

*Probus is all about fun and friendship
in retirement.*

*Making your Club the best it can
be!*

Introducing Belinda Evans, Probus Ambassador

I am the Secretary of Brighton Central Combined Probus Club, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in March.

The Ambassador's role is to offer help and advice to all the Probus Clubs (usually Presidents and Secretaries) within their Local Government area.

Most of the Clubs in my Cluster are based in the City of Bayside, but the Cluster also includes two Clubs located just outside Bayside.

We try to organise Cluster meetings every few months so the Presidents and Secretaries can discuss any problems, and we can share ideas to help our Clubs thrive.

*Welcome
to a chat about your
Club's activities*

What motivated you, personally, to join a
Probus Club?

Studies on older adults

Looking at Google Scholar, there are 864,000 studies that have been done on social isolation and loneliness in older adults.

In days gone by, some older people who didn't have the advantage of joining any sort of social club like Probus became very lonely and isolated. Younger people often moved into the neighbourhood and weren't interested in talking with the old fogies, and as their contemporaries died, it made them even more isolated. They became "orphans of age".

A typical study on loneliness

A total of 120 unique risk factors for loneliness were examined. Risk factors with relatively consistent associations with loneliness were:

- not being married/partnered and partner loss
- a limited social network
- a low level of social activity
- poor self-perceived health and
- depression/depressed mood and an increase in depression.

A systematic review of longitudinal risk factors for loneliness in older adults. 2022. Lena Dahlberga, Kevin J. McKee, Amanda Franka and Mahwish Naseera. School of Education, Health and Social Studies, Dalarna University, Falun, Sweden; Aging Research Center, Karolinska Institutet & Stockholm University, Solna, Sweden.

So, what does Probus offer?





*Probus
ticks all
the
boxes....*

- Individual support
- Strong social network
- Strong social activity
- Healthy ageing through activities such as exercise groups and walking groups
- Interesting guest speakers that broaden your horizons
- Individual interest groups that take your mind off life's little niggles

A photograph of a group of people, likely a team or community, holding hands in a circle. The image is slightly blurred and has a warm, golden-hour lighting. The text "Social support" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font.

Social support

Everyone needs to feel that
they're valued.

Let's look at social support.....

What does your club do to welcome prospective new members?

What does your club do to welcome members?
Do you have a greeter?

How do you keep your members coming back for more?

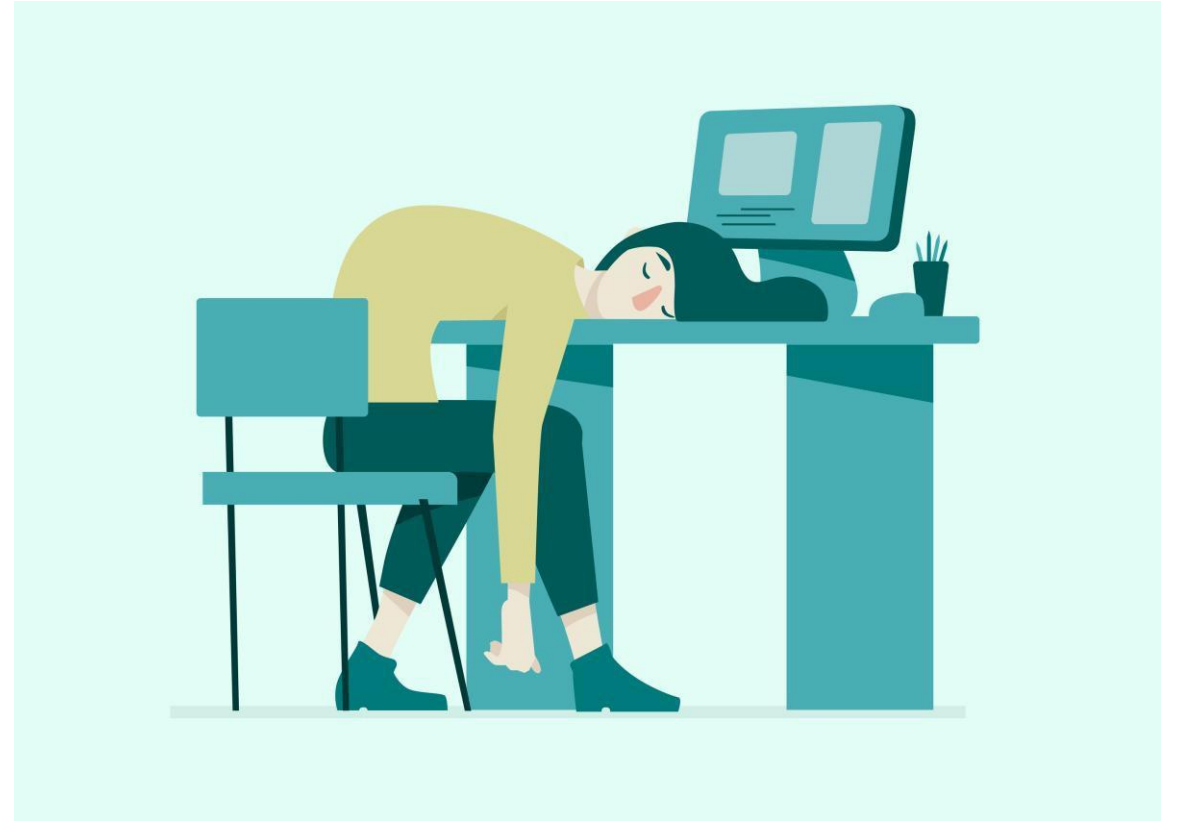
Do you offer any incentives to members to bring friends along who may wish to become new members?

