

*Probus friendship:
in leaps and bounds*

*Making your Club
the best it can be!*



ANNIVERSARY



1976 - 2026

PROBUS

IN AUSTRALIA

Introducing Helen Holliday, Probus Ambassador

I was the Foundation President of Olinda Probus, and we're now 20 years old. I've done every committee job and been President three times. Currently Secretary. I am a Life Member of Olinda.

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

I'm the Ambassador for Yarra Ranges Council area.

We try to organize cluster meetings on a regular basis 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
Probud Club?



How did my Probus Club start?

A few days after I'd left work, I ended up with a couple of gorgeous puppies, the Labradoodles, Fred and Emma.

Over the next few months, I discovered a curious human trait – humans are very happy to talk to dogs, but not to the humans!

But, gradually, over time, we started to make new friendships, and the penny finally dropped that there were locals in the same boat as me – we were all lacking a social network.

So Olinda Probus Club came into existence all because of our dogs!

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.

I have known older friends who didn't have the advantage of joining any sort of social clubs like Probus and the sad thing for them was that they became very lonely. Younger people moved into their 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
- Positive improvement in healthy activities such as exercise groups and walking groups
- Interesting guest speakers that broaden horizons, as well as individual interest groups that take your mind off all of life's little niggles.

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?

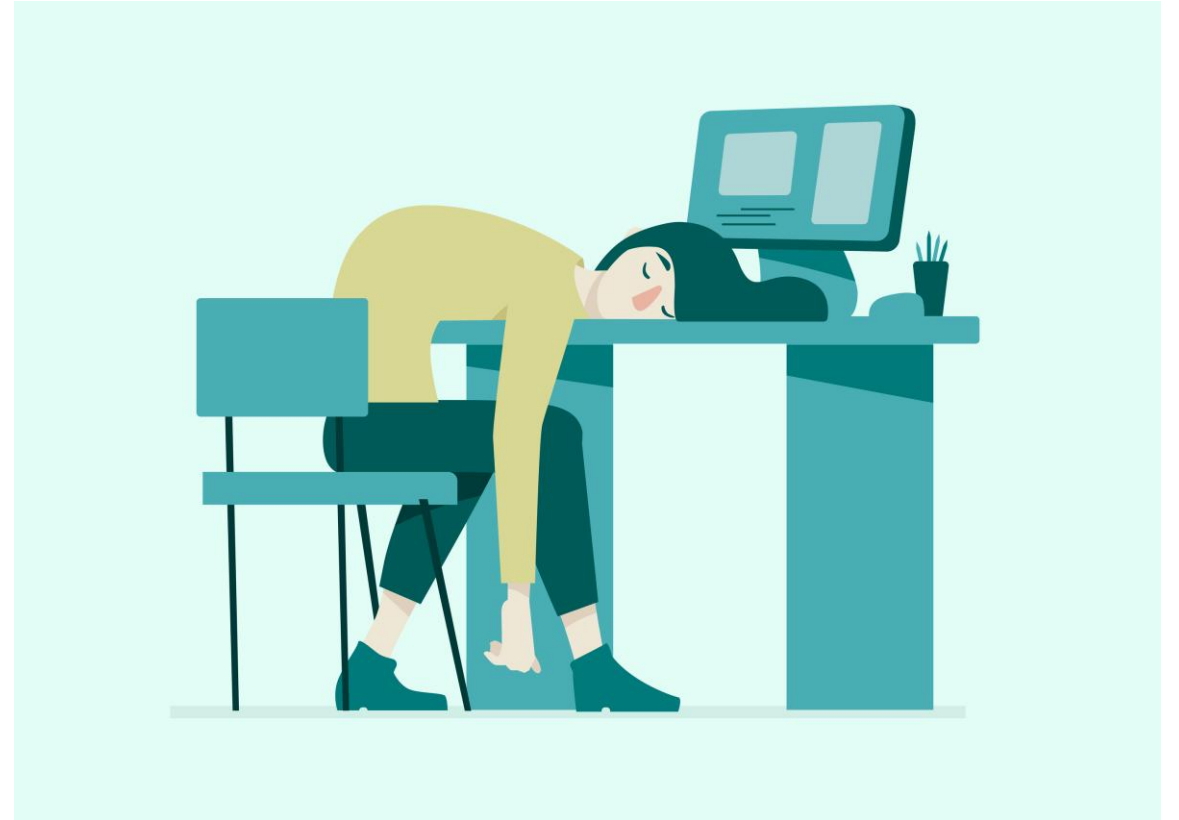
A close-up photograph of several people's hands stacked together in a circle, creating a sense of unity and support. The hands are of various skin tones and are positioned in a way that suggests a group hug or a collective gesture of solidarity. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the hands.

