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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 had a morning cup of coffee with Rob Aitken recently. We both attended the Association's visit to the Shrine of Remembrance and Rob suggested we get together the following morning. We often do this when Rob comes down to Melbourne from his home in the country. Unbeknownst to me, Rob had arranged for Tuan Hoang to join us, so when I arrived it was a great surprise to see Tuan again after so many years.

Most of our conversation revolved around our times working for the Overseas Projects Corporation of Victoria (OPCV) during the 1990s. I first met Tuan when I successfully tendered for an Asian Development Bank funded project in Bangladesh. I was quite excited because it was the first project I won for the company. The project involved establishing a computerised registration and licensing system in the Bangladesh.

I went across to Bangladesh pre-tender to look at their current processes and to assess the other factors likely to affect the project – such as office accommodation, vehicle inspection facilities, current skill levels, computer capability – and even the reliability of power supply – to name a few. It was my first visit to Dhaka which is one of the largest cities in Asia. At that time, there was a lot of poverty and it was the rickshaw capital of the world.



The rickshaws of Dhaka.

Bangladesh is a small country but is the eighth-most populous country in the world and the most densely populated. At the time I first visited, it was still emerging from the Bangladesh Liberation War when, as East Pakistan, it severed from West Pakistan because of a dispute over language. The Pakistani Government located in West Pakistan had decreed that the official language for the divided country should be Urdu (as spoken in the west) and the Bengali speakers in the east revolted. There were other factors too, as East Pakistanis felt that they received less largesse from the Pakistan government than their counterparts in the west.

It is interesting to note that Bangladesh, in 2021, emerged as the second largest economy in south Asia in terms of per capita income, surpassing both India and Pakistan. Bhutan is the highest.

When I returned to Australia, I wrote up a methodology for the project and assembled a team to prosecute the job, including Peter Lowe, Leon Stephens, John Trainor and Tuan Hoang who had either worked for or were working for VicRoads. Michael Heppell from the Public Service Board of Victoria was also recruited for the team. I had briefed all the team members about Bangladesh during the preparation of the tender but, because Tuan was such an unassuming and gentle person, I thought it was only appropriate to thoroughly brief him about what I thought would be the difficulties of working in Bangladesh.

I described the bustling population – you can never be alone in Dhaka – the poverty, the cultural mores I had been advised of in a visit to the Australian High Commission, the dirty streets, and the smells. You might think this was a bit of overkill, but during my career at OPCV we had experience of a number of consultants who could not handle their unfamiliar environment. That is the origin of the term ‘going troppo’.

I thought I had done a great job with Tuan, emphasising that his task was going to be difficult. All the time he looked at me half quizzically with a slight smile, and when I had finished my diatribe, he said quietly, “David, I came to Australia as a boat refugee from Vietnam. I know what difficulty is.”

I felt very small. Tuan went on to do other projects for OPCV in other countries and became a very successful consultant for OPCV and a great person to work with.

At our morning coffee, he mentioned that he had written about coming to Australia from Vietnam for a refugee Facebook group which I have included later in this newsletter.

NEW MEMBER

I am pleased to advise that Keven Urbancic has joined the Association and we look forward to seeing him at some of our functions.

VALE

Bruce Phillips contacted me on 5 September with the sad news that Colin Kosky had died. This is what he wrote:

‘I’ve heard, yesterday, from Dinah Kosky (Colin's wife) with very sad news. Colin passed away on Monday following a lengthy fight with brain cancer.

He was one of the youngest Regional Managers (for South-West/Geelong) ever appointed in VicRoads and was an outstanding manager of people and resources.

He will be sorely missed by his family and all those who came in contact with him.

Colin will be farewelled privately by his family and a function, to celebrate Colin's work and life is to be held (by invitation) in Geelong, next week.

I found Colin to be a good friend, a brilliant thinker, and one having similar ideals and impressions to uphold the high standards of road design, construction and maintenance in Australia.

With great sorrow

Bruce Phillips'

After informing members via email, I received many expressions of condolences from members attesting to Colin's ability, integrity and humanity – two of which I have included below. The first is from John Scully who wrote:

'David,

Extremely sad news about Colin.

I remember when I first started with VicRoads in 1995 and was visiting each of the Regional Managers. Colin was a wonderful and charming host in Geelong when I met him. I thought he was clever, interesting and faced the world with a tolerant and philosophical attitude.

His wife was equally charming and when invited to dinner I took a wine Dinah really liked. I felt at home immediately.

He was an excellent example of those VicRoads managers who I had the privilege to work with because they really cared about their job. Colin made me proud to work for VicRoads.

John'

The second is from Kevin Mintern-Lane.

'Hi David.

Thank you for this very sad news as I'm feeling gutted by it.

Having worked with Colin many years ago I was always so impressed by his enthusiasm and ability to relate to everyone and blend into the teams.

If you are able to, can you please pass on my deepest sympathy and condolences to the family.

Regards

Kevin Mintern-Lane'

All the tributes could be summed up simply by saying that Colin was one of the good ones. We express our sympathy to his family and friends but he has left a great lot of appreciation and respect from his colleagues.

WHAT'S COMING UP

We need to know how many people are coming on our Great Alpine Road trip. The dates are:

- **Wednesday, 6 November** - We meet in Traralgon at 12.30 pm for lunch and stay overnight in Bairnsdale.
- **Thursday 7 November** - We drive From Bairnsdale to Bright along the Great Alpine Road.
- **Friday, 8 November** - We stay overnight in Bright, then disperse for home or elsewhere.

If you wish to join us, please contact David Jellie on pdjellie@hotmail.com

Further details of the trip are provided below.

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.

Date	Event	Contact Person
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
2025		
Monday 3 February	12 noon Occasional Lunch, Doncaster Shoppingtown Hotel	Just turn up.

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

This is the last notice regarding our Golf Day.

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.

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 or SMS 0412 064 527.

Great Alpine Road Trip, Wednesday 6 November to Friday 8 November.

I provided details about the history of the road in the last newsletter. Many claim it to have Australia's most spectacular mountain scenery – the inland equivalent of the Great Ocean Road.

The itinerary for Thursday, 7 November along the Great Alpine Road is:

The first township we encounter on the Great Alpine Road is Bruthen – only 15 minutes from Bairnsdale. It is a pity it is so close to Bairnsdale because the local bakery sells the best pies and pasties you will ever taste. We always stop there on our family holidays to Southern NSW - both going and coming.

Bruthen, located on the Tambo River, is dairy country with gently rolling hills. The Tambo River is located just to the south of town and it makes its journey into the Gippsland Lakes system via Swan Reach, entering Lake King north of the fishing village of Metung.

The next town is the small community of Swifts Creek, located at the junction of the Tambo River and Swifts Creek. The area was originally settled by Europeans in the gold rushes of the mid-1800s. At the time of the 2011 census, Swifts Creek and the surrounding area had a population of 419.



The farm land at Swifts Creek.

Driving north another 25 km we reach Omeo, where we will stop for lunch. Omeo is much the same size as Swifts Creek – it has a population of 406. The name is derived from an Aboriginal word for 'mountains' or 'hills'. Omeo has many historic buildings remaining in the town and it is the commercial hub for the Omeo Region and service centre for outlying communities such as Benambra, Cobruna, Cassilis, Swifts Creek and Ensay.

We will have lunch at the Golden Age Motel. You can't miss it!



The Golden Age Motel in Omeo.

There are a few things we could do before or after lunch. For example, if you are in the market for a cuckoo clock, we could visit the shop which has probably the greatest range in Australia.



