



Staying Connected

Issue 72, July 2025

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Acting President and Vice President
Trevor Logan

As we navigate the ever-changing landscape of modern life, one remarkable area of human progress stands out: Artificial Intelligence. AI is no longer science fiction or just something used in tech labs — it is now woven into the fabric of everyday life.

From talking to our phones to instantly translating languages, suggesting the fastest route home, or assisting doctors in diagnosing illnesses, AI has moved from the margins to the mainstream. Even here at Probus, some of us use AI-powered tools to edit photos, organise travel, or help draft reports — yes, even this one!

AI's potential is vast. It is helping researchers develop life-saving drugs in record time. Farmers are using it to monitor crops and reduce waste. And in the arts, AI can now compose music, paint, and even co-author novels — not to replace people, but to collaborate with them in new ways.

Of course, like all powerful tools, AI raises important questions — about ethics, privacy, and its effect on employment. But one thing is certain: this technology is here to stay. The challenge now is to guide it with wisdom, humanity, and balance — areas where experience, like that of our Probus members, has immense value.

This is not just a youth-driven revolution. Seniors are among the fastest-growing groups embracing AI — using it to stay connected, to learn, and even to create. What an exciting time to be alive and to keep learning.

So whether you're curious, cautious, or captivated by AI, it is worth engaging with. It's another way we, as 'elders', can continue to understand and influence the future — and help shape it for the generations that follow.

Trevor Logan
Vice President
(Acting President – July)

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT

Graham Yates - 0466 481 099
grahambowtie@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Trevor Logan 0428 795 334
trevor.logan@bigpond.com

SECRETARY

Irene Evans - 0418 478 626
irene_evans@yahoo.com.au

TREASURER

Carmen Cviker - 0402 290 782
carmen.cviker@bigpond.com

MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

Julie Yates - 0400 378 135
membershiprlpc@gmail.com

OUTINGS & ACTIVITIES OFFICER

Megan Nelson - 0413 049 026
megan@mjnelson.com.au

GUEST SPEAKER CO-ORDINATOR

Toni Rennie - 0419 680 799
toni.rennie@bigpond.com

WELFARE OFFICER

Karen Wilson - 0425 232 332
karenmw123@hotmail.com

NEWSLETTER OFFICER

John Baker - 0418 456 922
john@producemarketing.com.au

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.

JULY MEETING REPORT

Thirty three members and five guests were in attendance.

Attendance Record

Acting President Trevor advised members to sign in on arrival, to ensure the Club is covered for insurance purposes.

Club Constitution and Standing Resolutions

Members had been given due notice of proposals, draft documents and recommendations to adopt a new Constitution and Standing Resolutions, based on templates supplied by Probus South Pacific Ltd (PSPL).

The following resolutions were passed, on the recommendation of the Management Committee:

1. That members, by special resolution, hereby adopt the Recommended Constitution provided by Probus South Pacific Limited replacing the current Constitution of the Club.
2. That members hereby adopt the Standing Resolutions replacing any current Standing Resolutions or By-laws of the Club.

Membership Report

Club membership is now 63 members.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Carmen presented an updated financial report and advised an updated Certificate of Currency had been received from PSPL.

Activities and Outings

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.

Acting President Trevor outlined how to use the new and simple system for RSVPs for Lets Do Lunch.

Guest Speaker

Guest Speaker was Monika Sitkowski, NSW GoodSAM Project Officer and Paramedic Specialist. A separate report on her important presentation is included elsewhere in the Newsletter.

WHERE IS IT?



Clue

The second widest canyon in the world, less than 150km from Sydney, with remains of shale oil works in the foreground and Pantony's Crown in the background.

Last month

Lithgow. The blast furnace opened in 1907 and could produce 1,000 tonnes per week of iron and steel. The site also produced the first steel in Australia (1900). Those were the days when we made stuff.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday, 5 August 2025

(and every first Tuesday of month)

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

Friday, 15 August 2025

Let's Do Lunch. Venue to be confirmed.
2pm. RSVP Trevor via Google form (link in WhatsApp)

Monday, 18 August 2025

(and every third Monday of month)
Walking (9.15am) and/or coffee (10am)
at Carmels, 284 Great North Road,
Wareemba.

