

National Seniors

AUSTRALIA

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS BRANCH

ConnectionS/Newsletter
October 2025



ACTING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

So, President Joan asks Judith, "Can you please chair the next meeting as I'll be overseas and so will Vice President, Teresa. Judith, obligingly, says "Of course". Joan says, "I've prepared most of it so there shouldn't be any trouble"; but of course, there was.

Thanks to not just one, but two, dodgy microphones, Judith almost immediately found herself speechless – well almost; it's a good job that she has a voice that carries. Then began a very amusing and unrehearsed skit with husband, Keith, who seemingly kept bringing each mic. back to life, handing it back over to her only to have it quit again. Back and forth several times as Keith jauntily says to her "Here, try this one" until Ron decided to take both microphones back to base for new batteries. Well done, Judith, for keeping your cool in the face of frustrating technology, and to both you and Keith for making us laugh about it.

What's in this Newsletter...

Acting President's Report

The Inaugural National Seniors Cup

Speakers' Corner

Members' News

Branch Events: Picnic at Bago;
the Night Sky

Forthcoming Events: Be
Connected; Charity Auction

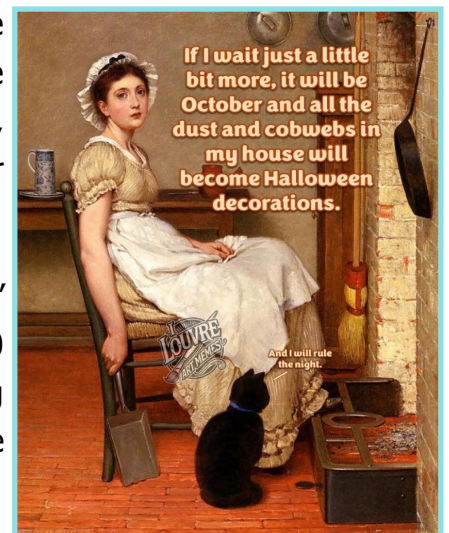
Birthdays

THE INAUGURAL PORT MACQUARIE NATIONAL SENIORS CUP



Here's how it works. A random horse race has been selected and will be shown at our Melbourne Cup Lunch, called by a professional race caller using local Port Macquarie names for the horses.

At the October meeting, you can enter a raffle for a chance to "own" one of the twelve horses running in this race. Raffle tickets are \$5.00 each. The twelve lucky raffle winners will be drawn at the beginning of our Lunch. Prizes will be awarded to the "owners" of the first three horses past the post. A little bit of added fun to the afternoon.



SPEAKERS' CORNER

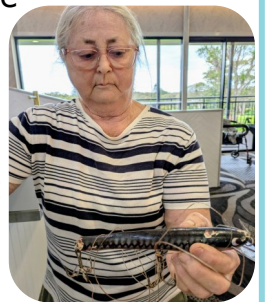


Leonie (L) and June (R)

Leonie Heath, from PMAWS, and June LePla, from FAWNA, spoke to members last month. As they talked, it became clear that these organisations have a lot in common: both are dedicated to rescuing animals in distress; they have a “no kill” policy meaning that, unless vets advise that an animal cannot be saved, they focus on rehoming (PMAWS) or releasing them back into the wild (FAWNA). They both run education programs, like their talk to us, to teach the public how to reduce the harm to domestic and wild animals. They are registered non-profits run entirely by volunteers and rely almost entirely on public generosity to fund their services.

PMAWS are overwhelmed by the number of abandoned and surrendered pets in its care, especially by cats that are close to littering or have just had kittens. To reduce these numbers, it urges the public to desex their pets and to do careful research before choosing a pet to make sure that it doesn't grow too big or too costly or outlive its elderly owner. Animals are fostered in the homes of volunteers until forever places can be found. Leonie had brought photos of some of the cats and dogs they had saved and told stories of how they had been badly treated and then rescued.

FAWNA's main aim is to return animals to the wild. The collection, care and release of native injured, orphaned or displaced wildlife requires a licence for each species; kangaroos, wallabies, possums, koalas, and birds to name a few. June, herself, has seven licences which she has to renew every three years. It has a 24/7 rescue hotline and volunteers will often travel half a day to collect animals reported at risk, making petrol their highest cost. The group tries to prevent injuries by talking about the ways that the public can harm wildlife: she showed the type of fishing lures that cause harm to birds and told us how possums are mostly killed by feral cats or those allowed outdoors.



