

A Merry Christmas to all!



TOOWOOMBA RANGE PROBUS

Newsletter

Issued December 12 2025

OUR "SANTA"



Posing as Santa was, in reality, President John Randall!

THE REAL ONE



Our Christmas Party was a bright and cheery occasion

At the Ballymore Room, Gold Park
On Tuesday December 9 2025



Enjoying the welcoming speech from President John Randall (sans his Santa beard and cap) was an audience of 70-plus happy Probians.

A Grand Choral Competition, the Happy Little Vegemites versus the Aeroplane Jelly Boys, was fiercely contested and narrowly won by the Vegemites. Here they are in action . . .



"It puts a Rose in every cheek . . ."

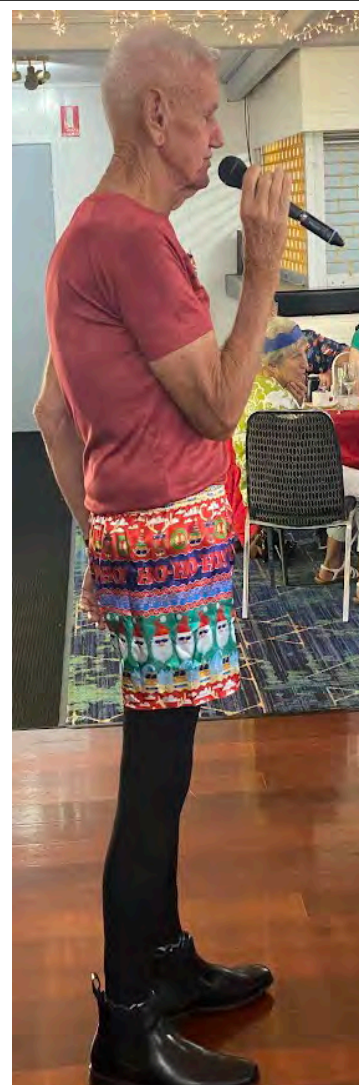


They "Like Aeroplane Jelly . . ."

Management Team 2025-26

President	John Randall
Vice President	Mike Butt
Imm Past Pres	Tony Mullen
Secretary	Tony Mullen
Treasurer	Ken Stephenson
Program Director	Rob Catto
Trips/Outings	Floyd Wilson & Paul Barrett
Welfare Officer	Rob Catto
Newsletter	Bruce Hinchliffe

Important function at the Christmas party was the awarding of Life Membership to two stalwarts of Toowoomba Range Probus Club, Dr Patrick Murray and Merv Bond. Merv was on hand to receive his Life Membership certificate from President John (“Santa”) Randall, and Patrick, who was unable to attend the Christmas Party, received his the following day via a visit to his home by former president Ray Taylor and Bob Kretchmann.



Superheroes wear their underwear over their clothing – and President John fell into that category with his most entertaining conduct of the festivities



Jurij and Anne Petriwskyj, George Gothe and Lilo enjoy the music provided by Kathy and Chris March.



Also enjoying the music in a different way: Col and Gail Wockner, Tim Sullivan, Lesleigh Ball, and Trish Sullivan



Hamper winner Claudia Stephenson with Peta Catto and Karen Kong

"I'm leaning on the lamp post at the corner of the street, in case a certain little lady comes by"

Dynamic Duo slays 'em at Christmas party



What a duo! Floyd and Tony belt out an old favourite at the Christmas Party



Barbara Stevens and Floyd Wilson in festive mood



John White with friend Margaret

NEXT OUTING - FIRST EVENT FOR 2026

A BARBECUE at Palm Lake Resort

97-161 Hogg Street, Toowoomba

Tuesday January 13, 2026, at noon for a 12.30 barbecue

A REMINDER, INCLUDING DIRECTIONS TO THE BARBECUE, WILL BE SENT ON 7 JANUARY

OAKEY VISIT: A call for starters will be made at the barbecue for the following proposed event on Tuesday 10 February:

Morning Melodies at Oakey RSL Club. It will be a self-drive outing, and each diner may order lunch from 12 noon.

Birthday Greetings January

Floyd Wilson	6
Merv Bond	11
Noel Radunz	12
Don Stevens	15
Katie Fleming	22
Tim Sullivan	22
Claudia Stephenson	29
Lyn Free	31
Doug Gordon	31

Next General Meeting – Ballymore Room, 341 Hume Street, Toowoomba-
10a.m. Tuesday 27 January 2026 *Details in Newsletter issued 21 January*

Don Watson's Last Word

I can't remember how to write numbers like
1, 1000, 51, 6, & 500 in Roman notation.
I'M LIVID.



