



**Branch Patron**

Air Commodore Tony Jones C SC

**Branch Committee**

**President**

Basil Nelson Phone: 0456 992 621 email: [tvlpres@raafaqlld.org](mailto:tvlpres@raafaqlld.org)

**Vice Presidents**

Lindsay Gordon email: [tvldpres1@raafaqlld.org](mailto:tvldpres1@raafaqlld.org)

**Secretary**

Basil Nelson email: [tvsec@raafaqlld.org](mailto:tvsec@raafaqlld.org)

**Treasurer**

Ted Mildren CSM email: [tvltreas@raafaqlld.org](mailto:tvltreas@raafaqlld.org)

**Ex-officio Members**

David Cowie

David O'Sullivan

**Welfare Officer**

Ted Mildren

**Postal Address**

PO Box 4031  
KIRWAN QLD 4817

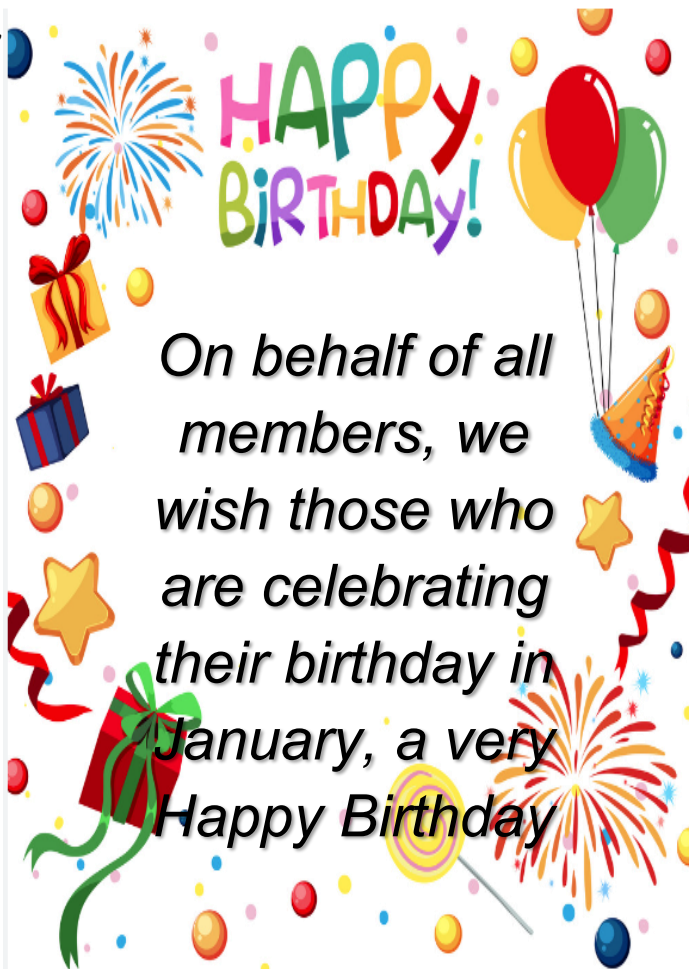
# FLIGHTLINE

Volume 26 No. 1

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### Next Branch Meetings

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Monthly Meeting

Time 10.00am

Bolton Clarke Community Centre

### Upcoming Branch Events

21FEB26 BREAKFAST

Odyssey on the Strand 0800

Unless otherwise advised, all social activity details will be posted as an event on the MMS and are family events so bring along family & friends

Coffee mornings venues will be notified by email to members.

## BRANCH CHRISTMAS LUNCH

It was that time of year where we bring our branch "Family" together for a hearty lunch and some social connection. That's what 32 members family and guests did in December at the Cutheringa Bowls Club.

Once again, Glenn, our host and Chef did not disappoint with a scrumptious selection of roast meat and vegetable staples as well as cold selections that "hit the spot" perfectly followed by dessert.

Along with the good food there was, as you would expect, good company with lots of chat and banter (I'm sure the stories get longer and wilder each year 😊).

There were plenty of raffle prizes with a number of buyers walking away with the goodies which allowed us to bolster our coffers a little.

Thank you to those who helped celebrate the festive season and hope you all went away happy and full. Hope to see you all in 2026

Bas  
President

## COFFEE MORNINGS

After a slow start to these morning chats, we started to grow in numbers.

Because of your initial feedback we are keen to get these mornings going again in 2026. Previously, members indicated that they would prefer to try different coffee shops.

Contact **Ted** with your preferred venue so a list could be created and the calendar updated with each month's location – **so please let us know where you want to go.**

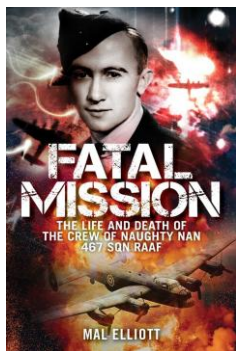
## 2026 Membership Fees

Have you paid your 2026 membership fees for 2026. These are now overdue so please check your emails for your invoice and attend to the payment as soon as you can.

If you have any concerns please contact Treasurer Ted Mildren.