Social support

Everyone needs to feel that
they're valued.

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?
 - Join MEPG!



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 don't do anything?
- How many members are fast asleep during the business meeting?



Social support and interest groups...

- One of the most important ways that a Probus Club can flourish is by organizing 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.
- My club, Olinda, has 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?

A photograph of a crowd of people at night, holding up lit sparklers. The scene is festive and celebratory, with many hands visible holding the sparklers high. The background is dark, and the light from the sparklers creates a warm, glowing effect. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

*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/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 a 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?
- Emma Chisit? (Remember that wonderful book “Let's Stalk Strine”?)
- 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 gut feelings, the things that turn you on, the bits you love and make you feel happy and interested and involved.
- I haven't pressed your "**Me**" button.
- I need you to **BELIEVE** in Myprobus.



I believe.....

- Remember Dr Martin Luther King's famous "I have a dream" speech?
- I have to get you so motivated about Myprobus that you're going to want to use it every day and your life won't be worth living unless you have it.

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.

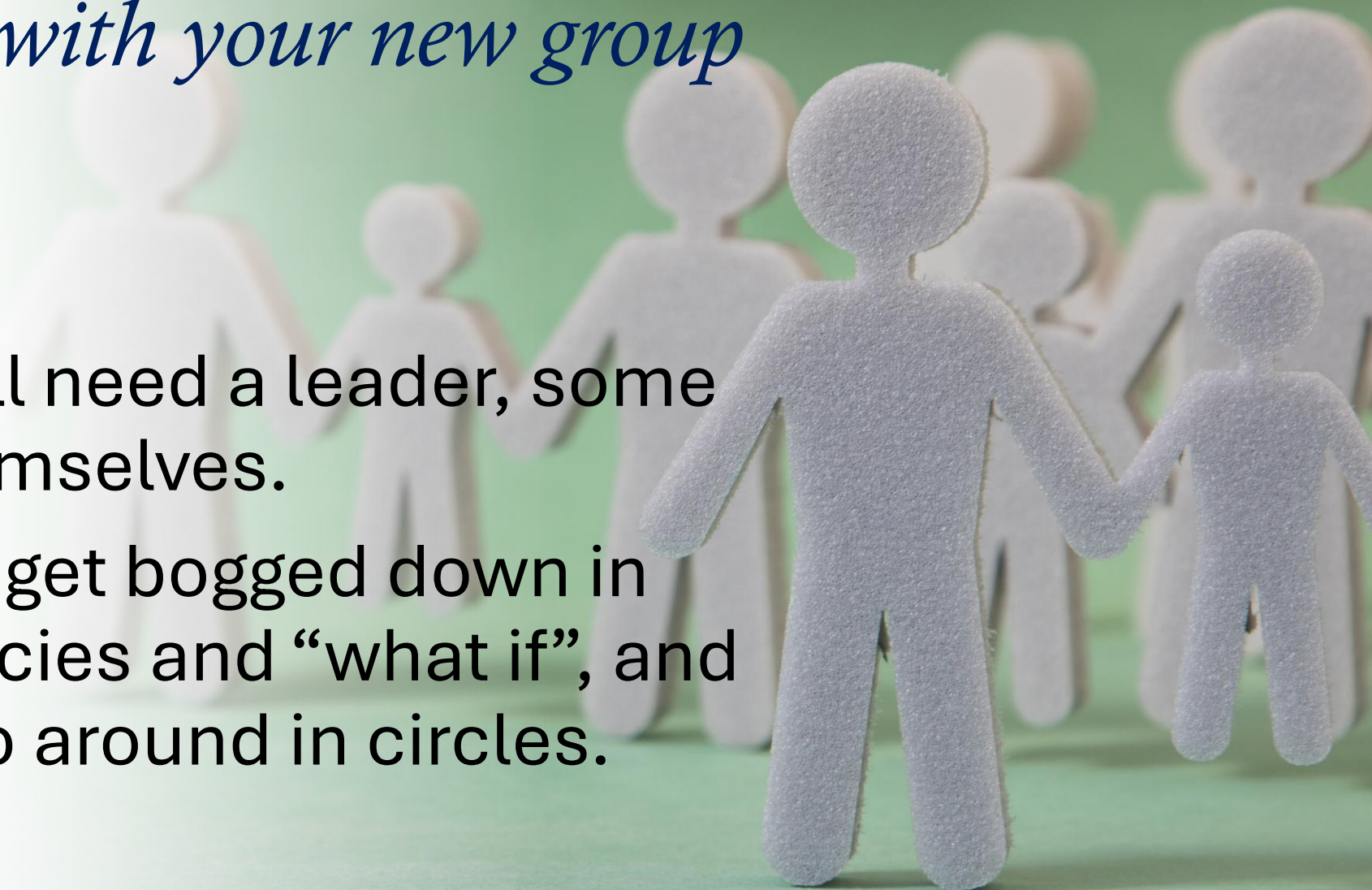
Get the person who suggested them to take the lead and organize the group/event.

