

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 4TH SEPTEMBER 2026

It was my privilege to be elected as President of this great Association in March, following in the footsteps of Carwyn Arnold, Rob Neary, Brian Gilmore and all those who have served before me.

I have had connections through Rotary with PAQ since 2006 but have never been part of the Management Committee, so taking on the role of President has been a steep learning curve. Thankfully I have had the valued assistance of our new Secretary Mary Helbig, and the other members elected to our Management Committee. Having my wife Margaret as Treasurer, PP Brian Gimore as Assistant Treasurer, and Mark Illingworth as Vice President and RLO Coordinator has been a big help.

Since PAQ was formed in 1992, there have been several changes in the support given to member clubs. In the early years there was more focus on social activities such as Bowls days, a Probus Choir, Annual Friendship Day Picnics and Group tours. PAQ also held an Annual President/Past President Lunch and an Annual Ecumenical Service.

PAQ had a printed version of the Qld Probian, mailed to all member clubs. In recent years, we needed to change from a printed version to a Digital Version, and then sadly last year needed to cease production of this as well. Thankfully our Webmaster, Rob Neary has been able to revise our PAQ Website and make this more user friendly for our member clubs. Clubs are now able to have news of their activities and photos displayed on our website, along with a range of documents in support of our member clubs.

Your new Management Committee is now focussing on how we can best support clubs, and changing this “Delegates Meeting” held each September to a “Delegates Day” to include other club members is part of our way forward.

We are working in close cooperation with PSPL to form new clubs, and this year have formed new clubs in Boonah and Narangba - and hope to form a new Samford District Probus Club next week. One big change has been that with a Club Constitution change; new clubs no longer need a Rotary Club to be the sponsor. Now we can also have PSPL, PAQ or another Probus Club as sponsor. We are finding that it is beneficial to have another Probus Club as the sponsor of a new Probus club and then provide guidance through their Management Committee members to the new Management Committee as mentors. This has worked well with Beaudesert Probus club sponsoring Boonah Probus Club, and Burpengary Probus club sponsoring Narangba Probus club. Arana Hills District

Probus Club is sponsoring and helping with the formation of the new Samford District Probus Club.

We have also been promoting more group tours and activities, and with support from Trade Travel have over 100 members going on a cruise to Vanuatu and New Caledonia in October as part of our 50 years celebration of Probus arriving in Australia. We also have two group tours to Marvelous Melbourne which will include the Neil Diamond – Magical Noise show.

Secretary Mary has initiated a PAQ-Talk as a regular means of imparting information to all Probus clubs in Qld, something that was lacking in the past. We do rely on Secretaries to share PAQ-Talk with their management personal, and sometimes also with all club members.

Mark Illingworth, and Mary Helbig, working with our RLO's have been conducting a series of ZOOM meetings as a means of better inclusion of member clubs, and contacting and supporting regional clubs.

Mark and Mary have also been working together to update many of our working documents and programs for secretaries and treasurers. We have also drafted an update of our constitution for approval by PSPL, which will better reflect how we can support our member clubs, and meet current legislation requirements.

We do value the support of our governing body Probus South Pacific Ltd, and we have been working closely with staff on promotion of celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of Probus arriving in Australia in 1976. Their new website is also friendlier and easier to access for support materials. Earlier this year, their Marketing Manager, Monika Prasad, joined with us to provide Information and Networking days at Belmont and North Lakes.

In conclusion, I feel that the real value of PAQ is the support we can give to our member clubs in Queensland, to help them to continue to provide the fun and friendship in retirement that is shared by their members, enriching their lives and providing a “Gateway to Living Long and Well”

Yours in Probus

Merv Richens

