



Probud Club of Sydney

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Newsletter

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June 2026

Issue 487

MEETING DATES

2 June 2026

George Gittoes AM

Afghanistan and Ukraine

- From The Inside

7 July 2026

TBA.

ACTIVITIES

5 June – Sydney Harbour Cruise

Japanese Mini-Sub Attack 1942

15 June – Winter Lunch

Royal Sydney Golf Club

14 July – Guided Tour of Salon

des Refusés, SH Ervin Gallery

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gentlemen,

At our meeting on 5th May 2026, we had the distinct pleasure of inducting two new members into our organization: Ian Foulsham and Dr. Alan Farrell. We warmly welcome them both to our community.

We were privileged to hear two engaging "Life before Probud" presentations. The first was delivered by The Honourable Keith Mason AC KC, who shared fascinating insights from his distinguished legal career as a Barrister and Solicitor-General, then as an Appeals Court Judge. He spoke candidly about the complexities and challenges he encountered while attempting to effect meaningful change within the Anglican Church and shared some challenges in his personal life.

Our second speaker, Bill Gregerson, reflected on his extensive career in finance, where he specialized in economic research and financial analysis. His impressive credentials include serving as a research partner for the stockbroking firm ABS White & Co., co-founding two boutique investment management companies, and holding directorships across numerous private companies. Remarkably, Bill remains actively engaged in investment research to this day.

Our May guest speaker, Kate Mills, delivered a compelling presentation on providing housing solutions for homeless people, with particular emphasis on homeless youth. Kate eloquently explained how securing stable housing creates a foundation from which numerous other life opportunities become accessible. She highlighted that this issue disproportionately affects Indigenous youth and individuals living with mental health conditions. Kate stated that housing was the bedrock of a person's life with multiple benefits flowing from that stabilising factor.

Rod Binsted.

President

Note: To Register to attend the 2 June 2026 Probud Meeting at the Union, University and Schools Club, along with any male guest you plan to host - [click here](#)

2 June 2026

George Gittoes AM

Afghanistan and Ukraine - From the Inside



George Noel Gittoes AM, born 7 December 1949, is an Australian artist, documentary filmmaker, photographer, and writer. For the greater part of his career, he has focused on human conflict, but always as a personal eye-witness.

Since 1986, this has meant constant travel to war zones and areas of conflict, including Nicaragua, the Philippines, Somalia, Cambodia, Western Sahara and Algeria, the Middle East (including Israel, Palestine, and Lebanon), South Africa, Rwanda, Mozambique, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, China and Tibet, Bougainville, East Timor, Congo, Iraq (both before and after the 2003 war), and troubled areas in the USA. Since 2007 he has worked particularly in Pakistan, Afghanistan and, since the Russian invasion of 2022, in Ukraine.

Having been a co-founder of the Yellow House Artist Collective in Sydney in 1970, in 2011 he opened a Yellow House in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. George's art and media work is held in major galleries and collections around Australia, including the National Gallery in Canberra and the Australian War Memorial.

George has directed around 20 films, as well as collaborating on a number of Pashto-language dramas in Pakistan. His first wife, Gabrielle Dalton, collaborated as co-producer with him on many of his early films. George's second wife, Hellen Rose, a singer, has been travelling with him and collaborating on many of his films made in conflict zones, since around 2009. His most recent films have been filmed in Afghanistan and in Ukraine since the Russian invasion in 2022.

Geoffrey McWilliam
Speaker Co-ordinator

MAY MEETING REPORT

President Rod Binsted opened the monthly general meeting welcoming members and three guests. He then followed with a brief mention of a book he had read about friends. It stated that we could each expect to know about 1500 people including 150 friends and five close friends. The membership of Sydney Probus is about 150 which is a perfect match with the suggested number of friends!

Geoff McWilliam provided a brief update on the forthcoming speaking program with an emphasis on variety.

