Probus Club of Pittwater

Newsletter – September 2026

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

President's Message

Dear Fellow Members,

Here we are and the year is 75% complete almost. I trust that you are looking forward to the warmer months that are fast approaching and I also hope you are all fit and well and fulfilling your lives with interesting activities and enjoying the friendship and camaraderie of Pittwater Probus. Just utilise our activities calendar which is part of this newsletter and make an effort to partake in some of our activities,

Thanks to Geoff Shepherd for his contribution last month about the spotted gum, you can be the next contributor just send your article along to Ron Seldon.

The Management Committee are all working hard to drive the Club to greater success, but they cannot do it without your support. You can help by 'bring a friend' to the next meeting, introduce a new member and win a prize or simply participate in a Probus Event.

A warm welcome to David Hill as a new member and it was pleasing to see five visitors to our August meeting.

So here we go on Bob's history tour of Mona Vale

Transport in Mona Vale evolved from early Indigenous footpaths and timber getter tracks into a modern Northern Beaches hub served by arterial roads, local on-demand transit, and the high-frequency B-Line bus network.

Indigenous Tracks and Timber Trails:

- Early transport routes through the area originated as traditional tracks used by local Indigenous peoples moving between the coast and inland hunting grounds.
- In the early 19th century, timber getters widened these paths into rough tracks to haul lumber down to Pittwater and Middle Harbour.
- Settlers later formalised a dirt track along the alignment of modern Mona Vale Road to connect the upper North Shore heights down to coastal timber resources.

Road and Bus Development:

- As farming and settlement grew, Pittwater Road became the primary north-south spine linking Mona Vale to Narrabeen, Manly, and Sydney.
- Mona Vale Bus Depot was opened on January 26, 1970, this transformed local public transit by taking over northern routes from Brookvale.
- Mona Vale Road has undergone continuous widening and major safety upgrades over the decades to manage heavy commuter traffic.

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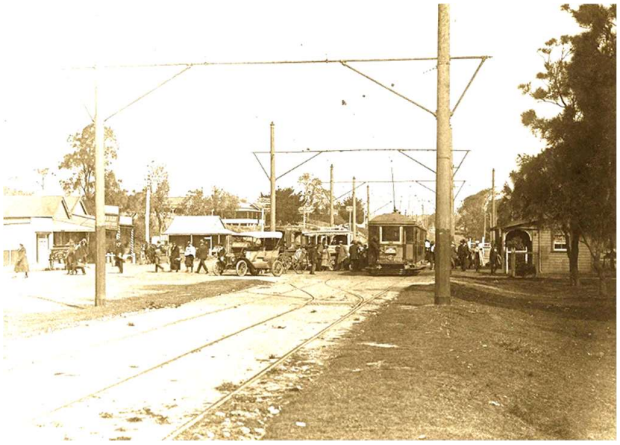
- High-frequency, double-decker B-Line bus services commenced in November 2017, vastly improving peak-hour commute times between Mona Vale and the Sydney CBD.
- Keoride was introduced to feed local residential areas into the main Mona Vale transport and commercial hubs.

Early Tram and Rail Proposals:
As the population swelled, the push to replace water craft with heavy rail or steel tracks intensified, resulting in grand plans that were only ever partially completed.

- In 1888 the NSW Government passed the North Shore, Manly and Pittwater Tramway and Railway Act. This ambitious piece of legislation authorized a sweeping line running all the way from the North Shore, across The Spit, through Manly, and directly north to Newport and Church Point.
- The grand rail line to Pittwater never materialised. Instead, an isolated tramway network grew in pieces from Manly Wharf. It reached Brookvale in 1910, connected back to the Spit Ferry in 1911, and was electrified and extended to Collaroy and Narrabeen by 1913.



