Probus Club of Pittwater

Newsletter – February 2026

Email: probus@pittwater.org.au **Website:** www.pittwaterprobus.org.au

President's Message

Yes, you guessed it – Valentine's Day is approaching, and it happens every year on 14 February.

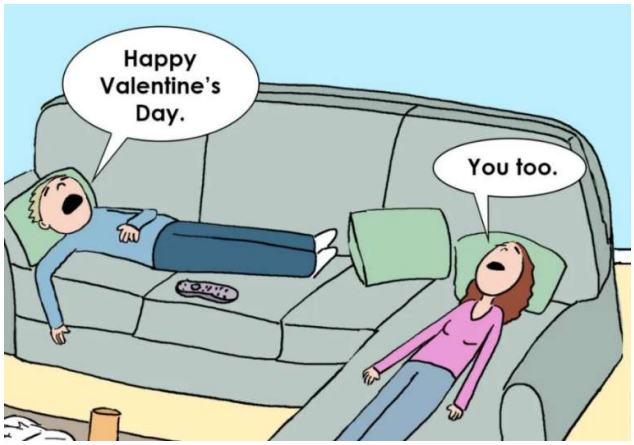
The exact origins of Valentine's Day aren't clear. Some say the day is named after St. Valentine, a Roman priest who lived during the third century.

Legend has it that Emperor Claudius II decided single men made better soldiers, so he banned marriage for young men. Valentine secretly married couples against the Emperor's orders. Sadly, he was caught and put to death.

Valentine's Day in Australia however is a curious mix of romance, sunshine, and a dash of Aussie humour. While the rest of the world might be shivering in February, Australians are busy dodging sunburn, swooping magpies, and deciding whether roses will wilt before they even make it home.

Forget candlelit dinners in Paris—here, couples might celebrate with fish and chips on their favourite beach, complete with aggressive seagulls.

Chocolates melt faster than your heart, so the truly prepared swap them for Tim Tams stored in the fridge.



And if you're lucky, your partner might serenade you with a ukulele at sunset… though more likely it'll be a karaoke rendition of "You're the Voice" at the local pub.

Australians also have a knack for practical romance. A bouquet of native flowers—waratahs, kangaroo paws, or even eucalyptus sprigs—beats imported roses that cost more than a week's rent. Some couples skip the fuss entirely and gift each other Bunnings vouchers, because nothing says "I love you" like a new power drill.

Of course, Valentine's Day isn't just for couples. Mateship runs deep, so friends often exchange cheeky cards or plan group barbecues. Nothing bonds people like burnt sausages and debates over who forgot the tomato sauce.

So, while Valentine's Day in Australia may not be dripping with Hollywood glamour, it's full of charm, laughter, and a uniquely Aussie twist, involving lots of love with a side of wit and a cold drink in hand.

… Charles Hill, President

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February 2026 – Main Speaker

Hans Kunnen - The Day New York Fell Down

We can all recall receiving the tragic news on Tuesday 11 September 2001, when suicide attackers seized two US passenger jets and crashed into each of the World Trade Centre towers, killing thousands of people.

The event had profound consequences across the globe.

Our speaker in February is Hans Kunnen who was there on that heart-breaking day and witnessed the event live. Hans was attending a conference in a building at the base of the twin towers which was also destroyed when the planes hit. The location of his hotel room is shown in the photo below.

Hans miraculously survived the terrible event and will recount the realisation of what was happening and the horror that followed.

Make sure you hear Hans' first-hand account of this horrifying event.

February 2026 – 5-Minute Speaker

Mona Vale Life Saving Club – Senior Club Member

Mona Vale Life Saving Club was founded in 1922 and has continuously patrolled the Mona Vale beach now for over 100 years.

Almost on its centenary, the club moved to its current, new clubhouse – which Pittwater Probus now calls home for one Tuesday morning each month.

The short presentation by a senior club member will tell us of the club's history and its ongoing role as an essential and greatly respected community service.

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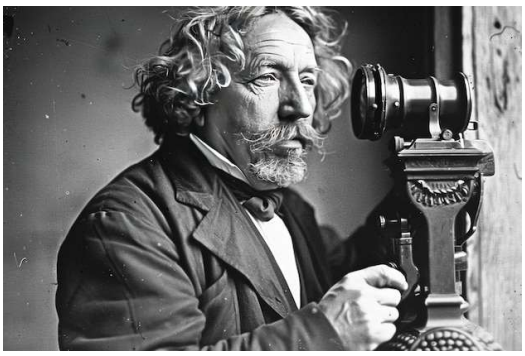
March 2026 – Main Speaker

Ian Thompson - The History of Photography - From Pin-Holes to Pixels

Ian will look at milestones dating back to the early French and English photographers who contributed to the development of photography as we know today - names like Joseph Niépce, Louis Jacques Daguerre, Henry Fox Talbot, Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard, plus others.



