Probus Club of Pittwater

Newsletter – May 2026

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

President's Message

Dear Probus Members,

After living in the Mona Vale area for some 20 years I thought I would use this month's President's messages to share a little of the history of our area, with the view that it may interest you in some way and encourage you to undertake further research and indeed for you to provide Ron Seldon with some articles for future Newsletters

Before European settlement, the area was known as **"**Bongin**"** by the local Aboriginal Peoples. The first European land grants were issued in April 1813. Most of what is now Mona Vale was part of a 700-acre survey granted in 1814 to Robert Campbell

Local lore suggests Campbell named the area after a town in his native Scotland, though the exact location remains a mystery. Another theory attributes the name to David Foley, an early tenant of Mona Vale Farm.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, the region was primarily rural, known for market gardening. It gained fame as a major hub for tomato cultivation, with many glasshouses dotting the landscape, particularly in what we know today as Warriewood Valley. During this era, the area was also sometimes referred to as "Rocklily" or "Turimetta". Significant landmarks emerged, such as the Rock Lily Hotel, which became a popular social destination and remains today and of course Turimetta Beach.

Mona Vale in the 1930s

Residential development accelerated after World War II, transforming the farm fields into a suburban hub. A pivotal moment in its social history was the formation of the Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club in 1922. We were privileged to learn much about the Surf Club last month and first president Freddie Lane, Australia's first Olympic gold medallist in swimming.

Mona Vale served as the administrative centre for the Pittwater Council from 2005 until the council's amalgamation into the Northern Beaches Council in 2016. Today, it is recognised as an affluent and well-established community, balancing its coastal heritage with a bustling commercial centre.

This is just a short snap-shot and I encourage you to add to the details with further information. Why not look at Mona Vale's Zoo and the Elephants at Bayview Golf Club.

I welcome your input and active participation in our great club of 45 years standing. By the end of the year we should have loads of information about our area.

… Stay safe and well, Bob Horton, President

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New way to go

In business these days you don't get fired.

You get redacted.

… Written By [redacted]

May 2026 – Main Speaker

David Mee – The Unknown Impact of Gold

David will talk about "Gold" and what is unknown about some of the impacts of gold in history.

He will include a short historical introduction, including the Australian gold rush, followed by its banning and confiscation in the USA by Roosevelt Executive Order in 1933.

Then the war years and the Bretton Woods agreement followed by the Nixon shock in 1971. A look at modern monetary theory, as practiced today, and the inflation that is designed into the current monetary system will complete the talk.

May 2026 – 5-Minute Speaker

Rod Rodwell – Living in Switzerland

New club member Rod Rodwell will talk about an Aussie living in Switzerland.

- What it's like to live there? Heaven?
- Almost unique system of government compared to Australia.
- Taxation.
- Effect of geographical location.
- Attitudes to life.

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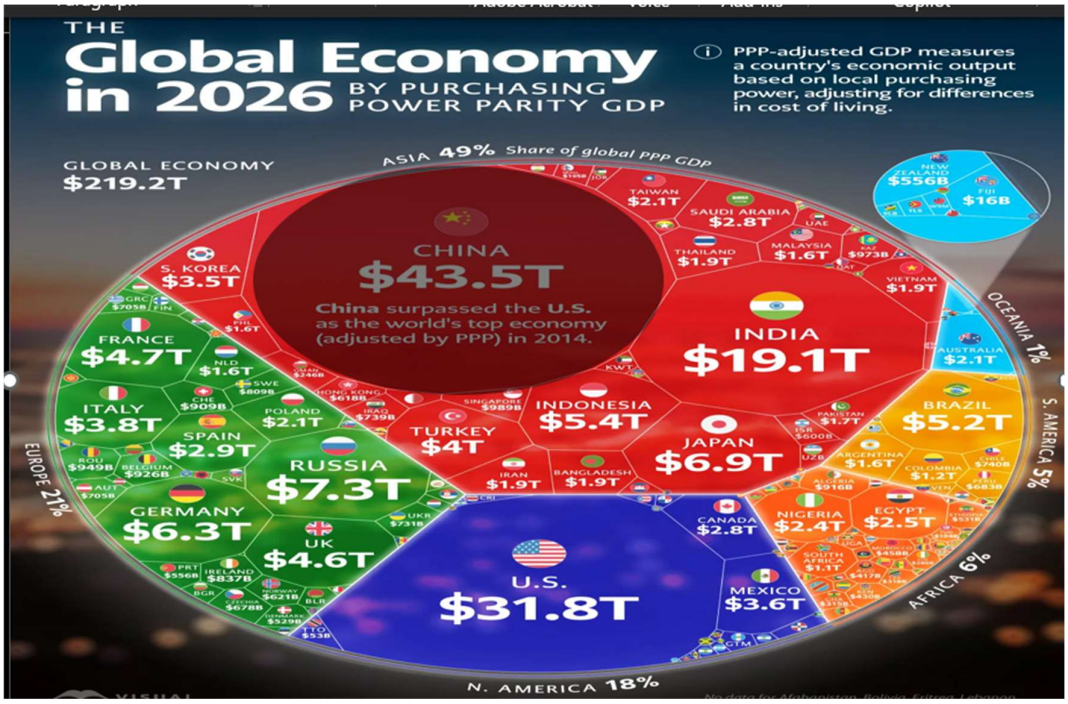
June 2026 – Main Speaker

