



# Probuss Club of Sydney

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## Newsletter

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August 2025

Issue 478

### MEETING DATES

August 5

STEPHEN LOOSELY AM

- A Moveable Feast

### ACTIVITIES

August 21 – Tour of Charles Perkins  
Centre, Sydney University

September 10 – Tour of the  
Quarantine Station

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## FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

*Gentlemen,*

When Professor James Curran addressed us on the unpredictability of President Trump's second term, little did we know that Trump would unleash the B2 stealth bombers and the 13000Kg bunker busting bombs designed specifically to attack the Iranian uranium enrichment sites of Fordow and Natanz, whilst Isfahan was attacked with submarine-based tomahawk missiles.

The effects on Iran's nuclear bomb ambitions are in dispute, however at the time of writing the truce after the Israel-Iran 12-day war appears to be holding.

Away from the tragedy of war, at our July meeting we were treated to a fascinating talk on how to compose music by The Honourable George Palmer AM KC.

George went into some detail about his Opera "Cloudstreet" based on Tim Winton's novel, with a video of the boy "Fish" a victim of near drowning, transformed by singing into a normal boy, then relapsing at the end of his song.

We were treated into some insights on George's early life, and his journey from school, to barrister, then judge and finally back to his true passion, composing music.

In August we will hear from ex Labor Senator Stephen Loosley AM, on the topic of "USA and Global Politics with President Trump".

*Rod Binsted*

Vice President

**Note:** To Register to attend the 5<sup>th</sup> August meeting at the Union, University and Schools Club, along with any male guest you plan to host - [click here](#)



**5 August 2025**

## **Stephen Loosely AM – USA and Global Politics with President Trump**



Stephen Loosely is an Australian lawyer and former politician and Senator. He was educated at Carlton Public School before attending Sydney Technical High School from 1965. Between 1972 and 1975 he undertook a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of New South Wales, graduating with first-class honours in political science.

Stephen joined the ALP in 1972 mentored by Graham Richardson. In 1976 he began working as a research officer for Senator Kerry Sibraa, subsequently joining the ALP

headquarters as an organiser in 1977, becoming assistant general secretary in 1979 and succeeding Richardson as general secretary in 1983.

At the 1990 federal election, Stephen was elected to a six-year Senate term as the ALP's lead candidate in New South Wales. He served as National President of the ALP between 1991 and 1992.

Stephen completed a law degree in 1997, while still in the Senate. He joined Sydney law firm Dunhill Madden Butler and then in 2009 he worked for Minter Ellison until 2015 as a strategic counsel.

Since March 17, 2008, Stephen has been the deputy chairman and non-executive director of Thales Group on the Australian board of directors.

Stephen is an expert on American politics and is a regular commentator on US elections in Australian media outlets.

In 2018, Stephen was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of New South Wales.



## JULY MEETING REPORT

Vice President Rod Binsted explained that he would chair today's meeting as President John Doherty had been unwell. However, John hopes to be fit to attend the Winter Lunch on 14 July.



The Vice President passed on the sad news that 20-year member and the Club's only Life Member, Frank Barr-David had passed away on 14 June. A few moments silence and reflection were held in memory of Frank.

The following thoughts on Frank's life have been shared by his friend and fellow member Derrick Docherty:

We were saddened to learn of Frank Barr-David's sudden passing, aged 93. He was born and educated in Brisbane. In his early twenties he was awarded a PhD in Chemical

Engineering at Yale University in the USA.

Frank joined IBM in marketing, was Branch Manager Sydney and then Melbourne. He spent 3 years with IBM WTC in New York. On his return he was appointed Executive Director Marketing for Australia and New Zealand. He continued as an Executive Director until his retirement in 1988. In addition to his high intellect, he had a high energy level and was enthusiastic and entertaining. He was our Club's Webmaster for 10 years until 2017.

Frank is survived by his charming wife Cherrie, sons Michael, Gregory, Andrew and grandson Oliver.

The Vice President touched briefly on recent world events in the Middle East and the opportunity to reflect on more pleasurable matters today. Three guests were introduced and welcomed.

