

# Fire Board

25/05/2025

2/2025

#11

It seems an age since the last Fire Board in early February before the Hobart reunion. Once again, we find parts of the country under water, while other areas are in desperate need of a good rain. The lose of life & property are heart breaking to watch, but far worse for those dealing with it.

The other extreme is our creek ran its full length for 4 days after a good dump of snow on the plateau the other week. It was the clearest of clear water. Thankfully it has been running where we pump from continually.

The Hobart reunion seemed to go well I hope all who attended had a great time. We were not alone at Wrest Point with 180 classic V8 hard top Ford coupes arriving for the weekend. I have to admit they sounded like “proper” cars even if they were Fords. The front of house staff were very good, nothing was a trouble. I cannot say the same for the young lady who was our event coordinator. She was that good she no longer works there. You will understand part of my frustration when it took till the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and a new coordinator to receive an invoice with a zero balance. The same figures I gave them on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

I am still working on the photos from the reunion but I will get them up on the web shortly. In the mean time Chas has a section from the dinner on his site at [2025 Reunion - Tasmania](#) I will get into gear and post some from the Green Room and Peppermint Bay.

We have been very busy here since the reunion, I’m sure it has nothing to do with age.

## Facebook sites.

[RAAF Firies](#)

[RAAF Fire and Rescue](#)

[RETIRED RAAF FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION](#)

**Web** [THE R.A.A.F FIRE SERVICE](#) (georama.com.au) hosted by Chas Adlard. It is Chas’s site where you can find back issues of “Fire Board” and back issues of Pat’s Newsletters back to 2011. There’s a wealth of information there. Adelaide Reunion - [2022 Reunion - Adelaide \(georama.com.au\)](#)

Info on the Hobart reunion and copies of all Fire Board issues are at [raaffirereunion.com](#)

- [Defence newspapers | News & Events | Defence](#)
- [Australian Defence Force \(ADF\) Firefighter Scheme | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#)
- [Advocacy Support — RSL Australia](#)

**ADF Mental Health All-hours  
Support Line**

**1800 628 036**

Call Lifeline on 13 11 14

[Beyond Blue | 24/7 Support for Anxiety, Depression and Suicide Prevention](#)

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## DVA

I don't have any real DVA news for you this time around. But I will re-post an excellent Facebook post by Peter Learmonth for those that haven't seen it.

### [Firefighters Australia](#)

[May 1 at 7:37 AM](#) ·

 My name is Pete Learmonth.

I am a Career Firefighter for over 44 years. 6 yrs in the Royal Australian Air Force, and 38+ yrs in Fire Rescue Victoria.

I served for 5 yrs at RAAF Base Point Cook Victoria, where I was based as a Crash/Rescue RAAF Firefighter.

As with all Firefighters up until 1989, we regularly trained (Drilled) in the open fire pits at Point Cook in knee high Toxic Chemicals.

We had inadequate protection. Only mediocre coats, white hats, jungle green trousers, flying gloves and leather boots.

We rolled and emptied multiple 44 gallon drums of unknown waste toxic chemicals (donated from nearby Petrochemical Refineries), into giant fire pits on the Base. The bungs from the drums sometimes blew out as we opened them and covered us with the toxins (stinging our skin & eyes), as we emptied them, due to the hot conditions.

We were expected to put these fires out with only water (for training purposes) & no BA (Breathing Apparatus) when Foam & BA was readily available.

The fires would flash behind us and gave out fumes, pungent black smoke, and loud crackling sounds as a result of the violent combustion.

We were not told of the lethal carcinogens that we were being exposed to.

The Government have identified at least 132 hazardous chemicals found in the Fire Training pits at RAAF Base Point Cook.

We were also exposed to and used AFFF on a daily basis!

Aging Firefighters dread & live in fear of getting Cancer.

I fear for the health & welfare of all my Firefighting Colleagues that were exposed and also for my future health. Allot of my Firefighting friends are no longer with us due to deaths from Cancers. 🙏

We need to take more care of our Firefighters!

Why was this allowed to happen?

Firefighters are dying!