June displays a vicious lure

When asked about fundraising, Leonie mentioned donations, small bequests, occasional small government grants, events and stalls in shopping centres. Both groups are always in need of volunteers and donations. **Editor: if you would like to support either of these charities, Leonie and June left leaflets which show how to contact them.**



New member, Ian Thiele, told us a little bit about himself at last month's meeting. In fact, Ian wanted to tell us about two particular aspects of his life: the first was his career in nursing and the second, he revealed later in his talk, was the biggest surprise of his life.

Both his parents were new immigrants, his

father from Wales and mother from Italy. Ian had a very comfortable childhood in Glenelg, with the beach at the bottom of his garden. After school at Scotch College, he studied science at Adelaide University and, after graduation, chose to enter the nursing profession.

Ian told us something of his nursing career: training in Melbourne; working in Edinburgh, the US and Saudi Arabia. He set up a Cancer

SPEAKERS' CORNER (cont.)

Ward in Warrigal and ended his nursing career as an Associate Director of Nursing. He had, by then, two Masters degrees (Emergency Medicine and Hospital Administration) in addition to a Nursing degree and Midwifery one. Ian also told a couple of amusing stories of his life in the wards.

Half-way through his talk Ian told a story about a mother leaving her four young children in the middle of the night while their father, a squadron leader in the RAAF was temporarily posted to Melbourne. Waking up to find her mother missing, the oldest child put on a pan of milk to feed the hungry baby and forgot about it. Thankfully, all the children were rescued from the resulting fire but it did mean that the family was broken up and the baby adopted.

Ian was that baby but he did not know, until 2009, that he had been adopted in 1955. His adopted parents, now dead, had not felt the need to tell him since to them he was their natural son. He met his birth family the following year, all but his mother who had died. Ian was able to tell his birth father that he had been blessed to have been the son of his adoptive parents. A couple of years later he changed his name from Ian Edgecombe, to his birth name, Ian Thiele. Thank you, Ian, for sharing these two most important aspects of your life.

MEMBERS' NEWS

VALE DOCTOR COLIN



The sadness of farewelling Dr Crighton by many of our members was offset by his family and friends reminiscing on the life of this lovely man and his very interesting and accomplished life.

His Sydney childhood was an exciting adventure where some of his escapades were blowing up letter boxes and shooting at his mother's washing. This led to his passionate hobby of clay target shooting which he continued all through his long life until his health failed. He taught his children to shoot and clean their rabbits and the story goes that the child with

the most pellets in their meal was the winner.

Colin studied medicine in Sydney and worked at numerous Sydney hospitals before relocating to Lithgow and then Kempsey with his wife, Marita, and family. He was a GP and Obstetrician both in Lithgow and Kempsey. When age told him that obstetrics was becoming too much he decided to study Geriatrics where he won the University medal. He became a geriatric geriatrician!

He lectured at the Rural Clinical campus here in Port where students said that they learned things from Colin that were not in any text book.

Dr Crighton was a highly-respected, compassionate and genuine friend and doctor who will be truly missed.

MEMBERS' NEWS

A LETTER FROM BOB AND ROBYN MORGAN

I wish to thank all of you for the many kindnesses and offers of support we have received since Robyn was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer six weeks ago. The day before the July Committee Meeting Denise rang me and asked "how can we help?". I found it difficult to answer this question but I was aware that I was overloaded and needed the impossible - an offsider.

However, we talked the situation through and reached the conclusion that meals were an issue – I'm not a cook! And we had well-stocked fridges and freezers. Denise took the problem to the Committee Meeting and within twenty-four hours President Joan called and took frozen foods away which she returned as six cooked meals ready to heat and eat. Then Erica appeared and did something similar. We have reached a situation where things are now more manageable.