Narrabeen Tram Terminus

- When the Sydney Harbour Bridge was designed, the eastern lanes were explicitly built to carry the never-constructed Northern Beaches Railway. Trams used the concrete viaducts as a "temporary" measure. Following a massive drop in public transport patronage, the entire Northern Beaches rail plan was abandoned, and the Narrabeen tram line was officially decommissioned on October 1, 1939, replaced permanently by double-decker buses.

I am certain that many of you can add to this brief overview for next month's newsletter.

Please do so and in the meantime take care of yourself and stay fit and well.

…Kindest regards to all, Bob

Time to "Spring" into Action

Spring has arrived, so it's time to get out and enjoy life with your club friends. Here's what's coming up!

- *Sydney Water North Head - September*
- *Sea Wave Thai Dinner - 15th October*
- *Archery Lessons – 27th October*
- *BBQ Winnererremy Bay - 6th November*
- *Sailing on the James Craig – 14th Nov*
- *Prawn Pod - 4th December*
- *Christmas Luncheon - 10th December*

No excuse not to join us.
All details are in the Newsletter!

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Vale – Captain James Attrill

With great sadness, we advise the passing of our long-term and highly respected member, Jim Attrill. Jim started as a Deck Cadet on general cargo ships in 1957 which led to 46 years at sea.

In the late 1980s, BHP became involved in the Northwest Shelf LNG project, operating 4 x 125,000 tonne LNG tankers. Jim was appointed Master on the second of these in 1990, the 'Northwest Snipe' and spent the next 14 years until his retirement delivering Liquid Natural Gas from Dampier, WA, to any of 10 ports in Japan.

Jim always kept a low profile within the club but was quietly active, being President in 2010. If Jim was participating in a club trivia quiz and you were not on his table, your likelihood of winning was pretty slim. Jim's natural knowledge always shone through.

Northwest Snipe

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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 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.

October 2026 – 5-Minute Speaker

Rod Nunn – Qantas Cabin Crew

On Boxing Day 1974, the day after Cyclone Tracy, Rod was a crew member on a Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet, the first into Darwin that brought out 706 passengers, mostly women and children and injured people.

Rod will tell the story of how the cabin crew managed this remarkable rescue mission.

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October 2026 – Main Speaker

John Roberts – Adventures of a Bridge Professional

John Roberts has been an international bridge player and professional bridge teacher for almost 50 years. He has won many Australian championships and represented Australia numerous times in world championship events.

John will talk about his earlier years when he travelled through Europe and the Middle East playing bridge tournaments. He has many entertaining accounts of the life of a professional card player including high-stake games, famous and infamous people he has played against, unusual prizes he has won and cheating scandals.

Since retiring from playing professional bridge he has taught thousands of people to love the game. He has also set up many bridge clubs in Sydney and runs Bridge Away, a travel agency specialising in luxury holidays for bridge players.

It doesn't come better than this!

Sea Wave – Thai Dinner

On Thursday 15th October 2025, the Probus team (members and partners) is heading to the Sea Wave Thai Restaurant in Avalon Parade again for a feast of the best of flavours, colours and sounds of Thailand. Member' partners and visitors invited. Time 6 00pm

The club has organised a set 3 course menu. Cost $55 00 per head. Buy your own drinks. See Menu below.

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The fixed menu for all to enjoy

Entrée: spring rolls, darling harbour prawns, prawn crackers with peanut sauce, satay chicken skewers and salt pepper squid.

Main: whole fish with season sauce, penang curry beef, stir fried chicken with cashew nuts, fried rice, vegies, tofu and steam rice.

Add your name to the list at the next meeting or contact Charles Hill on 0414 913 267

The Two Faces of Iran

Brian Kennedy – Iran, As It Once Was

Eleven years ago, my wife Barbara and I booked a car and driver to take us from Tehran to Shiraz across the mountains of Iran. We were joined by our daughter Charlotte.

Nobody told us was what a friendly people the Persians are. Or that there are two very different lots of people in Iran -the city sophisticates and the country folk. Today we watch the awful war news on television and wonder how it is affecting the people who gave us such a warm welcome in September 2015.