We as Firefighters also deserve to live healthy lives with our families, to be cared for and compensated for any ill health, Cancers and Distress!

By the way, a hurried \$27 million cleanup was under way at RAAF Base Point Cook to prevent those 132 chemicals (some which are known carcinogens) entering lakes and Port Philip Bay, and exposing nearby Housing Estates.

I feel the RAAF & the Federal Government have allot to answer for and for the past practices & exposures at RAAF Base Point Cook (Victoria), Amberley (Queensland), and other RAAF Bases!

I believe that there should be compensation for all Firefighters unnecessarily exposed to these toxic chemicals.

Where is the duty of care?

Who is protecting the protectors?

Pete Learmonth 

Fire Rescue Victoria.

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[Advocacy Support — RSL Australia](#)

[Australian Defence Force \(ADF\) Firefighter Scheme | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#)

The form you need to register can be found at

[D9387 - Application for the Australian Defence Force Firefighter Scheme](#)

“Point Cook Fire Fighter “ is a good search to start with on the net.

[Veteran White Card | Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

It may not be a magic wand but is one less thing to do should you ever need to make clam.

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## R.A.A.F Fire Fighter Reunion 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 Hobart, Tasmania

Fifty-nine members were booked to attend the Welcome Drinks at the Green Room Bar. The reunion was well under way in the Birdcage Bar before the official 18 00 hr's start. Driving into Hobart Bill Woolrich rang me to ask, "do we need a feed before we come tonight?" A fair question really. "Can I tell you tomorrow?" was not the answer he wanted. As it turned out even our resident fussy eater Jim Dent managed to get a feed I'm told. Which is surprising given some of his comments when we were finalising the menu.

Jim was a gain front of mind at lunch at Peppermint Bay the next day. But first.

Not being able to use the jetty at Wrest Point was a pain. The on again off again in the last week didn't help. Maxi taxi's in Hobart are not in great supply it seems, but the concierge seem to think he had 2 lined up for us. Things started well with one arriving right at 09 00, 4 more people in a normal taxi and all that was needed was the second Maxi and we were set. From 09 20 till 10 00 there was not a taxi of an sort arrive at Wrest Point. We know this as we were waiting and watching. The ferry departed for Bellerive early to try and make up time in order to return for us. Thankfully the original Maxi taxi return at 10 00 to collect us. Not without some encouragement form reception staff I fill. We did manage to leave one member behind, but he did join us for the return trip & we even had a couple of extra join us for lunch.

Once safely on board we enjoyed a pleasant cruise down the Derwent to Peppermint Bay. I just happen to sit on the end of the table and was among the first to be served. Well shock horror, now I eat broccoli, mainly because Christine tells me to, but to have it served as a salad. My first thought was 'What have I done, it looks like something the dog coughed up, Jim will love this.' While Jim didn't "love this" at all, I have to say it was deliscious. As was the whole cold course. Only to be surpassed by the lamb in the hot course.

On the return up the river, I gave everyone there a RAAF Fire Reunion Peppermint Bay coaster. While people seemed to like them, the biggest reaction was form the captain who apparently collects that type of thing.

Sixty-one were booked for the dinner in the Board Walk Callery. It would have to have one of the better views of the Derwent River. We had 2 toasts for the night which was as formal as it got for the night. A poem that is included at the end of this newsletter was the prelude to the Australia toast and a far too long a list of names was read before a toast to Absent Friends.

A discussion as to the next reunion was had with Darwin again being mentioned but no one had a proposal to go with it. A cruise, Brisbane or Sea World on the Gold Coast was proposed by Keran Carsburg. With the consciences being Brisbane or Sea World with Keran to form a committee to finalise things.

This was followed by a buffet dinner and raffle. Some of the prizes can be seen in the pic's of the dinner.

I would hope that most people (couple or single attendee) when home with a set of coasters. I put them on the table and was immediately asked a question by someone, turn around and they were gone. They took far longer to make.

The following day there was around 18 at lunch.

