Probus Club of Pittwater

Newsletter – December 2025

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President's Message

Yeah! It is that time of the year again when:

Santa Clause is coming to Town

It is a time unlike the Northern Hemisphere where we swap snow for surfboards and roasting ourselves on the Peninsula's Northern Beaches. Forget sleigh bells jingling—what you'll hear instead is the sizzling of prawns on the barbecue and the sound of someone complaining that the cricket is on again.

As Australians we have perfected the art of celebrating Christmas in shorts, thongs (the footwear, not the scandalous kind), and wide-brimmed hats. Santa himself often ditches the reindeer for kangaroos—because, let's face it, flying marsupials are far more efficient in the Southern Hemisphere. And while the rest of the world dreams of a white Christmas, we dream of not getting sunburnt while unwrapping presents under a gum tree.

The festive menu is equally unconventional. Turkey might make an appearance, but it's usually served cold, alongside mountains of seafood and pavlova so large it could double as a flotation device. Ice cream puddings replace the traditional hot ones, because no one wants to eat molten fruitcake when it's 35 degrees outside.

Decorations also take on a uniquely Aussie flair. Plastic snowmen melt in the heat, so families opt for inflatable Santas lounging in deck chairs or fairy lights strung across verandas. Carols are sung with gusto, though "Silent Night" feels ironic when the cicadas are screeching like a heavy metal band.

And yet, despite the quirks, Christmas in Australia is gloriously joyful. It's about gathering with the family, friends and mates, enjoying the sunshine, and laughing at the absurdity of wearing a woolly Santa hat while sweating buckets. It's proof that the holiday spirit thrives even when the thermometer insists it's midsummer.

- *Do you know when Santa's in the room? You can sense his presents*
- *Why is Christmas just like a day at the office? You do all the work and the fat guy with the suit gets all the credit.*

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE

… Charles Hill, President

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December 2025 – Main Speaker

Club President Charles Hill, as per club custom, is scheduled to give his presentation to members at the meeting on Tuesday 9th December 2025.

Charles is an Urban Planner (semi- retired), with almost 50 years in the profession, having worked in State and Local Government and in the private sector, as a director of a major planning consultancy firm and as a private consultant.

Whilst the undeniable value of planning is widely accepted, albeit grudgingly in some, Charles' talk will focus on what is a planner, the benefits of planning and in particular population growth, ageing, climate change, and housing affordability.

December 2025 – 5 Minute Speaker

Mince Pies & Coffee

Well, here we are, at the end of another year and the last meeting for 2025. And what a year it has been! To reflect on all the club activities we have enjoyed, please join President Charles Hill for "a mince pie and coffee".

You cannot end the year in better fashion and in greater company!

When: The December Meeting Tuesday 9th December 2025 in place of the 5-Minute Speaker.

January 2026 – Main Speaker

How we won the America's Cup – Noel Phelan

The achievement of the Australian team in winning the America's Cup in 1983 was one of the most remarkable feats in Australian sporting history.

Australia II captured the hearts of the nation when they won the America's Cup in1983, breaking a 132-year winning streak by the Americans in sport's oldest trophy. Perhaps the most iconic of Australian sporting moments, the competition caught the attention of sailors and non-sailors alike, throughout Australia and abroad.

"You captured the imagination of the people the world over" said American President Reagan, as he congratulated the Australia II crew on a visit to the White House two days after the race. "You have shown us the stuff of which Australians are made."

Noel Phelan returns to give a well-researched and graphic account of the day.

Come along and learn what really happened.

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January 2026 – 5-Minute Speaker

Is Artificial Intelligence really intelligent or just a computer banging its 'bots' together to come up with a percieved clever response?

As AI becomes more interwoven into our modern world, knowing how it works and how to use it can help us better leverage the technology in our personal life.

Our resident scientist Gunter Schaule will let us in on the secret.

Count your Chickens

With the recent influx of female leaders into Australian political circles drawing an array of reactions, one is reminded of the old maxim:

The cocks may crow, but the hen lays the eggs.