The famous cuckoo clocks!

The small town of Hinnomunjie is about 10 km from Omeo and has a site many old bridge engineers might be interested in.

The Hinnomunjie Bridge has been classified by the National Trust. It is historically and architecturally significant. Opened in 1910, it is the second oldest timber truss bridge known to the Trust in Victoria, and one of only two with multiple trusses. Its construction predated the formation of the Country Roads Board which built numerous timber truss bridges in the mid 1920s to standard patterns, and it differs in some details of construction. The bridge characterises the particular need in Gippsland to construct wider river spans. Its prominent trusses highlight its timber construction, and harmonise with the landscape. Broad-axe marks on its members are of special interest, and the bridge is of local importance as a legacy of the "Knocker's Track" to the tin and gold mines of the Glen Wills area.



Hinnomunjie Bridge

Ric Anderson from Benalla will meet us at Omeo and lead us on our journey to Bright. Using his local knowledge, we will stop at various places such as Dinner Plain and Mount Hotham.

Dinner Plain is the largest recreational horse-riding area in Australia. It is a thriving all-year-round resort with a wide range of summer activities such as bush walking, horse riding, mountain biking as well as a ski tow for use during winter.



Dinner Plain

The tradition of hospitality at Dinner Plain goes back well over a century, when mountain cattlemen first arrived to rest and graze their cattle. The site of Dinner Plain village was originally part of 640 acres (2.6 km²) property. When the coaches were running between Omeo and Bright, they would stop here for midday dinner, hence the area became known as Dinner Plain.

In 1987, Peter McIntyre and Harry Seidler shared the Zelman Cowan Award for non-residential architecture in Australia; McIntyre won for his design for the Ski Lodge at Dinner Plain.

Mount Hotham Alpine Resort is set on the slopes of Mount Hotham. The ski resort comprises an alpine village, situated at an altitude of 1,750 metres (5,740 ft), making it the second highest resort village in Australia after Charlotte Pass village, in NSW.



Mt Hotham village – with snow.

From Mount Hotham, we drive to our evening destination of Bright.

The town was first known as Morse's Creek but in 1861 it was renamed in honour of the British orator and politician, John Bright.

During the Victorian gold rush there was a rush to the nearby Buckland River. As the gold deposits gradually diminished, Chinese miners arrived in the area to sift the abandoned claims. Tensions over Chinese success from Anglo-Irish miners caused the violent Buckland Riot in 1857, resulting in the deaths of Chinese miners and the flight of 2,000 Chinese. The riot was eventually quelled by the Beechworth police under the command of Robert O'Hara Burke (of Burke and Wills fame) from 80 kilometres away.

Bright is a popular tourist centre through all seasons. The autumnal colours of the European trees planted in the area is celebrated during the Bright Autumn Festival. The town is close to the Victorian Alps and various alpine national parks and towns including Mount Buffalo, Mount Feathertop, Mt Bogong and Mount Hotham.

It is also popular for paragliders. There are many paragliding and hang glider launch sites close to Bright, and the town has become a centre of activity for paragliding festivals and competitions.



Aerial view of Bright.

I now have a confession to make. In the last newsletter, I suggested that we might visit the Kiewa Valley Hydro Scheme. However, after hours of research and enquiries I have found out that there is nothing to be seen in Bright. So, on Friday morning, you can sleep in if you like.

Normally for trips like these, we ask people to organise their own accommodation. However, there may be savings to be made with group bookings. It is therefore, important that I finalise the numbers as soon as possible.

If you are interested, please register with me on: pdjellie@hotmail.com

Those of you who have already registered need not re-apply.

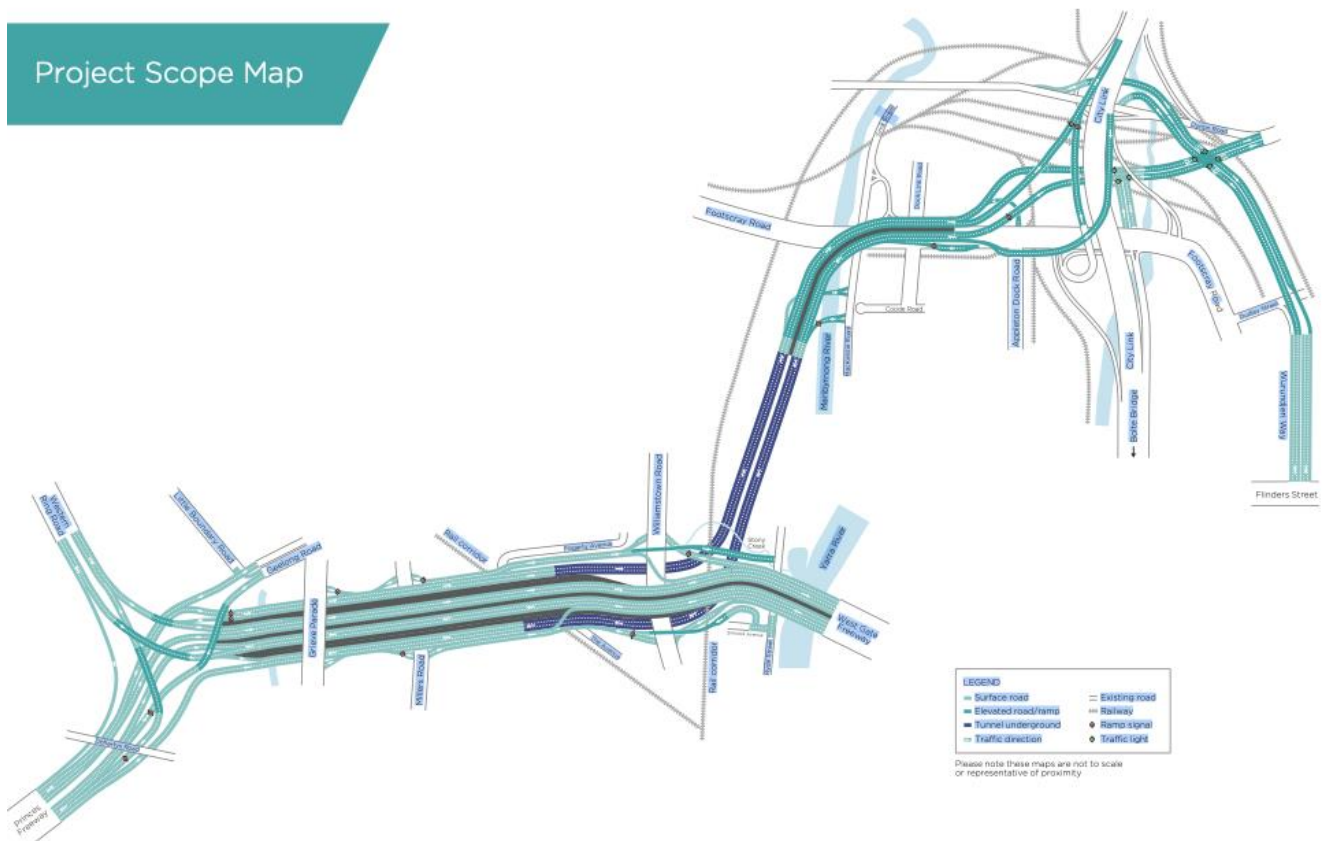
WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

West Gate Tunnel Project

On Monday 19 August, we had a very interesting bus tour of the West Gate Tunnel Project. Fifty members, friends and partners attended. Following the tour, we had lunch together at a local pub where we were joined by some of the West Gate Tunnel staff who accompanied us on the tour.

