

PROBING THE BRIDGE

February 2026

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Combined Probus Club of
Northbridge Inc

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From the President

It hardly feels as though any time has passed since I last sat down to write the January newsletter, yet here we are again. The start of February seems to have come around remarkably quickly, perhaps because our last meeting was held so late in January. Of course, February also brings with it Valentine's Day on the 14th, and there's talk of Red Roses being in the air. For those among us who are romantics at heart, I hope you've managed to surprise your loved ones with a bouquet of roses to mark the occasion!

We have kicked off the year in excellent spirits with a delightful luncheon held at Infusions Cammeray. This gathering set a positive tone for the month ahead. On February 20 there will be a guided tour of the historic Queen Victoria Building. For February 24, we have organised a Just Lunch at the North Sydney Hotel, providing another chance for members to connect over a relaxed meal. And rounding out the month, on February 26, members are invited to join the \$2.50 Club for an outing to Bronte Beach.

This year marks a special occasion for Probus as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our organisation. To honour this golden milestone, our Club is proposing a barbecue at Tunks Park. The park offers an excellent setting for members to come together and enjoy a relaxed day outdoors. It's also a wonderful opportunity to invite friends along, giving them a chance to experience first-hand what our Club is all about. Details will be provided in next month's newsletter. We are currently aiming to hold the picnic in May. Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mosyln AC, our Governor General, in a letter sent to head office acknowledged the work of members behind the scenes and how Probus has impacted communities across Australia.

There has been a request from Sophie Brosher, a research assistant from National Health and Medical Research Macquarie University, for volunteers to take part in an online survey to study the relationship between chronic illness, social isolation and loneliness in older adults. There are a few criteria that need to be met; such as over 60, suffering from a chronic illness etc. If you are interested contact me and I will pass on to you further information so you can contact Sophie.

Roger has organised the official notice for the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which will be held during our meeting on March 16. This announcement appears in this newsletter to ensure all members are informed.

With the upcoming AGM, my 12-month term as President will come to an end. I would like to take this opportunity to express how much I have enjoyed your company over the past year. Having the chance to connect with so many of you has been truly rewarding, and I am grateful for the support and camaraderie shared throughout my presidency.

President Bev

Our next meeting will be held at Northbridge Golf Club on Monday February 16 starting at 10am. If you can't attend, please phone or text Judy Smith 0422 537 044 before the meeting. Michael Bartok will be our five-minute speaker.



Out and about

Above & left: A large group enjoyed a special Thai lunch at Infuzions in Cammeray.

Below: A happy get together for a cuppa at Inner Cravings, Northbridge Plaza. It's on the first Monday of every month.



Opportunity for new memberships

Very unusually, instead of having a waiting list our club has six membership vacancies! So, please pass the good news to your friends, relatives or neighbours who would enjoy activities like great day trips, theatre outings, tours and travel within Australia and being part of a friendly social club. Please invite them to come along to one of our monthly meetings or perhaps an activity. Let's keep our club strong and thriving!

Dates for your diary

Online payments to Probus Tours Account,
BSB 062 215, A/C 10073196, please.

Friday, February 20

Tour of Queen Victoria Building, \$25

We'll meet at 10.45am at the information desk on the ground floor of the Queen Victoria Building. The tour starts at 11am. After the tour, we will go by Light Rail to Circular Quay for lunch at the cafe on the ground floor of the Museum of Contemporary Art (own expense). Numbers and payment at the January or February meetings.

Tuesday, February 24

Just Lunch, 12 noon at North Sydney Hotel, 292 Miller St (opposite North Sydney Oval)

Order your own drinks and meals at the bar.
Add your name to the list so we can ensure you have a seat at our booked tables.

Thursday, February 26

\$2.50 Club outing to Bronte Beach

We will meet at the foot of the Town Hall steps at 11am and catch a train to Bondi Junction, then a bus to Bronte Beach where we will have lunch at a choice of eateries. After lunch, there will be a short optional stroll to the beachfront before catching the bus to Bondi Junction, train to Town Hall station, then Metro from nearby Gadigal station to Victoria Cross station, and bus home.

Monday, March 2

Coffee catchup, 2.30pm

Join an informal gathering of members for coffee and a chat at Inner Cravings, at Northbridge Plaza. No need to book. Hosted by Kerrie Williams.

Thursday, March 19

Wisemans Ferry

Coach to Wisemans Inn for lunch (own expense), then short walk around visiting the little museum and the old cemetery. Pay \$30 at the February meeting.

