

# National Seniors

## AUSTRALIA

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS BRANCH

## ConnectionS/Newsletter

### July 2024

### Executive Committee

President	Teresa Iwinska
Vice President	Dee Watkinson
Secretary	Lesley Cooney
Treas/Welfare	Erica De Carlo
Activities	Lee Brown
Membership	Ron Mitchell
Newsletter	Bill Wendt
One Thing About	Linda Philp

### EDITORIAL

Where did the year go? It only seems like yesterday that I took on the role as your newsletter editor. I must say thank you for the support of James McAdam, Erica DeCarlo and Dee Watkinson. Not only did they support me in my first year on committee, but also held down busy positions on the General Committee.

As the year proceeded, I think we produced an interesting newsletter which most members enjoyed reading the many articles of our never-ending list of activities. With most of us on the committee taking breaks for many reasons, we shifted to enlist help from you the members. This has proved to be a great success. It involves all members in doing write-ups on guest speakers and activities. Saying that, I would also like to thank Allen Philp for being our photographer this year. As the format is working well, I will continue with this over the ensuing year as **I LOVE DOING IT.**

I will, however, be looking for a member who would like to learn the Publisher program together with learning how to put the newsletter

together. It is easy, so don't be daunted by the thought.

This was my first year on the General Committee and have learned lots on how we operate, and my thanks go to President Teresa, the whole team, and Sue for their full support in making my first year a most enjoyable one.

My wish for next term is that you all keep involved, support each other, enjoy the planned activities, and be involved. This is your Branch, and it's up to us all to keep it a successful one.

**Editor Bill.**

### JULY BIRTHDAYS

Lee Brown	Lesley Cooney
Mara Goodall	Kevin Howell
Walter Lutz	Andrew Moll
David Morris	Keith Reichenbach
Jillene Vaughan	
Mavis Wallace	
Lynda Walters	



# A STORY TO HELP YOU SAVE YOUR VALUABLES

This is a story that will help our members keep their phones and valuables safe.

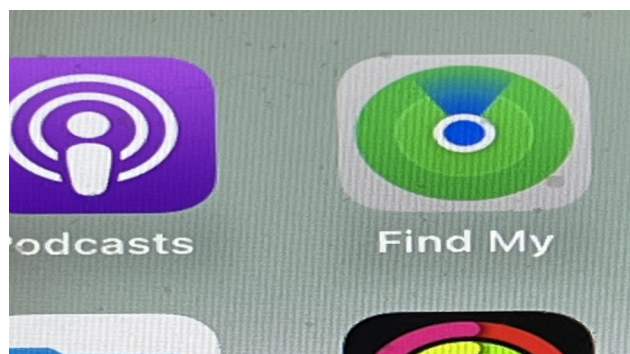
During a recent committee meeting, two members discussed leaving their wallets and phones on the roof of their cars and driving off. One of them was me. We all decided that this would be a great story to let you all in on.



The story starts when Sue and I stopped at Woolies at Lake Cathie to do some shopping on the way back from a job I had to do in the area. Now we all know that Sue has been disabled and needing help walking. We finished our shopping and before loading the shopping into the car, together with giving Sue assistance to get into the car, I put my phone and my wallet/card holder ON THE ROOF OF THE CAR.

I drove off around 2 km in a 50 zone towards Port. Just after hitting the 100 zone, Sue noticed something hanging from above the back door. I stopped and found that the strap of my wallet/ card holder was caught in the top of the back door INTACT. However, no phone. After walking to the side of the road to no avail. On returning home I

called my phone from Sues, but it rang out, giving hope that no-one had picked it up. I made 3 trips from home to Cathie to no avail. Decided to go into Port to Telstra. I informed them of the problem and told them that our two phones were linked. I drove home and picked up Sue's phone and returned to Telstra



Now this is where it became interesting. The sales guy on duty opened the FIND MY APP on the phone and pointed out that my phone was in the grass on the side of Ocean Drive near the 100k sign. I then asked what to do next. He told me to put the phone on the front seat and the GPS in the phone would tell me to the exact spot. Within 30 minutes I was at the spot where the GPS told me to stop. After stopping I found the phone in the short grass exactly where the Find My said. He said that if I couldn't see it, push a button on the phone and an alarm would go off and it could be heard from 100mts.