- Kate Mills CEO of the Property Industry Foundation will be speaking at today.
- George Gittoes on 2 June a photographer, writer, painter and film maker. He will talk about Afghanistan and Ukraine from the inside. George will be accompanied by his wife Hellen Rose, who will sing for us. Perhaps a first for our Club!
- Beyond June, Geoff has identified speakers on artificial intelligence, global investment & infrastructure, energy and sports. Suggestions appreciated!

Bob Eckstein updated us that the activities program for 2026 including:

- NSW Rail Museum at Thirlmere was thoroughly enjoyed and keenly recommended by the 13 who attended.
- The excellent golf day at Killara saw 23 attendees with very good weather followed by lunch.
- On 5 June - Naval Historical Society Sydney Harbour cruise focussing on the 1942 Japanese midget submarine attack. Bookings now closed.
- 15 June - Winter Lunch – at the Royal Sydney Golf Club. The guest speaker is Paul Adam on the history of chocolate, including tastings.
- On 14 July, Salon des Refusés at the S H Ervin Gallery, Observatory Hill.

For further information see the Activities section below and Club emails/website.

INDUCTIONS



L to R: President Rod Binsted, John O'Connor, Alan Farrell, Ian Foulsham, Peter James.

Dr Alan Farrell

Alan Farrell was introduced by John O'Connor, having met in the Union Club some years ago with a group of gents that get together to drink wine and beer, have lunch and then generally chew the fat. Alan grew up in Waverley, studied medicine at Sydney University followed by specialist studies in radiology at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. He then joined a small radiology practice which became a large radiology practice and then became two large radiology practices. Alan retired eight years ago. He used to surf, ski and white-water kayak. He is interested in current affairs and wine, often together. He has been married to Tina for 53 years and has eight grandchildren. John assured us that we will enjoy knowing Alan Farrell.

Ian Foulsham

Peter James was very pleased to have nominated Ian Foulsham being a friend almost 60 years ago having met on the cricket field at Sydney University. Ian grew up in Wollstonecraft, went to Shore, continued his involvement with the school coaching rugby. Ian studied arts/law at Sydney University, spent about 60 years in the law, mostly in his own practice in the city, retiring at 80. Ian has been very involved in cricket, including Chair of Sydney University Cricket Club at the time of winning the first grade premiership for the first time. He was also very involved in I Zingari, playing till he was about 60 years old. Ian has been a member of Killara Golf Club for many years. He has a house at Blackheath and was closely involved in the restructure of the local golf club. Ian has been married to Linda for about 60 years and has three boys.

We are sure to enjoy his company.

LIFE BEFORE PROBUS

The Hon. Keith Mason AC KC



Keith Mason commenced by thanking members for making him feel so welcome since joining Probus. He summarised his talk as, 'a life of unplanned switches'.

Keith was born in Glasgow. His parents came to Australia when he was one, his father having been in the British merchant navy. His parents had a tough time during the war, with his father being away for great periods of time. They decided to move to Australia in preference to Canada or South Africa. Keith confirmed that he was lucky that they chose Australia. He grew up in Concord West, educated at The Kings School after obtaining a scholarship with the assistance of the local rector. He married Anne in 1972 and has been happily married since then. Their first date happened to be because Keith was the only person Anne knew with

a dinner suit, so she chose him to accompany her to a school formal! Unable to have children, they adopted two. As their son had a cleft palate, Anne ended up becoming the National President of the Cleft Palate and Lip Society and Keith became involved with the Children's Medical Research Institute, where he was President for ten happy years.

Keith went to the Bar in 1972 thinking he would have a practice in commercial law, took silk in 1981, but then switched to a short-term government job for a bit of a break, being President of the Law Reform Commission for two years. He then became Solicitor General for NSW replacing Mary Gaudron when she moved to the High Court, a role that he held for ten years and which he thinks was the most fascinating part of his career, being the barrister/in house lawyer for the government, particularly, dealing with crises for politicians. His next role was President of the Court of Appeal serving for ten years covering a wide range of experiences and cases. In another switch he became Chair of the NSW Electoral Commission for five years observing the interaction of politics and law and government.

