

WELCOME – Our first morning tea and monthly meeting were a great opportunity for so many members to catch up after the holiday period, and we were delighted to welcome new members/guests to our group. Our February guest speakers, Stephanie and Julie, from Care Kits For Kids provided a very interesting presentation on all their good work and thanked all our members for their invaluable contributions. Please remember that with any of our branch activities held in hospitality venues and bus trips, all guests must use the Check In Qld app and show proof of vaccination until further advised. Masks however will no longer be required in these venues from 6pm on Friday 4 March 2022.

2022 BRANCH MEETINGS

Our March branch meeting will be held on Thursday 10 March at the Coorparoo RSL Club. Arrival will be at 10:00am for a 10:30am start with guest speakers, updates on branch and national activities, raffles, and refreshments. The cost will be \$7.00 per person payable at the door. As St Patrick's Day falls the following week, members are encouraged to be '**seen in green**' to celebrate everything Irish. This could be through clothing, wigs, glasses, hats etc. – use your imagination!

Our guest speaker will be Emily Gould from Seniors Enquiry Line to provide information on scams affecting seniors.

We hope you can join us and perhaps stay for lunch at the club afterwards (at your own cost).

The remaining meeting dates for 2022 will be:

14 April	12 May
9 June	14 July
11 August (AGM)	8 September
13 October	10 November

WELFARE OFFICER APPOINTED

Julie Jermy has kindly agreed to act as a Welfare Officer for our branch. If any member is ill or needs assistance, or knows of another member who may, please contact Julie on 3395 2056 to see if we can assist in any way.

MORNING TEA CATCH-UP

Our next morning tea and chat will be on Monday 28 February at Easts Leagues Club, 40 Main Avenue, Coorparoo from 10:00am.

There is ample free parking, or it is a short stroll from the bus stops. The car park opens at 9:50am and the club opens at 10:00am. We hope to see you there.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Best wishes to the following people who celebrate their birthdays in March:

Lorraine Knight	Evelyn Jamieson
Denise Munns	Marjorie Richardson
Graham Tienan	Pat Will

We hope you enjoy your special day with family and friends.

CARE KITS FOR KIDS DONATIONS

Some suggestions of items are listed below that can be brought to our monthly meetings and will be delivered to Care Kits For Kids. Most can be purchased at discount shops, and not everything needs to be provided each month. Every donation will help Queensland children in need.

March – Books – lined writing, colouring or scrap books

April – Face washer, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush

May – Long pants, jackets, tops, beanies (sizes 0-16)

June – Underwear, socks (all sizes to 16)

July – Hair brush, comb, bands, clips, baseball cap

August – roll-on deodorant (no glass or spray), shampoo, conditioner (travel or small size)

September – Summer pyjamas, girls crop tops (all sizes to 16)

October – Reading book (all genres & ages), small soft toy or doll (no beads or stick on eyes)

November – Back pack, small lunch box

DAY BUS TRIP – IT'S A MYSTERY DESTINATION

Our first day bus trip for 2022 will be on Monday 28 March departing the Coorparoo RSL Club at 8:00am and returning at approximately 4:30pm. The destination is a mystery which will keep everyone guessing until we get closer to the venue for lunch. Cost will be \$63.00 per person which covers the bus hire, morning tea and lunch payable before or at the March meeting.

All bookings and enquiries should be directed to Pat Will on: T: 3398 8726; M: 0437 774 049;

E: patsywill@gmail.com. Please advise any special dietary requirements at the time of booking so they can be pre-arranged.

MEET ONE OF OUR MEMBERS...

To help get to know a little more about our members we would like to profile a member each month, and Mary Lambrose has kindly agreed to share some of her story.

Q: Tell us a little about when you were growing up, your work life and family.

Mine is not the story of the typical Brisbane family, but then we are not in control of what life throws at us. My parents separated before I was born and my mother with my two brothers, aged two and four years, returned to the family home to live with her father (my grandfather) in Fortitude Valley.

When I was four years old my grandfather died, and as my grandfather supported us financially, my mother then had to find work. I was sent to boarding school with the Sisters of Mercy at the Star of the Sea Convent, Southport, where I stayed with the nuns for three-half years with only one visit from my mother and uncle. I tried to escape by hiding in the back of my uncle's truck but was found and taken back to the Convent.