I recommend that you all install this fantastic app. It can also be used to locate your families, car keys and other items.

**NEVER PUT YOUR VALUABLES ON THE ROOF OF YOUR CAR**

**By Bill Wendt.**



### **"My Double Life"**

Judith quickly put us at ease, claiming she wasn't quite a secret spy! It turned out that her two lives can be summarized as working in the fashion industry – then later setting up her own 'Home Selling' business.

The talk was accompanied by many relevant photos – starting with Judith as a fifteen-year-old starting with June Daly Watkins OAM where she attended personal development school in where young ladies were trained in etiquette and deportment – with a strong emphasis on fashion and modelling. This led to working in fashion, but also getting married and having three children.

After some time, she wanted to branch out and start her own home selling business. At the time a woman required her husband's approval (and signature) to start a business, but obviously this was obtained. Judith was herself surprised at how well and how successful this enterprise became. Part of this was that she claims she was very shy and was initially not keen on public speaking. She became team leader and clearly (based on today's presentation) much more confident! We saw and heard about the many business awards received – including

winning a car (for a year...), and a mink coat. Sales success was measured (by her father) as: 'That's a lot of frocks'.

Then a theme familiar to many of us: A short break holiday visit to Port Macquarie – which clearly influenced her to move away from Sydney and join us all here!

The remainder of the talk, and many exciting photos to go with it, covered Judith's adventurous hiking, climbing, canoeing holidays to a long list of places all over Australia and later New Zealand. This began with a plan to do the Overland Track in Tasmania. She and her friend packed and dressed for an adventure well away from the fashion world – with a much smaller vanity case than normal for fashion events! The overland track began with an 'unexpected' first day of almost vertical climbing – and continued with hard trekking for the remaining five days. Despite exhaustion and 'cool' weather this did not put them off adventure travel.

Since that trek, other areas of Tasmania were explored (Bay of Fires, Freycinet), as well as the Bungle Bungles, Kakadu, the Kimberley, Karijini – followed by NZ hikes, kayak adventures, and an interesting departure from the Trans-Alpine train in the snow – pulling luggage along without knowing in which direction the accommodation lay.

Another challenge was returning from Hobart to Sydney on one of the (smaller) Sydney to Hobart racing yachts – which might be enough to put someone off sailing, however Judith did it more than once! In summary, Judith's life of work and pleasure had revolved around selling fashion – an activity which has still not stopped.

**By Mike Hall**



At the June NS meeting our guest speaker was Marion Chisholm, who has had many years' experiences as a grower of a variety of plants and in particular grapes. Having lived in WA, NT and NSW she has been able to apply her knowledge of the vastly different climatic conditions in which we live in Australia, to achieve successful growing outcomes. The word Terroir is important here because microclimates, soil types and temperature differences influence the ripening and flavour of the grapes.

Marion referred to the wine industry from 1998 in Margaret River and how it has evolved across the country. It was here that she honed specific skills and a discriminatory ability to judge grape qualities and their effects on the production and outcome of wine styles. Grapes require different pruning techniques too.

With her expert knowledge, Marion explained why Cab Sav will keep longer than Shiraz, and if friends bring a variety of wines to your table, drink a Rose, then a Merlot before the other two.

Stelvin caps have helped reduce wine taint as have stainless steel tanks. She also advised that

you taste a bottle of wine first after opening, to see if it requires aerating or decanting. Nice glasses add to the enjoyment of wine.

Don't forget that wines suffer from 'bottle shock' in transportation and may need to be 'rested' for a couple of weeks before opening. Remember that with your ordered deliveries!

Marion referred to the hardier types of grape grown in NSW..Isabella, Chambourcin, Villard Blanc and Norton. She also talked about the joys of 'blind tasting' wines and how price is not an indication of enjoyment, Aldi wines score well here!

To conclude, Marion has passed on a great range of reference materials including movies, You Tube and books. Your committee can help you here.

**(adapted from Marion's notes)**

## A SPECIAL AWARD



It was lovely to see Mara Goodall receive a well earned 25th year Service Badge together with a Life Membership awarded by Head Office. Congratulations Mara, you truly deserve your award.

