

WELCOME – It was very pleasing to note that no members suffered any major damage or flooding from Cyclone Alfred and it was wonderful to see a “sea of green” as members dressed to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day at our March meeting. Congratulations to our winners Jenny, Merv and Joy on their creations that caught the eye of our guest speaker judges. Our guest speaker, Andrew Campbell, from Neuaudio Audiologist, provided some very interesting information on the importance of hearing health and the international research into links to dementia in later years. Members greatly appreciated receiving copies of his book on the subject.

BRANCH MEETINGS

Our next branch meeting will be on **Thursday 10 April** at the Coorparoo RSL Club. Arrival will be at 10:00am for a 10:15am start with guest speaker, updates on branch and national activities, fun time, raffles and refreshments. The cost will be \$8.00 cash per person payable at the door. As our meeting is just before Easter, we encourage members to be creative by wearing or bringing something themed to Easter.

Our guest speaker, Nina Mullins from the University of Queensland’s Advancement & Community Engagement office will provide information on all the public facilities available at UQ.

The dates for 2025 are:

8 May	12 June
10 July	14 August
11 September	9 October
13 November	

MORNING TEA CATCH-UP

Our next morning tea catch up will be on **Monday 14 April** from 10am at Easts Leagues Club. This is always a great informal way to get to know fellow members outside the confines of a branch meeting.

The dates for 2025 are:

19 May	16 June
21 July	18 August
15 September	20 October
17 November	

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Best wishes to *Karin Chambers, Elsie Debney, Sophia Feulbach, and Lyn Potter*. who celebrate birthdays in April. We hope you enjoy your special day with family and friends.

MARCH DAY BUS TRIP – IT’S A MYSTERY DESTINATION

There are still seats available for our first day bus trip for 2025 on **Monday 31 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 is \$65.00 per person which includes the coach, morning tea, and two-course lunch. Please advise any dietary requirements and your menu selection from below at the time of booking:

- WAGYU ROYALE BURGER – premium beef pattie, candied bacon, lettuce, special sauce & chips
- CHICKEN PARMIGIANA – crumbed chicken breast with Napoli sauce & cheese, salad & chips
- CHICKEN CAESAR SALAD – soft boiled egg, crisp prosciutto, creamy anchovy (GF available)
- GREEK SALAD OF LAMB FILLETS – marinated in garam masala, rosemary, garlic, kalamata olives & Greek style fetta (GF)
- SALT & PEPPER CALAMARI – light salad, chips & chilli lime dipper
- FISH & CHIPS (grilled – GF) mixed leaf salad, lemon & funky tartare sauce
- DESSERT – is ice cream
- TEA & COFFEE – available at your own expense

All bookings and enquiries should be made with Pat Will on M: 0437 774 049; T: 3398 8726 or E: patsywill@gmail.com. Payment can be arranged at the 13 March branch meeting or by direct deposit to the Coorparoo National Seniors, BSB: 084 391; Account: 047949379. If using this method, please include your name so it can be matched to the payment.

COMMUNITY PANTRY DRIVE

If you would like to contribute to a local community pantry to assist those in need in our local area, please bring along some items of good quality non-perishable food to our branch meetings. We will collect and distribute them to a local organisation. Please ensure that all items are well within use by date.

CARE KITS FOR KIDS

As part of our relationship with this organisation our branch members contribute small items each month with some suggestions of items listed below that can be brought to our monthly meetings. Most can be purchased at discount shops, and not everything needs to be provided each month.

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 – Backpack, small lunch box

ENJOY READING?

Don't forget our book swap at each monthly meeting. There are some great books available for only a gold coin (\$2 or \$1) donation which goes towards our club charity donations. Donated books are all in good condition and can be swapped back another month.

WELLBEING OFFICER

If you are, or know of any member who is ill, injured, or in need of help please notify Jan Jackson on 0411 987 174 so that we can give our support where needed.

BRANCH RECYCLING ITEMS

If you are interested in recycling used tablet blister packs, please bring them along to any of our monthly meetings. We will investigate other items for recycling throughout the year.

