



## Out in the shed with Ted.

Ted McEvoy

### Happy New Year!



Happy New Year everybody out there in RAM land.

I hope your New Year's Eve was as good as mine and that 2009 is a prosperous, healthy and happy year for you all.

Tedda.

### PBS Safety Net.

We mentioned this a short while ago, but now that the year has ended, we think it important that it get another run. It is time to get ready for this year. The next PBS safety net scheme runs from 1 Jan 2009 to 31 Dec 2009. If you haven't already done so, it's time to ask your local



Australian Government  
Department of Health and Ageing

chemist to keep a record of all your family's prescriptions and if you have to buy from another chemist, take the receipt to your local chemist and ask him to add it to the record.

The Government's PBS safety net is designed to help you and your family with the cost of medicines. In this case, a family consists of:

- A couple living together, married or not, with or without dependant children.
- A single person with dependant children.

A dependant child is one under 16 years of age or a full time student under 25 whom you support.

It works like this:-

In any calendar year, if you are a holder of a concession card that entitles you to \$5.00 PBS prescriptions, then once you have bought 58 PBS prescriptions (at a total cost of \$290), then all further prescriptions are free.

If you do not have the magic card, then once you have spent \$1,141.80 on PBS prescriptions, all your further prescriptions are charged at \$5.00 each. (these figures relate to the 2008 calendar year – the 2009 figures were not available when we compiled this data)



Unless you keep a record, you could reach these thresholds during the calendar year and not know it and miss out on your entitlement to free or cheap medicines. It is definitely worth while keeping check of how much you spend at the local pharmacy. If you want more info on this you can get it [HERE](#).

When I was younger I hated going to weddings. It seemed that all of my Aunts and the grandmotherly types used to come up to me, poke me in the ribs and cackle, 'YOU'RE NEXT.' They soon stopped that after I started doing the same thing to them at funerals.

## **Microsoft Office 2007 – cheap!!**

Microsoft's 'Ultimate Steal' promotion for students is now available for a price that's so low it almost qualifies as stealing. The price is about as good as you'd hope – Office 2007 Ultimate edition officially sells for \$679.95 but if you shop around you can usually buy it for around \$400. The 'Ultimate Steal' price is just US\$59.95 – yes, you read that right.

The software is sold as a standard 'Perpetual licence'

### **What do you get??**

The Office Ultimate 2007 offer includes the following

- Access® 2007
- Accounting Express 2008



- Excel® 2007
- InfoPath® 2007
- Groove® 2007
- OneNote® 2007
- Outlook® 2007 with Business Contact Manager
- PowerPoint® 2007
- Publisher 2007
- Word 2007

### **Who can get it!!**

If you're a student or on staff at an approved institution, and you have an "EDU" email address or a student ID, then you're eligible. If you have an email address issued by your school/college/uni Click [HERE](#) then enter your email address where indicated, or, if you don't have a "EDU" email address, but have a student ID card, click [HERE](#) and fill in the boxes as prompted and in either case you will receive an email from Microsoft with download instructions.

We wonder if the [FREE](#) version of OpenOffice is starting to hurt??

## **RAAF maintenance crews in landmark victory**

Article from: [The Australian](#)



HUNDREDS of former RAAF maintenance workers, who have fought for almost a decade for recognition that their work on [F-111 fighter-bombers](#) made them sick, have won a landmark case that paves the way for a back-down by the Department of Veterans Affairs over its refusal to pay compensation.

