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*Membership of the Association is available to all who have been members of VicRoads or forerunner organisations or the spouse of deceased members, and bestows on them all the rights of the Rules of Association. Cost of membership is a once only fee of \$50. Enquiries about membership or receipt of the Newsletter by e-mail should be directed to the Secretary, VicRoads Association, PO Box 3217, Cotham VIC 3107 or by phone or e-mail as shown above. Visit our website at <https://vicroadsassociation.org>*

Dear Members,

I have been somewhat preoccupied with other matters over the last few weeks and have not had time to prepare the newsletter as I normally do. However, I am keen to send out a newsletter even if it is only half baked. This one will be shorter than usual because I propose to defer some reports to later newsletters.

I sent out Tom Glazebrook's document on the Country Roads Board and the roles played by the Divisions in delivering road management services to the state. As I said in the covering letter, it was a remarkable achievement from a man of 98 years of age to dredge up from his memory the details of his paper. Tom's daughter, Sue Ham, formatted the report and she did an excellent job in pulling it together.

I have had a number of comments already and a few are published in this newsletter.

## WHAT'S COMING UP

Please remember that partners and friends are always welcome to all our events.

The table below shows a summary of events for 2024. If any changes occur, I will inform you in future newsletters or by email.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Contact Person</b>
Monday 9 September	10.45 am Shrine of Remembrance – followed by lunch. See note below.	Jill Earnshaw
Monday 7 October	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Friday 25 October	12 noon. Annual Golf Day at Greenacres. See note below.	Jim Webber
Monday 4 November	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Wed., Thur. & Frid. 6, 7 and 8 November	Road trip along the Great Alpine Road. See note below.	David Jellie
Monday 2 December	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up
Tuesday 10 December	12 noon for 12.30 pm, Christmas lunch, Waverley RSL	Ken Vickery
<b>2025</b>		
Monday 3 February	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up.

## **Monday 9 September - Shrine of Remembrance tour**

Join us at 10.45 am for the 11.00 am 45-minute guided tour of the Shrine of Remembrance.

This will be followed by lunch at the Rising Sun Hotel, 2 Raglan Street, South Melbourne; several blocks away.

Please register your interest in attending with Jill Earnshaw - [jillmearnshaw@gmail.com](mailto:jillmearnshaw@gmail.com).

When registering, please let her know if you are interested only in the tour or the tour plus the pub lunch.

While entry to the Shrine is free, there is a cost for the tour with an expert guide. It is \$15 for Seniors - please bring your card, \$20 for other adults, or free for Veterans and serving members of the Australian and New Zealand defence forces.

The Shrine is located on Birdwood Avenue and St Kilda Road, 1.3km from Flinders Street Railway Station. You can walk or catch a tram from the city. Take any southbound tram from Federation Square (except route number 1) to stop 19 Shrine of Remembrance. The nearest car parking is on Birdwood Avenue and St Kilda Road (ticketing required). Disabled access bays are opposite the Shrine on both sides of Birdwood Avenue.

Lunch at the Rising Sun Hotel in Raglan Street, South Melbourne is about a 15-minute walk from the Shrine. If a tram is passing the Shrine, you could take it for one stop (to stop 20) to reduce the walk.

## **Occasional Lunch at Shoppingtown Hotel, Monday 7 October at 12 noon.**

Our next lunch is on Monday, 7 October. There is no need to register – just turn up.

## **Annual Golf Day – Friday**

The 9th Annual Golf Day will be at the Green Acres Golf Club, East Kew on Friday 25 October at 12 noon. It is open to VicRoads Association members and friends.

Previous VicRoads Association winners were:

2014 Ken Vickery  
2015 Jim Webber  
2016 John Ford  
2017 Rob Gilpin  
2018 Roy Gilmour  
2019 Ken Mathers & Jim Webber (tie)  
2020 Not held  
2021 Roy Gilmour  
2022 Not held  
2023 Roy Gilmour

Please let Jim Webber know by Wednesday 16 October if you wish to play and if you wish to share a cart- [jameswebber1717@gmail.com](mailto:jameswebber1717@gmail.com) or SMS 0412 064 527.

## **Road Trip along the Great Alpine Road, Wednesday 6 November to Friday 8 November.**

The Great Alpine Road extends from Bairnsdale to Wangaratta – a distance of over 300 km. The road has existed since colonial times in some form, but was unsealed for much of its history; its last portions were sealed between Slatey Cutting and Dinner Plain in the 1996–97 financial year (when the road was renamed the Great Alpine Road), and the 12 km between Dinner Plain and Horsehair Plain in the 1997–98 financial year.



A brief itinerary is described below. I will research sites and places of interest along the route and expand the details accordingly

### **Wednesday 6 November**

We will meet in Traralgon to have lunch with ex-VicRoads regional staff and then drive on to Bairnsdale for an overnight stay and have dinner with ex-VicRoads staff. This is a 280 km drive.

### **Thursday 7 November**

From Bairnsdale we join the Great Alpine Road heading north and have lunch in Omeo. After lunch we drive further north for an overnight stay at Bright. This is 230 km.

### **Friday 8 November**

In the morning, we will visit the nearby Kiewa Valley Hydro-electric Scheme after which we will disperse for home or elsewhere.

We are doing this trip in Spring which is a fantastic time to drive the Great Alpine Road. It's not yet busy with holidaymakers, the weather is starting to warm up, and the Victorian Alps are blanketed in a sea of wildflowers, blooming alongside the road.

The Great Alpine Road was initially built in the mid-1800s to provide access to the remote goldfields of the Victorian Alps. Back then, it was little more than a rough track, suitable only for horse and carts. But the gold rush had attracted a huge number of prospectors and miners to the region, so the route still played a crucial role in transporting people, equipment, and supplies to and from the goldfields.

The road was also used for other purposes, such as transporting timber from the forests of the region and providing access to the remote high country for grazing cattle and sheep.

In the early 1900s, the road was upgraded to accommodate motor vehicles, but it was still a winding unsealed road requiring great care in navigating it. It wasn't until 1996, in fact, that the Great Alpine Road received its official name, after it was finally sealed, making it a much safer and more accessible route for motorists.

In the 1980s, major upgrades were finally made to the road, including the addition of safety barriers and the widening of the sealed pavement, making it the drive that we know today: beautiful, thrilling, and safe.

I hope the photographs below will whet your appetite.