Keith always been sustained and prodded by his Christian faith, although he sees himself as an outsider in the Sydney Anglican establishment. He and Julia Baird tried unsuccessfully to have women priests accepted in Sydney, a fight that he has been involved in over many years in tribunals and courts. Likewise, he's been involved in overcoming for women to become bishops and same sex marriage blessings in the Anglican Church. Currently he's writing a memoir about his struggles with the Church.

Bill Gregerson



Bill was a stockbroker for most of his career. He grew up in Adelaide. Then things were very different - a basic matriculation in science and maths opened many pathways. His father and grandfather were both medicos. Bill decided that medicine wasn't for him. In his final year at school he studied economics, so that's where he headed at university. The concept of efficient allocation of scarce resources has always been an interesting part of his activities. On graduation, the demand for economics graduates was very strong, opening multiple career choices. He followed the economics research route leaving Adelaide and joining a major trading bank in Sydney in the economic research department and later becoming an economist with

an industry organisation. Not seeing a longer-term career pathway, he retrained as an investment analyst, joining Australian Development Finance Corporation staying for five years. He undertook further studies at the University of NSW. On graduation, a partner of the broking firm ABS White suggested they were looking for someone to takeover a research function. He joined the firm and subsequently became a partner and later a member of the Stock Exchange. The broking industry underwent a lot of changes during this period, particularly due to the transformation to the Australian Stock Exchange. Out of the blue, the French bank, BNP Paribas approached the firm with an acquisition proposal, which was accepted, the firm becoming a subsidiary of BNP. Bill stayed with this new group for about ten years.

Subsequently, Bill joined a business where he managed private clients. He subsequently retired, but then his son convinced him to help start a boutique funds management business, of which he is still a director.

WHY YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE UP 40% OF HOMELESSNESS

Kate Mills, CEO Property Industry Foundation



In his introduction Geoff McWilliam commented that the Property Industry Foundation was formed 30 years ago when the building and construction industries realised they would more effectively support the community if they worked together. Kate Mills has been CEO of this successful Foundation for the past 8 years.

Kate commenced her presentation with a video featuring 3 young people experiencing homelessness in different forms, but all at risk from living in unsafe and insecure accommodation.

First Nations people, while 3% of the nation's population, are one third of the youth homeless population.

Kate then spoke of the Foundation's focus, as a social purpose development partner, on building/renovating houses and apartments that are then operated by front line charity

partners like The Salvation Army who have the necessary operational expertise. The Foundation also seeks longer-term solutions.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that 46,000 young people (under 25) are homeless every night in Australia. Family and domestic violence, a housing crisis, or a family or relationship breakdown are the main causes. Some young people don't recognise they are homeless - they see the way they live in an insecure, unsafe or impermanent environment as being normal.

Young homeless people are more likely to be female (65%), aged 18-24 years (76%) and not enrolled in any form of education or training (74%).

One in every two of the 40,000 young people (15-24 years) seeking refuge for a night are turned away because of a lack of beds. But affordable, stable housing is fundamental to their economic, psychological and physical wellbeing.

There are no rental opportunities for people on Australia's Youth Allowance of \$677.20/fortnight

Homeless numbers are increasing and there is a risk that the current level of homelessness will be seen as acceptable. It is higher in the 19-24-year age bracket reflecting the absence of the support traditionally provided by school and family. The

Foundation gives particular emphasis to the 16-18 age bracket, so the young people are better prepared when these support structures fall away.



Kate commented that young people could be better off remaining connected with their family while the family gets support to function better. It is nearly always better to take steps, say via a social worker, to make a better family, including better parenting, than to remove a young person from having contact with their family.

In response to the argument “They should go to school or get some training” she commented that it is very hard to go to school or apply for a job if your clothes are not clean and you haven’t had a shower!

