



# Staying Connected

Issue 71, June 2025

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In a world of uncertainty and negativity, I have been thinking about how fortunate we are in Australia. One feature that stands out is "Australians have talent" in all walks of life and at all levels, whether working or volunteering.

At the top level are people like Melissa Perkins (recently ranked 79 in 'Fortune' magazine's Most Powerful Women globally), Cliff Obrecht and Cameron Adams co-founders of Canva; Mike Cannon-Brookes and Scott Farquhar co-founders of Atlassian.

Who has heard about the Anduril-led prototype Ghost Shark extra-large autonomous undersea vehicle i.e. submarine drone, which is being developed in Australia for the RAN, ahead of time and under budget? The first of three prototypes has already been launched. And much better value than AUKUS!

Abundant talent also resides in the food industry, whether in developing fresh and value-added products or in food service. As an example, only this week SBS profiled '50 greatest changemakers in food in Australia'. What a list of achievers from many different backgrounds! They have been amongst the original 'influencers', well before social media.

Naturally, good food requires good ingredients, an area where talented Australian farmers excel, whether meat, grains, dairy, fruit, vegetables and more.

Much closer to home is the talent revealed through our Probus Club. For example, it is a delight to read the Newsletter and discover in the 'Three Questions' section how members have contributed their expertise in employment and in 'retirement'. Also, check out the article about the ABC's 'The Piano' and view the show to be inspired.

A broad cross-section of speakers, including members and area-specialists, have also demonstrated their talents. In addition, informal discussions at special interest group activities have been a source of inspiration.

As 'elders', we have the talent to foster talent in Australia's younger generations and help give them a brighter future.

Graham Yates  
President

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Russell Lea Probus Club acknowledges the Wangal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the lands on which we meet and we pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging.



## JUNE MEETING REPORT

A record 47 members and 6 guests were in attendance.

### Membership Report

Membership Officer Julie reported the Club's membership had grown to 61 members.

New members Di Keeffe and Anne Gibbins were introduced and inducted into the Club by Julie.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Carmen presented the financials, including current account status, income, outgoings and commitments.

The meeting was advised of the five Committee members now authorised by the Management Committee to approve payments.

### Activities and Outings

President Graham, in the absence of Activities and Outings Officer Megan, outlined recent activities and events coming up in the next month, which are shown in the "For Your Diary" section of the Newsletter.

### Guest Speaker

The record attendance was drawn, at least in part, by the Guest Speaker Georgia Holmes, Professional Home Organiser and her topic "Decluttering and Downsizing for a Simpler Life". A summary of her excellent and practical presentation is included with the Newsletter, as well as an attachment with some key slides.



*Di Keeffe (left) and Anne Gibbins (right) welcomed and inducted by Julie Yates*

## FOR YOUR DIARY

### Tuesday, 1 July 2025

(and every first Tuesday of month)

Let's Talk About Books, Canada Bay Club  
2.00pm. RSVP Karen via WhatsApp.

### Wednesday, 2 July 2025

Scrabble Club at Jill O'Doherty's.

11.00am - 1.00pm. RSVP Jill via  
WhatsApp

### Sunday, 6 July 2025

Theatre Group - 'The Lady Vanishes',  
Genesian Theatre, 2B Gordon Street,  
Rozelle. 4.30pm Book at

<https://genesian.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/141385>

### Monday, 21 July 2025

(and every third Monday of month)

Walking (9.15am) and/or coffee (10am)  
at Carmels, 284 Great North Road,  
Wareemba.

