# Watery Sauces Oldies and Boldies

**Newsletter No 108** **July 2025**

NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIREES ASSOCIATION


## The AGM

As advertised, the Annual General Meeting was held on 3 April in the BCC Brisbane Square Library. Attendance was disappointing with only seven members present in the room, although there were another six connected by a less than ideal zoom connection.

The usual reports from the President and the Treasurer were presented and accepted before the meeting progressed to the election of officers. There was a very sad note here as, shortly before the AGM, Gary Corbett had suffered an aortic dissection and though he had recovered somewhat, he was forced to withdraw his renomination as Treasurer, the position he had held since 2016.

All other retiring Committee members had nominated and Tony Clarey had agreed to step into the Treasurer's role. All were elected unopposed, but there was a subsequent vacancy for a Committee member. Peter Butler "volunteered" to fill this position. A brief biography of Peter can be found on page 3.

There was some discussion regarding a proposed review of the role and functions of the WRRA and after a short piece of additional business, attendees moved on to lunch in a nearby establishment.

### From the Editor's Chair

*What a pleasure it was to join a group of old colleagues at the forum held at Witton Barracks on 30 June (see notes on pages 5 & 6). The discussions on the role and future of the Association were of considerable interest with good participation n in the discussion, followed by catch-ups over lunch. .*

*Wouldn't it be good if there was greater participation in WRRA events with more attendance and news of members through contributions to future Newsletters?*

*Until next time, au reservoir.*

**Ian Pullar, Editor**

## Additional Business

As well as serving as Treasurer from 2016 until 2025, Gary Corbett had worked with Bruce Pearce to mastermind the Q100 celebrations held over several months in a number of centres in 2022. Readers of the WRRA Newsletter would also be aware of the amount of research Gary carried out on the history of the water industry.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Association, the meeting bestowed Honorary Life Membership on him – a well earned honour.

Having sponsored Gary's nomination, Ian Pullar expressed regret that WRRA had not similarly honoured three former office bearers whom he thought well and truly deserved Life Membership. Bernie Credlin had been a President, a Committee member and editor of the Newsletter for many years. Dave Morwood had also been a President and committee member for a very long time. Lee Rogers, having been shanghaied into the role of Treasurer in 2002, had occupied that position until he was elected President in 2010 and served three years in that role and a further three years as past President. .He rewrote the constitution.

While it was too late to recognise the contributions of Bernie and Dave, the oversight in Lee's case could be remedied. He was duly elected an Honorary Life Member – again a well earned honour.

## Co-Patron Retires

Our Co-Patron, Linda Dobe was the Director-General of the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water. With the change od Government and the reorganisation of departments, she became the Director General of the new Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers. She has now moved into retirement. We thank her for her support and wish her well in the future.

Kathryn Clear, who supplied this editor with notes for the Newsletter, has also left the Department.

The Department now has an Acting Director General, Joshua Hannan, until a permanent appointment is made.

## Future Events

A fun-filled calendar lies ahead:

**Friday 1 August: Mid-Year Lunch**
The venue for lunch is the Indooroopilly Hotel (Pilly Pub) Bistro, located at 3 Station Road, Indooroopilly, close to Indooroopilly train station and Indooroopilly Shopping Centre.
Commencing 12 noon, own cost.
RSVP to the Secretary by 24 July 2025 so that we can confirm numbers for the venue.

**Tuesday 9 September: Technical Update – Paradise Dam** (with Mal Shepherd, CDO Infrastructure Development & Delivery)
The venue is at Sunwater office, 515 St Pauls Terrace, Fortitude Valley.
Arrival 10.30am – Meet at ground floor of Sunwater building to be escorted to the meeting room.
Presentation 11am -12 noon – followed by lunch at Jubilee Hotel (if desired), own cost.
RSVP to the Secretary by 31 August if wishing to attend in person or on-line.

**South Burnett Excursion 13 to 16 August**
Field visit to the South Burnett district that coincides with Baconfest in Kingaroy. Members are invited to attend the excursion at their own expense and are advised that they will need to book accommodation at their earliest convenience because of the popularity of Baconfest.
Details of the proposed itinerary can be found on the Associations website Events page along with a link to Baconfest activities.
RSVP to the Secretary by 31 July if intending to join the field visit.

**Wednesday 15 September Golf day** organised by Peter McMahon
The venue is the Wynnum Golf Club, 76 Stradbroke Ave, Wynnum.
Arrive 8.30am for 9am tee off for 18 holes. Details on the Association's website Events page.

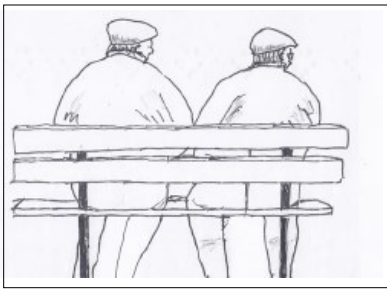
**Wednesday 8 October Central Queensland Annual Get Together** organised by Mike McKenna
Venue location Capricorn Tavern, Scenic Highway, in southern Yeppoon
Details in a separate notification from the WRRA Secretary. For further information and registration with Mike mmc37711@bigpond.net.au>

**Friday 17 October: Visit to Rocklea Hydraulics Lab** (with Peter Lewis, Laboratory Manager)
Venue location 1345 Ipswich Road, Rocklea
Arrival 10.30am Tour commences 11am, followed by BBQ lunch from 12 noon, BBQ food and drinks supplied by Sunwater, no cost to members. Details on Association's website Events page.
Group limit 40.
RSVP to the Secretary by 8 October.