The West Gate Tunnel Project is a four-kilometre toll road currently under construction linking the West Gate Freeway at Yarraville with the Port of Melbourne and CityLink at Docklands via twin tunnels beneath Yarraville, as well as a bridge and elevated road section.

The project was first proposed by infrastructure company, Transurban, in 2014 as a means of alleviating congestion on the M1 corridor, providing a new river crossing as an alternative to the West Gate Bridge and moving trucks out of residential streets in the city's inner west. The freeway-standard link includes two tunnels with three lanes each that are approximately 4 km long outbound and 2.8 km long inbound, a new bridge over the Maribyrnong River, and an elevated road above Footscray Road. The project will also involve widening of the West Gate Freeway from eight to 12 lanes between the M80 Ring Road and the West Gate Bridge.



The underground tunnels in the map above are shown in dark blue, the surface roads in light green and the elevated roads in darker green. The connection to CityLink is in the top right-hand corner, and the connection to the Princes Highway is in the bottom left-hand corner. The connection to West Gate Bridge is in the centre of the plan.

The tunnels are 15.6 metres in diameter making them the largest in the southern hemisphere. There are three lanes of traffic in each tunnel. They were formed by two boring machines each

weighing 4,000 tonnes and measuring 90 metres in length. One machine has been dismantled and removed and the other has been buried underground.

There are three levels in the tunnels accommodating traffic, ventilation and maintenance.



Cross section showing the three levels.

The tunnels are lined with precast concrete segments which were manufactured in Benalla in northern Victoria. All other precast concrete components such as parapets and bridge segments were also cast there. Some of you will remember that we visited this facility a few years ago during our road trip to Benalla.

The new \$60 million precast concrete facility was built to provide more than 65,000 concrete products for the project. The facility included a new 700 metre rail siding and 600 metres of new rail track connecting it to the nearby freight line so that the concrete segments could be loaded directly on to freight trains and transported to Melbourne.

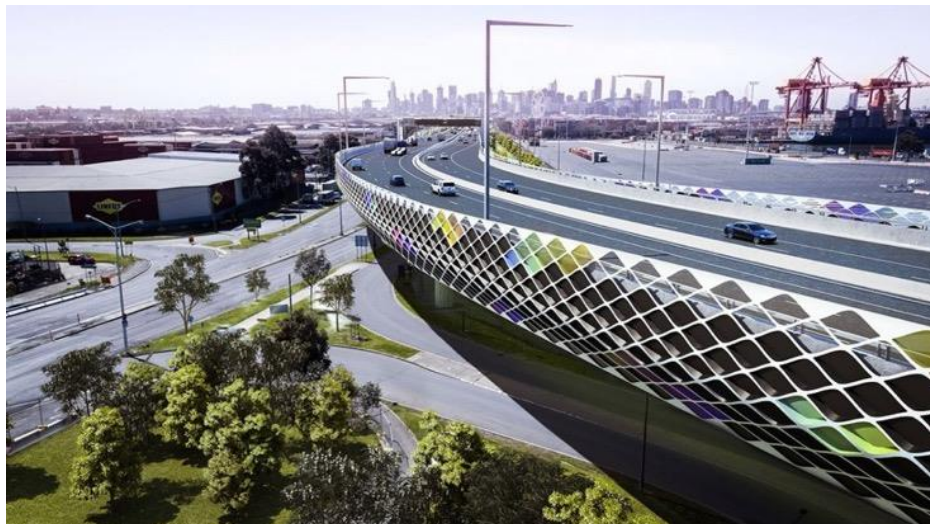
460 of the concrete components, weighing up to 160 tonnes, were too big for the railway tracks and were instead trucked to Melbourne via 52-metre long, five-metre high "superload" freight vehicles travelling at 25 km/h.



The entrance to one of the tunnels with precast concrete liner segments in the foreground.



Interior of a completed tunnel.



Artist's impression of the elevated roadway.

Visit to the Shrine of Remembrance, Monday 9 September

Below is Jill Earnshaw's report of the tour.

'In early September a group of members and some partners visited the Shrine of Remembrance and took a guided tour. This was just ahead of the 90th anniversary of its opening on 11 November 1934.

Whilst touring the outside of the Shrine, of particular interest were the four external buttresses (sacrifice, peace and goodwill, justice, and patriotism). There are also now four courtyards on each corner of the Shrine. The first of these was built in 2003 with the remaining three opened in 2014. The group then spent some time in the Sanctuary, Crypt and Galleries. The expansive gallery space underneath the monument includes over 800 artworks, historical artifacts and personal effects that illustrate the experiences of Australians in war and peacekeeping operations. If you haven't been to the Shrine, or not for some time, it is well worth a visit. It

was also interesting to see the number of school groups at the Shrine, with up to 60,000 school children visiting each year.

One of the current exhibitions on display there focusses on the competition to design the Shrine, Victoria's War Memorial. There were 84 entrants in the design competition with many, like the winning entry, taking inspiration from ancient Greek buildings. Visitors can explore the entries of the 1921 War Memorial design competition, each a testament to the social and political tapestry of that time. Offering a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the past, visitors can examine detailed plans, conceptual drawings and correspondence, and eavesdrop on conversations between designers and builders from the 1920s, gaining insight into the creative process behind the Shrine's inception.

A number of VicRoads Association attendees also utilized an on-site computer kiosk which holds computer data on people who enlisted in Victoria and serviced in World War II. Several then printed out, for a nominal cost of \$5, details of their relative's service which was then reprinted onto a larger certificate card and placed in an envelope - a special form of remembrance for generations to come.

We followed the visit with a very convivial lunch at the Rising Sun Hotel in South Melbourne.'



Some of the group who visited the Shrine of Remembrance.

I think the Shrine is a remarkable place and I was most impressed by the elegance and solemnity of the Crypt in the centre of the building.

In the centre of the Crypt stands the Father and Son sculpture created to honour the courage and sacrifice of two generations of Victorians who served and died in the First and Second World Wars.



The Father and Son sculpture.

It is symbolic of the service of many Victorian families, in which the father served in the First World War (1914-18) and the son in the Second World War (1939-45). Father and Son was unveiled in 1968 by the Governor of Victoria, Sir Rohan Delacombe. The sculpture was created by Raymond Ewers. The inscription on the sculpture reads:

These figures of father and son honour the courage and sacrifice which links two generations of Victorian Servicemen and women who served in the World Wars 1914-1918 and 1939-1945.

In both wars, fathers, sons and brothers enlisted together and many of the First World War veterans re-enlisted in the Second World War. The two wars were only 20 years apart.

I was also impressed by the beautiful frieze that ran around the four sides of the crypt. It was created by a young sculptor called Lyndon Dadswell.



Dadswell's frieze.



Details of some of the panels in the frieze.

In 1929, at the age of 21, Dadswell worked as an assistant to the English sculptor, Paul Montford, on the Shrine. He was responsible for the 12 sandstone panels of the inner frieze in the Shrine's interior. The remarkable thing is that the panels were carved *in situ*. He would have worked from a scaffolding platform high in the air and in a space which would have been fairly dark. A remarkable achievement for one so young.

Dadswell was the first sculptor to be appointed an official war artist of the Second World War. With a reputation as one of Australia's promising young sculptors, Dadswell travelled to London in 1935 to study at the Royal Academy. He returned to Sydney two years later to take up a teaching position at East Sydney Technical College (later the National Art School).

