



# INSIGHT

To include articles in this newsletter please contact the Editor at:  
**u3abunbury@gmail.com**, or Phone: **0490 449 737**  
U3A Bunbury Inc: PO Box 1909, Bunbury. WA. 6231



## Enlightenment

U3A Bunbury Inc.

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## NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE, BUNBURY. W.A.

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*"Patriotism and feeling proud of Australia is not what One Nation put it as, right? I've represented Australia at the Olympics. I've carried the Australian flag in an Olympic ceremony. I am absolutely patriotic. And you know, there are many Australians when you go to citizenship ceremonies, right? It's a multi-faith, multicultural Australia that is the most patriotic of all. So, I just want to be really careful when One Nation talks of patriotism. It's only their kind of patriotism that they recognise."*

**Independent Federal MP Zali Steggall, speaking on ABC radio.**

***To stop Australian democracy going the way of the US, here's what we need to do.....***

Around the world, democracy as a system of government is backsliding. After more than 50 years of liberal democracy in ascendancy, democratic progress plateaued around the turn of the century and is now going backwards. In 2025, there were only 31 liberal democracies out of 179 countries. And the United States – once the poster-child for democracy – was downgraded from “liberal democracy” to “electoral democracy” because of declining checks and balances on power, freedom of expression and civil rights and equality before the law. Australia is one of the few remaining liberal democracies, and a leading one at that. But we are not immune to anti-democratic forces or the fraying international rules-based order.

A new Grattan Institute report, "**For the people: Future-proofing Australia's democracy**", identifies the main vulnerabilities for Australia's democracy and opportunities to build a better, more resilient democratic system. Australia comes from a place of strength. We are one of the world's leading democracies, consistently ranking highly on international measures of democratic health, as well as on a suite of economic and social measures – including life expectancy, human development, employment, and GDP (gross domestic product) per capita.

This is no coincidence. Our democracy underpins our prosperity and safeguards our rights and freedoms. International evidence shows democracy supports peace and economic growth, while delivering longer lives and more education. Social trust matters too. Countries with higher interpersonal trust – like Australia – tend to have higher economic growth and lower income inequality, which in turn support democratic resilience. But the world order in which Australia has flourished is now being seriously tested. These are more turbulent times not just for our economy or standard of living, but for liberal democracies themselves. Fuel for discontent is building - our report takes stock of Australia's greatest asset: the health of our democracy. The good news is that Australians' support for democracy has been consistently strong – even growing over time. Only a small share of the population is discontent or disengaged with the system, and the data do not suggest either have been spreading. The bad news is that our social compact is under pressure. This is showing up in growing economic pessimism, worry for future generations, concern about unfairness, declining sense of belonging and low trust in political actors.

While support for democracy remains high in Australia, satisfaction with how our democracy actually works is more fragile. Satisfaction with democracy is typically lower among groups who are less well served by the status quo. Most obviously, our institutions have persistently failed First Nations Australians, and don't fully support new migrants. Lower-income Australians and those with financial concerns tend to report lower trust and satisfaction with democracy. Renters are less satisfied than homeowners, and people in regional areas tend to be less satisfied than people in cities. Migrants are an interesting exception here. Migrants (except for those from the UK) are typically more satisfied than people born in Australia with the way democracy works here, despite the disadvantages they often face living here. This may, at least in part, be due to direct experience with other systems. Everyone needs confidence that the system can work for them, even if it doesn't always. Groups who persistently lack security, opportunity, or solidarity under the current system cannot reasonably be expected to trust or defend it. Where there is fuel for discontent, there is increasing risk that global challenges could spark a blaze. Three inter-related global risks are particularly testing for democracies. **First**, the decline in traditional news media and the rise of online and social news sources are fragmenting our fact base, and making misinformation and extreme views more salient in people's daily lives. **Second**, global political tensions and the rise of anti-democratic forces overseas are testing Australia's social cohesion at home. And **Third**, the heightened probability of economic, social, and environmental shocks increases the challenges democratic governments face to deliver better outcomes for their people.



These are risks – not eventualities. The resilience of our democracy is in its capacity to recognise challenges and collectively respond. And 5 ways forward - Our research and consultation identified five priorities for Australia to build a better and more resilient democracy:

- 1. Make the most of our parliament** - Our elected federal parliament sits at the centre of Australia's democracy. An independent review should consider how to make it more representative and better functioning – to rebuild trust in politics, improve administration of government and enable better long-term decision-making.
- 2. Nurture belonging and engagement** - We need more ways to have a say and be heard and clearer pathways to citizenship. Our public sector leaders should also be actively stitching public engagement into the fabric of our existing institutions.
- 3. Protect our public sphere** - A healthier public sphere requires ensuring the sustainability of our news media and investing in institutions that produce trusted information. We should also experiment with responses to misinformation, to work out which approaches are effective at scale
- 4. Tackle the known policy challenges** - In a democracy, process matters, but so do outcomes. Australians need confidence that our system of government can work for them and build something better than the status quo.
- 5. Prepare for the future** - Crises are the moments that build trust, or lose it, and the future will almost certainly be more volatile. Governments can prepare by reducing our vulnerability to known risks, building fiscal buffers and calibrating expectations about what governments can reasonably do to cushion the blow.

**Governments can and should lead on this. But we mustn't forget that in a democracy, we govern ourselves. This is a task for all of us**

*Kate Griffiths, Democracy Deputy Program Director, Grattan Institute; Aruna Sathanapally, Chief Executive, Grattan Institute and Matthew Bowes, Senior Associate, Economic Prosperity and Democracy, Grattan Institute*

*This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article "<https://theconversation.com/to-stop-australian-democracy-going-the-way-of-the-us-heres-what-we-need-to-do-280353>".*



## Jean Lishman, Riding for the Disabled, 27th March, 2026.

To quote Winston Churchill,

***“There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man”***

At the Helsinki games, in 1952, Lis Hartel, a Danish rider, won a silver medal despite being paralysed from the knees down from polio. She was such an inspiration that across Europe, in 1964, a loose organisation was formed called the Advisory Council on Riding for the Disabled and by 1966 UK was represented by 23 groups. In 1969 the formation of the Riding for the Disabled Association happened and it's now all over the world.

The philosophy of using horses for people with disabilities has been around for a long time, with the Greeks using horses in the rehabilitation of soldiers returning from wars. In recent years Therapeutic Riding is also used for laughter and companionship, with caring for wounded personnel being used after world wars.