… Margaret Thatcher

It Doesn't Come Better Than This!

Where else would you go for the Past President's Lunch?

The Ritual Didn't Get Underway!

The weather was against us so we did not get to enjoy our fill of prawns in November as planned.

No matter, the committee has sprung to action to set up a new date. It is Friday 12th December 2025. Last get-together before Christmas.

Join the team and bring your chairs and refreshments. No need to book ahead, just roll up.

Note: A reminder to place your family Christmas order with Anna, early December.

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Speaker's Corner

Sibylla and Velvet - Guide Dogs NSW

Probus members were given a very special presentation by Sibylla from Guide Dogs NSW accompanied by her guide dog Velvet. Sibylla is part of the Social Change Team working within the organisation which breaks down the barriers of blindness through independence and safety.

In 1950, Dr. Arnold Cook arrived in Australia with the country's first Guide Dog. He was a young West Australian who had lost his sight at the age of 18 through a rare disease and became familiar with Guide Dogs after travelling to England to study.

The first Australian guide dog was trained in 1952 and named Beau.

There are now Guide Dog associations in every state and currently the national total of working dogs is 250.

The NSW Guide Dogs purposely breed puppies at their training centre in Glossodia which is open to the public on selected days. They rely largely on public funding with only 10% coming from NDIS.

The ability of guides dogs can be life-changing to their handlers by finding lift buttons in buildings, road crossings, travel on buses and trains and avoiding obstacles. They are trained to respond to their handler's command but will disobey if it puts the handler in danger.

An example of the training, was when Sibylla moved a chair across the room and instructed Velvet to lead her to it, to which Velvet successfully did without hesitation.

An amazing quality of guide dogs was demonstrated by Sibylla, with Velvet with harness on lying obediently at Sibylla's feet during the presentation. Once the harness was removed, Velvet became a lively puppy running around the room and enjoying all the attention from members, happy to be patted and mix in. Once the harness was back on, Velvet reverted to a working guide dog. The difference was truly remarkable.

The members enthusiastically thanked Sibylla and Velvet coming to our meeting to which the club handed over a donation of $200 to Guide Dogs NSW. A fitting thank you.

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… Ron Seldon

Sail up the Parramatta River

The end of the journey for Probus Sailors.

Probus Golf Report – 14th November 2025

The day was fine and the company also, when seven Probus golfers played at Palm Beach Golf Course for their monthly match.

The winner on the day was Bill Sherman; Warwick Pope, runner up.

Next round will be on the 12th December at which the **Golfer of the Year Award** will be presented! Hit off time 10am.

Our annual **Christmas Lunch** will be at **PALM BEACH GOLF CLUBHOUSE.**

All Pittwater Probus golfers past and present are welcome to attend.

… Graham Morley, Golf Convenor

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November 2025 Accounts

Opening Balance 1 November 2025	**$4,542.87**
Morning Coffee Receipts	$155.00
Past Presidents Lunch Payments (part)	$268.00
Christmas Lunch Receipts	$3,390.00
Rod Rodwell – Joining Fee	$45.00
Total Receipts	**$3,858.00**
Morning Coffee - MVSC	$120.00
Morning Tea Biscuits & Wine	$74.50
Guide Dog Visit Expenses – John Porter	$18.94
Past President's Luncg – Charles Hill	$706.76
Guide Dogs Donation	$200.00
Refund Incorrect Payment - Farrell	$380.00
Total Expenses	**$1,500.20**
Closing Balance 30 November 2025	**$6,900.67**

Sunset Sips – Friday 26th December

Its summer!

Time to get out and welcome some warm weather. Join the team at the Mona Vale Surf Club and celebrate summer.

Sunset Sips 5 00 pm Friday 26th December 2025

BBQ

Coming up in January, the next BBQ at Winnererremy Bay!