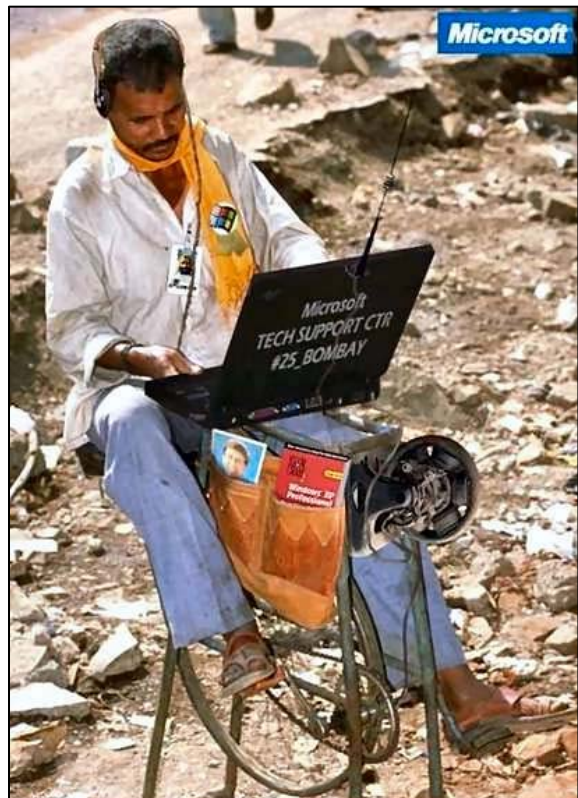
Former RAAF airframe fitter John Manuel (left), late last year, forced the Department of Veterans Affairs to admit liability that his work inside F-111 fuel tanks, in the 1970s, led to him contracting a rare cancer and depression.

Mr Manuel, 60, is one of hundreds of F-111 maintenance crews -- nicknamed the "pick 'n' patch" units -- who were excluded from a 2004 compensation and healthcare scheme after a study found workers fixing the aircraft's leaking fuel tanks had a 50 per cent higher incidence of cancer.

One New Zealander says to another: "hey bro, what's a Hindu?"  
The second New Zealander replies: "lays eggs bro"

The study also found an almost two-fold increase in depression and anxiety, a 2½ fold increase in sexual dysfunction and a 2 fold increase in obstructive lung disease.

Only workers involved in the official [F-111 "deseal/reseal" program](#), set up in 1977, were given access to the scheme, which included full healthcare coverage and automatic payments of up to \$40,000 that did not preclude more substantive compensation claims being filed in the courts.



The Rudd Government launched a parliamentary inquiry into the \$21 million scheme after mounting criticism by sick and suffering former RAAF workers denied payments or facing years of bureaucratic delays over their claims.

The "pick 'n' patch" workers were denied their claims, largely because the RAAF destroyed F-111 maintenance records up until 1992 (can you believe that?? - tb).

In a submission to the inquiry, headed by Brisbane Labor MP Arch Bevis, commonwealth Ombudsman John McMillan slammed the Defence and Veterans Affairs departments about the maintenance records and ongoing administration of the scheme.

"The complaints (from former RAAF airmen) made to my office highlighted several deficiencies in the original records," Mr Bevis said.

"It is clear that in some cases there were not adequate documents to support a person's contention that they qualified for a payment."

Professor McMillan said the scheme was still racked with problems, saying there was "no policy" in how to assess claims once documentation was provided.

"Our concern about poor record-keeping is that it is not clear how a decision was reached," Professor McMillan said.

The Veterans Affairs Department recently paved the way for an expansion of the scheme by accepting liability in Mr Manuel's claim for compensation. Mr Manuel worked in the "pick 'n' patch" units for four years before his discharge in 1977.

In 2000, he contracted a rare sinus cancer. He also has depression and has attempted suicide several times in the past few years.

"It has been a long, hard struggle," Mr Manuel said.



"I have lost a few of my former workmates to cancer and the anxiety of being repeatedly rejected for claims led me to a couple of suicide attempts."

Mr Manuel's Brisbane solicitor, John Cockburn, said the legal win was hugely significant.

"This is the first time that Veterans Affairs have accepted liability with the 'pick 'n' patch' units," Mr Cockburn said.