I returned home when I was seven-half years old and had to fit into family life where my brothers looked on me as a stranger and were not prepared to share me with their mother. My mother was very Victorian and secretive and my presence at the Convent was never spoken of, so the relationship with my brothers was very stressful and was like that all my life.

I attended St Patrick's Primary School in Fortitude Valley and then went to All Hallows' Secondary School which fed my mother's ego! I have however only recently discovered that my attendance at All Hallows' was on a charity basis. I was interested in learning domestic science, but I was directed to learn office skills instead which, together with my own organisational skills, stood me in good stead during my working career in administration, hospitality and managing a motor lodge.

I do believe that we need to think carefully before we make decisions, especially where marriage is concerned. I have been married three times seeking the love that I didn't have as a child. From when I was first married to the present day, I have moved 45 times, but I feel safe in my present home. Sadly, after one marriage failed my daughter and I were left homeless, so we know what it's like to be set adrift at the mercy of others. I personally do not believe in homelessness because I think that in this type of situation, we have to use the brain that God gave us to get ourselves back on an even keel. My daughter Catherine has told me that she was never frightened when we were homeless as she knew me well enough to know that I would get us both out of the situation. The closeness with my daughter is very precious.

Catherine rose out of the ashes, and I am proud of her as she is a Montessori teacher at the International School in Yokohama, Japan. She married a wonderful Japanese man, and they have two daughters, Alisa

and Emma aged 12 and four years. It was a delight to be able to travel to Japan for her traditional Japanese wedding and spend time touring the country. We keep in touch regularly by phone and email.

I also have a wonderful son, Greg, who lives in Brisbane with his wife. They are very supportive of me, and I feel blessed to have them in my life.

For 20 years I hosted international students from various European and Asian countries as well as the USA while they studied a range of topics from lifestyle to violin. Sadly, the travel restrictions of the pandemic stopped the students being allowed to come to Australia, but some students continue to keep in touch which I enjoy greatly.

Q: Do you have someone who you can call a life-time friend?

My daughter, Catherine, tells me that I am her best friend, and she is certainly mine - we have been through a lot together.

Q: What are some ways you keep yourself busy nowadays?

I have always been an active person, not on the sporting field, but as an organizer. As the years have caught up with me, I now belong to a book club, am a member of the Heritage Group, and of course National Seniors. I enjoy meeting friends for lunch and movies regularly.

Q: What is the secret to a happy and healthy life?

Be careful with the decisions that you make in life, especially where marriage is concerned. I speak from experience following my three marriages, but as my son tells me I am "a magnet for idiots"!

Q: If you could change one thing in your life, what would it be?

I regret that I didn't become a journalist and had a more meaningful life. Maybe as Lois Lane I would have found my Superman!

Q: What do you like most about National Seniors Coorparoo?

I enjoy the companionship and find it interesting with Freya and Graham (love his humour) at the helm.

EXERCISE FOR SENIORS

Most seniors never get enough exercise. In His wisdom, God decreed that a senior become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys, and other things, thus doing more walking. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God saw there was another need. In His wisdom He made seniors lose coordination so they would drop

things, requiring them to bend, reach, and stretch. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God considered the function of bladders and decided seniors would have additional calls of nature, requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing more exercise. God looked down and saw that it was good.

So, if you find, as you age, you are getting up and down more, remember it's God's will. It is all in your best interest even though you mutter under your breath.

THE POWER OF EMPATHETIC CONVERSATIONS

"Being heard and understood is the key to validating people's feelings and experiences. And you can also help normalise their concerns about what they are going through." Says Razia Ali, Mental Health Coach for Remedy Healthcare.

In what are challenging times, it's never been more important to ask your friends, family and colleagues if they're getting the support they need. You may have noticed that something isn't quite the same, that they seem out of sorts and just not themselves. Asking if they're okay lets them know they have the love and support they might be looking for.

But it's also important to know what to say if someone says they're not okay. What do you say? How do you respond? What are people looking for when they open up and share that they're struggling?