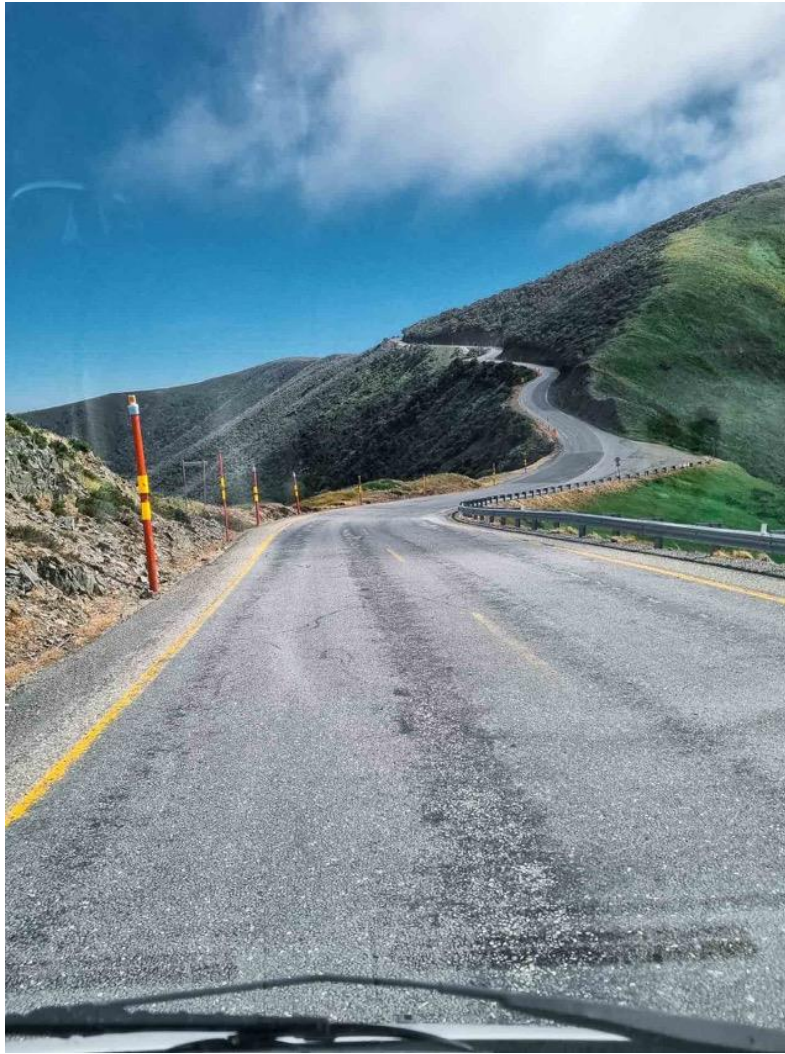
The Great Alpine Road takes you through some of the state's most picturesque locations.





High country on the Great Alpine Road





Typical road conditions.

I will provide more details as the itinerary evolves but it would be good to get an idea of how many people are interested in coming so that I can work out accommodation and catering requirements.

**So, if you are interested, please register with me on [pdjellie@hotmail.com](mailto:pdjellie@hotmail.com)**

### **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING**

On Monday 19 August, we had a very interesting tour of the West Gate Tunnel Project. I propose to report on the visit in more detail in the next newsletter.

On the next page are a couple of photographs taken at the West Gate Tunnel Information Centre which is located on the corner of Somerville Road and Whitehall Street, Yarraville.

If you would like to visit, its opening hours are:

- Monday to Friday: 10am to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm





Members at the West Gate Tunnel Information Centre.

## **Change of President**

I have decided not to nominate for President of the VicRoads Association next year. I will serve until our next Annual General Meeting in March 2025. I am providing this notice now as I want to provide a smooth transition when the time comes. I am happy to remain on the committee, if elected, and will assist the new President in any way I can.

I expect that it will be difficult to find a person to take on the role because one's first response is to take a step backwards. I want to assure you that the role is fairly straightforward –

chairing our meetings and acting as a spokesperson for the Association. Since I started (I think in 2002) I have also had wonderful advice and assistance from all the committees in which I have served.

If there is a member out there who thinks he or she might be interested in the position, please let me know and I will be happy to discuss it with them.

I also wish to withdraw my involvement as editor of the newsletter. I want to do this under the same timetable above i.e. continue to the AGM and then transition over the following term of office. I think it is quite feasible to have an editorial team where the responsibility can be spread.

Again, if anyone is interested, please contact me as soon as possible and I could start a mentoring process straight away.

I have loved being your President and newsletter editor but, like Joe Biden, I am resigned to handing over to my successors.

## **Development of the Head Office Site – 60 Denmark Street, Kew**

Expressions of interest have been invited for the development of the Head Office Site. At first, we did not think the Association would have any interest in making any submission, but Jim Webber drove past one day and thought about the significant trees on the site – thinking that their retention would be a link to the Country Roads Board and its successors.

Consequently, we have made the following submission.

*The VicRoads Association wish to make a submission in relation to the retention of the perimeter trees on the 60 Denmark Street, Kew site, with particular reference to the eucalyptus trees on the Denmark Street frontage. Whilst this is not a formal submission as it was not submitted before the close of formal consultation period, the Association is still keen that the issues it raises be considered in the decision-making process.*

*The VicRoads Association's primary purpose is to foster fellowship among members and maintain friendships from work days with an opportunity to socialize, meet new people and have some fun.*

*Membership is open to ex-employees (staff or field) from VicRoads, Country Roads Board, Motor Registration Branch, Transport Regulation Board, Traffic Commission, Road Safety & Traffic Authority, Road Construction Authority, Road Traffic Authority and those in the Roads component of various State Departments and Ministries.*

*Most of our over 300 members, if not all of them, worked at 60 Denmark Street at some stage in their career. The attachment of our members to the Denmark Street site was illustrated by 200 members attending the Farewell to Kew function held in May 2024 - an event generously supported by the Department of Transport and Planning. Had the facility had the capacity to hold more guests, many more would have attended.*

*The retention of the canopy trees on the site will have great community benefit for future residents on the site, those driving along Denmark Street as well as those living in surrounding areas. The mature trees, many of which were planted at the opening of the two buildings in the 1960s, include Eucalyptus, Paperbarks, Spruce, Plane trees and Pin Oaks. Given the expected setbacks on any new development, their retention will not impinge on the development envelop and would allow for pedestrian and cycle paths through the site.*

*The four mature Eucalyptus trees on the Denmark St frontage vary in height from 20- 25 metres. The retention of these trees will be a powerful recognition of the previous use of the site.*



*Boroondara Council recognises tree protection and canopy cover as an important issue to the community. In its 2017-27 Boroondara Community Plan, the community identified protecting and increasing canopy cover on private land as a priority.*

*In light of the location of these trees on the street edges of the site, and their historical connection with the long-term former use of the site, their retention would be consistent with the Council's support for tree retention on private property.*

*Retaining these trees would reduce the visual impact of any new buildings, particularly if the proposed development utilises a greater proportion of the site and reduces the extent of greenspace currently in place.*

*David Jellie  
President, VicRoads Association  
Mob. 0418105276*

*Jim Webber  
Director pTrans Pty Ltd - Transport & Planning Consultant  
& VicRoads Association Committee Member  
Mob. 0412064527*

*Jill Earnshaw  
Secretary, VicRoads Association  
Mob. 0438777352*

## **NEW MEMBER**

I am pleased to advise that David Challman from Benalla has joined the Association and we look forward to seeing him at some of our functions.

