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## President's Report – AGM 10 March 2026

Welcome everyone, and a very special welcome to our newer members.

As I reflect on the past 12 months, the first thing that comes to mind is: *where did that time go?* It seems like only yesterday that I was standing here being inducted as President.

I am very pleased to say that Bearbrass Probus is a thriving club.

Membership has continued to grow throughout 2025, and we now have **97 members**, including **24 new members**. This growth reflects the welcoming and inclusive nature of our club. I truly believe we are a friendly and approachable group, and it is always a pleasure to hear the lively chatter at morning teas and gatherings. Feedback from new and prospective members consistently highlights the warm welcome they receive. I also believe that the wonderful variety of activities and events we offer is a major attraction for people considering joining our club.

### Activities and Interest Groups

2025 has been an extremely busy and successful year.

We continue to enjoy a wide range of regular monthly and fortnightly activities, including the **book club, mahjong, cards, coffee mornings, wine group, and movie group**, just to name a few. These activities remain well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by members.

Richard has taken over the **walking group** and is doing a wonderful job researching a variety of locations and historical landmarks across Melbourne, which become the focus of his walks. Those who have attended have given glowing reviews.

During 2025 we introduced two new interest groups:

- **The Art Appreciation Group**, convened by Coral Lee, which has visited a diverse range of exhibitions throughout Melbourne and even travelled further afield to Bendigo for the *Frida Kahlo* exhibition and to Geelong for the *Archibald Prize* exhibition.
- **The Morning Melodies Group** — although somewhat ironically held in the afternoon — which has enjoyed a wide variety of performances at Hamer Hall.

In 2026 we have already established a **Photography Group**, convened by Spike.

Two of our newer members, **Rose and Cathy**, have also started a **Wednesday Lunch Group**, with the first gathering held last week at Little Bean in Docklands.

### Special Events and Excursions

We enjoyed a wonderful variety of special events and excursions throughout 2025.

Live shows and musicals attended during the year included:

- *Dolly – The Musical*
- *Annie*
- *Anastasia*
- *A Christmas Carol*
- *Jesus Christ Superstar*
- *The Nutcracker*

Looking ahead to 2026, I have reserved tickets for **A Beautiful Noise**, the story of Neil Diamond, which is coming to Australia. Our group will attend in October.

Other outings during the year included visits to:

- Pentridge Gaol
- Rippon Lea Homestead
- The Treasury Building
- The Police Museum
- Seaworks Maritime Museum

Sue Hoile and Coral Lee also organised a wonderful **three-day trip to Warrnambool in September**, where many members stayed in cabins at the caravan park and enjoyed exploring the region together.

The **Wine Group** enjoyed a mini-holiday in **Rutherglen**, sampling the local wines at several wineries.

Jill has also been busy organising events for 2026, including visits to the **Cranbourne Botanical Gardens** and a **Ballarat heritage walk**.

## **Social Events**

Eating and drinking continues to be a very popular pastime among our members!

Our **Christmas in July** celebration at PJ O'Brien's is always well attended, and we also had a wonderful turnout at our **Christmas break-up lunch at the Imperial Hotel**. As if we hadn't had enough food and drink, a lovely **picnic by the river** was held after Christmas.

The **monthly Wine Group** continues to thrive, often with a waiting list.

One of our most popular social initiatives has been the **Sunday Roast Group**, convened by Cate and held at various local hotels. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring members together for a relaxed Sunday meal — particularly for those who may otherwise not have plans, or live alone.

We also held a delightful **“Guess Who's Coming to Dinner”** evening, where guests were randomly assigned to one of three apartments for a catered dinner — a great way for members to mix and mingle.

## **Acknowledgements and Thanks**

As President, I see my role as steering the ship. However, the club would not run smoothly without the dedication, support and contributions of many members.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge and thank **all our convenors**. Without convenors, these activities simply would not happen. To our newer members, please don't be shy if you would like to convene an activity — new ideas are always very welcome.

We have enjoyed a great variety of speakers at our meetings, and I would like to thank **Tony Thomas** for organising these, as well as for his work in publicity and promoting our club. It was particularly enjoyable hearing presentations from our own members, including **Sue Hoile** speaking about walking the Camino Trail and **Susan Bower** sharing her experiences in television production.

Thank you to **Kerry, Cate, Denise and Heather Cameron** for organising the very successful **Games Day in July**, which replaced our usual meeting. Everyone who attended had a great deal of fun.

To the **Management Committee**, thank you for your hard work and support, and thank you to those continuing in your roles for 2026.

In particular, thank you to:

- **Mel Gray** for keeping our website current and interesting, and for serving as Secretary
- **Jill** for doing an outstanding job coordinating activities
- **Bill** for welcoming new members
- **Spike** for his role as Meeting Manager, ensuring our meetings run smoothly
- **Kerry** for taking minutes and assisting with PowerPoint presentations each month
- **Cheryl** for her work as Welfare Officer
- **Shane** in his role as Immediate Past President
- And finally, **Jules**, for all your work as Treasurer

Finally, I would like to thank those who have reached out to offer support throughout the year. Your encouragement and assistance have been greatly appreciated.

As I continue in the role of President for 2026, I would like to remind you that I am always available by telephone or email if you have any concerns, ideas, or feedback.

Now, let us take a few moments to look back at some of the fun and highlights we shared in 2025.

Thank you.