Tasmanian couple walking out of the divorce court, the wife is crying her heart out.  
Husband says ' Oh for God's sake stop crying, you're still my sister'

## **Consumer Price Index (CPI) Increase and early payment of pensions.**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) announced a CPI number of 166.5 for September 2008. As this is higher than the March 2008 number of 162.2, the following calculation was made to determine the increase to your pension:

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{(\text{September 2008 CPI number}) - (\text{March 2008 CPI number})}{(\text{March 2008 CPI number})} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{(166.5 - 162.2)}{162.2} \times 100 \\ &= 2.651048\% \\ &= 2.7\% \text{ (when rounded to the nearest tenth of one per cent)} \end{aligned}$$

Due to the first payday in January falling on the New Year's Day public holiday, pension payments scheduled for Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 were deposited into bank accounts one day earlier on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008. All paydays after this will revert to the scheduled dates.

Therefore, on payday Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008, your pension will have increased by 2.7%.

You will soon be sent a letter from the Department with your updated pension amount.

It is important to note that the January CPI increase does not apply to a pension commenced on or after 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008. A pro-rata increase will apply to pensions commenced between 16<sup>th</sup> July and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

The CPI takes into account a range of factors as determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). If you would like more information about the CPI and how it is calculated, you can go to the ABS website [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

# Virgin.

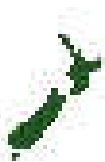


If you would like to see what Richard Branson has in mind for your next trip abroad, click the red tail.

I ended up with an older woman at a club last night. She looked pretty good for a 60-year-old. In fact, she wasn't too bad at all, and I found myself thinking that she probably had a really hot daughter. We drank a bit, and we had a bit of a snuggle, and she asked if I ever had a 'Sportsman's Double?'.

'What's that?' I asked. 'It's a mother and daughter threesome,' she said. 'Oh,' I said as my mind began to embrace the idea, 'No I haven't.' And I wondered what this daughter of hers might look like. We drank a bit more, then she says with a wink that tonight was 'my lucky night'. I went back to her place.

We walked in. She put on the hall light and shouted upstairs: 'Mom, You still awake?'



Click the map to see what some think of New Zealand.....

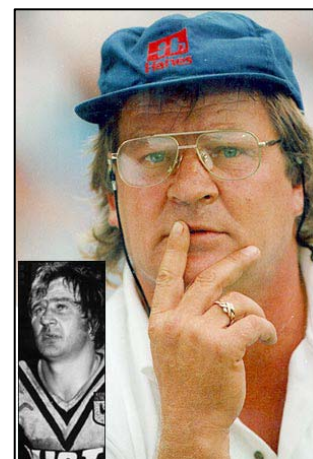
# Embarrassed.

I don't usually blow my own trumpet, being the humble sort of a bloke that I am, but I'm a bit chuffed about the degree of recognition I've (I'd say rightfully) received as a result of my efforts. I must say it was a great honour to receive the award and it will only spur me on to greater goals in 2009. I'm sure you too would be impressed with the news – please click [HERE](#)

## C-130 Tank Problems.

RUGBY league great [Tommy Raudonikis](#) (right), regarded as one of the hardmen of football, is facing his toughest ever opponent as he takes on the Defence Department to prove his RAAF service gave him cancer.

The former NSW and Australia halfback is preparing legal action, claiming a cancerous testicle he had removed in the mid-1980s was



linked to his years of work inside the fuel tanks of the air force's main transport plane, the C-130 Hercules.

Raudonikis is among a growing number of former RAAF maintenance crew fighting the Defence and Veterans Affairs departments over exposure to toxic chemicals amid deplorable working conditions as they tried to fix fuel tank leaks on aircraft, including Hercules and F-111s.

Many of Raudonikis's former colleagues have died from rare cancers or are engaged in expensive legal battles for compensation and recognition that their illnesses are linked to their daily exposure to a cocktail of chemicals, earning them the "goop troop" tag at the time.

"We worked in these tanks for hours at a time, inhaling the fuel and chemical fumes, with just gloves and overalls," Raudonikis told The Australian.

