



Staying Connected

Issue 77, December 2025



BEST WISHES

On behalf of your Management Committee, best wishes for the Christmas season and 2026.

2025 has been an exciting year of vibrancy and growth for our Club, thanks to the significant efforts of your Management Committee and support from members. 2026 is shaping up to be another year of fun, fellowship, and friendship for Russell Lea Probus Club members.

Graham Yates
President



2025 NEW MEMBERS

Our Club continues to experience solid growth, with 13 new members joining and bringing our total membership to 67.

To all the new members listed below – a warm Probus welcome. To Membership Officer Julie, thanks once again for all your efforts.

Pam Curtis
Rebecca Geran
Anne Gibbins
Noy Goodman
Richard Goodman
Barbara Imrie
Ian Imrie

Herb Neuschwanger
Col Rennie
Toni Rennie
Helen Searle
John Searle
Gloria Walter

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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.

FEBRUARY GUEST SPEAKER "SCAM AWARENESS - YOUR BEST DEFENCE" Charles Fellner

Charles is a retired IT professional. His presentations focus on the more common scams. He explains what goes on behind these scams, the steps to take to avoid being scammed, and what to do if you have been scammed.

He has a strong interest in the psychology of scamming and believes this is a crucial and often overlooked aspect of the puzzle.

KINDNESS IS POWER: TEN LIFE-CHANGING BENEFITS OF BEING KIND Jacquie Baker

Kindness is often mistaken for niceness - a passive, easy virtue.

But for founder of the Kindness Factory, and former cricketer, Kath Koschel, true kindness is an active, brave, and challenging endeavour rooted in honesty.

In summary, here are Kath Koschel's 10 reasons why being kind is powerfully good for you:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Makes us happier | 6 Boosts confidence |
| 2 Results in better sleep | 7 Improves heart health |
| 3 Supports mental health | 8 Reduces pain |
| 4 Increases resilience | 9 Helps the immune system |
| 5 Increases wellbeing | 10 Slows ageing |

Learn more at <https://kindnessfactory.com/our-story/>

WHERE IS IT?

Clue

Asian Botanic Garden famous for its Orchids

Last month

Kings Park, Perth WA



FOR YOUR DIARY

SPECIAL EVENT

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.

REGULAR EVENTS

Friday, 16 January 2026

Let's Do Lunch at noon. Sackville Hotel, 599 Darling Street, Rozelle. Look for RSVP on WhatsApp.

Monday, 19 January 2026

(and every third Monday)

Walking off the Festive Feasts (9:15am) and/or Coffee@Carmels (10:00am), 284 Great North Road, Abbotsford

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

2026 MONTHLY MEETING DATES

Fourth Thursday of the month at 10.30am at Club Five Dock

- | | |
|----------|--------------|
| 23 April | 27 August |
| 28 May | 24 September |
| 25 June | 22 October |
| 23 July | 26 November |



CHRISTMAS FUNCTION FULL OF FUN, FELLOWSHIP AND FRIENDSHIP

Monday, 5 December 2025

Forty nine members had a memorable Christmas function at Angelos on the Bay as the accompanying photos highlight.

A special thanks to all the organisers for the most enjoyable function.



NOW IN SEASON

We are now heading into the best of the summer fruit. It's a veritable Cornucopia ("abundance and nourishment") when it comes to availability of excellent eating fruit for Christmas and the festive season.

Top of the list would have to be mangoes, with all the favourite varieties available. Whether you prefer Kensington Pride, Calypso, Honey Gold or R2E2 (all Australian developed varieties), they are all in plentiful supply, excellent value and excellent eating.

Close behind are cherries, from Young and Orange in NSW and several areas in Victoria. From Christmas onwards there will be increasing volumes from Tasmania, continuing until February.

Next on the list would be stone fruit. Surprisingly, there are some very good apricots available from leading independent green grocers, such as Whole Farms at Enfield.

Peaches, nectarines and plums are now readily available and again the best eating fruit seems to be in Independents. Major production comes from around Swan Hill on the mid-Murray River.

Rockmelons and Honey Dew melons (the light green flesh fruit) and Watermelons are also very good eating and great for mixed platters.

All the berry fruits (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries) are also available, thanks to a spread of production areas, new varieties and new production systems.

Tropical fruits to consider include papaya (much better eating than the traditional pawpaw which is also in some shops), pineapple (again new varieties have led to a better eating experience) and lychee.

Grapes are a mixed bag, as is the tail end apple season, with Pink Lady and Granny Smith seeming to be the main varieties remaining, before the new season starts in February.

Cooking and salad vegetables are readily available, including asparagus. Again new varieties and greenhouse production means tomatoes, cucumber, capsicum and eggplant are more reliably available and good eating. Of course avocados just keep on keeping on.

Enjoy!



Unique image courtesy of ChatGPT

FAMOUS QUOTE

"The quality I look for most is optimism: especially optimism in the face of reverses and apparent defeat. Optimism is true moral courage."

Sir Ernest Shackleton, a remarkable leader who dealt with adversity and roused optimism in those around him when facing the toughest of odds.

THREE QUESTIONS: GRAHAM YATES

This month President Graham Yates shares family and employment insights, as well as his significant contributions to the community.

What are some of the highlights of your family life?