## **NEWS FROM MEMBERS**

### **Peter McCullough**

The first Letter to the Editor in the Herald Sun of Monday July 15, 2024 was written by Peter McCullough as follows:

#### ***State basket case***

While the justice, health and education systems might be in a mess, Shannon Deery's article ("A whole lot of pain on roads") confirm my worst fears. Victoria really is a basket case.

The risk of venturing out for a Sunday drive is now the equivalent of attempting to scale Everest in shorts and thongs.

For about 70 years, (1913 to 1982) Victoria had a state road authority, the Country Roads Board, which was funded from state sources (motor registration fees, driver licence fees, even fines under the Motorcar Act) and grants from the Commonwealth (a definite amount per gallon of petrol was hypothecated for roads).

The general rationale was what you take from the motorist you returned to the motorist.

With adequate funding plus capable and experienced managers (only one political appointment in 70 years), the Country Roads Board was able to provide Victoria with a road

network which was arguably the best in Australia. The photographs in the Herald Sun are indicative of how far our standards have fallen. Is there a level below third world?

It would be interesting to compare the \$37.6 million spent on our roads in 2023/24 with the amount paid up by motorists in that year to both levels of government.

Editor: Hear! Hear!

### **Bruce Hartnett – on Tom Glazebrook’s report**

‘Tom is incredible at 98.

I hope the current regime learns from him - but sadly I doubt that they will.’

### **Graeme Walter – on Tom Glazebrook’s report**

‘I have read Tom’s record and it reflects my memory, even though I was a basically only involved with bridges.

I also agree entirely with Tom’s comment 6 on the final page. Those comments reflect my own experience dealing with the current lost souls working with the current organisations who attempt to convince others they know what they are talking about.

The best the current lot could do is go for a drive on the network to see where they are lacking.

It is sad to see all those years of experience and expertise that was transferred by appropriate mentoring disappearing. It is a bit like the blind leading the blind at the moment.

Cheers and thanks to Tom.’

### **Ted Barton – on Tom Glazebrook’s report**

‘Thanks for sending out Tom Glazebrook’s report.

I found it very interesting and informative, and it brought back memories of my time in Benalla Division when Tom was ADE there.

It is good to have your Appendix 3 following Tom’s report as it enables the reader to see the sequence of Government actions that have led to the current terrible condition our roads in Victoria are currently in.’

### **Peter MacDonald – on Tom Glazebrook’s report**

‘This is very interesting from a historical perspective.

I would like to add some further comments addressing the core aspects of road maintenance.

VicRoads spent many years working with other road authorities developing and applying measurement systems for prioritising pavement maintenance. Key attributes were surface shape (several attributes to record including roughness), skid resistance, edge breaks, ravelling, rutting, potholing etc. Most of these went towards a program that coined the phrase “a stitch in time” to characterise the intent of the program. The objective of course was to

implement maintenance in a timely manner to ensure that the pavement did not deteriorate to such an extent that costly major rehabilitation work was required.

The lack of regular side drain cleaning is also a feature that leads to destructive moisture entry into the pavement that sits alongside Tom Glazebrook's observation of lack of attention to verge mowing. Further, the low cable barriers alongside every highway seem to have been expressly designed to obstruct access for drain clearing equipment.

Now I don't know to what extent VicRoads or its emaciated present incarnation still collects road condition information but if they do then clearly there is extremely limited follow up to implement periodic measures to areas requiring attention. Moreover, the drastic reduction in the budget for maintenance of the road system has inexorably led to a major state wide deterioration of road pavements.

This is not a recent development that can be attributed to the floods we had not so long ago, which the State government has, to its shame, tried to sheet home as the reason for damage across the road system. This progressive neglect started many years ago accompanied by the deskilling of the VicRoads organisation. VicRoads and its predecessor organisation the CRB were once organisations that staff were proud to acknowledge as their employer because of the widespread recognition of the ability of the organisation to make the very best use of its allocations in looking after the road infrastructure. That, sadly, is no longer the case.

With the present sorry state of the State budget and the squandering of massive amounts of taxpayer's money on grandiose urban infrastructure projects, I cannot see any improvement in the road pavement condition for decades to come, no matter who is in power politically.'

## **VALE**

We extend our sympathies to the families and friends of the following colleagues who have died.

### **Leslie (Les) Robert Bull**

The following tribute was written by Jim Davis, Hon Secretary, RAE Association (Vic) Inc.

***Vale – 3178685/8264750 Lieutenant Colonel Leslie Robert Bull, RFD. (Retd)***

It is my sad duty to advise you of the passing of Lieutenant Colonel Les Bull on 09th July 2024. I never had the opportunity of serving with Lieutenant Colonel Bull but certainly knew of him by reputation so my personal knowledge is limited and accordingly I have been provided with the following from his family and great friend Paul Lancaster and I thank them very much for this information.





*“Les Joined 22nd Construction Regiment in 1972. The Regiment was a Supplementary Reserve (SR) Unit sponsored by the Country Roads Board (CRB), State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works. After completing his recruit training, he was posted to 107 Plant Squadron (Heavy). 107 Plant Squadron and 22 Construction Regiment HQ were both sponsored by the CRB. This was at a time when the boards of these engineering organisations were comprised significantly by members who had seen service in WW2 and Korea. The concept of the SR was based on engineering lessons learnt during WW2.*

*As a professional engineer with the CRB, Les was selected for and commenced his training to become an officer within the Unit. This process took commitment and three years to complete through six Engineer Groups officer training programs. He was subsequently Commissioned as a Lieutenant troop commander in 107 Plant Squadron.*

*Les spent a significant amount of his early service with 22 Construction Regiment. One of Les’ great achievements was the design of the Monegeetta Constant Speed Test Track which was built by the Regiment over a period of approximately 8 weeks. In a testament to the quality of the design and the engineering work of the Regiment the track is still in use today.*

*After attending Staff College Les was posted as the Commanding Officer of Melbourne University Regiment (MUR), a posting he held for six years and finally to the Officer Career Management area (DOCM).*

*Les was a dedicated soldier who gave his all to whatever posting he received. Les, however, as a senior/executive engineer experienced career conflict issues; in the end one’s profession must take precedence. This dilemma inevitably leads to a loss of great talent or at best a significant reduction of commitment. As Les was never one to do things by half he went onto the Standby Reserve at the end of 2000 and remained there until his retirement in 2014.*

*Les was a popular no-nonsense officer admired by his peers. His mates from those early years in 22 and 6 Engineer Group were saddened to hear of his ongoing health issues and his passing on Tuesday morning 9th July.*

*Les leaves behind his wife Dianne, and their four much loved boys; Nicholas, Travis, Elliot, Marshall and their families.*

*RIP you have earned your rest.*

The achievements and contribution by Les to the Corps here in Victoria cannot be adequately detailed in this short summary but we all owe thanks to people like Les who laid the foundations for the RAE as we know it now.