In Australia, 1964, the McIntyre family from Kenmore in Queensland, had a disabled daughter and they established classes which included her. The organisation was established in WA in 1973, and in 1979 a National Association for the Riding for the Disabled was formed. In 1984 Princess Anne was asked to be the patron, and continues that role today.



The Southwest Equestrian Park in Capel, was purchased for the club to use. The Brunswick Lions donate hay bales for the horse feed. Boyanup Lions help weekly. The club were approached by the Tenth Light Horse Brigade to see if they could help with funding. There has been a Meelup garden party, which raised funds, but they also survive on donations and the occasional Lotterywest grant. The club managed to purchase the land with lots of support.

In the Therapy side of things there are five different sections:

- Therapy riding - giving access to people with disabilities the enjoyment of horse riding.
- Vaulting riding - a fun and engaging way for individuals to experience the outdoors.
- Carriage riding - specially adapted to cater for wheelchairs if necessary.
- Dressage riding - individuals can be encouraged to participate in competitions.
- Hippotherapy riding - “Hippos” means horse in Greek - Literally means “treatment with the help of the horse”. Hippotherapy is a treatment strategy that utilises equine movement to improve neurological and sensory function in an individual with a disability

Sharon Jarvis is an Australian para-equestrian. She represented Australia at 3 Summer Paralympics - 2008 Beijing, 2016 Rio and 2020 Tokyo. She now lives in Donnybrook, running a pony stud. An current example of assisted therapy:- returned soldiers with P.T.S.D. are allocated a horse to look after. Horses are most generous with their “compassion”. The programme at R.D.A.S.W. has also been trialed for people suffering from anorexia.

Only qualified national accredited coaches can supervise the hypnotherapy riding. Jean was a qualified coach before she retired.

Horse riding can help with the physical benefits of

- \* improved balance and muscles.
- \* Stretching tight or spastic muscles.
- \* Improving coordination, faster reflexes and better motor planning.
- \* Improved respiration, circulation, appetite and digestion.
- \* posture control.



**Carriage riding** consists of a four-member team for the carriage:- a horse handler, therapist, and two side walkers. The therapist has accreditation at level one. The coach is present at all times. The horse is chosen with care, usually assessed by the coach. They are 14-15 hands high, eight years and older, either donated, bought, or loaned. The children are very fond of the horses.

Clients at the Riding for the Disabled South West are any child three years upwards, neuro-diverse, or they're referred by their doctor. Some are transferred for therapy. Cerebral palsy is the most common neurodiverse, but there are many different kinds and different kinds of palsy. Some of them have continuous movement, which could scare the horses. Some clients are unacceptable, those with spinal rods, mental health problems, and severe spina bifida. They also have children with developmental mental delays, sometimes this is from parents who have been using drugs. They've had two to three year olds with developmental delays, assessed by individual Physiotherapists.

There was a study the group was involved in. Four children were in one group and four were in the hypnotherapy group. One in the normal group remained the same; three out of four in the hypnotherapy group improved.



The SW group were lucky to have a visit from an inspirational person, Philippa Verry. Phillipa is a thalidomide child from the UK, although now an adult, and has never seen herself as being disabled. Organisers who were setting things up for her had questions about how they were going to feed her, but she ended up eating, while sitting on the floor, with her feet! When riding her reins are used with her feet, and they are tied to the stirrups, and she controlled her horse with just the movement of her legs. She was asked what she would like to do while she was still in Western Australia and back in Perth, and she said she would like to sail on the Swan, which she did, but Jean thinks she probably meant she would have liked to sail the boat herself!

<https://thalidomidetrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Phillippa-Verry-with-Stilton-Permission-receieved-01.02.22-768x512.jpg>

The group had a child who was blind and non-verbal, but they laid him on a sheepskin. When the sunshine came through the trees, Jean saw his eyes move. He was put into the carriage and when the horse stumbled, the team sang the song "The Old Grey Mare Ain't What She Used To Be", and he smiled. Another client was an Aboriginal child who was non-verbal, but one day at the centre after some interaction with horses, he spoke in his native language. These moments are very special to all the volunteers.

They have motor vehicle accident people who have lost limbs below the knee, and some of them have ended up riding in competitions. If they have hip problems, they manage to do carriage driving.

There have been difficult years at the South West Group - Covid, NDIS, and for three years the Cable Shire has not allowed the group to do any improvements to the place, saying they're selling the Crown land. They have been going backwards and forwards with petitions, lawyers and meetings. The group put in a submission why they needed to be there. They are now allowed to use the land and buildings, but the developer, next door, wants road access, so the story continues.

Thank you Jean for a very informative talk.

*If you would like to help the group out with a donation, please visit their website: <https://www.rdaasw.org.au/>.*

*You can also donate by using their code for your 10c bottles.*



PLEASE DONATE YOUR CHANGE

Scheme Id:

**C10283307**

THANK YOU!

Here is a lovely poem given to me by Jean Lishman after her talk on Riding for the Disabled.

## THE HORSE

Where in this wild world can man find friendship without envy,  
Beauty without vanity, or pride without nobility?

Here, where grace is laced with muscle and strength with gentleness confined.

He has served with servility,  
He has fought without enmity.

There is nothing so powerful, nothing less violent.  
There is nothing so quick, nothing more patient.

Australia's past has been born on his back.  
All our history is his industry.  
We are his heirs, he is our inheritance.



### Just for Fun!!

What do you call a dog magician?  
A Labracadabrador!

Why did the Stadium get hot?  
All the fans left!!



Why did the man put his money in the freezer?  
He wanted cold hard cash!

What do you call a can opener that doesn't work?  
A Can't Opener!!



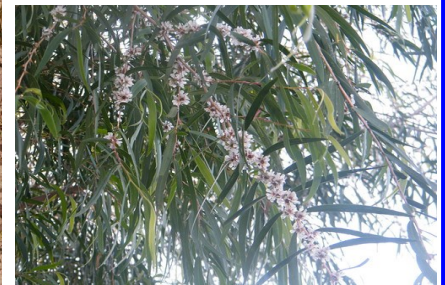
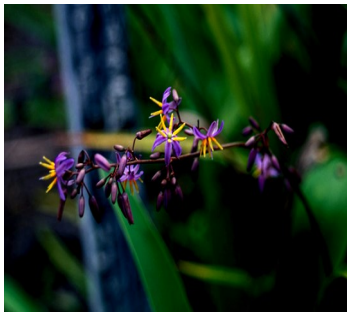
We are now entering the Noongar season of **Makuru**, represented by dark blue symbolising rain and cold weather, but also the fertility season - June to July. Traditionally, this was the time to move inland away from the coastal winds, as we can all attest to over the weekend!!