Our first day in Tehran began with a visit to the former US Embassy. Someone had painted a message on the wall. "Death to America". Not a promising start. Then one of the guards smiled and offered to take our photo. We wandered off to explore the bustling modern city. Every time we stopped to consult our tourist map a crowd of locals would gather around us anxious to practice their English and offer directions. It soon became apparent that we were practically the only English-speaking tourists in Iran. Today I imagine that there are probably none.

As we travelled around the country the differences between city and country rapidly became apparent. While the smart young girls of Tehran wore their brightly coloured headscarves defiantly pushed back on their heads, the women of Yazd in central Iran often wore the full burqa. Boris Johnson got himself into a lot of trouble by comparing Muslim women in burqas to letter boxes. So, I won't. However, walking around Yazd it became apparent that the city slickers from Tehran enjoyed watching their country cousins who still lived in traditional houses made of dried mud.

Our driver expertly navigated his way through some of the world's worst traffic. He spoke little English, but when he saw a man with a white turban he made his political views known by swearing Bad Mullah and spitting. Outside Isfahan he pointed out the plant where they were enriching uranium. It was beside a lonely road and in full public sight. We decided not to stop and take a photo.

Brian Kennedy and his daughter Charlotte outside one of the many ancient mosques of Isfahan

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Outside our hotel in Isfahan the beautiful ancient city of mosques a complete stranger approached us and invited us to her house for lunch. We had read that this was a common Persian practice, so we accepted. The next day our driver found her suburban home in a modern block of flats. We were joined by her husband who worked for an insurance company and her two daughters who were learning English at school. Charlotte who had learned Urdu as a diplomat in Pakistan was able to follow some words of Farsi which is a related non-Arabic language. Lunch was served on a carpet on the floor and was the best meal we had on the whole trip.

Lunch was served Persian style by our hostess and two daughters

Our last city was Shiraz which is near the ancient city of Persepolis which in 3 BC was mostly destroyed by Alexander the Great, the earliest in a long line of invaders of Iran which now includes Donald Trump. Unfortunately, you can no longer get a glass of Shiraz wine in Shiraz. In fact, alcohol is illegal throughout Iran. This meant that I didn't get an alcoholic drink during the whole trip of two weeks five days and three hours. I staggered aboard the Air India plane and ordered a whisky.

Meanwhile Charlotte was flying back to America where she was studying and was subjected to a hostile interrogation by the Iranian police and accused of being a spy. Fortunately, she was finally cleared and flew back to America where the immigration department demanded to know what she was doing in Iran.

… Brian Kennedy

BBQ Is Back in November

Daylight Saving is here!

This means one thing.

It's time we had a BBQ at Winnererremy Bay!

Mark the day: Friday 6th November 2026

Join us at 5 00 pm. Cost $5 per head.

Pay on the day.

PIG Investment Group

Join the Probus money men at 10 30 am Wednesday 2nd September at the Mona Vale Golf Club Café as they decide what to invest in next.

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Come Sail Away

Experience the thrill of ocean sailing on a fully restored Tall Ship from the 1870s: the James Craig.

This is a once in a life-time experience and should not be missed

Your amazing experience, organised by Sydney Heritage Fleet, begins as this historic 1874 square rig sail-ship leaves her berth at Pyrmont. As you cruise down the harbour, take in the sights of other harbour icons - the mighty Harbour Bridge and the stunning Opera House - then wave farewell to the beautiful Sydney skyline as we make our way out through Sydney Heads to the great blue yonder to watch the crew unfurl and set sails, turning time back 150 years to the Age of Sail.

