

National Seniors Australia ~ Centenary Branch

MARCH 2022 - Newsletter

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

President's Report

We have started the year well with our excursions and trips providing stimulating social experiences, and dare I use the word 'educational' as well. Our explorer trip up the Brisbane River to Breakfast Creek and back was very popular with members, and River City Cruises looked after us well.

The bus trip to Emerald has had many expressions of interest, but you must make a decision and pay the \$200 deposit to secure your seat, otherwise you could miss out. I know that we'll once again have a wonderful time, getting to know the region, sharing our experiences, while being served meals in restaurants and sleeping in comfortable rooms that other people clean.

Bev Hocker, through her meals on wheels work, has raised the issue of emergency information, in the unhappy event that any of us need to call an ambulance and rush to hospital. We may not be in a state to give details of our age, health details, medications and so on. So we are urging members to take steps to ensure that in an emergency, we have information on the fridge door and in our wallets to facilitate speedy treatment. See the form at the back of this newsletter to fill in and put on fridge.

As a direct result of the skin cancer talk presented by Des from the Cancer Council at our last meeting, at least one member discovered she had a melanoma, which brings home to us the importance for every one of us to take steps to both protect our skins, and check for and take action re suspicious moles etc. It's not a disease that only happens to someone else.

Finally, we can congratulate ourselves for weathering the Covid-19 pandemic, and making use of vaccine protections to get back to getting on with things in our habitual enjoyable way. The threat of serious illness from this disease has really receded for those vaccinated (or immune anyway), and won't stop us from meeting and going to places of interest, as usual.

Entertainer: Darrel Beasant – The Pitch Factory.

BIRTHDAYS: Best wishes are extended to all our valued members celebrating birthdays during March. We hope you have a wonderful day.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS



COFFEE & CONVERSATION: On the last Tuesday each month members meet for Coffee and a chat at the elevated area in the Mt Ommaney Food Court at 10am. New Members are most welcome.

MUSIC AT THE HUB – Resumes on Sat. 5th March at 6pm (for 7pm) \$10 BYO. See Marjorie for further info.

On Monday evenings at 6.30pm a group gathers at Westside HQ (Sherwood Services Club) for Indoor Bowls. Its lighthearted, a bit of exercise and costs a princely \$3. See Maree Collins and/or Bev Hocker for further information. Join us to avoid watching nothing on television and for a bit of social activity.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Evening Dinner – Wed. 9th March – Chai Yo Thai Restaurant, Goggs Road (opposite Home Base at Jindalee.) BYO.

Tuesday 15th March 2022. Coach Trip. Chung Tian Temple at Priestdale. Depart JBC 8.30am.

Sunday 15th May 2022– 7days 6 nights – Trip to Roma/Emerald/Springsure/Rubyvale/Blackwater/Rolleston/Injune/Chinchilla/Dalby. 7 days/6nights.

Deposit of \$200 to be paid March Meeting. Balance to be paid May meeting.

N.B. Probus Club have requested that we park across the road when we do on our coach trips, if possible (i.e. walkers excluded) instead of in the Bowls Club Carpark.

PLEASE NOTE; FULL PAYMENT FOR BUS TRIPS IS TO BE MADE AT THE MONTHLY MEETING BEFORE TRIP. NAME BADGES ARE COMPULSORY FOR ALL BUS TRIPS.

BRANCH REFUND POLICY FOR BUS TRIPS: The bus is booked the Thursday before we travel. For cancellations after this date, except for medical emergencies, money will not be refunded

BANK DETAILS ARE:- BSB 084259, ACCOUNT 821660559 Centenary National Seniors
Put reference Trip EM for payments for Emerald trip

CONTACTS

PRESIDENT/EXPLORER TRIPS	FRANCES	0438 638 079
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COACH TRIPS	ANN	3376 3760/0432 630 721
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MAHJONG	JUDY HUNOLD/JO MURRAY	3378 4935/ 0406413836
STEADY STEPS /CHANGES TO ADDRESS/PH NOS	GEOFF HARVEY	3715 7874
HEART FOUNDATION WALKING MT OMMANEY		SEE DOREEN FLYNN
MUSIC AT THE HUB	MARJORIE	3376 2030

