

**WELCOME** – Our November branch meeting provided some great fun with members enjoying some Melbourne Cup related activities with winners from the fashion field as well as our improvised race field! Congratulations to everyone who won a prize. Our guest speaker, Ross Nicholls from the Mission to Seafarers Brisbane, added a little French flair as he sported a beret during his presentation. He was extremely grateful for all the beanies and scarves that everyone has been knitting as well for the cash donation to the Mission. Several members enjoyed the visit to the Anzac Square Memorial Galleries in November which will be something we will arrange again next year. Our sincere thanks to everyone who provided items for Care Kits For Kids again this month, and throughout the year – your donations are always greatly appreciated by this organisation.

*If we don't have the opportunity of seeing you at one of the last activities for the year, we would like to wish you and your families and friends a very happy Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year. We look forward to meeting up again next year.*

## BRANCH MEETINGS

Our monthly branch meetings will recommence on **Thursday 8 February** at the Coorparoo RSL Club. Arrival will be at 10:00am for a 10:30am start with guest speaker, updates on branch and national activities, raffles, and refreshments. The cost will be \$7.00 cash per person payable at the door.

The dates for 2024 are:

8 February	14 March
18 April	9 May
13 June	11 July
8 August (AGM)	12 September
10 October	14 November

If you are new to the branch and wish to park at Coles opposite the RSL please remember to advise your number plate to Pat Will on 3398 8726 at least 48 hours prior so she can pass this information on to the parking organisation. If Pat already has your number plate listed, you don't need to advise her again.

## DECEMBER & JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Best wishes to the following members who celebrate birthdays in December and January. We hope you enjoy your special day with family and friends.

December	January
Lorraine Field	Rosslyn Dallaghy
Libby Scheinpflug	Joan Hedger
Freya Tienan	Joan Jell
Gwendolyn Ungerer	

## DAY BUS TRIP TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Seats are still available if you wish to join members and guests for our last day bus trip for 2023 on **Monday 4 December**. We will be visiting Buderim on the Sunshine Coast, stopping for morning tea on the way, and visiting the Buderim Pioneer Cottage which is one of the oldest surviving residences in Buderim, before enjoying a two-course lunch at the Buderim Tavern. The coach will depart the Coorparoo RSL

Club at 8:00am and return at approximately 4:30pm. Cost is \$65 per person which includes the coach tour, morning tea, Pioneer Cottage visit and lunch.

Our Christmas raffle will be drawn during the lunch, so all members are encouraged to donate one or two gifts, wrapped in Christmas paper, that can be used as prizes during the raffle to raise funds for our branch charities.

All enquiries and bookings can be made with Pat Will on 3398 8726 or 0437 774 049. Please advise dietary requirements at the time of booking. Payment can be made by cash or direct deposit to the NSA Coorparoo bank account BSB 084 391; account 047949379. If using this payment method, please ensure you list your name against the payment.

## BRANCH CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Places are still available if you wish to join members and guests to celebrate the Christmas season with a two-course lunch at the Coorparoo RSL Club from **12:00pm on Thursday 14 December**. Cost will be \$30.00 per person. Guests are very welcome, and payment can be made on the day.

If you wish to attend, please advise Freya Tienan on nsacoorparoopres@ozemail.com.au or 0409 397 330 by 8 December.

## MORNING TEA CATCH-UP

Our last morning tea catch up at Easts Leagues Club will be at 10:00am on Monday 20 November and recommence in 2024 on Monday 15 January. This is a great informal way to get to know fellow members outside the confines of a branch meeting.

The dates for 2024 are:

15 January	19 February
18 March	22 April
20 May	17 June
15 July	19 August
16 September	21 October
18 November	

## MISSION TO SEAFARERS BRISBANE

Our thanks go to all members who have been knitting beanies and scarves throughout the year. These items, along with a cheque for \$250, were donated to Capt Ross Nicholls during his presentation at the November branch meeting.

