

PROBING THE BRIDGE

August 2026

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**Combined Probus Club of
Northbridge Inc**

**PO Box 233
Northbridge, NSW 1560**

President

Gordon Kenny
0439 013 616

Vice President

Judith Dunstan
0411 488 078

Past President

Bev Piper
0413 742 846

Secretary

Heather Skeen
0412 611 399

Treasurer

Dick Watson
0431 160 587

Membership

Judy Smith
0422 537 044

Community Liaison

Peter McNair
0415 242 628

Travel

Carol Jones
0437 494 667

Activities

Marlene Black
0480 264 237

Theatre

Katherine Kelaher
0407 230 944

Newsletter

Penny Lye
9958 7566
0411 988 630

Speakers

Malcolm Lye
0449 191 246

Welfare

Kerrie Williams
0407 914 699

Catering

Jan Loiterton
0407 732 255

Public Officer

Roger Williams
0422 882 306

From the President

What a treat it was to have Emeritus Professor Michael Atherton AM as last month's guest speaker. The way he wove together his fascinating life story with slides, readings and performances on rare musical instruments made for a wonderfully entertaining presentation. Thanks to five-minute speaker Judith Dunstan for her fitness tips and water-based exercises. By the way, Willoughby Leisure Centre is re-opening soon if you are interested in joining an exercise class.

I am told by my good wife that the outing to Nutcote was really interesting and brought back happy memories of banksia men and gumnut babies. May Gibbs' house has been lovingly restored by North Sydney Council after years of neglect.

The Probus 50th Anniversary picnic was an enjoyable experience for the 48 members who attended. A warm, fine day, delicious food and good fellowship in a beautiful setting is a good recipe for success. A sub-committee of Heather Skeen, Jan Loiterton, Paulette Beverley, Judy Smith, Patty Larkins, Peter McNair and myself did the planning and delicious slices and nibbles were made by Dawn Spinks, Judy Smith, Ros Kenny, Ruth Boylan, Penny Lye and Patty Larkins.

We were taken back to childhood days with "pass the parcel" and other games with lucky winners. Our observational skills were put to the test to ensure the kookaburras did not eat the sausages off the grill or out of our hands. Many thanks to all those extra people who helped on the day to make this a really special event.

Probus is a worldwide movement in 23 countries. The success of the organisation is seen through the commitment of members and the wide recognition of Probus as a community service program.

Probus originated in the United Kingdom, with the development of two community-based social clubs in the 1960s. The first Probus Club in the South Pacific region was the Probus Club of Kapiti Coast, New Zealand. The club was formed in 1974 and was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Paraparaumu. This was soon followed by the formation of the Probus Club of Hunters Hill, NSW in 1976.

The first Probus Club for women in the region was the Ladies Club of St Heliers, New Zealand in 1982. This was closely followed by Bateau Bay, NSW later that year. Following the advent of single gender clubs, the concept of combined gender clubs was developed.

Today, there are men's, ladies' and combined Clubs.

Since the first Clubs were established in New Zealand and Australia, Probus has grown at an astonishing rate, and is administered by Probus South Pacific Limited, based in Parramatta NSW. The probus philosophy – Fun, Friendship and Fellowship – lives on and is certainly worth celebrating. (source – Probus Website)
President Gordon

Our next meeting will be held at Northbridge Golf Club on Monday, August 17 starting at 10am sharp. If you can't attend, please phone or text Judy Smith 0422 537 044 before the meeting.



Above: Ros Kenny said: What a treasure Nutcote is May Gibbs' home for 42 years, tucked away in Neutral Bay. Seventeen of us made our way there and stepped back in time as we walked through her house which has been beautifully restored and full of memorabilia we all could relate to. Then sandwiches as we remember them and tea in beautiful cups we all love. Thank you Marlene for organising a delightful morning.



Above: The Yulefest revellers from our club rugged up against the Canberra cold weather.



Left, above & below: Forty-four club members had a lovely time at the Anniversary Picnic on the waterfront at Tunks Park, enjoying the sun on a warm winter's day.



Dates for your diary

Thursday, August 20

\$2.50 outing to Balmain

We will meet at 10.45am at Wharf 5 at Circular Quay and about 11am catch a ferry to Balmain East. From there we will travel by the 442 bus to Balmain Town Hall, to lunch at the nearby quaint London Hotel. After lunch we take the 442 bus through Balmain across the Anzac Bridge to the QVB building. There we can board the Light Rail to the Bridge St stop in the city for our journey home. Please see Peter McNair to register.

Tuesday, August 25

Auburn Botanic Gardens Japanese cherry blossom display

The coach is full: it will leave the Golf Course at 10am. Cost of \$20 per person covers coach and entry; six people are still to pay. If you are not coming, please let Marlene know as she has a waiting list. Lunch (own cost) will be at the Depot Brewery and Café in the Supercentre at Artarmon. This is a small brewery with all the stainless steel beer cylinders and several different beers to taste, plus a variety of lunches.