**Thursday 20 November: Christmas Lunch Get-together and Barefoot Bowls**
Venue is Merthyr Bowls club, 80 Oxlade Drive, New Farm
Commencing 1pm. Details on Association's website Events page.

**A milestone event: Ben Russo's 100th Birthday is on 8 October. Congratulations and Best Wishes!**

Maurice (Maurie) de Hayr passed away in May, aged 91, after suffering Alzheimers disease for several years. Maurie was an ex-Local Government Draftsman who took over being in charge of the drafting section in the old Designs Branch when Roy McArthur retired in the 1980s.



*"This retirement's got a lot going for it. My eyesight's gone. My knees have gone,. My back's gone …"*

# New Committee Member Peter Butler

Peter Butler started with Irrigation & Water Supply Commission in August 1974 as a cadet draftsman. He was studying for a civil engineering degree but had run out of money, so he accepted the offer of a drafting cadetship.

He qualified as a draftsman in 1978 and worked in Irrigation Branch (16 months) and moved to Project Planning Branch until the department dissolved (1995). In Project Planning, he drifted into cartographic drawing which he enjoyed because of the artistic nature of maps. He was lucky enough to be part of the CAD (computer aided drafting) and GIS (Geographic Information Systems) upheavals that began in the 1980s.

During the 1980s, the structured drafting hierarchy (Checking, Senior and Supervising Draftsman) evolved with the introduction of the Technical progression schemes which allowed for progression via individual skills. Peter just did what he found interesting and at times challenging.

He became interested in CAD software (called GDS), main frame based software held at CITEC. Ken Anderson (surveyor and programmer) and Peter developed a suite of processes and software to "automate" drawing cadastral plans. Equipment was very expensive then and they by-passed the problem by Ken's clever use of cheap programable calculators to accept input files making up survey work (boundaries and tabulated text). Ken also built a small device (baud rate converter) to speed up transfer of data to CITEC. His device improved the upload rate from 300 to 1200 baud (characters per seconds). So slow compared to current speeds.

The Burdekin Falls Dam was being built and Hein van der Heide had included in the surveying contracts that digital files had to be supplied of survey work. Garry Russell (CAD administrator) was able to set up a CAD drawing in "real world" coordinates and Ken also wrote a program to digitise and geo-locate existing contours covering the entire dam water body, creating the bones of a great project. This development had all been completed in only a few months.

The Burdekin Dam structure was completed well before time and as things go in government the Department had not acquired the inundated land before it filled.

The proverbial hit the fan when on Monday morning the Commission was issued a law suit of some $80,000 for a week's inundation of a property at the very tail of the dam. The inundation was comparative very small (less than 1%) to the other dozen (or so) properties which the inundation covered. All property owners shared the same lawyer who signalled similar action were forthcoming. The estimate was over $1 million a week lawsuit.

At a hastily arranged meeting about the problem Peter asked if Alan Mayne and he could work overtime for a week to supply main plans covering the whole dam that could be used for acquisition proclamations. For a proclamation to be issued, a plan was needed of the main drawing with Plan Identification from Lands Department and an accurate area showing the location of the existing river banks. They needed to work outside normal time so they could use the computer terminals that were shared with other groups in normal working hours. By Friday night they had completed the task. The following Monday morning Peter received a phone call from the Secretary, Bill Meredith, thanking Alan and him for their work, saying, "You don't know how much you saved the Commission". Peter commented that he was aware.

Peter became involved with AutoCad and helped to develop SurvaCAD which became an Australian industry standard for drawing cadastral plans.

Around 1986, a new concept of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was becoming available to the Government Departments. Peter became heavily involved along with Garry (Max) Merrett and others This was really pioneering stuff in the days before the internet. *(Peter has supplied me with a detailed account of the development process, far too long and detailed for this document. Suffice it to say that he has every reason to be justifiably proud of how far advanced his group was with the digital revolution.* ***Ed. )***

Later, Peter moved to the Lands Department where he worked with Rod Thompson, a database genius. He had designed and coded the Digital Cadastral Database (DCDB) in the mid 1980s. The system lasted nearly 40 years before being recently decommissioned. Peter worked on the implementation of Rod's conceptual RIME (Resource Information Management Environment) system, the most phenomenal idea he ever got to work on. A co-worker once commented, "we don't need the internet, we have Rod to answer all our questions". Peter was disappointed when the powers that be cancelled RIME for a proprietary system.

He ended his work life in the property addressing space. He designed and tested an address validation service that is currently used by 24 government departments as well as the public. The coding was done by the department's IT group. An application of the service called "the Geocoder" is available on the Queensland Government "information" domain. At the time he retired, the record daily usage was about 12 million requests.

Outside of work, Peter has been heavily involved for many years with the Wilston-Grange AFL Club. He was President of the club from 1991 to 2010 and in recognition of his commitment and long-standing contribution to the Club, one of its fields was named the Peter Butler Field after him.

We are delighted to welcome our newest Committee member.

# Toowoomba Water Resources Oldies Gathering – 21 May 2025

Another generous offer from the Water Resource Retirees Association was all it took to get the ball rolling on the second 'Water Resources Oldies' gathering on a summer's day in autumn in Toowoomba (which was uncharacteristically warm in the Garden City).