Points arising from Q & A included:

- Finland’s low level of homelessness is credited to the country's “housing first” policy i.e. focus on providing housing including to those who in the past would have been denied because of a drinking problem. Australia needs more public housing to stop people becoming homeless in the first place.
- Given that the current Youth Allowance is not enough to allow a young person to pay the rent needed to justify building a residential property, the Federal Government has just announced a Youth Housing Supplement to address this gap.
- The Foundation has recently adopted a model where it does the work and meets the cost of achieving DA status for projects that the government can then fund.
- The Foundation is advised by the operator on apartment design. It will depend on the age and situation of the intended tenants ie the design for single 16 year olds will be different (more shared facilities) to that for young mothers with one or more children (more privacy).

Neil Martin reflected on his past discussions with homeless people and conveyed our thanks to Kate for her excellent presentation.

Alan Locke

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

Recent Events

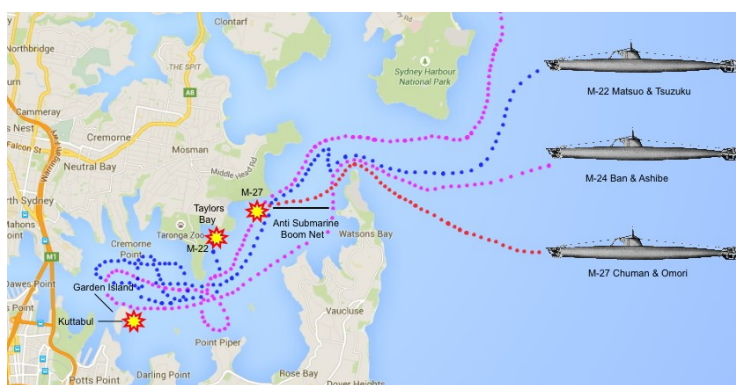
After a full suite of events in March and April, there have been no social activities since last month's Newsletter. The Sydney Harbour Cruise was originally planned for May, but due to the availability of the Naval Historical Society personnel and craft, it was postponed to 5 June.

Future Events (please see the website and emails for further details and bookings)

Sydney Harbour Cruise - Japanese mini-sub attack 1942

Conducted by the Naval Historical Society of Australia

Friday 5 June 2026



The 1942 Japanese midget submarine attack on ships in Sydney Harbour remains a topical subject. However, many Sydneysiders know little about this watershed event. This cruise will provide a detailed description of events leading up to and during the attack.

Your comfortable and spacious cruise boat will take you to sites on the Harbour where key events occurred and a comprehensive description of how those events unfolded during the fateful night of 31st May and 1st June 1942. The story will be told by expert narrators from the Naval Historical Society of Australia.

A comprehensive commentary will be provided. Every passenger will receive a complementary booklet with detailed information and photos as a souvenir.

It is important to remember that this is a cruise and that access to the vessel is via a steep gangway, whilst throughout the vessel there are stairs, not suitable for those with medium to severe mobility issues. Members with low to medium mobility issues are usually able to manage.

Check-in Time: 09:30am. Boarding Time: 09:45am for 10:00am departure

Departure Point: King Street Wharf 3, Darling Harbour, Sydney.

Finish time: 1:00 pm

Access: Ferry to Barangaroo or train and walk from Wynyard or Town Hall Stations.

The cost is \$85 per person. **As full payment was required by the Naval Historical Society one month prior to the cruise, bookings have now been closed.**

Contact person on the day: Kim Oates

Winter Lunch at the Royal Sydney Golf Club – Monday 15 June 2026



The 2026 Winter Lunch will be held at Royal Sydney Golf Club on Monday 15 June from 12 midday till 3pm. Canapés and pre-luncheon drinks on the front lawn, overlooking the Harbour, will be followed by a two-course meal with wines and coffee. The guest speaker is Paul Adam of Du Plessy Pralin & Otello whose family has been making chocolates for 65 years, now at West Pymble. He will

tell us about the history of chocolate making and the hazards of being featured on TikTok. He will provide us with samples!

The Club car park should be reasonably quiet on a Monday. The Rose Bay Ferry wharf is a 7 minute walk away and the 324 and 325 Bus stops adjacent to the Club at the corner of New South Head Rd and Kent Rd.