You know the procedure:

- *Put you name down to say you are coming*
- *Arrive at Winnererremy Bay at 5 00 pm on Thursday 22nd January with chair and essential refreshments*
- *Pay the Bagman $5 each*
- *Enjoy a freshly cooked BBQ sausage in a buttered roll. Choice of pork or beef.*
- *Better still, enjoy the great Probus camaraderie!*

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PIG Investment Performance – Report Card

Each year the Probus Investment Group (aka PIG) selects listed securities to form two portfolios - "Income" and "Speculative".

We invest a total of a theoretical $10,000 in 10 securities in each portfolio, total of $100,000 per sector.

Our ASX specialist Jim Attrill models each portfolio on a Google spreadsheet that links values to the market for real time information. The PIG team can access the spread sheets at any time via the internet.

Selection of investment securities is made by PIG participants and the year runs from March to February. We use an "active" management approach meaning that we monitor individual security performance each month and "sell" and "buy" as deemed necessary.

This year we started off well and remained steady before the big November downturn did do damage to the year's result, but what the hell!

Let's have a good lunch at the Mona Vale Golf Club Café on Tuesday 12 noon 2nd December 2025. All welcome to join the PIG team.

Opinions Required!

The Pittwater Likely Lads invite you to join them at the Mona Vale Golf Club coffee shop and provide your mindful thoughts to the debate.

So why not join them?
Each Thursday morning at 10 00am.
Your education of things that matter will be enriched beyond bounds!

Oh Barnaby!

Are we about to lose a politician that keeps on giving?

Barney, as we have witnessed over the years, has done it all. From crossing the floor 28 times whilst in the Senate to being Deputy Prime Minister of Australia.

But is this the pinnacle?

Scoring a dinner-date with Pauline!

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Longreach Tour

Our travelling members have itchy feet and asking where the next Pittwater Probus Extravaganza Trip will go to and when.

Well, our Master Travel Adventurer, Bill Sherman, has one on the drawing boards.

Not just a wander down a nearby lane.

Oh no! Something that could possibly be on your bucket list. We are planning to go to Longreach and Winton in Queensland in July 2026.

Activities being considered:

- *Qantas Founders Museum,*
- *Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre,*
- *Thompson Sunset River Cruise*
- *Local Outback Rail Tours*
- *Speciality Museums, Monuments & Statues.*

The initial thinking is to:

- ✓ *Travel by self-drive to Brisbane*
- ✓ *Day in Brisbane*
- ✓ *Catch the overnight Spirit of the Outback train from Brisbane to Longreach*
- ✓ *Enjoy local Longreach and Winton sights and activities*
- ✓ *Return by air to Brisbane*
- ✓ *Drive home to Sydney*

These are just ideas being kicked around at the moment.
Want to join the planning team? Contact Bill on 0418 257 330.

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Probus Up-Coming Activities

	December 2025	
Thursday	***Every***	***Probus Coffee Group – Mona Vale Golf Club 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***2nd***	***Committee Meeting at Warriewood Brook – 9:00 am***
Tuesday	***2nd***	***Probus Investment Group Lunch – 12 noon Mona Vale Golf Club Café***
Thursday	***4th***	***Pittwater Probus Christmas Lunch – Amici di Toni Arrive at 12 noon***
Tuesday	***9th***	***Probus General Meeting Main Speaker – President's Pick 5 Minute Speaker – Coffee & Mince Pie Lunch after at Pittwater RSL Club.***
Friday	***12th***	***Golf at Palm Beach – 10:00 am hit off Followed by Lunch at Palm Beach Golf Club House***
Friday	***12th***	***Prawn Pod, Bayview. Meet at 5 00 pm.***
Friday	***26th***	***Sunset Sips – Mona Vale Surf Club - Join us at 5 00 pm.***
	January 2026	
Thursday	***Every***	***Probus Coffee Group – Mona Vale Golf Club 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***6th***	***Committee Meeting at Warriewood Brook – 9:00 am***
Wednesday	***-***	***No Probus Investment Group Meeting in January See you at Warriewood Brook in February – 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***13th***	***Probus General Meeting Main Speaker – Noel Phelan – America's Cup Win 5 Minute Speaker – Gunter Schaule – All about AI Lunch after at Pittwater RSL Club.***
Friday	***16th***	***Golf at Palm Beach – 10:00 am hit off Followed by Lunch at Palm Beach Golf Club***
Thursday	***22nd***	***BBQ - Winnererremy Bay 5 00 pm $5 each – Pay the bagman***
Friday	***30th***	***Sunset Sips – Mona Vale Surf Club - Join us at 5 00 pm.***