21 'Oldies' turned up at the Toowoomba City Library Community Rooms for a presentation by John Porter from SEQWater on the Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline. The decision to build the pipeline followed severe drought conditions in 2019/20 when water supply for the towns of Warwick and Stanthorpe fell to critical levels and water was trucked from Warwick to Stanthorpe to meet basic needs.

The Queensland Government has confirmed more than $300 million in funding for the project that will supply permanent water supply to the townships of Wyreema, Greenmount, Nobby and Clifton and drought contingency supply to Allora, Warwick and Yangan. Water will be further carted to Stanthorpe and Killarney in times of severe drought. SEQ Water will construct, own, maintain and operate the pipeline expected to be operational by 2027.

SEQ Water are about to commence consultation with communities along the pipeline route and the discussion provided insight into some of the likely and probably predictable concerns. Top concerns included impacts on those who currently rely on the Toowoomba water supply network and who pay for ongoing operation and maintenance.

Jim Weller followed the presentation with a vale to Charlie Ellway. Charlie was a Marine Biologist and Ecologist, who joined the Department with the 'RiverReach' programme in the late 1990s and then went on to lead the 'Biologists for the Bush' team that morphed into the 'Environmental Flows Assessment Programme' in South Region. Charlie passed away after a long battle with Leukaemia on 7 May 2025. Charlie was a true gentleman and exceptionally tolerant of his pro-development colleagues with a good appreciation of maintaining the balance between water resource development and the environment.

Unlike the 2024 event, someone in the crowd remembered to get a photo of the gathering before we moved over to join a few more colleagues at Zack's Bar at the Burke and Wills Hotel.

A great afternoon and evening had by all. Special thanks to SEQ Water, the WRRA for encouragement and sponsorship and those who travelled; Frank and Sandra Van Schagen, Andrew Conway and Chris Robson.

*Thanks to Jim Weller for this account* ÷**Ed**.

Above: Jim Weller between Bruce Gaydon and Steve Goudie (official photographer)
Below: The group

## WRRA PLANNING FORUM 30th JUNE - SUMMARY– Chris Robson

Members will recall that at the AGMon 3April this year I tabled for general business a paper "WRRA Planning for its Future". The paper flagged a key step in considering our role, our activities, and our future would be a half-day workshop forum to discuss the issues facing the Association and options for the future.

The half day forum was held on 30 June at the Witton Barracks, Indooroopilly, attended by 27 members and friends, including one of our patrons, Glenn Stockton CEO of Sunwater. A detailed Information Paper on the Association's current situation was provided to attendees before the forum and is now on the Association's website for all members' information.

Working in both large and small groups, attendees were asked to evaluate the Association's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, and what our response options could be for the future. Broadly the issues and potential responses were collated under the themes of purpose, finance, membership, events/ activities, communication, and networks.

There was considerable discussion about the purpose, objectives and name and if they are still appropriate or should be updated to encourage broader water industry membership, networking and scope of activities. While still focused on social and technical events, activities, and gatherings, should the Association focus even more on companionship and assistance, and also take a role in the collection and collation of historical water related material and/or contribute to contemporary water organisations through mentoring support?

Some observations on the forum discussions were:

- The Association has a strong history and tradition and is the only one of its type in Qld. Maintaining the family spirit of the Association will be important in making any change.
- The Newsletter is one of the strengths of the Association, however its three issues per year is dependent on the efforts of one person, Ian Pullar as editor. The scope for more frequent issues and perhaps smaller in size per issue etc was discussed, however this would need more member input for articles and for editorial assistance.
- There were some differences of opinion as to what the Association does and should do. Is it simply a social organisation for retired water resources employees or is it something more?
- The Association's name is in itself a disincentive for many potential members. The words "water resources retirees" immediately conjure up a view that it is not a place for other people interested in water resources and in the water industry more generally.
- After all the years that the association has been operating it still seems to have younger members emerging. Where did they come from and what has been the incentive for these people to want to join?
- The Association has been and continues to be government centric. Other water industry people such as constructors, consultants, suppliers, planners, environmental people and other associated sciences have not been considered as potential members. Should the Association seek to be more inclusive and open to other people in the water industry?
- The opportunity to provide mentoring services by members who have expertise and knowledge useful to current water industry organisations was discussed with differences of opinion on member willingness to participate.
- The issue of advocacy was discussed but generally discounted as this would require a considerable change in the purpose, scope, and resources required and create serious potential for conflicts of interest with the Association's sponsors.
- Many good ideas emerged, though any change needs to be practical and achievable. As a volunteer-based organisation it is important not to try and do too much.
- The range and number of social and technical activities needs review with the purpose of more member participation. What do the members want in this regard? Also, the Association's objectives include assistance for members in need – what should that be in practice?
- Concerns about the financial sustainability of the Association as set out in the Information Paper were reinforced with respect to escalating operating expenses and limited funding for any significant new Association funded initiatives such as events like the Q100 events held State-wide in 2022. Suggestions included raising membership fees which have not changed for some 20 years and seeking project-based funding from community funds such as the Qld Gambling Community Benefit Fund.