## DENDY CINEMAS COORPAROO

Thanks to our friends at Dendy Cinemas Coorparoo for providing complimentary tickets for use as raffle prizes. Look out for these movies coming soon:

NAPOLEON (action); TROLLS (animation); CHRISTMESS (comedy); THE OLD OAK (drama); LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND (drama); ANDRE RIEU'S WHITE CHRISTMAS (music – 2&3 December only); THE JUNGLE BUNCH WORLD TOUR (animation); UPROAR (drama); DICKS; THE MUSICAL (comedy); MASTER GARDENER (drama); MAESTRO (drama)

*If you love movies, why not join the Club! Become a member of Club Dendy to receive discounted tickets and candy bar items, exclusive offers, birthday rewards and much more. Visit Dendy Cinemas Coorparoo or online at [dendy.com.au](http://dendy.com.au) for more details.*

## A NEW VERSION OF A POPULAR CHRISTMAS SONG

### I SAW ELVIS DRESSED AS SANTA CLAUS

Oh, I saw Elvis dressed as Santa Claus  
In my hometown shopping mall last night.  
I knew it must be him, Santa is very slim.  
And his sideburns were much darker than the  
whiskers on his chin.

Oh, I saw Elvis dressed as Santa Claus  
Hiding underneath a beard of snowy white.  
Then I saw his whiskers slip, when he curled his lip.  
Elvis dressed as Santa Claus last night.

*And did you ever wonder why it is they call his  
helpers Elves?*

Oh, I saw Elvis dressed as Santa Claus  
Hiding underneath a beard of snow white.  
You can imagine my surprise when I saw through his  
disguise.  
Elvis dressed as Santa Claus last night.

Well, I saw Elvis dressed as Santa Claus  
In my hometown shopping mall last night.  
He was sitting in Santa's chair; little sister pulling on  
his hair.  
And I heard him say "Now don't be cruel, you'll get a  
teddy bear."  
Oh, I saw Elvis dressed as Santa Claus  
Hiding underneath that beard of snowy white.

Then I saw his whiskers slip, when he curled his lip.  
Elvis dressed as Santa Claus last night.

Well, it makes me want to sing  
Blue Christmas like the King.  
Elvis dressed as Santa Claus last night.



## NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION PLACES GREATER EMPHASIS ON GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

After almost seven years of advocating for the rights of older Australians, Mr Ian Henschke has left National Seniors Australia (NSA) and his role as Chief Advocate. Our sincere thanks and best wishes go to Ian for his future activities.

Ian joined NSA as Chief Advocate in 2017. During this time, he has championed our NSA advocacy work, elevated our profile, and together with the support of credible research and sound policies, positioned NSA as a leader in age-related advocacy.

Thanks to the collective efforts of the Advocacy, Policy, and Research teams, National Seniors has achieved positive outcomes for older Australians including:

- Retaining the energy supplement for new Age Pension recipients.
- Opposing the proposal to scrap franking credit cash refunds.
- Securing a regulated price for electricity together with basic consumer protections.
- Reducing the Pension Loans Scheme rate (now Home Equity Access Scheme) to 3.95% and making it available to everyone of pension age.
- Retaining the pension age at 67 instead of the proposed 70.
- Reducing deeming rates for pensioners and other payment recipients.
- Campaigning government to reduce the home care wait list by 25% in 12 months by releasing tens of thousands of home care packages.

- Increasing the income test threshold for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card to give more self-funded retirees access to concessions.

Recently the team has been advocating to reduce the barriers to older workforce participation. In September, the government announced a permanent increase to the Work Bonus limit from \$7,800 to \$11,800 providing more money in the pockets of working pensioners.

NSA will maintain its media profile while also pursuing a new strategic direction that has a greater emphasis on government relations – this is where they will more firmly focus their energy moving forward. To support this, the board is recruiting a Chief Executive Officer.

Importantly, the experienced Research and Policy teams, who supported Ian in his role, will support the CEO in their role while they continue to do what they do best – learning about your needs and developing an advocacy agenda to ensure these needs are met.

While the search for NSA's CEO is underway, Chief Operating Officer, Chris Grice, will act as media spokesperson.

Of course, NSA's work and successes wouldn't be possible without the members who provide feedback and insights and give the weight and credibility to their work – thank you for your ongoing support.

## HOW TO MINIMISE MEDICAL MISTAKES

Misdiagnosis can have fatal consequences – and one possible solution is for doctors and patients to go back to basics.

It's one of the great benefits of living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: knowing that, if you feel unwell, you can go to a health professional, have an accurate diagnosis, and be treated for your illness. Generally, we can rely on those professionals and be confident that modern health systems will deliver accurate diagnostic outcomes and support.