Following the onset of the Second World War, Dadswell enlisted in the 2nd Division Australian Imperial Forces on 29 April 1940. With the rank of acting corporal, he embarked for the Middle East in August 1940 and fought with the 2/3 Battalion in Greece, Libya and Syria. On 22 June 1941 he sustained gunshot wounds to the head and left leg while fighting the Vichy French in the Syrian campaign.

For several months prior to his injury, Dadswell's supporters back in Australia had been advocating the Commonwealth Arts Advisory Board, the Department of Information, and the Australian War Memorial, for his appointment as an official war artist. In September 1941 Dadswell was promoted to lieutenant and commissioned as an official war artist.

Based in Cairo, Dadswell created sculptures of his war time experience serving with the Australian infantry in the Middle East. Dadswell returned to Australia in 1942, and resigned from his commission as an official artist in December. He resumed teaching, and was a major influence on the next generation of Australian sculptors.

As reported by Jill, we had a very convivial lunch at the Rising Sun Hotel in South Melbourne. This is the official pub of the Sydney Swans (ex-South Melbourne) and I imagine there is a sombre atmosphere today, as I write this, two days after their disastrous grand final.



NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Beautiful people

The ex-Contract Services Group get together every six months or so and this photograph was taken at their most recent gathering. Lovely lot of people, aren't they?



Standing - Left to Right: Owen Thomas, Noel Osborne, Peter Crook, Anjila Gregory, Helen Yannacouplas, Kay Sinclair, Rex Atkins, Paul Petredis, Neville Schmidt, and Sri Thangarajah.
Seated: Niele Garcia and Robyn Robb.

Tuan Hoang's journey to Australia

On 30 April 1975, the north Vietnamese Communist Forces completed the invasion of South Vietnam with the fall of Saigon. The South Vietnamese government was dismantled, families torn apart and millions persecuted.

More than 1.5 million Vietnamese escaped the bloodshed and turmoil, between 1975 and 1995. Fleeing in overcrowded and unseaworthy boats, they became known as the Vietnamese Boat People.

Braving open seas, these refugees experienced hunger, dehydration and pirate attacks. Hundreds of thousands died, while many survivors were sent away after reaching nearby countries. Eventually, temporary refugee camps in Southeast Asia were established, giving them makeshift protections. Pursuing for peace and freedom, many later settled in western countries including Australia.

The first Vietnamese Boat People docked at Darwin Harbour on 26th of April 1976. This was the first time Australia welcomed new arrivals from outside of Europe, since the abolition of the White Australia Policy.

In the following ten years, over 80,000 Vietnamese people settled in Australia. Nowadays, more than 350,000 Vietnamese Australians proudly stand alongside the other refugees and migrants from around the world who call Australia home, and contribute to our rich cultural diversity and economic strength.

Tuan Hoang was a boat person who left Vietnam in an open boat to make a new life elsewhere. In his account below, he does not mention his journey on the open boat – whether by design or not – but he begins his story following his rescue in the South China Sea. This is Tuan's story.



'We were rescued by the Danish ship Adrian Maersk and arrived at the Singapore Refugee Camp on June 22, 1980.

Our escaping voyage began from the Can-Gio estuary¹, in a boat carrying 54 people. Later, our captain's daughter was born in the camp. We collectively and gratefully chose Denmark as our second homeland, with only two individuals opting for Australia due to family sponsorship.

When we first arrived at the camp, there was only a front gate. A few weeks later, fences surrounding the entire area were built to enforce Singaporean law prohibiting refugees from working outside the camp, risking work-related accidents and creating delays in resettlement. Despite the prohibition, people still managed to escape to rendezvous points outside the Sembawang market area where they were picked up by vehicles to work as labourers on various civil engineering projects, including bridge and high-rise buildings - notably, the construction of Changi Airport, which was opened in 1981.

Sembawang market located near the camp served as a place where our community bought goods and exchanged currencies and selling gold - one tael² of gold could fetch around 150 Singapore dollars, a substantial amount compared to the daily allowance of 2.5 dollars per person. Apart from the main camp, Singapore also had a separate facility for those suffering from lung diseases. Everyone had to undergo health check-ups and lung X-rays before boarding the plane. Those with signs of tuberculosis had to stay for treatment, taking medication for 1 to 2 months before reevaluation. This smaller medical station was situated in the Katong Centre area near the port, near the famous Merlion statue (the water spouting

¹ Cian Gio is about 50 Km south of Saigon (now called Ho Chi Minh City)

² A weight used in China and south east Asia approximating 50 grams.

icon.) It also served as a temporary detention centre for prisoners being transferred from the Galang camp via Singapore.

Regardless of our diverse backgrounds, once we arrived at the refugee camp, we were all welcomed with the heartfelt warmth from those arrived before us, as I vividly recall the day our ship docked in Singapore. After bidding farewell to the ship's crew, we stepped off the gangway onto a bus bound for the camp located in the suburban northwest. The journey was long with much traffic delays and took several hours to reach Hawkins Road. Despite the late hour, the camp residents stayed awake, waiting eagerly. Children ran alongside our bus from the entrance to the gathering point—a junction leading uphill to the Administrative Area. Some of our fellow refugees reached in through the bus windows to grasp our hands. They were so happy for us to survive the ordeal and welcome us like long time acquaintances.

Farewells within the camp, especially when bidding adieu to loved ones embarking on resettlement journeys, were equally poignant. Uncertainty about the future loomed large. Would we ever meet again? Many unspoken questions hung in the air, quietly exchanged through meaningful glances during partings.

Daily life in the camp involved various activities. Local Singaporeans, along with a few government representatives, managed the camp alongside the UNHCR, the Camp Director and the committees (task forces.) made up of dedicated volunteers. The committees were:

- Welfare Committees had numerous responsibilities including distributing second-hand blankets, mats, pillows, utensils, and clothing to newcomers.
- Outreach Committees which served as interpreters both within and outside the camp. e.g. when accompanying individuals to hospitals, assisting with medical appointments, and facilitating paperwork at embassies. They also helped fellow refugees compile settlement documents.
- Education Committees organized language classes.
- Health Committees provided medical care at the Camp Medical Centre.

Despite spending a few months in the camp, most of us felt a sense of contentment. Our minds were free, unburdened by worries about food and clothing. Even the crucial step of resettlement was well-organized, given the Singaporean government mandate that all refugees must be pre-approved by the country of the saving ship, before allowing them ashore.

It was through the outreach services that I came to know many benefactors who had long been assisting refugees. These compassionate individuals included UNHCR officials, volunteer teachers, and diplomats from the United States, Canada, Australia, France, and more. They either resided within the camp or accompanied us to the docking ships to conduct on-site interviews, medical examinations, and preparation for resettlement.

Their acts of compassion knew no borders. Figures like Dr. Rupert Neudeck and the medical team aboard the *Cap Anamur*³ ship received numerous plaudits of gratitude and acknowledgment. Personally, I will never forget Dr. Franz Koenig from *Cap Anamur*.

³ *Cap Anamur* is a humanitarian organisation with the goal of helping refugees and displaced people worldwide.



Tuan (on the right) and a fellow inmate in the Singapore camp.



Tuan with Dr Franz Koenig.

On one occasion, he picked us up from the camp to go to *Cap Anamur* to help the newly rescued refugees. Although there was already a skilled interpreter from the U.S. embassy, the sheer number of the refugees necessitated additional assistance. We helped people fill out forms with their personal details before the interviews. Afterward, Dr. Koenig took us back to the camp and, on the way, shared a late meal at the Night Market – under one of those housing high rises.