Gunter Schaule – China's Commanding Global Economy



Gunter has travelled to China four times, observing grand cities and impressive landscapes. In his Power Point Presentation, he explores population trends, economic developments, infrastructure, and China's influence on the world.

June 2026 – 5-Minute Speaker

David James – Narrabeen Lagoon

As a small boy, David moved with his family from Western Australia to live alongside Narrabeen Lagoon-- back then the lovely waterway was increasingly in trouble from the entry of polluted septic runoff and poor tidal interchange. He will tell how public action led to the reversal of that decline.

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Position Vacant – Vice President

Fellow Members,

We are in urgent need of a Vice President to be part of the administration team in the running of our club. Like all other committee positions the role is voluntary but not onerous. You will become a key member of the club.

The role may not be quite the same as portrayed by Sir Les, but does enjoy the great camaraderie within the committee and the club.

In line with our Constitution, the Vice President becomes the President in the following year. Which is a key leadership role in maintaining the future of our club. Please feel free to talk to anyone on the committee about the position.

If you decide to take on the role, you will be creating history.

Don't worry, the club will supply you with the suit and tie …. Cheers!

Proportional Representation in Australia

Whilst it is just over a 100 years ago (July 1924), when the Commonwealth Electoral Act was amended to enshrine compulsory voting at federal elections, probably our most important reform was the introduction in 1918 of the preferred method of voting.

This latter legislation however has a very interesting history.

According to George Brandis former High Commissioner to the UK, Liberal Senator and Federal Attorney General (SMH August 24), the preferential system of voting came from the work of a 19th century NZ mathematician academic, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson.

In 1865 Dodgson under the nom de plume Lewis Carroll published probably the most successful children's book named Alice in Wonderland.

However apart from writing children's books, Dodgson had an interest in voting systems, and amongst other achievements developed voting methods specifically for parliamentary elections, one of which he called proportional representation, which was subsequently recommended for adoption by the Royal Commission in 1915.

So when you attend the polling booth at the next election, be aware that as Brandis indicates, it is the same person who also gave us Alice in Wonderland, the White Rabbit, the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter, and Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee.

… Charles Hill

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Members, where are you?

Each month we get between 30 and 35 of our total membership of 64 at our meetings. Most of the attendees are our regulars. So where are the rest of you?

I, as your Club Welfare Officer, will be endeavouring to catch up with you to find out what is keeping you away and if there is any way in getting you to the meetings. Note there is ample parking at the Mona Vale Surf Clubhouse.

So, if you can get to the Mona Vale Surf Clubhouse, write on your calendar Tuesday 12th May 2026 commencing at 10 am, and catch up with your fellow club members.

We look forward to seeing you again.

… Charles Hill, Welfare Officer

Activities Coming Up

Activities Officer, John Rodger is looking at a relaxing ferry trip on Pittwater travelling to Ettalong in June, with lunch at the RSL Club.

