Probus Club of Pittwater

Newsletter – August 2026

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President's Message

Dear Fellow Members,

I trust that this month's newsletter finds you all fit and well and ready to join us at the August meeting at 10.00am on August 11 at the Mona Vale Surf Club. This month's speakers have a flying theme with Rohan Walter reflecting on "The Recollections of a Qantas 747 Captain" and our own Robert Trayner continuing his stories as an "Outback Flying Doctor."

As you are aware, visitors are very welcome and we continue to look at ways of attracting new members. Your committee continues to beaver away at ensuring the future longevity of your Club, we are still looking for your support to make things happen.

Just as I am still waiting for one of you to provide Ron Seldon with an article on the history of our area. Thanks, Ron, for your contribution last month on G Brothers.

So here is my input for this month. Pittwater and Mona Vale share a rich history dating back to traditional custodianship by the Garigal and other local Aboriginal peoples. Key milestones highlight the area's evolution from indigenous lands and timber-getters' camps to maritime outposts, a bustling agricultural hub, and finally a vibrant residential sanctuary on Sydney's Northern Beaches.

Aboriginal Heritage and Early Settlement

- Traditional Names: The Mona Vale area was originally known by the local Aboriginal peoples as "Bongin". The nearby headland of Newport was called m'Bung-gie Bung-gie, while the Bushrangers Hill area was known as Bannaweera.
- The Naming of Pittwater: Governor Arthur Phillip explored and named the body of water "Pitt Water" in 1788 to honour William Pitt the Younger, who was the Prime Minister of Great Britain.
- Robert Campbell's Grant: The land comprising modern-day Mona Vale was first surveyed in May 1814 and granted to prominent merchant Robert Campbell (1769–1846). Local lore suggests Campbell named his estate "Mona Vale" after a town in Scotland, though its exact location remains a mystery.

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Maritime and Transport History

- Convoy Shipping: By 1803, privately owned shipping coasters began navigating between Pittwater and Cowan Creek. They often travelled in convoys to avoid pirates who were runaway convicts hiding along the shoreline.
- World War II Defences: During 1941–1942, fearing a land invasion, the Federal Government placed about 300 two-tonne concrete tetrahedron tank traps around Pittwater's beaches and foreshores to deter enemy tanks.

Agriculture and Industry

- The Glasshouse Era: Before it became a residential suburb, Warringah Shire was celebrated as a district of glasshouses. Thousands were built across Warriewood, Mona Vale, and Newport to support a thriving tomato and tropical fruit-growing industry.
- The "School Boat": In the early 1900s, many children living around the mouth of Pittwater lacked physical access to schools. The government requisitioned a subsidised motor launch that picked up children from Bayview, Clareville, and Newport, ferrying them to the public school at Church Point.

Local Landmarks

- Mona Vale Cemetery: Established around 1904, it is a significant historical site where early pioneers and notable Australians—such as the acclaimed author and playwright Morris West—are laid to rest.
- Mona Vale Hospital: The community-initiated, 152-bed acute hospital was officially opened on February 22, 1964, but as we know today this has now given way to the Northern Beaches Hospital in Frenchs Forest.

These are just a few local historical facts which I hope you can add to.

Stay safe and well and we hope to see you all very soon at our monthly meetings or at one of our activities which are detailed in the newsletter.

… Bye for now and best regards, Bob

August 2026 – Main Speaker

Rohan Walter – Recollections of Qantas 747 Captain

Rohan, retired 747 Qantas Captain, will talk of his many flying exepriences. Like all Qantas Pilots they have a wealth of stories to tell. Flying a large jet, full of passengers and more importantly landing safely is no simple task. But up in the air it is not always plain sailing (sorry wrong pun). There are many incidents some a little serious and some humerous, Hear Rohan tell his stories that you don't normally hear, first hand.

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August 2026 – 5-Minute Speaker

Robert Trayner – Further Stories from the Flying Doctor

By popular request, club member Robert Trayner will again share stories of his amazing life as a Flying Doctor in outback Western Australia.

September 2026 – Main Speaker

David Hutchinson – Climate Change

David is a First-Class Honours graduate in chemical engineering. Spending his career working in the environmental field. Now retired but has researched climate change issues over the last 2 years and has been giving presentations for over a year.

His presentation focusses on the basic science and current data on the state of the planet. The science and the data highlights general misinformation in the community by showing where perceptions are refuted by the facts.