In the Makuru season, as waterways and catchments fill, people move around more freely on land. During this time, food sources shift from the sea and lakes to land animals like **Yongars** (kangaroos). These animals offer not just food but also materials like skins for warmth and bones and sinews for making tools. Makuru is indeed a season when many animals start pairing up in preparation for breeding. This period helps ensure that young are born at a time when conditions are more favourable for their survival.



You might spot pairs of **Wardongs**, (ravens), flying together. And down by the lakes and rivers in the South West, you'll see a surge of **Mali's**, (black swans) also getting ready to nest and breed.

You'll find the landscape dotted with flowers in blues and purples—from Blue-Berried Lilies to Purple Flags—and as the season winds down, you'll notice the white blooms of the Weeping Peppermint starting to appear.



A 65 year old woman had a heart attack.

While on the operating table she had a near death experience.

Seeing God she asked, "Is my time up?"

He said, "No, you have another 33 years, 2 months and 8 days to go!"

Upon recovery, the woman decided to stay in the hospital and have a few things improved.



She had a face lift, liposuction, breast implants and a tummy tuck.

Since she had so much more time to live, she figured she would make the most of it.

She even had someone change her hair colour and brighten her teeth.

After her final operation she was released from the hospital.

While crossing the street, on her way home, she was killed by an ambulance.

Arriving in front of God she demanded, "I thought you said I had longer to live. Why didn't you save me from the path of that ambulance?"



To which God replied, "**I didn't recognise you!!!!**"

*Many thanks to Pat for this one!*

## Jackie Ross and the role of Music Therapy

April 10th, 2026

### The Power of Musical Recognition



Jackie started her talk by playing a well-known Neil Diamond song and then asked us how it made us feel, which highlighted the **emotional reaction** people feel when they recognise a familiar song — a very real neurological and emotional response. This reaction is central to how music therapists work, because familiar music activates memory, emotion, and connection.

Jackie then gave us a short history about music therapy:

- It has existed since **1892**, being well-established in Canada, the USA, and the UK. After World War II, it was used in England to help returning soldiers reintegrate into everyday life, many suffering from what is now known as P.T.S.D. It is now recognised alongside:



- Physiotherapy: occupational therapy: speech therapy
- art therapy (*distinct from "sound therapy" — no singing bowls or mystical practices!!*)



In Australia there are around 700 registered music therapists with the profession being still relatively new. Jackie introduced us to some **neuro-music therapy**, which uses brain-based research, E.E.G.'s, and imaging to understand how music affects neural pathways. We could see the difference in C.T. scans between someone with Alzheimer's listening to a song they knew for a long time, and someone without Alzheimer's listening to a song they had just heard.

### So, what do Music Therapists actually do?

Music therapy uses **musical experiences to achieve non-musical goals**, such as:

- **Social skills** e.g. A child with autism learning eye contact, turn-taking, listening, and shared play through musical interaction.
- **Coping with anxiety, stress, or pain**
- **Self-expression** Music provides a safe, flexible space where people can express identity and emotion without rigid rules.
- **Developmental support** Music stimulates brain development and emotional regulation.
- **Trauma processing and legacy work**

### The core principles around Music Therapy are:

- **Person-centred:** every session is shaped around the individual, not the therapist.
- **Strength-based:** focus on abilities, not disabilities.
- **Improvisational:** therapists adapt moment-to-moment with no two sessions the same.
- **Identity-building:** music helps people reconnect with their strengths, talents, and sense of self.

**So, why does this work?** Music is fun and engaging — especially helpful for young people who may resist traditional therapy. It bypasses some of the barriers of talk-based approaches and it taps into deep neurological systems linked to emotion, memory, movement, and connection.

**Music is an Emotional Influence.** Jackie described working with a young woman whose parents were at their wit's end, suspecting she had an eating disorder, spending most of her time isolated in her room. By listening to the same music the young woman played on Spotify, Jackie realised how strongly negative music choices were reinforcing her low mood. A key part of therapy became helping her recognise that music can worsen or improve emotional states, and that choosing music aligned with how she wants to feel could be a powerful tool.

**Why Is Music Unique in the Brain?** Unlike speech or hearing — which each have specific, localised brain regions — music activates multiple areas across the entire brain. Music engages: the corpus callosum (communication between hemispheres); the motor cortex (movement, instrument playing); the frontal lobes (behaviour, expression); the sensory cortex (touch, physical sensation); the auditory cortex (hearing); the visual cortex (reading music, watching movement) and the cerebellum (balance, coordination). Even passive listening lights up these networks. It has been discovered that early musical training changes the brain. Children who engage in music before age 12 show measurable structural differences in brain scans. Even inconsistent practice, (if they play an instrument), still benefits brain

development. Jackie informed us that violinists have enhanced development in the brain area controlling the left-hand little finger, which they use for finding the notes.

**Music and Emotional Expression.** Music naturally involves expression. Familiar songs trigger immediate emotional reactions, which is why they are so powerful in therapy. Because music is not stored in one brain region, people with Dementia or Alzheimer's can often respond to music long after other abilities fade. Even individuals in a coma show brain activity spikes when familiar songs use their names that are being sung. Long-term musical memories remain accessible even when short-term memory is severely impaired. In Neuroplasticity and Rehabilitation they have found that the brain can "find another route" when pathways are damaged — like taking a detour when a bridge is out. Music provides a rewarding, motivating stimulus that strengthens new neural pathways. Making music with others adds social reward, synchrony, and shared purpose.



### **The Importance of Personalised Music**

Therapists must choose music carefully. Families often mis-remember a loved one's preferences "Mum liked ABBA" - (**NO!** it was because **you** liked ABBA). Correct music selection is essential for emotional connection and therapeutic success. Attaching rhythm and melody dramatically increases recall. This is why rhymes, chants, and songs are effective learning tools. Rhythm is our first point of connection — humans naturally synchronise to external beats.

### **Areas Where Music Therapy Helps:**

Healthy ageing —	choirs, exercise to music, and active engagement support wellbeing.
Cognitive support —	memory, attention, planning, and decision-making.
Emotional regulation —	mood, anxiety, stress.
Social connection —	shared music-making builds belonging.
Movement and coordination —	rhythm supports motor control.

