

**Probus Club of Templestowe Valley (Combined)**

**Secretary's Inaugural Annual Report**

**2003/2004**



## **Introduction**

This report is the first report from the Foundation Secretary of the club. Its purpose is to inform club members of progress we have made since our creation in June 2003.

## **About Probus**

### **History**

The Probus movement had its genesis in two ancestors in the United Kingdom in 1965 –1966. These were established by Rotary Clubs in Welwyn Garden and later in Caterham. This later club was the first to be called a PROBUS CLUB. Out of the “PRO” in Professional and the “BUS” from Business. The word “Probus” incidentally is the Latin word from which the English word Probity comes from; meaning uprightness and honesty. Both were formed to meet the need for companionship of their peers and mental stimulation for retired business and professional men.

The first PROBUS club in Australia was Hunters Hill in NSW in 1976. By 1996 there were 1875 clubs in the Pacific region. In 1982 the first PROBUS club for women was opened in Bateau Bay NSW and subsequently Combined Probus Clubs have been formed.

### **Members**

During 2003 the number of Probus clubs in the South Pacific Region was over 2000. With an average membership of around 100 there are approximately 200000 members.

### **Probus South Pacific**

In February 1981 a group of members in the Sydney area decided to instigate a service to provide information for groups intending to form Probus clubs. This eventually became the Probus Information centre a later to become the Probus Centre-South Pacific. The quarterly Probus newsletter which later became a magazine was instigated from this centre.

### **Probus Groups**

As Probus has grown, groups of clubs have organised gatherings for special occasions to which they have, through Probus South Pacific, invited Probus members from throughout the region.

Probus Rendezvous is now an established annual Probus event.

## **Our Club History**

### **How and why the club was started**

Probus clubs in our area have been very quick to establish a full membership and thus a wait list of people wishing to join. Given an annual membership drop out of less than 5% in most clubs, these wait lists can take several years to turn over. Periodically, local Rotary Clubs take the initiative and organise the formation of new clubs to take up the wait lists of existing clubs.

Our club was started by Manningham Rotary under the guidance of Ken Murray and Max Didier on June the 12<sup>th</sup> 2003 when the inaugural meeting was held in the hall that we still use for fellowship meetings.

### **The inaugural meeting**

When Manningham Rotary arranged the Foundation meeting and invited people on local wait lists to attend, several officers and members of local Probus and Rotary clubs spoke to the meeting about Probus and what it stands for. A total of eleven volunteers from Rotary and other Probus clubs assisted with the running of the meeting. Forty prospective members attended.

Seven people volunteered for committee and later met to establish the office bearers we have today. A Welfare Officer, Public Officer and Hospitality Officer were added to the committee positions in October making a total committee of eight members.

### **Foundation Members**

Subsequent to the Foundation Meeting, 62 foundation members signed up. These were members who joined at the Foundation Meeting or before the first fellowship meeting held in July

## **Probus Club of Templestowe Valley - Secretary's Report**

### **The Newsletter**

The newsletter has proven to play a vital role in keeping members informed on activities both future and past. The committee at their first meeting decided, that the newsletter should be posted out so members have access to information several days prior to the meetings. This would allow time for them to make arrangements and have any payments ready to be passed over at the next meeting. This arrangement though entailing cost in postage, will be continued because of the benefits to members. There is a plan in place to have the newsletter sent by email to those members having access to the Internet.

### **Constitution and by-laws**

The club members at our inaugural meeting agreed to adopt the standard constitution and by-laws of Probus South Pacific. The documents describing the constitution and by-laws have been made available at meetings and can be requested from the Secretary at any time.

The committee decided at their first meeting to apply for incorporation through the Corporate Affairs Department. By being properly incorporated, any litigation has to be directed to the incorporated body and cannot be directed to individual members. This application is currently in the process of approval.

### **Club Insurance**

Probus South Pacific provides a universal insurance cover for members and third parties at or around club events. Our club is levied an annual fee to cover this insurance.

### **Auditor**

Early in the year, one of our members Terry Peargood, volunteered to act as Auditor for the Club. Subsequently, Terry decided that an independent Auditor would be more appropriate and so stood down. The committee has appointed an independent Auditor, Mr. Brian Reed.

As Brian was unexpectedly unavailable to do our audit this year Terry volunteered to audit this year's accounts. This audit has been completed.

