



## THE GRAPEVINE – OCTOBER 2026 – Issue 7



### FROM THE PRESIDENT

#### **A message from Probud South Pacific**

1 October, marks the beginning of *Probud Month* 2026, and this year is particularly special as we celebrate 50 years of Probud in Australia.

As we celebrate 50 years of Probud in Australia, we want to hear from the people who have made those 50 years so special – our very own Probud Club Members.

#### **What's your Probud Story?**

Whether it's the friendships made, memorable trips, new experiences or simply the joy of being part of the Probud community, every member has a story worth sharing.

Selected testimonials may be featured across Probud publications, website, social media and promotional materials.

Need some inspiration, Why did you join Probud?, What do you enjoy most about being a member? Have you made a special friendship through your Club?

Share your testimonial by 31 October 2026 to be eligible to win a 50th Anniversary Probud Hamper. Click [here](#) to share your Probud story. For more info, click [here](#).

We have a busy October ahead, with two exciting overseas trips planned for our members.

Highlights of India gets underway on 8 October, followed by our Egypt adventure, departing on 12 October.

I'm sure there will be plenty of wonderful experiences, stories and, of course, lots of fabulous photos to share in our next issue of The Grapevine. We look forward to seeing where our travelling Probeans have been!

Pam Floyd

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

At the Meet and Greet held on **26 August**, three prospective members attended as guests — and it seems we passed the test, as all three joined shortly afterwards.

An informal induction took place at our October meeting and I am sure all members took the time to make them feel welcome.

A friendly greeting, a quick chat, or simply inviting them to sit with you will help them feel part of the wonderful spirit that defines our Club.



## OUTINGS REVIEW – Painting with Stone Tour

### Sharon Peterson

On 23 September we enjoyed a very informative walking tour around Sydney CBD looking at some beautiful examples of stonework created by the Melocco brothers from Italy. Initially working with marble mosaics, they later moved on to more colourful ceramic mosaics and their own secret formula for terrazzo and scagliola (artificial marble).

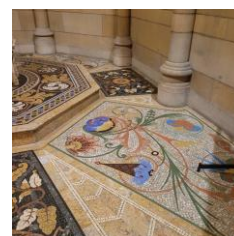
Eldest brother Peter Melocco arrived in Sydney in 1908, having been educated in New York, and was able to secure the contract for the floor in the Chapel of Irish Saints in St Mary's Cathedral. The work was completed in two years, after which he was able to bring out his two younger brothers from Italy. The relationship with St Mary's continued with the commissioning of the floor of the Baptistry in 1930 and the floor of the Crypt which was finished in 1958, a few years before Peter's death.

Meanwhile they created other monumental works such as the foyer of the Mitchell Library illustrating the map drawn by Abel Tasman, an extremely fragile document that was made accessible to the public in its stone interpretation.

They brought out from Italy the technology of scagliola which was a thin layer of a cement-based compound wrapped around pillars and architraves to look like marble. These columns are still visible in the old Commonwealth Bank building in Martin Place (now Macquarie Bank) and in the State Theatre.

It was heartening to hear that Peter Melocco's grandson, also Peter Melocco, is still involved at St Mary's Cathedral in restoration and creation of new panels in the crypt, using the same techniques that his grandfather did. The State Theatre is also pursuing a restoration program of the floors and columns, using original ceramic tiles still on hand.

Following the tour, we went to the Park Street Bar & Bistro for a late lunch.



## HISTORY OF THE WAG (WINE APPRECIATION GROUP) – 10 YEARS ON

David Davoren

### The Beginning

Our Probus Club was formed in 2014 and, as the club developed and grew, the idea of establishing a Wine Appreciation Group emerged. It was an exciting opportunity and one I was delighted to convene when approached by the then Interest Group Co-Ordinator Connie Fraser.

You know the old story. The sergeant lines up the soldiers and says, "I need a volunteer." At that moment, all the other soldiers take a step backwards!

