened upon the local touristy newspaper and read an article about a notable “fireman” (firefighter) who helped found the “Associacao Humanitaria dos Bombeiros Voluntarios” in 1874-75.

This clever young man aged 3 went with his family to live in Porto after being born in the countryside. Guilherme Gomes Fernandes was to become quite famous. Years later, aged 19, he helped found this volunteer fire service. At age 22, he was appointed Commander of the Fire Department in 1877 and Inspector of Fire of Porto in 1885.

OK, you’ve got the gist of what this man was about! Well, here we were having coffee outside this little restaurant, just around the corner from the famous “Harry Potter” library, when I saw the cast bronze bust of Gomes Fernandes, looking quite green and tarnished about 15 metres from where I was sitting supping my coffee. Amazing I thought! Quite coincidental I’m sure!

Reading a little more about Gomes, he later went on to develop a business in the area of journalism, having created and directed the newspaper “O Bombeiro Voluntario” published between 1877 and 1890.

Gomes was in charge on the night a deadly fire raged in the famous Porto Banquet Theatre. It was

20<sup>th</sup> March 1888 when the tragic fire occurred. During a benefit party for the actor Firmino Rosa, a blazing fire broke out behind the scenes of the theater. The fire quickly spread, consuming all the interior of the building.



After 2 hours, the Banquet Theatre was destroyed and reduced to rubble. For hundreds of visitors inside, those moments of unimaginable fear and horror. The rapid spreading of the fire, the intense smoke, the lack of lighting (having been cut off as soon as the fire broke out) and the general panic resulted in the death of 120 people.

The fire was deemed accidental, the public blamed the lack of security of the building, the delayed arrival of firefighters for the extensive damage and the large number of victims. The political class tried to blame the safety inspector, Guilherme Gomes

Fernandes, who was in charge of the facility’s inspection a year before the tragic event.

However, it turned out that in his report, the inspector specifically highlighted the need to carry out some works to create better fire safety conditions in the theatre. Since his recommendations had been ignored back then, he refused to take responsibility for the tragedy.

Gomes contribution to the progress of firefighters in Porto and in the country earned him the title of “Master”, as well as prestigious national and international decorations.

**Guilherme Gomes Fernandes died in Lisbon, Hospital of S. Jose, on October 31, 1902.**

## Recruit Training!

As a group of recruits stood in formation at the Training College, the drill instructor yelled, “All right! All you idiots fall out!” As the rest of the squad wandered away, one recruit remained at attention.

The drill instructor walked over until he was eye to eye with him, and then raised a single eyebrow. The recruit smiled and said, “Sure was a lot of them, huh, sir?”

# “Gone But Not Forgotten”

We were saddened to hear of the passing of former MFB firefighter Don Brennan.

Don was a much-loved District Officer, (the equivalent of today's Commander rank), who joined MFB in October 1959 at the age of 22, when William Thomas Aldridge was Chief Officer.

A qualified carpenter, Don was born in Western Victoria and had worked as a wool presser before joining the Brigade.

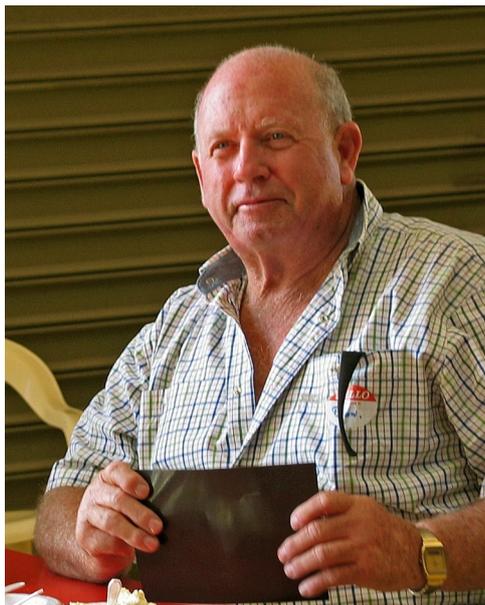
He spent the early part of his career stationed at FS01 (Eastern Hill), FS03 (Carlton), FS04 (Brunswick), FS47 (Footscray) and FS48 (formerly North Melbourne), which was the District Station at the time.

While stationed at FS03, Don attended many motor vehicle collisions on the rescue appliance.

Don was a natural leader who progressed through the ranks throughout his career. In 1967, he was promoted to Sub-Station Officer (S-SO), followed by Station Officer Grade 2 three years later and Station Officer in 1975. At that time, he was stationed at FS01 and FS23 (the former Camberwell Fire Station.)

