



Staying Connected

Issue 76, November 2025

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Probus after 50 years in Australia

As we move towards celebrating 50 years of Probus in Australia (the first Club was formed at nearby Hunters Hill on 3 February 1976), it is worth reflecting on what Probus means to us as individuals, our Club and the wider community.

Help celebrate this important occasion by attending our Brunch event in Abbotsford Quarantine Reserve on the day.

Probus provides "Fun, Friendship and Fellowship in Retirement". Look no further than our most recent meetings, outings and activities for fun, friendship and fellowship in action.

The vibrancy of our Club is no accident, with many members making contributions, on and beyond our Management Committee. Diverse activities and outings, monthly meetings with stimulating guest speakers, regular communication through the Newsletter and WhatsApp and introducing new members all benefit our members. Behind the scenes our administration and finances are in good volunteer hands.

Probus is a worldwide movement in 23 countries, originating in the UK in 1965. The first Club in the South Pacific was established in New Zealand in 1974, followed in 1976 with the formation of Hunters Hill Probus Club.

The organisation claims quite rightly to provide retirees and those approaching retirement with the opportunity to connect socially, which is so important in today's world.

Today there are 100,000 members across Australia and New Zealand, under the umbrella of Probus South Pacific Ltd (PSPL).

As a Probus Club member you have access to a number of benefits through PSPL, including:

- Probus publications such as 'Active Retirees'
- Probus Member Benefits Scheme, and
- Probus National Insurance Program

In addition, our Club receives valuable support through a dedicated Support Team at the Probus South Pacific office.

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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.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - continued

To learn more and subscribe to publications go to:
<https://probussouthpacific.org/>

Regards
Graham Yates
President

NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

Thirty nine members were in attendance, including new member Gloria Walters. There were three visitors and 17 apologies.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Carmen presented an updated financial report with a very positive forecast for the end-of-year situation.

Membership Report

Membership is now 67 members.

Activities and Outings

Activities and Outings Officer Megan outlined recent activities, and events coming up in the next month and beyond. These are listed in the "For Your Diary" section of the Newsletter.

Guest Speaker Report

Guest Speaker Coordinator Toni reported February Guest speaker will be Charles Fellner on 'Scam awareness-your best defence'.

Management Committee Succession Planning

The meeting was advised all Management Committee positions will become vacant at the March AGM. Members were encouraged to consider nominating for a position, to bring new expertise and experience to the Committee.

In particular, appointments are required for new positions of General Committee Member, Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer. The Activities and Outings Officer will also become vacant.

Guest Speaker

November Guest Speaker was Tim Elchah, Chiro/Osteo/Physio on "Preventing Falls and Maintaining Mobility". A separate report on his presentation is included in the Newsletter.

FAMOUS QUOTE

"You can often change your circumstances by changing your attitude."

Eleanor Roosevelt

FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday, 5 December 2025

Christmas Lunch, Angelos on the Bay, Cabarita.

Friday, 16 January 2026

Let's Do Lunch at noon. Sackville Hotel, 599 Darling Street, Rozelle. RSVP via Google form (link will be in WhatsApp).

Tuesday, 3 February 2026

Brunch Celebration of 50 years of Probus in Australia, 9.30am Abbotsford Quarantine Reserve. Save the date and more details to follow.

Tuesday, 3 February 2026

(and every first Tuesday of month)
Let's Talk About Books, 2pm, Canada Bay Club.

Friday, 13 February 2026

Let's Do Lunch at noon. Venue to be finalised.

Thursday, 26 February 2026

First 2026 Monthly Meeting, Club Five Dock at 10.30am. Guest Speaker: Charles Fellner, "Scam awareness - your best defence".

Thursday, 26 March 2026

Annual General Meeting, Club Five Dock

WHERE IS IT?



Clue

Spring wildflower festival in a capital city park.

Last month

The gold Super Pit in Kalgoorlie, approximately 3.5km long, 1.5km wide, and over 600m deep.

NOVEMBER GUEST SPEAKER

"Preventing Falls and Maintaining Mobility"

Tim Elchah, Chiro/Osteo/Physio

Leichhardt (and Gladesville)- based chiropractor Tim Elchah opened his excellent presentation with a graphic demonstration of the degenerative stages of arthritis on the spine.

He then described causes of falls and how they can be minimised through different simple and gentle exercises, to help maintain mobility, minimise falls and maintain independence.

Three factors control balance - vision, auditory/hearing and joints. More detail was included in his presentation, which can be found at the link shown below.

Tim then detailed different exercises, which are also shown and described in the presentation. Many you can do sitting, for example on a bus, watching TV or even at a Probus function. In relation to exercises, there is no pass or fail. Just keep doing it and you will get better at it.

Finally Tim detailed how to receive pain treatment without high costs, utilising Medicare and Private Health (not at the same time).

At the end of the meeting Tim had a long line of members taking up his offer of a preliminary assessment.

