

# National Seniors

AUSTRALIA

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS BRANCH

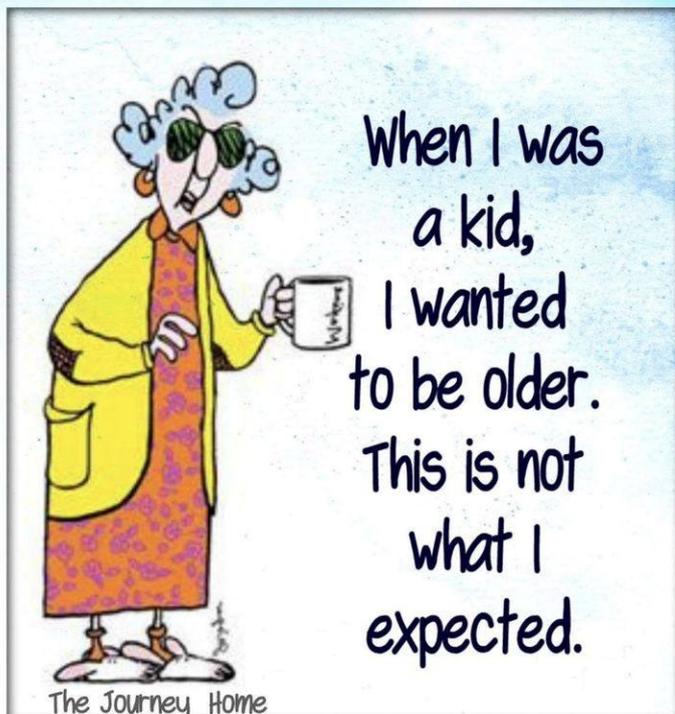
ConnectionS/Newsletter  
JULY 2025

## What's in this Issue ....

Guest Speaker, Jenny Knowles  
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Marita and Dr Colin Crighton OAM  
Hunter Valley Trip Update  
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## JULY ACTIVITIES

Monday 14 July    500 Club  
Tuesday 15 July    Annual General Meeting  
Monday ???        Pickleball



## JULY BIRTHDAYS



Lee Brown  
Lesley Cooney  
Mara Goodall  
Kevin Howell  
Walter Lutz  
Lyn Miller  
Sarah Missio  
Andrew Moll  
Keith Reichenbach  
Mavis Wallace  
Lynda Walters

If you haven't already ....  
Get your Flu Vaccination

## Guest Speaker - Jenny Knowles from the Hope Charity



vocations—from her high-flying days as a Qantas hostess to the grounded presence she brought as a yoga teacher. Later, she became a support worker for the Quest for Life foundation, offering solace and strength to those living with AIDS.

Driven by a lifelong desire to help others heal, Jenny has studied and practised in fields like Attitudinal Healing and Psychoneurology—disciplines that delve into how mindset and emotional resilience shape our physical health.

One study she referenced explored cancer remission, revealing profound insights: 84% of women who went into remission had left their marriages—a move often rooted in reclaiming personal power, seeking purpose, and building deep connections. In contrast, men surrounded by loving family networks showed higher rates of recovery, highlighting the crucial role that emotional support plays in healing.

### A Cheque for Change and Jenny's Story

A \$2,700 cheque was recently presented to Jenny—an impassioned force behind the local charity, The Hope Shop. With a heartfelt smile, she announced that this generous contribution would enable the organisation to double its impact, increasing the number of food hampers distributed from 50 to 100. That's 50 more families who will feel cared for and supported in times of hardship.

Jenny spoke candidly about the path that brought her here.

Her life has been a tapestry of reinvention and service. Married three times and the proud mother of one, she's explored numerous



## Book Review

### Suitcase of Dreams - Author Tania Blanchard

The sequel to "The Girl from Munich". 1956 After the horrors of Nazi Germany and post war occupation, Lotte and Erich Drescher and family arrive in Australia to start a new life full of dreams of a bright future. After years of struggling to find their feet, the sacrifices they have made finally seem worth it. As darker shadows of the past reach out to them from Germany and the Vietnam war looms, a turning point will change her life forever. An epic tale of love and endurance. *Anne Jackson*

## MYSTERY CAR OUTING...

And what a mystery! 40 National Seniors members met after 9am at the tennis courts, behind Port City Bowls Club, in much anticipation. The weather was perfect with blue sunny skies. Our lovely organizer Denise Healey had put together a large list of questions and very few answers. With car sharing organized, we excitedly drove left from the car park, as instructed...and it was ON!

Eyes to the left...eyes to the right..eyes upwards...to not only find answers to the questions but also to make sure the correct directions were followed. But wait..there was more, some questions were cryptic!