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 if", 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 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:

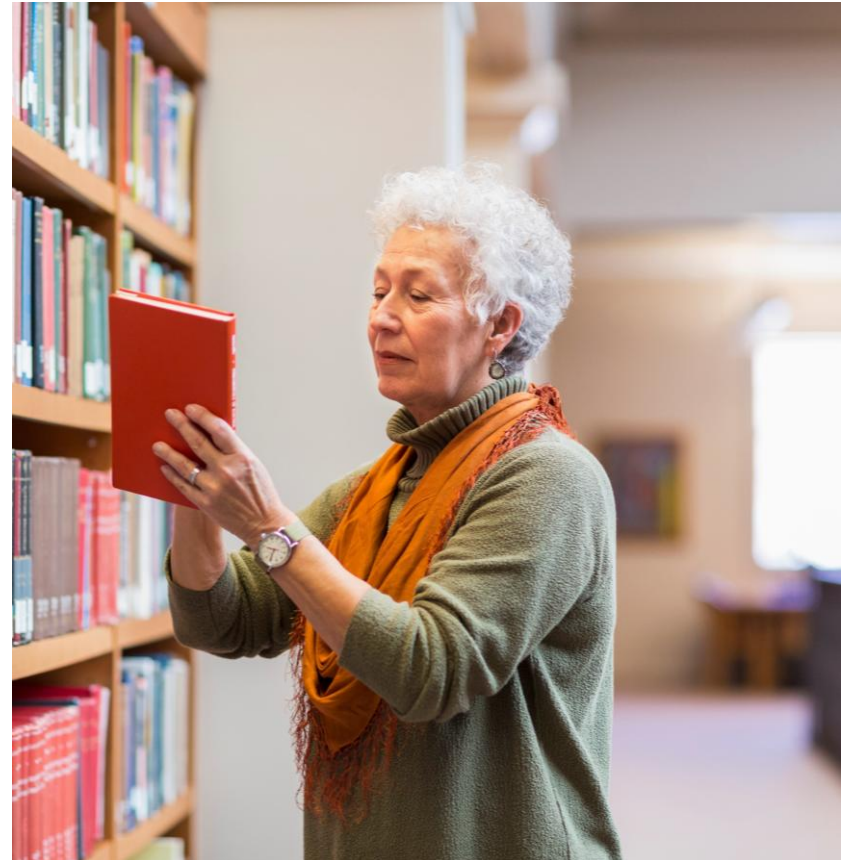
Coffee mornings,
lunches, dinners, visits to
places of interest, crafts,
cake decorating, recipe
swaps, car rallies,
caravanning, cycling,
wine appreciation.



What sort of groups can we have?

Brain groups:

Book discussion, 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.*