The iconic

TOOWOOMBA FOUNDRY

From a talk by member George Gothe to Toowoomba Range Probus Club
General Meeting on 25th November 2025

In 1871 Mr. George Washington Griffiths, newly arrived from Manchester, England, set up an ironmongery and mechanical repair shop in Ruthven Street, Toowoomba.

This was the beginning of the iconic Toowoomba business known as the Southern Cross Organisation – the Toowoomba Foundry. G.W.Griffiths's brother. John Alfred Griffiths. an

engineering graduate from Manchester University, joined the company, and the name of the Company became Griffiths Bros & Co. In 1874, the brothers bought land at the corner of Ruthven and Campbell Streets in Toowoomba and a foundry was built. Additional adjoining land was acquired, and modern factory buildings covered over 11 acres.



This aerial shot, taken around the mid to late 20th century, shows the massive area covered by the foundry in Ruthven Street from Campbell street to Bridge street and the extensions north of Bridge Street.

The speaker said the Foundry was one the most Iconic businesses in Toowoomba for over 100 years.

George Gothe held managerial positions with the Foundry in Toowoomba and Melbourne from 1969 till retirement in 1999



"I also believe it was very important in Toowoomba's growth over this period.

"Working in this organisation gave me the feeling I was working for my own family. I believe most employees felt like this; they were proud of the company and wanted it to succeed.

"As Horst mentioned a couple of meetings ago, the Foundry employed 1200 to 1400 people and after the war it reduced to approximately 800. This would have been in the Foundry only; however there would have been a further 300 to 400 people the Foundry employed in the Southern Cross network of companies throughout Australia."

Griffiths Bros. & Co. built some of the earliest windmills in Australia. The first, built around 1876, was called the "Economy", followed by the "Simplex Economy", the "Simplex", and later the "Little Wonder".

This photograph shows a 16 foot { 4.8 m } Simplex Economy Windmill. The 16 foot refers to the diameter of the wheel.



In 1884, the name was changed to Toowoomba Foundry and Railway Rolling Stock Manufacturing Company Limited. Then in 1922, it was changed to Toowoomba Foundry Co. Ltd., and in 1932 to Toowoomba Foundry Pty. Ltd. The name remained until sold to Tyco Flow Control [Pacific](#) in late 1999.

The Southern Cross Sales Organisation comprised of a group of companies spread over Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, distributing and servicing the products of Toowoomba Foundry Pty. Ltd., under the trade name of "Southern Cross"

Continuing The Foundry story . . .

From locomotives to lawnmowers!



In 1913 the Foundry won a State Government contract to build 15 C-16 locomotives for 4000 pounds (now \$8000) each.



The Foundry built and sold two-stroke and four-stroke lawnmowers.

Huge tanks like the one pictured below were also built by Toowoomba Foundry.



Southern Cross motor pumps were a big part of the Foundry's business.

The primary aims of the Toowoomba Foundry were to design and manufacture everything needed -- To obtain water -- To pump water -- To store water -- To distribute water

But in the early 1960s the Foundry took on a special project – to design and produce a light aircraft.

Powered by a 180 hp Lycoming O-360-A1A four-cylinder engine, the SC1 cruised at 160 mph {257 km/h} and had a range of 740 miles { 1,190 km } fully loaded.

The fuselage was of all-metal construction, apart from the fibreglass engine cowling

The airframe was designed to handle engines up to 260 hp and was fully stressed for aerobatics.

The aircraft was never placed onto the Australian register, but it wore the radio callsign VH-SCA on the upper starboard wing, lower port wing and either side of the tail fin.

The aircraft is now proudly displayed at Wellcamp Airport. It was built at the Foundry in 1960 and first flew in 1961. It was originally built to compete with American companies Piper and Cessna but was found too costly to enter full-scale production.



A second aircraft was designed and built by the Foundry – the Pegasus.

In May 1982 it was test flown by one of the principals of the Foundry, Barry Griffiths, 47, who tragically died when the aircraft plummeted into a ploughed paddock near Jondaryan. Many theories were put forward regarding the crash – the most plausible, in the opinion of the speaker, was that the pilot blacked out from lack of oxygen and the uncontrolled plane nosedived into the ground.