*Your ticket includes morning tea, a tasty lunch and afternoon tea. Tea, coffee and water are available throughout the sail and alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and souvenir merchandise can be purchased onboard. *Please note that this is a cashless venue for on-board purchases, debit or credit card only.*

- *Boarding 10:30am*
  - *Departing 11:00am*
  - *Returning 4:00pm*
- *Depart & Disembark North Wharf, Australian National Maritime Museum*
- *Due to safety requirements, passengers must be at least 12 years old to board the vessel.*
- *Due to the heritage nature, the vessel is not wheelchair accessible. Stilettos, sharp-heeled shoes, smoking and e-cigarettes are strictly prohibited.*
- *If, in the opinion of the Master on the day, the wind or sea state is deemed unsuitable for the comfort of passengers, the cruise will be cancelled and passengers given the option of another day or partially refunded.*

Location: Tall Ship James Craig, Wharf 7, 58 Pirrama Road, Pyrmont, NSW 2009. Just north of the Maritime Museum.

How do you want to get there? Parking in streets if available. Time limits apply, so public transport and a walk from QVB better if people are able.

Passengers watch the crew work on the rigging and prepare to sail. You can walk around the ship, take photos, chat etc. No need to climb the mast.

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Date: 14th November 2026, subject to availability. Please advise your intentions on the sheet to be circulated at the September General Meeting, or by email to the club.

Seasick medication desirable. (Talk to David Cant, he may be able to provide some.)

The cost is $168 per person, to be paid to Pittwater Probus by Friday 25th September 2026. Pittwater Probus: BSB 062 211 Account 00900956

Visit the Sydney Heritage Fleet website www.shf.org.au for more information.

Sea to Sky

Don Tinyou recounts a once Newport resident who made the change from Newport to the Glass House Mountains in Queensland. Bob Martin was a well-known and competent local builder located in Newport who decided with his wife, Karen, to have a sea change reverse. Some members may remember Bob when he lived in Newport.

This is his story.

In the hinterland of Queensland's Sunshine Coast, there is a long tradition of fruit farming. Innovators like second generation farmers Robert and Karen Martin are part of the gourmet production in this fertile area with its sub-tropical climate. They are enthusiastic horticultural lists who take great pleasure in bringing the best exotic fruits, like custard apples, dragon fruit and lychees to Australians' plates. And they are now gaining worldwide attention with innovations like the Pinks Blush custard apple variety and the award-winning Custard Dustt' sweetener.

Robert and Karen are the latest producers to take up the fruit-growing tradition at Yanalla and reinvent it for contemporary Australian tastes.

Here in Queensland's Glass House Mountains region (named by Captain James Cook in 1770 because the mountain shapes reminded him of glass-making foundries), early European settlers found the perfect place to grow tropical fruits in the rich volcanic soil.

In the 1920s, the land that is now Yanalla was part of a soldier settlement allotment. Some of the pecan trees from that time still survive on the property and still produce sweet nuts.

Robert's parents, Bob and Janette Martin, bought the property in 1976 and named it 'Yanalla' after Janette's childhood home at Mosman in Sydney (which was once the home of author Ethel May Turner).

When Bob and Janette decided to retire in 2011, Robert and Karen bought the property and rebranded it Yanalla Farms. Robert and Karen replaced older orchards with new trees to meet emerging demand. They planted popular varieties of lychees and introduced dragon fruit trees to meet emerging demand. Their most exciting innovation is developing an unusual custard apple with its origins on a tree Bob noticed 20 years ago.

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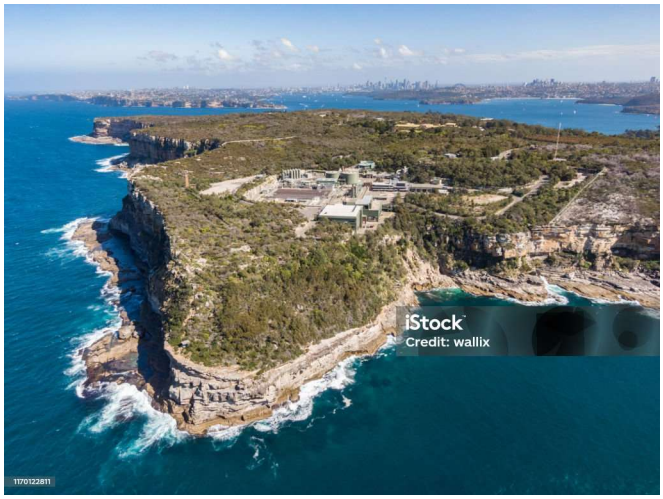
Today the unusual pink-tinged custard apple is nearly ready to be licensed to other growers who will benefit from this delightfully different, delicious new variety.