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Minutes of Pittwater Probus Inc. Meeting

Meeting	11th November 2025. Commenced at 10 00 am at Mona Vale Surf Club. Meeting opened by President Charles Hill who welcomed members. 35 members present. 1 Visitor, Rod Rodwell.
Apologies	John Rodger, David James, Warwick Pope, Warwick Dalzell, Peter Mayman, Wes Harder, Kim Russell.
Inductions	Darryl Miller inducted.
Welfare Report	Stephen McRobie advised Michael Mannington out of hospital. Rod Rodwell joined the club.
Minutes	Minutes of the October 2025 meeting were published in the November Newsletter. Moved Geoff Richards. Seconded Geoff Sheppard. Carried.
Matters Arising from Minutes	Nil.
Correspondence	Pittwater Probus received 45 Year Anniversary Certificate from PSPL.
Secretary's Report	Nothing to report.
Treasurer's Report	Paul Mascall advised the October 2025 accounts were published in the November Newsletter. Balance 1st October 2025 $3,953.07 Balance 31st October $4,542.87. Moved Geoff Sheppard. Seconded John Harston. Carried.
Birthdays	Martyn Bullock, Howard Cocks, Peter Mayman, John Owens, Gunter Schaule, Allan Woods, Steve Jacek, Darryl Miller. Allan Woods turns 101, 27th November.
Activities & Functions	Bob Horton: Parramatta River trip in November. Coffee every Thursday morning. Sunset Sips Friday 28th November at MVSC. Prawn Pod Friday 21st. Christmas Lunch 4th December. BBQ Thursday January 22nd.
Speakers	John Porter: December Speaker – Charles Hill - President's Pick. January Noel Phelan - America's Cup.
Newsletter & Website	Ron Seldon: Read and enjoy.
Golf	No report. Next game Friday 14th November at Palm Beach Golf Club.
Investment Group	John Harston advised continuing success story. PIG lunch at MVGC Tuesday 2nd December. All welcome.
General Business	One Minute observed for Remembrance Day.
Speakers	Main Speaker: Sibylla from Guide Dogs Australia, accompanied with her dog Velvet, gave an enlightening presentation of the role of the Guide Dog organisation and the breeding and training of Guide Dogs. The President thanked the speaker and announced a $200 donation to Guide Dogs Australia.
Next Meeting	9th December 2025 at Mona Vale Surf Club commencing at 10 00 am. Meeting Closed at 12 00 noon. Signed as a correct record.

2025 Office Bearers

President	**Charles Hill**	**Activities Officer**	**Bob Horton**
Vice President	**Bob Horton**	**Newsletter Editor**	**Ron Seldon**
Secretary	**David Cant**	**Speaker Organiser**	**John Porter**
Treasurer	**Paul Mascall**	**Functions Officer**	**Stephen McRobie**
Welfare Officer	**Stephen McRobie**	**Past President (Ex-Officio)**	**Stephen McRobie**

2025 Support Officers

Golf Convenor	**Graham Morley**	**Probus Investment Grp.**	**John Harston**
Activities & Functions Committee	**Bob Horton, Stephen McRobie, John Porter, David James, John Rourke, David Cant, Charles Hill**	**Speakers Committee**	**John Porter, Bill Sherman, Brent Baker, David James, Charles Hill**

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