Wednesday, 20 August 2025

Mid-morning. Sydney Cherry Blossom
Festival (and food stalls), Auburn
Botanic Gardens. Meeting point to be
advised. Seniors \$8.95 Adult \$16.60.

Book online at

<https://www.cumberland.nsw.gov.au/sydneycherryblossomfestival>

Thursday, 28 August 2025

Monthly Meeting, Club Five Dock at
10.30am. Guest Speaker: Bill Hayes, a
Guardian ad Litem in NSW Courts and
Tribunals.

Sunday, 31 August 2025

Theatre Group – Ken Ludwig's 'Moriarty'
(Holmes and Watson have a new case to
solve). Genesian Theatre, 2B Gordon
Street, Rozelle. 4.30pm Book direct with
Melanie on 1300 237 217

Thursday, 25 September 2025

Monthly Meeting, Club Five Dock at
10.30am. Guest Speaker from Sydney
Harbour Trust "Interesting Places
Around Sydney Harbour"

REMAINING 2025 MEETING DATES

28 August	23 October
25 September	27 November

JULY GUEST SPEAKER

Monika Sitkowski, Acting Senior Manager NSW Ambulance for Project GoodSAM

Monika Sitkowski has been an Intensive Care Paramedic with NSW Ambulance for 23 years, transitioning three years ago to Project GoodSAM, which supports emergency and out of hours services across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

Monika was passionate about empowering community members to use simple life-saving skills, encouraging members to become a volunteer and receive alerts to help in nearby CPR emergencies while paramedics are on their way. Every second counts, using hands-only CPR.

GoodSAM cardiac arrest alerting system has saved dozens of lives. She said building a community of lifesavers is vital.

Monika said she loved connecting survivors with people who helped saved them. She believed one of the key successes of the program has been the connections responders have to support, and their inclusion as community members.

To learn more and sign up to volunteer go to:
<https://www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/goodsam>



NSW Ambulance

AUGUST GUEST SPEAKER

Bill Hayes, a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) in NSW Courts and Tribunals

Bill Hoyles was appointed as a member of the NSW Guardian ad Litem Panel in 2015 to assist clients in NSW Courts and Tribunals anywhere in NSW.

The clients are people who are deemed to lack capacity to conduct a matter for themselves, or to instruct a lawyer. Their incapacity may include age, dementia, mental illness, hard drug addiction, acquired brain injury, intellectual handicap, genetic conditions, or a combination thereof.

The role of the GAL is to act independently in the best interests of the client (i.e. be the client's temporary Guardian), and the appointment is "ad Litem" (meaning "for the Matter").

Bill will talk about the GAL role with examples of the types of cases that GALs appear in.

NOW IN SEASON

Citrus continues to be the most consistent of the fruits available. It has been an excellent winter for both mandarins and oranges. Some of the orange varieties include Navels, Cara Cara and Blood – all are excellent eating at the moment, as are the many varieties of mandarins.

Bananas may have a dull tinge to their skin, caused by cold weather in the growing areas. Internally they are fine. The smaller Little Gems are very good eating, if you spot them in independent retailers.

Eating quality of apples and pears is generally excellent. You may have read Shepparton in the Victorian Goulburn Valley, which produces around 90% of Australia's pears, is planning a "Big Pear", adding to all the "Bigs" around the country.

Other fruits to consider are kiwifruit (green and gold) and berries when they are a reasonable price.

For experience in the past few weeks, I would avoid grapes, as too many are not holding up after purchase.

Avocados keep on keeping on.

Tomato prices are again much more reasonable, with supplies increasing.



FAMOUS QUOTE

"If you don't build your dream, someone else will hire you to help them build theirs"

Tony Gaskins, motivational speaker and author

AN ARTFUL AFTERNOON Megan Nelson

What does it mean to 'make your mark'? Did you know there are endless ways to 'make a 'mark'? and there is also no right or wrong way!