Link to Presentation, which Tim has been happy to share:
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/la3oe3rpss05u88vq998y/Probus-club-presentation-27112025.pdf?rlkey=c5e9ua4ioyqxfd9ghv0po1wqp&st=b6rij72c&dl=0>



NOW IN SEASON

We are now heading into the best of the summer fruit season.

One of the most obvious is cherries, with good supplies and good eating cherries from NSW and Victoria. At the moment the main NSW production area is Young, with Orange soon to start sending more fruit. Maintain quality by storing in your refrigerator. The season will run until February.

Continued.....



NOW IN SEASON - continued

Peaches, nectarines and apricots are also increasing in volume and taste. Unlike cherries, stone fruit should be held at room temperature until they are ready to eat, then put them in the frig briefly to chill. Refrigerated unripe fruit, at home or along the chain from the farm to retail, is the main cause of mealy fruit. Good plums should start appearing soon.

Mango quality and taste is great. They just keep on keeping on, with all the main varieties readily available. Also look for lychees and other tropical fruits from northern Australia.

Other good eating fruits include rock melons, watermelons and papaya. Eating quality (i.e. sweetness) of grapes continues to improve, although it is still a little early for great taste.

All the Berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries) are in season. Victorian strawberries, which are regarded as amongst the best, are now in full swing.

Reports from WA suggest their avocado season, from now to March, could be amongst the biggest ever. If you have recently visited around Pemberton, in the south west, you can understand why, with thousands of trees coming into production. Good news for summer salads and prawn combos!

KIAMA EXCURSION BY TRAIN

By Anne Gibbons

Eighteen enthusiastic participants braved the dismal weather forecast and joined the excursion on 29 October to Kiama.

The promised spectacular ocean views from the train were obscured by rain until after Wollongong. The vegetation was easily seen as we passed through the national park after Heathcote, while lively chatter continued the whole journey, as it had from meeting up at Central. We disembarked in a break in the showers which had replaced the rain as we travelled South.

On arrival, John started his very interesting Historic Tour with the origin of the name, Kiama. The name Kiama is from its Wodi Wodi Indigenous name Kiaram-a, to which some sources give the meaning "where the sea makes a noise"— a reference to the famous Kiama Blowhole.

We walked down the hill to the town where a local lady, Maria, hearing John point out the buildings from 1860, and 1880s, asked if we would like to go inside the oldest Church in Kiama. We followed her to Kiama Presbyterian Church, built from 1860 to 1863 and heritage-listed. Maria and Megan (of Presbyterian heritage) explained the layout of the Church https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scots_Presbyterian_Church,_Kiama



Continued

*Top right
Blow Hole in action*

*Bottom right
Restored 1886 Terrace houses for workers*

KIAMA EXCURSION BY TRAIN - continued

The friendly locals also volunteered to take our group photos.

A few continued from the Church to the Leagues Club. The rest went up to the Lighthouse and Blowhole in the return of the drizzling rain. The walk back to the club passed a beautifully restored row of miners' cottages before we all enjoyed lunch at the Club and a leisurely stroll back to the return train at 2.55. This trip had no cessation of the lively conversations. As a newby to the club I enjoyed the opportunity to get to know people and have a lovely day out.



Gathering at Central



Gathering on the Town Hall steps



Learning about the 162 year old Presbyterian Church



The weather was not an issue

VAUCLUSE HOUSE EXCURSION

Friday 21 November

By Irene Evans



Vaucluse House



Gathering around the fire in the kitchen

Our tour guide, John, had a most impressive knowledge of the home and surrounding buildings and his commentary was both informative and most amusing. The house is set of 9 hectares of harbourside land, with lavish period interiors and expansive grounds.

Lunch followed at the Rose Bay Hotel – a lovely afternoon enjoyed, I am sure, by all who attended.

Our latest excursion took us to Vaucluse House, Museum of History, NSW. Whilst the weather was not favorable, 12 brave souls managed to traverse the bus routes and make it to the site.

Vaucluse House was the home of William Charles Wentworth. It was first built as a small stone cottage between 1803-1805 by convict Sir Henry Browne Hayes but in 1827 was purchased by Australian born Lawyer, Explorer and Politician William Wentworth.



In the Orientation Room at the end of the tour

THREE QUESTIONS: JACQUIE BAKER

Jacquie has been an important part of Russell Lea Probus Club since its inception in 2020, becoming a Foundation Member and Foundation Treasurer.

Can you tell us about your early life in Fiji and high-school education in Australia?

I was born in Suva, Fiji, the oldest of four daughters. My father, as were his parents, was born in Fiji, making our family one of the old colonial families. My mother was born in Australia and travelled to Fiji towards the end of WWII. I attended primary school in Suva. I loved living there, endlessly fascinated watching the changing tides that exposed the barrier reefs twice a day, necessitating the use of a local pilot to navigate large ships through the gap in the reef and bring the ships into the port.