Our deepest sympathy and condolences are extended to the family and friends of Leslie Robert Bull.

### **Robert (Bob) Parr - 1946-2024**

I included an obituary for Bob in the last newsletter but received this one from Jill Earnshaw following Bob's funeral. Bob was obviously a lovable knock-about fellow, much admired for his sense of humour.

'Bob was not a member of the Association but he was a regular attendee of the annual Strategic Lunch of the Alcoholics Cuisine Klub (SLACK) Christmas lunch functions for ROSTA and RTA staff.

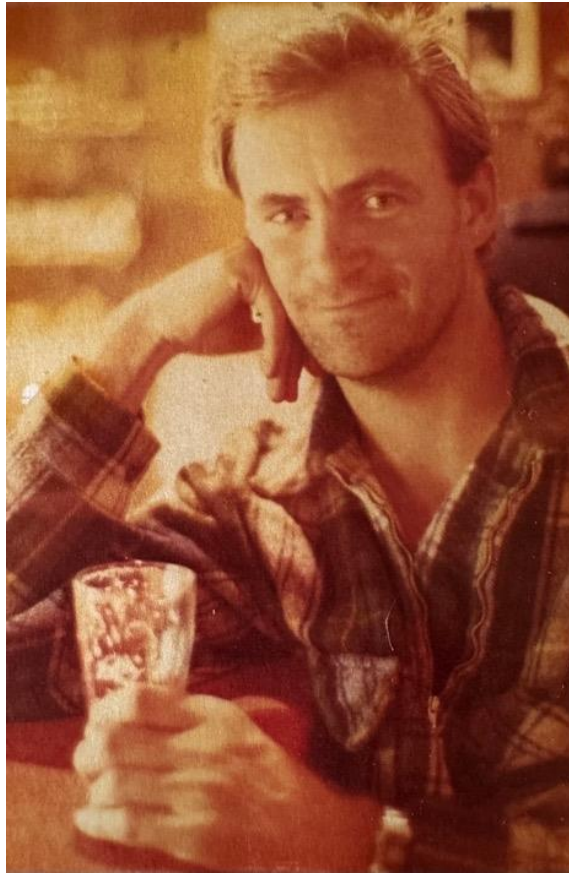
Bob was born in Bendigo and moved all over Victoria as a child; contributing to his lifelong love of the bush.

In 1966, Bob graduated from Warrnambool Technical College with a Diploma of Civil Engineering. There he made lifelong friends - Ross Gordon, Mike Verey and Les Mayes. He then joined the CRB where he worked in the Advanced Planning area before a 2-year stint in the army. Upon return, he worked in the Road Planning area where he was involved in the initial planning work on the widening of Punt Road. He was later involved in the construction work to widen the Nepean Highway.

Bob then chose to specialise in traffic engineering, spending time in both metropolitan and rural areas. Having retired from VicRoads he spent many years working as a highly respected traffic engineering specialist with John Piper at his consultancy, John Piper Traffic. Whilst there he worked on designing roads in the Docklands area amongst other projects. He was an engineer's engineer. He loved details and loved what he did and was very good at it.

Bob was also a competent house builder, loved motor racing - Formula V, and much later, in his much-modified Mazda MX5 sports car. He was an avid skier, enthusiastic cyclist, keen bushwalker and a competent golfer.

Bob lived a very happy and fulfilling life. He is survived by his daughter Danny and wife Sue. Bob was a country kid at heart. He was buried in his beloved Yackandandah in plot No. 24 (his racing car's number).



Bob Parr enjoying a drink.

### **Glen Savage – 1935 – 2024**

Howard Ellis rang to say that Glen Savage had died in Ballarat on 26 July at the age of 89.

Glen was not a member of VicRoads Association but I do remember him coming to dinner with us about 12 years ago when we visited Horsham on one of our road trips.

Glen was a long-serving member of staff in Horsham Division, much of his service being Assistant Divisional Engineer.

Norm Butler was not only a colleague of Glen but they went through Caulfield Technical College together. Norm sent me the following memories of Glen.

*Glen started work with the State Electricity Commission as a draftsman working in their design office in Prahran. He studied for his Diploma of Civil Engineering part time and with two years full time study at Caulfield Technical College, qualified in 1959. After graduation Glen worked with the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Commission in Cooma for a couple of years.*

*Glen's 36-year career with the Country Roads Board/RCA/VicRoads was entirely at Horsham where he became a highly respected leader and senior engineer. Glen and Sandra made their home in Horsham, Glen was a highly motivated member of the community in Horsham, being heavily involved in the Horsham Tennis Club, running the boundary regularly at the local footy, a leading light in community activities and festivals and active in the Horsham Rotary Club.*



*Unfortunately, in recent years, Glen had fallen victim to dementia which slowly but surely progressed. Glen was in care for the past two years. Although Glen's wife, Sandra tried to find a nursing home closer to Horsham, Ballarat was the closest that was available - such is the issues with living in country Victoria.*

*Glen was privately cremated with family and close friends attending*

*I visited Glen and Sandra about four years ago, during COVID. At that stage Glen was well on the way to full dementia, but gratefully, I was able to get a few lucid moments with him. So sad.*

We extend our sincere condolences to Sandra and their three daughters, Nadine, Tamara and Coryn and their families.

## **Russell Roberts**

Julie Cooper posted the following notice on the VicRoads Facebook page.

I received very sad news that Russell Roberts (draughtsman Bridge Design) passed away on 11 July after a vigorous battle with cancer. Russell was a hysterically funny guy who kept everyone on their toes. We send our condolences to his wife Leanne (nee Abbott) (also an ex-VicRoads employee) and their son Luke.