A small, enthusiastic group met at Jill and Kerry's place on 18 June to spend a few hours exploring mark making using different textiles and techniques. We were guided in this by thoughtful, inspiring artists Jillian Goodwin and Lawrence McDonnell.

Mark making allows one to relax and focus the mind and we commenced by just letting our pencils go in whichever way we chose. We moved onto using marks to 'picture' emotional responses such as anger, happiness, fear and peace.

Jillian then provided each participant with a blank 'artist's book'* and offered papers, pens, paints and ideas as to how to personalise these. It was fun to see the creativity blossom around the table as we got to work. Our time came to an end with a 'show and tell' and Jillian's comments and feedback, which was beautifully encouraging!



Continued.....

AN ARTFUL AFTERNOON continued

With yummy drinks and nibbles provided by Kerry and Jill throughout the afternoon and a lovely chat about art in general at the end, this really was a great time together.

**An "artist's book" is a work of art created in book form that is conceived and produced by an artist, often emphasizing the interplay between visual and textual elements.*



The focus of an artist's book is often on the artistic expression, concept, and experience of the book itself rather than solely its content or narrative.

AUSTRALIAN JAPANESE GARDENS



Auburn

Japan is famous for many things, including its rich history, food and gardens.

Without visiting Japan, it is possible to experience three excellent gardens much closer to home – at Auburn, East Gosford and Cowra.

The Japanese garden is the highlight of the Auburn Botanic Gardens. They were the brainchild of Shire Engineer Eric Black, chief engineer of Auburn Municipal Council (and now Cumberland City Council) from 1949 to 1979. The gardens include two lakes, a waterfall, bridges and many different flora.

They are popular year-round and especially during their annual Sydney Cherry Blossom festival held this year from 16 to 24 August.



Gosford

A Probus Club visit to the Festival is planned for Wednesday 20 August. See "For Your Diary" for how to book tickets. More details will follow via WhatsApp. Highly recommended. For more general information:

<https://www.cumberland.nsw.gov.au/sydneycherryblossomfestival>

The beautiful 0.4 hectare Edogawa Commemorative Garden next to the Gosford Regional Gallery was gifted by Edogawa, an outer suburb of Tokyo, in 1994. It includes a roofed pavilion, Koi pond, Serene teahouse and meandering pathways. Probus members who visited as a club outing will certainly endorse the Garden's value for a visit.

Further afield is the Cowra Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre, which was established to recognize and develop the relationship between the people of Cowra Shire and the people of Japan. This important relationship had its origins in the Prisoner of War Camp that housed the Japanese P.O.W's during World War II.

Continued.....

AUSTRALIAN JAPANESE GARDENS continued



Cowra Peace Bell

The five hectare strolling and wheel-chair friendly garden is one of peace, tranquillity and beauty.

By the way, Cowra Civic Square is home to one of only 21 peace bells located around the world. The Australian World Peace Bell was awarded to Cowra in 1992 and is crafted from melted down coins donated by 65 members of the United Nations.

Closer to home is a back yard Japanese Garden, which demonstrates anything is possible.



Cowra



Croydon

REST, EAT AND RELAX ON THE ROAD West and Northwest NSW

Bathurst

Country Coffee – good breakfast, lunch and coffee, opposite historic park

Dubbo

CSC (Church Street Café) – good indoor/outdoor dining, good quality fresh food

Mudgee

Millbrie, Alby & Esthers, The Coffee Burrow – all good, so your choice, all close in Church Street

Gulgong

Prince of Wales Hotel - historic 1800's hotel with great food and wine

Dunedoo

White Rose, Kakkadoo and Chad's Bakery Café – all quite similar, take your pick

Coonamble

Global Village Restaurant & Café – in-house bakery, good range; pleasant surprise in a small town

Lightning Ridge

Opal Street Café – good breakfast choices, good coffee, outdoor dining, street art

District Bowling Club – best for dinner, popular with tourists, walk to accommodation!