Have you ever turned right at a road which may croak? Where is Tiplers Drive? And who knew coffee would be at Café A Plenty? Abundance Café had been renamed..but fortunately the delicious coffee and cakes served there were welcomed after 24 questions and almost...the halfway mark.

Sometimes hard to get a group of chatty National Seniors moving, the eager participants continued with a new set of 42 questions, on the Wauchope side of the freeway. And interesting it was! Many folk traversed streets and an Industrial area never before ventured into. How often are you given instructions to 'Turn left at the mauve/purple park and into dirty bum drive'?

It's not every day that you look for a giraffe to tell you where lunch is. But the Bago Tavern gave us all enough space outside to enjoy good food and drinks, whilst checking off the answers and enjoying great conversation.

The magnificent perpetual trophy for the highest overall marks was awarded to Christina & Martin Brewer and Noeleen & Louis Hayward.



Denise received a lot of reflective and very well deserved accolades for putting this fun drive together, no mean task.

And how lucky are we...Denise has offered to do this excursion again next year!



## MYSTERY CAR OUTING...



Table 1 with some of the happy Mystery Car participants

Table number 2 all enjoying the food on offer at the end of the Mystery Car drive



Table number 3, all enjoying each others company



And the table with the winners of the Myster car drive ....



## Omnicare Presentation

Recently Branch member John Urquhart was asked to present to the Wauchope Omnicare group on National Seniors.

John is a recently retired Board member of National Seniors and chaired the Audit, Risk, Finance and IT committee and the Research committee.

John spoke on the structure of the organisation, its purpose and on aspects of its advocacy and research including research papers on dementia.

In addition he provided an overview of the organisations business including insurance, travel, membership, investments and business partnerships.

John highlighted the significant advocacy and political impact the organisation has through its interactions with Politicians, the Friends of Seniors Group and our growing supporter/ membership numbers that currently stand at 260,000.

He also covered many of the benefits of National Seniors membership and in particular the calculators on finance, concessions and downsizing and the recently released discount app.

John and Teresa concluded the presentation by covering aspects of community group/Branch sustainability and success including discussion on;

- care,
- communication,
- entertainment and
- education

Some of the group expressed interest in joining our Branch. Note one of our cherished members Wynne Eldridge in the adjacent photo. Wynne is also a member of Omnicare.



## Croquet 'Come & Try'

Croquet activity proved popular.

It was a fun morning at the 'Come and Try' croquet session.

The current President of Port Macquarie Croquet Club, Jill Drury introduced the session describing the purpose of the sport and why it is so appealing to Seniors. Jill also gave some interesting history from the 1950's with the laying of turf for the West Port greens and of photos of first Club, exclusively women in white uniforms. Men were invited to join within 10. Port Macquarie numbers of women and men playing are fairly equal. Club members also participate in inter district, State and National competitions.

We were soon on the lawns, mallets in hand, for practice sessions then began play in pairs within groups of four, each with one experienced player. It was wonderful to hear all the laughter and occasional cheers. There were some excellent shots played. We could see how players of different ability and experience partner up, (as in regular games) and the scores can be a narrow win of 7 points to 6 after nearly an hour's play.

On the adjacent court Steve and Dee were having a coaching session. It is an important part of welcoming new members that they receive free coaching and are helped to understand the rules of play.

Players commented that they both enjoyed the croquet and the company. A few indicated that they would take up the offer of three, free coaching sessions (Lawn fees of \$10 apply for two of these) before deciding to become members. More information can be sought from us or found on <https://portmacquarietroquet.com.au/club-information/>

Robyn & Ian Richardson.



By Sue STEPHENSON

**THE** Port Macquarie-Hastings was strongly represented in this year's King's Birthday Honours in both the Order of Australia and Meritorious Awards divisions.

In addition to the Australian Police Medal awarded to Mid North Coast Police District Superintendent Shane Cribb, are the volunteers, advocates and experts who have been recognised for their contribution to the community.

### Marita and Dr Colin Crighton OAM

Marita and Dr Colin Crighton are no ordinary couple.

Both have been recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia for their shared interest in improving the lives of the Hastings' older residents.

Mrs Crighton was acknowledged for her service to community health.

"Marita has worked with the Hastings Home Hospice team for more than three decades, supporting palliative care patients," Mid North Coast Health shared.

She has served as President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and as a committee member.

It is hoped her recognition will encourage others to follow in her footsteps.

Like her husband, she is a member of the Port Macquarie branch of National Seniors Australia, and has been involved in the University of the Third Age (U3A).