Functions Officer, Charles Hill, is busy organising 2 old favorite outings:

- *July 2026 Lunch at Limani*
- *October 2026 Thai Dinner at Sea Wave Avalon*

In the meantime, David Cant is looking at the possibility of a visit to the "James Craig" which is a fully restored 19th-century three-masted iron - hulled barque operated by the the Sydney Heritage Fleet.

Details to follow.

PIG Investment Group

The 2026 investment portfolios have been selected and the investments made. The Group continue to monitor the Australian market in the shadow of the distressing events in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, join in on interesting discussions around the world of finance. You do not have to be a financial whiz to join the conversation.

Join the Probus money men at 10 30 am Wednesday 6th May at the Mona Vale Golf Club Café as they decide what to do now!

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An Evening with Rodgers & Hammerstein

Glen Street Theatre, 7:30 pm Friday 22 May 2026

Last Chance!

- *Show time: 7:30 pm Friday 22 May 2026*
- *Club members to purchase tickets direct from the Glen Street Theatre.*
- *The plan is to meet at 6:00 pm at the Glen St. Shopping Centre (across the road from the theatre) for dinner at one of the restaurants before the show.*

Make sure you don't miss this great musical evening and stir up old memories!

Any queries please contact John Rodger on 0448 029 122

Golf Report – Friday 17 April 2026

A small but elite field of seven contested the golf day at Palm Beach on April 17th. Modesty prevents me from naming the winner, but the runner-up was Bill Sherman with a net score of 32.

The trophy made a miraculous return after months missing in a location which I am not permitted to reveal.

The starter at the Golf Club has asked if we can advise numbers in advance. We have a booking for up to 12. But he would like to know if we have less than 9, which would enable him to use one of our "hit-off" times. I promised him we would have a show of hands from anticipated participants at the meeting prior to each golf day, the next of which is Friday May 15.

We also need to re-introduce the mandatory $2 ball competition, as I have squandered the funds passed on by Graham on new golf balls.

… Warwick Pope

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New Member

Richard White FCPA

Richard is an accountant by training and has lived in the Pittwater area since 1973.

In 1959 Richard started a 12-year career with a large manufacturing company in Marrickville and then saw an ad for a job in South Korea so he spent 2 years helping Unisys to get established, and, at the end of his time returned to Australia and joined Honeywell for 8 years where he left to start his own CPA practice in North Sydney. Richard was subsequently coaxed by one of his clients, a publicly listed company, to join them.

In the intervening 10 years Honeywell had sold, worldwide, its Computer Division to a French multinational who coaxed Richard back, basically into the company he had left 10 years earlier. 3 years later the French company sold its US Canadian and Australian operations. Richard stayed with the new company long enough to transition their IT/Systems and he then left and semi-retired.

12 years later a former CPA client coaxed Richard to the US to help his client with his new venture. 6 months later the major shareholders in Switzerland transferred Richard to Suisse where he and his wife enjoyed a wonderful 3 years. The Swiss government eventually hinted that perhaps a Swissy could do what he was doing so he returned to Oz, and a 3rd retirement.

In the last 12 months Richard has been heavily involved in Northern Beaches Council "matters", firstly part of a 2-man team submitting to IPART a detailed objection to NBC's 40% rate rise application, and in the last 9 months part of Protect Pittwater and its quest to have the former Pittwater Council de-merged from NBC and once again become independent of Manly-Warringah.

Richard, welcome to Pittwater Probus.

It's Medicinal!

The experts say that coffee offers numerous health benefits, including increased energy, improved brain function, reduced risk of chronic diseases and enhanced longevity.

Join the Pittwater Likely Lads at the Mona Vale Golf Club coffee shop and partake in some weekly medicine!

Each Thursday morning at 10 00am.

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Positive Use of AI

In the back-blocks of South Eveleigh, Sydney, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia has a specialist group called the "Pollen Team". They use AI Honey Pots to trap scammers into automated chats, gathering intelligence 100 times faster than humans. They lure and trap global scammers in real time by engaging thousands of criminals in simultaneous automated conversations to extract intelligence and protect CBA customers from a growing global threat.