## **Our Committee**

The foundation committee, now made up of eight members is as follows:

- **President** Kerry McInerney
- **Vice President** Margaret Cornell
- **Treasurer** Lorraine Cooper
- **Secretary** Doug Hayne (Also Public Officer)
- **Assistant Secretary** Peter Fishley
- **Speakers** Gwen Young
- **Hospitality** John Mugridge
- **Welfare** Terry Pearlgood

### **Our President**

It was very apparent at the inaugural meeting that our President Kerry McInerney would be a good choice that club members had made for the job. Kerry's experience with industry and ability to put the message across has resulted in a highly motivated membership.

Kerry has also kept the enthusiasm going in all those whose efforts keep the club active by making sure these hard working members get recognition for their efforts.

### **Our Vice President**

Our rule that the President's position be rotated between male and female members has no real significance in Marg Cornell our inaugural Vice President being suitable for the position. By being deeply involved with handling membership and wait list issues, and participation in committee matters, Marg is appropriately placed and qualified to take over when she takes over the President's Chair from Kerry as a result of the by-law that the Vice President takes the chair automatically.

## Probus Club of Templestowe Valley - Secretary's Report

### Our Treasurer

When Lorraine Cooper put her hand up for the Treasurers position at our inaugural meeting, no one really knew how well qualified and experienced she was to take on this critically important role on the committee. Lorraine has been an excellent guiding light in keeping the finances of the club ongoing and in the future on a firm footing. She has had a major role in developing proper procedures for handing the quite significant sums of money involved in running club events. Lorraine is also a major contributor to activities at the busy front desk at our fellowship meetings.

**Financial health:** The 124-membership number has helped relieve a potential financial problem we may have had due to Hall and administrative expenses. Luckily, club activities do not have a lot of variable expenses. Hall hire for instance is the same irrespective of membership numbers. This should allow us to keep fees at their current rate in the medium term.

**Controlling expenditure:** The committee, and in particular our Treasurer, are very conscious of the fact that many members have a limited budget. Our administrative expenses do need to be closely monitored but without putting pressure on members and in particular committee members, to pay incidental costs out of their own pockets. With this in mind the committee are always looking for ways of keeping our costs down. Expense reductions such as emailing the newsletter will help here also. As we are a "not for profit" organisation, any future surplus if any, will be used for the benefit of members in appropriate ways decided by the committee.

### Our Secretary and Newsletter Editor

When I volunteered for committee membership, my main aim was to use my experience in writing documentation as Newsletter Editor. Somewhere along the line during our committee get together after the Foundation meeting, I ended up with both Newsletter and Secretary positions. Fortunately Peter Fishley responded to my request by taking on the role of Minute Secretary. I am very grateful to Peter for his assistance and expertise in this.

After 8 months on the committee I look back with pride and fondness for the positive experience this has been for me. We are a young club with a very motivated committee. Committee meetings and the fellowship meetings have all run very smoothly thanks to the efforts and advice from the committee and our members.

### Our Assistant Secretary

Peter Fishley's Public service experience has been very valuable in having accurate minutes and encouraging proper observance of protocol at our committee and club meetings.

As secretary, I was very pleased when Peter volunteered to be the minute secretary.

Peter has also contributed a lot to helping club members get to know one another by going out of his way to chat with all people making sure they all feel a part of the club.

### Our Welfare Officer

Several months after our foundation, it became apparent that we needed a welfare officer and Terry Pearlgood willingly gave up the Auditor role he volunteered for earlier, to take on this sensitive and important task. As a result of Terry's work in the background, there are several members who will feel that their link with the club has not broken due to their inability to attend. Terry has also instigated the idea of birthday wishes being delivered with the newsletter to those members who volunteered their details on their membership application. These greetings have been included for four issues now and have been well received.

### Our Hospitality Officer

John Mugridge was without portfolio for some months after our inaugural meeting when he was elected on to the committee. John however has made a great contribution at both committee and fellowship meetings. John thought carefully about where he could help and came up with the idea of having someone to greet people at the door and make sure all felt welcome. This will be particularly important in the future when new members and visitors arrive among our group who have known each other and socialized over a period of time.

John has also taken on the task of making sure information is visible and available at our fellowship meetings by having notice boards made and placed at strategic positions around the hall.

## Probus Club of Templestowe Valley - Secretary's Report

### Our Speakers Officer

Gwen Young came to our club as many members of Probus do, from a local Rotary group and soon made her presence felt with great appreciation for the quality and relevance of the speakers we have had at our fellowship meetings. Gwen has a great list ready for our meetings for some time to come and makes sure there are enough speakers on her list to ensure any cancellations are covered.

Gwen is also a very important member of our committee whose experience with Rotary has been of great benefit in assisting us to make decisions.