David then provides information on what the world in general is doing to address climate change and what 2 countries (Australia and China) are doing specifically.

The presentation ends with a summary of where we stand and scientific predictions of what the world will look like once earth's temperature stabilises at a new higher level.

David's talk is bound to elicit a lively discussion with the Members.

September 2026 – 5-Minute Speaker

Warwick Pope – Catering in Outback Australia

Warwick during his career was employed as the Australian Manager of an international catering company. Many of his contracts were to provide catering services at remote outback sites. Several on large development projects.

Hear how Warwick kept hungry workers satisfied with eye-catching but nutritious food. Plus providing all the necessities when the nearest shop is several hundred kilometres away.

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New Member

David Hill

David "retired" at 68, he thought. But his services soon were sought explaining Computer, Printer, Smart TV and related IT issues, in understandable language. So, he remains "semi-retired", spending a few hours per week helping people with home IT issues.

David enjoys life with wife, Chris, their two sons and their partners and children, and more leisurely pursuits with friends. Interests include golf, walking, surfing & investing.

David was born in Parramatta but his parents and sisters soon experienced country life in Grafton, then Kempsey & Muswellbrook as his father progressed up NSW Railway ranks. A young life in the dying days of steam trains created great memories.

The family returned to Sydney for David's teens to 20s education before he started a sports goods business in Dee Why on the back of his interests in Skateboarding & Surfing.

The beginnings of personal computers in his 30s led David to embrace the computer revolution throughout the rest of his working life in technical roles at a number of leading Australian IT companies.

David, welcome to Pittwater Probus.

Strategy According to Donald

The world's greatest strategic minds struggle every day to understand Donald's forthcoming strategy for the word and yet many in frustration fail to uncover the formula.

The solution is simple:

"Donald always forgets what he said the day before!"

Thank you, Members

Thank you, Members, for participating in the monthly club door raffle. The club collected $160 at the July Meeting and thanks to Graham Morley who donated the bottle of wine.

All going to strengthen the club's financial position. Note the raffle will continue each month to December. Taking part is of course voluntary.

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NBC Parking Permits Now Digital

Council Beach Parking Permits are now digital!

The new system being brought in by Northern Beaches Council will marry your parking permit to your car registration details. That means no more lost or damaged stickers, a reduction in the misuse of permits, less plastic waste and ultimately a financial saving for ratepayers.

The existing windscreen mounted Beach Parking Permits expire on 31 August 2026. You need now to apply for a Virtual Parking Permit. You can do this on-line by going to the NBC website and click on the highlighted tab or visit the council direct.

As before, two Beach Parking Permits are assigned for each rateable property and are free of charge. Ratepayers apply now and then not again for 3 years, unless your vehicle or circumstances change.

PIG Investment Group

The world of finance conitues to sway with global events. To find a steady investment is currently hard to find.

Nevertheless the PIG team can usually come up with a possibility or two. Join in on interesting discussions, you do not have to be a financial whiz to enter the conversation.

Join the Probus money men at 10 30 am Wednesday 5th August at the Mona Vale Golf Club Café as they decide what to invest in.

Albos' AI Room

We have a new office in Canberra, reporting directly to the Prime Minister, called the "AI Room".

To make this a success, it is suggested that no humans enter the room, only AI computers, with the purpose of eating each other.

How's that for Intelligent thinking!

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They show us how to age gracefully

We who live in Pittwater are surrounded by trees, and in particular those just outside our backdoor that we get to know well as they become our "friend" over the years

Nevertheless, when a tree begins to fade there is disappointment because we are slowly losing a friend.

Geoff Sheppard shares his story of a spotted gum which for years stood proudly at No. 60 Hudson Parade, Avalon. It grew to over 60 ft tall. In the early 40's the loppers wanted to chop it down being a spotted gum favoured for milling. Hower, the determined resident of No. 60 chained herself to the tree to prevent its destruction. She saved the day!

But sadly, time took over, and the tree became a shadow of its former glory. It is considered that it has now died from root degradation, a fungus named - Armillaria Luteobubalina.

The photo of the tree was taken a while back. It has been "gazetted" by Northern Beaches Council for "corralling" (arborist term for severe trimming rather than chopping it down).

