



# WELLINGTON COMBINED PROBUS

## November/December 2025 Newsletter

**NEXT MEETING:** **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

(Please send apologies to Cedric Croft 021 162 9599 - [croft.nevay@xtra.co.nz](mailto:croft.nevay@xtra.co.nz))

**Member Speaker:** **Alexia Stoddart – “The Wellington real estate market”**

**Guest Speaker:** **Christmas entertainment by “The Mighty Ukes”**

**The club meets at 10.00am on the second Thursday of the month, except January, at the Gateway Baptist Church, 33 Park Road, Miramar.**

**Website:** <https://www.probusouthpacific.org/microsites/wellingtoncombined>

### President's Report – October 2025



First of all, thank you to all the Committee members who kept the club going and for running our October Club meeting so well in my absence. Those on the Committee at present are all outstanding, both in their roles, and in stepping up to do extra tasks when needed.

Joan and I spent much of our trip in Sri Lanka, where the traffic has been described as hair-raising, chaotic and exhilarating. We did not take the wheel, but from what we saw there did not seem to be much order or compliance with even basic traffic rules. Cars, tuk-tuks, motor bikes, buses, trucks and those on foot vie for space on congested roads that often do not have any markings at all. And yet we did not see any collisions or accidents during our time there, although I understand they do occur.

One reason for this I believe is that the attitude of drivers is one of trying to get where they want to go as quickly as possible, but always being ready to let other road users, even pedestrians, cut in front of them.

Whether this stems from the widespread practice of Buddhism, which teaches respect for others and the elimination of anger I am not sure, but it made me reflect on my own attitude to driving and to life in general. Without promoting Buddhism at all there may well be something to learn from those skillful drivers who remain focused and calm in the midst of what seems like total mayhem and who invariably arrive safely at their destinations. Getting angry at others who do something we don't like, whether on the road or not, is so often a pointless reaction. I am hoping that those drivers have shown me the better approach is to let others get on with their lives and to remain calm when their actions do not affect my life unduly.

Still, I wish the All Blacks had beaten England at Twickenham.

See you at the Christmas lunch on 4<sup>th</sup> December and the Club meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

Todd

“My definition of an intellectual is someone who can listen to the William Tell Overture without thinking of the Lone Ranger.”

Billy Connolly



## Calendar of Events – December 2025/January 2026

Date	Event	Location	Time
Every Monday	Walking Group	Christine Tijssen	10:00am
Thursday, 4 <sup>th</sup> December	Probus Christmas Lunch	The Pines	Noon
<b>Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Probus Monthly Meeting</b>	<b>Baptist Church, Miramar</b>	<b>10:00am</b>
Thursday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	Tea/Coffee Morning	Cafe Polo, Miramar	10:00am
Friday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	Monthly Committee Meeting	Tricia O'Donnell's	2:00pm
Thursday, 29 <sup>th</sup> January	<i>Deadline for submission of Newsletter stories/pictures</i>		
(For group events please check dates and times with the group organizers)			

### A note about the Christmas break:

As is usual over the Christmas/New Year period *there will be the normal Club Meeting in December\**, but then no other Club activities until February, except that the tea/coffee morning at Polo is expected to go ahead on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January and the Committee will be meeting on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January.

This will be the last newsletter for 2025. The next one will be published at the end of January. Although we will be seeing many of you at The Pines and at the December meeting, the Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members, wherever in the world you may be:

**"Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."**

*\*With Christmas cake, and entertainment by "The Mighty Ukes"*

### At the November Meeting

**Members Present: 66 – Apologies: 26 – Absent: 15 – Visitors: 0**

#### Guest speaker: **Joakim Liman**



**Joakim** has a background in wildlife management and horticulture, and he originally worked as a zookeeper at Wellington Zoo when he arrived from Sweden 16 years ago. Since then he has been closely involved with the elimination of rats and other predators by Predator Free Wellington, which has been a great success in Miramar and is now being continued throughout the greater Wellington region.

He told us about his early interest in conservation when he noticed the destruction of wetlands in his native Sweden and how, at the age of nine, he built a backyard pond to attract frogs. In addition to the elimination of predators in Miramar he founded *Te Motu Kairangi – Miramar Ecological Restoration* whose aim is to recreate the rich, diverse coastal forest ecosystem that existed before human impact. So far over 36,000 native plants have been re-introduced to the peninsula and there has been a noticeable increase in the number of native birds now that their main predators have been eliminated.