**Palliative Care, Neurological Conditions, and Practical Music Therapy Techniques.** Jackie described Palliative care as one of the most meaningful and privileged areas of music therapy. Because music remains accessible in the brain until the very last moments of life, the therapist can support individuals and families right up to the end. It provides comfort, connection, emotional expression, and a sense of presence during dying. Music is also a powerful tool for people with dementia because musical memory persists even when other cognitive functions decline. For acquired or traumatic brain injury, music can help organise the brain's actions by reducing the number of choices the brain must process. E.g: counting in ("4, 3, 2, 1... pick up the cup") helps the brain initiate movement by narrowing the action pathway. This is especially important to people with Parkinson's Disease. People with Parkinson's may "freeze" and be unable to initiate movement, even in dangerous situations (e.g., crossing the road). It has been found that using a rhythmic cue or a familiar song ("Hi-ho, hi-ho...") it can unlock movement because rhythm provides structure and reduces cognitive load. This technique can significantly improve safety and independence. In children there are Developmental Disorders. Music therapy supports children with Down syndrome, autism, and other developmental conditions. Jackie illustrated this by telling us about a youngster who had trouble with their legs, so sessions were playful and movement-based, such as using a floor piano to encourage standing, stepping, balance, and muscle development. Activities are fun but intentionally designed to build physical, cognitive, and social skills.

Using existing songs, therapists carry large libraries of music and choose songs that match the client's preferences and needs. Jackie stated she had a library of over 1,000 pieces of music. Live music is preferred because the therapist can change the key to suit the client's vocal range or tempo can be slowed or paused to support speech or memory and the therapist can leave space for the client to fill in words or sounds. Improvised music avoids triggering emotional memories and allows safe, neutral engagement. Personalisation is essential: every song affects every person differently. Music narrows choices, organises the brain, and supports movement, speech, memory, and emotional regulation. It is effective across the lifespan — from toddlers to people in their 90s, supporting healthy ageing, social connection, physical activity, and emotional wellbeing.

**Music Therapy at the End of Life.** Jackie described working with a man who knew his life was nearing its end. In those moments, people often gain remarkable clarity about what truly matters — relationships, regrets, forgiveness, unfinished emotional business. Music becomes a gentle doorway into these reflections, allowing people to process grief, express what they couldn't say before, and find peace. She emphasised that we can never predict what a person will need emotionally at the end; each experience is unique.

A common myth is that people with dementia or brain injury cannot learn new things — Jackie strongly rejected this. She suggested with the right enticement, structure, and musical cues, learning is absolutely possible, and she gave us an example of a woman who had a stroke at age 50 and lived another 25 years. Twenty years after her stroke, when Jackie met her, she wrote and remembered a new song, week after week. Music provided the scaffolding her brain needed to retrieve words and structure. With

melody, rhythm, and predictable phrasing the brain “find its way.” Even when a person struggles with words, the musical contour provides cues that guide recall. This is why familiar tunes, repeated motifs, and simple melodic patterns are so effective in rehabilitation.

**Turning Words Into a Song.** Jackie concluded her talk by asking us all to write a word or two on a sticky note which then became the basis for a spontaneous group song, illustrating the creative power of music. Jackie’s improvisational skills, to a Bluesy-Rock’n’roll beat were woven into an improvised song -



*“I’m glad that I wake up in the morning, two people like to do that.  
I’m really glad I’ve got my life, my health, my family.  
I love nature, a sense of humour, my husband, my wife.  
I’m grateful for the trees and oxygen,  
I’m grateful for the use of my legs.  
I’m grateful for the place that I live - and that is in Australia,  
I love this world and the music of the 50’s.  
Good health,  
I’m really happy that I’ve got birds to hear in the morning,  
peace and relaxation and being healthy.”*

How clever was Jackie, however I’m not sure it will be a hit anytime soon!!

Many thanks Jackie for a wonderful presentation, and thanks to our member, Denise, for suggesting Jackie.



## DID YOU KNOW.....



Australia now has 178 billionaires – our most ever, according to an Oxfam Australia analysis of the 2026 *Australian Financial Review* rich list.

In fact, the analysis found, the 20 richest Australians hold more wealth between them than the three million least wealthy Australians.

The total wealth of our 178 billionaires is \$686 billion, and Oxfam makes the point that merely *the rise* in their wealth over the past year – \$25.67 billion – would be enough to lift almost one million Aussies out of poverty, cover all household electricity bills for more than a year, fund our entire national aid budget more than five times over, and pay for the groceries for almost three million households for the year.

“There is something fundamentally wrong with a system where extreme wealth keeps skyrocketing while so many people are struggling to afford the basics, and governments claim there is not enough money for housing, healthcare, climate action and essential services,”

Oxfam’s chief executive, Jennifer Tierney

## JUNE CALENDAR

DATE	Room/Location	Speaker & Title/Event
<i>Wednesday, 03rd June, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
<b>TUESDAY, 09th JUNE 10.00 - 11.00 am</b>	<b>Programme Room BUNBURY CITY LIBRARY</b>	<b>Join John McKernan talking all things "Topical"</b>
<b>Tuesday 09th June 11.15am - 12.30pm</b>	<b>Programme Room Bunbury City Library</b>	<b>U3A Committee Meeting</b>
<i>Wednesday, 10th June, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
<i>Thursday 11th June 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Jo's Place Australind</i>	<i>Continents on the Move Course</i>
<b>FRIDAY, 12th JUNE 9.30 - 11.30 am</b>	<b>E.C.U. Building 6.103</b>	<b>Stay On Your Feet Presenta- tion, "Move Your Body"</b>
<i>Wednesday, 17th June, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
<i>Thursday, 19th June, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Jo's Place Australind</i>	<i>Continents on the Move Course</i>
<b>TUESDAY, 23rd JUNE 10.00 - 11.00 am</b>	<b>Programme Room BUNBURY CITY LIBRARY</b>	<b>Join John McKernan talking about all things "Topical"</b>
<i>Wednesday, 24th June, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
<i>Thursday, 25th June, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Jo's Place Australind</i>	<i>Continents on the Move Course</i>
<b>FRIDAY, 26th JUNE, 9.30 - 11.30 am</b>	<b>Building 5, Room 132/133</b>	<b>Wayne Custodio An intro to AI .</b>

### "12 Stories" Personal Writing Course.

Most of our members would be aware that Angelika has been facilitating our first course, "12 Stories" every week since April. We have 5 people enrolled in the course, and we agree that we are enjoying the journey very much. It is really nice to write a short piece of prose about one of the subjects, and find that every one of us has a different approach to the subject. So far we have written 400-500 words on the following subjects:-

◇ Time; Place; People; Animals; Food and Childhood.

