

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF PROBUS**

The Probus movement had its genesis in two ancestors — both in the U.K. and both established by Rotary clubs. The first was known as the Campus club. It was formed in 1965 by the Rotary Club of Welwyn Garden City, 20 miles north of London with Fred Carnhill as the driving force. (Its name was derived from the area of the town in which it was conceived — the Campus.) The second, with Harold Blanchard as the catalyst, was formed by the Rotary Club of Caterham in 1966 and was named the Probus Club, for the “pro” in professional and the “bus” in business, which also made up the Latin word from which the word “probity” is derived. Both were formed to meet the need for companionship of their peers and mental stimulation for retired business and professional men.

Since then, Probus has spread around the world, it moved first within the United Kingdom, then to other European countries, on to New Zealand and Australia and then South Africa. More recently, to North America, Africa, India, Asia, Cyprus, South America and Japan. The first club in the region was the Probus Club of Kapiti Coast, New Zealand, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Paraparaumu in 1974. The first in Australia was the Probus Club of Hunters Hill, NSW, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Hunters Hill in 1976 with the help of the Rotary Club of Dumbarton, Scotland. Since the first clubs were established in Australia and New Zealand, Probus has grown at an astonishing rate. By the turn of the century, there were in excess of 2000 clubs in the region.

The first Probus club for women in the region was the Ladies Probus Club of St Heliers, New Zealand in 1982 and the second was formed in Bateau Bay, NSW later in the same year. Following the advent of single gender clubs for men and women, the concept of combined gender clubs was developed, so today we have men’s, ladies’ and combined clubs.

In February, 1981, five Rotarians in the Sydney area, all of whom had been involved in the formation of Probus clubs, got together to share their experiences with the intention of preparing some basic information for Rotary clubs contemplating the formation of Probus clubs. They were District 9680 Past Governor R.S. (Bob) Burnett, Rotary Club of Turramurra; Past President W.A. (Bill) Jacobs, Rotary Club of Hunters Hill, Chairman of the District 9680 Probus Committee; C.A. (Cec) Short, Rotary Club of Turramurra and member of the District 9680 Committee; District 9690 Past Governor J.W. (Jim) Stanford, Rotary Club of Padstow; and C.S. (Cliff) Johnstone, Rotary Club of Sydney, Chairman of the District 9750 Probus Committee.

Based on the growth of Probus in the region from two to 44 clubs in a comparatively short time, they predicted a rapid escalation in the future growth rate. Reporting their findings to the governors of the three districts centred on the Sydney metropolitan and near country areas, they recommended the provision of an information service to Rotary clubs throughout the region. The result was the Probus Information Centre (now the Probus Centre — South Pacific Inc.), which was established by authority of all the district governors in the region to assist with planning and promotion to ensure steady growth and maximum efficiency in the use of Rotary resources.

In response to popular demand, a Probus newsletter (issued to clubs from 1982) was converted to a quarterly news magazine available to all members in June, 1983. Probus News serviced both Australia and New Zealand until 1999 when Active magazine was introduced in New Zealand through a sponsorship arrangement with RDU Pty. Limited. Both magazines appeared in spring, summer, autumn and winter editions providing news and information for members and giving clubs and individuals a forum for the exchange of ideas and information and the expression of opinions. One result of the regular appearance of the magazines has been the rapid development of inter-club visits and fellowship. Trans-Tasman and interstate tours with visits to Probus clubs have become almost commonplace. Probus News grew to a 64 page bi-monthly issue and in 2006 with a facelift and a new image became **PROBUS – the magazine**. In 2008 the magazine expanded to 80 pages.

Both magazines continue to develop and grow as the ‘flagship publications of the Probus organisation.’ Each issue contains a Message from the Chairman, Management Matters and Membership Forum sections along with puzzle page, readers’ stories, club news, prizes and competitions.

Probus Centre has close liaison with Rotary District Probus Chairmen and committees throughout the region, providing training, resources and assistance in the extension of Probus.

Probus Centre is the delegated authority to hold in trust the Probus name, Probus emblem and Probus Rendezvous Trademarks in Australia and New Zealand.

Probus Centre launched a Pilot Probus Program in District 3820 in the Philippines in 2007 and to date there have been six Probus clubs formed and the appointment of a Rotary District 3820 Probus Chairman. The future holds opportunities for further extension of Probus in the Philippines. Probus Centre is the Trademark owner for Probus name and emblem in the Philippines.

In some areas, since the development of the Probus Centre, groups of clubs have formed local regional Interest Groups for the exchange of ideas of mutual interest. In other areas such groups have grown into Probus associations under the accreditation of Probus Centre.

As Probus has continued to grow in the region, groups of clubs have gained the confidence to organize gatherings for special occasions, to which they have invited Probus members from throughout the region.

In 1987 the Probus club of Perth, WA, organised a highly successful Septemberfest, which attracted visiting Probians from all states of Australia and from New Zealand. In 1988, the Probus clubs of South East Queensland invited Probus members to participate in what they called Operation Handclasp in association with Expo 88.

In April 1991, Probians from far and wide converged on the Barossa Valley in South Australia for a "happening" known as Rendezvous "91" which was declared a resounding success by the more than 1400 participants. Under the direction of a small committee headed by Rendezvous Secretary David Merrick Rendezvous continued; Rendezvous in 1993 in Port Macquarie NSW, Christchurch New Zealand 1995, Echuca/Moama on the VIC/NSW border 1996, Perth WA 1997, Goulburn NSW 1998, Gold Coast QLD 1999 and Armidale NSW in 2000.

At the end of 2000, Probus Centre – South Pacific Inc. Committee of Management took over the responsibilities of establishing guidelines, selection process, provision of 'seed capital', development of a manual and overseeing the financial and social success of future Rendezvous. Rendezvous has been such a success that it has become an annual event in the Probus calendar and the opportunity to become the host city is a highly sought after honour.

Rendezvous continued with Canberra ACT 2001, Auckland New Zealand 2002, Cairns QLD 2003, Nelson Bay NSW 2004, Geelong VIC in 2005 plus the first Probus Rendezvous in Canada, Launceston TAS in 2006 coinciding with the bi-centenary of Launceston, Gold Coast QLD 2007 and Christchurch New Zealand 2008 and Canadian Rendezvous 2008. Rendezvous serves to promote fellowship and extend friendships among retired people from all over the world.

The Probus philosophy has not changed – the True Spirit of Probus is Friendship, Fellowship and Fun.

Probus success is found in the commitment and recognition as 'A Community Service Program of Rotary clubs'.

PROBUS – Tomorrow's Vision for Active Retirees