

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

As you would be aware, all our activities are on hold. However, two did occur before the axe fell—the Old Codgers Music group, attended by 11 music lovers, and the Coffee Club attended by 18 coffee and tea drinkers.

## TOUR NEWS

The planned tour to Eyre Peninsula has been cancelled. The plan is to proceed with it as soon as practicable but in all likelihood this will not be until around this time next year. The tour to India is on hold—not yet cancelled but almost certainly will be.

The idea of short self-drive tours in support of bushfire and/or drought affected areas has not been developed. All tour planning will be placed on hold until the end of the COVID-19 crisis.



*Top Left: Outgoing President Ed Thurston inducts Michael Brinsden as new our President for 2020–21 at the AGM on 9 March 2020.*

*Top Right: The Epping and District Probus Club's Committee for 2020–21.*

*Bottom Right: The members at the St Patrick's Day lunch at Camden Valley Inn on 11 March 2020. It turned out to be our last outings function until the COVID-19 crisis is over.*

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## Epping and District Probus Club Inc.



President	Michael Brinsden	9868-4940
Secretary	Ross Beattie	9871-1838
Welfare Officer	Ray Palmer	9836-4516
Website: <a href="http://www4.tpg.com.au/users/keithrob">www4.tpg.com.au/users/keithrob</a>		
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Our Committee for 2020–21 is: Michael Brinsden (President), Position Vacant (Vice President), Ross Beattie (Secretary), Leo Hart (Treasurer), Ken Fletcher (Speakers), Michael Brinsden (Outings), Ray Finch (Other Activities), Wal Gallagher (Tours and Special Events), Ray Palmer (Welfare) and Ed Thurston (Immediate Past President). In addition, Godfrey Abel will assist the Treasurer, Keith Dixon will assist with Speakers and Russell Gough will assist with Outings.

## PRESIDENT'S MISSIVE

As your President for this year it is very disappointing for me to preside over the unfortunate truncation of all of our meetings and activities. Probus is for friendship, fellowship and fun and of course in the current social circumstances we cannot fulfil these aspirations.

At our Committee meeting earlier in March we really had no option but to postpone all activities for March and April. There will be a Committee meeting (or a telephone hook-up) in mid-April to review the situation but at this stage it is likely that we will have to postpone all of our activities again until the overall coronavirus situation improves.

In this difficult time for all of our Club members it is vitally important that we take all the precautions necessary to keep well and to continue to keep active at home as much as possible.

My best wishes to you all and I hope we can get through this period quickly and safely.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Given the current spread of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus and incidence of COVID-19 infections in NSW, and particularly in our area of Sydney, the Club's Management Committee met on Tuesday, 17 March 2020 and resolved that all currently scheduled Club activities are POSTPONED (or cancelled if that is not practicable) until further notice, with immediate effect. Therefore, any activities undertaken privately by members will not be covered by Probus Insurance.

As currently scheduled, there will be NO GENERAL MEETING in APRIL or MAY. The situation will be reviewed by the Committee regularly and a Committee meeting is scheduled for mid-April. The Committee values the benefits of our social activities and it is intended that they be resumed as soon as possible.

It encourages members to consider their own health, and the health of others they meet with, by observing the guidelines of our health authorities ([www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) and <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>).

## MARCH MEETING

Dilini Manthilaka was our guest speaker last month, when her topic was "Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)". The macula is the central part of the retina, the light sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. The retina processes all visual images. You are reading this Newsletter using your macula. Visual images are transmitted to the brain via the lens → retina → optic nerve → brain. The macula is about 4 mm in depth. Dilini gave a power point presentation showing the structure of the eye and how it is made up of blood cells.

The degeneration of the macula causes progressive macular damage resulting in the loss of central vision but the peripheral vision is not affected. In comparison to other eye problems, 50 per cent of the population will have some form of AMD, 16 per cent will suffer from glaucoma, 11 per cent from cataract lens issues and 20 per cent from miscellaneous eye problems. Over the age of 50, 1/7 of the population are diagnosed with AMD and 1/3 over the age of 80.

Eighty-five percent are diagnosed with MD in its early or intermediate stages of development, while 15 per cent are not diagnosed until the late state. There are two types of MD, the dry or atrophic and wet or neo-vascular. The former results in a gradual loss of central vision, while the latter is characterised by a sudden loss of vision and is caused by abnormal blood

vessels growing under the retina. Cells die without blood supply but if the supply is too much it causes atrophy. Early detection is vital. In its early stages MD may not be noticed but it can be detected in an eye test.

The key symptoms are difficulty with reading or any other activity requiring fine vision; distortion where straight lines appear wavy or bent; distinguishing faces becomes a problem and dark patches or empty spaces appear in the centre of one's vision. A need for increased illumination, a sensitivity to glare, decreased night vision and poor colour sensitivity may indicate an eye problem and needs professional advice.

Dilini spoke about "Drusen". It comes from the German word "node" or "geode" and comprises small yellow deposits of fatty proteins (lipids) that accumulate under the retina (a waste product). It occurs naturally with age. The relationship between Drusen and macular degeneration is unclear but having soft Drusen is a sign of macular degeneration.

Dilini then covered the risk factors—age, genetic, health style and eating for the eye. She distributed an entire pamphlet on nutrition and supplements for macular degeneration. Also included in the distribution package was an Amsler Grid. It is used at home to regularly test for changes in vision and symptoms of MD. However, it should be relied upon for diagnosis.

The treatments available for macular degeneration depend on the stage and type of the disease. Current treatments for the wet form have been shown to be highly effective in saving sight. However, early detection, diagnosis and timely treatment are critical.

The Macular Degeneration Foundation Australia (MDFA) is involved in education, awareness, client services, advocacy and research. Its phone number is 1800-111-709 and its website is [www.mdfoundation.com.au](http://www.mdfoundation.com.au).

We very sincerely thank Dilini for coming and enlightening us on how our eyes are structured and in particular how vitally important is the macular.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that their subscriptions for 2020 are now due. As agreed at the March 2020 Annual General Meeting, the Club's Annual Membership Subscriptions remain at \$40.00. Members are asked to kindly pay their subscriptions by April either by Direct Deposit to our Epping and District Probus Club, which can be made electronically in the following manner: Bank – Westpac; BSB – 032 287; Account No. – 154993; with a short description stating YOUR NAME and the event or reason for payment [e.g., DUES Your Name (no hyphen, slashes, etc.)] or by cheque payable to "Epping and District Probus Club" and posted to: Epping and District Probus Club, P.O. Box 855, Epping, NSW, 1710. Please ensure your name is written on the back of the cheque.