It's not an arduous task, but a beginning to be expanded, if we so desire. It will end in July, and we intent to present some of our stories to the wider membership, so you can see how easy it is to start a memoir. Even if we don't get to expand what we've started, it will certainly be a collection of stories for our next generations about some things that we felt were important in our lives. Angelika is a very capable facilitator, helping to bring us out of ourselves and maybe some of us out of self-consciousness, to encourage these stories to be told.

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As part of our ongoing commitment to our partnership with the **Act Belong Commit** message, here's a reminder about Men's Health Week, which runs from 8th to 14th June. This is a summary of an article printed by our friends at The Regional Men's Health Initiative, who spoke to us in February.

## Communication Differences June 1, 2026 Warrior Wellbeing Articles

Men **can** and **do** talk — but only when the environment feels safe, respectful, and unhurried. Understanding gendered communication differences helps prevent misunderstandings and strengthens relationships

### **Why Communication Breaks Down**

- Modern life pressures push many people to breaking point, affecting relationships at home, work, and in families.
- Most communication is **non-verbal**, so relying on technology often leads to misinterpretation.
- We often misunderstand people of the opposite sex because we forget the basics: **talking, listening, taking time, and being fully present.**

**Gender Differences in Communication** - Not "right or wrong" — just different.

- **Men generally talk less** than women.
- **Women use narrative style**, telling the story in detail.
- **Men often give short, valid answers** (yes/no/ok/good).
- **Men find emotional talk harder** — partly biological wiring, partly social conditioning.
  - Many men lack confidence in verbal skills, so they need:
    - encouragement to talk
    - someone to ask what's wrong
    - support to check whether a problem has been resolved and how.

### **The Cost of Not Talking**

- Difficult topics — relationships, children, farm/business issues, health — often remain unspoken.
- These unresolved issues can become **long-term, destructive patterns** that damage wellbeing and relationships.

**Building Better Communication** - Practical strategies for more productive conversations:

- Choose the **right environment**.
- **Make time** — timing matters.
- Be open to **alternative solutions** and **realistic compromise**.
- **Listen, listen, listen** — without interrupting.
- Identify **trusted mates** you can talk to.
- Seek **help** if communication keeps breaking down.

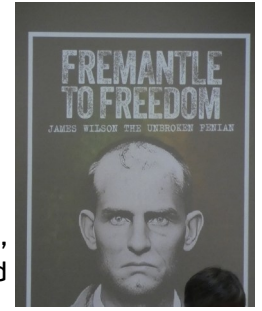
**Let's make sure men ( and people) have those meaningful conversations.**



APRIL 24th, 2026.

## Peter Murphy - Fremantle to Freedom

A look at the Catalpa Escape through the eyes of Irish political/military prisoner James Wilson.



Peter gave us a wonderful talk on the Catalpa adventure - quite relevant at the time, as there was a play coming to B.R.E.C. that was called The Catalpa Escape - and bought along a copy of his book that has just been released.

**James Wood and other Irish political prisoners.** James was a soldier in the British Army in the 1800's, but after talking with some other Irish brothers, he made the decision to leave, and in 1866 was subsequently arrested for treason and sentenced to death, later commuted to life imprisonment. He, and other Irish soldiers that left the British Army, were classed as political or military Fenians and imprisoned in England, in terrible conditions, before being transported to Western Australia on the last convict ship to land here.

**The Fenian Brotherhood.** The Fenian Society was an ancient Celtic term, referencing the Fianna tribe led by the fierce Irish warrior, Fionn MacCool. During the Great Famine the Fenian Society rose in popularity, and in America, former Irish people formed the Clan na Gael, which later became known as the Fenian Brotherhood of America consisting of "well-heeled" Irish businesspeople. The Irish Republican Brotherhood was also formed, and collectively they became known as Fenians.

### **Transportation to the Swan River Colony and life aboard the Hougoumont.**

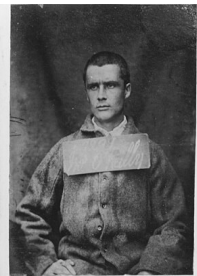
The last transportation ship to Australia left England with 229 convicts, of which 62 were Fenian political prisoners. While on board the ship, the Fenians penned a newsletter called The Wild Goose which contained anecdotes, stories, poems, jokes and more. One "famous" one is called "Let Erin Remember" written by Thomas Moore. The ship anchored off Rottnest Island and the prisoners were marched off to Fremantle Jail.



<https://fremantleprison.com.au/media/1620/header-generic4.jpg?>

**John Boyle O'Reilly and his escape to pave the way for others.** John Boyle O'Reilly was sent to Bunbury to work on the railway, clearing bush to make way for further development of the south west region. Before becoming a soldier, he had been a journalist, so he had good observational skills, and basically didn't miss a trick. He always kept a notebook with him and penned many a prose or poem about life in the Australian landscape, including a story loosely-based on the bushranger Moondyne Joe.

He came to the attention of Bunbury Catholic priest, Father Patrick McCabe, who looked after the Irish convicts with Dardanup farmer, Big Jim Maguire. In 1896, under the cover of darkness, John Boyle O'Reilly leaves the convict camp to go to Buffalo Beach in Australind. Imagine the (now) Conservation Park in February/March - no water, no fuel, lots of mosquitos - and he was out there for 2 weeks! He survived on frogs, Quenda's and reptiles whilst digging for fresh water. In March 1869, John Boyle O'Reilly finally escaped to America on the ship Gazelle.



John O'Reilly, W. Hassett

By 1871 civil Fenians had been pardoned in the UK and exiled Fenians who travelled to New York were given a heroes welcome. James Devoy, at 28 years of age, was one, and become leader of Clan-na-Gael. Devine and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa started to seek funds to free Eire, and found out about the 8 military Fenians still in prison in Fremantle Jail. John Boyle O'Reilly was now an Editor of the newspaper The Pilot and an avid letter writer. James Wilson, still in Fremantle Prison, started to pen a series of letters named "Letters from the Tomb", and James Devoy took these letters around to the "well-heeled" Irish businesspeople in New York to raise funds.