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: Anne Munro. P.O. Box 470 Mt Ommaney. 0411 564 267

A Middle Eastern Sojourn (by Frances Bertrand)

It was about 6 pm on an otherwise unremarkable evening at home with family at the dinner table in Brisbane. The phone rang and when I answered, a woman with an unusual accent identified herself as working for the Higher Colleges of Technology in the United Arab Emirates. 'We're preparing a contract for you', she said. I had sent my online application several weeks previously and had almost forgotten about it, but it appeared I was about to be employed by the United Arab Emirates government to instruct young Emiratis in English, at a women's college, a bit like TAFE in Australia.

After another month, a contract had been signed, belongings had been sorted and disposed of or stored, house rented, official documents of marriage, identity and citizenship had been notarized and sent, passports had been arranged, and qualifications checked. We were on our way to Bangkok where we would receive the visa for the UAE, at the end of January 1998.

Once the visa had arrived, we booked our flight to Dubai and went to the airport in Bangkok. Flying to the Middle East meant following a special corridor in the departure area, where the usual smiling faces were replaced by serious faced airport personnel who made a thorough search of all luggage. We thought that we'd be excluded from the flight when they found a penknife in our teenage son's bag, but after close questioning the knife was merely confiscated. This was before 9/11 and we were not used to such extreme vetting, wondering what was in store at our destination in a part of the world we only knew of through news bulletins.

The United Arab Emirates was originally 6 independent states, each ruled by an Emir, who had absolute power, and this had been the case through centuries. In 1976 they federated to form one country; the six rulers ruled in a kind of joint council, and the country started modernising from its traditional ways of life, boosted by gigantic oil revenues which had commenced in the early 20th Century and which underpinned a comfortable lifestyle for its people, the Emiratis. During our time there, the national population comprised just a few million Emiratis, with a per capita average annual income twice that of Australia. However, the resident population was about 10 million, the majority being foreigners living in the country and providing all sorts of services and being employed as everything from banking staff, retail managers and salespeople, office workers, factory workers, agricultural labourers, doctors and nurses, and teachers and university professors and lecturers. Most of the unskilled jobs were filled by workers from the Indian subcontinent, but there were also Philippino maids and traders and professionals from other middle Eastern countries such as Irak, Syria and Egypt.

We were driven from the airport to the emirate of Sharjah, a 20 kilometre drive away Dubai, which was to be our home for the next 20 months.

The United Arab Emirates was a very safe and peaceful place to live, apart from the erratic and sometimes downright dangerous driving habits. All the foreign residents had to have police clearances, and everyone over the age of 18 had a blood test within 24 hours of arrival, which if HIV positive, meant being deported within 24 hours. The people lived in big sprawling houses made of concrete bricks but rendered to give a beautiful, usually white, exterior behind high gated walls. On many corners there were even more beautiful mosques. The main roads were bitumen, but back streets were compacted sand, and you could turn a corner and come across a herd of goats, roped together being led from A to B, looking for sparse green desert shrubs to chew on. Unfortunately none of these back roads had names, nor the houses street numbers, and so a phone was indispensable for any deliveries or visitors, who would ring when they were near and be verbally guided 'in' by phone: "we're the house with the pink fence three doors from the corner where the food shop is."

The hot climate forced life to be lived largely indoors, either in home air conditioning or in spacious (and expensive) shopping malls. There were bars and pubs in Dubai because it was legal for non-Muslims to drink alcohol, and there was a kind of foreigners club in Sharjah with a sports oval, gym, swimming pool and English pub-style hotel bar and restaurant. The membership of the club was a must for us to get exercise and chill out with a swim and cold beer beside the pool on the weekend, although I was dismayed to learn that the pool was heated in 'winter', when the daytime temperature was about 28 degrees and a plunge into cool water would

have been refreshing!