Louis Jacques Daguerre

Then the American George Eastman of Kodak fame as a late entry in the photography history time-line. Ian considers the history of Kodak with their domination of the film/film cameras market, followed by their rapid fall when digital photography took over. For Kodak, the game is now over.

March 2026 – 5-Minute Speaker

No speaker in March due to the AGM

SCAM Warning

If you have received an email in the past few days from a Probus member, saying they are overseas and request you to buy on their behalf an expensive present to give to a terminally ill friend. DO NOT RESPOND. IT IS A SCAM!

BBQ While the Sun Shines

Daylight Saving will end early April!
This means one thing.

It's time to squeeze in a BBQ at Winnererremy Bay before we end up in the dark!

You know the procedure:

- *Put you name down to say you are coming*
- *Arrive at Winnererremy Bay at 5 00 pm on Thursday 19th March with chairs and essential refreshments*
- *Pay the Bagman $5 per head*
- *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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Call for Nominations

You will recall Vice President, Bob Horton, during the January meeting reminding members that the 2026 AGM is coming up in March and that there is currently a call to nominate committee members for the 2026 Probus year.

Please give this serious consideration, because the current committee cannot continue for ever!

In particular, Bob was asking anyone to assist with the Newsletter. Although I was being flippant when commenting on the role during the meeting, there is a great opportunity to contribute to the Newsletter at any time with writing an article of interest to members or just a fun one-liner.

It can be serious or satire, long or short. it does not matter. It just has to be within the acceptable guidelines. If you want to have a go for the fun of it, that is fine. Come and talk to me.

... Ron Seldon, Editor

Mucking In!

The imposition of tariff wars brings to mind George Bernard Shaw's immortal adage "That you never wrestle with pigs because you both get dirty and the pigs like it."

… Andrew Tillet, AFR

PIG Investment Group

"Riding the waves of success"
…. John Harston, Investment Maestro

Join the Probus money men at 10 00 am Wednesday 4th February at Warriewood Brook.

Note! The March PIG Meeting will be held at an alternative location. Details to follow.

Sunset Sips – Friday 27th February

Its summer and its hot!

Time to get out and enjoy a refreshing cold drink.

Join the team at the Mona Vale Surf Club and celebrate staying cool!

Sunset Sips 5 00 pm Friday 27th February 2026

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Probus Golf Report – 16th January 2026

Dear Fellow Probus Friends, this is my final report as your Club Golf Convenor.

We only had five players at the Monthly Competition at Palm Beach on an overcast day. The winner was Bill Sherman, runner up Graham Morley.

I feel, at this point, it is time to step aside and allow another member to continue on as Club Golf Convener. The up-coming AGM is an appropriate time for me to hand over the role. A transition before this time would be seamless as I have booked all the Friday rounds for the year.

I have held the position of Convener for 9 years, during this time:

- I introduced a modified scoring system to speed up the game. (maximum score for a hole, 8 strokes)
- I introduced a local rule of 150 mm through the green to increase enjoyment of the game.

Both the above comply with Golf Link rules and regulations.

- I also introduced a Ball Comp in conjunction with the Monthly Trophy. $2 contribution by participants to pay for balls, and Trophy at end of year.
- Encouraged golfers to attend lunch at the end of the game and held a Christmas Lunch at the end of the Year to award prizes and golf ball gifts.
- Established the Golfer of the Year Award with Trophy.

Written over 90 Monthly Reports for the Newsletter which have included:

- 6 of my original cartoons.
- One true personal golf story (published in Readers Digest).
- Golf stories, jokes, cartoons, related golf information, and an eulogy.
- Over the 9 years we had an average of 7.5 players which prior to Covid was 7.9

I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as Convener, playing golf and the camaraderie of fellow players. I thank them for their support.

Pittwater Probus golf will continue, perhaps with the convener's role modified. If a new convener is not forthcoming golf is still booked in for the rest of the year, on the Friday following the Probus Monthly meeting. Hit off time 10am.

Perhaps players may simply wish to enjoy social golf, followed by lunch without the need to collect money, score, or award trophies?

Any remaining funds from the ball comp will be used to purchase golf balls to still be used for prizes or distributed among Probus golfers.

Once again, thank you! Wishing you good golfing. "Fo o o r e!"