As the newly appointed convenor an initial meeting was held, the invitation read:

**"Bring along one of your best bottles. Let's share it, enjoy it and discuss whether we should form a Wine Appreciation Group."**

The response was overwhelming. More than 20 members attended, with Helen O'Neill scrambling to find enough chairs for everyone.

And so, the Wine Appreciation Group, affectionately known as **WAG**, was born. I only wish I had thought of that name at the time. It was certainly far better than "**Carpe Vinum**" ("**Seize the Wine**"), the title I had enthusiastically adopted in those early days.

### WAG Goes Travelling

The first WAG wine trip, to Orange in October 2019, was organised by Colin Peterson, Helen O'Neill and Mike De Podolinsky. It was a great success, attracting 27 members.

Subsequent wine trips have also been very well supported. These have included visits to the Hunter Valley, organised by Colin and Sharon Peterson, and Mudgee, organised by Hilary and Nigel Streatfield.

The Canberra wine trip was also organised by Hilary and Nigel Streatfield, while the Griffith trip was organised by Neil Price.

These excursions provided members with opportunities to discover new wine regions, enjoy local hospitality and, of course, share plenty of good company along the way.

## HISTORY OF THE WAG (WINE APPRECIATION GROUP) – 10 YEARS ON Continued

### **Some Memorable Presenters**

One of our first presenters was Paula Rowe, who disguised Aldi wines for a blind tasting. The results were very interesting and generated plenty of discussion.

Ben Malouf from First Vintages delivered a fantastic presentation accompanied by some excellent wines. We learned how and why wineries use those coveted gold award stickers on their labels.

Michael Camilleri from Cumulus Wines in the Orange region also provided an enjoyable and informative tasting experience.

Another memorable occasion came about when we approached Molly's Cradle Wines after noticing their wines appearing on the wine lists at both the Palace Hotel and Massey Park Golf Club.

They agreed to present their wines at our Christmas Dinner in 2017. We booked the outdoor area at Nui Due and Michael, the owner, was extremely helpful throughout the planning.

However, when the evening arrived, the account manager, Paul Clark, turned up instead of the planned wine expert. He arrived carrying several boxes of wine and quickly confessed that he was more of a salesperson than a wine-tasting expert! After leaving the wine with us, he headed off to the Palace Hotel to catch up with a mate over a few beers.

We were more than happy with that arrangement. As a result, we ended up with considerably more wine than we would normally have enjoyed at a tasting, making it a Christmas dinner many members still remember!

## **HISTORY OF THE WAG (WINE APPRECIATION GROUP) – 10 YEARS ON**

### **Continued**

#### **2020 – The Year of COVID**

As fresh ideas were needed and COVID disrupted so many activities, the reins were handed to Paula Rowe, with encouragement and support from Paul Barnes.

#### **2021**

Colin and Sharon Peterson took over from Paula and introduced many new initiatives, including **the Bell**.

The purpose of the Bell was simple: to get everyone's attention when there was too much talking and not enough drinking!

#### **2024**

Hilary and Nigel took over as conveners and continued the group's success, organising the 2024 Christmas Dinner at Savoury Dining and the 2025 Christmas Dinner at Stone Restaurant.

#### **2027**

As we look ahead, we are delighted to welcome Margaret Mahon as convener for 2027.

#### **A Decade Worth Celebrating**

So there you have it: **10 years of Wine Appreciation!**

From more than 20 enthusiastic members squeezing into Helen O'Neill's common room, \$5 boxes of wine glasses and blind tastings of Aldi wines, to wine trips across New South Wales and beyond, WAG has certainly come a long way.

Over the years there have been different organisers, fresh ideas, memorable presenters, countless wine tastings, excellent trips and, of course, a fair amount of wine along the way.

Most importantly, WAG has provided friendships, laughter and shared experiences that have enriched our Probus community for the past decade.