Geoff McWilliam advised forthcoming speakers including the Hon. George Palmer AM KC at today's meeting, Dr Stephanie Ward speaking on "A Brain for the Ages" at the Winter Lunch on 14 July, Stephen Loosely AM on 5 August with his thoughts on the USA and President Trump, Wilsons Advisory in September to discuss investments and Dr Michael Pembroke a new member, retired judge and author in October.

Kim Oates reported on activities including the terrific tour to the Art Gallery of NSW to view the Archibald Prize entries with very knowledgeable guides. The theatre party to attend a performance of Agatha Christie's *Spider's Web* on 12 July, now fully subscribed (waitlist available) starting at 2:30pm running for about 2.5 hours. A room has been booked at the Chatswood Hotel at 12:30pm for lunch beforehand. A tour of the Charles Perkins Centre at Sydney University on 21 August is online and filling fast. A tour of the North Head Quarantine Station will be online shortly.



## INDUCTIONS



L to R: Ted Brogan, Bill Gregerson, Vice President Rod Binsted, Stephen Robb KC

### Bill Gregerson

Ted Brogan introduced Bill Gregerson, a near neighbour in Lindfield who he has known for forty or so years. They are good friends as are their wives. Bill comes from Adelaide, attended the Collegiate School of St Peter, then moved to Sydney where he completed a Master of Economics degree. He joined ABS White as a research assistant and rose to the rank of partner before retiring. He now runs his own funds management company.

### Stephen Robb KC

Rod Binsted introduced the Hon. Stephen Robb KC who was an outstanding barrister and then judge mostly in the areas of commercial law and then appellate law. Rod has known Stephen through his partner's sisters and her friends over many years. By way of introduction Rod quoted from Stephen's induction as a judge in which Stephen is described as an approachable, reliable and focused advocate, inclusive leader and valued mentor, calm collected and unerringly precise with complete mastery of the law and facts. In his own words at that same event, Stephen stated that he was a grateful beneficiary of the advance in social conditions in modern Australian society, where a young boy born into the Australian working class should by the grace and generosity of his fellow Australians be given a Commonwealth Scholarship, which opened up the possibility of the professional life which he has been able to live.



## LIFE BEFORE PROBUS

### Professor Bernie Haylen



Bernie was born at St Margaret's, Darlinghurst in 1953 and has spent most of his working life around Darlinghurst. He enjoyed nine years schooling at St Aloysius' College. The Latin scholars' old boys group meet six monthly and have all done well in diverse professional roles. Tertiary education commenced with two years of Civil Engineering at Sydney Uni. He soon learnt that the response to problem solving was just to get on with it and sort it out. Switching to Medicine at Sydney Uni in 1973, Bernie completed the course in the usual five years. An interest in musical theatre developed along the way. He produced the 1975

Medical Revue called "Quack Quack", going on to produce the 1978 and 1979 St Vincent's Hospital Revues at the newly completed Seymour Centre. It was a great move romantically as Bernie danced in the chorus line next to his future wife, the revues being a great source of doctor-nurse marriages.

Resident and registrar training continued at Nepean, Westmead, St Margaret's, St Vincent's and Liverpool, UK hospitals in the field of urogynaecology and whilst at Liverpool he became a lifelong Liverpool FC supporter. Bernie's Doctor of Medicine thesis was based on a study of how quickly men and women pass urine and measured by his Liverpool (Haylen) Nomograms, which remain the world reference. Testing of 600 volunteers involved a degree of bribery in the form of a can of drink and a Kit-Kat, whilst exceptional results were rewarded with a Mars Bar!

Bernie commenced private practice with principal appointments at St Vincent's and the Mater in Sydney in 1989, retiring almost 36 years later in 2024. His clinical and academic record is extensive with over 130 peer reviewed publications, a professorial appointment at UNSW, world leadership for terminology of the lower urinary tract and pelvic floor dysfunction, founding editor of the International Continence Society Glossary and a pioneer of many urogynaecology surgical procedures. In 2023, with a Sydney colleague, rewrote about 30% of the Gray's Anatomy chapter on the female reproductive system.