## **MORE HEAD OFFICE MEMORIES**

John Wright provided these observations on the CRB's move to Kew:

- Well prior to the move, the staff were polled as to which of several locations they might prefer to move to. However, the reality was that the old Kew Railway station site was always going to be chosen, simply because it was available. One rumour was that very few staff wanted to work in Kew and the Board members had chosen it because most of them lived along the tram routes servicing Kew (not that any of them would stoop to catching trams).
- Looking back, I think the least recognised triumph of the new headquarters was the fact that it finally accommodated all the various branches of the CRB, such as Plans and Surveys, Title Survey, Bridge Division, Metropolitan Division, Traffic and Location, Survey, Printing and so on in a single building. Previously, all these entities had been housed in various 'tin sheds' scattered around the rear of the Eastern Annexe of the Exhibition Buildings. At the time of the move, the Materials Testing Division was still located in Drummond St, Carlton and would stay there until a new companion building was constructed for it in Kew on the corner of Wellington Street. Years later as the organisation grew, many of these services would move out again.
- One of the more welcome facilities in the building was a large cafeteria run by a Mrs Best (There had been no cafeteria in the old CRB building). Her large, tasty meals were served on equally large plates and were fantastic value for the money. At lunchtime staff queued right out to the lifts. Regrettably, it was only to last until the first accounting period revealed how much the meals were costing the Board. Suddenly, Mrs Best disappeared, and the meals and the plates became much smaller under a new manager.
- The new building had a caretaker who lived in a flat at the top of the building. His title, as I recall, was Resident Building Maintenance Supervisor.

## LEST WE FORGET

I received many favourable comments about my take on the First World War that I published in the last newsletter. It was an extract from *Roads to War* as is the one below on the origins of the Second World War. For the benefit of new members, *Roads to War* is a book I am writing about all the men and women who worked for the CRB or its successors who served in the wars.

There was no single cause of the Second World War. It was a series of events and developments around the world that came together inexorably, until disaster eventually erupted. The myth of the First World War being the 'War to end all wars' was exploded – but there can be no doubt that the Treaty of Versailles - motivated more by revenge on Germany rather than sympathy toward it following defeat - was a major cause.

The Treaty of Versailles was signed in 1919. It codified the peace terms between the victorious Allies and Germany. It required Germany (and its allies) to accept full responsibility for all the loss and damage caused by the First World War. It required the disarmament of Germany, as well as harsh territorial concessions and the payment of massive reparations. The treaty humiliated Germany while failing to resolve the underlying issues that had led to the war in the first place. The economist, John Maynard Keynes - a British delegate to the Paris Peace Conference - predicted that the treaty was too harsh and the reparation figures too excessive and counter-productive. On the other hand, prominent figures on the Allied side, criticized the treaty for being too lenient on Germany.

Germany's resentment of the treaty was exploited by Adolf Hitler during the rise of the Nazi Party in the 1930s. He asserted that Germany had not lost the war but, rather, it had been betrayed by the Weimar Republic who negotiated an unnecessary surrender. Germans viewed the treaty as a humiliation and, with nationalistic fervour, they eagerly listened to Hitler's oratory which blamed the treaty for all of Germany's ills. Hitler's promises to reverse the depredations of the Allied powers and recover Germany's lost territory and pride, was a significant factor in the onset of the Second World War.

Another major contributor to the Second World War was the Great Depression. It worsened the collapse of the German economy. Though the Treaty of Versailles may not have caused the crash, it became a convenient scapegoat for the Nazis. The depression was world-wide, causing economies to shrink and limiting trade between nations. Unemployment was high, banks failed, prices fell and businesses closed. The people of Germany turned to the messianic political message of Hitler, placing their hopes on his promises to make Germany great again.

This was an era of totalitarianism. European and other democratic nations were transfixed by a fear of Communism which had arisen out of the Russian Revolution. In Germany and Italy, the future appeared to be a form of militaristic totalitarianism known by its Italian name, Fascism. It promised to provide for the needs of the people more effectively than democracy, and presented itself as a certain defence against Communism. Benito Mussolini established the first Fascist dictatorship during the inter-war period in Italy in 1922. It is a myth that he got the trains to run on time. Mussolini's rise to power had been founded on publicity. He might have had bizarre policies and looked like a comedic figure to later generations, but he knew what worked when it came to getting attention, and his propaganda was strong. Mussolini picked on the rail industry as something to show how his supposedly dynamic rule had improved Italian life. But in truth, there was only minimal improvement in Italian railways but a huge suppression of liberalism and individual civil rights.



Benito Mussolini – the first Fascist dictator – and Adolf Hitler - 1943.

Hitler's ruthless rise to power was fuelled by Germany's nationalistic ambitions. He made military pacts with Italy and Japan (known as the Axis) and stealthily built up Germany's military forces and war arsenal. In 1936, Hitler moved troops into the German speaking areas of the Rhineland (in France), Austria and Czechoslovakia without any resistance, because neither Britain nor France had the military resources to resist. This move heartened the huge following of the Nazis in Germany and strengthened its resolve for war.

Great Britain and France had been pursuing a policy of appeasement with Hitler. The sight of the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, brandishing a piece of paper – the Munich Peace Agreement of 1938 – is an iconic image of history. History proved that it was worthless. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain cuts a sad figure in history. He fought doggedly to prevent war and in doing so, delayed its outbreak for a couple of years. Some historians have taken a more favourable perspective of Chamberlain and his policies by arguing that going to war with Germany in 1938 would have been even more disastrous as the UK was totally unprepared.

His conduct of the war was heavily criticised by members of all parties in the British Parliament and, in a vote of confidence, his government's majority was greatly reduced. Accepting that a national government supported by all the main parties was essential, Chamberlain resigned the prime-ministership because the Labour and Liberal parties would not serve under his leadership. Although he still led the Conservative Party, he was succeeded as Prime Minister by his colleague, Winston Churchill.

Chamberlain's reputation remains controversial among historians, the initial high regard for him being eroded for failing to prepare Britain for war. Most historians in the generation following Chamberlain's death held similar views, led by Churchill in *The Gathering Storm*. Nonetheless, Chamberlain is still unfavourably ranked amongst British prime ministers.





Neville Chamberlain declaring peace in our time through the Munich Peace Agreement.

In August 1939, Hitler and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin signed a non-aggression pact which further alarmed Great Britain and France. Hitler had long planned an invasion of Poland, a nation to which Great Britain and France had guaranteed military support if it were attacked by Germany. The pact meant that Germany could invade Poland unopposed without facing a war on two fronts. On the other hand, Stalin was buying time so that Russia could build up its war machinery without waging war against Germany. They also made an agreement on how they would later divide up Eastern Europe. The pact fell apart in June 1941 when Nazi forces invaded the Soviet Union.