James Devoy

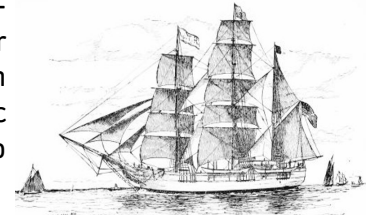
**The Die is cast, the Captain is chosen and The Catalpa escape.** There were 8 military/political Fenians left in Fremantle Prison, James Wilson; Martin J. Hogan; Michael Harrington; Bob Cranson, Thomas Hassett, Thomas Darragh; James Keys and Robert Cranston. Martin Hogan took up writing to Devoy, in encrypted letters sent through by Father McCabe.

They also enlisted the help of the Fenian strategist, **John J. Breslin**. Breslin has already taken part in some escapes from British prisons.

Devoy and Clan na Gael buy The Catalpa for \$5,000 spending another \$15,000 to make it look like a whaling boat. Then they set about looking for a Captain to skipper the boat. They met up with **Captain George Anthony** from New Bedford and explained their plan with him. He tells them he will have to think about it as he has a wife and new baby girl at home and he would be away for quite some time. He returns the next day saying he will do it and when pressed on why, he states he is a Quaker and "it's the right thing to do".



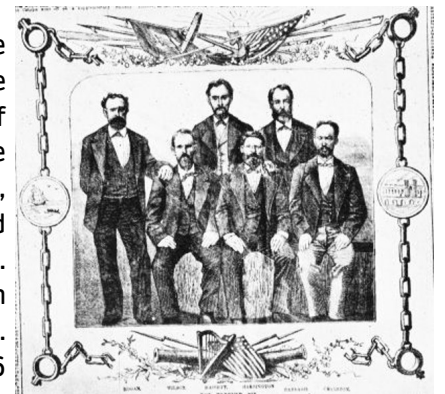
The Catalpa goes on a few whaling trips to get the crew acquainted with the ship, and then in early 1876, sets sail for Koombana Bay, Bunbury, arriving on Easter Sunday, March 28th. While anchored in Koombana Bay, a series of cryptic telegrams were sent from the Post Office in Stephen Street, to Fremantle to say whether the escape was actually taking place.



On Easter Monday, 6 Irish convicts leave their work posts outside Fremantle Prison, remembering these men had been in prison for 10 years and as "trusted" prisoners were allowed into the vegetable gardens to work manually, without any guards. John Breslin, posing as John Collins, had now acquired a horse-drawn carriage and whisked the 6 prisoners away to a beach near Rockingham. At the same time, a local named James Bell, saw all the kerfuffle and questioned what was going on. The men all got into the row boat from the Catalpa and started rowing over to the end of Garden Island where the mother ship was anchored. However, there was a storm, which hid the Catalpa, making it very hard for the men to get to her.

By this time Prison Guards had arrived on the beach and watched as the crew battled the ever increasing rise of the waves as the storm intensified. Captain Anthony called to his crew to dig deep and row as best they could, but the Catalpa remained hidden as night fell. All through the night the crew tried to keep the little boat heading in the right direction, with the escapees huddled in the bottom of the boat and being very ill. As the first light of morning appeared, they could see the Catalpa ahead, and picked up their efforts to rejoin the ship.

However, also travelling towards the ship was a steamer called The Georgette, and although the crew of that ship had glasses to scan The Catalpa, they continue past and went further up the coast. Feeling as if things were going their way, the Captain and crew were dismayed to see a guard boat, filled with police heading straight for the Catalpa. Luckily, the Captain, crew and escapees arrived on the ship before the guard boat reached them and Captain Anthony ordered the ensign to be raised. This ensign was the flag of the America's and indicated the ship was in international waters, thereby preventing anyone from boarding the ship. The Catalpa then set sail for Boston, America and in August 1876, the 6 Irishmen arrived to a heroes welcome.



The rescued prisoners,

(from the Irish World, Sept 2, 1876)

All escapees lived out their lives, although some of them died young, (John Boyle O'Reilly died at 46), some became alcoholics, but the majority survived and went on to have families. James Wilson passed away in 1921, at the ripe old age of 89. John Devoy died in 1928 at the age of 86, having been allowed back to Dublin in 1922 to celebrate their Independence.



John F. thanking Peter for his talk.

Many thanks Peter, for an interesting talk.

**Peter's book is available at the Bunbury Heritage and Museum Centre in Bunbury**



## JULY CALENDAR

DATE	Room/Location	Speaker & Title/Event
<i>Wednesday, 01st JULY, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
<i>Thursday 02nd JULY, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Jo's Place Australind</i>	<i>Continents on the Move Course</i>
<i>Friday, 03rd July.</i>	<b>SCHOOL HOLIDAYS COMMENCE</b>	
<b>TUESDAY, 07th JULY 10.00 - 11.00 am</b>	<b>Programme Room BUNBURY CITY LIBRARY</b>	<b>Join John McKernan talking all things "Topical"</b>
<b>Tuesday 07th July 11.15am - 12.30pm</b>	<b>Programme Room Bunbury City Library</b>	<b>U3A Committee Meeting</b>
<i>Wednesday, 18th July, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
<b>FRIDAY, 10th JULY 9.30 - 11.30 am</b>	<b>E.C.U. Building T.B.A.</b>	<b>Bunbury Orchid Society talking all things Orchid.</b>
<i>(?)Wednesday, 15th July, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
<i>Monday, 20th July.</i>	<b>SCHOOL HOLIDAYS FINISH</b>	
<b>TUESDAY, 21st JULY 10.00 - 11.00 am</b>	<b>Programme Room BUNBURY CITY LIBRARY</b>	<b>Join John McKernan talking about all things "Topical"</b>
<i>Thursday, 23rd July, 9.30 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Jo's Place Australind</i>	<i>Continents on the Move Course</i>
<b>FRIDAY, 24th JULY, 9.30 - 11.30 am</b>	<b>Building T.B.A.</b>	<b>Ric Stacey The Artist Ape</b>
<b>FRIDAY, 31st JULY</b>	<b>OUTING</b>	<b>T.B.A.</b>

/Continued from Page 10.....

All participants would encourage other members to "have a go" and write 12 stories to pass on.