You don't have to have all the answers but knowing what to say (and just as importantly, what not to say) means you can help someone feel loved and supported to get the help they might need. Razia Ali says empathy is a powerful act of support that helps people overcome their fears of asking for help.

"I try to put myself in their shoes and how hard it must be to ask for help with their mental health in the first place," she says. "One of the biggest barriers to asking for help is the stigma that still surrounds talking openly about mental health."

What can I do to help?

Listen, listen, listen – and then listen some more.

By listening and caring, you're giving someone the time and attention they truly need. And it doesn't always have to be a sit-down talk either. Go for a walk and a chat and you might be surprised at how much easier the conversation flows.

Actively listening to people and taking what they say seriously is the first critical step. Don't interrupt, don't judge, a simple acknowledgment of their experiences and how tough things are will encourage them to keep talking. Don't be scared of silence either, people sometimes need time to articulate their thoughts.

"People are craving to be heard," Razia says. "Putting people at the centre of the conversation lets them know that they are important as an individual. Being heard and understood is the key to validating people's feelings and experiences. And you can also help normalise their concerns about what they are going through."

How to respond

When they've finished speaking, foster more encouragement by asking how they feel, and show that you've been actively listening by repeating back in your own words what you understand to be the issue. Follow that up by asking if you have understood them correctly.

You can also mention you've noticed some changes in their mood or demeanour. Asking if they want to keep talking about things can also elicit further conversations that allows them to feel comfortable and that they can trust they won't be judged.

"People are already struggling because of what they are going through," Razia says. "It's important to look at the conversation from their point of view. Having that rapport means those difficult conversations can be easier. Their concerns start with 'no one can help or understand what I am going through'. When we acknowledge their concerns and worries and let them know that it's common for people to feel this way with life challenges, it tells them that they have been heard."

Key phrases to use

It's important to focus on providing outlets for their responses, as opposed to trying to "solve" or "fix" the problem. It's not your job to provide solutions but to enable them to share their concerns and fears without the stigma of judgement.

It could just be "I'm really sorry to hear about all that" to make them feel validated and heard. Following that up with "what else can I do to help?" or "would you like to talk about it some more?" can also be extremely helpful. You can also offer to help them find professional support and accompany them to subsequent appointments.

"I have heard some people say, 'I am being silly, many other people are going through a lot more than me'", Razia says. "Letting them know that what they are going through is not okay and that what they're feeling

is important makes it clear they are your sole focus at that moment. What this does is put them at the centre of their own life and tells them that they do not have to suffer alone. Getting treatment for your mental health is as normal as going to your GP for a constant headache or any physical pain. It's not okay for people to suffer in silence."

Make time to check in

Follow up with them a few days later, just as a check-in to see how they're doing. Ask if they've found a better way to manage things. It's really important to understand that not everyone can quickly embrace the notion of seeking professional support, so it can take a while for someone to actively get help.

If that's the case, just keep going with positive reinforcement and let them know you're always around if they need to talk. If you can, talk about the benefits of trying a different method and that professional support is there to help. It's also a good idea to make sure they're aware of how their GP can assist with mental health plans and accessing government-subsidised treatment options.

And lastly, it's important to check if they are connected to the right support networks if they need immediate help and support. If they haven't yet connected, offer to help them find something that's suitable, do a quick Google search for what they are feeling or start at the services below:

- Beyond Blue (24/7) – 1300 224 636
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467
- Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800
- MensLine – 1300 789 978
- SANE Australia – 1800 187 263

(Source: Australian Unity)

FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES...

Children are quick and always speak their minds.

Teacher: How old is your father?
 Kid: He is 6 years.
 Teacher: What? How is this possible?
 Kid: He became a father only when I was born.

Teacher: Maria, go to the map and find North America.
 Maria: Here it is.
 Teacher: Correct. Now, Class, who discovered America?
 Class: Maria.

Teacher: Glenn, how do you spell 'crocodile'?
 Glen: KROKODIAL
 Teacher: No, that's wrong.
 Glen: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

Teacher: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

Donald: H I J K L M N O

Teacher: What are you talking about?

Donald: Yesterday you said it's H to O.

Teacher: Clyde, your composition on 'My Dog' is exactly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his?