Do you have active Almoners/Welfare Officers who chase up anyone who isn't well, or needs some help?

Do you remember your members' birthdays with a call, a card, or even a text message?

Club meetings....

- Are your guest speakers fair, good, great, exciting, or dead boring?
- Is everyone awake during the guest speakers, or have half of them dozed off?
- Do you offer a variety of guest speakers?



Club meetings....

- What is your business part of the meeting like?
- Do you do a PowerPoint presentation, or have the agenda up on a screen, or do you not do anything?
- How many members are fast asleep during the business part of the meeting?



Social support and interest groups...

- One of the most important ways that a Probus Club can flourish is by organising additional interest groups.
- Some clubs have heaps of groups going. For example, Ringwood Clocktower has 24! Yes! 24 groups going, and Ringwood Clocktower is, understandably, one of the busiest and biggest Probus Clubs in Australia.
- Some clubs have at least 5-6 different groups going every week.
- How many groups does your club offer to members? If you only offer a monthly coffee group, i.e. you go to a local coffee shop once a month, is that good enough?



*Let's look at
interest groups.*

These are one of
the most valuable
components of a
thriving Probus
Club.



Interest groups....

They offer:

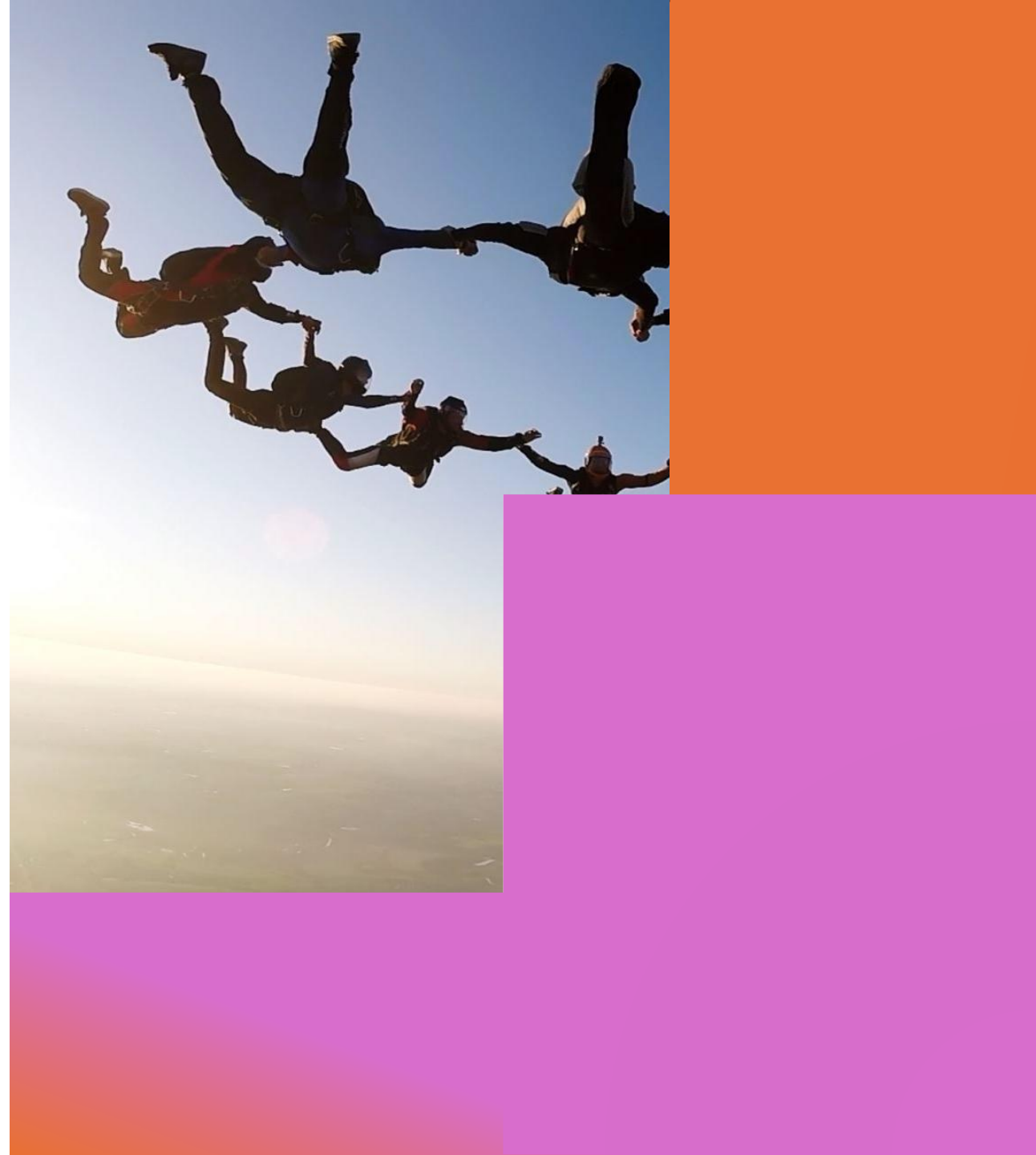
- Fellowship and friendship and deeper social connections
- A better way for members to get to know each other in a smaller group setting
- A way for members to enhance existing skills and knowledge bases, as well as to learn completely new skills i.e. mental/cognitive stimulation
- Physical wellbeing