Threats are very different in the digital world. Customers are up against sophisticated global organised crime groups, using social media and online communication platforms to try and dupe customers into sending money.

That's were the Pollen Team comes in, armed with their laptops and powerful enterprise software. They are acting as decoys, distracting scammers and gathering intelligence. For example, the scammer thinks they are conversing with a CBA customer trying to convince them in buying Telstra shares. But the criminal is actually talking to a "bot" which is part of the software using AI, deployed by the Pollen Team to create a security alert. The bots have had more than 272,000 conversations with scammers since the system went live in August. Bots work 24 hours a day resulting in numerous security alerts.

Nevertheless, the criminals are also developing their systems in their endeavour to catch customers out. It is an on-going war.

… Extract from James Eyres Report, AFR

April 2026 Accounts

Opening Balance 1 April 2026	**$2,939.92**
Morning Coffee Receipts	175.00
Club Annual Fees	1,500.00
Joining Fee	20.00
Total Receipts	**$1695.00**
Morning Coffee – MVSC/Biscuits	133.70
Cost of Comm Meeting Room Hire	12.00
Badge	14.00
Admin. Costs	120.90
BBQ Costs	126.63
Dept Fair Trading Tax	57.00
Total Expenses	**$464.23**
Closing Balance 30 April 2026	**$4,170.69**

Sunset Sips – Friday 29th May 2026

Autumn is truly upon us and the weather is getting a little cooler!

Time to get out and enjoy a smooth red!

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

Sunset Sips 5 00 pm Friday 29th May 2026

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Speaker's Corner

Nicholas Cowdery – Voluntary Assisted Dying ACT NSW

Nicholas reminded us that only two things in life are inevitable: death and taxes. While some may be able to do something about the latter, we all face the former.

How we die is important - to us, our families, friends and associates and to those affected at the time. Nicholas gave a very informative outline of The Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022 which passed through NSW Parliament on 19 May 2022. The legislation came into effect from 28 November 2023 after an 18-month implementation period.

Nicholas advised the term voluntary assisted dying means an eligible person can ask for medical help to end their life. The person must be in the late stages of an advanced disease, illness or medical condition. They must also be experiencing pain and suffering they find unbearable.

If a person meets all the criteria and the steps set out in the law are followed, they can take or be given voluntary assisted dying to bring about their death at a time they choose. The assistance invokes doctors and nurses, but it is illegal to pressure someone to ask for voluntary assisted dying.

Nicholas also referred to "Dying with Dignity" which is an advocacy organisation committed to supporting voluntary assisted dying laws and other end-of-life choices for residents in NSW.

Nicholas covered 3 particular tragic case studies of people trying to help others die before the Act became NSW law. In some situations, the action of the person assisting the dying was seen as a criminal offence with many being prosecuted.

However, under the Act, palliative care is an option but there are a number of requirements to be met before assistance can be given.

The patient:

- Must 18 years.
- Has to have an advanced progression in their health – death in 6 months.
- Suffering that cannot be relieved.
- Decision making capacity to communicate consent voluntarily.
- Limits on severity of the disease.
- Healthcare worker cannot suggest the process but can discuss with the patient.

At least 2 doctors to make the decision on the request at the time. The process can be self-administered or by medical staff.

No one is charged with criminal offenses. No prosecutions. Doctors to be trained in the process.

Finally, Nicholas advised that it is recommended that everyone consider making an Advanced Care Directive.