### Thursday, 24 July 2025

Monthly Meeting, Club Five Dock at

10.30am. Guest Speaker: NSWA  
GoodSAM Project Officer and Paramedic  
Specialist, Monika Sitkowski, "How the  
GoodSAM Responder app saves lives"

### Friday, 25 July 2025

Christmas in July, Polish Club, Ashfield.  
RSVP Trevor via WhatsApp form posted  
25 June or direct

<https://forms.gle/7izPuRZ8mbLqrNnW6>

## REMAINING 2025 MEETING DATES

24 July	23 October
28 August	27 November
25 September	



## JUNE GUEST SPEAKER

### Georgia Holmes, Professional Home Organiser

### "Decluttering and Downsizing for a Simpler Life"

Georgia delivered many important and practical points in her presentation, not only about decluttering, but also organising and where to dispose of clutter items. Her practical examples were drawn from many real-world experiences helping people.

Some key points in her presentation included:

- Decluttering is the basis for letting go and helping live the life you want
- Declutter first then organise
- Start small
- A tool for deciding: "If I had to leave now and never come back, would I take an item with me"
- Options for disposal: donate, recycle, rubbish (and where to go with different categories), and sell (being aware of how much time might be involved)
- Ask permission/consult before disposing

To assist members, and with Georgia's approval, a separate file containing many of her slides and a 'starters' check list accompanies the Newsletter.

Her final message: "The most important things in life are not things".



*Vote of thanks and Proboscis gift presented by Barb Davis.*



## WHERE IS IT?

### Clue

Historic iron and steel blast furnace west of Sydney

### Last month

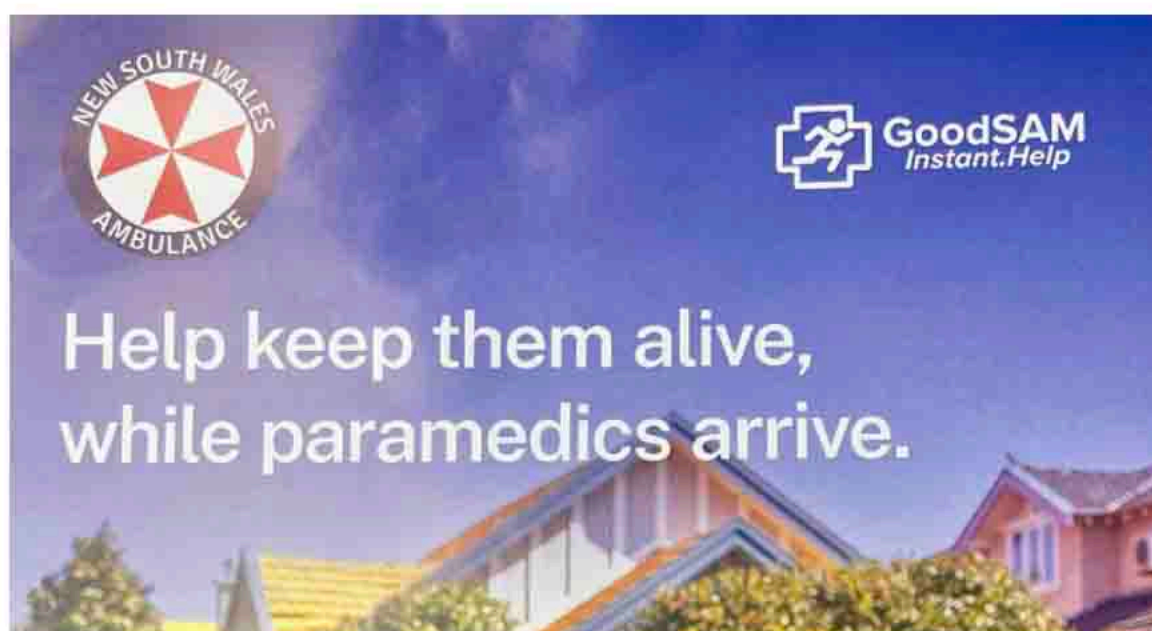
'Australia' Rock, Narooma

## FAMOUS QUOTE

"Rules are not necessarily sacred, principles are."