The participating Oldies &/or Boldies. Photo by Rachael Thompson

**WRRA Planning Forum** *continued*

- The Association's communication methods and networks were seen as an area that should be considered for renewal, noting the website was launched 15 years ago and is mainly used as a public face of the Association with its Newsletters, Events page and presentations page. The use of broadcast emails to members is dependent on members email addresses being up to date. Emerging technology using Artificial Intelligence was suggested as a way forward and also expanding our network with others water industry groups to broaden social and technical opportunities for members.

The feedback at the Forum on the Association's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, and what our response options could be for the future has been compiled for the next step in the Planning process.

The next step is to prepare an Options Paper on WRRA's Future for broader consideration by all members. At the Forum 7 people volunteered to be on a working group to draft the Options Paper. The working group members are Greg Claydon (Executive Committee Representative), Bob McDonald (Constitution), Terry Loos (convener), Graeme Milligan, Greg Munck, Doug Flanders, and Gary Corbett.

The plan is for the working group to develop the draft Options Paper in consultation with the Management Committee to be reviewed by a further Planning Forum in November for the final Options Paper to be circulated to all members by the end of the year for feedback and then preparation of the WRRA's Future Direction Plan for consideration at the next Annual General Meeting in April next year.

We are taking a fairly measured and considered path in examining the Association's future, which given our 40 years history is worth the effort.

Further, while we work through this process the Association will continue to provide social and technical events and activities for the benefit of members. These are set out further in this Newsletter and on the website Events page.

## Emeritus Professor Colin Apelt

Members of my vintage who studied Civil Engineering at the University of Queensland will remember Professor Colin Apelt. Before he became a University lecturer he worked for the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. Recently he did the WRRA the honour of becoming a member –.one of the oldest and one of the newest.

Despite the fact that he has now reached the venerable age of 92, age does not appear to have wearied him too much. Every Thursday he goes to St Vincents Hospital and dispenses drinks and companionship to palliative care patients. To judge from the photograph, his clients have a wide range of options but Colin reports that of late Gin and Tonic has been the tipple of choice! How heart warming it is that he continues to do this. One might say an e-merit-ous Professor!

*As a footnote, Jon Henry tells us the Professor has a particular notoriety with a distinctly watery sauces flavour. He is one of only two people ever to publish numerical solutions to the Navier Stokes equations calculated by hand.*

## Restoration

Retired dam engineers will be pleased to hear news of an upcoming event; **ANCOLD Developing the Next Generation of Dam Engineers Forum: Think Tank 2025.**

This event is designed to address the shortage of skilled dam engineers through strategic insights and industry leadership. The Organising Committee and the ANCOLD Executive are excited to host this important initiative, to be held in Melbourne on 11 and 12 September 2025.

This Forum will bring together resource and discipline leaders, as well as emerging and experienced dam engineers, to discuss how the industry can strengthen workforce development. With a significant pipeline of dam upgrade projects ahead, ensuring there is a sufficient cohort of dam engineers equipped with the right skills and knowledge will be critical to meet the demands of Australia's current and future dam infrastructure projects.

(**ANCOLD** is the acronym for the Australian National Committee on Large Dams)

**Answer to Brain Teaser** on page 10

A. 19 and 91.

# Sunwater Snippets

Julian Murphy
*Julian is a Senior Media and Communications Adviser*

**Paradise Dam**

Planning is continuing for a new wall on the Burnett River near Bundaberg. Crucial road upgrades for the Paradise Dam Improvement Project have recently been completed to enhance community safety and cater for increased traffic movements to and from the dam during construction of the new dam wall. They include 10km of Paradise Dam Road enhanced, major intersection upgrades at the Bruce Highway, and a new 57m-long dual lane bridge at Degilbo Creek to improve flood resilience. Geotechnical and quarry investigations continue.

**Announced allocations**

Allocations for the 2025-26 water year have been announced and are positive across most of the state. All water supply schemes with high priority water have been allocated 100% of their entitlement. Only four of 23 water supply schemes will start the water year with medium priority allocations less than 100%.

- Chinchilla: 71%
- Cunnamulla: 69%
- Nogoa Mackenzie: 0%, however, will have access to 75,000 ML carryover
- Upper Burnett (John Goleby subscheme): 97%

**New weirs for the Burnett**

Sunwater is undertaking planning activities to deliver two new weirs at Barlil and Cooranga in the Burnett region to improve regional water security for farmers, businesses and communities. These projects are a key commitment of the Queensland Government and Sunwater to sustain and grow agricultural production in the area. The weirs have been the subject of previous design and feasibility studies. Both the Barlil and Cooranga weir proposals were recommended for future consideration following the Bundaberg and Burnett Regional Water Assessment. Sunwater is committed to delivering both of these projects before the end of 2028.

**Lower Burdekin groundwater**

Sunwater is supporting the Queensland Government, Burdekin irrigators and local agronomists to implement sustainable long-term measures to mitigate the rising groundwater (and salinity) in the Lower Burdekin. This project is implementing preventative off-farm measures and intervention techniques to counter the threat of rising groundwater levels and salinity. Works completed or nearing completion as part of the Lower Burdekin Groundwater Mitigation Project include:

- upgrading and lining a section of open channel to reduce water seepage.
- Installing bores to remove and redirect water from the aquifer
- improving efficiencies of the Gladys Lagoon water distribution system.

# Departmental News

*Notes provided by Paul Sanders, Director of the Office of Director-General, Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers*

**Drinking Water Symposium in Weipa**

The Queensland Indigenous Local Government Drinking Water Symposium was held in Weipa from 17–19 June, bringing together water operators, council staff and government agencies from across Far North Queensland.