COMMON ELECTRICAL RISKS IN OLDER HOMES

Older homes have charm and character, however, they can have hidden electrical risks. Many houses built decades ago weren't designed to handle today's high energy demands, leading to overloaded circuits, outdated wiring, and potential fire hazards. Ageing electrical switchboards, ungrounded outlets, and DIY repairs can also increase the risk of shocks or power failures. "If left unchecked, these issues can put your home and family at risk," according to electrical contractors. "Understanding the common electrical dangers in older homes is the first step toward making your space safer."

Here are some risks and what you can do to protect your home:

Outdated Wiring Systems – many older homes still have original wiring that wasn't designed for modern electrical demands. Over time, this wiring can become worn out, unsafe, and a major fire hazard. Here's why outdated wiring is a risk:

- Knob-and-tube wiring: common in homes built before the 1950s, this type of wiring lacks grounding and isn't designed for today's power needs, increasing the risk of shocks and fires.
- Aluminum wiring: used in some homes from the 1960s and 70s, aluminum expands and contracts

more than copper, which can lead to loose connections and overheating.

- Brittle or frayed insulation: older wiring systems weren't built to handle multiple high-power appliances, leading to overheating and potential circuit failures.

If your home has outdated wiring, it's a good idea to have a professional electrician inspect and upgrade your system for safety.

Overloaded Circuits and Insufficient Outlets – older homes weren't built for the electrical demands of modern life. Decades ago, households had fewer appliances, meaning electrical systems didn't need to support multiple devices running at once.

Today, with TVs, computers, kitchen gadgets, and chargers plugged in everywhere, older wiring can struggle to keep up. This often leads to overloaded circuits, which can trip breakers, cause flickering lights, or even start electrical fires. Another common issue is the lack of outlets. Many older homes have just one or two per room, forcing homeowners to rely on extension cords and power boards – both of which increase the risk of overheating and short circuits.

If you find yourself constantly unplugging one device to use another, it might be time to upgrade your electrical panel and install additional outlets. A licensed electrician can assess your home's needs and ensure your wiring is safe and up to code.

Lack of Grounding and RCD Protection – If your home was built before the 1970s, it might have ungrounded outlets, which can pose a serious electrical hazard. Grounding is essential because it helps direct excess electricity safely into the ground, reducing the risk of shocks, power surges and electrical fires. Without proper grounding, plugged-in devices can become dangerous, especially in areas with high moisture, like kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry rooms.

Another key safety feature missing in many homes is residual current devices (RCDs). These outlets shut off power instantly if they detect an electrical fault, preventing shocks and electrocution. Modern building codes require RCDs in wet areas, but many older homes still lack this protection. If your home has outdated two-prong outlets or lacks RCDs, it's time to upgrade. A licensed electrician can replace ungrounded outlets and install RCDs to improve your home's electrical safety and bring it up to modern standards.

Faulty or Deteriorating Electrical Panels – Your home's electrical panel is the heart of its electrical system, distributing power to different circuits. In older

homes, these panels may be outdated, overloaded, or deteriorating, creating serious safety risks. Here's why an old or faulty panel is a problem:

- Frequent tripped breakers: if your breakers trip often, your panel may struggle to handle modern power demands.
- Fuse boxes instead of circuit breakers: some older homes still use fuse boxes, which can be a fire hazard if fuses are improperly replaced with oversized ones.
- Burn marks or a burning smell: discolouration, charring or a burning odour near the panel could indicate overheating or loose connections.
- Buzzing or crackling sounds: unusual noises from the panel could signal faulty wiring or failing components.
- Limited capacity: older panels may not have enough circuits to support new appliances or renovations.

If your electrical panel shows any of these signs, it's time to call a licensed electrician for an upgrade.

Poor DIY Electrical Work – in older homes, it's not uncommon to find electrical repairs done by previous owners trying to cut costs. Unfortunately, DIY electrical work can lead to dangerous problems, especially if the person didn't fully understand what they were doing. Common mistakes include using the wrong type of wiring, making loose connections, or overloading circuits. These issues can increase the risk of electrical shocks, short circuits, and even fires.