… Graham Morley, Former Golf Convenor

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New Member

Rod Rodwell

Rod was born in England during an air raid.

Rod's father built cement and fertiliser factories so he soon went off to Baghdad in 1946. A much different place to now. He toured Kurdistan on muleback with his mother aged 4. Started school there but returned to England in 1950. Rod didn't stay long before being transported to New Zealand for his father to build another cement factory.

Rod completed schooling in New Zealand but ended up in Law School at the ANU in Canberra. He dropped out and like many drop-outs in those days became a Software Engineer. Then spent the rest of his career, doing just about every job in computers and telecommunications travelling the world and changing his domicile regularly. Most enjoyable were an 8-year spell in England and 13 years in Switzerland where he almost stayed for ever.

Rod has always been a keen sportsman particularly cricket and rugby and now golf. Together with his wife, Eileen, Rod played golf internationally for the Swiss Seniors Golf Team with some success. However, in 2011, as most of the family lived in Australia, he returned to the Northern Beaches for the third time. Not all the family were happy as he deprived them of very excellent skiing holidays.

Rod is a devoted gardener. He and Eileen live in Elanora Heights and have a total of 6 children and 16 grandchildren. Rod, welcome to Pittwater Probus.

~~Longreach Tour~~

A trip too far away!

Alas, we did try but the logistics were against us, especially the facilities on an aging train.

Never mind. Your committee is looking at other potential escapades for our intrepid members. Maybe closer to home.

At least further than the Manly Ferry!

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!

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What is in a Brand?

We are prone to brands when we shop. Sometimes fiercely loyal or sometimes don't really care, just look at the price! Nevertheless, we are frequently drawn to organisations because of how they are perceived to behave in the community. How does this happen? It's called branding. Major organisations, industrial and retail fight hard to promote good branding in the marketplace so they can pursue your money.

You will recall in 2019, Qantas was the top Australian brand, but by 2023 had dropped to 41st place. (And we all know why!) Woolworths and Coles improved their brand strength and value by addressing reputational issues stemming from claims by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission that they misled customers and were taking advantage of shoppers.

The key job of Marketing Executives (Note, they are actually salesmen who wear bow ties!) is to push their branding up the ranks of commerce.

Brand Finance Australia uses a formula to work out a brand's value using a range of factors including the earnings contributing from licensing brand assets, valuation of the trade name, trademarks and logos to arrive at a "brand strength score".

It is interesting to note this score moves up and down with public perceptions including negative media reports. The current 2026 scores for the top ten are:

Brand	***Current Rank***	***2025 Rank***	***2026 Brand Value ($Bn)***
CBA	*1*	*1*	*16.02*
Woolworths	*2*	*2*	*15.15*
Telstra	*3*	*3*	*12.38*
Coles	*4*	*5 – Up one*	*8.76*
Bunnings	*5*	*8 – Up three*	*7.94*
NAB	*6*	*6*	*7.87*
BHP	*7*	*7*	*7.71*
ANZ	*8*	*4 – Down four*	*7.66*
Westpac	*9*	*12 – Up three*	*7.43*
Rio Tinto	*10*	*11 – Up one*	*6.75*

… Source: Brand Finance Australia

Sorry, can't stop to chat, I'm off to Bunnings!

January 2026 Accounts

Opening Balance 1 January 2026	**$2,245.32**
Morning Coffee Receipts	$155.00
BBQ Receipts	$70.00
Annual Fees – John Porter	$50.00
Total Receipts	**$275.00**
Morning Coffee – MVSC	$120.00
Morning Tea – Biscuits	$15.30
Domain Renew – pittwater probus.org.au	$17.95
Select Housing Renew – pittwaterprobus.org.au	$198.00
BBQ Costs	$130.00
Extended HDMI Computer Cable- John Porter	$69.95
Noel Phelan Parking – John Porter	$20.00
Total Expenses	**$571.20**
Closing Balance 31 January 2026	**$1,949.12**

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Speaker's Corner

Noel Phelan gave members a comprensive background on how Australia won the America's Cup which 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, 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.

The America's Cup fascinated the Australian sailing community for 20 years before they were victorious. Up until 1962, Britain and Canada were the only two nations to challenge for the Cup. In 1962 an Australian syndicate from the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron challenged the Americans for the first time. Led by Sir Frank Packer, the challenge by Gretel was unsuccessful, but they became the first challenger to win an America's Cup match race against the Americans since 1930. They then challenged with Dame Pattie in 1967, Gretel II in 1970, Southern Cross in 1974, and Australia in 1977 and 1980.