*Joakim was introduced by Sheila Kleyn and thanked by Ross Madgwick*

**Member speaker: Jane Muru Anderson**



**Jane** told us the fascinating story of Whenua Hou (Codfish Island), a small island off the west coast of Stewart Island to which she has a family connection through her great-grandmother and grandmother. It was the site of the first Māori/European settlement in New Zealand after the sealers arrived, mostly coming from Sydney, and married Māori women. Their children intermarried with other families, spreading across Southland coastal settlements.

Today, the island is a conservation area, and access is strictly controlled to protect the native fauna and flora. Jane told us about Stephen Fry's visit to the island when a kākāpō called Sirocco got a bit too frisky for comfort. Click on the picture to see the video.



## **Matters Arising**



**Christmas Lunch at The Pines - Information**

57 Members have signed up for the Christmas Lunch on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> December and bookings are now closed. The bar will be open from noon, and lunch will start about 12:30.

We look forward to seeing you there.



### **Bookshare Table**

The Bookshare Table has become a successful addition to our monthly meetings. Bring along a book or two that you have enjoyed, and you may well find another one to take away. Administered by Jan Humphries and Dianne Little



### ***“Leadership from the Maori World”***

Remember our gifted book is on the book table to be borrowed if you are interested. Sign up if you want a turn.



A big **Thank You** to this month's catering crew,  
Beryl, Eileen and Warren



## Visits & Outings

*Members are encouraged to put forward their suggestions for visits or outings to a member of the committee.*

### **Visit to BGI**



On Wednesday the 12th of November six members enjoyed a visit to the Boys' and Girls' Institute (BGI), hosted by Ross Davis and members of his team. After each person introduced themselves and gave a brief recap of their life, we were shown around their impressive premises, which is dominated by the magnificent carved poutokomanawa symbolically supporting the roof.

Other artworks include a handmade outrigger waka, and a striking life-size totara carving "Waiting for Te Whiti" by Ihaia Puketapu, adorned with 60,000 staples by Sacha Huber.

- **Dining Out – Sheila Fitzsimons – 021 443 043 - [sheilafitzsimons@gmail.com](mailto:sheilafitzsimons@gmail.com)**

There was no Dining Out in November – it was cancelled due to insufficient numbers.

Other than the Christmas Lunch there will be no Dining Out in December or January.

- **Monthly Tea/Coffee Morning**



This is an informal get-together at 10.00am on the fourth Thursday of each month (except December) at Polo, on the corner of Rotherham Terrace and Para Street, Miramar. There's no need to book, just come along for a snack and a chat.

*Next one: Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January.*

## **Special Interest Groups**

**Group Leaders**, please send dates, news, and pictures (relevant to the activity) for inclusion in the next newsletter to the editor, *Peter How* - [peterhow@hotmail.com](mailto:peterhow@hotmail.com) – *Deadline for next edition: 29<sup>th</sup> January.*

- **Quiddler: Kit Burford 027 930 2009 - [kitkenburford@gmail.com](mailto:kitkenburford@gmail.com)**



The Quiddler group meets on the first Thursday of the month, and welcomes new members, even if you haven't played before.

There will be no Quiddler in December, as it clashes with the Christmas Lunch, or in January. The next session will be 5<sup>th</sup> February. For more information, please contact Kit.



- **500 Group: Warren Fitzsimons 021 107 3036 – [warrenfitzsimons@gmail.com](mailto:warrenfitzsimons@gmail.com)**



The 500 group meets on the fourth Thursday of the month starting at 1:30pm, with a short afternoon tea break. Three tables of four can be accommodated. There are now 12 permanent players but there is room for other occasional players. Training or brush up skills are offered if you are keen to join.

*If you are interested, please contact Warren for details of times and venue.*

- **Walking Group: Christine Tijssen 021 193 3884 - [christine.tijssen@yahoo.com](mailto:christine.tijssen@yahoo.com)**

The Walking Group is still going strong and we generally have about ten walkers on our Monday outings.

We have visited three new cafés in recent months – Sipriana on Thorndon Quay, La Cloche on Hutt Road and L Bay (formerly Elements) on Onepu Road. Our Christmas lunch is being held at Picnic at the Botanic Garden.

Apart from the obvious benefits that walking brings, we see all sorts of interesting points of interest on our walks. Recently, we had two unplanned, but interesting diversions on our walk.

The first one was in the shopping area in Berhampore, where we stopped at nil products (correct spelling!) – a business that stocks eco-friendly products for the family and children. All their products are eco-friendly in some way from being reusable, organic to biodegradable. Everyday products making a difference.

The second one was in Brougham Street, where we stopped to chat to a lady, Angela Francis, who makes porcelain pieces from a workshop in her garage. All of her pieces which include platters, plates, dishes, bowls, vases and vessels are individually handmade. The business is called One of a Kind Ceramics.