… Geoff Sheppard

June 2026 Accounts

Opening Balance 1 July 2026	**$2,889.60**
Morning Coffee Receipts	160.00
Club Annual Fees	50.00
Joining Fee	20.00
Raffle	160.00
Limanis Lunch	1,155.00
Art gallery	351.00
Total Receipts	**$1,896.00**
Morning Coffee – MVSC/Biscuits	133.00
Cost of Comm Meeting Room Hire	12.00
Limanis Lunch	1,015.91
Total Expenses	**$1,160.91**
Closing Balance 31 July 2026	**$3,624.69**

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Speaker's Corner

David Cant – Journey on the James Craig

In early 2025 the tall ship James Craig sailed from Sydney to Hobart to celebrate its 150th Anniversary. On board was our secretary David Cant, who recounted his experiences leading up to departure and during the ten-day voyage.

It was a trip back to the time when hundreds of thousands of migrants and convicts emigrated from Europe to Australia braving the extreme conditions around Cape Horn. Most survived the 3-4 month voyage, but many ships and lives were lost.

The James Craig was later scuttled in Tasmania but subsequently restored to its former glory by the volunteers of the Sydney Heritage Fleet – 'The Museum that goes to Sea'.

The voyage was conducted in the traditional manner of the Age of Sail. Passengers participated in crewing activities – hauling ropes, climbing the ratlines, trimming the 21 sails, 'knowing the ropes' - 150 or so lines of running rigging - performing watch duties day or night, assisting in the galley, making sails and scrubbing decks.

His illustrated presentation shared the highlights of David's trip of a lifetime!

... Editor

Sunset Sips – Friday 28th August 2026

Winter is about to disappear at the end of the month.

But it's still a bit chilly in the evening.

Never mind, brace the cold and enjoy a smooth red!

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

Sunset Sips 5 00 pm Friday 28th August 2026

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Advance Notice

Your Activities Officer and his sub-committee are keenly looking at a variety of activities over the next few months.

They are considering visits to:

- *October - Archery Class – date tbc*
- *November - James Craig sail – date tbc*
- *BBQ – Friday Nov 6th*
- *December Xmas Lunch – Thursday Dec 10th*
- *January - Prawn Pod - date tbc*
- *February - Devonshire Tea picnic at West Head - date tbc*

… Activities Officer John Rodger

There is so much to discuss, but of so little consequence

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

Each Thursday morning at 10 00am.

There is so much to discuss, but of so little consequence!

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Once Climate Change was on Top

The Reserve Bank of Australia instructed JWS Research to carry out a survey just before the war erupted in the Middle East. The survey indicated a turnaround in local economic concerns as shown in the table below at a time when local issues were more clearly defined. Note how Climate Change already had slipped down the ladder where it once was on top.

No doubt, recent Global Events are changing our current thinking, not only because of the Middle East war over there but the effect on economics closer to home.

Top Economic Concerns Before the Middle East War	
Inflation	70%
Housing	39%
Interest Rates	28%
Employment & Wages	27%
Government Spending	25%
Climate Change	24%
Global Events	23%

… Source: RBA, JWS Research

The way the ball bounces

An Aussie senior golfer won an invitation to play a round of golf with the U S President, Donald Trump.

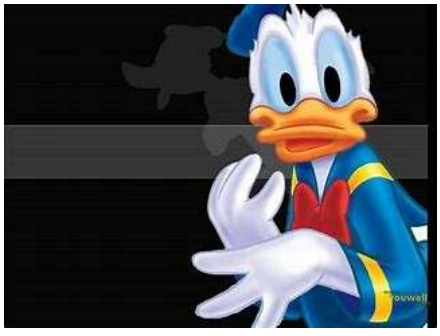
They met on the first tee where Donald said, "I'm a great golfer and I never lose, but try to keep up."

Donald hit a big drive. The ball heading for the rough in the distance.

The Aussie hit down the fairway and when he got to his ball, he was surprised that the Presidents ball ahead was in the middle of the fairway, with a couple of the Presidents Minders standing by.

This went on for several holes until the Aussie decided to try to hit further past the President to find out what was going on.

So, he took a big swing and lashed at the ball. The ball flew through the air in a big arc and started to head towards the President.



The Aussie yelled out "Mickey Mouse, Mickey Mouse!"

Luckily the ball missed the President.

One of the Minders rushed over to the Aussie and demanded "What sort of a warning is 'Micky Mouse' supposed to be?"

The Aussie said, sorry, I was a bit confused, I meant to call out, "DONALD DUCK !"