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**The NEXT Reunion**

**Queensland**

**Brisbane or Gold Coast**

**Keran Carsburg is in the process of organising a committee.**

**Tentative Date is**

**March 2027**

**Details to follow at a later date.**

## **Historical Notes**

### **The Bradfeild Scheme**

As water, too much or too little is in the news, the 1938 “Bradfeild Scheme” is worth a look.

The idea was to divert the upper reaches of the Tully, Herbert and Burdekin rivers to the west of the Great Dividing Range. This is done via dams, tunnels, pipes and pumps in some cases. There are various adaptations of the plan using the river systems to supply water to western Queensland and on to South Australia. Some plans divert water into the Lake Eyre catchment.

While the benefits of a reliable supply of irrigation water to this inland area are obvious. Other purported benefits are a large amount of hydro power & possibly more rain fall west of the Great Dividing Range and flood mitigation for towns east of the range, The possible rainfall increase comes about with an increase in evaporation from surface water and vegetation west of the range. Others say that the evaporation rate is too great in this western area and the water would be gone before it could be used.

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25 April 2025 marked the 110th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing by ANZAC and other Commonwealth forcers.

7<sup>th</sup> May 1915 - RMS Lusitania was sunk by a German submarine marked a turning point in WW I turning American Public opinion against the German's.

## Green and Gold Malaria

By [Rupert McCall](#)

The day would soon arrive when I could not ignore the rash  
I was obviously ill and so I called on Doctor Nash  
This standard consultation would adjudicate my fate  
I walked into his surgery and gave it to him straight

"Doc, I wonder if you might explain this allergy of mine  
I get these pins and needles running up and down my spine  
From there, across my body, it will suddenly extend  
My neck will feel a shiver and the hairs will stand on end

And then there is that symptom that a man can only fear  
It's a choking in the throat and the crying of a tear"  
Well, the doctor scratched his melon with a rather worried look  
His furrowed brow suggested that the news to come was crook

"What is it Doc?" I motioned "Have I got a rare disease?  
I'm man enough to cop it sweet so give it to me please"  
"Well I'm not too sure" he answered, in a puzzled kind of way  
"It seems you've got some kind of fever but it's hard for me to say

When is it that you feel this most peculiar condition?"  
I thought for just a moment and then I gave him my position  
"Doc, I get it when I'm standing in an Anzac Day parade  
And I get it when the anthem of my native land is played

I get it when Meninga makes a Kiwi-crunching run  
And when Boony grits his teeth to score a really gutsy ton  
And I got it back in '91 when Farr-Jones held the Cup  
And I shivered at Royal Ascott when Blak Caviar got up

I get it when the Banjo takes me down the Snowy River  
And Matilda sends me waltzing with a billy-boiling shiver  
And I get it when I see our farmers fighting for their names  
I get it when our firefighters walk towards the flames

It flattened me when Bertrand raised the Boxing Kangaroo  
And when Perkins won from lane eight, well, the rashes were true blue  
So tell me Doc" I questioned "Am I really gonna die?"  
He broke into a smile before he looked me in the eye

As he fumbled with his stethoscope and pushed it out of reach  
He wiped away a tear and then he gave this stirring speech:  
"From the beaches here in Queensland to the sweeping shores of Broome  
On the Harbour banks of Sydney where the Waratah's in bloom

This poem was sent to me by Mark Gribble in March 2024.

There seems to be many versions as people change a line here and there.

I replace AB with Boony and Great Australian Bight with Cockle Creek. The most southern spot you can drive to with a 2wd car in Australia.



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### Green and Gold Malaria

#### continued

From Uluru at sunset to the mighty Tasman Sea  
In the Adelaide cathedrals, at the roaring MCG  
From the Gulf of Carpentaria down to Cockle Creek  
The medical profession call it 'Green and Gold Malaria'

But forget about the textbook's son, the truth I shouldn't hide  
The rash that you've contracted here is 'good old Aussie pride'  
I'm afraid that you were born with it and one thing is for sure  
You'll die with it young man because there isn't any cure"

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Vale

|                    |            |                |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| Christopher Deavin | 16/02/2025 | 1971 Course 26 |
| Steve Wilson       | 28 05/2025 | 1993 Course 01 |
| Paul Deegan        | 17/05/2025 | Direct Entry   |