Cap Anamur II arriving in Hamburg, 1986

It was during that time, I noticed Dr. Koenig carry a sack filled with letters, aerograms, postcards, and more. His intention was to take them to the post office, the next morning, to send them to the families of the hundreds of refugees we just met. Such a meticulous care ensured their loved ones back home would receive news of their safe arrivals. And, he did that consistently, every time *Cap Anamur* docked, for all who asked for help.

Those letters were priceless gifts bringing joy to many Vietnamese families - mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and children, who anxiously awaited the great news.

Truly, he embodied the spirit of a genuine Santa Claus.

An enlightened being who selflessly serves others.

A compassionate Bodhisattva who walks the path of true enlightenment!

Today, as I scanned and uploaded old photos to Facebook, the faded traces of memories evoked a sense of nostalgia for cherished friends from the long past.

*Over forty years of loyal Friendship
Life swiftly flows like a passing dream...
Through upheavals, waves of the time past.
Fading photo images, yet sweet feelings gleam*

27/2/2024'

RTA SLACK Christmas Lunch

In our last newsletter reference was made to an intriguing gathering – the SLACK Christmas lunches. Jill Earnshaw explains what it is about.

‘Around 1985, part of the newly formed Road Traffic Authority (RTA) moved out of the old bowling alley in Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn, and re-established itself in 3 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell. Within a few steps was Burke Road with its wide variety of restaurants. Sometime after that first year, several members of the new Strategies group decided try out a few of the local restaurants.

Soon enough, local restaurants were contacting members of the team encouraging staff to visit their restaurant. This was the early days of the RTA’s Traffic Management Division and one of the teams in that Division was the Strategies Group. So, the Strategies Lunchtime Alcoholics Cuisine Klub (SLACK) was formed. Those were the days when you could have a beer or glass of wine at lunchtime. Whilst the group visited multiple lunch spots over time, sharing its patronage around, its annual Christmas party was always held at Sofia’s Pizza Restaurant.

That tradition continues even today though the restaurant is a far cry from the little, single fronted establishment it once was. Initially numbers were 50-60 people. In those early days senior staff did not attend but since they have retired the group has greeted a former Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Chief Engineer. Occasionally, the lunch drifted into dinner and continue on for a few hours after that. On one occasion, one attendee woke up at 3 am on a train to Hurstbridge; needless to say, he had fallen asleep and missed his station.

The group, whose membership has morphed a little over time, continues to gather each year for the SLACK Christmas Lunch, thanks to co-ordinator, Don Purdue, who is also a VicRoads Association member.

After gathering once a year for over 35 years, last year the group also introduced a midyear gathering. The menu has remained the same over all those years. A good feed is had by all though most are not able to eat as much as in their younger years! Whilst the group that gathers is a somewhat smaller these days, usually around 20-30, the lunches are characterized by lots of laughter and banter, reminiscing, and always a photo or two.



The SLACK Christmas lunch 2023.

WHAT WILL BECOME OF HER?

You will have read in the newspaper or seen on television reports about the future development of the site of head office in Kew.

A community meeting was held recently to explore ideas and to raise issues regarding the plans for housing on the site and a summary of these are given below. I am indebted to Biruta Don for providing these details.



Head Office looking pretty disconsolate on 16 September 2024.

Purpose and background

A community meeting on the housing plan for the Kew VicRoads site at 60 Denmark Street was held at Kew RSL on 27 August 2024. The meeting was an opportunity for residents and other stakeholders to learn more about the proposal, and to share their feedback and concerns with the Member for Kooyong, Dr Monique Ryan.

Invitations to the event were mailed to residents in nine streets proximate to the site. The event was also advertised on social media and on Monique Ryan's website. Over 90 residents attended.

Presentations were given by Associate Professor Rory Hyde (University of Melbourne School of Design) and Scott Walker (Director of Urban Living at City of Boroondara), followed by a Q and A session also involving Mayor Lisa Hollingsworth and Councillor Wes Gault.

Feedback provided in discussion, and in writing, has been collated and will be shared with the relevant Victorian government ministers in the coming weeks. This document outlines a summary of information provided about the site, key themes of constituent concerns, and planned next steps.

Site information

- The former Kew VicRoads site is 2.5 ha, with a tail connecting the site to Barkers Road.
- The site currently has three buildings built in the 1960s, ranging in height from five to eight storeys. (There are only two buildings – Ed.)
- VicRoads ceased operations on the site at the beginning of 2024.
- The site is owned by the Victorian State government (crown land)
- The site is close to the popular Kew Junction shopping precinct and has a number of adjacent public transport and cycling routes.
- The land has been declared surplus by the Department of Transport and Planning.

Rezoning Proposal

- The Victorian Minister for Planning is currently considering whether to prepare, adopt and approve Draft Boroondara Planning Scheme Amendment C411boro at 60 Denmark Street, Kew.
- Consultation has been undertaken under section 20(5) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.
- To recognise the land is no longer required for a public purpose and to allow its redevelopment, a planning scheme amendment was sought (in April) to make the following changes:
 - Rezoning the rectangular portion of the site from Transport Zone 1 – State Transport Infrastructure (TRZ1) to the **Commercial 1 Zone (CZ1)**;
 - Rezoning the southern 'tail' of the site from Transport Zone 1 – State Transport Infrastructure (TRZ1) to the **General Residential Zone (GRZ)**; and
 - Application of an **Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO)** to the site.
- Boroondara Council supports the CZ1 rezoning but advocates for the tail to be rezoned for public park and recreation to enable pedestrian and cycle connections along the former rail corridor to Barkers Rd.

- It has been suggested that the site could be developed for 500 homes, and that the Victorian government may set a target of at least 10 per cent of affordable homes in this development.
- Urban design guidelines have been shared with the State Government by Council; these have focussed on shadow impacts, design excellence, visual bulk management, pedestrian and cycle links, and enhanced open space.

Key Themes from Community Feedback

Key considerations are social/affordable housing spread, traffic and shadow impacts, enhancement of open space, pedestrian and cycle links, management of visual bulk, design, incorporating high value trees.

Victorian government’s approach to community consultation

- Strong sense of disappointment in the Victorian State Government’s approach to consulting residents on this, and other, developments.
- Concerns regarding State Government’s tendency to bypass the Council on such projects.
- Trust in State Government to consider constituent concerns and implement their feedback is low.
- Questions were raised about what Council can do to enable better participation in state government decisions like this.
- Concern regarding who the ultimate decision-makers are for this project.
- Strong desire to “keep public land public.”

Housing affordability

- The importance of incorporating social and affordable housing was emphasized.
- Many attendees supported the notion of a higher target of social and affordable housing than the 10% currently being discussed.
- Concerns regarding the ongoing housing crisis and the need to house essential workers like nurses, paramedics, and childcare workers close to their places of work.
- Strong support for Nightingale model of affordable housing; Bills Street in Hawthorn was also discussed as a model.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of clarity around definitions of social and affordable housing, compared to public housing and how these terms are used.
- Several residents expressed concern about their own capacity to afford to live in the area in the future.
- Acceptance of need to increase density to allow room for people across a range of income levels and lifestyles to live in the area.

Sustainability & Environment

- New homes should be built sustainably and in line with strong environmental and energy-saving considerations. For example, high star energy rating and solar panel installation.
- Strong support for the site’s “tail” being a public park space.
- Many advocated for good public spaces within the main part of the site as well.
- Tree preservation was raised, particularly high-value trees on the site that could be incorporated into the development.
- Suggestion for vegetation between units and playgrounds.