Monday, September 7

Coffee catchup, 2.30pm

Join an informal gathering of members for coffee at Inner Cravings at Northbridge Plaza. It's hosted by Kerrie Williams and there is no need to book.

Tuesday, September 22

Tour of the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden to see spring flowers \$25

The flowers should be coming out by then. We will be given morning tea – scones with wildflower jam. We may also hear the chap who plays the didgeridoo. Lunch will be at Tastebuds Nursery, Terrey Hills (own cost). Names please at August meeting.

October 31 – November 10

Probus anniversary cruise with Trade Travel

Departing Sydney on the Celebrity Solstice, visiting Eden, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Kangaroo Island (Penneshaw). Nine Northbridge Probus members have registered to do the cruise.

The tour is now fully booked.

November 22– 25

On Course coach tour Newcastle, Port Stephens, Hunter Valley, Christmas lights

Departing Sydney travelling to Newcastle accommodation Rydges Newcastle City. Hunter River launch cruise. Afternoon free time to explore the foreshore area.

After breakfast we travel to Nelson Bay and Port Stephens travelling back to Rydges Newcastle. Next day will be spent travelling to the Hunter Valley visiting local places of interest. Our accommodation is the Mercure Hunter Gardens. After dinner the tour will visit the spectacular light show in the gardens.

Next day the tour will leave the Hunter Valley and travel home via the Entrance. Fifteen members have registered and single and double rooms have been selected.

Register at the meeting if you are interested in attending and Carol will try to get single/double rooms. Cost per person \$1819, twin share \$1495 per person.

Sunday, December 13

Spirit of Christmas,

Willoughby Symphony Choir, 2pm

All tickets have been taken. Payment of \$70 is now due and payable either by cash at the August meeting or by direct transfer into the Probus Tours Account. No transport is provided; make your own way to the Concourse Concert Hall, Chatswood. Parking is available underneath.

Wednesday, January 13

Neil Diamond Musical - A Beautiful Noise Sydney Lyric Theatre, 1pm

All tickets have been taken. The cost of \$110 includes transport to and from the theatre. Payment is now due and payable either by cash at this meeting or by direct transfer into Probus Tours Account.

Online payments to Probus Tours Account BSB 062 215, AC 10073196. You still need to register at the desk.
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Who will be speaking to us?



At the August meeting, Sydney author and psychiatrist **Greg de Moore** will be speaking about his award-winning book on Thomas Wentworth Wills, an early Australian sporting hero. Tom Wills grew up in a wealthy family in NSW, which was descended from convicts. As a child, he befriended local Aboriginal people and learned their language and customs. He led the first Aboriginal cricket team to tour England and later helped to invent the game of Australian Rules football. Greg spoke about his book at Sydney Writers' Festival and will offer copies of the book for sale at our meeting.

Dr Garry Lowder will return to speak to us in September about Alfred Russel Wallace, one of the most important and underrated 19th century natural scientists. Today, Charles Darwin receives all the attention and recognition for the origins of species and the theory of evolution, but Wallace may be more deserving. Garry is an excellent speaker with well-researched presentation material.

In October, **Norm Webb**, an apiarist and award-winning honey maker since 1985, will give an entertaining and informative talk about his bees and honey. Norm will bring samples of his championship honey for sale.

*Have you moved house, got a new mobile phone or changed your email address?
If so, would you please advise Judy Smith, our membership officer, of your new details?
You can do this via email j787as@yahoo.com.au or at the August meeting.*

Meet a member

Annie Richards was inducted in October 2025

I was born in Exeter in 1950 as the second of twins, though I was undiagnosed at the time. My younger sister was born four years later. My dad was in the army, so we moved all over the globe during Britain's colonial days. As a result, my twin and I went to 13 different schools.

Eventually I followed my passion for nursing and trained as a midwife and health visitor, working at a large teaching hospital in the UK. I trained at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. After that I met my husband at a medical school in London and we married in 1976. Just nine days later we moved to Broken Hill in outback NSW, where he took up a residency. Soon after we settled in Sydney where he became a plastic surgeon and I joined him as his nurse in private practice. We raised four children, two in London and two in Brisbane, and now I have five children all around Brisbane.

Meanwhile, I enjoy art and have been on some amazing art tours, where I met Bev Piper, Dawn and Virginia. Through them, I joined the Neutral Bay Club and am now enjoying the Northbridge Probus Club. My husband plays bridge twice a week and stays busy with Lifeline. With all these activities, life is sweet.



This simple-to-make slice was a great hit at the recent anniversary picnic, and there were several requests for the recipe. Here it is. Easy!

DATE AND WALNUT SLICE

Mix together 125g melted butter, one cup brown sugar, one cup chopped dates.

Add 1 cup sifted SR flour and one egg and mix. Mixture will be stiff.

Add half cup chopped walnuts. Spread into greased and lined slice tin.

Bake in preheated 170 deg oven for 30 minutes. Let cool before cutting into squares.