From 1984, Don was rostered on day work after being transferred to FS01 Administration. He also served as a committee member of the former Officers' Association. He was promoted to District Officer (DO) in 1985, working at FS01, FS10 (Richmond), MFB's Training College and Operations. At the Training College, Don assisted with examinations and was the Course Coordinator for DO Course 10 in 1986. Don also sat on interview and selection panels for potential recruits. Later, Don held the position of DO Operations and was Chief Officer Laurie Lavelle's Staff Officer. He also spent time at FS25 (Oakleigh).

Don was very active in MFB's social activities. A talented sportsman, he participated in a number of MFB sports teams including football, cricket, golf,



fishing and squash.

He was President of MFB's cricket club in 1962 and spent many hours organising competitions against other agencies, including Victoria Police, the Army and interstate fire and rescue brigades.

A talented runner, Don was a member of the Country Fire Authority (CFA)'s Willaura running team, which won competitions in Victoria and Tasmania.

Generous and charitable, Don was quick to help anyone in need and assisted several firefighting families both in Victoria and interstate. He volunteered for the Uncle Bob's Club for more than

52 years, where he organised memorable events for sick children at the Royal Children's Hospital.

Dedicated to his community, Don spent much of his personal time volunteering, fundraising and organising local events.

Don retired from MFB on 1 December 1987, after 28 years of service. During his distinguished career, he had served in all MFB districts. His daughter, Angela, also worked for MFB in Alarm Assessment.

After retirement Don and his wife travelled widely and continued their volunteer work. Don served as President of the Retired Firefighters' Association for 17 years, off and on, between 1989 and 2015.

Last year, he was selected to carry the baton in the Queen's Baton Relay during the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Don was highly-regarded and respected by all who knew him. His former colleagues and friends would travel from afar to visit and spend time with Don as he battled illness in hospital.

Don passed away on Saturday 21 September 2019. He will be greatly missed.

## Barry 'Baz' MCBREARTY Registration Numbers 7215 and 4283

Senior Station Officer Barry 'Baz' McBrearty was first appointed to MFB on 10 January 1983 as an apprentice painter and decorator when he was just 17 years old.

Inspired by the lights and sirens, Baz made the transition to firefighting in 1998. Baz graduated from Recruit Course 68 in September that year. It was a busy introduction to firefighting for Baz. He attended a significant fire at United Transport within his first few months on the job.

A natural leader, Baz progressed quickly through the ranks. He was promoted through the positions of Leading Firefighter, to Station Officer in May 2004 and graduated from Senior Station Officer Course 40 in 2016.



Over his 31 year firefighting career, Baz was located firstly at Pascoe Vale (FS06), then most stations in Central and Northern Districts as well as Hawthorn (FS18), North Balwyn (FS19), Windsor (FS35) and Templestowe (FS30) on C and D platoons.

Baz worked in Operational Training for a number of years, sharing the knowledge and skills built over his career with Recruit Course 117 in 2015, Recruit Course 119 in 2016 and Recruit Course 121 in 2017.

He was most recently based at Carlton Fire Station (FS03) on C platoon.

Baz passed away on 5 August 2019, and is survived by his wife Sue and his three children, Jack, Angus and Eden. Baz will be missed, and is remembered a dedicated firefighter, husband, and father, and an exceptional leader.

Source; MFB Media Comms.

## Malcolm Howard DABB

We were saddened to hear of the recent passing of Malcolm Howard Dabb, who managed MFB's Tailor Shop for 25 years.

Born in Melbourne in 1933, Malcolm was 22 years old when he was appointed as a Cutter and Tailor in October 1955, joining the brigade from the tailoring trade.

In the 1960s, the Tailoring Department was located at FS03 (Swanston Street, Carlton) and the Manager reported to the Supply Department (now Procurement). Later, the Tailor Shop moved to the Abbotsford Training College building.

When Malcolm commenced in 1955, the Tailor Shop Manager was Mr R Dann, who retired in 1963 after 30 years' service. In 1964, Malcolm was promoted to Manager.

Malcolm undertook a European tour In the 1980s, where he visited various Brigades in Helsinki, London and regional UK, investigating uniforms and insignia and their methods of design and manufacture. He held a Letter of Introduction from the Chief Fire Officer, Laurie Lavelle.