Bernie has been married to Denise for 44 years, has four sons and a daughter, none of whom have any interest in medicine. He continues to sing with St Brigid's Coogee Choir for the last 14 years and the Sydney Male Choir for the last eleven years. The latter choir supports the Anzac Day dawn service and has done so for over 92 years. The choir will be singing at the Sydney Town Hall Concert "A Touch of Tango" on 23 August.

For relaxation, Bernie spends time in Scone and the Barringtons where his property elevation reaches 4630 feet. His boating interest is about to expand with the purchase of a new craft, mainly for use on the harbour.



## Rod Ravenscroft



Rod was born in Melbourne and has an arts degree from Monash in pure maths and history, an MBA from University of Pennsylvania and a graduate diploma in pure maths, but is not a mathematician, although he enjoys challenges and logical processes.

He has three daughters and seven grandchildren, two of whom are about to sit their HSC.

Rod has had two careers, the first in Banking/finance and post-retirement working for not-for-profits with marginalized communities in inner Sydney, victims of domestic violence and Aboriginal stolen generation men.

Rod was not keen to talk about himself, but elaborated on a couple of his business decisions, quoting Dumbledore of Harry Potter fame – “It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities”.

- When working for a fairly big finance company, he was asked to clean up the financial statements of a division that was technically insolvent. The issue was a perpetually large item that couldn't be reconciled. The issue was actually a large bribe paid to a senior manager of one of the organisation's clients authorized by his predecessor – everyone knew about it. What would you (the audience) do?
- Working in India for a large Australian bank he had been informed that his country manager and his employee mates were a group of talented and experienced white-collar criminals who had techniques to defraud the bank and had previously done so at other significant banking organisations. Some professional friends advised him to do nothing. What would you do?
- Working for a charity in Sydney assisting marginalised people who were gambling addicts. Additional funding became available to employ another counsellor. The best candidate was a man who had been released from gaol some years previously after serving 13 years for murder. Counselling takes place in a small room, what is the duty of care to staff and clients? Would you employ someone with this record?

So, what did Rob do?

- In the case of the finance company, he approached the client and proved that one of the client's employees had accepted a bribe. The client's employee resigned, and his own company's supply contract was renewed.
- At the bank, he did pass on the information, the bank sold the arm of the business, as others had done previously and the criminals found work with another organisation.
- The gambling counsellor was a model employee who helped a lot of people in spite of some ongoing concern by his manager.

In the words of Carl Jung, “You are what you do, not what you say you'll do.” Actions show priorities, values, beliefs, who a person really is.



## The Hon. George Palmer AM KC

### Composing An Opera



Following Geoff McWilliam's introduction, George Palmer spoke of his fascination with music from an early age, with a keen desire to play the piano. While neither of his parents were musical, some members of his extended family showed strong interest.

George would have been happy to make a career of music but was reminded of the financial realities and so studied law which he found only mildly interesting. He added that his subsequent career as a lawyer and judge was more satisfying, particularly when it involved helping people. Whilst working in the law he wrote music on the side.

In 2000, with assistance from the ABC, he recorded something to play to his ailing father. A senior ABC executive was impressed and decided that they would feature George and his music in an edition of "Australian Story". Entitled "Judgement Day" it was well received, leading to his being "outed" as a composer. Two masses followed and by 2010 he felt it was time to fulfil a desire to compose an opera with a strong Australian focus. The story in Tim Winton's "Cloudstreet" had appeal and through persistence and negotiation an agreement was reached to tell that story in an opera.

A high calibre Director, Gale Edwards was attracted. One of her particular interests was to "get the libretto right" and to ensure that a typical audience member, "the lady in Row G", was pleased with what she saw and heard on stage. A process involving multiple workshops and rehearsals was involved.

The opening night performance was a great success with the opera critically acclaimed. Before showing a video clip George emphasised the benefit of having a first class Director and the importance of the opera being authentically Australian.

Expanding on the factors essential to success, George reinforced the need for the dialogue to be clear and readily understood, that there be no musical or acting "distractions" impacting the audience's focus on the stage, and that performers be good actors as well as good singers.

Reflecting on contemporary opera George commented that it must tell a story and, for commercial success, it must engage the audience. The one on which he is



currently working is derived from a classic Australian story and contemporary issues. It will be "very Australian"!