*Please contact Christine for further information.*



- **Hassle Free Cooking: John Ellings 04 973 8096 – [j.a.ellings@gmail.com](mailto:j.a.ellings@gmail.com)**



This month the group cooked and enjoyed a tasty one-pan dinner.

Remember that John Ellings spoke at our Club meeting about the camaraderie and pleasure of cooking and sharing food together. If you would like to start a similar group he will be happy to help you get started. Just contact him at [j.a.ellings@gmail.com](mailto:j.a.ellings@gmail.com).



- **Wine Tasting Group: David Williams 027 305 3697 - [loisanddavid@xtra.co.nz](mailto:loisanddavid@xtra.co.nz)**



The wine tasting group gathered at John Ellings home to blind taste a selection of red wines. The plan was to compare a red wine, namely a Grenache from an Old-World country, with a similar wine from the New World, in our case from New Zealand. Grenache was unfamiliar to any of us, so it was an interesting exercise. Most of the Old-World wines we sampled came from different areas in Spain.

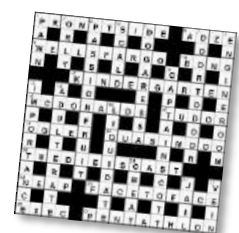
The overall conclusion by our tasters was that the New World wines took preference over the Old-World wines.

*Interested in joining? Please contact David or Lois*

- **Cryptic Crosswords: Ernie Koch, (04) 934 9805 or 027 459 6451 - [erniek10@gmail.com](mailto:erniek10@gmail.com)**

The Cryptic Crossword Group meets every couple of weeks or so at Lyall Bay or Strathmore. We work separately and together to fill in puzzles, helping each other with the tougher clues. Even if you have found these crosswords difficult in the past, there is plenty of help available. A cup of tea or coffee is served and there is time for a chat.

*If you're interested in joining us, please give Ernie a call.*



- **Technology Group: John Ellings (04) 973 8096 – [j.a.ellings@gmail.com](mailto:j.a.ellings@gmail.com)**

**Your mobile phone provides health information, but...**

***...be cautious how you use and rely on it, the information may be wrong. Remember it does not replace professional medical and clinical advice.***

**How can a mobile phone do it?**

Because it uses up to thirteen sensors alone or in combination. These offers high quality performance, but lower accuracy, precision and dynamic range than the equivalent professional instruments.

# accelerometer sensor  
# gyroscope sensor  
# magnetometer sensor  
# camera sensor  
# fingerprint sensor

# face recognition sensor  
# proximity sensor  
# thermometer sensor  
# global positioning sensor  
# barometer sensor

# microphone sensor  
# ambient light sensor  
# motion detection sensor

According to the website [Best Practice Advocacy New Zealand](https://www.bestpracticeadvocacy.co.nz/) there are over 165,000 health, clinical and medical related apps available for your phone, so how do you know if an app is trustworthy and reliable? Their website gives a detailed critique of health-related apps and should be read by any current health or medical app user.

Most health apps may not be peer-reviewed or clinically tested but would probably be the subject of research and extensive user feedback. Preferably use those with clinical or professional connections.

If possible, find the developer or organisation behind the app, who created it and why. Was it a university, college, government health agency, non-profit health organisation or patient advocacy group, or did it have a partnership with a medical or research institution or endorsements from qualified professionals?



SUMMARY – Some apps are generally considered safe, useful and reliable, examples are walking pedometers, heart/pulse rates, personal safety, reminders for medication or hydration, sleep patterns, meditation and more.

*Health, clinical and medical apps should best be regarded as interesting, entertaining, possibly informative, and never considered to be a substitute for obtaining prompt medical or clinical advice from a qualified professional.*



In-depth information on every health, clinical or medical subject is available using artificial intelligence, a subject for another time.