Improperly installed outlets, switches, or light fixtures are signs that unprofessional work may be present. If you suspect your older home has amateur electrical repairs, it's important to schedule an inspection. Fixing these mistakes now can prevent costly, and potentially dangerous, problems down the line. Always prioritise safety over savings when it comes to electrical work.

Pest Damage and Wiring issues – older homes often have small gaps and hidden spaces where pests like mice, rats, and insects can nest. Unfortunately, these unwanted guests love to chew on electrical wiring, stripping away insulation and exposing live wires. This can lead to dangerous short circuits, power failures and even electrical fires.

Inefficient or Unsafe Electrical Appliances – older homes often come with outdated electrical appliances that can be inefficient, unsafe, and even hazardous. These appliances weren't designed for today's energy standards and can put extra strain on your home's electrical system. They can be a risk by causing overloaded circuits; frayed or damaged cords; lack of modern safety features; excessive heat or sparks; and are often less energy-efficient.

Don't Ignore Warning Signs – older homes have charm and character, but their electrical systems can pose serious safety risks if not properly maintained. Many of these risks can be addressed with regular inspections and professional upgrades. If you live in an older home, don't ignore potential hazards – contact a licensed electrician to assess and improve your electrical system. A few updates today can help keep your home safe for years to come.



CAUSES OF INJURY AND DEATH REVEALED

Falls are the leading cause of hospitalisation and death in Australia, and seniors are the most common age group affected. Transport, assault, and accidental poisoning are other leading causes of injury hospitalisations and deaths, according to date from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

A recent update to the report, *Injury in Australia 2022-23*, presents the latest injury-related hospitalisations (2022-23) and deaths (2021-22). It includes trends over the preceding decade and local area information regarding four major external causes of injury. The AIHW says data examined for mortality varies by year due to being updated and released one year later than hospitalisations.

"This ongoing work monitors trends in injuries as a major cause of morbidity, permanent disability and mortality with the aim of informing discussion around injury risk, prevention and management," AIHW spokesperson Dr Sarah Ahmed said.

Women more at risk – falls have been the leading cause of injury-related hospitalisation and fatality in Australia over the past decade and across most regions. They accounted for:

- 238,055 hospitalisations in 202-23, accounting for more than two in five (43.4%) of all injury hospitalisations.
- More than two in five (6,378) injury deaths in 2021-22, with rates increasing due to age.

Falls were most common among those aged 75+ (46% of reported cases) followed by those under 15 (10%), with most injuries happening at home. Slips, trips, and stumbles were the most frequent cause with 74,399 cases in 2022-23, however hospitalisation patterns varied by season and the type of falls.

While falls were the leading cause of injury hospitalisations and deaths for both sexes, females were more likely to be hospitalised for falls than males.

Transport – Transport was another leading cause of injury hospitalisation in 2022-23, resulting in around 61,200 hospitalisations. Seniors were not a leading age group in this category. Cars were more frequently involved in both transport-related injury hospitalisations (over 20,000 cases) and deaths (over 720 fatalities).

Transport-related injuries resulted in 1,500 deaths in 2021-22 and were most common among males (1,148 deaths). The good news is that across types of transport, age groups, and sexes, injury rates generally decreased over the past decade.

Assault – Assault resulted in 20,490 hospitalisations in 2022-23 and 218 homicides in 2021-22, with people aged 25-44 most likely to be affected. While males were the most common perpetrators across all assault types, the patterns of assault-injury hospitalisations differed based on who was assaulted and the nature of the assault.

Accidental poisoning – Older people, especially those 80 and over, and the very young (under four) were the most common age groups affected by accidental poisoning. It resulted in 8,921 injury hospitalisations in 2022-23 and 1,567 injury deaths in 2021-22. For children aged 0-4, there were around 80 hospitalisations and 11 deaths per 100,000 population.

Among accidental poisoning related hospitalisations, the proportion of cases severe enough to require ventilatory support doubled over the decade from around 4% in 2012-13 to 8% in 2022-23. Common substances that caused poisoning hospitalisations

and deaths included antiepileptics, sedatives, psychotropics, narcotics, opioids, and hallucinogens.