Points arising during questions included:

- George enjoys good relations with Opera Australia. They have "fantastic" capabilities and their current travails are not all their own fault. We were encouraged to support them.
- Historically there has been a deep connection between the law and music. Many composers were "failed lawyers". Interestingly, for a time, Tchaikovsky worked in the Department of Justice in Moscow!
- A common theme embraced by the law and opera is "structure" - both lawyers and composers are seeking to structure a cohesive, compelling story for their clients and audiences.
- While absent in past centuries, there are now many more women composers.

Our speaker's presentation was clearly appreciated by members and in thanking him Keith Hartman, a former school friend, commented that in their schooldays he had not anticipated that George would develop such a creative mind, of which he now stands in awe.

*Alan Locke*

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

### Tour of Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes 2025



On Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June, 31 members and guests participated in a visit to the Art Gallery of NSW to view the entries in the Archibald Prize exhibition. Access was gained to the exhibition half an hour before the general public, which made for much better viewing. Our attendees were divided into two smaller groups, and for an hour were shown selected paintings by two very knowledgeable guides. The tour started by viewing the works of talented school children (the Young Archies), before moving to the Archibald exhibition. The guides informed us of the backgrounds of the artists and their subjects. They explained the messaging and



technical features of the paintings. After the guided tour ended, most members stayed on to view the Wynne and Sulman exhibitions.

The tour was very enjoyable, and, as in previous years, a fruitful source of contemplation and discussion.

A small number then met for lunch in the Gallery Café for a late morning tea/early lunch.

**Bob Eckstein**

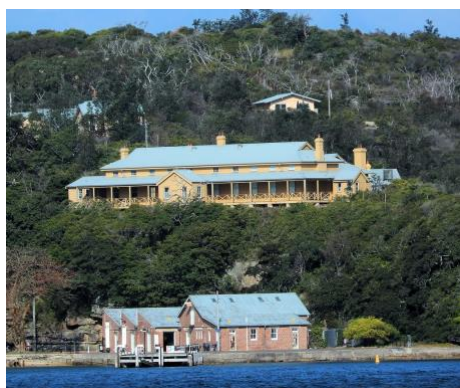
**Future events** (please see the website and emails for further details)

### **Visit to the Charles Perkins Centre, Sydney University**



There will be an opportunity to visit the Charles Perkins Centre, Sydney University on Thursday **21 August 2025**. Charles Perkins was the first indigenous person to graduate from an Australian university. As a student, he organised a student bus tour 'The Freedom Ride' around NSW to draw attention to the state of indigenous health, education and housing. Perkins went on to hold several distinguished positions in Australia. Sydney University has recognised his contributions by establishing the Charles Perkins Centre, sharing his philosophy of collaboration, inclusivity and challenging the status quo in healthcare. The Centre is at the bottom of John Hopkins Drive off Missenden Road. The tour will commence at 10.45am behind the reception area on level 1 of the Centre and take approximately one hour. There is no charge. A reservation for lunch has been made at the nearby Grandstand Restaurant at attendees own cost. See the Club website and email for further details.

### **Quarantine Station Story – Private Tour**



A visit has been arranged to the Sydney Quarantine Station on **10 September 2025**. For over 150 years, from the 1830s, the Quarantine Station was for many, the beginning of a new life in Australia after making the arduous and lengthy journey from their homelands. Ships suspected of harbouring people infected with contagious disease such as Spanish influenza, smallpox or bubonic plague were quarantined here so that these deadly diseases would not reach the general population in Sydney. Ultimately, a success story for the growing Sydney population, it did however leave an indelible mark on those that were quarantined; tales of love and loss play out alongside themes of cultural and social change, medical history and progress.



This tour will last 90-minutes visiting the various buildings and archeological sites that comprise the quarantine station precinct. Walking is required, sometimes on sloping or uneven surfaces. Please bring appropriate clothing for outside weather conditions, and closed walking shoes for the uneven surfaces.

After the tour, a light lunch will be provided. Weather permitting, this can be eaten outside, taking in the spectacular harbour view.