*Franklin D. Roosevelt*

**JULY GUEST SPEAKER**  
**Monika Sitkowski**  
**NSWA GoodSAM Project Officer and Paramedic Specialist**



GoodSAM supports emergency and out of hours services across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

For example, GoodSAM cardiac arrest alerting system has saved dozens of lives. Building a community of lifesavers is vital.

Monika will talk about GoodSAM and becoming a volunteer to receive alerts to help in nearby CPR emergencies while paramedics are on their way.

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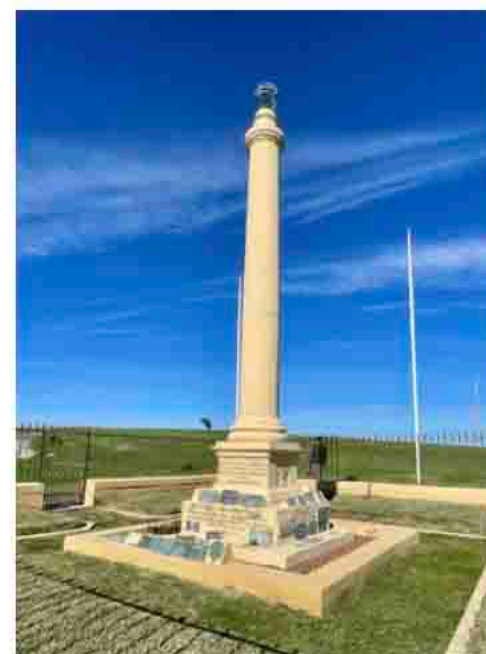
**"Any News on La Perouse?"\***

Compte de Laperouse, who sailed into Botany Bay on 26th January 1788, is held in the same high international esteem as Cook and Magellan, as the greatest navigators and explorers the world has known.

The visit by 19 members to La Perouse on 28 May featured talks, exhibitions and walks to learn more about this oft-forgotten part of Sydney.

The program commenced with a visit to the Laperouse Museum, housed in the 1882 cable station connecting New Zealand with Australia and the rest of the world. Greg Davis, one of the staff, gave an excellent presentation about the area's history, including the ancient and on-going indigenous connections.

Then followed a video presentation highlighting the many achievements of La Perouse, from his involvement in North America, his round-the world scientific expedition, to his disappearance in 1788 after his 6-week visit to Botany Bay.



*La Perouse Monument*

.....continued



## "Any News on La Perouse?"\* - continued

His achievements made him the most famous and revered person in France at a time of major social upheaval and unrest – hence the inquiry from Louis XVI.

Other features of the La Perouse headland include:

- The 1828 La Perouse Monument to commemorate his visit to Australia
- Grave of Franciscan Friar Pere Receveur, a chaplain and naturalist who died at Botany Bay on 17 February 1788
- Bare Island fortifications, built in the late 1800's to protect against the Russians (some things never change), and
- 1822 Macquarie Watch Tower, built to prevent smuggling of illicit alcohol and tobacco (some things never change).

A memory for many members was the Sunday 'Snake Man' and his show. The show continues every Sunday afternoon.

The fully restored Museum will be unveiled in August and will be well worth another visit.

\* Supposedly the final words of Louis XVI before he was beheaded by guillotine on January 21, 1793



*Group at Macquarie Watch Tower*



*Museum and former Cable Station*



## LET'S DO LUNCH Bald Rock Hotel

Twenty five members were far from fazed by Let's Do Lunch being held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup>. In fact it was the highest participation by members to date.

The warm atmosphere of Rozelle's historic Bald Rock Hotel, established in 1876, was an excellent venue to suit a cold winter's day. Members enjoyed socialising together, as well as the quality and range of the 'pub food' on offer, particularly the signature Guinness Pie, with mash and mushy peas.



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## NOW IN SEASON

Citrus would have to be the pick of the fruits available. Mandarins continue to be excellent eating (sweet and juicy), with more varieties available. Most are seedless these days, except Honey Murcotts. Peak Navel orange season has now arrived and should continue for some months.