Among non-pharmaceutical substances, alcohol was responsible for the highest number of accidental poisoning deaths (155 in 2021-22). (Source: AIHW)

A TIMELY REMINDER ABOUT SHINGLES

Medically known as herpes zoster, shingles is a significant health concern for older Australians and free vaccination is available for many seniors. Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus, the same virus responsible for chickenpox. After an individual recovers from chickenpox, the virus remains dormant in the nervous system and can reactivate later in life, leading to shingles.

This condition is characterised by a painful, blistering rash that typically appears on one side of the body. About one in three people will develop shingles in their lifetime, with the risk increasing significantly after the age of 50. For Australians 65 and over, the likelihood of complications from shingles is notably higher. These complications can include post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN), a condition where severe nerve pain persists even after the rash has healed, as well as potential issues including pneumonia, hearing problems, blindness, or swelling of the brain.

Shingles Awareness aims to dispel misconceptions and encourage older Australians to take proactive steps in protecting their health. A common myth is that only those in poor health are at risk. Even people who feel fit and healthy can develop shingles as the virus lies dormant in nearly all adults over 50, regardless of their lifestyle. Vaccination is a key strategy in reducing the incidence and severity of shingles.

Free shingles vaccination under the National Immunisation Program (NIP) is available for eligible people at moderate to high risk of severe illness and complications from shingles. A two-dose of Shingrix is available for free for:

- People aged 65 years and over
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over
- People 18 years and over who are considered at increased risk of herpes zoster due to an underlying condition and/or immunomodulatory/immunosuppressive treatments.

Older Australians are encouraged to consult with their healthcare providers about shingles and the benefits of vaccination. Understanding personal risk factors and engaging in informed discussions with medical professionals can lead to better health outcomes.

Shingles poses a significant health risk to older Australians, but awareness and proactive measures, such as vaccination, can substantially mitigate this risk. (Source: *Better Health, Know Shingles*)

HOW AI IS CHANGING SHOPPING

Stores are adopting a system that 'reads' the products you take from their shelves and charges you automatically. How safe and reliable is it, and is it a threat to jobs?

Our weekly shopping experience has changed dramatically over the past few decades – along with the number of people hired by the big supermarkets. You may be shocked to learn that there's another big change just around the corner.

Not so long ago, it was common to encounter two staff members at a supermarket checkout – one to ring up your purchases and another (often a school student working part-time) to pack your shopping bags. Then came the single-operator checkout, where either the person at the till packed your bags or you had to do that yourself. After that came the self-service checkout, with just one staff member supervising a whole bank of machines that you're expected to operate yourself.

But even that's becoming old hat. Consider this scenario: You walk into the supermarket, choose products from the shelf and, once you have what you want, you leave the store – without going through a checkout, be it staffed or self-service.

No, you are not committing a crime, because payment will automatically be made through your supercharged credit-card account.

This is already a reality for many European shoppers and it is probably coming to a supermarket near you relatively soon. The technology that lets you bypass the checkout has been developed by a company called AiFi (pronounced "eye-fi"), which has partnered with Mastercard to create a seamless shopping experience. The "Ai" part of the name, of course, refers to artificial intelligence, and this is just one example of how it is affecting every part of our lives.

The system – an advance on tech already available in Australia where customers can scan their items as they take them off the shelves – works thanks to hundreds of cameras situated around the store. These cameras record which products go into your shopping trolley and are taken out of the shop. To use it, you tap your credit card as you enter the store, and Mastercard takes a \$1 payment to ensure your account is valid. That money is subtracted from the purchase amount or refunded if you leave without buying anything.

It is being trialled in Europe, including by German supermarket giant Aldi and Polish retailer Zabka, which has plans to roll out 1,300 "autonomous" stores in coming months.

