

# National Seniors Australia ~ Centenary Branch

## DECEMBER 2020- Newsletter

Good morning, members.

Let's farewell 2020 – pretty strange year for most of us but we all did the right thing and Qld seems to have Covid19 on the run. Keep up the good work. Wash your hands!!.

As we look to 2021 let's try to have a couple ( 5 to 7) day trips. Maybe a trip to Hervey Bay for whale watching. We need your input for suggested trips. While we have time to spare over December and January please put some thought into day excursions for our Explorer Trips and let me know your ideas.

Our trip to Lightning Ridge – 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April – is all systems go. We will need names and deposits of \$400 per person at the February meeting. In the event that Covid rears its ugly head all monies paid will be refunded.

Once again I thank each and every committee member for their participation in this most difficult year.

I take this opportunity to wish you and yours a safe, happy, healthy Christmas and look forward to meeting again in February.

**DO NOT SAVE ANY MORE BOTTLE TOPS - REQUIRED AMOUNTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.**

OOPS – Sorry. The biscuit recipe in November Newsletter had 1 cup butter. It should have read ½ CUP BUTTER.

**MARJORIE GREEN IS NOW RECUPERATING IN CANOSSA REHAB FOLLOWING HER RECENT STROKE AND WE WISH HER ALL THE BEST FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY.**

Geoff Harvey, our Treasurer, has been cultivating a moustache for Movember, proceeds going to Mens Health. The \$1 returned to me by some members from Melbourne Cup lunch, will be donated to that cause. Well done Geoff.

Do not forget your favourite recipes for February Newsletter. Maybe we could even do our own cookbook!!

BIRTHDAYS:

MANY HAPPY RETURNS



CONTACTS

PRESIDENT/EXPLORER TRIPS  
(Entertainers/Guest Speakers)

BEV

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VICE-PRESIDENT

YVONNE

37158980

SECRETARY/NEWSLETTER  
(INCLUDES MEMBERS WISHING TO HAVE THEIR

CHERYL

0407597812

NEWSLETTER EMAILED, OR PUT IN AN APOLOGY FOR GENERAL MEETING)

TREASURER	GEOFF	3715 7874
COACH TRIPS	ANN	3376 3760
DINNERS, FUNCTIONS	JENNY	3376 3616
MAHJONG	JUDY HUNOLD/JO MURRAY	3378 4935/ 0406413836
STEADY STEPS /CHANGES TO ADDRESS/PH NOS	HUGH	3376 1371
HEART FOUNDATION WALKING MT OMMANEY	SEE DOREEN FLYNN	
MUSIC AT THE HUB	MARJORIE	3376 2030

#### CENTENARY NATIONAL SENIORS WEBPAGE

<https://nationalseniors.com.au/get-involved/branches/centenary>

***Do you know of any Centenary Seniors members who are unwell? Often we do not know of anyone who has been unwell or in hospital. If you know of any members please call Carol Uren on 0415 722 940. Meetings are first Tuesday each month, February to October, except November (second Tuesday) at the Jindalee Bowls Club at 9.30am. Secretary: Cheryl Williams. P.O. Box 470 Mt Ommaney .***

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#### A POEM TO BRING BACK MEMORIES.

A clothesline was a news forecast, to neighbours passing by,  
There were no secrets you could keep, when clothes were hung to dry.  
It also was a friendly link, for neighbours always knew, if company had  
stopped on by to spend a night or two.  
For then you'd see the "*fancy sheets*" and towels upon the line;  
you'd see the "*company table cloths*" with intricate designs.  
The line announced a baby's birth, from folks who lived inside,  
As brand new infant clothes were hung, so carefully with pride!  
The ages of the children could, so readily be known,  
By watching how sizes changed, you'd know how much they'd grown!  
It also told when illness struck, as extra sheets were hung;  
Then nightclothes and a bathrobe too, haphazardly were strung.  
It also said, "*On vacation now*", when lines hung limp and bare  
It told, "*We're back!*" when full lines sagged, with not an inch to spare!  
New folks in town were scorned upon, if wash was dingy grey,  
As neighbours carefully raised their brows and looked the other way.  
But clotheslines now are of the past, for dryers make work much less.  
Now what goes on inside a home is anybody's guess!  
I really miss that way of life, it was a friendly sign,  
When neighbours knew each other best by what hung on the line.

## **MEMBER PROFILE**

### **My Foray into Decorating a “Christmas Lights House”, by Geoff Harvey.**

Back in 2003, there were a lot of changes to my life; My wife and I had just moved to a new (to us) house in The Gap, our grandchildren were toddlers, and after being offered redundancy, I had retired to give more attention to home life. This new house had a nice high set veranda across the front, and I thought that a few Christmas lights and icicles across the front would impress my grandchildren. I had never ever done lights before so off I went to K-Mart and up went my lights. However, I then found that a neighbour across the road had been displaying Christmas lights for many years, and sadly, my few lights looked rather insignificant in comparison. So, you guessed right, my lights multiplied rapidly that first season.

After that first Christmas, I Googled ‘Christmas lights’ and found that, at least in the USA, lights could be controlled by computer and even synchronised to music to make a much more impressive display. As it happened, I had worked with computers in a technical sense throughout my working life, and this ‘light control concept’ became a new challenge in retirement. Could this be achieved in Oz with Australian lights and 240 V power? Some initial purchases and testing showed that the computer control would work, and so I started a journey down a long road. What was the best way to computerise lights in Australia? What types of lights and arrangements work best to create a dynamic display, eg colour changes, movements, twinkles etc? What structural shapes could be used to support the lights? The internet contained many ideas to draw on, artificial ‘mega-trees’, ‘mini-trees’, arches, icicles, bushes etc.