There was no mandatory dress code in the country, so Westerners dressed as we would at home, however avoiding shorts, low necklines or above the knee hems at work or out and about. Most Emiratis wore traditional dress. For men this was the white long sleeved shirt buttoned at the neck and descending to the ankles, called a dishdasha. Women wore traditional colourful dresses with a wide neckline, long sleeved and to the ankles, which unfortunately could rarely be seen because on top of these they wore the long black cloaks completely hiding anything worn underneath. They wore black head scarves surrounding their faces, hiding the hair and neck completely. Some also hid their faces behind a black mask which allowed only their eyes to be seen, and some even wore black gloves to hide their hands.

In spite of the wealth and some excellent infrastructure, like transport and hospitals, as a teacher of young people who had completed their schooling, schools were clearly failing to educate children and young people to think for themselves, and to demand a similar standard of performance to the West. This meant that most of the post-secondary Emirati students we received in our college were slow to progress and unsuited to tackle more demanding subjects that would lead to sufficient expertise to carry out modern work tasks. I hope that in the years since we left, that this has improved in line with the stated goal of the government to eventually replace the imported foreign workforce with locals.

Since there is no free press and little news in the newspapers, information about crimes and diverse events was mainly gleaned by gossip with colleagues. The emirs had absolute power in each emirate, and disputes were often settled by the emir, rather than by a court system. Nevertheless, those traditional rulers made the country run and enabled people to get on with their lives, peacefully and prosperously. (However, I really missed the feeling that I was protected by 'rights' which reflected Western values and a modern and open system of justice.)

Our colleagues from places like Canada, the UK and Ireland appreciated the hot sunny weather more than we Australians, as coming from cold and wet countries they cop miserably, long winters. There were several beaches also in the UAE, but I turned my nose up at them, being utterly spoilt by plenty of top quality beaches in Oz. Seeing how people from cold countries appreciated warm sunny weather, nowadays I try to really appreciate our sunshine and climate, and a dip in the ocean with the luxury of brave young surf lifesavers to save me if necessary.

Living there was a very interesting experience and taught us a lot about Arab history, culture and world view. Among some things I learned are the following:

1. There are five basic 'pillars of Islam' in the Muslim faith, which Muslims should follow, and none of them mention drinking alcohol, or women covering their bodies. People who follow these five rules can call themselves Muslims.
2. Muslims in the UAE love Christmas: the stores in the malls were all decked out with huge Christmas trees and decorations, and our students often exchanged presents, or gave their teachers presents. We were inundated with 'Merry Christmas' at College around this time. In the Muslim faith, Jesus is regarded as a prophet, much like Christians regard John the Baptist.
3. The lack of equality of women is not just religious: Jewish, Christian and other men in the Middle East are extremely 'macho' and not ready to give up their dominance any time soon. It really is the kingdom of men.
4. Muslims are not only forbidden to drink alcohol, they are also forbidden to gamble. And extra marital sex is also against the law. Therefore in the UAE, all these things were against the law for Muslims. (Some people might ask: what fun's left?) Non-Muslims were permitted to drink or gamble, but were breaking the law if they gave alcohol to a Muslim. Nevertheless, we personally saw that authorities turned a blind eye to places where alcohol was sold to all and sundry, and to places with poker machines.
5. While in our culture we strive to make rationality the basis for decision making, especially in the world of work, in the Middle Eastern cultures, the subjective or emotional aspects of life are allowed more prominence and influence events more.
6. Number of Middle Eastern refugees or asylum seekers accepted in the UAE: zero.

Contemplations of a senior

*** My tolerance for idiots is extremely low today. I used to have some immunity built up, but obviously there is a new strain out there.**

*** As I watch this generation try and rewrite our history, one thing I'm sure of ... it will be misspelled and have no punctuation.**

*** Me: Sobbing my heart out, "I can't see you anymore ... I'm not going to let you hurt me again."**

Trainer: "It was one sit-up."

