

## GUEST SPEAKER

### Mike Munro AM

#### *The Last of the Bushrangers and This is Your Life*



Mike's presentation was in two parts. Firstly, he told his own family history including his two Great Uncles who were Australia's last bushrangers, and then some of his experiences presenting *This is Your Life*.

Mike had a difficult upbringing with his mother who was a lovely caring well-read Dr Jekyll when sober, but a horrendous abusive alcoholic Mr Hyde for much of his younger life, together living in a seminary, after being estranged from his father since an infant. He described his father as an Irish rogue with whom he didn't have a good relationship, although there was some recontact as Mike became an adult

Mike was 30 years old and an established TV journalist when his dying father told him of the incredible story of the Kenniff brothers, the cousins of his grandfather, who had changed his name from Kenniff to Munro out of shame. From initial disbelief, Mike's subsequent investigations revealed the full gruesome story culminating in the brothers killing a policeman and a station manager on Easter Sunday 1902, burning their bodies and putting the remains in police saddle bags.

The story was exciting, and Mike's delivery brought it to life. He outlined the many controversies of the Trial and the Appeal, the pastoralists versus the squatters, the Catholics versus the Protestants, the allowing of testimony from an aboriginal, the Trial judge sitting on the Appeal panel etc.

Then in response to a member's question, Mike regaled us with a range of memorable experiences from his time as presenter of *This Is Your Life*. Having undertaken hard hitting investigative journalism in newspapers and TV, including on *Willesee*, *60 Minutes* then hosting *A Current Affair* and *Sunday Night*, Mike was somewhat hesitant to take on the family show. He decided that unsung heroes would make excellent candidates. He then described many hair-raising experiences, some as consequences of secret phone calls required to create a personal profile, misunderstandings and hilarious incidents, many with celebrities.

He was firm however that the surprise introductions looked and were absolutely genuine, and a number of high-profile shows were cancelled when details were leaked in advance.

Ray Hyslop's vote of thanks accurately reflected members' enjoyment of a thoroughly stimulating highly entertaining professional presentation.

Many members purchased Mike's book, a review of which will be included in the November Newsletter. For those who were not able to attend the meeting, or who missed out on the fully

sold copies, the book 'The Last Bushrangers' can be purchased through your local bookshop, or on the Booktopia website <https://bit.ly/3ledZAX>