

## **Distinguished Member – Robert Layet**

### **A Conversation with Robert Layet**

1 June 2026

Robert Layet has been recognised by the Aerosol Association of Australia as a Distinguished Member in honour of his long and remarkable contribution to the aerosol industry.

#### ***What were your career highlights?***

Robert's career began in the 1950s, when there were no aerosol manufacturers in Australia. Looking back, he spent most of his working life with two employers. The first was National Radiators, where he worked from 1955 to 1972. There, he focused on developing aerosol valves and helping introduce aerosol technology to the Australian market. Because the format was still so new, much of that time was spent building interest among customers and finding practical product applications using the latest valve technology.

In 1972, Robert moved to Ensign Laboratories, where he stayed until retirement. There he joined his long-time colleague and Ensign founder, John Thornborrow. John was a senior chemical engineer with a strong vision for aerosol manufacturing in Australia, and Robert played an important role in helping bring that vision to life. Drawing on technical knowledge from international companies such as Risdon and Precision Valve in the United States, he helped develop locally made, highly precise valve components for Australian production. At the time, imported valves were expensive and not always well suited to local filling methods, so this was a significant step forward for the industry. Along the way, Robert also worked with other early adopters of the aerosol format, including Aerosols of Australia, Samuel Taylor, and Parco.

#### ***What were some major challenges you faced?***

As one of the pioneers of the aerosol industry, Robert faced a number of major challenges. One of the biggest was helping both Federal and State governments become comfortable with this new format. At the time, there was real concern about the safety of a pressurised container holding flammable gas and product, so proving that aerosols could be used safely took persistence, patience and strong technical knowledge. Robert was also instrumental in developing the Aerosol Standard and served on the original PK-13 committee established by Standards Australia. The standard set out manufacturing specifications, labelling requirements, and safety measures, including the unique quality control method of water-bath testing. Much of that original framework in standard remains in place today.

Robert was also closely involved in the scientific discussions around CFC ozone depletion that emerged as a major environmental issue in the late 1970s, particularly in relation to aerosols using CFC propellants. He recalls that the issue took him to many parts of the world, where he

contributed to discussions and debates about the science involved and the alternatives that were being considered.

***What has been your involvement with the Aerosol Association of Australia?***

Robert was there from the beginning as a founding member of the Aerosol Association of Australia, which was established in 1960. Over many years, he utilised the influence of the association to advocate for the industry on issues such as flammability, filling standards, dangerous goods regulations and worker safety. Through the association, he helped present a clear and informed industry voice to government and regulatory authorities.

The Aerosol Association of Australia is proud to recognise Robert for the outstanding contribution he has made to both the association and the wider aerosol industry. His work helped shape the industry in Australia, and his influence continues to be felt today. We thank him for all he has given to the industry and wish him a long, happy, and well-earned retirement.

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