The connections made during the Symposium help to support strong partnerships to deliver safe and sustainable drinking water for Indigenous communities.

The Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council water team took out the Far Northern Indigenous Councils Best-Tasting Tap Water competition!

**The Whitsunday Water Plan**

The Whitsunday water plan – set to expire on 1 December 2025 – is being reviewed and replaced. The coastal basin of the Don, the northern area of the Proserpine Basin and southern area of the O'Connell basin which do not fall under a water plan will be included, along with the Bowen and Dryander underground water areas. Water in the region is mostly taken to support agriculture, mining, tourism and aquaculture and supports growing communities and towns. Expanding existing industries and new or emerging industries in the region, will have impacts for water needs and use.

**AHA Conference**

In May, several staff from our North and South Regional Water Monitoring teams attended and presented at the Australian Hydrographers Association (AHA), conference in Launceston, Tasmania over four days.

The conference was attended by over 200 water monitoring professionals from Australian state agencies, New Zealand state and regional councils, the BOM, state owned corporations and private enterprise. Our attending staff delivered engaging presentations, with one staff member picking up an award for Best Presentation for his overview of the team's work using Hydro-STIV and low-cost cameras for monitoring remote sites.

**Queensland Critical Minerals**

Last month, a roundtable discussion was held at Julia Creek to connect with critical mineral miners, councils, other government agencies and advocacy groups. Departmental staff gave a presentation on securing water for critical minerals for the area, which included an update on the Gulf Water Plan. Queensland has an abundance of critical minerals (such as copper, zinc, graphite, aluminium and vanadium), found in the area around Julia Creek and Richmond in the Gulf Country in north-west Queensland. The Gulf Water Plan enables critical mineral operations to safely access water without impacting other water users or environmental needs in the area.

## Chappos Big Lap Continued

### Jon Chapman

We did a cruise of the river from north of Paringa from the Woolshed Brewery, through the backwaters, billabongs etc. Our guide was a bit of a Bear Grylls type. He explained that river height was back to normal although the flow rate was still at approx. 200GL / day; normally it would be 20GL / day. After the backwater run, he took us out into the main river to Heading Cliffs these amazing red monsters towering over the river.

We had a day in and around Renmark to check out the museums, the almond factory (biggest crop in the area these days), the most amazing rose garden and a vodka distillery. Very pretty town.

Before leaving Renmark and the Murray, we checked out the Riverland Wine Centre where over 20 wineries sell their wares. The centre sits atop a high bank of the Murray so get a platter, sit with a wine and admire the views over the recently flooded plains below.

Our final stop in the Murraylands was a little pub at Overland Corner. This place became an island in the flood and they were required to evacuate even though their levee kept the flood at bay. This is where the Murray turns south towards Goolwa and is called Overland Corner because the pioneers had to make a call here to follow the river or go overland to Adelaide.

***Leg 21 South Australia (Flinders Ranges)***

Heading further north west we stayed a few days at Burra, an old copper town with a full two days of historical places to see – there were two mines, the old Gaol, a Cornish village and several old pubs.

Next Wilmington, via Gladstone (the largest inland grain storage centre) and Laura (home of CJ Dennis). It was here we fluked a trip on the Pitchi Ritchi Railway from Quorn. As part of the Old Ghan Line, the train takes you south towards the Pitchi Ritchi Pass, a hard carved cutting thru hard rock with just a metre either side of the train. Quorn has some amazing old buildings from the boom days of the railway line to the north.

We spent a week at Rawnsley Park Station, a farm stay just south of Wilpena Pound. We did several drives into the National Park through the Bunyeroo Valley, and Brachina and Parachilna Gorges past multiple lookouts and places like the Razorback, Elder and Chase Ranges, the Great Wall of China and Rawnsley Bluff. We also went to Blinman (yet another copper mine) and Parachilna on the eastern side of Lake Eyre.

The plan was to take a flight over Lake Eyre, but we were told that no water had yet made it into the Lake, so we just did a one hour flight over Wilpena Pound and the surrounding areas, absolutely amazing country!!

Our Flinders Ranges adventures continued with a visit to Hawker, another Old Ghan town and home to the Jeff Morgan Gallery and some of the most stunning landscape art. The most magnificent is a 360 degree mammoth landscape of Wilpena Pound.

Next, Orroroo where there is a massive Red Gum, and a place to commemorate the Goyder Line, where it was said farming north of the line was unsustainable. It is quite marginal country, but it was in fine fettle when we were there.

The last of the Southern Flinders stops was Peterborough. We visited the Steamtown Railway Heritage Centre for a day and a night show. Famous for switching trains and freight across the three differing gauges, there is a massive roundhouse at the centre that is the centrepiece of all the activities. The centre also celebrates Radium Hill, Australia's first uranium mine. We had a day drive from here through some old pioneer railway towns, in particular Terowie when Douglas MacArthur uttered the "I will return" at a stopover headed to Darwin in WW2. This was our last stops in South Australia, a State we intend to return to in the future.

***Leg 22 New South Wales (Broken Hill)***

Leaving Peterborough and SA, we followed the railway line, the line that got Broken Hill's resources to Adelaide because NSW refused to build a line to Sydney. Little all but deserted towns like Oddla, Wirra, Yunta and Cockburn the last stop in SA. Over the border into NSW and the road instantly turned to crap!