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Anastasia, Sydney Lyric Theatre, 1pm

This event is fully booked. Payment is now due and payable at February meeting or to the Tours account.

Thursday, April 30

Berowra Heights

We'll enjoy the views from the lookout then lunch (own expense) at the old café Pie in the Sky. Both have great views and the pies are wonderful and well-known. \$25, pay at February or March meetings.

October 31 – November 10

Probus Anniversary cruise with Trade Travel

Departing Sydney on the Celebrity Solstice, visiting Eden, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Kangaroo Island (Penneshaw). A range of special Probus social events is being planned for this Anniversary voyage.

Only balcony cabins are available: single cabin approx \$7600 per person, share cabin \$8700 (for two). Drinks and wifi are not included and can be purchased. Twelve Probus members have registered to do the cruise. If you are interested in joining them please register at the February meeting.

Wednesday, August 12, 1pm

Fiddler on the Roof, Theatre Royal

Cost \$115 including bus transport to and from the theatre from Northbridge Golf Club. Dawn is taking names of anyone who is interested, and payment can be made into the Probus Tour account at any time.



Coming speakers

In February, our speaker will be **Tom Sweeney AOM** (left), a prominent figure in the Australian arts community. He is best known for his dedication to Willoughby Theatre Company, with which he has been involved for more than 50 years, serving as an actor, director, administrator and President. Tom will be talking about the theatre. **Susan Alexander** will speak to the club in March about her book "A Spanish Love Affair". Susan is a former tennis champion, successful businesswoman and a poet. Her book is a memoir of her time in Madrid, her experiences on the European tennis circuit and her marriage to a Spaniard. In April, something different ... selected players from the **Willoughby Symphony**

Orchestra will be giving us a mini-concert, playing popular classics. We have also asked **Willoughby Mayor Tanya Taylor** to introduce the players and speak briefly to us (though this will depend on her availability).

Getting to know her

Valerie Gomm was inducted in July 2025. Here is her story.

My sister and I were born in India in 1946/47. Our parents were British and after the Depression my father was offered the opportunity to go and live in India and learn the tea trade. At the age of 30 and with a bank balance of 1000 pounds he proposed to his girlfriend in England and they were married and took up residence on a tea estate in Silhet, East Pakistan. When the War of Partition broke out my parents had to decide whether to go back to England or emigrate to Australia. Dad's uncle agreed to sponsor us and the decision was made.

After many years of schooling in the Shire I pursued a secretarial career and worked in the Bank of NSW. My hobby was pottery which I took up at Gympie Tech at nights. I soon got itchy feet and applied to Ansett Airlines as a flight attendant and had two years flying around Australia. My friend in the bank had decided to travel to Europe so I resigned from the airline to join her. We travelled for two years as you did in those days and eventually came home.

I started potting again when I met and married my husband Bernard and we moved to Cammeray. I was lucky enough to be given a pottery wheel and I fired at Willoughby Workshop, which is still there today. Bernard and I had three sons. When our boys were becoming independent, we travelled. We both rode bikes and our first destination was Vietnam south to north. Two years later, time to save up, we rode in Cambodia to Phnom Penh, then Laos north to south. Our next trip was to South America, no bikes this time. We visited Galapagos and Easter Island.

In 2000 we renovated our house and it seemed a good idea to travel while that was being finished. We embarked with our bikes to Rajasthan then in 2002 France, the Rhone River and Dordogne and finally Namibia.

Bernard passed away in 2022 and I have done some solo travel: a ceramic tour of Vietnam, six days walking the Camino in Spain, four of which were in the pouring rain, and last year Finland, Lapland and Norway to view the Aurora Borealis. I have been blessed with good health and a loving family. It doesn't get better than that!

Seen on an old fella's T-shirt:



AT MY AGE

SEEN EVERYTHING

DONE EVERYTHING

HEARD EVERYTHING

BUT CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING

Notice of 2026 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Combined Probus Club of Northbridge will be held at 10am on Monday, March 16, 2026 at Northbridge Golf Club, Sailors Bay Road, Northbridge.

Agenda

- Welcome
- President's report
- Minutes of 2025 AGM
- Treasurer's report
- Audited Financial Statement for 2025/26
- Membership subscription for 2026/27
 - Election of committee members
- Appointment of Auditor for 2026/2027
- Induction of President for 2026/2027

Heather Skeen, Secretary