Britain and France's attempts to appease Germany by agreeing to Germany entering some parts of Czechoslovakia as agreed in the peace agreement of 1938 was flaunted when Germany invaded Poland in September 1939. Hitler was under the misapprehension that he could march into Poland with impunity. He had been playing brinkmanship with Britain and France and he believed that they would bow to his bluff but it was this act that caused Britain and France to declare war on Germany. Hitler was shocked. As was the case in the First World War, Australia automatically became involved as a member of the British Commonwealth.

On the other side of the world, Japan too was hit badly by the economic depression. Like Germany, Japan had a strong, militaristic tradition of warrior culture. The Japanese people had lost faith in the government and they looked to the army to find a solution to their problems. Japan was hungry for mineral and oil resources and their military class had ambitions of ousting the US as the major power in the Pacific.

The Japanese had already begun imperial expansion in Manchuria (1931), Inner Mongolia (1936), and China (1937). China was rich in oil and minerals and Japan needed these resources to build up its war machinery. China sought international help from the League of Nations in resisting the Japanese invasion but they were ignored.

The Empire of Japan entered the Second World War on 27 September 1940, by signing the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy. It further expanded its territory by the invasion of French Indo-China (Vietnam) in September 1940. The US was concerned about the security of its Pacific territories and strengthened its naval fleet which was stationed at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii. Japan, realising that its expansion in the Pacific could be threatened by this move by the US, attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 aiming to destroy the US fleet at one fell swoop. For seven hours on that same day, there were coordinated Japanese attacks on

the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island, the Dutch East Indies<sup>1</sup>, Thailand, Borneo, Malaya, and Hong Kong. The strategic goals of the Japanese offensive were to cripple the US Pacific fleet, capture the oil fields in the Dutch East Indies, and maintain their sphere of influence over China, East Asia, and Korea. It was also to expand the outer reaches of the Japanese Empire to create a formidable defensive perimeter around the newly acquired territory.

The bombing of Pearl Harbour was a critical turning point in the war. America declared war on Japan immediately but not on Germany. In fact, it was Hitler who declared war on America on 11 December 1941. He thought that Japan would support Germany by attacking Russia but this did not eventuate. This was a catastrophic blunder on Hitler's part as it created a grand alliance of nations – America, Britain and Russia – which was eventually to bring powerful offensives from both the east and west to defeat the Nazi forces in Europe.



USS *Arizona* sinking during the attack on Pearl Harbour.

Australia entered the war after Britain's declaration of war on 3 September 1939. By the end of the war, almost a million Australians had served in the armed forces in the European theatre, the North African campaign and the South West Pacific theatre. Australia also came under direct attack for the first time in its post-colonial history. Its casualties from enemy action during the war were 27,000 killed and 24,000 wounded. Many more suffered from tropical disease, hunger, and harsh conditions in captivity. Of the 21,467 Australian prisoners taken by the Japanese only 14,000 survived.

Australia's initial involvement in the Second World War was in Europe and North Africa. The Royal Australian Navy participated in operations against Italy in June 1940 and Australian airmen flew in the Battle of Britain the following August and September. The Australian army was not engaged in combat until 1941, when the 6th, 7th, and 9th Divisions joined Allied operations in the Mediterranean and North Africa.

Following early successes against Italian forces, the Australians suffered defeat with the Allies at the hands of the Germans in Greece, Crete, and North Africa. In June and July 1941 Australians participated in the successful Allied invasion of Syria, a mandate of France and the Vichy government. Up to 14,000 Australians held out against repeated German attacks in the

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<sup>1</sup> The Dutch East Indies was often referred to as NEI (Netherlands East Indies) and is now Indonesia. Likewise, New Guinea was the entire island which has now been split into Irian Jaya (part of Indonesia) and Papua New Guinea. Malaya included Singapore – which is now a separate country – and the remaining part is now Malaysia.

Libyan port of Tobruk, where they were besieged between April and August 1941. After being relieved at Tobruk, the 6th and 7th Divisions departed from the Mediterranean theatre for the war against Japan. The 9th Division remained to play an important role in the Allied victory at El Alamein in October 1942 before it also left for the Pacific. By the end of 1942 the only Australians remaining in the Mediterranean theatre were airmen serving either with 3 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) or in the Royal Air Force (RAF).

Following the outbreak of war with Japan, Australian units were gradually withdrawn back to home base. However, units and personnel of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) continued to take part in the war against Germany and Italy. From 1942 until early 1944, Australian forces played a key role in the Pacific War, making up the majority of Allied strength throughout much of the fighting in the South West Pacific theatre. While the military was largely relegated to subsidiary fronts from mid-1944, it continued offensive operations against the Japanese until the war ended.

The map below shows places mentioned in the stories of many of the men I write about in *Roads to War* who served in the New Guinea and New Britain campaigns.



Map depicting eastern New Guinea and New Britain - 1944.

The Second World War contributed to major changes in Australia's economy and its military and foreign policy. The war accelerated the process of industrialisation, led to the development of a larger peacetime military and began the process of Australia shifting the focus of its foreign policy from Britain to the United States. The final effects of the war also contributed to the development of a more diverse and cosmopolitan Australian society through the migration of European refugees.

The war also saw the emergence of women playing vital roles in the war effort. Although nurses accompanied the AIF in 1940, during the early years of the war women were not called on to make any significant contribution. Labour shortages forced the government's hand and, in February 1941, the RAAF established the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF). The RAN also began employing female telegraphists, leading to the establishment of the



Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) in 1942. The Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) was also established in October 1941 and outside the armed services, the Women's Land Army (WLA) was established to encourage women to work in rural industries. Other women in urban areas took up employment in industries, such as munitions production.



Keep them flying! This is a recruiting poster for the WAAAF – 1941.

The Second World War brought new horrors to history. In terms of total dead, about three per cent of the world's population was obliterated – 75 million people. Many people died because of deliberate genocide, mass bombings, massacres, disease and starvation. The concentration camps of the Germans, the prisoner of war camps of the Japanese and the gulags of the Russians saw unimaginable atrocities committed in the name of nations.

Nazi Germany killed over 11 million people because of their ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, physical/mental condition or religion. This included six million Jews. Up to 10 million Chinese people were enslaved by the Japanese to work in the mines to provide the war materiel for the Japanese. Of the 5.7 million Russian prisoners of war held in Germany, fifty-seven per cent died or were killed.

These awful acts of cruelty driven by insane prejudice, in a perverse way, legitimised the Second World War when compared to others. It would be intolerable to think of what the world may have been like had Hitler succeeded. The disdain for liberal democracy and the parliamentary system by Fascism and Nazism is now widely recognised as immoral and evil. The horror of the Holocaust could never be conceived on any rational basis and the fact that it occurred should never be forgotten. The period of the Second World War must go down in history as one of the World's darkest periods – in terms of numbers, the darkest of all time.