What else do interest groups do?

- They provide a leadership learning role for their coordinator.
- They provide a sense of responsibility for everyone involved – a good reason to get out of bed and do something.
- They improve communication skills. How do you let everyone know when the group will meet next and where?
- They spread the load/onus on the committee for communication.
- They provide diversity for all interests.
- They can adapt quickly to different conditions.
- They're usually cost-effective, requiring little or no financial support.

What else do interest groups do?

They embody the principle that life doesn't end at retirement, but actually opens up multiple new doors to new interests, new friendships, wellbeing, purpose, and richer experiences for all members.



Let's take a quick look at the psychology of “me”

- What am **I** interested in?
- What motivates **me** to do something?
- What do **I** enjoy?
- What do I not enjoy?
- What feels right in **my** life as a retiree?
- What doesn't feel right in my life as a retiree?
- Am I spending too much time watching “Days of Our Lives” or playing War Games, or Candy Crush, or just sitting around not doing anything?
- Does my social life revolve around Doctors' visits?

Let me introduce you to a new product...

Let's look at an example of a brand new product that's just been launched on the market.

It's called MyProbus, and it's a terrific product.

I'm here to tell you that MyProbus is a terrific product.

Your response.....



Meh....

- Maybe....
- What's it going to do for me?
- What's in it for me?
- What is MyProbus's purpose?
- I can tell you that it's the best product, it's simple to use, it's user-friendly and the best thing you've ever had and all that blah blah....
- But are you going to buy it?

Nope!

- Why not?
- Because all my brilliant marketing skills haven't addressed **YOU**.
- I haven't addressed your needs or feelings, the things that matter to you, the things you love and that make you feel happy and interested and involved.
- I haven't pressed your "**Me**" button.
- I need you to **BELIEVE** in MyProbus.

Motivation

- There is a school of thought that we only follow leaders for ourselves.
- What do politicians do to get you to vote for them? They promise to give you what **YOU** want.
- I do the things that I want to do, not what you tell me to do.

- + • Would the real Probus Club please stand up?

So, how does this translate into a real Probus Club?

Listen to your members.

Ask!

If you don't already have a good number of interest groups going, then you need to start the ball rolling.



Getting the ball rolling.....

Step One: Ask!

And ye shall receive.

Yes, you might get some silly suggestions, but on the whole, you'll get sensible ideas.

Follow up on them.

Get the person who suggested them to take the lead and organise the group/event.