# PORT MACQUARIE ART WALK



Friday, a mild winter evening, the Port Macquarie Art Walk was on. For a first-time attendee it proved to be a pleasant surprise. A variety of light installations throughout the CBD caught the eye with the trees festooned with many and varied hanging lights. The children's artwork, set out in a colourful pavilion, was very popular as was a very effective laser image of sea life shown on a mesh screen, which gave the impression of an aquarium. There was even a special sand sculpture.

A large blue whale which apparently breached and dived was a feature (It had collapsed when we got to it). Light columns were around the town square and looked great. People and families with children were all enjoying the spectacle with crowds filling eateries of all sorts. Our National Seniors group enjoyed a meal at North Point Thai. All in all, the Art Walk was a great success - the town was jumping.



# OUR WANDERING WATTO'S

## Halfway Point!

5 weeks to make it to Kunnanara and 5225 km. Just as well we set out mid May and not at the start. Due to the heavy rainfall and flooding of rivers in the north of the country so many roads became impassable. There have been massive road repairs, and many are ongoing, the roads look like patchwork. There have been frequent stops at traffic lights with go slow zones. The Barkly Highway from Camooweal to Threeways, near Tennant Creek is a nightmare, not just because of 400km without toilets but 80 km at each end is full of potholes, some the size of small baths, which have to be slowly negotiated, traffic is patient and often single lane. We encountered a later rain which caused much mudchurning when pulling over to the side of the road for vehicles to pass each other and potential bogging without 4 wheeldrive..yes it was that bad. That said, being out on the road, often without reception and the ability to choose your daily distance and stopoff points, is a brilliant way to relax and clear the mind. It's a joy to converse with fellow travellers and talk about good places to see and you often catch up with the same people going your way. Drinks are shared around local community dinners, campfires, just under the stars or at coffee stops. Not everyone is chatty and there are a lot of folks on the road coping with ill health, but they keep making

the most of it.

Some highlights..the annual horse races at Brewarinna, when it was freezing cold but the 'local' ladies, who had travelled hundreds of km to get there, were determined to wear their skimpy finery..and cowgirl boots. Many slept overnight in their cars before taking the muddy dirt roads back to their farms. Interestingly at least half the jockeys were young girls. The community got together 4 days before the event to dig up and re lay the track because of flood damage.

Also, at Brewarrinna are the Indigenous fish traps, where rocks are organised to hand catch fish as they swim upstream and are then put into holding pools until required for food. This arrangement is thought to be the oldest man-made monument in the world



Back o' Bourke where the town looked good, the locals were friendly, and their Cultural Centre was really well put together. We had not appreciated how far Henry Lawson had travelled and worked in his lifetime and used it as inspiration for his writing, along with all the other pioneer travellers presented there. Fred

## OUR WANDERING WATTO'S (2)

Hollows is much appreciated there, and we visited his majestic grave site.

The remains of Mary Kathleen, a uranium mining town established just outside Mt Isa in 1958 can be explored. There are many slabs from the homes to park and camp on, a herd of cows now pass through during the day. Sue Scott lived there as a young girl, the lifestyle and town layout is clearly illustrated on 2 boards.



The billabong at Camooweal is always a delight. We go to the first lake where the lily pads and huge variety of birds make for fabulous viewing, along with sunrise and sunsets. The bird chatter is amazing, especially when the brolgas honk. There is a Drivers Museum in town which is well worth a visit.

Mataranka is home to Bitter Springs, a 32-degree thermal river where people take their noodles and enjoy the 15-minute ride downstream under pandani trees. We did it twice.

At nighttime is the 1-hour whip cracking show by 31 year old Nathan 'Whippy" Griggs. He holds 3 world titles in the Guinness Book of Records, page 124. Very entertaining, he passes a hat round at the end of each performance, 5 nights a week. He does sell merch; we have the stubby holder. He uses great music, lights and fire and gives the youngsters a lesson in whip cracking.

The Victoria Highway from Katherine to Kununnura is stunning with high red stone backdrops, blue skies, rivers and the start of boab trees. The rest stops here are a true joy and the temperatures start to increase, along We also feel for communities like Tambo when the pharmacist visits once a week. But they do run fundraising Chook races each night in the pub!





So, housework is sweeping 1.5m of carpet each day. Food prep is simple, but meals are delicious. There are pubs and dinners provided by caravan parks to enjoy too. At Julia Creek we sat with 3 guitar players who had only met that afternoon, but they provided great entertainment that night. Julia Creek is about to do a mega expansion with the opening of a new iron ore mine. The trains around Mt Isa are over 1km long carrying ore to Townsville.