### Continents On The Move with Jo Williams

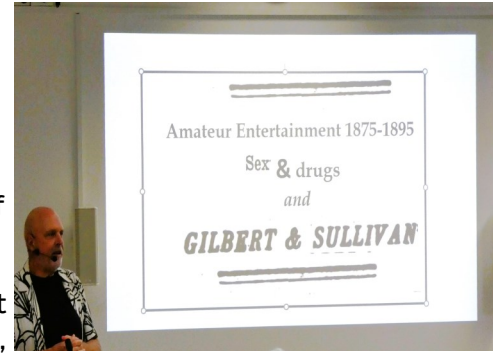
Hot on the heels of our first course, we will be commencing our second one for the year, **Continents On The Move with Jo Williams, our President**. Jo will be holding this course at her house in Australind, and intends to have a 4-week block, a 2-week rest (school holidays), followed by another 4-week block. At present she has 4 members attending, and the fees for this course are \$4.00 per session, or \$30 if paid in full. The first session starts Thursday, 11th June at 9.30am, and should run for 2 hours. If you are interested in going please give Jo a call on 0407 445 176, so she can let you know where she is.

Last, but certainly not least, Ric Stacey will be presenting an "Art" course later next Semester, called Unleashing Your Creative Spirit. Details are still to be finalised, but as soon as we know where, when and how we will let you all know. In the meantime, be sure and attend on Friday, 24th July for Ric's talk on The Artistic Ape. He gave us a brilliant talk on "The Art of Portraiture" last year, and I have no doubt this follow up will be just as interesting.

## MAY 08th, 2026 - BRENDAN KELLY

### Drugs, Sex and Gilbert and Sullivan

Brendan entertained us with a great history of Perth amateur entertainment, 1875 - 1895.



Brendan started by describing the strict public moral codes of Victorian society, especially around sexuality. Although sex was “officially “for procreation,” desire was universal and private behaviour was often less inhibited. Public discretion was essential. In public though some reserved or mindful discretion had to be remembered. Different classes shared expectations of emotional restraint, church attendance, and propriety. Victorian society also had a chaotic relationship with drugs. Many medicines and tonics contained **opium, cannabis, ether, and alcohol**, making self-medication easy and common. The value of Victorian medicines had much to do with their contents. Drug use influenced writers and artists, and everyday ailments were treated with potent concoctions.

#### Gilbert & Sullivan and the Rise of Amateur Theatre.

Gilbert & Sullivan’s operettas provided a socially acceptable outlet for fun, satire, and mild rebellion, allowing people to mingle, dance, and express themselves while maintaining outward respectability. Amateur theatre reflected the tastes of Perth society and offered a safe space for creativeness.

#### The Golden Age of Amateur Entertainment in W.A. (1875–1895)

This era began with the arrival of **Governor Sir William Robinson** in 1875. A gifted musician and composer, Robinson energised Perth’s cultural life. His songs sold widely, and Brendan suggested modern-day musicians would love to have the turn-over of the 1890’s!! - 30,000 copies at one shilling and six-pence apiece. He served 3 terms as governor and became a central figure in the colony’s artistic scene.

#### Francis Jerome Ernest Hart (“Jerry”)

Hart started out in 1878 as a young schoolmaster but soon moved into journalism and theatre. Nick-named “**Cocky**” for his bold commentary, he was a talented librettist, actor, and organiser. He produced shows, wrote the tickets, sold the tickets and then he wrote the reviews. In partnership with Robinson, collaborating on songs and even an opera *The Handsome Ransom* (later *Predatoras*).

#### St George’s Hall and the Amateur Theatre Community

Built in 1879, originally for a firm of solicitors, St George’s Hall became the hub of amateur performance. Many prominent Perth, and Bunbury, families—Cliftons, Campbells, Crouches, Hains, Leakes, Morrisons, Peppers—participated as actors, musicians, set painters, or organisers. Amateur theatre was a respectable pastime for the upper class, provided decorum was maintained. A well-connected English immigrant, Jocelyn George Herbert Amherst became involved in the amateur operatic society. He served as patron, performer, and organiser, working alongside Hart and others. Originally for his social standing and influence, he helped legitimise amateur theatre.

#### Hart’s Influence and Legacy

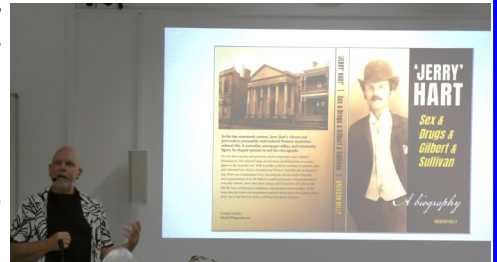
Hart was the charismatic ringleader of the movement. He wrote prolifically, promoted performances, and mobilised wealthy supporters. His energy shaped Perth’s cultural life during the boom years. Hart developed a close creative relationship with Governor William Robinson, collaborating at Government House. Together they wrote songs, shaped plots, and performed music around the piano. (Remembering that every home had a piano during those years). Their first major success was the patriotic song “Unfurl the Flag”, with Robinson composing and Hart writing the lyrics. Gilbert & Sullivan productions were especially popular, shaping the personalities and social life of the performers. Hart edited

the Victorian Express in Geraldton and constantly promoted amateur theatre. Charismatic, multilingual, and tireless, he became the central organising force behind Perth's amateur dramatic movement.

He mobilised wealthy patrons, professionals, and everyday workers alike—racehorse owners, barmaids, milkmen, newspaper boys. However, his life was marked by financial instability, possible gambling, and periodic bankruptcy, but also bursts of creative brilliance. He wrote hundreds of thousands of words of theatre publicity and reviews, often identifiable by his distinctive style. Despite his importance, he was largely forgotten which has prompted Brendan to write a new biography to restore his place in WA cultural history. Now they say behind every successful man, there is a successful woman.....

### Lillian Mitchell - A Forgotten Western Australian Cultural Force

Lillian Mitchell, daughter of Captain Mitchell and born in Cornwall, is described as one of the most influential yet overlooked women in early Western Australian cultural life. Her absence from mainstream histories reflects the broader erasure of women of the era. As Brendan notes, *"her story, like the history of women back in this era, [is] almost non-existent."* She was a gifted musician, a sharp social observer, and a pioneering journalist whose personality—intelligent, feisty, stylish, and socially astute—made her a standout figure in Geraldton and later Perth. Lillian met journalist Jerry Hart in Geraldton, where their shared love of music and theatre drew them together. They became central figures in amateur theatre, producing high-quality performances and shaping the cultural life of the region. Lillian also began writing for the *Victorian Express* and later the *Western Mail*.