Traffic and transport

- Concerns were raised about the capacity for Denmark Street to handle additional traffic, particularly impact on residents.
- Suggestions of an underground carpark to avoid overcrowding street parking.
- Concern that the area is not currently safe for pedestrians and cyclists and that this is an opportunity for improvement in community safety.
- Support for a shared path along the tail and through California Inn site to existing shared path.
- Desire to extend or add to existing public transport services.
- Concern about on-street parking on Denmark Street (should be discouraged).

Design and Aesthetics

- The importance of design excellence was emphasized, with considerations for shadow impacts, visual bulk management, and maintaining lines of sight.
- Some concerns were raised about preserving views to existing structures - i.e. Xavier College and sunset/sunrise views. Suggested solution was to leave gaps between buildings so some views can be maintained.
- Discussed the potential for the existing VicRoads buildings to be refurbished rather than demolished.
- Possible height of new buildings was discussed, including suggestion that new buildings to be no higher than those currently in place.
- Development needs to take into consideration the design of existing dwellings in the immediate area.

Health and Safety

- Pedestrian, cyclist, and child safety was raised in relation to extra traffic.
- Concerns regarding the possibility of asbestos in current buildings and safety during demolition.
- Area needs to be safe and accessible for children.
- Concerns about impact of construction work of local traffic, air quality etc.
- Drainage issues from Kew Junction down Denmark Street were mentioned.

Community

- Potential impact on school zoning for current residents.
- Impact on property values.
- Desire to foster a diverse community.
- Call for a mix of infrastructure providing community services and supports

Economic Considerations

- The high cost of developments, including taxes, materials, and labour, was discussed.
- There is a need for sufficient margins to make developments viable.

LEST WE FORGET

This is an extract from *Roads to War* regarding the events leading up to the Korean War. I could find only three people who worked with the CRB or its successors who served in this war – Stoker Mechanic Max Airey, Private Mick Doyle and Corporal Kenneth Goudie.

The Korean War was the first major conflict following the end of the Second World War. It was also the first military action of the Cold War between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. The Cold War conflict was a civil war that became a proxy battle between the superpowers as they clashed over communism and democracy. It was a war of political ideology.

The main reason the United States became involved in Korea was to do everything possible to keep communism from spreading around the world. Since the beginning of the Cold War the United States had practiced a policy of containment against the expansion of communism and wanted to prevent the ideology from taking root in different regions of the world. For its part, the Soviet Union had actively supported the spread of communism in places such as Cuba, Korea, Vietnam and Eastern Europe. The American involvement in the Korean War was to contain what was coined at the time, the Domino Theory, whereby if one country fell to communism then its neighbours would tumble successively like a line of domino pieces.

The Vietnam War started as a civil war between North Korea and South Korea in 1950. At the end of the Second World War, Soviet forces accepted the surrender of Japanese forces north of latitude 38° N (known as the 38th parallel) and the U.S.A. forces accepted Japanese surrender south of it. Negotiations failed to reunify the two halves, the northern half being supported by the Soviet Union and the southern half being backed by the U.S. In 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea, and U.S. President Harry Truman ordered troops in to assist South Korea. The UN Security Council, minus the absent Soviet delegate, passed a resolution calling for the assistance of all UN members in halting the North Koreans. At first North Korean troops drove the South Korean and U.S. forces down to the southern tip of the Korean peninsula, but a successful amphibious landing at Inchon, turned the tide in favour of the UN forces. They pushed the North Koreans back up the Korean Peninsula to the Yalu River on the Chinese border.



Invasion of Inchon – September 1950

China – whose border was now threatened by the US – then entered the war. Chinese forces stole through the mountain passes, mostly at night, and penetrated the US army and fought a brilliant guerrilla war and forced the Americans back to the 38th parallel. Once this parallel had been reached both sides dug in and it became a war of attrition. The stalemate continued for two years before an armistice was negotiated. However, during this period of attrition, the US unleashed an apocalyptic air bombing campaign which destroyed nearly all of North Korea's towns and cities – and 85 per cent of its buildings. Although napalm is usually associated with the later Vietnam War, it was first used in Korea to devastating effect. In August 1951, an international war correspondent, Tibor Meray, stated that he had witnessed "*a complete devastation between the Yalu River and the capital.*" He said that there were "*no more cities in North Korea.*" He added, "*My impression was that I am traveling on the moon because there was only devastation - every city was a collection of chimneys.*"

Like most wars, it is not known how many people died in the Korean War, but it is certain that most of the people killed were civilians. The figures I quote here are more conservative than some other sources but who knows what is correct? In total, about three million people died, two thirds of whom were civilians. The remaining million were killed in battle - including 600,000 Chinese and 300,000 Koreans (on both sides). The American Department of Defense (sic) quotes a death toll of American troops of 36,574 and other UN troops make up the balance.

From 1950-53, 17,000 Australians in all defence forces fought as part of the United Nations (UN) multinational force. After the war ended, Australians remained in Korea for four years as military observers. Since then, Australia has maintained a presence, discharged by the Australian Military Attaché.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Australian troops move through the wreckage of a North Korean town.

Of the 17,000 Australian combatants who served in the Korean War - 340 were killed, 1,200 were injured and 30 were captured.

Neither side 'won' the Korean War but South Korea was saved from the yoke of communism. It is now a successful and prosperous nation. Officially the war has not ended although shots haven't been fired for 70 years. It is a ceasefire that hasn't been followed by a peace treaty. It has also left North Korea as one of the poorest nations on earth – under the oppression of totalitarianism more than communism. Kim Il-sung was the Commander of the North Korean forces during the war and ruled the country until his death in 1994. His son, Kim Jong-il, succeeded him, and he in turn was succeeded by his son, Kim Jong-un.



Official portrait of Kim Il Sung, often seen in public places.

Now, North Korea is often referred to as the ‘Hermit Kingdom’. It is widely recognized as having the worst human rights record in the world. Severe restrictions are placed on the political and economic freedoms of its citizens, internal travel is tightly controlled and employment is doled out on the basis of political reliability. Political prisoner camps holding about 200,000 prisoners force their inmates to work in conditions approaching slavery.

North Korea has over one million active and over eight million reserve and paramilitary troops making it the largest military force in the world. This is about one third of its population. But of greatest concern to the wider world is North Korea’s arsenal of nuclear weapons but the strength of it is uncertain. It is also alleged to have a large stockpile of chemical weapons.

Perhaps it could be said that the result of the Korean War has created a new monster in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea? It certainly hasn’t made our lives more secure.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL

Each year I give a number of talks to various groups such as U3A and council groups on a wide-ranging variety of topics and I recently prepared a PowerPoint presentation on women in art. Up until the 20th Century, very few women participated in art – or other aspects of culture for that matter.