I grew up in Pascoe Vale, Victoria, about 15kms from Melbourne's CBD. Our family home was the first built in the street, and for several years we lived with dirt roads and relied on horse-and-cart deliveries for essentials such as milk, bread, and ice. I attended a local primary school close to home, then rode my bike several kilometres to Fawkner Technical School, travelling through the cemetery and dodging wildlife along the way.



Can you take us through your working journey?

I began my career in 1967 with the Bank of New South Wales after completing my Leaving Certificate. I worked across multiple branch roles and was soon offered a position in the Sydney data centre, which I initially declined. I later worked at CIG in manufacturing and technology, where I learned COBOL programming and micrographics. These skills led me back into banking with the Commercial Bank of Australia (CBA) as a Micrographics Technical Executive. Shortly after, the merger between CBA and BNSW occurred, returning me to my former colleagues.

For two years, I commuted between Melbourne and Sydney, helping modernise micrographics services across Australia and retraining staff. I later joined Westpac Wholesale Banking, where I helped establish a new architectural team, receiving amazing training and mentoring, learning much about leadership and innovation training.

In 1999, I was headhunted into AMP during its demutualisation, where I built a new architectural team from scratch. I worked closely with global technology providers and later supported executive leadership, including completing major international mergers and acquisitions across India, Japan, the UK, and China. My next role was at EDS, involved consulting in financial services worldwide, winning major contracts and leading significant innovation projects, including rebuilding the Commonwealth Bank's credit card processing platform.

I was later recruited into a global gaming technology company, becoming Chief Technology Officer (CTO) and leading architecture development across 25+ countries. In 2010, I returned to Westpac as a Principal Architect, where I spent 12 more years on major projects—postponing retirement well beyond 2022.

In addition to your Probus contribution, what other involvement do you have with community organisations?

After a very privileged life, I felt a strong desire to give back to the community, inspired from an early age by their mother's service at the Queen Victoria Hospital.

My community involvement began with Rotary in Drummoyne, where I have contributed actively for over 30 years. During this time, I participated in numerous barbecues and service projects, supported local libraries, and assisted Sea Scouts and Scout Associations. I also served as President of Rotary Drummoyne for eighteen months.

Continued

THREE QUESTIONS: GRAHAM YATES - continued

For ten years, I led an international remote programme in Kenya, helping to build a library and community centre that now serves over 5,000 local children and adults. This centre provides clean water, sanitary facilities, books, and essential learning materials.

For the past 20 years, I have supported the charity Kathleen York House (KYH), which provides live-in rehabilitation for women affected by drug and alcohol issues, along with support for their children. Residents receive up to six months of accommodation and a further two years of support services. I have served as a board member of KYH for the past seven years.

In recent years, I have also found great enjoyment in Russell Lea Probus Club, serving as President for the past two years.

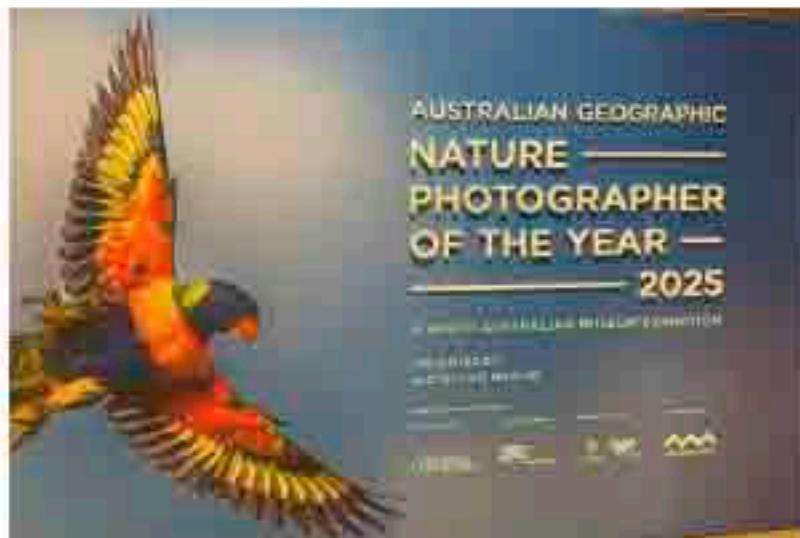
NATURE CAPTURED: AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Until 15 February 2026 the Australian Museum is again hosting the Nature Photographer of the Year Exhibition, curated by the South Australian Museum.

In addition to the photo of the year, there are several other categories, all worth viewing, including endangered (animals and plants), black & white format, looking down from above (mostly excellent drone photos), looking up to the heavens and junior (under 18).

The exhibition is now in its 21st year and all of the previous winners are included.

Entry is free and easily accessible.



THANK YOU FROM YOUR NEWSLETTER TEAM

Best wishes for Christmas and 2026.

Many thanks to those members who contributed a wide range of articles for the Newsletter. Member contributions make a significant difference to the Newsletter content and popularity, so keep them coming next year.

We have enjoyed providing members with positive and diverse stories; we will continue to do so. Your feedback has been much appreciated.

John and Rosemary

John's granddaughter Emily (16) has been commissioned again this year to produce the accompanying Australian-themed Christmas image, using ChatGPT.

