

National Seniors Australia ~ Centenary Branch

APRIL 2022 - Newsletter

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

NB: APRIL MEETING TUESDAY 5TH IS TO BE HELD AT WESTSIDE HQ CORINDA (FORMERLY SHERWOOD SERVICES CLUB) AT 10AM.

President's Report

Our Meeting Venue

As you know, due to the storm surge experienced by Brisbane a month ago, Jindalee Bowls Club was under water almost to ceiling level of the upper level rooms. The Bowls Club are not in a position to let us know any date after which we could return for our monthly meetings there. So we have had no choice but to look at an alternative. After much time considering the various places, the committee has decided to **meet at Westside HQ for April, May and June meetings**. The criteria we used to choose the best venue were as follows:

- Priced within budget
- Modern, well maintained room with tables and comfortable chairs
- Enough area for 80 to 90 people
- Access for mobility impaired
- Near members' suburbs
- Bathrooms ease of access
- Morning tea available at reasonable price (or kitchen facilities available)
- Equipment storage available
- Parking

No venue was found to be ideal, and some are not available. We looked at the alternatives in the list below, and Westside HQ was found to be the most suitable.

Alternative meeting venues

- 12 Apostles Church hall
- The Hub
- Riverlife
- Centenary Uniting Church
- St Catherines United Football Club
- St Catherines Church hall
- 17 Mile Rocks Church

We still have some information to collect, and the decision re the future venue from July, is not 'set in stone'. However, the following should be noted and I ask every member who reads this report to consider carefully:

1. The Bowls Club has been charging us \$60.00 for each meeting.
Westside HQ are offering us their function room on Tuesday mornings for free.

2. Each month a team of kitchen volunteers lead by Brenda Bennett, has been purchasing, transporting and preparing everything needed for our morning teas/coffees, and they also bring up the urns and other materials from the basement and set them up for us, and pack up the urns etc and take them back to the basement at the end of the meeting. Their service has been efficient and reliable, but we must not forget their efforts, which exclude them from most of the meeting that the rest of us enjoy.

Westside HQ is providing a morning tea all set up and ready, for the sum of \$5.00 per person.

3. All committee members and the kitchen helpers and a couple of other people, have for years been reliably arriving one hour early to move all the furniture and dais, bring up the audiovisual equipment from the basement and set it up, and ensure a smooth and successful morning for everyone. At the end of the meeting, a few helpers pack up the audiovisual equipment and take it down to the basement while the kitchen helpers do likewise with their urns etc. and wipe the tables down.

Westside HQ is providing the audiovisual equipment at no cost and most of it is already mostly set up: all we have to do is to provide the laptop computer.

As I write this report, we have not yet experienced a meeting at Westside HQ. I will be interested in members' opinions and feedback regarding the meeting facilities and the morning tea/coffee provided.

Other news

Our February 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 in May, is proving popular. I know that we'll once again have a wonderful time, getting to know the region, sharing our experiences. Don't forget to pay before the end of April to avoid disappointment.

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, in February, at least one member discovered she had a melanoma. This 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.

Guest Speaker: Representative from Macular Degeneration Assoc.

BIRTHDAYS: Best wishes are extended to all our valued members celebrating birthdays during April. 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.

INDOOR BOWLS

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 Marie Collins and/or Bev Hocker for further information. Join us to avoid watching nothing on television and for a bit of social activity.

APRIL BRING & BUY

Our April meeting is usually our annual Bring & Buy. However this is postponed to a future date.

FROM ANNE MUNRO - SECRETARY

A National Seniors Australia – Centenary Branch Facebook page for the group has been created and I invite all Centenary Seniors Members who are on Facebook to join. Please invite other Members to join the FB page and start posting group information.

RECENT EVENTS:

Evening Dinner – Wed. 9th March – Chai Yo Thai Restaurant, Goggs Road was very well enjoyed by 20 members.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday 13th April – Evening Dinner Pepper Lounge Jindalee 6pm (behind Pool).

Tuesday 10th May – Coach Trip to Twinnies Pelican & Seabird Rescue, Sunshine Coast.

For over 60 years twins, Paula and Bridgette Powers have been rescuing and treating pelicans and sea birds. Guided tour through their Rehab Facility and learn more of the work being done to save our beautiful sea birds. Morning tea, lunch, and donation to the facility included. \$70. Names to Jenny at April meeting.

Sunday 15th May 2022– 7days 6 nights – Trip to

Roma/Emerald/Springsure/Rubyvale/Blackwater/Rolleston/Injune/Chinchilla/Dalby.

7 days/6nights. Balance to be paid by the end of April.

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

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MAHJONG	JUDY HUNOLD/JO MURRAY	3378 4935/ 0406413836

STEADY STEPS /CHANGES TO

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

MEMBER PROFILE:

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.

JOKE:

Are you sweating whilst putting petrol in your car?

Feeling sick when paying for it?

You have CAROWNERVIRUS.

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."

APRIL 2022

Monday 4 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 5 th	General Meeting	10.00am	Westside HQ Corinda	\$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	Pepper Lounge Jindalee	
Thursday 14 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Monday 18 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
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	
Thursday 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	Westside HQ Corinda	\$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	Twinnies Pelican Rescue	\$70
Wed. 11 th	Evening Dinner	6pm	Jindalee Hotel	
Thursday 12 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Sunday 15 th	Coach Trip	7am	Emerald/Roma – 7 days 6 nights.	
Monday 16 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
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	

JUNE 2022

Thursday 2 nd	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Monday 6 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 7 th	General Meeting	9.30am	Westside HQ Corinda	\$5
Wed. 8 th	Evening Dinner	6pm	TBA	
Thursday 9 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Mt Ommaney Library	
Monday 13 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 14 th	Explorer Trip	8.30am	TBA	
Thursday 16 th	MahJong	9-12noon	Monier Hotel	
Thursday 16 th	Lunch	12noon	Monier Hotel	
Monday 20 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent. Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Thursday 23 rd	MahJong	9- 12noon	Monier Hotel	
Monday 27 th	Steady Steps	9.15am	Cent.Uniting Church Hall	\$7
Tuesday 28 th	Coffee & Conversation	10am	Mt Ommaney Food Court	
Tuesday 28 th	Committee Meeting	1pm	Mt Ommaney Library	
Thursday 30 th	MahJong	9--12noon	Monier Hotel	

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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