Clyde: No, sir; It's the same dog.

Teacher: Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

Harold: A teacher.

WHAT IS SHINGLES?

Shingles – also known as herpes zoster – is a disease caused by a reactivation of the chickenpox virus. Shingles is a serious disease and one in 10 people have nerve pain (which can be severe) caused by shingles which can sometimes last for months or even years.

What causes shingles and who is at risk? -

Shingles causes a blistering rash and can only develop if you've had chickenpox before, so if you've had chickenpox in the past, you can develop shingles.

This is because the inactive chickenpox virus stays in your nerve cells near your spine. When shingles develops it's because the virus has become active again. Usually, a person will only get shingles once in their lives, but it can sometimes occur again if you have a weakened immune system.

Shingles is more likely to occur in people who:

- Are aged over 50
- Have weakened immune systems, e.g.: have HIV or AIDS; have had an organ transplant; have recently had a bone marrow transplant; or have a condition which requires treatment that affects the immune system such as chemotherapy for cancer.

What are the symptoms of shingles? - Shingles presents as a skin rash characterised by pain and blistering. It can affect any part of the body, but usually appears on one side of the face or body. Symptoms include:

- Pain
- A burning, tingling or itching sensation
- A stabbing sensation
- Sensitivity to touch
- Numbness in the affected area of the body
- Sensitivity to light
- Fever and/or headache
- Fatigue

See your doctor as soon as possible if you are experiencing any shingles symptoms, as the sooner you start treatment, the more effective it is.

Can shingles be passed on to others? - You can't catch shingles from another person with shingles, but the virus responsible for chickenpox can be passed on by someone with shingles to a person who has not had chickenpox (disease) or been vaccinated against it. This can happen when a person comes into contact with the fluid from the blisters. To prevent passing the virus on, keep the rash covered with clothing or a dressing and always clean your hands after you touch the rash or change any dressing.

What are the complications of shingles? – Shingles gets better without any complications in many people. In others several complications can occur. These include:

- Ongoing nerve pain (post-herpetic neuralgia)
- Shingles occurring in the eye area can result in temporary or permanent vision loss. Your doctor may refer you to an eye specialist for treatment.
- The shingles rash can become infected and you might need antibiotics.

How is shingles treated? – Shingles is generally diagnosed by a doctor, who will usually examine you and may also test the fluid from the blisters. There is no cure for shingles, but it can be treated with antiviral medication. Treatment works best if started within three days and should ideally be started within 24 hours of the rash appearing.

Shingles and vaccination – The National Immunisation Program provides a free shingles vaccine at 70 years of age. There is a free catch-up program for 71-79 year-olds until 31 October 2023. There are now two vaccines available on prescription to people aged 50-69 years and from 80 years, but they must be paid for by the patient - Zostavax® and Shingrix®. (Source: Queensland Health)

WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR USED FACE MASKS, WIPES AND LATEX GLOVES?

Disposable face masks have been an essential part of our fight against COVID-19, but now they're appearing everywhere from footpaths to gutters and even in our waterways.

Disposable face masks can take hundreds of years to break down and threaten to entangle wildlife, litter our beaches, block sewers, and pollute the food chain.

ABC Science reports researchers have provided hard evidence of the massive global growth of this new form of litter. The University of Portsmouth's Keiron Roberts

and his team compared the growth of mask litter in 11 different countries and found an alarming increase occurred between March to October 2021. "There was this massive jump, almost 9,000%," Dr Roberts said.

The environmental problems caused by mask litter

While disposable face masks might seem to be innocent tissue-like objects, the truth is, they're a new form of plastic pollution that environmental scientists are increasingly worried about. Not only is face mask litter potentially contaminated with COVID-19, but masks are made of long-lasting plastic materials that don't break down. They can smother plants, entangle or choke animals and potentially cause blockages in the sewerage system.

A recent study showed disposable masks can contain dangerous chemical pollutants and tiny plastic fibres and particles that can accumulate in the food chain. QUT's Centre for a Waste-Free World is working on developing masks that incorporate more biodegradable materials such as cellulose.