However, a study by Johns Hopkins University in the United States has cast doubt on that. It found that across all clinical settings, including hospitals, an estimated 795,000 Americans die or are permanently disabled each year due to diagnostic error. The number of "serious harms" due to misdiagnosis is even more disturbing. Lead investigator David Newman-Toker says they could total 4 million per year. Vascular events, infections, and cancers – dubbed the Big Three – account for 75% of the serious harms. The study found that 15 diseases account for 50.7% of the total serious harms.

Five conditions account for 38.7% of total serious harms: stroke, sepsis, pneumonia, venous thromboembolism, and lung cancer. The overall average error rate across diseases was estimated at 11.1%, but the rate ranges widely from 1.5% for heart attacks to 62% for spinal abscesses. Strokes were missed in 17.5% of cases.

**The Australian Experience** – Dr Norman Swan, who hosts *The Health Report* on ABC Radio, says Australian research on injuries in healthcare shows similar results to the United States, pro rata. However, in many cases, the patient is blamed because they've stayed at home suffering symptoms for a long time before presenting them to a doctor. "Can we blame patients for this?" Dr Swan asks.

Dr Newman-Toker agrees that a contributing factor is the gap between the time that a patient first experiences some kind of medical symptom, to the time they seek care. "Data from the UK, for example, shows that the patient interval is a significant contributor to diagnostic delay in cancer cases," he says.

**Solutions** – Dr Newman-Toker says solutions deployed at Johns Hopkins to address missed strokes include:

- Virtual patient simulators to improve front-line clinician skills in stroke diagnosis.
- Portable eye movement recordings via video goggles and mobile phones to enable specialists to remotely assist front-line clinicians in diagnosing strokes.
- Computer-based algorithms to automate aspects of the diagnostic process.
- Diagnostic excellence dashboards to measure performance and provide feedback on quality improvement.

The researchers believe a major issue in misdiagnosis occurs during the doctor-patient consultation. Something as simple as training doctors to listen more closely to what patients tell them could make a difference.

Dr Newman-Toker says doctors need to get back to better bedside diagnosis. "That interaction – the act of taking histories and physical exams, some of which has become sort of a lost art in the technological progress that we've seen over the years – is something that we really need to restore. And we've seen that when we do this for problems like stroke manifesting as dizziness, for example, that we can actually significantly reduce the misdiagnosis rates." (Source: Johns Hopkins)

## WHY GARDENING SHOULD BE EMBRACED IN OUR OLDER YEARS

Gardening is a delightful journey that can bring immense joy and a sense of fulfillment, especially for older adults. Whether you have a vast backyard or a cozy balcony, nurturing a garden can be a wonderful way to connect with nature, reminisce about fond memories, and create new ones.

First and foremost, find a sunny spot in your garden or balcony where you can feel the warmth of the sun on your face. It's a perfect place to sit back and relax while witnessing the miracle of growth unfolding before your eyes. Gardening not only helps beautify your surroundings but also allows you to relish the simple pleasures of life.

Preparing the soil is like reminiscing about the good old days. Clear away any debris, just as you clear away any worries from your mind. Amending the soil with compost is akin to adding the richness of experience and wisdom to your life's journey, making everything more fertile and vibrant. Choosing the right plants can be like picking old friends to join you on this gardening adventure. Opt for familiar and easy-to-grow varieties like tomatoes, sunflowers, or roses. These plants may evoke cherished memories and add a sense of familiarity to your gardening experience.

Remember to water your plants with care, just like tending to your loved ones. Like giving a gentle hug, watering your plants regularly and appropriately will help them thrive and flourish. Take the time to talk to your plants as well; they love the sound of your voice just as much as you enjoy their company.

Timing is crucial in both life and gardening. Learning about the growing seasons and the best time to plant can be like reminiscing about the seasons of your own life. Embrace the wisdom of knowing when to start new chapters and when to allow things to naturally come to an end.

In your garden, look out for unwelcome visitors like pests, just as you would for any challenges in life. Be patient and find eco-friendly ways to address these pesky intruders, just like finding creative solutions to life's obstacles. Pruning and deadheading your plants is like decluttering your living space. Removing unnecessary burdens from your plants allows them to grow and blossom freely, much like how letting go of unnecessary worries and material possessions can lighten your heart and soul.