In Broken Hill we set up camp at the showgrounds, a bit out of town but green grass, great amenities and home for the next seven days.

Day 1 saw a tour of the greater town area, the old mines that have become lookouts as the mullock heaps surround the town. The Lode Miners memorial is a stand out with a steel structure is home to name plates for all who have perished in the many BH mines. Other stops on the day were the fully restored and operating 1950s Bells Milk Bar and the RFDS base where filming of the next series of the TV series was happening. We did a tour here that gives you a greater understanding of the magnitude of the significance of the RFDS to the outback. Our final stop on day 1 was the Pro Hart gallery. Wow!! The man was complex and simple at the same time and the paintings are so varied from his bizarre abstracts to the magnificent landscapes and depictions of Australian scenes. One painting was in a room where it covered all walls, with historical scenes dotted everywhere (not for sale). The paintings started at $590 and went to $16K. We got a print and some ant art; Pro was into his ants that he thought were like miners burrowing into the earth.

On Day 2 we took a tour of the Menindee Lakes. Our tour guide was full of outdated rhetoric and hated bureaucrats, scientists and shiny bums, Jon had to bite his lip a lot!! Despite all that he was very informative and we had to agree with the Murray system so full why were releases still happening, sheer political madness! We saw Burke & Wills camp and then we went to Kinchega Woolshed and the National Park. Well worth taking the tour to see the best of the place, so long as you filter Milton's BS!!

## Chappos Big Lap *continued*

Day 3 saw us tour town with museums, murals, Pro Hart sculptures and so much more. The majestic old buildings. show the opulence that once was, including the Palace Hotel where Pricilla Queen of the Desert was filmed. Jon did the heritage walk to take in all the grand buildings. One stop was a museum (Silver City Mint) that included a landscape painting called the Big Picture. You enter a pergola in the centre of an octagonal building. and on the walls is an outback landscape that measures 100 x 12 metres; it took 9 tonnes of paint to complete. Jaw dropping stuff.

On Day 5 we drove to Silverton with the wonderful experience of the 39 dips in the road; glad we didn't do this with the van on. Silverton is a stark place, everything it was said to be. Lots of history the Old School and Old Gaol museums, Mad Max Museum and the Silverton Hotel. Leanne had to go to the John Dynon Gallery, the man who does everything emu!! No trip to Silverton would be complete without a drive to the Mundi Mundi Plain and lookout, it sure is flat out here. On the way home we stopped at two places linked to an incident in 1915 when a couple of Turks ambushed a train full on picnickers going to Silverton. As sympathisers with the Turkish regime during WWI, they killed four people and of course met a similar fate when the townspeople rounded them up.

Our final days at BH were not so good as we both ended up with COVID, Leanne's second dose, my first.

***Leg 23 New South Wales (Broken Hill to Lightning Ridge)***

By now winter was in full swing and the mornings quite fresh. Over seven days we had stops at Wilcannia, Cobar and Bourke. Had a couple of zeros along the way and a -3 at Bourke. The old indigenous issues were evident again, but as said before if you don't over- react not a problem.

Each town had a heritage walk that Jon did and these places would have been significant stops in their day. The wealth in the towns past was clear to see.

Cobar has the Gold Peak Mine still in operation, a massive operation that can be viewed from a lookout about 10 km out of town. In town is the old mine called Fort Bourke these days.

Bourke itself has a great museum called the Back O Burke Exhibition Centre and we had a cruise on a paddle boat along the mighty Darling. Hard the believe that the steamers came all this way up river in better times.

***Leg 24 New South Wales (Lightning Ridge)***

On the way to Lightning Ridge, we passed through Brewarrina and Walgett. The indigenous fish ladders at Brewarrina are interesting, while Walgett has a mural of Jimmy Little on its water tower. These towns have lots of good street art.

A town that was always on the bucket list was The Ridge. Of course, it has lots of opal shops, overpriced to blazes, but the art is a highlight, home to John Murray (google him) in particular, but very shop wall has a mural turning a dry and dusty place into a colourful spot. Lightning Ridge has 4 Car Door Drives, marked by different coloured car doors as signs, bit different, but each has in highlights. Each takes you through the miners' shanties and each has collection of used machinery (junk). The Blue Door Drive is highlighted by Bevans Cactus Nursery, 1000s of cactus plants, hairy, spikey, cute and plain bloody ugly. The Red has a few bottle houses and the highlight is Amigos Castle, built by hand by a failed miner from ironstone boulders. The Yellow features Lunatic Hill, in its day the largest open cut opal mine. We never got to do the Green Door Drive, but it features the new mining method of noodling; basically, putting the overburden through a cement truck bowl and sieve to get the smaller opals the original miners didn't care for. The originator of the method is a multi-millionaire.

No trip to LR is complete without a trip to the Pubs In The Scrub. You can drive yourself, although the roads are not great, so we did it in a tour bus. We met some of the guys from the TV show featuring opal mining before our first stop at the Sheepyard Inn. Each of these pubs were once unlicensed meeting places, now they are licensed and while serving the locals, they have become tourist spots with camping available. If you want to, you can scratch in the tailing heaps for missed opal. Next was the Glengarry Hilton and last the Grawin Club. Well worth the effort to see how these people live, although their eyes suggest the level of trust is not high.