### Committee Activities

Committee meetings are held monthly, soon after the regular club meetings. Committee members have all been generous in offering the use of their homes for these meetings.

All of the committee meetings have been congenial, friendly and productive. Several important issues have been dealt with and improvements to procedures developed. The committee members regularly communicate with one another to keep us all up to date.

It was not all hard work though as the final committee meeting in 2003 was followed by a barbecue to which all members contributed. A lot of socialising and bonding occurred into the late hours of the evening.

### Members

Keeping track of members' attendance and new member applications as well as and the collection of fees, has been a major task for our membership officer Marg Cornell and Treasurer Lorraine Cooper and others who have assisted from time to time. Membership details are passed on to the Secretary who maintains a database of members' details. We now have a good database of members and their details, which makes the production of lists such as the phone list and attendance registers much easier, consistent and accurate.

### Events Co Ordination

One of the main administrative tasks for our dedicated people who organise events, is the tracking of members wishing to participate and the gathering and checking of funds collected.

Our treasurer quickly identified the need for a procedure and put a draft procedure to the committee. A sub committee was formed and the three members worked out a procedure and the associated documentation needed to keep track of event administration. This procedure has been given a trial run and will now be adopted for all events where collection of funds is involved.

### Fellowship Meetings

Arrangements for the hall that we use for fellowship were made for us by Manningham Rotary who sponsored the inauguration of our club. We are able to book the hall a year ahead thus ensuring that we always have comfortable a meeting place. Our choice of the second Monday of the month has not been always possible to adhere to because of Monday holidays early in the year. We appreciate the members' patience in coping with the different periods of time that occur between meetings.

**Fees:** The committee decided to try to keep cost to members at a minimum and thus came up with a \$2.00 fee to cover the hall hire and tea. Although tight, this fee has worked out to be adequate to handle these costs. The committee has no plans to change this in the coming year.

**Tea Roster:** Immediately the club meetings commenced we had plenty of volunteers to do the work needed to provide our "Fellowship Tea" at the meetings. A Roster was drawn up using alphabetical order of surnames. This appears to work well as long as we provide adequate notice. We expect that the members whose names start with "Y" (there are no Z's) will be on the tea roster in 4 to 5 years time; the luck of the draw.

### Speakers

Gwen's choice of speakers has been excellent with all of the speakers so far receiving a warm welcome and stimulating questions and discussion. The speakers for the first eight months of our existence were:

- **July**            **Beryl Jones**            **Smith Family**
- **August**        **Anna Davey**            **Forensic Science**
- **September** **Peter Casey**        **National Boy's Choir**

## Probus Club of Templestowe Valley - Secretary's Report

- **October**    **Kosta Kostoski**    **Railway and Post Office Antiques**
- **November**    **Ken Smithies**    **Bowen Therapy**
- **December**    **No Speaker**
- **January**    **Doug Hayne**    **Audio Visual Presentation**
- **February**    **Gabriella Byrne**    **Gambling Addiction**

### Luncheon

Part of the Probus tradition is for members to gather for a luncheon after fellowship meetings. Being aware of costs of this to members, the Manning ham Club was chosen and visited for lunch after most of our meetings the exception being the Christmas Lunch in December which was enjoyed by 82 members at the Yarra Valley Club's premises. The committee would like to thank Yvonne Shembrey for bookings and making sure the venue management were informed of numbers.

### Club events

Elaine Hayne, Helen Armstrong and Ema Lim, got our events planning off to a great start with our great trips to Maldon, Queenscliffe and Ballarat Begonias with a more ambitious four day trip to the Corrowa-Bright district planned for later this year.

Other gatherings of members where details are advertised in the newsletter but no booking or collection of funds needed, have worked very well with picnic visits to Jazz at the Zoo and Heidi park being enjoyed by a number of members. These events are important as they take little organisation and give members a choice without the pressures of minimum numbers. There are some exciting plans with some new ideas for trips being investigated, but we welcome any suggestions and practical advice from all members, concerning events, and their planning, and management.

A lot of work has been done by Elaine, Helen and Ema in finding places and things to go to and finding out what the members want. Elaine has also promoted events strongly at meetings and in the newsletter. An important part of this activity is collection and reconciling of funds. Issues with refunds and broken promises have been handled professionally and with good will.

For the future, the committee sees the need to have a single person responsible for co-ordinating events planned by members. This will maintain a consistent process and make sure we minimize clashes and events that may require a lot of effort only to be cancelled due to lack of support.

### Club groups

#### Theatre group

Ellen Boyd and Joan Planck got the theatre nights started very quickly with some really great nights out with a very enjoyable Christmas outing in November. There is a regular meeting of film fans at the Balwyn Theatre. Thanks to Joan and Ellen for getting this important activity running so quickly.