We will meet at the Q Station Reception Centre, at the end of North Head Scenic Drive. There is plentiful car parking there. As bus transfers are required to the quarantine station precinct, attendees will meet at 9.30am the Centre, for the tour commencing at 10.00am. The cost is \$60 per person which includes lunch at the tour's conclusion.

### **Christmas Lunch**

Looking ahead, the **Christmas Lunch** is booked for **8 December 2025**, at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron. Please ensure that this important annual event is in your diary.

### **FOOD Train Weekend in Orange, NSW**



The FOOD Train weekend package is the perfect getaway for food lovers. Hosted by local foodies, this 3-day guided trip on **27-29 March 2026** showcases some of the Orange region's best food and wine experiences and includes tickets to FOOD Week's most sought-after event, Forage. Enjoy exclusive local tours, selected FOOD Week events, and dining at some of the region's best restaurants and wineries.

The cost will be: \$1590 each twin share or \$1770 for a single. Bookings to be finalized by September 2025. Only 30 places are available and **are almost filled**. A waitlist will be available.

Activities included:

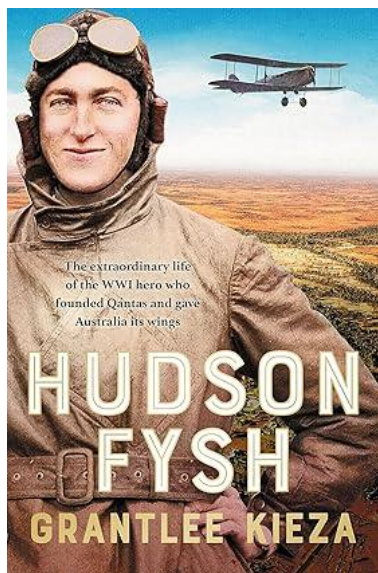
- Return train ticket in reserved carriage from Sydney to Orange, with the option to upgrade to a flight home.
- 2 nights' accommodation (twin share or single) at the Quest, Orange.
- Bus transfers between events and trains.
- Full day FORAGE experience on Sat 28 March.
- Breakfast at the Sunday Producers Market and Brunch on Sunday, the official closing event of FOOD Week.
- All meals over the three days.

***Bob Eckstein & Kim Oates***  
***Events Coordinators***



### Hudson Fysh

by Grantlee Kieza (2022) 375 pages – Non-Fiction



Australians are obsessed by air travel. We have more than our fair share of pioneers – such as Charles Kingsford-Smith, Charles Ulm, Bert Hinkler and Ross & Keith Smith. That Qantas is also an obsession is illustrated by this book and *The Chairman's Lounge* (recently reviewed).

Fysh co-founded Qantas in 1920 and finally retired as chairman in 1966. Others came and went during that period, but Fysh single-mindedly stuck to his task in building the great Australian airline.

His early career in Gallipoli and the Western Desert are not well known – so make good reading. From then on, the minute details of early aviation will appeal to the

afficionados, but not so much to the general reader. However, the author writes with a light touch, even though chasing too many rabbits down burrows.

Qantas has a well-deserved reputation for safety. However, that is not apparent in the early days of civil aviation. Those early days were not for the fainthearted.

So we have a good modern author delivering a well written popular story, which deserves retelling – and Qantas under Fysh makes an interesting contrast to the Qantas revealed in *The Chairman's Lounge*.

*David Castle*

## A TOUCH OF HUMOUR!

### Golf for Beginners

An old man and a 20 year old are paired together at a golf tournament. They're playing a long par 5 that dog legs around some tall trees.

As the 20 year old sets up his tee shot to hit onto the fairway the old man notes "when I was your age we used to hit over the trees - not around to the side."

So the 20 year old readjusts and tries to hit over the trees - but can't clear them and loses his ball. He tries again and loses that one too...

Then the old man says "of course, when I was your age, the trees were only 6 foot tall."



## EV for Beginners



## Short Handed

A man is in the emergency room after an horrific accident. A surgeon is examining his hand. He had already lost three of his fingers and the rest of his hand was in a bad way. "Doc! I'm a taxi driver. Will I still be able to drive with this hand?" "Maybe. But I wouldn't count on it."

## HOW TO CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER

To contact any committee member [Click here](#)

**Please use email where possible or telephone if you require urgent contact.**