Our highlight of our stay in LR was our tour of The Chambers of the Black Hand. A mad pom tried his hand at opal mining for 25 years and in his estimation had made $27K in that time. The opal is found below a sandstone layer that he had tunnelled through. When he was bored, he would take a butter knife and carve some busts in the sandstone. At some stage it dawned on him that he could open up the sandstone level, do some carvings and invite the tourists in. Today it is a series of tunnels with 1000's of simply amazing carvings. You could spend hours down there, but an hour is all you get! The mad pom is 82 and still pokes about the ridge, quite a wealthy man but not from opal mining!

We had a dip in the artesian spa, it's a bit warm this one, but 15 – 20 minutes does give you a lift. An intriguing place and one we could revisit.

*To be concluded ...*

# HEALTH *and beauty*

## Luck of Ages

According to the profile of WRRA members, the average age is increasing with a substantial proportion now aged 79 or more. But, according to a recent article in *The Courier Mail*, we are the lucky ones. Globally, of people born between 1930 and 1946, about 99% are now dead so we are the rare surviving one percenters!

Perhaps that is why we don't even rate a generation classification. People born after World War II are referred to as *Baby Boomers* with subsequent generations *Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z,* and *Generation Alpha* .

## On the a-gender

Gender selection is banned in Australia on ethical grounds. That doesn't stop hundreds of Australian parents heading overseas to undergo the controversial practice of choosing the gender of their "born to order" babies.

Sex selection takes place through biopsying embryos which also checks for any chromosomal abnormalities. The service adds about an additional $US 5,500 to regular IVF. Interestingly, daughters are the most sought after, with around 70% of Australians opting for the fair sex.

What a contrast to the Chinese "one child policy" where boys overwhelmingly predominated.

*When I get a tension headache, I do what it says on the aspirin bottle; take two and keep away from the children.*

### Exercise those Brain Cells

Q. There are 100 houses in the street. Sally's house number is the reverse of Judy's number. The difference between their house numbers ends with 2. What are their house numbers?

*Answer on page 5.*

Dante Gabriel Rosetti 1827-1882
**Ophelia**

*"If I'd thought for one moment that immersion learning of a language would end up like this, I'd never have signed on."*

## AI

Once upon a time, AI stood for Artificial Insemination. In this latest incarnation, it stands for Artificial Intelligence and, like most new inventions it is both good and bad. For example, the Australian Medical Association claims that AI is being exploited to mislead the public into purchasing unproven and potentially harmful treatments for serious illnesses including diabetes. The AMA is calling on the federal government to crackdown on "deepfake" AI videos that mimic reputable health professionals.

Experts are also warning that AI tools are dumbing Australian school children down Tools such as ChatGPT are rewiring children's brains and giving them "digital amnesia" A grade 10 English teacher noticed that students who used AI for essay drafts struggled to discuss their arguments in class.

According to a study from MIT, using AI to write essays led to a 47% decline in neural connections, dropping from 79 to just 42%.. Those who used ChatGPT had the lowest brain engagement and consistently underperformed at neural, linguistic and behavioural levels. Just cutting and pasting essay contents results in students unable to recall details of what they had written. "Alarmingly, 83% of AI users could not recall what they had just written, compared to only 10-11% of non-AI groups".

**Answers to Terry's Trivia** (page 11)
1. (iii) square. 2. (iii) 10. 3. (iv) pressure. 4. (iii) Switzerland. 5. (iv) alien abductions. 6. (iii) his Mama. 8. (iv) Maserati. 9. cemetery. 10. (iii) maple.

## Pedants Corner

**Where has Who gone?**

When I went to school (admittedly a long time ago and when children were taught the fundamentals of grammar) I was instructed that the descriptor for a person was "who" as in "the man **who** broke the bank at Monte Carlo". On the other hand, animals and inanimate objects were followed by "that" or "which" as in "Sundown is the time **that** I like best". But all too frequently these days I hear "the people **that** catch the bus…" Why?

That leads to the subtle difference between the correct usage of "that" and "which". The difference is that "that" is used to define, whereas "which" is used to describe. For example, if I were to say "Cut the grass with the mower that is in the shed, " I wouldn't be talking about any other mower from another store. And if I said "Cut the grass with the mower which is in the shed" I would only be telling you where the mower is.

## When is 12 pm?

If I am told that an event will start at 12 pm, I am confused. Now pm is the abbreviation for post meridiem (after midday) so etymologically 12 pm must be 12 hours after midday, ie midnight. Similarly, 12 am (ante meridiem) must be 12 hours before midday or midnight. The solution is obvious: the time in the middle of the day is 12 noon or 12 midday.

Airlines avoid any possible confusion by scheduling departure times as 12:01 am etc.

## Mispronouncements (should be mispronunciations)

I was sent an article quoting various people's pet hates with mispronunciations. Here are a few:

- Skedule (must be sh-edule)
- Haitch (must be aitch even though it's the only letter that doesn't start with its own sound
- Expresso
- Mischiev-i-ous
- "har-ass-ment" when it should be "harass-ment"
- epi-tome, should be "e-pit-omee
- Bruschetta pronounced as brooshetta. People have got used to what the gh does in spaghetti, so why not the ch in bruschetta?

A homophonic limerick

**Sour Grapes Produce a Little Whine**
A tourist in France exclaimed, "Oh.
that's quite a large sum that I owe;
I've squandered my dough
on the wines of Bordeaux;
I ought to have stuck to the eau."