Getting Going with your new group

- **Step Two:**

Some groups will need a leader, some can manage themselves. Don't let people get bogged down in too many intricacies and "what ifs", and don't let them go around in circles.



Getting your new group going

- The last thing you need is for the group to get bogged down in a multitude of indecisions.
- An example:
- We're starting a Walking Group.
- DO NOT let everyone throw in a bunch of ideas of where and when. They all come later.
- Set the day, time and place for the first walk. Yes, some people won't be able to come for the first walk, but they'll come.
- Make it simple and easy, and definitely not too energetic so everyone feels defeated and won't come again.
- And yes, take your dogs with you! You'll pick up new members.





Your new group....

- **Step Three: Communicate! Set the date, time and the venue.**

Let everyone in your club know about the new group/s and even let your neighbouring clubs know. They might have members who would like to join in for a particular activity.

What sort of groups can we have?

- **Exercise/activity groups:**

Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi, cycling, dancing, gardening, Table Tennis, Badminton, Golf, Tennis, walking, Pickleball, frisbees, swimming, tours to places of interest, bowling.





What sort of groups can we have?

General interest groups:

Gardening, computers and technology, photography, painting, wood-working, car maintenance, pottery, knitting, crafts, philately, discussion groups.

*What sort of
groups can we
have?*

Social groups:

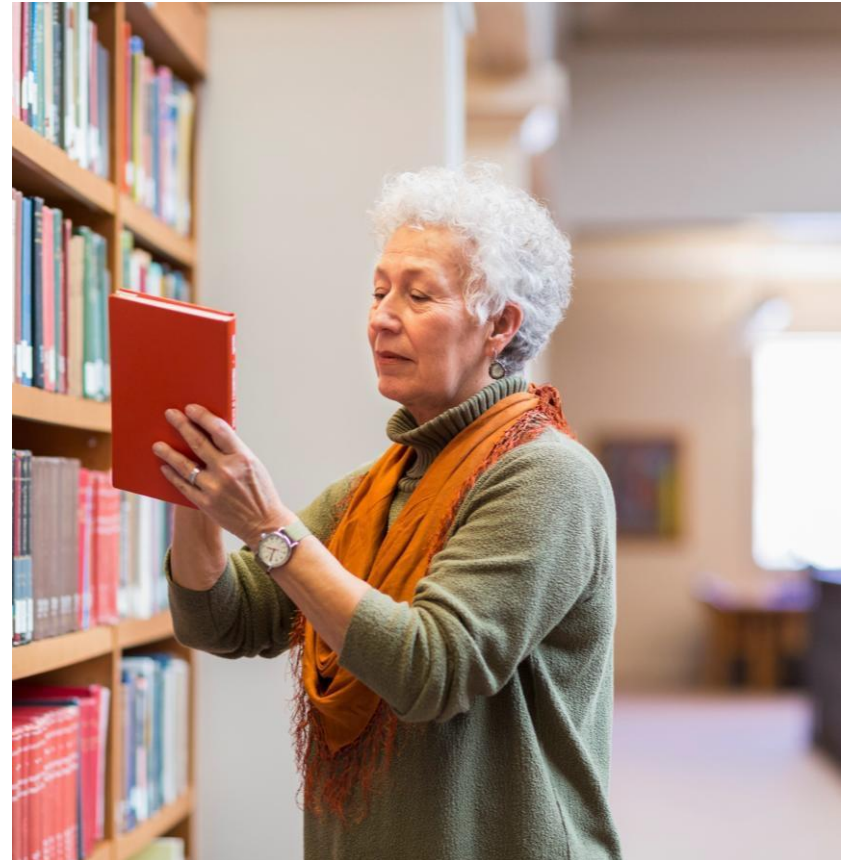
Coffee mornings, lunches, dinners, visits to places of interest, crafts, cake decorating, recipe swaps, car rallies, picnics, caravanning, cycling, wine appreciation.



What sort of groups can we have?

Brain groups:

Book discussions, music/art appreciation, trivia competitions, cards, travel, current affairs, choir, Sudoku, crossword, Wordle, Code Cracker competitions, Scrabble, poetry writing, essay writing, Mahjong, magic tricks.



Generating new members

- We all need to remember that we're living in the 21st Century, and we need to keep up with current technology.
- One of the most important things for all clubs is to continually find new, younger members. But if the younger members can't find you, or, more directly, if their Google search can't find you, you've just lost a prospective member.
- It's really important that you have a good website and you are easily contactable.

That's all from me.

Thank you for your attention.

*I hope I've managed to inspire
you to leap outwards.*