… Ron Seldon

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Probus Up-Coming Activities

	May 2026	
Thursday	***Every***	***Probus Coffee Group – Mona Vale Golf Club 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***5th***	***Committee Meeting – Mona Vale Library 9:00 am***
Wednesday	***6th***	***Probus Investment Group Meeting – 10:30 am Mona Vale Golf Club***
Tuesday	***12th***	***Probus General Meeting Main Speaker – David Mee – History of Gold 5 Minute Speaker – Rod Rodwell - Switzerland Lunch after at Pittwater RSL Club.***
Friday	***15th***	***Golf at Palm Beach – 10:00 am hit off Followed by Lunch at Palm Beach Golf Club***
Friday	***22nd***	***Glen Street Theatre – Rodgers & Hammerstein Music Meet for dinner before the show – 6 00 pm.***
Friday	***29th***	***Sunset Sips – Mona Vale Surf Club - Join us at 5 00 pm.***
	June 2026	
Thursday	***Every***	***Probus Coffee Group – Mona Vale Golf Club 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***2nd***	***Committee Meeting – Mona Vale Library 9:00 am***
Wednesday	***3rd***	***Probus Investment Group Meeting – 10:30 am Mona Vale Golf Club***
Tuesday	***9th***	***Probus General Meeting Main Speaker – Gunter Schaule – China Economy 5 Minute Speaker – David James – Early Narrabeen 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***
Thursday	***18th***	***Ferry ride to Ettalong – Lunch at the RSL. Details to follow.***
Friday	***26th***	***Sunset Sips – Mona Vale Surf Club - Join us at 5 00 pm.***

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Minutes of Pittwater Probus Inc. Meeting

Meeting	14th April 2026. Commenced at 10 00 am at Mona Vale Surf Club. Meeting opened by President Bob Horton Hill who welcomed 36 members.
Apologies	Ian Storey, Bob Anderson, Peter Mayman, Graham Morley.
Inductions	Richard White was inducted into the Club. Richard gave a brief outline of his career.
Welfare Report	Charles Hill gathering statistics on membership meeting attendance. Charles planning to do welfare contact of those not attending. Club looking at an incentive program to attract new members.
Minutes	Minutes of the March 2026 meeting were published in the April 2026 Newsletter. Moved John Rodger. Seconded John Rourke. Carried.
Matters Arising from Minutes	Vice President position vacant – appeal for starters. Request for ideas from members regarding club activities.
Correspondence	PSPL Admin.
Secretary's Report	David Cant reported it has been a busy month for the committee. Moved John Porter. Seconded Gunter Schaule.
Treasurer's Report	Warwick Pope advised the March 2026 accounts were published in the April Newsletter. Balance 1st March 2026 $1,957.52. Balance 31st March 2026 $2,939.92. Moved Trevor Stephens. Seconded Bill Sherman. Carried.
Birthdays	Rod Nunn, Richard Trevitt, Barrie Unsworth, David Varley, Stephen McRobie.
Activities & Functions	John Rodger appealed for 2-3 helpers. Coffee every Thursday morning. Golf Friday 17th April. Sunset Sips Friday 24th April at MVSC. Boat trip to Ettalong with lunch at the RSL planned. Need 10 people. Glen St. Theatre 22nd May – Rogers & Hammerstein. Lunch at Limani coming up. Planning for Christmas party.
Speakers	Brent Baker advised Speaker for May is David Mee – Gold. Short Speaker Rod Rodwell – Switzerland.
Newsletter & Website	Ron Seldon: Enjoy.
Golf	Warwick Pope reported March game: Rod Rodwell 1st (2 under par) 2nd Graham Morley.
Investment Group	John Harston: Investments not going too well due to problems in the Middle East. Meetings at the Mona Vale Golf Club very noisy. Looking at alternative at the new Warriewood Community Centre.
General Business	$50 club fees now due.
Speakers	Short Speaker Gunter Schaule – AI. Main Speaker Nicholas Cowdery – Voluntary Assisting Dying Act. Brent Baker thanked the Speaker.
Next Meeting	12th May 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	**Bob Horton**	**Activities Officer**	**John Rodger**
Vice President	***(Vacant)***	**Newsletter Editor**	**Ron Seldon**
Secretary	**David Cant**	**Speaker Organiser**	**Brent Baker**
Treasurer	**Warwick Pope**	**Functions Officer**	**Charles Hill**
Welfare Officer	**Charles Hill**	**Past President (Ex-Officio)**	**Charles Hill**

2025 Support Officers

Golf Convenor	**Warwick Pope**	**Probus Investment Grp.**	**John Harston**
Activities & Functions Committee	**Bill Sherman, Charles Hill, David James, John Rourke, David Cant.**	**Speakers Committee**	**Brent Baker, Bill Sherman, David James, Charles Hill**

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