Pip Kiernan from Clean Up Australia is already well aware of the problem of mask pollution. "We know anecdotally from our volunteers there's a significant amount ending up in the environment," she said, adding that pollution of waterways was of huge concern. "Whatever is dropped on land is likely to end up in a waterway eventually."

RSPCA Australia has urged people to cut the ear loops off masks when disposing of them to reduce the chance of animals becoming entangled in them.

The study, published in *Nature Sustainability*, showed how the researchers looked at changes in COVID-19 policies in the different countries examined. This is when they discovered mask pollution increased most dramatically following mask mandates, which were encouraged by the World Health Organisation to stop the airborne spread of coronavirus.

He said the team was surprised to find the worst increase was in the UK. Australia did not have the larger increases seen in some other countries, including the UK. "Within the first three months of mask mandates in Australia, mask littering remained below 0.2% of all collected litter," Dr Roberts said.

One reason for this, he said, could be as mask wearing became more widespread around the globe, Australia was having very strict lockdowns. "When you guys go into lockdown, you really go into lockdown," Dr Roberts said. This meant people were not out and about wearing masks and later discarding them as litter.

But Dr Roberts has a warning for Australia as it opens up and masks become more important in controlling

the spread of COVID-19. To avoid replicating the UK experience, we need to dispose of the masks properly.

Governments that mandate masks, he added, need to help through education and providing more bins for masks. "Legislating for masks causes mask littering, so if you ask someone to do something, you need to make sure there are mechanisms in place to support them to do the right thing. This gives Australia the opportunity to act now and help prevent this wave of mask litter sweeping other nations." (Source: ABC Science)

TRUSTED TRADIE

One of our members has recommended **Phil Haskew TV Repairs & Installation** at East Brisbane. Phil does TV and antenna installation and repairs and provided prompt and efficient service. Contact Phil on 07 3891 1082.

BRANCH CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries please contact our Secretary, Graham Tienan, on mobile 0407 736 453 or email nsacooparoosec@gmail.com.

SMILE

THE IRISH MILLIONAIRE

Mick, from Dublin, appeared on *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* and towards the end of the program had already won 500,000 Euros.

"You've done very well so far," said Chris Tarrant, the show's presenter, "but for a million Euros you've only got one life-line left, phone a friend. Everything is riding on this question. Will you go for it?"

"Sure," said Mick. "I'll have a go!"

"Which of the following birds does NOT build its own nest?"

a) Sparrow; b) Thrush; c) Magpie; d) Cuckoo

"I haven't got a clue." Said Mick, "So I'll use my last lifeline and phone my friend Paddy back home in Dublin." Mick called up his mate and told him the circumstances and repeated the question to him.

"Awww Jeez, Mick!" cried Paddy. "Dat's simple, it's a cuckoo."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm bleedin' sure."

Mick hung up the phone and told Chris, "I'll go with cuckoo as my answer."

"Is that your final answer?" asked Chris

"Dat it is."

There was a long, long pause and then the presenter screamed, "Cuckoo is the correct answer! Mick, you've won 1 million Euros!"

The next night, Mick invited Paddy to their local pub to buy him a drink. "Tell me, Paddy, how in Heaven's name did you know it was da cuckoo that doesn't build its own nest?"

"Because, ya damn fool, he lives in a bleedin' clock!"

* * * * *

An Irishman goes to the doctor, who after examining him says "You have some problems with your heart, but if you take these tablets, I think it will be okay."

So the doctor gives the man the tablets and the patient asks, "Do I have to take them every day?"

"No," replies the doctor, "take one on the Monday, skip the Tuesday, take one on the Wednesday, skip the Thursday and go on like that."

Two weeks later the doctor is walking down the street, and he sees the patient's wife. "Hello Mrs Murphy," he says, "how's your husband?"

"Oh, he died of a heart attack," says Mrs Murphy.

"I'm very sorry to hear that," says the doctor, "I thought if he took those tablets he would be all right."

"Oh, the tablets were fine," says Mrs Murphy, "It was all the bloody skipping that killed him!"

* * * * *

Barman says to Paddy "Your glass is empty, fancy another one?"

Lookin' puzzled Paddy says "Why now would I be needin' two empty feckin' glasses?"