"There were no warnings about the health hazards, and you have got all these blokes, me included, getting these rare cancers and illnesses.

"There needs to be an investigation and the Government has to look after people like me who have served their country and done the right thing. They would compensate us if we were sent to war, but they don't seem to want to help blokes who trusted the RAAF but are now suffering. It is a battle worth fighting."



In 2004, a health study found there was a 40 to 50 per cent higher incidence of cancer among maintenance units involved in the F-111 "deseal/reseal" program, set up in 1977.

The Howard government announced a \$20million scheme giving automatic ex-gratia payments of between \$10,000 and \$40,000 to those involved in the program. The scheme included medical care and allowed for more substantive compensation claims to be pursued through the courts. But the compensation program excluded maintenance workers, who did the same work on the F-111s, between 1973 and 1976, as well as airmen carrying out ad hoc fuel tank repairs on the aircraft until 2000.

Hundreds of these workers are suffering illness or depression, but are having their compensation claims rejected. Queensland solicitor John Cockburn, who is representing several former servicemen, including Raudonikis, said the treatment of the former airmen was a national disgrace.

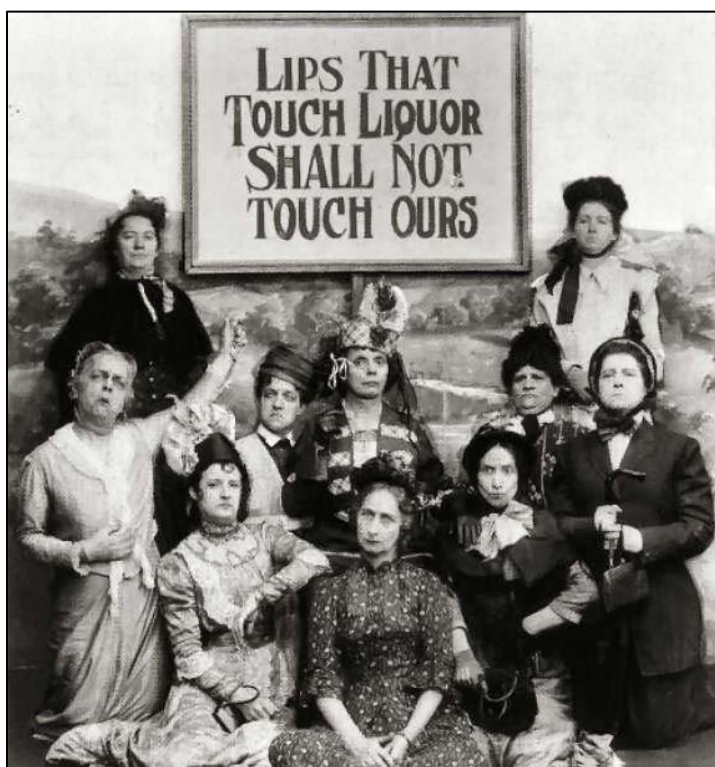
"There are hundreds who have worked on these aircraft in terrible conditions and who are now suffering, but the Government has turned their back on them," he said.

## **World Financial Crisis.**

If you're like the rest of us, and a bit confused as to why the whole world is shot to bits, financially, perhaps this will make it a lot clearer. It's a big file and, depending on your connection speed, will take a few secs to download. Click [HERE](#)

After a long night of making love, the bloke notices a photo of another man on her nightstand by the bed. He begins to worry. "Is this your husband?" he nervously asks. "No, silly," she replies, snuggling up to him. "Your boyfriend, then?" he continues. "No, not at all," she says, nibbling away at his ear. "Is it your dad or your brother?" he inquires, hoping to be reassured. "No, no, no!!!" she answers. "Well, who in the hell is he, then?" he demands. Don't worry, she says, "That's only me before the surgery."

If you were living in the US around 1919, just before prohibition started, and came upon the following poster...



I mean, seriously!!!

Would you quit drinking???