Dr Crighton's citation is for service to the community of Port Macquarie in his capacity as a former

geriatric doctor, general practitioner, surgeon-obstetrician and Mixed Probus Club member.

He is also a keen target shooter and has been a member of the Oxley Pistol Club and Port Macquarie Clay Target Club.

### Erika Gleeson OAM

Disability advocate Erika Gleeson was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to the disability industry.

Best known as the founder of Autism Swim, Ms Gleeson has also served the community in the following roles:

- Senior Behaviour Specialist and Disability Consultant, since 2013.

- Guest university lecturer, since 2013.

- Director on multiple Disability/Inclusion Boards, since 2013.

- Consultant, NSW Police on Wandering Responses, 2020

- Behavioural Specialist, The Centre for Applied Behaviour Analysis, 2013-2016.

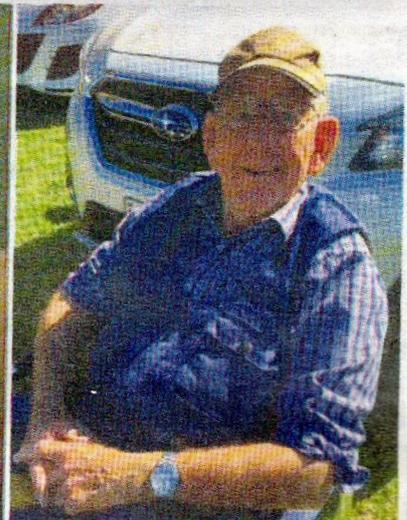
- Clinical Trainer and Consultant, Equalis, 2011-2013.

Ms Gleeson shared that she was "incredibly honoured" to receive the award.

"After 16 years in a career I love deeply, it's been a privilege to witness the evolution of our industry and to see the world, albeit [very] slowly, become more neuroaffirming.

"The timing is especially meaningful as Autism Swim celebrates its 10th anniversary.

"There is still a very long road ahead, but with 1:5 people having a disability, any spotlight on the disability sector is



□ Hastings Home Hospice volunteer Marita Crighton OAM and her husband Doctor Colin Crighton OAM. File photos: Mid North Coast Health and PMQ Clay Target Club.

ever so necessary.

"In a time when parts of the world are moving backwards, I'm especially grateful to be surrounded by people who push the inclusion movement forwards."

### Karen McKay (OAM)

Port Macquarie's Karen McKay will receive a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to early childhood education.

Mrs McKay spent an incredible 43 years as the Director of St Joseph's Early Childhood Services in Laurieton, between 1980-2023.

"Throughout her time with us, Karen demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the care, development, and learning of young children," the service shared.

"Her deep knowledge, leadership, and tireless advocacy for quality early learning left an indelible mark not only on our service, but also on the broader educational community."

In acknowledging her



□ Childhood educator Karen McKay OAM. Photo: Semann & Slattery.



□ Disability advocate and Autism Swim founder Erika Gleeson OAM. Photo: Erika Gleeson Consultancy.

well-wishers, Ms McKay said she missed her "past life" but now volunteers as "gardener in the dementia wing at my Dad's aged care facility."

## Hunter Trip Update.

The trip to the Hunter in late November including to the Xmas lights at the Hunter Valley Gardens is now fully subscribed. We have 37 members on the list. The final itinerary and the process for payment will go out to those on the list in August.

Please note the approximate cost of this activity is around \$460 per person twin share. This includes most meals ( morning teas, pub evening meal, breakfasts, Xmas dinner evening meal and lunches) accommodation, entrance to the Lights and two tastings events. It does not include drinks. The accomodation cost unfortunately has increased by \$40 per person since we last visited the Hunter lights two years ago. Food prices and tastings have also gone up. Please contact John or Teresa ( mobile 0408384804 or [mailtjohn@yahoo.com.au](mailto:mailtjohn@yahoo.com.au)) if further clarification is required or if you would like to put your name on the waiting list.

Entertainment at the Xmas dinner will once again be performed by the National Seniors 'All Stars' and this dinner will be a theme night. Detail to follow.

Looking forward to another great trip.

John and Teresa



## 2024–2025 Committee Lunch

Bill and Sue hosted the current committee and their partners, a total of 17 National Seniors, to a 'Thank You Lunch' at Wauchope Country Club.

Everyone had a great time, the wine and food were great, and the company was exceptional.

It was an excellent committee, and a lot was achieved during the year with Bill guiding us. All committee members worked well together and enjoyed themselves immensely during the process.

We extend our best wishes to Bill and Sue.

Ron Mitchell

## Your 2024/2025 Committee

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