Robert and Karen are keen to celebrate the region's fruitful legacy and continue the local horticultural traditions. Their farm is now the venue for occasional food events where locals and visitors come and feast in the orchards beneath the Glasshouse Mountains, which have been part of the landscape for more than 25 million years.

… Sourced by Don Tinyou

Trip to Sydney Water's North Head Establishment

Looking for something to do in September.



John Rodger is aiming to take a Probus Group to Sydney Water's North Head establishment.

Sydney Water Community Relations people have indicated that they would be happy to host such a visit and provide a guided tour. Once we have the date which is likely to be late September, we will let you know.

Learn about how this establishment provides a very necessary service, right at our doorstep.

August 2026 Accounts

Opening Balance 1 August 2026	**$3,624.69**
Morning Coffee Receipts	160.00
Club Annual Fees	50.00
Raffle	145.00
Total Receipts	**$355.00**
Morning Coffee – MVSC/Biscuits	131.80
Cost of Committee Meeting Room Hire	12.00
Art Gallery Trip Cost	277.00
Admin Supplies	92.05
Total Expenses	**$512.85**
Closing Balance 31 August 2026	**$3,466.84**

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Ducking and Diving

Graham Morley has been busy again. Here is his cartoon of Donald Trump swapping planes.

The Taste of Spring

The prawns have arrived, so take a moment to mark in your diary, 5 00 pm Friday 4th December for the first Prawn Pod gathering of the season.

The assembly of this ritualistic Probus event will be at Bayview (next to the tennis courts) to enjoy the most enticing prawns and oysters from the Prawn Pod. Join the team and bring your chairs and refreshments. No need to book ahead, just roll up.

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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Archery Lessons – Cromer Park

As our Activities Officer John Rodger advised at the August Meeting we will be going to Archery School on Saturday 27th October in the afternoon.

With 15 positive responses we have the core group ready to go. The cost will be $26 per head, and it will be at Cromer Park. More details to follow.

So, test your skills on one of the oldest forms of sport, or as it was in the old days, survival.

Speaker's Corner

Rohan Walter – Qantas Captain

Rohan recounted many behind the scenes stories from his career as a Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet Captain, noting that although there is a serious side to flying big jets, there are lighter moments.

Rohan was coming to the end of his school years and not totally sure what to do next. He was given by chance, via a Newspaper Ad, given to him by a friend, an offering to learn to fly as a commercial pilot. Eventually he was selected from a large number of applicants.

After joining Qantas and learning to fly, Rohan advanced his career into flying large passenger planes. He spent one and a half years flying Boeing 707s, followed by forty-five years flying 747s.

In telling many entertaining stories of his career, Rohan talked about flying through the Hong Kong towers in the old part of the city to land at the original airport. Something most of us have experienced as passengers.

Rohan described his enjoyment in flying 747s and considering them to be a great plane, comfortable, safe and secure.

... Editor

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Highlight of the Year

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Sunset Sips – Friday 25th September 2026

It's Spring!

Winter is gone, so time to get out and prepare for summer.

Taste a cool white to welcome the season change!

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

Sunset Sips 5 00 pm Friday 25th September 2026

Institutions That Threaten Our Prosperity

DemosAU is an organisation that specialises in providing insights and decision making across Australia to governments and the Australian public. Their work includes political and public opinion polling.