**Here's to the first 10 years of WAG, and to whatever the next vintage brings!**

## OCTOBER GUEST SPEAKER – ANDREA NATOLI – HEART RESEARCH INSTITUTE

### TOPIC -- HEART HEALTH FOR SENIORS

Our members enjoyed an interesting talk by Andrea Natoli who kept us up to date with the research that is happening now at the Heart Research Institute.

Today HRI has more than 190 personnel, working in 14 scientific groups and supported by an operations team, with over 800 collaborations across 44 countries.



### Tips on taking care of your heart health

Andrea is Head of Gifts and Wills and Planned Giving at the Heart Research Institute, with a career spanning medical devices, pharmaceuticals, community nursing, aged care and the NDIS sector.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

### DID YOU KNOW

#### Get Online Week: Free Tech Help at Concord and Five Dock Library

FREE sessions are available for Seniors to go along with their phone or laptop and get some coaching on how to learn some basic 'digital' things.

#### Next sessions – no appointment needed

Mon 19 Oct, 2pm - 4pm at Concord Library

Thursday 22 Oct, 2pm - 4pm at Five Dock Library

#### Click here for more information

[Get Online Week: Free Tech Help at Concord Library](#)

**19**  
OCT



**Get Online Week: Free  
Tech Help at Concord  
Library**

Concord Library

**22**  
OCT



**Get Online Week: Free  
Tech Help at Five Dock  
Library**

Five Dock Library

### MEMBER SUPPORT

If you hear that one of our members is unwell, recovering from an operation, or going through a difficult time, **Helen O'Neill, our Welfare Officer**, would like to know.

A kind word or helping hand can make all the difference, and Helen will ensure they receive the support and care of our Probus community.



Have you or your group shared special moments? Like to be included in the next edition of this newsletter? Your feedback is always appreciated.

[Click here](#) and send news, photos, group outings etc.

## YOUR OCTOBER DIARY

| OCTOBER 2026                                                                        |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MO                                                                                  | TU                                                                                                          | WE                                                                                                                                 | TH                                                                                                          | FR                                                                                                                 | SA                                                                                  | SU                                                                                  |
| 28                                                                                  | 29                                                                                                          | 30                                                                                                                                 | <b>1</b>                                                                                                    | <b>2</b><br>October Members Meeting Agenda<br>Members Meeting<br>October Members Meeting Agenda                    | <b>3</b>                                                                            | <b>4</b>                                                                            |
| <b>5</b>                                                                            | <b>6</b>                                                                                                    | <b>7</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>8</b><br>Highlights of South India - 2026                                                                | <b>9</b><br>Highlights of South India - 2026                                                                       | <b>10</b><br>Highlights of South India - 2026                                       | <b>11</b><br>Highlights of South India - 2026                                       |
| <b>12</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026 | <b>13</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026                         | <b>14</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026<br>Travel Chat - Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro | <b>15</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026<br>Mary McKillop Museum | <b>16</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026<br>Executive Committee Meeting | <b>17</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026 | <b>18</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026 |
| <b>19</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026 | <b>20</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026<br>Sculpture By The Sea | <b>21</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026                                                | <b>22</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026<br>Highlights of South India - 2026                         | <b>23</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026                                                                    | <b>24</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026                                     | <b>25</b><br>Egypt Small Group Discovery - 2026                                     |
| <b>26</b>                                                                           | <b>27</b>                                                                                                   | <b>28</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>29</b>                                                                                                   | <b>30</b>                                                                                                          | <b>31</b>                                                                           | <b>1</b>                                                                            |

### FUTURE MEETINGS - 2026

Friday 6 November 2026  
 Friday 5 February 2027  
 Friday 5 March 2027 (AGM)

There are no meetings scheduled for December and January.

- The annual Christmas dinner will be held in lieu of the December meeting.
- The annual barbecue will be held in lieu of the January meeting.

### FAMOUS QUOTE

“Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away”  
 Maya Angelou

All issues of the newsletters can be viewed on our website - [Newsletters Archive](#)