*** Do you ever get up in the morning, look in the mirror and think "That can't be accurate."**

*** I want to be 14 again and ruin my life differently. I have new ideas.**

*** God promised men that good and obedient wives would be found in all corners of the world. Then She made the earth round...and laughed and laughed and laughed.**

*** I'm on two diets. I wasn't getting enough food on one.**

*** Apparently RSVPing to a wedding invitation "Maybe next time," isn't the correct response.**

*** I put my scale in the bathroom corner and that's where the little liar will stay until it apologizes.**

*** Felt uncomfortable driving into the cemetery. The GPS blurted out "You have reached your final destination."**

CALENDAR 2022**MARCH 2022**

Tuesday 1 st	General Meeting	9.30am	Jindalee Bowls Club	\$5
Thursday 3 rd	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Saturday 5 th	Music at The Hub	6pm	The Hub - BYO	\$10
Monday 7 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Wed. 9 th	Evening Dinner	6pm	Thai Goggs Rd OPP Home Base	
Thursday 10 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Monday 14 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 15 th	Coach Trip	8.30am	JBC- Chung Tian Temple	\$70
Thursday 17 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Monier Hotel	
Thursday 17 th	Lunch	12noon	Monier Hotel	
Monday 21 st	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent. Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Thursday 24 th	MahJong	9- 12noon	Monier Hotel	
Monday 28 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 29 th	Coffee & Conversation	10am	Mt Ommaney Food Court	
Tuesday 29 th	Committee Meeting	1pm	Mt Ommaney Library	
Thursday 31 st	MahJong	9--12noon	Monier Hotel	

APRIL 2022

Monday 4 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 5 th	General Meeting	9.30am	Jindalee Bowls Club	\$5
Thursday 7 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Monday 11 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Wed. 13 th	Evening Dinner	6pm	TBA	
Thursday 14 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Monday 18 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 19 th	Explorer Trip	8.30am	Bogga Road Jail	
Thursday 21 st	MahJong	9.-12noon	Monier Hotel	
Thursday 21 th	Lunch	12noon	Monier Hotel	
Monday 25 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent. Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 26 th	Coffee & Conversation	10am	Mt Ommaney Food Court	
Tuesday 26 th	Committee Meeting	1pm	Mt Ommaney Library	
Tuesday 28 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Monier Hotel	

MAY 2022

Monday 2 nd	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 3 rd	General Meeting	9.30am	Jindalee Bowls Club	\$5
Thursday 5 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Monday 9 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 10 th	Coach Trip	8.30am	Butterfly House Bribie Island	\$70
Wed. 11 th	Evening Dinner	6pm	TBA	
Thursday 12 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Monday 16 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 17 th	Coach Trip	7am	Emerald/Roma – 7 days 6 nights.	
Thursday 19 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Monier Hotel	
Thursday 19 th	Lunch	12noon	Monier Hotel	
Monday 23 rd	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent. Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Thursday 26 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Monier Hotel	
Monday 30 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 31 st	Coffee & Conversation	10am	Mt Ommaney Food Court	
Tuesday 31 st	Committee Meeting	1pm	Mt Ommaney Library	

EMERGENCY MEDICAL DETAILS

NAME:

ADDRESS:

OTHER RESIDENTS THIS ADDRESS:

DATE OF BIRTH:

DOCTOR:

PHONE NUMBER:

HOSPITAL OF CHOICE:

COV-ID STATUS:

MEDICARE NUMBER:

HEALTH FUND:

EXPIRY DATE:

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER:

NEAREST CONTACT NAME (1):

NUMBER:

NEAREST CONTACT NAME (2):

NUMBER:

NEXT OF KIN:

NUMBER:

CURRENT MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND MEDICATIONS

ALLERGIES:

DISABILITY:

Any specific entry instructions: Door Code
Gate Code