In 1989, Malcolm entered retirement, having dedicated 33 years to the design and manufacture of MFB uniforms. However, he committed to continue to work part time 'for as long as was required, in order to train a new manager'.

Malcolm passed away while on holiday in Bali and is survived by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

His son Chris described him as a gentle man, loved by all his family and friends. A private service and cremation was held in Bali.

## My Mate Barry – A few words & thoughts from his mate Ken Copeland

We first became friends in the fire service, not so much on the job but more through part-time work that Barry arranged - doing contract maintenance work in Canberra and Sydney. I was 28 at the time, so that makes the friendship more than 40 years.

As I progressed through the ranks, our lives diverged a bit but in later years Barry looked me up in the Netherlands and it was as though there had never been a break at all.

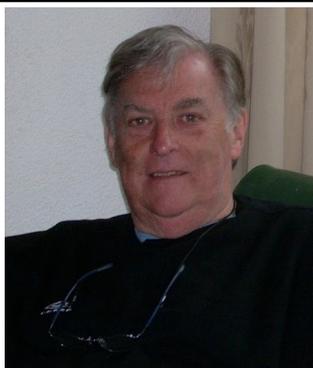
I'm reminded of the words of a song by Harry Chapin (who was a favorite of Barry)

From Let Time Go Lightly by Harry Chapin

**"Old friends, they mean much more to me than the new friends,**

**Cause they can see where you are, and they know where you've been".**

I remember Barry bike riding in an official event during one of our working trips in Sydney. Another friend, Frank Ward, said that he remembers Barry riding his bike into the backyard of the old No. 1 Fire Station - "this is how we want to remember him".



Barry had a network of cycling friends all over the world. We called in on Bruno and Gaby in Cologne just after they had a baby. (Bruno and Gaby and daughter came to our place a few years ago).

We'd catch up with Barry every time we went to Australia - watching the Grand Prix from his balcony or in later years having a meal at the Greensborough RSL. It's all a bit blurry but again it was always as if we could just pick up from where we

left off, no matter the time in between.

We would swap photos and emails with interesting stories each knowing what the other might appreciate. Every weekend Barry would send The Age Quiz including the Get It puzzle.

After Barry broke his leg recently, I was out walking and I started a video call with the intention of showing him the heath to try to brighten his day - he was rather drowsy and told me that they had decided to amputate his leg below the knee. I said "oh, shit" - he was still witty in his reply - "yeah, that's what I said" - this was the last time I spoke with him ~ "Rest in peace Barry"

## Bruce Weaver

Bruce joined the Brigade on the 14th of January 1985, aged 26. He was in recruit course 46. Reg No 3806.

After recruits he was stationed at FS 33 before being stationed at most Central and Eastern stations on A platoon.

Spending a fair bit of time at 35 stn.

Promoted to SFF in 1990 then SO in 1991. Bruce attended Coode Island in 1991, and also went to NSW on deployment in 1994.

In 2014 Bruce completed the FSCC course and was promoted to Senior FSCC in 2018.

Bruce served the Community and Brigade for over 34 years, with a smile and a fair bit of laughter.



Image; Barbara McCumisky

## Peer support is available to Retired Firefighters and Associated Members

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

**Chloe Henderson — Peer Coordinator 0417 538 289**

**Scott Darcy – Peer Coordinator –**

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

**John Howe — Retirees**

**9729 0984**

# A round-a-bout letter from "Roundthreads"

"Roundthreads" is a retired firefighter's magazine from the London Fire Brigade Retired Members Association which John Berry put me onto a few months ago. It's a very sophisticated coloured magazine, unlike our very cheaply produced black and white "Water Off" magazine with the poorly paid editor!

At our last meeting in Corio, I bumped into Ernie Paddon, who I knew as a face from the past, however didn't really know him when he and I were in the job, as he was about 100 years older than me! Ernie worked for the London Fire Brigade back in the day, before he decided to come to the land of milk and honey and warm weather. Ernie gave me a hard copy of the winter edition of "Roundthreads" and in this publication Ernie showed me a letter he had written to the editor. Below is a story of an incident he attended in North Woolwich, outside of London in the 1960's.