Then in 1983, Australia challenged with their best prepared syndicate ever, AUSTRALIA II. Owned and built by a syndicate of Western Australians headed by businessman Alan Bond. The Australians were determined to bring home the Auld Mug. The designer of Australia II, Ben Lexcen, had conceived a winged keel that under secret testing in the Netherlands had out-performed conventional keels. The yacht was built in WA by boat builder Steve Ward.

Lexcen's winged keel was at the centre of much controversy. Upon arrival in Newport, the keel was hidden from view with tarpaulin 'modesty skirts'.

The design was protested by the Americans, but ultimately the "off-water" psychological battle was won by the Aussies and they were given the all-clear to race.

Skippered by John Bertrand, the crew of Australia II displayed a 'never-say-die' attitude when they came back from being 1-3 down, in the best of seven series. The Aussies fought their way back and the final race proved a real wrestle. The American boat Liberty led from the start, until being overtaken on the last downwind leg by Australia II. During the final windward leg the team aboard Australia II tacked 45 times to defend their precious lead. At 5.21pm on September 26, Australia II crossed the line to win the America's Cup, taking the Auld Mug in an historic 4-3 win.

"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."

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The State of Play

The Business Council of Australia has just announced its 2025 Scorecard as to which State is "Best for Business".

The report compared each state and territory in 10 categories and ranked them based on planning systems, payroll taxes, property taxes, and charges, retail trading hours, workers compensation premiums, duties on insurance and licences and requirements to do business in FY25.

1. South Australia
2. Tasmania
3. Northen Territory
4. Aust. Capital Territory
5. New South Wales
6. Queensland
7. Western Australia
8. Victoria

… Source Business Council of Australia

Notice of the 45th Annual General Meeting – Mona Vale Surf Club 10th March 2026

Notice is given with regard to the 45th Annual General Meeting at 10 00 am Mona Vale Surf Club Tuesday 10th March 2026. All members are invited.

The Minutes of the 44th 2025 Annual General Meeting are below:

PROBUS CLUB OF PITTWATER INC. MINUTES of 44th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD MONA VALE SURF CLUB 11th MARCH 2025	
Opening & Welcome	Jim Attrill, as the appointed Chairman of the AGM, confirmed that due notice had been given for the meeting and that a quorum was present. He then declared the 44th Annual General Meeting of the Probus Club of Pittwater Inc. open and extended a welcome to all fellow members.
Minutes of 43rd AGM	The Chair sought confirmation of the Minutes of the 43rd AGM as a true and fair record of the meeting, a copy of which was included in the February 2025 Newsletter, and proposed they be accepted. Seconded by Stephen McRobie. Carried by the Members.
Treasurer's & Audit Report	The Chair called on the Treasurer, Paul Mascall to present the 2024 Treasurer's Report: Total Receipts in 2024 $26,570.85 Total Payment in 2024 $29,543.46 Profit/Loss ($2,972.61) Balance Brought Forward $6,362.43 Balance 28 February 2025 $3,389.82 The Treasurer thanked Warwick Pope for auditing the 2024 accounts.

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	The Chair proposed acceptance of the report. Seconded by John Harston. Carried by the members.
2025 Fees	The Chair advised that he had received a recommendation from the 2024 Committee for the 2025 Fees to remain at $50.00. Moved Wes Harder. Seconded by Charles Hill. Carried by the members.
Committee Nominations	The Chair advised that he has received nominations for each of the positions on the Committee except for Activities Officer, and asked for nominations for this position or any other position. There were no further nominations. The Chair declared the position vacant and declared the 2025 Committee nominations closed.
Election of Committee Members	The Chair confirmed that current Nominees for the Committee have all agreed to serve. The Chair moved and declared that the members nominated for the various offices are deemed to be elected. Prior to requesting a supporting vote for this declaration, the Chair advised the proposed Committee to be: President — Charles Hill Vice President — Bob Horton Secretary — David Cant Treasurer — Paul Mascall Welfare & New Members — Stephen McRobie Activities Officer — *Vacant* Functions Officer — Stephen McRobie Speakers Organiser — John Porter Newsletter Editor — Ron Seldon Past President (Ex Officio) — Stephen McRobie The Chair's declaration of the new Committee members was seconded by Geoff Sheppard. Carried by the members. The Chair called for nominations for 2025 Club Auditor. John Porter proposed that Warwick Pope be nominated as Auditor. Seconded by Paul Macall. Carried by the members.
Close	The Chair thanked Stephen McRobie and the 2024 committee for their hardworking contributions in managing the affairs of the club and congratulated Charles Hill and his committee for their roles in 2025. The Chair declared the 44th Annual General Meeting closed.