## A BOOK in Review



Author: Mal Elliott  
Release Date: 24 May 2019  
Pages: 224  
Book Type: paperback  
ISBN: 9781922265159

**Price: \$29.99**

*Fatal Mission* is the story of Australian navigator Oscar Furniss, just one of 55,000 young men who perished while flying for Bomber Command during World War II. Lovingly crafted by his nephew, Mal Elliott, this book brings to life a young man whose name was never spoken by his family and who was a stranger to his modern-day descendants. Elliott follows Oscar from his carefree childhood in the Blue Mountains through his training over the vast emptiness of Canada to the mist-shrouded patchwork landscapes of Britain and on to the hostile skies of occupied France. He uses the accounts of the two surviving aircrew to piece together the events of the fateful night that saw most of the crew of Lancaster JA901, affectionately known as Naughty Nan, perish as pilot Colin Dickson heroically manoeuvred his burning aircraft away from the towns and villages that dotted the landscape. This has been a difficult book for Elliott to write as it has a harrowing description of his uncle's last moments. The terrible impact of the deaths of the aircrew are vividly described alongside the miraculous tales of the two survivors. But for the family of Oscar Furniss there would be no miracle, just the lingering weight of deep and lasting grief. This is a story that moves beyond the technical descriptions of bombing missions to describe the human toll of conflict. It underlines the crucial importance of commemoration, of refusing to allow those who perished in war to be forgotten. Theirs was a sacrifice that we who live in freedom should never forget.

## DVA NEWS

### ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL ESO PEAK BODY

In late 2025 ESOs received a letter from Minister Matt Keogh addressing the establishment of a national peak body for ex-service organizations (ESOs) following a Royal Commission recommendation.

## In summary the letter reported:

- The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide recommended creating a national peak body for ESOs, emphasizing collaboration with the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).
- The peak body aims to provide a unified voice for ESOs, enhancing their representation in government discussions and improving veterans' access to quality services.
- The Australian Government has agreed-in-principle to this recommendation and allocated funding for ongoing consultations with ESOs
- Key challenges include ensuring appropriate governance, representation, and trust within the ESO sector.
- Minister Keogh expresses concern over some ESOs' reluctance to support the peak body and urges renewed commitment to the initiative.
- Feedback from the ESO community is sought to gauge support for collaboration on this project

## The response

The RAAF Association Divisions (States) were asked to comment on the proposal put by the minister so a National consolidated response could be put forward. The response outlines the Air Force Association Ltd's commitment to developing a national peak body for ex-service organizations (ESOs) and provides recommendations for its establishment.

- AFA Ltd supports the creation of an independent peak body to engage with various government departments, emphasizing the need for independence from the Department of Veterans' Affairs to avoid perceived bias.
- AFA Ltd recommends forming a government-independent panel to develop a business case for the peak body, focusing on strategy, governance, risk management, and lobbying to enhance outcomes for veterans and their families.
- The association acknowledges alignment with findings from the 2025 ESO Peak Body consultation, particularly regarding



governance and funding options, suggesting a shared understanding of charitable peak body attributes within the ESO community.

- AFA Ltd notes the government's non-imposition stance on the peak body establishment and expresses a desire for regular updates on the progress of this initiative.

### DVA Update

Subsequent to these submissions, DVA produced an update on the proposal. A summary of the document outlines the establishment of a national peak body for Ex-Service Organisations (ESOs) to support the veteran community in Australia.

- The Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide recommended creating a national ESO peak body to unify veterans and enhance their wellbeing.
- Consultations from 2024–2025 indicated strong support for this initiative, emphasizing that the ESO community should lead its establishment and operation.
- An ESO-based steering committee is developing a framework for the peak body, with support from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA).
- Canadian Mr. Nick Booth, has no direct military association but is regarded as an international expert with extensive experience in veteran support, will engage with the community starting February 2026 to advise on governance and funding.
- The goal is to create a sustainable body that strengthens advocacy, improves service delivery, and ensures veterans' voices influence national policy.
- Interested parties can register for updates via the DVA email provided.

**We wait patiently to see the outcomes in the consultant's report. The burning question will always be "will this peak body be truly INDEPENDENT?" You make up your own mind.**

More information can be seen on the DVA website and the link below.

[ESO Peak Body 2025 Consultation Insights](#)

## DIVISION MISSION STATEMENT

For those who may not be aware, following workshops on governance and Branch consultation, the following is the agreed current mission statement for the Queensland Division.



## AFC and RAAF ASSOCIATION QUEENSLAND DIVISION

*Caring for our Air Force Family*

### OUR MISSION

*To support the wellbeing of the Air Force family through Advocacy, Assistance, Camaraderie and Commemoration*

### OUR VISION

*To ensure that current and former Air Force members and their families receive the veterans support they need and that their legacy is ensured*

### OUR VALUES

*In all our actions, we reaffirm our allegiance to Australia, honouring the ideals of freedom and sacrifice. RAAFA Queensland holds the true values of honesty, trust, loyalty, courage, and camaraderie*

## Date Claimers

31JAN (Sat)	Def Members & Family Expo	Townsville Stadium, Murray	0900-1200
<b><i>FEBRUARY</i></b>			
05FEB (Thu)	Coffee Morning	TBA	0930
08FEB (Sun)	Branch Meeting	Boulton Clarke Community Centre, Rows Bay	1000
14FEB (Sat)	National Servicemen's Day	TBA	TBA
15FEB (Sun)	Fall of Singapore	Townsville RSL	TBA
21FEB (Sat)	Breakfast	Odyssey on the Strand (Extended Family event)	0800
<b><i>MARCH</i></b>			
05MAR (Thu)	Coffee Morning	TBA	TBA
08MAR (Sun)	Annual General Meeting	Boulton Clarke Community Centre, Rows Bay	1000
15 March (Fri)	Dinner & Barefoot Bowls	Kirwan Sports Club (Extended Family event)	1800
31MAR (Tue)	Transition Seminar	Entertainment Centre	0730-1600

If you would like to see something specific in these newsletters, please contact [tvlsec@raafaqld.org](mailto:tvlsec@raafaqld.org) with your request