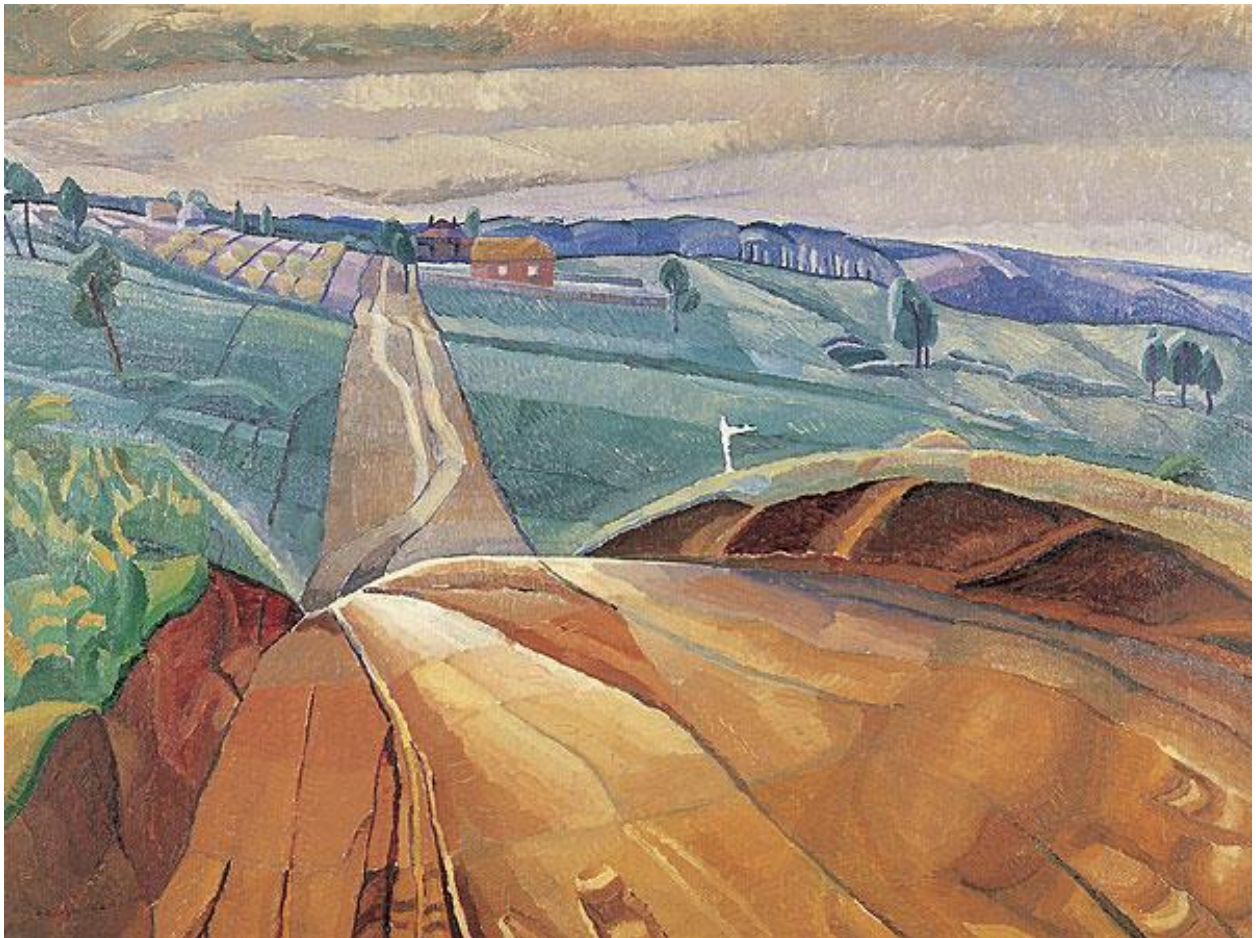
In all my research, I could not find any woman who had participated in art before the Renaissance era. Throughout history, the experiences of women, both in society and as artists, have been very distinct from men.

Historically, society’s structure has restricted women’s ability to participate in any form of life. This is probably due to a mixture of tradition, male chauvinism and misogyny.

In a very modest way, I want to rectify this terrible bias by sharing with you, the works of some Australian women carried out since the beginning of the 20th Century. Some you have heard of, and others probably not.



Ethel Carrick Fox, *Beach Scene*, 1910.