*"Dear Editor, after reading the last edition of "Roundthreads", the cartoon in Cartoon Memories from the past – the one of the fire crew in the rowing boat – brought back memories for me as I had been in a similar situation many years ago in the 1960's.*

*I can't remember if it was still West Ham Fire Brigade at the time, or after the changeover to London fire brigade.*

*Late one night the pump was turned out from No. 3 Stn Silvertown to a fire on a dolphin at the old Woolwich ferry terminal at North Woolwich. On arrival, we found out that a dolphin was a series of very large wooden posts sunk into the riverbed. They were placed on an*



*angle, there were, three or four of them and they were joined at the top by a large steel band and very large steel bolts. The posts were about 12 feet out of the ground and about 20 feet from the shore. The tide was in at the time and the Leading fireman in charge and I thought, "We have a problem here!"*

*Apparently, the posts were to be removed and a work crew had been out there during the day cutting the steel bands and bolts to enable removal of the posts. What the workmen had not realized, was that the oxy gear they had been using has caused a bullseye (hot spot) in the timber. This in turn and after some time, the timber burst into flame – hence the call to the fire brigade.*

*Whilst pondering what to do, a Thames lighterman in a rowing boat asked if he could be of help. After some discussion the L/fm and I in full fire gear, myself with a knapsack sprayer on my back and wearing a hook belt along with a hook ladder, were rowed out to the dolphin. I pitched the hook ladder to the top of the timberwork and, with the L/fm stabilizing the foot of the ladder, I climbed up and put out the flames with the knapsack sprayer, and using an axe removed any timber that may have caused a problem.*

*The reverse procedure was conducted and we were rowed back to shore. If either the L/fm or I had fallen into the water with our gear on, we would have sunk like a stone. I wonder what Occupational Health and Safety these days would have said! We did not give it any thought, but just got on with the job, which we did in those days. I for one miss them!"*

*Ernie Paddon. Ex WHFB@LFB – Also ex - Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Melbourne, Australia*

## Greetings and Salutations

I wanted to send some sort of holiday greeting to my friends and colleagues, but it is difficult in today's world to know exactly what to say without offending someone. So I met with my lawyer yesterday, and on her advice I wish to say the following

Please accept with no obligation, implied or implicit, my best wishes for an environmentally conscious, socially responsible, low stress, non addictive, Gender neutral celebration of the summer solstice holiday practiced with the most enjoyable traditions of religious persuasion or secular practices of your choice with respect for the Religious/secular persuasions and/or traditions of others, or their choice not to practice religious or secular traditions at all.

I also wish you a fiscally successful, personally fulfilling and medically uncomplicated recognition of the onset of the generally accepted calendar year 2020, But not without due respect for the calendar of choice of other cultures whose contributions to society have helped make our country great (not to imply that Australia is necessarily greater than any other country) and without regard to the

race, creed, colour, age, physical ability, religious faith or sexual preference of the wishers.

By accepting this greeting, you are accepting these terms:

This greeting is subject to clarification or withdrawal. It is freely transferable with no alteration to the original greeting.

It implies no promise by the wisher to actually implement any of the wishes for her / him or others and is void where prohibited by law, and is revocable at the sole discretion of the wisher.

The wish is warranted to perform as expected within the usual application of good tidings for a period of one year or until the issuance of a new wish at the sole discretion of the wisher.

E&OE

Best Regards (without prejudice)

Name withheld ( Privacy Act ).



Charlie & Sage, from Mooroolbark

**Your hosts:**  
**Lin and Jan Bell,**  
 ex-MFB, exceptional  
 customer service since 2006

**M: 0403 221 737**

Home Office: 03 5255 3839



## Enjoy a pet-friendly holiday all year round

24 Roditis Drive, Ocean Grove

Close to dog beach - 500m by car, 10 minutes walk  
 Pets can stay & sleep indoors, with a pet treat on arrival.

### Spring Rates - \$240 per night!

- Modern kitchen, gas benchtop, electric oven, microwave, dishwasher, cooking equipment supplied. Refreshments, barbecue, outdoor setting.
- Lounge/dining area, gas log fire, living areas have reverse cycle air con, flat screen TV, DVD/CD player.
- Modern bathroom - double walk-in shower, toilet.
- 3 bedrooms - 2 queen, 2 singles, electric blankets, pillows, doonas supplied, linen/towels available or BYO.
- Laundry, outdoor line, indoor drying racks, *extra toilet*.
- Outdoor warm shower, secure fully fenced garden.
- Shopping centres, local supermarkets, PO, banks, medical centres, shops, cafes and restaurants.
- Ocean Grove Hotel, Golf Club and Bowls Club for meals.