#### Collections and Museums

Wendy Fishley got groups together for visits to the Johnson Collection with a lunch afterwards and has more of these popular visits along with Museum tours planned for 2004. The events do require planning and often collection of deposits prior to the event and Wendy had done a great job of managing these outings.

#### Tennis and Golf

Irene Boyd started a Tennis Group that has had some congenial competitions, and John Mugridge has started regular golf days with good attendances and scores..

#### Reading Group

A book and reading group has started meeting regularly thanks to Helga Braun's efforts.

### Our Membership List

We have a membership of 122 with about half these being foundation members. In December we capped our membership and now have a wait list of 30 people.

## **Probus Club of Templestowe Valley - Secretary's Report**

We do get attendance numbers of up to 90 or so members at Fellowship along with several guests each month. This unfortunately is not yet reflected in the support for our events where we have struggled to get the minimum number of attendees at the events organized for members.

### **Interesting statistics from our membership:**

- **Males**           **40**
- **Females**       **83**
- **Couples**       **36**
- **Married**       **89**

Average age of the 89 members who provided their date of birth on their applications is 66years. Making a rough estimate of the ages of those not volunteering their birthday, the overall average is probably close to that figure.

We have what is probably a fairly rare situation in Probus clubs in that we have a mother and her daughter and son in law all as members of our club.

### **Interests**

Main interests from membership applications are:

- **Golf**               **25**
- **Walking**       **24**
- **Reading**       **20**
- **Gardening**     **19**
- **Travel**           **33**

### **Vocation:**

Our members come from a wide variety of vocations in their working life. Below are some of the more common vocations of our members.

- **Administration** **11**
- **Engineer**       **7**
- **Manager**       **6**
- **Secretarial**     **4**

## **Our Newsletter**

Without the Newsletter, the club could not function properly. It is important that all club "happenings" are communicated to members quickly and in time for decisions to be made and before fellowship meetings. Fortunately I have had marvelous co-operation and encouragement from committee and members. Most of the feedback I have received is positive and encouraging with support for the changes that have been made over the short time we have been in existence. The newsletter is printed off on my faithful HP printer on the Wednesday before the meetings. I then rush off to Officeworks and print off about 100 copies, then home to fold, staple, address and stamp them with help from Elaine and friends. Then rush them off to the post box before 6pm. This provides the 89 or so copies posted out to members for delivery on the Thursday before the next meeting, and leaves some over to have on hand at meetings and send to interested parties outside the club. We plan to email the newsletter to as many members as possible and it will also be available for download from a web site.

## **Our connection with local council**

Manningham City Council maintains contact with most organisations in the municipality and we get regular correspondence from them regarding their events and plans. One of the Council events we have had participation with, is the Citizenship Ceremonies. Due to communication from the council, some members have represented us at these ceremonies.

## **Our Connection With Rotary**

Manningham Rotary Club were our foundation sponsors and we will be eternally grateful to them for instigating the club and supporting us whilst we were in the formation stages. It should be emphasized however, that although we are associated with Rotary, we are not a subsidiary group nor are we a fund raising organisation. (We are a "FUN" raising organisation).

However, we would expect that as we grow, many of our members will participate in volunteer community help activities as Probus groups and this would be welcomed and encouraged.

## **The Financial Report (The Treasurer Lorraine Cooper)**

Attached to this report, is the Treasurer's and Auditor's reports which in three pages do not fully reflect the dedication that Lorraine has put in to ensuring the integrity and accuracy of our financial reporting. We owe a lot to Lorraine for taking on the responsibility and hard work needed to achieve this. It is apparent that Lorraine has also had a lot of assistance and I am sure, advice from her member husband Ray.

## **Summary**

The Probus Club of Templestowe Valley has been an outstanding success in its first year of operation. Membership has quickly reached a sustainable level and we already have a substantial wait list of potential members. Several successful events have been planned and enjoyed by members and friends. Administration procedures and rules have been developed and other management tasks such as incorporation and liaison with local council and other clubs have been worked on along with other tasks planned for the future by the committee.

The Foundation Committee have all nominated to stand for re-election for 2004. Should they all be re-elected the momentum will continue into 2004 with the task of management of new membership being now reduced, the business of the "FUN Raising" mentioned earlier in this report can be focussed on.

Once again I would like to thank all of the committee and members for their support of their Secretary. Without your support I could not have had whatever success I have had in doing the job.

Doug Hayne

Secretary, Probus Club of Templestowe Valley