



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

PROBUS 50TH ANNIVERSARY AFTERNOON TEA

Thursday 9 April 2026

Acknowledgments

Michael Ransom, Chair, and **Marie Ransom**

Members of the board, Probus South Pacific Limited

Presidents and Members of Probus Clubs from across Victoria

Distinguished Guests

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which this House stands – the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Eastern Kulin Nation – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

It's a pleasure to welcome you all to Government House today.

We meet in a building that also marks a significant anniversary this year – 150 years since it was first occupied.

Some of you may already be aware of that fact, particularly if you have been among the many Probus Clubs we have hosted on our guided tours here.

If this is your first time, however, I welcome you.

Probus is a term that is now familiar in suburbs and towns across Australia, but in tracing the club's history, it's worth considering the origins of this distinctive name.

Many of you will know this history better than I.

Broadly speaking, the movement began in the UK in the 1960s, first known as a 'Campus Club' and then later as 'Probus' – the latter being a portmanteau of the words 'professional' and 'business'.

Conveniently, or perhaps deliberately, this 'new' word was not new after all – *probus* is a latin adjective meaning honest or virtuous.

From this evolved a genuinely new term, 'Probians', used to describe the people that form the club's membership.

Today, *Probians* encompass a much broader group than the original membership of retired professionals and businessmen.

Clubs now extend far beyond UK, stretching across the world and here in Australia for the past 50 years.

And though the values of honesty and virtuousness remain important, the concept of a Probus Club can evoke a whole range of adjectives.

That's because membership means different things to different people.

Some people may join to find and maintain social connection.

Others may be inspired to keep physically active.

Some may wish to learn new skills and or gain knowledge.

For many, it is a combination of all these reasons.

However, there is one thing all *Probians* have in common:

They recognised Probus as the place to find all these benefits.

It's a sentiment summarised well by journalist and National Spokesperson for Probus, Heather Ewart, who said:

"Every Probus club is different, but they all offer the same sense of belonging."

Over the years, these Clubs have been sustained by countless stories of people who have found that feeling.

That has created a community of tens of thousands of Victorian members at over 400 branches right across the State.

There's perhaps no more important time to have a sense of belonging.

Recently, we have seen devastating natural disasters across our State, which bring a heavy burden for those affected directly.

We are living in increasingly polarised times, where productive conversations with one another can seem harder to achieve.

And though technological advances are creating efficiencies in daily life, they risk making us more isolated.

Within all these challenges, the core pillars of Probus are of positive influence, and in-person engagement remains one of the best ways to strengthen them.

So while membership may be of individual benefit, the existence of these clubs across Victoria also benefits our State more broadly.

Having these networks of connection within our communities enriches us all – no matter if we are *Probians* or not.

When people fall into hard times, these relationships are what they lean on for support.

And as we look to create more welcoming communities in the future, these values – Probus values – are among the foundations we build on.

Congratulations on this significant milestone, and best wishes for the years ahead.

Thank you.