They have just completed their "Net Trust Watch Report" which shows a material decline in trust in Australia's national institutions since the start of 2025

Net Trust Comparison	***January 2025***	***April 2026***
Bureau of Meteorology	*53%*	*40%*
CSIRO	*47%*	*42%*
Australian Electoral commission	*42%*	*39%*
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission	*35%*	*30%*
Therapeutic Goods Administration	*32%*	*28%*
The High Court	*27%*	*22%*
Australian Broadcasting Commission	*24%*	*17%*
Reserve Bank of Australia	*12%*	*15%*
House of Representatives	*8%*	*-1%*
The Australian Senate	*5%*	*1%*
Australian Energy Market Operator	*-8%*	*-9%*
The Criminal Justice System	*-10%*	*-9%*

Not Surprised!!

… Extract from DemosAU, AFR

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Probus Up-Coming Activities

	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 Hutchinson – Climate Change*** ***5 Minute Speaker – Warwick Pope –Outback 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***
Friday	***25th***	***Sunset Sips – Mona Vale Surf Club - Join us at 5 00 pm.***
	October 2026	
Thursday	***Every***	***Probus Coffee Group – Mona Vale Golf Club 10:00 am***
Tuesday	***6th***	***Committee Meeting – Mona Vale Library 9:00 am***
Wednesday	***7th***	***Probus Investment Group Meeting – 10:30 am*** ***Mona Vale Golf Club***
Tuesday	***13th***	***Probus General Meeting*** ***Main Speaker- John Roberts – Playing Bridge*** ***5 Minute Speaker – Rod Nunn – Qantas Cabin Crew*** ***Lunch after at Pittwater RSL Club.***
Thursday	***15th***	***Dinner at Sea Wave Avalon – 6 00pm***
Friday	***16th***	***Golf at Palm Beach – 10:00 am hit off*** ***Followed by Lunch at Palm Beach Golf Club***
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 August 2026. Commenced at 10 00 am at Mona Vale Surf Club. Meeting opened by President Bob Horton who welcomed 35 members. 2 visitors Bruce Hamer and Brian Slavin.
Apologies	David Varley, Geoff Sheppard, John Shewood, Bob Anderson, Michael Mannington, Peter Mayman.
Inductions	David Hill was inducted.
Minutes	Minutes of the July 2026 meeting were published in the August 2026 Newsletter. Moved Wes Harder. Seconded David James. Carried.
Matters Arising from Minutes	Vice President position vacant – appeal for starters. Probus 50th Birthday coming up. A bottle of sparkling wine to members if they sign up a new member.
Welfare Report	Charles Hill advised that only 50% of members attending meetings. Endeavouring to collate maladies affecting members.
Correspondence	PSPL correspondence only.
Secretary's Report	Nothing to report.
Treasurer's Report	Warwick Pope advised the July 2026 accounts were published in the August Newsletter. Balance 1st July 2026 $2,899.60. Balance 31st July $3,624.69. Moved Paul Mascall. Seconded Wes Harder. Carried.
Birthdays	Ken Boyes.
Activities & Functions	Sunset Sips Friday 28th July at MVSC. Coffee group. Organising Archery lessons $25/Head in October.
Speakers	Brent Baker advised Speaker today is Rohan Walter to talk about his many experiences as a Qantas Captain. Robert Trayner talked about the Flying Doctor. September Speakers are David Hutchinson and Warwick Pope
Newsletter & Website	Ron Seldon has an article from Brian Kennedy.
Golf	Warwick Pope reported Brent Baker won the July Trophy.
Investment Group	Generally, a mixed bag; some up, some down.
General Business	Charles Hill advised that the club had 80 members in 2020, 60 members in 2025. Need 4 extra members per year to break even on numbers. Committee endeavouring to increase membership and meeting attendance to stabilise the club. Follow up on ex-members of Rotary as a possible source.
Speakers	After the break, Rohan Walter gave an entertaining talk about many of the antics that take place behind the scenes. The President thanked the speaker.
Next Meeting	Meeting closed at 11 50 am. Next Meeting 8th September 2026 at Mona Vale Surf Club commencing at 10 00 am.

2026 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**

2026 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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