We stay at a variety of venues with varying facilities and costs, many free. Price is no indication of quality or value. We try to spend money in some towns, but groceries can be expensive.



**By Dee & Steve Watkinson.**

## **BOOK REVIEW**

**The Women"**

**Author Kristin Hannah**

In 1968 Frances McGrath first heard the words "Women can be heroes" which changed her life. Having recently lost her brother in Vietnam she decided to join the Army Nurse Corps and follow his path.

There she is overwhelmed by the chaos and destruction of war. She discovers the true value of female friendship and the heart-break that love can cause. The trauma of coming home to a changed America where they were rejected as VETs and not recognised for their courage.

Suffering PTSD she undergoes months of therapy before she decides to buy a disused farmhouse in Montana where she establishes a retreat for VET women also suffering from trauma.

A heartwarming story of women heroes.

**By Anne Jackson**



## PROPOSED CHARITY FOR 2024-2025

Your committee are seeking your ideas on a suitable charity that we could support in the coming year. It is suggested that the charity you select should be serving our local community and not be a large organization that receives funding from governments. All entries will be discussed and a decision reached at the Annual General Meeting.



CareFlight is an Australian aeromedical charity which uses helicopters and aircraft to transfer patients from accident scenes and seriously ill patients between hospitals. It employs its own paramedics and critical care technicians. It receives Government funding for specific projects and has corporate sponsors.

Port Macquarie is a regional base where aircraft and staff are stationed. Our members have used the service, where a member's seriously ill great granddaughter was transferred from Coffs Harbour to Newcastle and another member was transferred from Port Macquarie Base to Newcastle for a heart operation.

**By Lee Brown**

Before my surgery, the anesthesiologist offered to knock me out with gas or a boat paddle...  
It was an ether/oar situation.

The  
**Hope**  
Community

"The Hope Community" is an organisation run by The Honour Church in Port Macquarie with op shops in Port Macquarie, Lake Cathie and Laurieton. It is a locally based independent organisation helped by a band of amazing volunteers.

Funds are raised through donations which are then either sold or donated free of charge to people and families in need. The money raised through donations is used to support the needy and homeless providing food hampers, clothing, bedding and household furniture.

There are shower facilities available for people living rough to come for a freshen up and vouchers provided to them to get clean clothes from our shop.

Hot meals are provided to the homeless on a weekly basis with a roster of volunteers who prepare up to 20 meals in their own kitchens which are then delivered to the people in need.

A very worthy cause supporting the vulnerable and needy people in our community."

**By Linda Philp**

## OUR HISTORIC WALK AROUND PORT MAC.

On Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June, a small group of our members gathered for a tour of Mrs York's Garden.



We met at a spot in the garden where the volunteer staff were all busy, pruning, cleaning, raking leaves and doing maintenance of these lovely gardens. 15-20 volunteers meet here every Wednesday morning to work and enjoy morning tea. Today was special as we were treated to a talk from Di Davidson, a very knowledgeable lady who gave us a talk on the history of the gardens.



The gardens were designed initially by Mrs Bertha York, who

started work on reclaiming, with council approval, a rundown section of heavily bushed parkland in 1963. By 1968 after so much hard work, the gardens were dedicated as Mrs York's Garden which is renowned Australia wide for its amazing array of plants and trees, walkways, seating areas, overlooking the main beach area of Port Macquarie.

We were shown an array of before and after shots of various areas of the gardens dating back to their inception. All this work is done by the many volunteers who meet here and undertake the upkeep while enjoying their company. They are very active in fundraising to cover the cost of their work.



It was then a short walk to the Port Macquarie Museum where we had an informative talk and a guided tour around another of the major attractions of our town.

Our knowledgeable tour leader today was none other than our amazing Activities Director, Lee Brown. Lee has a vast knowledge of the history of Port and told us many stories of the early convict days and how Port

evolved, which was basically a Penal Settlement. A great Museum which all members should visit.



It was then over to our lunch at Reyhana's for a fun-filled lunch session. Although a small group by comparison, it was another very enjoyable activity with some lovely members.