### "Cora" - Her Pen Name and Public Voice

Using the pen name **Cora**, (which was also a corset-style), she became a major contributor to the Ladies' Page, writing on fashion, society, domestic life, and women's status. Her fashion knowledge was exceptional, and she produced vivid descriptions of garments and social events. She also used her platform to advocate for women's political participation, famously writing: *"I hope [for] the not far distant time when the two sexes will sit together and legislate for their country."* (1891).

### The Cultural Scene: Amateur Theatre and Social Networks

The cast of prominent amateur performers and supporters who shaped Perth's cultural life alongside Lillian and Jerry included;

- **May Gibbs** (before fame), daughter of artistic parents Herbert and Cecilia Gibbs.
- **George Leake**, future Premier of WA, witty and deeply involved in amateur operatics.
- **Horsey James**, magistrate, lawyer, actor, and cricket administrator.
- **Richard Septimus Haynes**, solicitor, politician, sportsman.
- **Freddie Hall**, civil servant and leading man in local productions.
- **Sir Thomas Campbell**, politician and newspaper editor, whose tragic death from a chloroform-based drug overdose shocked society. (It must be remembered in Victorian times, it was never seen as "drug taking", just potions. They could get a potion for a pick-me-up; toothache; rheumatism etc., because the medical care in those days was nowhere near what it is today.) Sir Thomas Campbell's untimely death helped pass the WA Poisons Act in 1894, which helped by categorising poisons in a different coloured bottle and licensing them.
- There was the odd "unsavoury" character in the theatre. George Anderson was a predator who infiltrated the amateurs. He came up from Albany at the end of 1889, posing as a theatrical entrepreneur. He was, in fact, as predator of underage women and offended while pretending to further their theatrical career. The local amateurs cancelled him as they saw him as a pariah. Jerry refused to work with him, and he later got jailed in Perth and then in Melbourne.

These individuals formed a vibrant, talented community producing operettas, plays, and musical eve-

nings that defined Perth's social life.

Lillian continued to report in the 2 Perth newspapers - The Western Mail and the West Australian - on social entertainment, stage plays, house parties and Society Hall which she had to attend all the time. Men and women would read her weekly reporting on domestic use; chatter and opinion, and Brendan mentioned that her reports were always so detailed and of the hundreds he had read, he couldn't remember reading two of the same descriptions.

1893 sees Paddy Hannan find gold in Kalgoorlie, and the beginning of the end for amateur theatre. Lillian and Jerry were also having problems in their marriage, with Jerry's history of financial carelessness just keeping him ahead of his creditors. Cora's final piece in the paper appeared on 6th September, 1895, with the following days column being written by Thelma. Professional actors from London, and Sydney and Melbourne were also having an effect on ticket sales and making Perth theatre change.

Brendan's new book is soon to be published, which will be a series of 40 Essays about the lives of Jerry and Lillian. Jerry eventually had too many affairs, and Lillian ended up divorcing him. A great talk from Brendan, and so interesting to find out some history about Perth, and to a lesser extent Bunbury, too. Many thanks Brendan.



Jennie S thanking Brendan

### May 29th, Visit to King Cottage, Bunbury, followed by lunch at Sylvana's.



14 members attended this outing and then enjoyed a lovely, (& reasonable) lunch at Sylvana's Café, situated inside the Bunbury Bowling Club.

Unfortunately we were missing, Jennie and Allan Staines, as Jennie had injured herself while in Perth the day before. This was very unfortunate as Jennie had arranged this visit, and I know we would have benefitted from her knowledge when walking around the property. (Jennie is a Life member of the Bunbury Historical Society)

We were allowed to wander through the rooms at our own pace, and when we got into the largest room in the house we were given a demonstration of the large pianola they have on display. The story goes that a gentleman brought it over from Italy, with the notion of using it in Dance Halls, but then the First World War broke out and he was interned at Harvey, (being Italian himself). The poor instrument never got its chance to be in the limelight, as time had moved on and when the Italian gentleman was released, it was the beginnings of the Great Depression, and no-one had money to spend on dancing. It was lovely to hear and watch the machine in action, that's for sure.

We also forgot to take any photographs of the day, as our faithful Allan usually does that job for us. Having said that, if anyone who was on the outing DID take any photos, could you please pass them on to Lyn to put in the Archives. Thanks.

Our next scheduled outing will be on 31st July. Our social committee have got their thinking caps on to take us somewhere not too cool, although with our weather last weekend, I don't think we can expect anything "normal" anymore!!

**MAY 22nd, 2026**

**FUNDRAISING FOR AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA  
AND SOLARIS CANCER CARE.**



On Friday 22nd May, U3A Bunbury did something I am not aware of happening before. We raised funds for the Biggest Morning Tea AND Solaris Cancer Care.

We had 23 members and friends attend the talk from lovely Christine, and we also had some of the staff from E.C.U. come and share our morning tea.

I think I can speak on behalf of your committee, to say we were so happy with everyone's help and generosity to hold this fundraiser, with our total funds coming in at **\$253.50** for Australia's Biggest Morning Tea and **\$207.85** for Solaris Cancer Care in Bunbury.



Maybe we can do a fundraiser once a year, for a different charity each time - what do you think?

Christine talked about her cancer journey, being diagnosed with breast cancer at 50 years. Not her happiest memories, but she has come out the other side having had a partial mastectomy. While in hospital, she became aware of the Rainbow Club, a complimentary therapy programme run out of St John of God Hospital, that delivered massage and Reiki. However, this was discontinued, so there didn't seem to be anywhere to go for help after that.



Solaris was started in 2001, under the medical directorship of Professor David Joske. He could see the need for complimentary therapies, having seen how patients with cancer had improved in their healing process. This was often by just having a foot massage!! Solaris has a few centres, with Perth and Cottesloe being the first to open. Bunbury Solaris Cancer Care, situated in Brittain Road, is in a lovely house, with relaxing gardens and a great Op shop!!!

Solaris in Bunbury can have up to 60 clients a week, as it is classed as a "soft place to land". They don't claim to be "curer's" - just helping to make life a bit better. Their services include Counselling, Support groups, Bereavement course, Walking for Men and Women, a Tuesday craft group amongst others. And how are these essential services paid for - Solaris Cancer Care is over 96% community funded - and receives NO funding from the Biggest Morning Tea, which is one of the reasons why we raised funds for them in tandem with A.B.M.T. Their services depend entirely on public donations, corporate partnerships and the generosity of volunteers.

Many thanks, again, to all our wonderful members who bought friends, made food and helped out with raffles, and clearing up. "Your blood's worth bottling!!!"