When I started high school, I attended a school in Sydney as a boarder, only going home to Fiji once a year. Boarding school life was a shock. Boarding mistresses, by and large, were disciplinarians rather than leaders or mentors. The food was totally uninspiring, and not just at school. How I longed for fresh fish, cooked the way my Mum did, along with fresh Fiji vegetables like dalo, ro-ro and daruka (a species of sugar cane, eaten as a vegetable).

What about your professional life, married life, living in various parts of NSW and settling in Sydney in 1985?

In 1970 I started work in the Commonwealth Bank Head Office in Pitt Street. Included in my tasks was processing punch cards for loans, requiring regular trips to Sydney University's computer centre, cutting edge at the time. I often tell people I was one of the first people to use a computer in Australia.

John and I met by chance in 1969 at a 21st in Griffith in the NSW Riverina. We married in January 1971, both at a young age. We lived in Narrabri, Lismore, Tweed Heads, Windsor and Leeton, as John was often transferred for work with the Department of Agriculture. Major floods seemed to follow us, until we moved to Leeton.

Finding full-time work was near impossible in Narrabri and Lismore. I undertook the Day Secretarial Certificate at Lismore TAFE, somewhat older than the 16-year-olds. On the Tweed I worked for a solicitor then finance company.

Our older son, Mark, was born when we lived near Windsor, and our younger son, Shaun, was born at Leeton. In 1985 we were transferred to Sydney, where we have lived in the same house in Croydon for 40 years. After we moved to Sydney, John worked for various organisations, before setting up our marketing company in 1997. I established and ran a bookkeeping service from this business and eventually devoted my time solely to running the financial part of our company.

I have been on various committees, always taking the Treasurer position, which nobody else seemed to want.



King Crab fishing in the Norwegian Arctic



Glamping Turkmenistan-style

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THREE QUESTIONS: JACQUIE BAKER - continued

What are some of your main interests?

I have always loved reading and still do. Movies, walking, travelling, beautiful buildings, spaces and colours – especially the colour pink - are all favourites too. I enjoy staying in contact with relatives and friends from different times in our lives, including school friends from primary school days in Fiji and high school in Australia. Because we moved often, after we were married, we remain in contact with many people we met in those different places.

Our two sons live close to us – one in Croydon and the other in Croydon Park. We have two granddaughters that we see often, who keep us amused and well-informed. We love them very much. In the future, I hope to do more of the same, staying healthy and fit.

Travel has been a special interest, internationally and in Australia, especially with friends. Working internationally for clients meant we were also able to mix pleasure with business, visiting many developing countries including in Asia, the Subcontinent, Egypt, Middle East and South America. Going to Antarctica meant that I have visited all seven continents.



Family business and coffee – a winning combination



With a friendly iguana in Fiji



Fiji with older son Mark



LITTLE WINGS

Several members have asked about Little Wings, since CEO Clare Pearson spoke to our Club over three years ago.

The best summary about the organisation's achievements have been summed up by Clare in her recent video Annual Report at the following link:
<https://www.littlewings.org.au/ceo-report-fy2025/>

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LITTLE WINGS - continued

For those members not familiar with this amazing organisation, Little Wings provides free, professional, safe flight and ground transport services for seriously ill children in rural and regional NSW, ACT and QLD. Pilots and drivers volunteer their time and expertise.

Little Wings eases the journey and helps sick children access specialised medical services and treatments that are only available in major cities. They support families by easing the financial burden, emotional strain and travel fatigue that they experience due to the long-distance travel associated with receiving vital medical treatment.

CBD ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION IN MINIATURE

“Civic Vision” is an exhibition of models created by internationally renowned architecture firm Foster + Partners, founded by Lord Norman Foster in 1967.

The exhibition is open until 21 December at level 2, 252 Pitt Street, a new 39-storey building designed by the company and sitting above Gadigal Metro Station. The company also designed Barangaroo Station.

Other Sydney buildings to feature include Deutsche Bank Place (with the goal posts on top), Lumiere Apartments near Town Hall, Salesforce Tower at Circular Quay and more.

Internationally they have been responsible for many iconic buildings, including the Gherkin and Bloomberg offices in London, the Reichstag Parliament Building in Berlin and a number of airports, including Hong Kong. Soon to open is the Zayed National Museum in Abu Dhabi.

Well worth a visit to see the models and accompanying descriptions. Entry is free.



PESTS IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

By John Baker



Sticky strips are still available today.

In this final extract from "Outback Heritage", featuring memories of Goodooga (my outback home town) the memories are of pests and their control in the Good Old Days.

"Household pests like flies were caught on long coils of paper hanging from the ceiling, covered with a sticky substance to trap them. This substance was similar in appearance to treacle.

For cockroaches, borax and sugar, mixed with water, was used as a control measure. One Goodooga resident once added Plaster of Paris in lieu of borax. His wife mistook the

mixture for icing sugar, as he kept the ingredients for his concoction in the kitchen cupboard. She baked a cake and iced it. The cake was then taken to a CWA function. No-one could get a knife through it.

No doubt she was not asked for the recipe".

As the writer concluded "Customs which were common place years ago would be looked upon with horror today".