### 2019/20 nightly rates - up to 6 guests

Spring \$240, Summer \$280, Autumn \$240, Winter \$200

Pets always stay **FREE!**

[www.bellsbythebeach.com.au](http://www.bellsbythebeach.com.au)

[info@bellsbythebeach.com.au](mailto:info@bellsbythebeach.com.au)

[www.facebook.com/bellsbythebeachholidayhouse](https://www.facebook.com/bellsbythebeachholidayhouse)

## Geelong Firey's Muster

*C.F.A. – M.F.B. – VIVA - AVALON*  
*Serving & Retired – Staff & Volunteers*  
*Smorgasbord Lunch*

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

**GATEWAY HOTEL**

**218-230 Princess Highway – CORIO**

*Members, Wives, Partners,*  
*Family & Friends*

**Contact:**

**Peter Lang 5275 6039**

**To receive Mail out notification**



## Keep your burn-off safe and legal:

- Check fire restrictions with your local council and register your burn on 1800 668 511
- Check and monitor weather conditions – particularly wind
- To avoid unnecessary calls to emergency services, notify your neighbours beforehand
- Leave a three-metre fire break, free from flammable materials around the burn
- Have sufficient equipment and water to stop the fire spreading
- Never leave a burn-off unattended – stay for its entire duration
- If your burn-off gets out of control, call '000' immediately
- Make sure that the fire is completely extinguished before leaving; if it's cool to touch, it's safe to leave.

For more information about burning off, go to  
[cfa.vic.gov.au/burnoff](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/burnoff)



## FIRE RESCUE RINGS

As well as the Fire Rescue rings we now have sets of Tie Bars, Ear Rings and Cuff Links.

These are available in different combination sets or can be purchased as a single item.

They are available from the Secretary and will be on display at the next meeting.

If you would like to place an order now, give Allan Roberts a call.

**Telephone: Mob: 0433 007 720**  
**Home: 9216 1658**

### **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 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.

## **Download the VicEmergency app**

The new VicEmergency app was launched recently and will replace FireReady this summer. The VicEmergency app is now available to download from the App Store or Google Play and Victorians are encouraged to download it ahead of the summer season.

The VicEmergency website has also been upgraded and a new emergency hotline released. The Vic Emergency app and website will provide warning and incident notifications about floods, storms, fires, earthquakes tsunami, beach closures, shark sightings and more.

## **Volunteers Required**

**The Fire Services Museum needs past fire service members to assist on an occasional basis at the Museum**

**Please contact**

**Mike McCumisky on: 9662 2907**

**Copy deadline for Water Off Magazine for next edition is January 3rd 2020.**

**Annual General Meeting-Wednesday 20th November 2019**  
**Nomination For Positions on the Committee**

**Nominations are called for the following positions on the Committee of the Retired**

**Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch Inc.:-**

- **President**
- **Vice-President**
- **Secretary/Treasurer**
- **Ordinary Member of Committee, Four (4) Positions**

Each position will serve for a term of one (1) year.

Please note that according to the Rules of the Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch Inc, only financial members may nominate for any of the above positions and any member nominating must have been a member for at least one (1) year.

Nominations must be in writing on the form below, signed by the Proposer and the Secunder and accepted by the Nominee. Completed nomination forms must be returned to the Secretary at the address shown below **no later than 17:00 hours (5.00) on Friday 8th November 2019**

**Allan Roberts**  
**Unit 158 Mernda Retirement Village**  
**89 Galloway Drive**  
**Mernda Vic 3754**  
**Telephone: Mob: 0433 007 720 Home: 9216 1658**

**Retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch, Inc.**

We, the undersigned, being financial members of the retired Firefighters Association of Australia, Victorian Branch Inc. hereby nominate:

**Nominee's Name**

**For the position of**

**Proposed by (signature) (Print name)**

**Seconded by (signature) (Print name)**

**Nominee Acceptance;**

**(Signature) (Print name)**

# **UFU RETIRED MEMBERS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON**

**Saturday 16th November**  
**Sofitel Melbourne, 24 Collins St. Melbourne**

A reminder:

If you have accepted the invitation to the luncheon and through illness, or some other circumstance, find you are unable to attend, please notify the Union Office A.S.A.P.

**Note;** Parking at Sofitel \$60.

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**PRINT POST No. 100002647**

**RFA Newsletter**

**If undelivered return to;**

Allan Roberts.

Unit 158 Mernda Retirement Village

89 Galloway Drive

Mernda Vic 3754

**SURFACE  
MAIL**

**Postage  
Paid  
Australia**