The technology is said to make the consumer experience easier and help retail researchers develop "spatial intelligence" – an understanding of how consumers move around the shop. This, in turn, will help improve the design of supermarkets and other public buildings. AiFi says its mission is "to understand and optimise the spaces in which we live, work, and interact using our world-class spatial intelligence technology".

Sireesh Nallathigal, Aldi's country development director, says: "By collaborating with AiFi we aim to gain new and meaningful insights into our customers and lay the data-driven foundations for levels of operational excellence." The tech is also being developed for use in sporting stadiums, service stations, and transport hubs. It was demonstrated at the Australian Open in Melbourne, at a pop-up store selling snacks and drinks to spectators.

AiFi's chief executive, Steve Carlin, has pointed to some of the advantages of the tech, including eliminating waiting time at checkouts and improved overall efficiency. But the big question for consumers is: how reliable and safe is it?

In Australia, there have already been complaints about the self-checkout technology being used at supermarkets. One Woolworths customer said she was charged nearly \$50 for a \$6 book – because it was identified as a pack of eight rather than a single item. Even supermarket staff could not override the error. What comeback would a customer have if overcharged by the new tech – especially if there are no staff on hand? This is an area where legislation, or an update to the powers of state and federal consumer watchdogs, may be needed.

And, because the cameras watch you while you shop, they could be used to gather data about your shopping habits and, by extension, your lifestyle. Maybe you want to keep that to yourself – although you might be surprised at how much they already know about you, especially if you use a loyalty card.

Another negative to the technology – and this could be a deal breaker for many older Australians – is that there is no option for cash payment. If you want to Keep Cash, this is not for you.

A major downside will be the loss of jobs, as humans will no longer be required in the checkout process, perhaps not even in a supervisory role. It's also just

one example of robots replacing humans, which is set to become a huge issue in coming years and decades. Tech billionaire, and presidential sidekick, Elon Musk, said last year that “probably none of us will have jobs” in the future. That is an enormous cause of concern, not just for seniors but for all future generations (Source: Yahoo! Finance, CNN, Smart Company)

TECH CORNER

Each year a company called Domo puts out a fascinating report called Data Never Sleeps. The study tracks the data transfer and collection that happens globally every 60 seconds during the year. Here are some interesting numbers for 2024:

- Every minute of the day we sent 18.8 million text messages and 251.1 million emails
- About 9,000 people applied for jobs on LinkedIn.
- Some 852 travellers booked an AirBnB stay
- People conducted around 5.9 million searches on Google. Every single minute of every day!
- Every 60 seconds we streamed 362,962 hours of Netflix
- We played 138.9 million videos on Facebook and Instagram.
- Siri answered half a million questions during the 30 seconds it took for you to read this.



BRANCH CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries please contact our Secretary, Graham Tienan, on mobile 0407 736 453 or email nsacoorparoossec@gmail.com. Do remember to update any changes to your details. Emergency contacts need to be current.

SMILE

Some Easter jokes:

Q: Christmas does come before Easter in one place-where?

A: *The dictionary*

Q: What's the best way to make Easter easier?

A: *Put an "l" where the "t" is.*

Q: How does Easter end?

A: *With an "r"*

Q: What should you do to prepare for all the Easter treats?

A: *Eggs-ercise*

Q: Where does the Easter bunny go for a new tail?

A: *To the retail store.*

Q: Why is the Easter bunny such a good listener?

A: *He's all ears.*

Q: Why did the Easter bunny fail?

A: *He put all his eggs in one basket.*

Q: What do you call an Easter bunny who gets kicked out of school?

A: *Egg-spelled*

* * * * *

A pastor decided to skip church one Sunday morning and go to play golf. He told his assistant he wasn't feeling well. He drove to a golf course in another city, so nobody would know him.

He teed off on the first hole. A huge gust of wind caught his ball, carried it an extra hundred yards and dropped it right in the hole, for a 450 yard hole in one. An angel looked at God and said "What did you do that for?"

God smiled and said "Who's he going to tell?"

* * * * *

Two little boys were at a wedding when one of them leaned over to the other and asked, "How many wives can a man have?"

His friend answered, "Sixteen...four better, four worse, four richer, and four poorer."