Gardening is not about perfection; it's about embracing imperfections and finding beauty in every stage of life. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, just as

you would have learned from past experiences. Every step of the gardening journey is an opportunity to learn and grow.

Lastly, gardening is also an excellent opportunity for bonding with loved ones. Share your gardening wisdom and experiences with family and friends. Invite grandchildren over to join you in the garden; their innocent wonder and laughter will bring an extra dose of joy to your gardening days. Gardening for older adults is more than just planting flowers and vegetables; it's a journey of heartfelt connections with nature, memories, and loved ones. Embrace the simplicity of gardening, and let it become a source of peace, happiness, and new adventures in this wonderful chapter of life. Happy gardening! *(This article was first published by 60plusclub.com.au)*

## DIABETES: A CONDITION IMPACTING HEARING HEALTH

As we age, it's not uncommon to experience changes in our health, but did you know there may be a connection between hearing loss and diabetes? A 2009 Blue Mountains study revealed people with diabetes are two times more likely to have hearing loss than those living without the condition.

While it's not known exactly why hearing loss is more common among people with diabetes, it is suggested that nerve damage caused by diabetes may affect the hearing nerves in the inner ear. Researchers also believe the prolonged high blood glucose levels may lead to hearing loss by affecting the supply of blood or oxygen to the tiny nerves and blood vessels of the inner ear.

Over time, the nerves and blood vessels become damaged, affecting the person's ability to hear. As a result, individuals with diabetes are two times more likely to have hearing loss than those living without the condition (Type I and Type II). Further studies demonstrate people who have blood sugar levels higher than normal (pre-diabetics) have a higher rate of hearing loss compared to those with normal blood sugar levels.

**The impact of untreated hearing loss** – Untreated hearing loss may have a range of negative consequences on an individual's life and can lead to safety concerns, putting them at higher risk of falls for example. It can also impact you in various forms such as:

- You may feel left out of conversation.
- Your social life may be impacted.
- You may feel frustrated, lonely, anxious, and isolated.
- You may experience increased fatigue.

Increased risks of other serious comorbidities, such as accelerated cognitive decline, have also been associated with hearing loss. In fact, some researchers found that older adults with hearing loss had a 24% higher risk of cognitive decline than those whose hearing was within normal limits.

**What can you do?** - If you are living with diabetes or have any hearing concerns, book a hearing check with a reputable hearing company to ensure you receive early diagnosis of any hearing loss and receive appropriate care.

## ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR CARER FINANCIAL SUPPORT?

Did you know that people who give constant care to someone with a disability or a medical condition, or an adult who is frail aged, could be eligible for a government payment? Two types of income support payment are available to carers: Carer Payment and Carer Allowance.

**Carer Payment** – This is for people who give constant care to someone with disability, a medical condition, or an adult who is frail aged. Constant care means you provide care for a large amount of time daily, roughly equating to a normal working day. If this care stops you from working full time, this payment could be for you.

The Carer Payment is a replacement source of income, while the Carer Allowance is a fortnightly supplement to your normal income. You need to have been caring for six months.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, 304,500 Australians were receiving the payment on 31 March 2023. Of these, more than one in four (28%) recipients were aged 55 to 64, with 60,800 recipients aged 65 and over. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, these numbers have risen in recent years in line with increases to the qualifying age for the Age Pension.

You can start your claim at any time, you don't need to wait six months. This payment, paid fortnightly, is also for those people caring for someone at the end of their life. Assets and income tests apply as part of the payment eligibility. Services Australia advises that the amount of Carer Payment you can get depends on your personal circumstances. This includes any income you or your partner get from employment. Carer Payment is taxable if you or the person you care for are Age Pension age.

If you are eligible for the Age Pension, you will need to choose between receiving the Carer Payment or the Age Pension.

**Carer Allowance** - is a supplementary payment for those who care for someone who needs daily support. To be eligible, the person you care for has a terminal medical condition or needs ongoing daily assistance for at least 12 months. To get this payment, you, and the person you care for, will need to meet some conditions for eligibility.

If you are working or studying full time, you can claim Carer Allowance in addition to any other income support payments, such as the Disability Support Pension, Youth Allowance for Students and Australian Apprentices, and Parenting Payment.