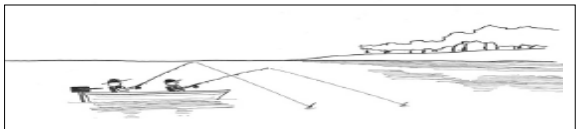
## Sign of the Times

On a church in Ipswich

**Swallow your pride. No calories.**

## Terry's Trivia (from the Barefoot Bowls luncheon. - Answers on page 10)

1. In 1785, King Louis XVI of France decreed that all handkerchiefs should be what? (i) Silk; (ii) White; (iii) Square; (iv) Pale blue; (v) Triangular.
2. How many hurdles in a standard 400m race: (i) 5; (ii) 8; (iii) 10; (iv) 12; (v) 15.
3. The Pascal is a unit of: (i) Temperature; (ii) Colour; (iii) Volume; (iv) Pressure; (v) Power.
4. Which country has a square flag: (i) Zambia; (ii) Peru; (iii) Switzerland; (iv) Vietnam; (v) Japan.
5. The St Lawrence Insurance Agency, Florida, specialises in insuring against: (i) Meteors; (ii) Alligator attacks; (iii) Earthquakes; (iv) Alien abductions; (v) A Cuban invasion.
6. Elvis sang, 'In the Ghetto' and who cried: (i) His Papa; (ii) the poor boy; (iii) his Mama; (iv) the Preacher; (v) the Doctor; (vi) all of them.
7. Which banknote shows the Shrine of Remembrance?:(i)5;(ii)10; (iii)20; (iv)50: (v)100.
8. Which Luxury car manufacturer's logo is a Trident: (i) Lexus; (ii) Kia; (iii) Alfa Romeo; (iv) Maserati; (v) Ferrari.
9. Which is the correct spelling: Cemetary; Cematery; Cemetery; Cemetry.
10. The national tree of Canada is a: (i) Redwood; (ii) Cedar; (iii) Maple; (iv) Pine; (v) Birch; (vi) Eucalyptus.



*When your wife says "What did you say?" it isn't because she didn't hear you. She's giving you the chance to change what you said.*

# Book Club

*Batavia* by Peter Fitzsimons

It can be rewarding looking for secondhand books in your local community library/book exchange in an old phone booth. I found this book, first published 14 years ago, and decided it could be a good read according to its cover declaring *Betrayal. Shipwreck. Murder. Sexual Slavery. Courage. A Spine-Chilling Chapter in Australian History*

It is. I learnt more about the Spice Trade in the 1500s and 1600s and how it resulted in Dutch seafarers being the first Europeans to find the west Australian coastline, firstly by Dirk Hartog in 1616, as they chartered their sailing ships from Amsterdam to the Dutch East Indies. The book also detailed another example of humankind's capacity for inhumanity to others and courage in the face of such adversity.

The book is a creative non-fiction narrative based on historical records of the activities of the Dutch East India Company some 400 years ago, as researched by the author over some 10 years up to 2011 when the book was published. There have been other books and historical documents about the shipwreck in 1629 of the grand sailing ship *Batavia* on the Abrolhos Islands off the coast of Western Australia. The author drew upon these documents and help from Dutch history experts and museums in seeking to make the narrative as authentic as possible.

The *Batavia* was owned by the Dutch East India Company and was on its maiden voyage from Amsterdam to the Dutch citadel of Batavia on the western end of Java, carrying some 340 people (sailors, soldiers, free settlers) and extensive cargo of goods for the citadel including 12 money chests containing 8000 silver coins worth about 250,000 guilders for trading in the Company's activities from India through the Spice Islands and to Japan. This was the greatest treasure to leave the Dutch Republic and was the source of the mutiny, evil and inhumanity cast upon the many of the 220 people left marooned on the Abrolhos Islands following the *Batavia* hitting and breaking up on one of the Island's many reefs.

The narrative describes in great detail the ease in which the evil mutiny leader, a disciple of the Rosicrucian sect, was able to lead the 40 mutineers in killing most of the others to keep the scant supplies for themselves, apart from some 40 in a long boat who sailed over 2000 miles to the Batavia citadel for help and rescue, and a small group of soldiers who survived on one of the Islands and eventually captured the mutiny leader and broke up the band of mutineers before the rescue ship arrived and saved the remaining 50 people.

So while it seems almost unfathomable, this extraordinary story did happen, some 400 years ago. The author has written a fascinating and detailed story about human endeavor, cruelty, and bravery.

There is *Batavia* exhibit in the Shipwreck Galleries at the Western Australian Museum in Freemantle, which includes a skeleton and façade of the shipwreck. There is also a *Batavia* exhibit in the museum in Geraldton, north of Perth.

**Chris Robson**

*Lyrebird* by Jane Caro

When a body is found, a twenty year old mystery is no longer a cold case. The original investigator, now retired, is bought back to head the fresh investigation. She assembles her team of former colleagues along with some new recruits who prove to be excellent choices with their local knowledge. The reader is exposed to the seedier side of life, still unfortunately experienced by so many, along with an undercurrent of the now popular climate change angle. A fast paced and exciting read.

**Lyn Brigden**

*Those who grow too big for their pants, will always be exposed in the end*

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*I hate main roads, so I go out of my way to avoid them."*