Although Germany and Japan stole the march on their enemies by preparing early for the war, the mobilization of people, resources and war materiel by the Allies was a critical component of the war effort. After the commencement of the war, the Allies were able to eventually outpace the Axis' war production. America's involvement was key. By the end of the war US factories had produced 300,000 planes, and by 1944 had produced two-thirds of the Allied



military equipment used in the war. Eighteen American shipyards built 2,710 Liberty ships between 1941 and 1945 – an average of three ships every two days.



*S.S. John W. Brown* – one of four surviving Liberty ships photographed in 2000.

The Second World War introduced its own set of innovations. The jeep was one of them. Its name is derived from its initials GP – standing for General Purpose vehicle. It was originally developed in the United States where the government called on manufacturers to submit designs. It had to be light and manoeuvrable, able to carry three people and capable of driving in deep mud and climbing steep slopes. The final design was a hybrid of designs by Ford, Willys-Overland and the American Bantam Car Company.

The jet engine was another innovation but it had little impact on the prosecution of the war. Even though the Germans flew the first jet propelled aircraft in 1939, and the British in 1941, its final development for combat aircraft came after the war. However, it did terrorise England in the form of buzz-bombs. The Japanese seized most of the rubber plantations in Asia and the Allies were forced to find alternative materials for tyres as well as for clothing and footwear. America accelerated early research on synthetic rubber and they were able to produce 800,000 tons by 1944.

Radar played a significant role. Systems were installed around England's south and east coasts and during the Battle of Britain in 1940, it enabled the British military early warning of imminent German attacks.

Perhaps the most important innovation to save lives during the war was the development of penicillin. Developed in 1928 by Alexander Fleming, it proved invaluable on the battlefield, fending off infection and hugely increasing survival rates among injured soldiers. The United States manufactured more than two million doses of the drug in preparation for the Normandy landings in 1944.

On 8 May 1945, Germany signed an unconditional surrender to the Allies. Hitler had committed suicide on 30 April during the Battle of Berlin and Germany's surrender was authorised by Hitler's successor, Admiral Karl Dönitz. The war in Europe was over but it still raged in the Pacific.

But the most significant innovation was to end the war. It ended finally with the detonation of two atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (on 6 and 9 August 1945). They unleashed a

power never seen before – not only in the devastation of the explosions themselves but also the long-lasting effects of radiation. The two bombings killed somewhere between 130,000 and 230,000 people, most of whom were civilians<sup>2</sup>. Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945, six days after the Soviet Union’s declaration of war on Japan. There is still much debate concerning the ethical and legal justification for the bombings. Supporters believe that the atomic bombings were necessary to bring a swift end to the war with minimal casualties, while critics argue that the Japanese government could have been brought to surrender through other means, while highlighting the moral and ethical implications of nuclear weapons and the deaths caused to civilians.



Hiroshima after the atom bomb blast. The domed building was one of the few that was not flattened and is now a memorial to all of the citizens of Hiroshima who died or were injured.

Now, nine nations have nuclear weapons and the horrendous threat of nuclear war still pervades the world today.

## **AND NOW FOR SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL**

I can’t think of anything beautiful today. Essendon footy club has collapsed into its old habits – which is very depressing.

The only thing that lifts my spirit is this wonderful painting which is mounted on my refrigerator. It is painted by my granddaughter and depicts Christmas eve. Santa Claus is on the roof with his bag of presents but the fire is alight with smoke coming out of the chimney. The Christmas tree is in the corner and the table is set for Christmas day. Matilda said that Santa will have to come in through the front door.

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<sup>2</sup> The American Air Force’s fire-bombing of Tokyo on the night of 9/10 March 1945 is the single most destructive bombing raid in history – killing up to 130,000 people and leaving over one million people homeless. The city comprised mostly wooden houses with paper windows.





Christmas Eve by Matilda Jellie

## TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

### The lure of the city

A city can be defined as a demographic population, as a metropolitan area, or a labour market area. UNICEF defines a metropolitan area as follows:

*A formal local government area comprising the urban area as a whole, and its primary commuter areas, typically formed around a city with a large concentration of people (i.e., a population of at least 100,000). In addition to the city proper, a metropolitan area includes both the surrounding territory with urban levels of residential density and some additional lower-density areas that are adjacent to and linked to the city (e.g., through frequent transport, road linkages or commuting facilities).*

Britannica defines a city as follows:

*A relatively permanent and highly organized centre of population, of greater size or importance than a town or village. The name city is given to certain urban communities by virtue of some legal or conventional distinction that can vary between regions or nations. In most cases, however, the concept of city refers to a particular type of community, the urban community, and its culture, known as “urbanism.”*

We intuitively know what a city is and I think most of us live in a pretty remarkable one - Melbourne – despite the criticisms we occasionally throw at it. There are over 5 million people living in Melbourne. There is a debate about Melbourne overtaking Sydney as the most populous city in Australia – but it depends on where you draw the boundaries. I would call it a draw at the moment but if trends continue, there will be no doubt that Melbourne will exceed Sydney within the next decade.

On a world-wide basis, Melbourne and Sydney are in the top 100 list of cities exceeding five million people – just.

Tokyo is the world's most populous city with 37.5 million. It is followed by Delhi (28.5 m), Shanghai (25.5 m), Sao Paulo (21.6 m), Mexico City (21.5 m), Cairo (20 m) Mumbai (20 m), Beijing (19.6 m), Dhaka (19.6 m), and Osaka (19.2 m). These are the top ten. New York is eleventh with 18.8 million people.

About half of the world's population live in cities, and by 2050, it is estimated that this figure will rise to two-thirds, but, as you will see below, two of the most pressing problems facing the cities of the future are poverty and environmental degradation.

Bad urban development isn't just ugly aesthetics. It's also poor air and water quality, insufficient water availability, waste-disposal problems, and high energy consumption, all of which are exacerbated by the increasing population density and demands of urban environments. Strong city planning is essential in managing these and other difficulties as the world's urban areas grow.

Delhi is the most polluted capital city in the world. India, of which Delhi is the capital, was also ranked as the world's third-most polluted country. India has the world's highest death rate from chronic respiratory diseases and asthma, according to the WHO. In Delhi, poor quality air irreversibly damages the lungs of 2.2 million or 50 percent of all children.

Experts say that rapid industrialisation coupled with weak enforcement of environmental laws have played a role in increasing pollution in the country. India has seen a lot of development in the past few decades, but poor industrial regulation means that factories do not follow pollution-control measures. Rapid construction has also contributed to rising levels of pollution.