THREE QUESTIONS: SUZANNE STACHIW

When Suzanne was first approached to feature in this section of the Newsletter, she was reticent to do so, on the basis that there was not much of interest. I hope by the time you have read Suzanne's story you will agree there is so much of interest.

After graduating from University you spent 10 years in the youth justice system, before transitioning to be a high school teacher for 32 years in the Public School system. Can you elaborate?

After graduating from University (ANU, Canberra - BA in Social Sciences with majors in Law and Criminology) I spent 10 years working at the Downing Centre in Sydney. The main role was involvement with the jurors (accepting/denying excuses for being unable to attend jury service). During that time I did volunteer work assisting youth workers at the then Bidura Remand Centre in Glebe, assisting with outings for the young people who were at the centre. The outings were simple things such as going for fish and chips on Bondi Beach or to the airport to watch the planes.



Also, during that time, I studied a Diploma of Education part time to become a high school teacher. I then worked for 32 years in the Public School system (14 years at Ashfield Boys High School and 18 years at Birrong Girls High School) in the Social Sciences Faculties. A Teaching career is rewarding but can definitely have its highs and lows.

You have a passion for travel, internationally and in Australia. What have been some of the highlights?

I have always had a passion for travel (particularly international when younger but now I really hope to explore Australia more).

The highlights were two trips to the United States and Canada exploring national parks (Denali in Alaska, Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks on the US and Canadian borders and Grand Canyon Arizona being the favourites. The overland trip from Kathmandu to London in the early 1990's was a memorable experience. Seeing the orangutans in Borneo was special, Japan is recommended, as is New Zealand (in the late 1990's I hiked the Milford and Routeburn tracks). I've been to Europe twice (my mother was Austrian) and tried unsuccessfully to learn to ski there in my early 20's.

They've been some short breaks to some Pacific Islands, the Cook Islands being the favourite.

A definite highlight was going to the Antarctic 15 years ago. It was an 18 night "expedition" from Hobart down to Commonwealth Bay (where we visited Mawson's Hut), stopping at the Antarctic Islands and finishing at Bluff in New Zealand.

Another great highlight was snorkelling with the whale sharks at Ningaloo Reef in WA.

Continued.....



Suzanne (second from left) Ningaloo Reef WA

THREE QUESTIONS: SUZANNE STACHIW - continued

What keeps you motivated today?

Currently, I still do intermittent casual teaching when asked at two local high schools, which I really enjoy, as it keeps me involved somewhat with the students and with updates with what is happening in the Education Department.

Due to personal and family experience with arthritis I am a Peer Mentor with Arthritis NSW/Qld. This involves speaking to people (only on the phone) about how to manage their arthritis or talking to them about their concerns if they are preparing for orthopaedic surgery.

I love the water and am a regular at Drummoyne Pool and Wylie's Baths (Coogee). My bushwalking days are over now so swimming is a great invigorating exercise.

I am a very bad piano player (not a natural) and still tinker often with the keyboard but don't challenge myself enough. I did take piano lessons for many years but gave up during COVID and haven't begun them again.

I enjoy theatre, concerts, movies, art exhibitions and appreciate the talent and work that goes into those art forms.

ABC AUSTRALIAN STORY "The River - Franklin River Rescue"



This two-part 'must-see' television, now on ABC iview, is one of the best programs of the year, with a compelling story, beautifully told and filmed.

It tells the story of a group of Lithuanian rafters who set out to experience a wild river in each continent, with Tasmania's Franklin River being their final challenge.

When rafter Valdas Bieliauskas fell and became trapped in rapids on the river, it set in train a perilous 24-hour rescue mission that presented rescuers with a terrible choice. He miraculously survived, even though he was given little chance of being extracted.

The outstanding efforts of rescuers from many different fields – SES, Police, medical staff and more – makes you proud to be Australian.

To view go to: <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/australian-story/series/2025>