Apples and pears continue to be excellent eating quality. My favourites are Jazz and Kanzi, both related and similar in taste and texture.

There are still good late season grapes available, although check for quality, as the local supply season is coming to a close.



*Continued.....*



## NOW IN SEASON - continued

The NZ kiwifruit supply season is in full swing, with both Green and Gold complementing small Australian production.

Berries are readily available, although eating quality varies, especially strawberries - avoid fruit with white shoulders.

Queensland Hass avocados are readily available and generally very nice eating. With cooler weather they will take longer to ripen at home, unless they have been 'conditioned' by retailers. To check for maturity 'check the neck' by gently pressing. If it 'gives' slightly it indicates the fruit is ripe inside.

If you are wondering why some vegetables, such as tomatoes and sweet corn, are so expensive there is a very good reason – mother nature. At this time of year many field tomatoes are grown at Bowen and Bundaberg, both recently hit by extreme weather. Similarly most sweet corn comes from Queensland. Greenhouse tomatoes are also expensive, because of lack of overall supply, plus one major operator has had to destroy crops, due to a new virus being detected.

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## GUIDE TO THE ARCHIBALD 2025

Visit the NSW Art Gallery between now and 17 August to view this year's Archibald, Wynne and Sulman final entries and winners.

Better still, join a free guided 50 minute tour to learn more about some of the major entries.

Sometimes you may think "why did this entry win?". Joining a tour can provide insights and answers. Tours are conducted daily at Noon and 2pm by very knowledgeable and passionate volunteers (that important word yet again!)

Entry to the three Exhibitions costs \$25, or \$22 for Seniors.

For more details: <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/2025/>

*Brilliant young actor Felix Cameron featured by artist Jeremy Eden*





### THREE QUESTIONS: COL RENNIE

Col had a varied career before joining Probus, starting his working life at 16 as an apprentice typewriter technician, studied Electronics and Communications at TAFE, worked in the IT industry for over 50 years, much of that time spent working in and around Aisa.

In 'retirement' he is a very active member of our Canada Bay SES, having worked in 12 major flood LGAs including Windsor, Lismore, Broken Hill, Mildura and in the last couple of weeks the Manning River in Taree. Members may recall Col and fellow SES volunteer Bill Hoyles addressed our Club in June 2022.

It is aspects of the Taree flood disaster that Col discusses for us.

**Who were the many different organisations and people involved in the aftermath of these most devastating floods, how do they mesh together and what was your/SES role?**

In my view the Northern Rivers (Taree and surrounding LGA) floods where the worst I have been involved in, with over 10,000 homes and businesses impacted. As an example, at one stage with just 3,000 properties inspected, 550 were declared uninhabitable and unsafe to live in - with mud and what is mixed in with it over 2 meters high in some homes, many knocked off their foundations.

My role last week was to Team Lead, prioritise the tasks and ensure the safety of a group of around 15 /20 spontaneous Volunteers from the community to provide clean up support, and to provide mental well-being support to home owners, to listen to their stories and help them find a way forward - to provide a shoulder to cry on and to let them know they are not alone.

**What was different about Taree?**

The scale in size and nature of the total devastation, along with the speed in which the local and surrounding communities stood up to work with us to start the recovery process, was unprecedented in my experience. **Remember people have lost everything**, with their life possessions being dumped in the street, buried in the mud and sewage, only for a council excavator to unceremoniously pick them up and take them to a tip.

So, to see complete strangers from all walks of life, young and old, turn up with brooms and, shovels to help you, provided the stage for many tears and laughter, as people realised they were not on their own and there was a way forward. It is amazing how much work 15 motivated people can do to help build hope.

*Continued.....*





## THREE QUESTIONS: COL RENNIE - continued

The mix of mud/sewerage/dead animals and other contaminants 2 meters deep in some homes is a smell that will last for a very long time.