The payment rates for the Carer Allowance are reviewed on 1 January each year. For 2023, the allowance is \$144.80 each fortnight if you are providing care to someone aged 16 or older. There is no assets test for the Carer Allowance, but there is an income test. To be eligible, you and your partner's combined adjusted taxable income must be under \$250,000 a year.

**Annual and One-Off Payments** – if you get a Carer Payment, Carer Allowance, or both, you may also be eligible for other payments.

- Carer Supplement is an annual payment. It helps cover costs when caring for someone with disability or a medical condition. You'll get this automatically if you're getting an eligible carer payment for a period that includes 1 July.

Additional payments if you care for a child:

- Child Disability Assistance Payment is an annual payment if you get Carer Allowance. You'll get this automatically if you get Carer Allowance for a period that includes 1 July and provide care for a child with disability or a severe medical condition.
- Carer Adjustment Payment is a one-off payment for carers of a child younger than seven years. It helps families with a child diagnosed with a severe medical condition or disability following a catastrophic event. You'll need to show a strong need for financial help when you claim this payment. (Source: Services Australia)

## WELLBEING OFFICER

If you are, or know of any member who is ill, injured, or in need of help please notify Jan Jackson on 0411 987 174 so that we can give our support where needed.

## BRANCH CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries please contact our Secretary, Graham Tienan, on mobile 0407 736 453 or email [nsacoorparoossec@gmail.com](mailto:nsacoorparoossec@gmail.com). Do remember to update any changes to your details. Emergency contacts need to be current.

## RECIPIE OF THE MONTH CHRISTMAS FRUITCAKE

### Ingredients:

1 cup water	1 cup sugar
4 large eggs	2lb flour
2 cup dried fruit	1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt	1 cup brown sugar
Lemon juice	Nuts
1 very large bottle of whiskey	

### Method:

- Sample the whiskey to check for quality.
- Sample the whiskey again to be sure it really is high quality.
- Take a large bowl. Check the whiskey again, to be absolutely sure it is of the highest quality, pour one level cup of it and drink. Repeat. Turn on the metric elixir, beat one cup and add some butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add one teaspoon of sugar and beat the mess again.
- Make sure the whispey is still okay. Cry another tup. Turn off the mixer. Break two bowls and add to the egg then chuck in the cup of fried druit. Throw in the flour. Mix on the turner. If the fried druit gets stuck in the beaterers pry it loose with a drowscriver. Sip some more whiskey before adding to the mood fixer!!
- Add the baking sofa, you sure could do with a lie down now!! Where's the wottle of biskey gone? Stir in the soda if you can find the mixing cup and that wooden spoon thingy.
- Now sample the whiskey again to check for tonsilsisity. Next, sift two cups of salt, or something like that. Who cares? Check the whispy. Now shift the lemon juice and strain your nuts. Add another tablespoon of sugar or whatever you can find. Add some of the whipsy if there's any left.
- Grease the oven, turn the cake tin to 850 degrees. Don't forget to beat off the turner. Throw the bowl out of the window, check the whiksy, whipsisky, cup another try, try again, have another drinky, where's that oven? And go to bed...or have a snooze, what the heck!!

Yum Yum! Zzzz! Zzzzzz!!!!

## SMILE

Q: What did the bald man say when he got a comb for Christmas?

A: "I'll never part with it!"

Q: What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?

A: *It's Christmas, Eve!*

Q: What is a vegan's favourite Christmas carol?

A: *Soy to the World.*

Q: What happened to the man who stole an Advent Calendar?

A: *He got 25 days!*

Q: What is every parent's favourite Christmas song?

A: *Silent Night!*

Q: How do sheep say Merry Christmas to each other?

A: *Fleece Navidad.*

Q: What did the wise men say after they offered up their gifts of gold and frankincense?

A: *Wait, there's myrrh.*

Q: What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

A: *Frostbite.*

Q: What is it called when a snowman has a temper tantrum?

A: *A meltdown.*

Q: What's the absolute best Christmas present?

A: *A broken drum – you can't beat it!*

Q: Who is never hungry at Christmas?

A: *The turkey – he's always stuffed.*

Q: What goes "oh, oh, oh"?

A: *Santa walking backwards.*