When I started down this road, all the available light strings were still incandescent as opposed to the LEDs that are now available. Colour depended on the glass colour of bulbs and the colour range was extremely limited. To create light strings of different colours, I spent many hours individually painting each bulb with glass paint. After three years experimenting with strings and mini-trees at our Gap house, we moved to Sinnamon Park to a new house with a totally different yard layout. It was a corner block with a 6 foot high brick fence and only a single entry gate. This posed a whole new set of layout constraints; from the street, nobody could see my yard, and because of the single entry, it was impractical for visitors to wander through the yard area inside the fence, I decided to decorate the visible parts of the house and fence so that it would be best viewed from the footpaths across the road. The first items were icicles on the house and fence, a series of mini-trees on the outside fence and a big ‘mega-tree’ inside on the corner. The first year or two I continued using the original incandescent lights with thousands of painted bulbs, but as LEDs became more available, the display transitioned to these new lights which were more vibrant, brighter and had a wider range of colours. I experimented with various light patterns and transitions, chasing mini-trees, rotating patterns on the mega-tree, colour changes and chasing patterns on arches. During these early years, the show was played with unsynchronized background music. On entering the 4KQ lights competition, crowds of spectators came and seemed to like what they saw.

After a few years of experimentation, I managed to synchronise the lights with a few pieces of music, using light patterns that I thought would be effective. Of course, you cannot see the results until the whole show is erected and then turned on. Some of the early results were a bit hit and miss, but over a few more years, I progressively refined my display ideas in parallel with adding new lights and structures, not always successfully. When I added more lights to arches, they collapsed in a moderate breeze; Storms blew over some of the light trees and even smashed my mega-tree one year just before Christmas. The designs improved each year and became more robust. Also, my programming of the lights improved each year, but this remained a very time-consuming part of what had become my passion. It took some 10-12 hours to program each minute of synchronized music, and the show typically ran 20-25 minutes.

My display became my passion and I derived immense satisfaction from two sources, firstly that sense of achievement when after weeks of testing the lights, programming and erecting the display, I would turn it on and see it actually work. And secondly, having got it working, to see the people come and watch. I ran the display each night for most of December and would spend all my evenings on the footpath talking to the visitors, handing sweets to the children, and answering questions, all the while hoping the computer did not crash. For the last few years of my display, I put out a donation box for charities that I selected and received some \$4500-\$6000 each year. It was pleasing to find a number of \$20 and even \$50 dollar notes in the donations from time to time. Busses came to visit, and some people even bought rugs to sit on while watching and having a picnic. (I did put out plastic chairs each night.) After moving to Sinnamon Park, I did enter the 4KQ lights competition and initially received 'judge's commendations.' In subsequent years, I was awarded some prizes for "Best Synchronized Display" and a placing in the Western suburbs division. In my final year 2014, I scooped the prize pool and was judged 'Best in Brisbane', a really nice way to finish.

A few statistics – answers to common questions:

- I would start erecting the display in earnest about end September.
- While lights were added and removed each year, there were about 100,000 lights.
- There were about 600 computer channels controlled from my PC.
- The power consumed was about the same as a moderately sized air-conditioner (2-3kW).
- I never counted crowds, but estimated at peak times that there might have been 3-500 watching.
- My lights started in 2003 (The Gap) and ended 2014 (Sinnamon Park).
- Videos are still on YouTube (2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrvjRFaKFmQ> or search for "Sinnamon Lights" for earlier videos.



## CALENDAR 2020

### DECEMBER 2020

Tuesday 1st	Xmas Lunch	11.30am	Monier Hotel	\$35
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	MahJong	9-12noon	The Hub	
Monday 7th	Steady Steps	9am for 9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Lord Mayor's Xmas Party	9am	B'bane City Hall	
Thursday 10th	MahJong	9-12noon	The Hub	
Monday 14th	Steady Steps	9am for 9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Lunch	11.30am	Monier Hotel	
Monday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Steady Steps	9am for 9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
		<b>XMAS</b>		

### JANUARY 2021

Monday 4th	Steady Steps	9am for 9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Thursday 7th	Mahjong	9-12noon	The Hub	
Monday 11th	Steady Steps	9am for 9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Thursday 14th	MahJong	9-12noon	The Hub	
Thursday 21st	Lunch	12noon	Monier Hotel Darra	
Monday 18th	Steady Steps	9am for 9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup>	Steady Steps	9am for 9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
<b>Tuesday 26th</b>	<b>Committee Meeting NB This is Public Holiday.</b>	<b>1pm</b>	<b>President's Home</b>	

### FEBRUARY 2021

Monday 1st	Steady Steps	8.45 or 9.45am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 2nd	General Meeting	9.30am	J'Lee Bowls Club	\$5
Thursday 4th	MahJong	9-12noon	The Hub	
Monday 8th	Steady Steps	8.45 or 9.45am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Thursday 11th	MahJong	9-12noon	The Hub	
Monday 15th	Steady Steps	8.45 or 9.45am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Thursday 18th	Lunch	12noon	Monier Hotel Darra	
Monday 22nd	Steady Steps	9am for 9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 23rd	Committee Meeting	1pm	Mt. Ommaney Library	