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Probus Up-Coming Activities

February 2026		
Thursday	***Every***	***Probus Coffee Group – Mona Vale Golf Club 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***3rd***	***Committee Meeting – Mona Vale Library 9:00 am***
Tuesday	***4th***	***Probus Investment Group Meeting at Warriewood Brook – 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***10th***	***Probus General Meeting Main Speaker – Hans Kunnen – Horror of 9/11 5 Minute Speaker – History of MVLSC Lunch after at Pittwater RSL Club.***
Thursday	***12th***	***Walk around Long Reef Headland - Meet 10 00 am***
Friday	***13th***	***Golf at Palm Beach – 10:00 am hit off Followed by Lunch at Palm Beach Golf Club***
Friday	***20th***	***Prawn Pod, Bayview. Meet at 5 00 pm.***
Friday	***27th***	***Sunset Sips – Mona Vale Surf Club - Join us at 5 00 pm.***
March 2026		
Thursday	***Every***	***Probus Coffee Group – Mona Vale Golf Club 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***3rd***	***Committee Meeting – Mona Vale Library 9:00 am***
Wednesday	***4th***	***Probus Investment Group Meeting – 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***10th***	***Probus General Meeting and AGM Main Speaker – Ian Thompson – History of Photography 5 Minute Speaker – No Speaker. AGM Lunch after at Pittwater RSL Club.***
Friday	***13th***	***Golf at Palm Beach – 10:00 am hit off Followed by Lunch at Palm Beach Golf Club***
Thursday	***19th***	***BBQ - Winnererremy Bay 5 00 pm $5 each – Pay the bagman***
Friday	***27th***	***Sunset Sips – Mona Vale Surf Club - Join us at 5 00 pm.***

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Minutes of Pittwater Probus Inc. Meeting

Meeting	13th January 2026. Commenced at 10 00 am at Mona Vale Surf Club. Meeting opened by Vice-President Bob Horton who welcomed members. 31 members present. 1 Visitor, Gary Geets.
Apologies	Charles Hill, Stephen McRobe, Kim Russell, Geoff Sheppard, Barrie Unsworth, Ken Boyes, Ray Brooks, Peter Nash, Bill Sivyer, Michael Mannington.
Inductions	Rod Rodwell gave an outline of his many global residences.
Welfare Report	No welfare issues to report.
Minutes	Minutes of the December 2025 meeting were published in the January 2026 Newsletter. Moved Ken Boyes. Seconded David James. Carried.
Matters Arising from Minutes	Longreach trip cancelled. Bill Sherman thanked for his efforts.
Correspondence	No correspondence.
Secretary's Report	Nothing to report.
Treasurer's Report	Paul Mascall advised the December 2025 accounts were published in the January Newsletter. Balance 1st December 2025 $6,900.67 Balance 31st December $2,245.32 after payment for the Christmas Lunch. Moved John Harston. Seconded Bill Sherman. Carried.
Birthdays	David Bennett, Warwick Pope, Kim Russell, Trevor Stevens, Phillip Ponton, Don Tinyou, Clive Steirn.
Activities & Functions	Bob Horton: Coffee every Thursday morning. BBQ Thursday January 22. Sunset Sips Friday 30th January at MVSC. Prawn Pod Friday 20th February. Walk at Long Reef 12th February 2026. Boat trip from Palm Beach to Patonga planned. Golf Friday 16th January. Members were asked to discuss ideas for activities with committee members.
Speakers	January Noel Phelan - America's Cup. February – Hans Kuneen Account of 911.
Newsletter & Website	Ron Seldon: Looking for assistance with the Newsletter.
Golf	Graham Morley golfer of the year for 2025. Next game Friday 16th January.
Investment Group	John Harston advised portfolios stocks "riding the wave of success". PIG meeting resumes in February.
General Business	AGM coming up. Need volunteers to fill committee positions.
Speakers	Ron Seldon gave a brief talk on the history of Pittwater Probus. Main Speaker: Noel Phelan gave an authoritative talk of Australia winning the America's Cup.
Next Meeting	10th February 2026 at Mona Vale Surf Club commencing at 10 00 am. Meeting Closed at 12 15 pm. 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	**(Vacant)**	**Past President (Ex-Officio)**	**Stephen McRobie**

2025 Support Officers

Golf Convenor	**Graham Morley**	**Probus Investment Grp.**	**John Harston**
Activities & Functions Committee	**Bob Horton, 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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