Grace Cossington Smith, *Landscape at Pentecost*, 1929



Grace Cossington Smith, *The curve of the bridge*, 1929



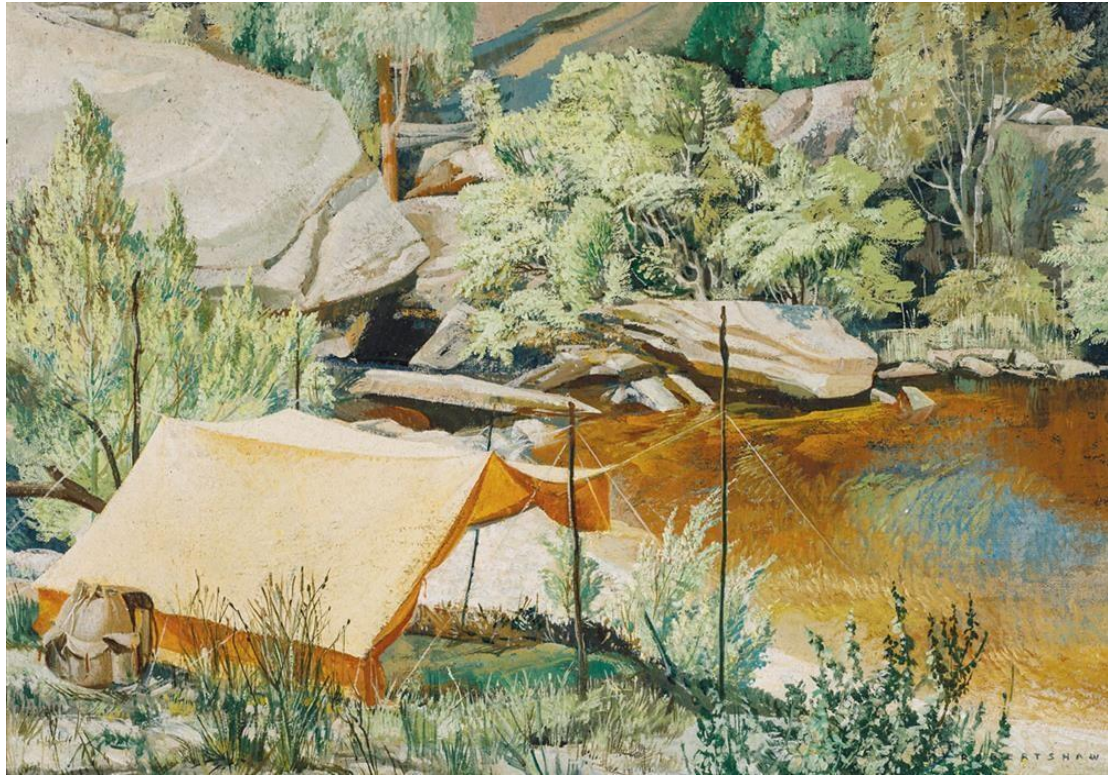
Thea Proctor, *The yellow glove*, 1927



Margaret Preston, *Still life with fruit*, 1926



Dorrit Black, *The olive plantation*, 1946



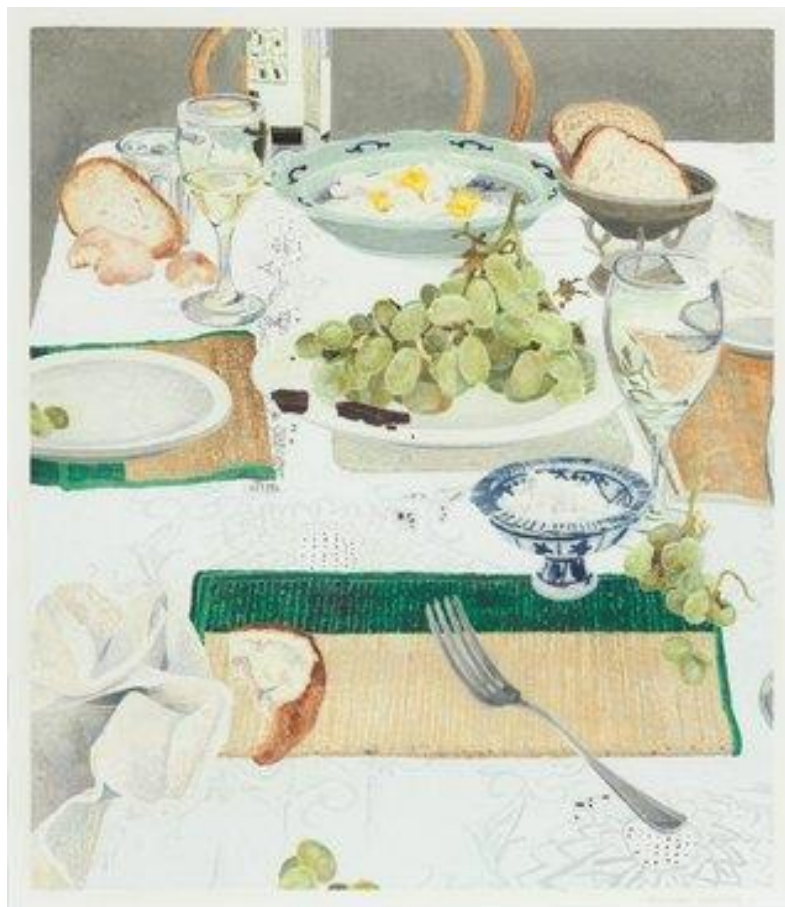
Freda Rhoda Robertshaw, *Bushwalkers camp*, 1945



Freda Rhoda Robertshaw, *Brigalow in summer*, 1945



Cressida Campbell, *Nasturtiums*, 2002



Cressida Campbell, *After lunch*, 2009



Queenie McKenzie, untitled and undated.



Clarice Beckett, *Wet evening*, 1927

TRIVIA AND DIDACTIC WHIMSIES

Big ideas cost, but so does inaction

There was an interesting article in The Age on 2 September 2024 with this heading. It was written by Neil O'Keefe who was the Federal member for Burke from 1984 to 2001 during which he was the parliamentary secretary for transport in the Keating government.



Hon. Neil O'Keefe.

He spoke about the pros and cons of projects including the Suburban Rail Loop and the arguments he had with the Kennet government. Kennet won the day and his government passed legislation that any future rail link to the airport would have to pay a royalty per passenger to the CityLink consortium. That deal lasted till 2019 which is the reason that the airport rail link is now back on the agenda.

But it was the last part of the article which arrested my attention which is quoted in full below.

'I'm not uncritical about some of the cost blowouts we have seen. Today the public whipping boy has become the CFMEU construction division. But when it comes to increasing costs of projects like the SRL, the union is only a small part of the story. A lot of it is legitimate (increasing costs of materials, skills shortages and an overheated building industry) are just a few reasons.

The state and federal governments also have a lot to answer for. They entered into contracts with large, experienced private sector operators who have taken them to the cleaners. These players fully understand that once the project is committed to, the risk of failure shifts completely to the politicians who promised the project in the first place and away from them. Government is on a hiding to nothing once the pin is pulled because, in the end, it is always the public who pays.

In the past, governments had capacity to develop and manage large projects from the initial planning phase right through to the completion - on time and on budget. Just look back to what the old Housing Commission, Gas and Fuel Corporation, Board of Works and the State Electricity Commission achieved under immense pressure to house huge numbers of new families at the post war baby boom ramped up.

But we no longer have that capacity. It has all been sold or outsourced as “public private partnerships”; doublespeak for government bluffed into being terrified of debt and letting the private sector fund projects in return for healthy profits that would otherwise have been public sector savings.

Recently, I returned to Melbourne from a trip to Europe. In Istanbul and Bordeaux, the airport trains cost two dollars. In Milan it was eight dollars. Yet when I landed back in Australia my choices were a bus costing \$23.90 or a cab or Uber fare starting at \$50.’

A few truisms

The main function of your little toe is to make sure all the furniture in the house is in the right place.

Horses have lower divorce rates. It’s because they are in stable relationships.

It’s pretty obvious that if I run in front of a car I will get tired but if I run behind a car will I get exhausted.

My teachers told me I’d never amount to much because I procrastinate so much. I told them you just wait.

90 % of bald people still own a comb; they just can’t part with it.

Every morning, I get hit by the same bicycle.....It’s a vicious cycle.

The word incorrectly is spelled incorrectly in every dictionary.

I’ve been experimenting with breeding racing deer. People have accused me of just trying to make a fast buck.

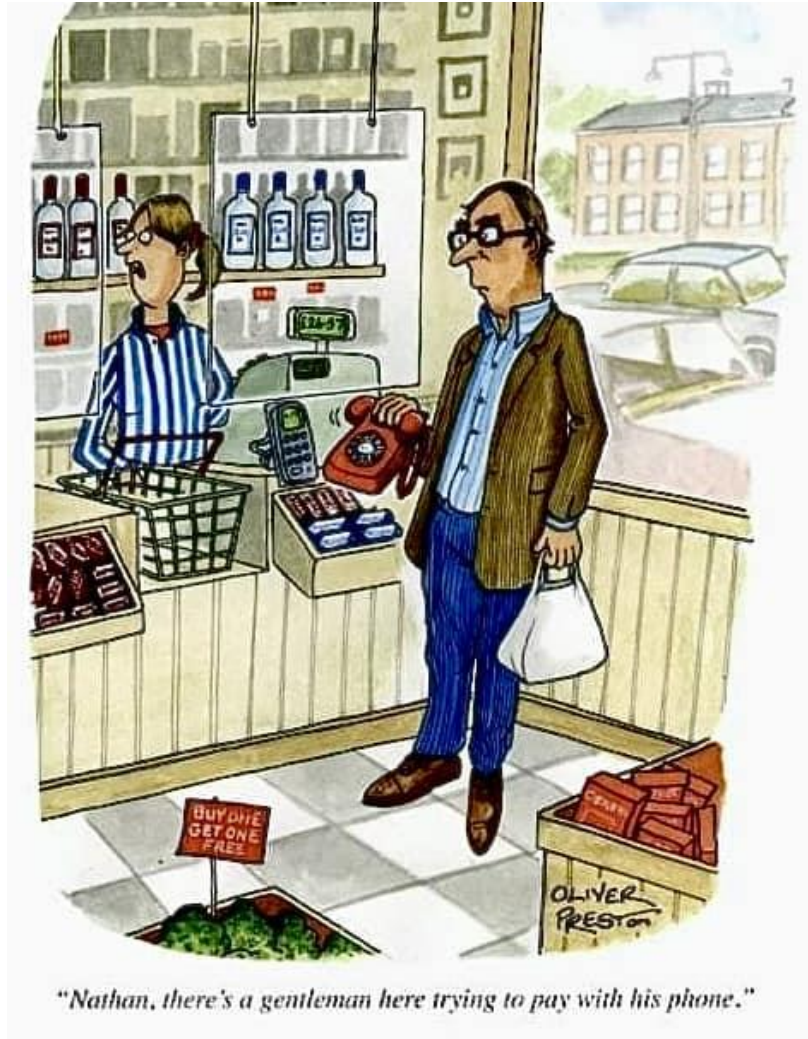
What do you call a row of rabbits hopping backwards? A receding hare line.

When I was a kid, we played spin the bottle with the girls, if they didn’t want to kiss you, they would have to give you a dollar. By the time I was 12, I owned my own home.

Always trust a nudist.....They have nothing to hide.



Modern phoney stories



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