… Graham Morley

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Probus Up-Coming Activities

	August 2026	
Thursday	***Every***	***Probus Coffee Group – Mona Vale Golf Club 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***4th***	***Committee Meeting – Mona Vale Library 9:00 am***
Wednesday	***5th***	***Probus Investment Group Meeting – 10:30 am Mona Vale Golf Club***
Thursday	***6th***	***Probus trip to the NSW Art Gallery to see the Archibold and other Exhibits***
Tuesday	***11th***	***Probus General Meeting Main Speaker – Rohan Walter – Qantas Captain 5 Minute Speaker – Robert Trayner – Flying Doctor Lunch after at Pittwater RSL Club.***
Friday	***14th***	***Golf at Palm Beach – 10:00 am hit off Followed by Lunch at Palm Beach Golf Club***
Friday	***28th***	***Sunset Sips – Mona Vale Surf Club - Join us at 5 00 pm.***
	September 2026	
Thursday	***Every***	***Probus Coffee Group – Mona Vale Golf Club 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***1st***	***Committee Meeting – Mona Vale Library 9:00 am***
Wednesday	***2nd***	***Probus Investment Group Meeting – 10:30 am Mona Vale Golf Club***
Tuesday	***8th***	***Probus General Meeting Main Speaker- David Huchinson – Climate Change 5 Minute Speaker – Warwick Pope – Setting up Remote Area Construction Camps and Catering Lunch after at Pittwater RSL Club.***
Friday	***11th***	***Golf at Palm Beach – 10:00 am hit off Followed by Lunch at Palm Beach Golf Club***
----	***----***	***We are having a quiet month in September, no activities. But we will be back in October.***
Friday	***25th***	***Sunset Sips – Mona Vale Surf Club - Join us at 5 00 pm.***

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Minutes of Pittwater Probus Inc. Meeting

Meeting	14th July 2026. Commenced at 10 00 am at Mona Vale Surf Club. Meeting opened by President Bob Horton who welcomed 33 members.
Apologies	Michael Mannington, Peter Mayman.
Inductions	No inductions. Kevin Allsop absent.
Minutes	Minutes of the June 2026 meeting were published in the July 2026 Newsletter. Moved Paul Mascall. Seconded Peter Nash. Carried.
Matters Arising from Minutes	Vice President position vacant – appeal for starters. Need to strengthen the club finances. Commenced a $5 raffle ticket on entry to the meeting up to Christmas with a bottle of wine as prize, all to boost club finances. Also, a bottle of sparkling wine to members if they sign up a new member. President asked for further information on the history of Mona Vale.
Welfare Report	Charles Hill advised that 12 members responded to his welfare enquiries. All OK.
Correspondence	PSPL correspondence only.
Secretary's Report	Nothing to report.
Treasurer's Report	Warwick Pope advised the June 2026 accounts were published in the July Newsletter. Balance 1st June 2026 $2,844.20. Balance 30th June $2,889.60. Moved John Porter. Seconded David James. Carried.
Birthdays	Brent Baker, Geoff Richards, Ian Storey.
Activities & Functions	Sunset Sips Friday 28th July at MVSC. 2-day golfing trip to Kooindah Waters in September cancelled. Art Gallery 6th August. Lunch at Limanis 30th July. Past Presidents Lunch in November.
Speakers	Brent Baker advised Speaker today is David Cant – James Craig voyage to Hobart. Bill Sivyer – Glasses for the vision impaired. For August Qantas Captain Rohan Walter and Robert Trayner.
Newsletter & Website	Ron Seldon looking for articles from members.
Golf	Warwick Pope reported June game, 5 players: Winner Bill Sherman. Next game Friday 17th July. More players required.
Investment Group	John Harston advised investments – some up, some down.
General Business	The President advised that the Committee was about to undertake a membership review, noting that it is declining. Need 4 new members per year to hold the status quo. Also seek former Rotary Club members that maybe interested our Men's Probus Club. Need to improve our account balance sheet.
Speakers	Short Speaker Bill Sivyer – Demonstrated his new vision impaired glasses complete with hearing aids. After the break, David Cant gave a very good account of his sailing to Tasmania on the James Craig with on-board photos.
Next Meeting	Meeting closed at 12 05 pm. Next Meeting 14th July 2026 at Mona Vale Surf Club commencing at 10 00 am.

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	**John Rodger, Charles Hill, Bill Sherman, David James, John Rourke, David Cant.**	**Speakers Committee**	**Brent Baker, Bill Sherman, David James, Charles Hill**

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