Taree had an amazing community response. On one Saturday alone 300 people turned up to help. Organisations ranging from churches, individuals, the Sikhs, football clubs, Mums and Dads and their children, it makes you proud to be Australian.

### How do you cope?

To be honest I am not sure you take on this role if it did not affect you at some level.

- My biggest support is being able to talk to my wife Toni at the end of every day.
- To be able to share what you have seen and what we did to help.
- To remind yourself you are doing the best you can in a disaster zone.
- You always feel like you should do more.
- Seeing the Australian mateship, with complete strangers jumping into the mud to help in any way then could, helped me a lot.
- Getting a muddy hug or sharing a laugh or a tear with the home owner at the end of a long day is what makes you want to get back into it tomorrow.

Taree is still ongoing and I need to go back to try and get some closure on this one. So this one is still work in progress.

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## REST, EAT AND RELAX ON THE ROAD Blue Mountains

### From Catherine Brown

#### Glenbrook

Cafe 2773 - Indoor with log fire and lovely outdoor area. Licensed. Fruit toast with passionfruit curd and mascarpone a delight!

#### Lawson

RoseyRavelson book shop and café - good coffee, homemade cakes and stacks of books.

<https://roseyravelstonbooks.com.au/?srsltid=AfmBOoopMEk64pApcoEr66rqyZL-VfJhSnMiYYvNekTILKaPhmjj3VHu>

**Megalong Valley** (a 15 min beautiful drive from Blackheath into the valley)

Megalong Valley Tearooms - great lunch spot, really good food. Licensed.

Dry Ridge Vineyard - cellar door lunch. Beautiful views, lovely cool climate wines, plus accommodation.

### From Karen Wilson

#### Katoomba

Carrington Hotel - enjoy history and good food

Katoomba RSL - very good Club food

#### North Richmond

Kravings Bistro - Cowra lamb and grain-fed Sirloin featured; good coffee

#### Kurrajong Heights

Archibald Hotel - spectacular views from the beer garden back to Sydney

*Continued.....*



## REST, EAT AND RELAX ON THE ROAD - continued Blue Mountains

### Editor's Pick

#### Wentworth Falls

Bakery Patisserie Schwarz – wide choice of good sweet and savoury pastries; good coffee  
Conservation Hut Café – great location for café food and glorious valley views

#### Lithgow

El Latte – excellent breakfast, where the ambos and police eat  
Workies Club – good club food, views to historic smelter etc

**Next Month:** North Coast NSW, followed by West and North West NSW, so send in your recommendations.

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## ABC TELEVISION SERIES REVIEW "THE PIANO"

"The Piano", on the ABC, is much more than a six-part series about a musical instrument. It is inspiring, telling the story of every day pianists across Australia from all ages and walks of life and how the piano has transformed their lives.

Regular Australians are invited to play the piano at busy locations, such as Central Station in Sydney and Southern Cross Station in Melbourne, and given the opportunity of a lifetime.



For example, classically trained pianist, DJ was on the verge of fulfilling his dream when a stroke left him unable to move his right side. Against all odds, he relearned to play (brilliantly) using only his left hand.

Ages range from five to a 103 year old who comes to life on the piano, even though his sight and hearing are failing.

The program, covering a range of musical genres, is hosted by Amanda Keller, who is quite open with her emotions.

What the pianists don't know is that they are being secretly watched by two world-class musicians —American entertainer Harry Connick Jr. and Australian concert pianist Andrea Lam.

Observing from a hidden vantage point at each location, they carefully select one standout performer each week to receive direct mentorship, leading to a performance at Sydney's iconic City Recital Hall.

'TV Tonight' praised The Piano, stating "2025's feelgood series of the year is here."  
The program is available on ABC iview.

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/piano/series/1/video/MP2447H103C00GN1>

A similar series created in the UK has also aired recently on the ABC and available on iview.

**Did you Know?:** World Piano Day is observed on the 88th day of the year, a musical celebration of the most famous 88-key musical instrument.