Dress code is smart casual, coats optional. The Club will allocate seating, a great way to mix and meet some new people. If you really have a preferred table group, contact Kim Oates (who will try, but no promises) 0433 050 448, or email Bob Eckstein at bobbyeckstein@gmail.com.



Cost is \$160 pp and includes food and drinks.

There will be a three course menu:

Canapés:

Australian tiger prawn, basil emulsion
Game farm duck pancake, cucumber, hoi sin.
Beetroot risotto cake with orange & dill mayo
Seared Atlantic scallop tart, apple puree, fried capers

Main Course:

Grainge beef eye fillet, potato fondant, creamed leeks, spinach & carrots with truffle jus.

Dessert:

Citrus tart with torched meringue and crème fraîche.

Tea and coffee

Please inform Kim or Bob in advance of any allergies or specific dietary requirements.

Guided Tour of Salon des Refusés, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney – Tuesday 14 July 2026

A tour of the Salon des Refusés at the S.H. Ervin Gallery, Observatory Hill, The Rocks, Sydney is planned for 9:45 am, Tuesday 14 July. Members, their partners and invited male or female guests are welcome. See emails and website for further details and bookings.

What good stuff did the Art Gallery of NSW miss?



The *Salon des Refusés* was initiated by the S.H. Ervin Gallery in 1992 in response to the large number of works entered in the Archibald Prize which were not selected for display in the official exhibition. S.H. Ervin Gallery's 'alternative' selection has become a much-anticipated feature of the Sydney art scene.

We will meet at 9.45am and be guided through the exhibition by an experienced member of the Gallery staff who will explain the works on display, why they have been chosen and perhaps give some clues why they were not included in the Archibald or Wynne Prizes.

Driving is recommended and parking is freely available at the front and rear of the Gallery. The nearest train Station is Wynyard followed by a walk north along Kent St and up the Agar Steps.

Jonathan Dalton *The Shadow of a Labyrinth.*

Simone Kessell after *Ariadne* (Simone Kessell, actor) oil on linen 213 x 137cm

Cost will be \$20.00 per person.

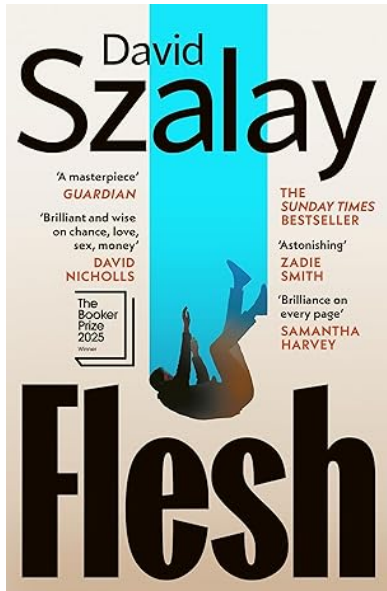
Lunch has been arranged, at member's expense, at the adjoining Trust Cafe.

Contact on the day is Bob Eckstein on 0411045761

Bob Eckstein & Peter Nochar
Activity Coordinators

Flesh

by David Szalay (2025) - 349 pages – fiction



The winner of last year's Booker prize has attracted more than the usual amount of controversy. While admired by the judges for its originality and spare prose, others have criticised its bleakness and lack of insight.

The protagonist appears to drift aimlessly from situation to situation, without any particular rhyme or reason. However, if you can stomach the sex scenes, it certainly exemplifies the world of men – particularly young men – in this day and age.

Therefore, people of our generation may struggle with the content and style. Others may find it a compelling read for the young or young at heart.

In any event Booker prize winners cannot just be ignored and the writer is one of the guests at this year's Sydney writers Festival.

David Castle

A TOUCH OF HUMOUR!

Excuses, excuses.....



Author at Work



A college class was told they had to write a short story in as few words as possible. The instructions were: The short story had to contain the following three things:

- (1) Religion
- (2) Sexuality
- (3) Mystery

Below is the only A+ short story in the entire class.

"Good God, I'm pregnant; I wonder who did it."

A Good Education!



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.