*If you would like to know more about any of the topics covered by the group, or have any comments or feedback, please contact **John Ellings**.*

**Todd's Teasers – Christmas 2025**

*By Todd Foster*

*This month the initial letters of the 12 answers spell the words Christmas Day.*

1. *In Clement C. Moore's 1823 poem 'Twas the Night Before Christmas, what is the name of the reindeer which is paired with Comet?*
2. *What is the name of the 1985 film in which 8-year-old Kevin is left by himself in his house just before Christmas?*

3. *What is the surname of the Polish-born American cosmetics manufacturer and art collector, who was born on Christmas Day 1872?*
4. *What was the nationality of film producer Ismail Merchant who was born on Christmas Day 1936 and who collaborated with James Ivory in the making of such films as Howard's End, Remains of the Day and A Room with a View?*
5. *In line one of the English translation of the 1847 carol, O Holy Night, what are brightly shining?*
6. *What is the first name of the actor who played Charlie's father (and Santa) in the 1995 movie The Santa Clause?*
7. *According to tradition the three wise men who visited baby Jesus were named Balthasar, Caspar and who?*
8. *In the Bible, who told Mary she was to bear a son who would be named Jesus?*
9. *What is the name of the dog in the title of a Christmas song featuring a famous WWI German flying ace?*
10. *The large Christmas tree erected in Trafalgar Square each December is an annual gift to the people of London from which European country?*
11. *Which play by William Shakespeare, featuring the kings of Sicily and Bohemia, takes place largely during the season of Christmas?*
12. *What name is given to the winter festival historically observed by the Germanic peoples that was merged with Christmas during the Middle Ages?*

## Notices

### Club Bank Account

The Club bank account is: **02-0520-0029712-000 (Wellington Combined Probus Club)**. When making a payment please include your name as reference.

### Permission to use photographs

Our Newsletter is sent to Probus South Pacific Limited in Australia and to local Probus Clubs. Sometimes PSPL use photographs of our activities in their publications. Our own website is progressing well, and from time to time, there will be photographs of Club members on that. If you do not want your photograph used in this way, please let Todd Foster know. Silence will be taken as "permission granted".

### Suggestion Box

Please take the opportunity to let the Committee know your thoughts and/or suggestions by writing a note and leaving it in the Suggestion Box which you will find on a table as you enter the meeting venue. It's a pretty pink - you can't miss it. Pen and paper provided. Both brickbats and bouquets accepted and encouraged, and there's no need to leave your name unless you wish to do so.

### Visitors

If you are bringing a visitor to our meeting, please ask for a temporary badge as you come in. Then introduce the visitor to the President so they can be welcomed by name. Beryl Smyth, another committee member, will also assist.

### Gluten-free

If you require gluten-free food, there is a limited supply available on the trolley in the kitchen at morning tea time. Just pop in and help yourself.

### Membership List, Club Constitution and Privacy Policy

A full Membership List is distributed periodically with the Newsletter. The Club Constitution has been updated in 2025 and is always available on our website, or you can download it here: [Constitution 2025](#) and [Standing Resolutions 2025](#). There is also a new [Privacy Policy](#) available on the website.

### Leaving the Club

If you no longer wish to belong to the club, please inform one of the committee members and formally resign, so that your name can be taken off the membership list.



## Almoner

If you are aware of a Club member who is not well, or who, for any reason, would benefit from receiving a card/phone call/contact from the Club, please contact Beryl Smyth.

## Travel Insurance

Probus South Pacific has joined with Allianz Partners New Zealand to provide travel insurance for Probus members for both domestic and international travel. Members who wish to apply for travel insurance can visit the website [here](#) or call the Allianz team directly on 0800 800 048.

## Probus Member Benefits Scheme

The Probus South Pacific Limited Member Benefits Scheme offers members exclusive discounts from a variety of participating businesses. Click [here](#) for details.

2025/26 COMMITTEE		
Todd Foster	President	027 475 2139 - tjfoster@xtra.co.nz
Vacant	Vice President	
Tricia O'Donnell	Immediate Past President	021 215 7740 - tricio2285@gmail.com
Sheila Fitzsimons	Treasurer / Catering / Dining Out	021 443 043 - sheilafitzsimons@gmail.com
Jan Humphries	Secretary	021 265 2973 – janice.humphries@gmail.com
Cedric Croft	Membership	021 162 9599 - croft.nevay@xtra.co.nz
Beryl Smyth	Almoner	04 972 1642 - bandk151@gmail.com
Sheila Kleyn	Speakers	021 0895 4426 – sheilakleyn@hotmail.com
Peter How	Newsletter	021 042 8451 - peterhow@hotmail.com
Barbara Eagle*	Website Coordinator	027 298 3339 - eagle.barbara@gmail.com

\*Co-opted

## Answers to Todd's Christmas Teasers

- |                        |                |                     |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Cupid               | 5. Stars       | 9. Snoopy           |
| 2. Home Alone          | 6. Tim (Allen) | 10. Denmark         |
| 3. Rubinstein (Helena) | 7. Melchior    | 11. A Winter's Tale |
| 4. Indian              | 8. Angel       | 12. Yule            |

# ALEXIA STODDART

**NO.1 Agent 2020/2021/2022/2023**

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