Robyn is currently undergoing a regime of chemotherapy treatment at the MNC Cancer Institute – it consists of two consecutive Wednesday treatments and the next two Wednesdays off. Treatment brings with it many side-effects and there are no guarantees of success. After some adjusting she is coping well. Robyn and I are very grateful for the many kindnesses you have shown us in the last few weeks. You've brightened our lives. You are a great group of people. Robyn and I feel privileged to be members of this group

VALE SUE SCOTT

On Tuesday 7th October, family and friends and fifty National Seniors were present at Sue's funeral service at the Innes Gardens Memorial Park Chapel. It was a beautiful service, the celebrant was Bill's son Scott Wendt; he handled it so well. Bill gave a heartfelt eulogy of his life with Sue. Afterwards we were invited to the River Room at Westport Club to continue with a celebration of Sue's life. It was lovely to chat with the family members of both Bill and Sue. This beautiful verse was part of the service program:



Afterglow

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles
when life is done.
I'd like to leave an echo whispering
softly down the ways,
of happy times and laughing times
and bright and sunny days.

(Ron Mitchell)

BRANCH EVENTS

BAGO MAZE AND WINERY

- what a beautiful place for a relaxing afternoon with friends. We had ten members turn up on this lovely sunny day for a picnic and drinks. We all enjoyed ourselves immensely; you have to admit spring is one of the best times of the year. Anyway, we were small in number but had the best time, the winery and maze looked pristine.



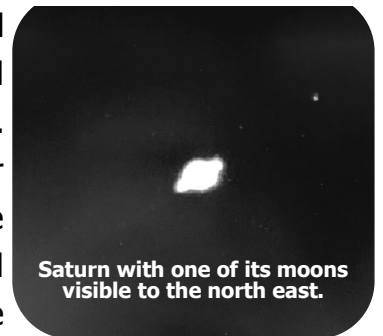
The Bago winery staff were so helpful. Joan rang the day before and spoke to Kelly to check where we could install our marquee. Kelly said she would let us have the tractor shed at zero cost as it wasn't being used that day; she and staff set up the tables and chairs for us. We had provisioned for twenty members to come, unfortunately with date change and members away we only had ten. Look forward to going to this venue again sometime, 10 out of 10 to the staff. **(Ron & Joan Mitchell)**

AN EVENING PICNIC AND SIGHTS AT THE OBESERVATORY



Port Macquarie did not disappoint as we enjoyed a lovely balmy evening at Observatory Park with a little cloud and smoke cover. Twenty-seven members greeted, chattered, laughed and indulged in fish and chips, pizza, salads and so much sharing. A very lively and enjoyable picnic where the setting sun and jet trails set the stage for our little walk up to Port's brand new Observatory, hoping to see something special in the night sky.

We were greeted by very knowledgeable volunteers who initially showed us the very interesting space rocks and debris etc. in the foyer and encouraged many of us to participate in the hands-on exhibits. Unfortunately, as said before, the cloud and smoke prevented a clear vision through the extremely large and brand new telescope but the crescent moon was visible and Saturn (with her rings in an almost vertical position) was faintly sighted. We could also see the skies via a telescopic camera, projected onto a computer screen.



Lee studies the distant waxing moon much closer up through the telescope

We were encouraged to attend the informative presentation in the new lecture theatre where another volunteer, Bruce, talked about the International Space Station and then the James Webb Telescope. Although much of the information was technical, a teenage-aged young man was totally enthralled by many of the topics and could answer many of the presenter's questions; but our Mike Hall was also a very knowledgeable and informed responder. The new Observatory is impressive; the telescopes on a higher level are easily accessible by ramp or stairs and the lecture room is spacious and comfortable.

BRANCH EVENTS

BE CONNECTED DAY—WEDNESDAY 22ND OCTOBER 2025



In preparation for our workshop at the Library, investigate the website

<http://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/>

to explore the workshops, podcasts and other resources that are available to support our digital learning. Have your questions ready for our tech guru, Michael. We will also explore AI and have an app sharing session.

ANNUAL CHARITY AUCTION—WEDNESDAY 19TH OCTOBER

As well as those treasures that need a new home, have you considered an experience or activity that you could offer to raise money for our charity, Care Flight. Will it be a morning tea or lunch, hosting a game of cards e.g. Bridge, jewellery making or an art lesson?

Please send your ideas to Lee at leebrown958@gmail.com



October Birthdays

Cynthia Brady
Carol Castiglioni
Gavan Pead

Christina Brewer
Bob Morgan
Leigh Pike



To everyone who helped put together this Newsletter:

The Newsletter Team - Denise, Erica and Judith
Members News—Marita, Bob, Ron
Branch Events—Ron and Erica
Birthdays - Ron

Lynda ❤️