Motor vehicle emissions are one of the main causes of poor air quality. Other causes include wood-burning fires, cow dung cake combustion, fires on agricultural land, exhaust from diesel generators, dust from construction sites, burning land fill garbage and illegal industrial activities.

The Badarpur Thermal Power Station, a coal-fired power plant built in 1973, was another major source of air pollution in Delhi. Despite producing less than 8% of the city's electric power, it produced 80 to 90% of the particulate matter pollution from the electric power sector in Delhi. During the Great Smog of Delhi in November 2016, the Badarpur Power Plant was temporarily shut down to alleviate the acute air pollution but was allowed to restart on 1 February 2017. In view of the detrimental effect to the environment, the power plant has been permanently shut down since 15 October 2018.





The photo on the left was taken during the Covid lockdown and the other is quite recent.

I originally set out to describe the ugly aesthetics of some of the cities around the world but I think it is best if I let the pictures tell the story.

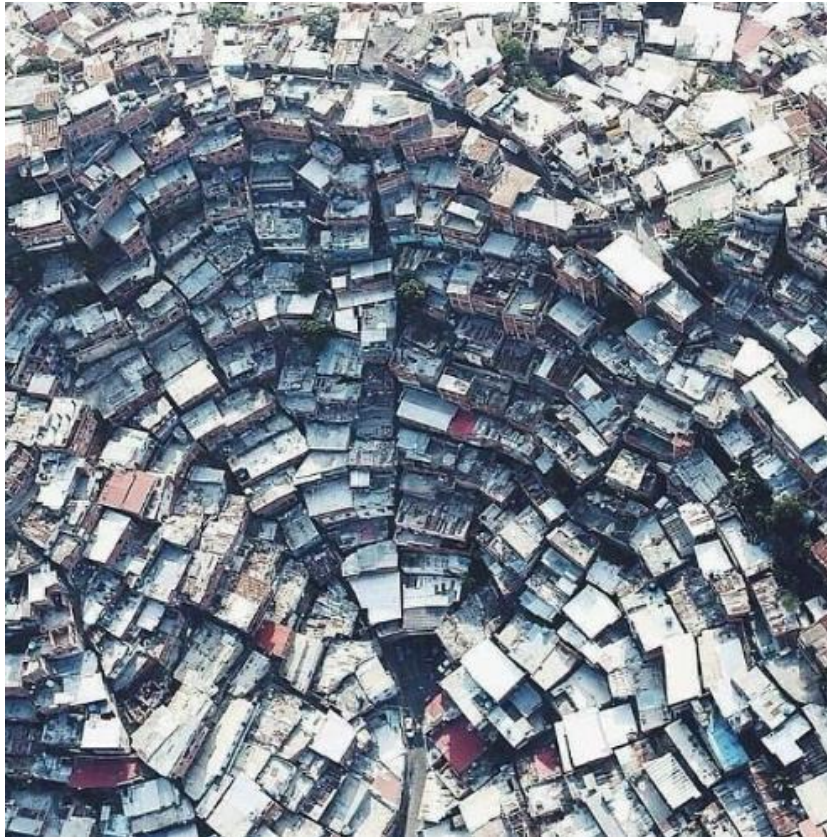


Hong Kong





Not a single tree in sight in this suburb of Cairo, Egypt.



'Housing' in Petare, Venezuela





Kowloon Peninsula, Hong Kong. A comparison between 1964 and 2016.



Naples, Italy. A villa amongst the bridges.



People offering prayers at River Yamuna, India, which is frothing from industrial waste

Thank goodness we live in Melbourne.



## **Such is life**

A friend suggested putting horse manure on my strawberries. I'm never doing that again, I'm going back to whipped cream.

If money is the root of all evil, why do they ask for it in church?

Did you know that by replacing your potato chips with grapefruit as a snack you can lose up to 90% of what little joy you still have left in your life.

I don't usually brag about going to expensive places, but I just left the petrol station.

At the bank, I told the cashier, "I'd like to open a joint account please."

"OK, with whom?"

"Someone with lots of money."

I don't want to get technical or anything, but according to Chemistry, alcohol is a solution.

When I drink alcohol everyone says I'm an alcoholic.

When I drink Fanta, no one says I'm fantastic!

## **I believe in miracles**

Three men were sitting on a beach in the South of France. They looked out over the water and saw Jesus Christ coming toward them.

When He got to them the first man said, "You're the Lord, huh? Well, when I was a child, I broke my ankle. It never healed and I've never been able to run. If you were the Lord, you could fix that?"

Jesus looked at him, touched his ankle, and the guy got up and ran down the beach, shouting; "I can run! I can run!"

The second man was a lot more respectful. "Lord," he said, "When I was a child, a firecracker blew out my eardrum. Do you think you could fix it?" Jesus looked at him, touched his ear, and the man ran down the beach after his friend, shouting; "I can hear! I can hear!"

Jesus looked at the third man who got up and backed away, saying; "Would you mind staying away from me mate? - I'm an Aussie, and I'm on Workers Comp!"

## **Old Age**

An "older" gentleman worked for a Bunnings store, helping direct customers at the entrance. He was a great success with customers and staff and everyone loved him. He had an easy way with people, but had one fault.

He was always late arriving for work in the morning.

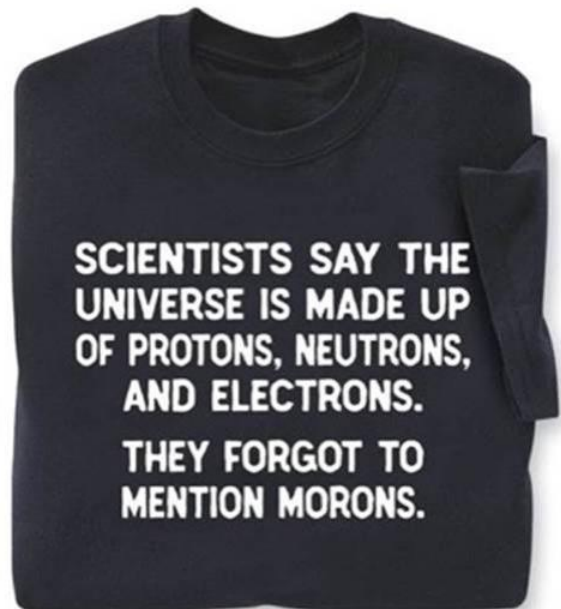
When it was time for the manager to call him in for a review of his work, he was full of praise, affirming the staff member, telling him about all the good reports he'd heard about him.

He gently tried to bring up the matter of his lack of punctuality.

"You used to be in the Navy, I believe? What did they say to you when you arrived late then?"

"They would say: 'Good morning, Admiral, may I get you a coffee?' "

### **Tee-Shirt messages of wisdom**



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