**By Bill Wendt.**



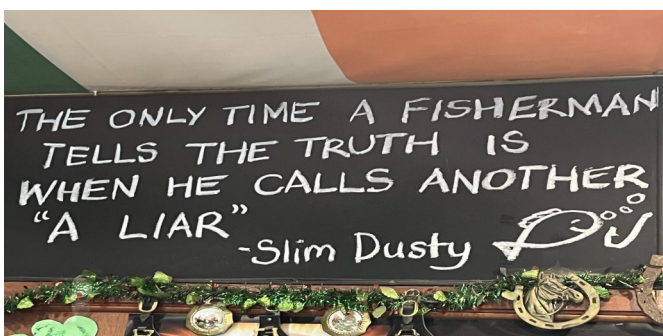
## FRIENDS OF MRS YORK'S GARDEN

The following proposal for our next charity to support came from our recent visit to the gardens. We were so impressed by what we saw and heard that over lunch we decided that this is a very worthwhile cause.

Friends of Mrs York's Garden is a community group of 20+ volunteers who have revegetated and now maintain the gardens from Goal Point to Allman Hill, overlooking the entrance to our harbour. They are self-funded, apart from any community grants they successfully apply for. Each Wednesday morning, they work on weeding, digging and replanting the area for the benefit of our community.

With assistance from local boat builders, they have beautified the area with seats and pavilions to enable visitors and locals to enjoy the beautiful views. They raise funds from their stall selling craft and home prepared goods as well as producing a yearly calendar. On the morning of our tour, we helped to celebrate the 92nd birthday of one of the original volunteers.

**By Several Members.**



## 2024 MAGICAL MYSTERY CAR TOUR



On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June, on a very chilly morning, over 40 of our members met in the Port Bowling Club car park, all keen to take part in our annual Magical Mystery Car tour. This year's event was organized by our Secretary Lesley and husband Paul who compiled a list of 25 questions that we all had to find the answers to. Our journey took us from the bowls club to various points of interest along the Pacific Drive, Ocean Drive, and all the way to our destination for lunch, the Kendall RSL Club.

We car-pooled, and after receiving final instructions from Lesley we headed off at 9.30 to gather answers to our questions.

Our morning tea stop was at 10.30 at The Bonny Hills Nursery where we all enjoyed a social coffee, together with some exotic looking cakes etc. Dragging ourselves away, we continued with our Quest to find the remaining answers to our questions. At around 12 noon, we arrived at our lunch stop at the RSL where we all enjoyed a nice meal, drinks, and a social event that kept on till around 2.30 when the crowd filtered off home to Port.

The winners of the much sought after trophy were presented to the team of Allen & Linda Philp, Donna Munro, and Nola Davies. Second place went to Ian and Robyn Richardson.

Another fantastic well attended, fun-filled activity of our Branch.



## WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE GETTING UP TO



### **"Blokes Notes" compete in Auckland, 13th July 2024**

Excitement is building as community A cappella male ensemble Blokes Notes prepare for their first international performance – having been invited to participate in the prestigious World Choir Games 2024, held in Auckland, New Zealand in July. This is a chance-of-a-lifetime for 18 ordinary blokes - to demonstrate the choir's commitment and talent and to represent our local community on an international stage.

The World Choir Games, often referred to as the "**Olympics of Choir Music**," is the largest international choral competition, attracting choirs from around the globe to showcase their talents, celebrate cultural diversity, and foster international understanding through music. It will give these legends an opportunity to grow musically, individually and as a collective, and make memories that last a lifetime.

Performing alongside **over 250 choirs representing 41 different countries**, the Blokes will be cultural ambassadors while demonstrating

their versatility and 'showmanship' to engage with diverse audiences.

The choir will have the opportunity to experience the diverse choirs from the 26 competition categories. The Blokes have prepared 4 songs for their competition, performing in the historic Auckland Town Hall's Concert Chamber, renowned for its fabulous acoustics. The Blokes will also participate in the opening Games ceremony and perform in the WCG Friendship Concert. Following the games they travel together to meet and sing a concert with Waikato Male Voices in Hamilton!

The Blokes are renowned for their quirky repertoire, their light-hearted and thoroughly entertaining performances, so the stage is set for Blokes Notes to make our community – and country - proud!

**By Ian Richardson.**

**Good luck to two of our NSPMH members, Ian and Kevin, who are in the choir. We are so proud of you.**

**Your Committee**