

# WESTERN AUSTRALIA SELF FUNDED RETIREES INC.

State and Federal Advocates for Fully and Partly Self Funded Retirees



## WASFR NEWS

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 3    AUTUMN 2014

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The additional Senate election (WA only), scheduled for 5 April 2014, together with the Federal Budget due on 13 May, and the WA State Budget a week or so later, are looming as matters of great interest to all of us.

There are whispers that the cost of a prescription for holders of a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) could increase to \$12.70 (instead of \$6), and I even heard of the possibility that the calculation of the Assets Test for an Age pension might also come under consideration. The possibility of a co-payment for visits to the doctor is also on the cards, but there is divided opinion as to whether such a move would be of benefit to the country, or just create a large workload that might not be in anyone's best interests.

This is all conjecture of course. However, we all know that some "hard decisions" need to be taken at both Federal and State levels. In addition, most of us also know that the time for Governments to tackle these "hard decisions" is in their first year of government. Ah, well, the sun will still come up tomorrow morning.

As some of you know, we have written to the Prime Minister, the Federal Treasurer and the Federal Minister for Health asking that they do not increase the cost of prescriptions for holders of a CSHC. Not a lot more that we could do.

The report from the Federal Government's "Commission of Audit" has, supposedly, been given to the Federal Treasurer who is considering what action to take. We have no idea when it might become public. At times like this it is easy to reflect on the Ken Henry Report (December 2009) which included 138 very soundly based recommendations from an impressive group of professionals—probably only one or two have been accepted.

It is now history that the WA Government finally saw reason and abolished the mandatory driving test for drivers over the age of 85. The medical test for those over 80 continues.

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**PRESIDENT'S REPORT** *Continued from Page 1*

WASFR has been trying to achieve such an outcome for several years, as have several other organisations so it is somewhat gratifying to see it finally happen. You may be interested to hear that the RAC is conducting a Survey on "Older Drivers" - on-line as well as normal hard copies. Some of us have already completed the survey—it can't do any harm if others do likewise.

Distribution of our 2014/15 Federal Pre-Budget Submission (PBS) was completed before Christmas. We sent out a total of 90 copies to Federal politicians, and have received an acknowledgment from most. As one would expect, no promises were made and several replies reminded us that we are experiencing difficult times, so don't get your hopes up too high!

Following the distribution of the 2014/15 PBS we were able to get an interview with Ms Allanah MacTiernan on 15 January 2014. Ms MacTiernan showed a lot of interest in several matters included in our submission and promised to do what she could to bring about a satisfactory outcome. However, it must be said that she was quite adamant that she would find it difficult to support any extension of the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) to those over the age of 65. The reason given was: "The country simply can't afford it." Actually, this response was not completely unexpected when we consider all the past publicity that has been given to the many problems that have surfaced over the past few months. Indeed, we have even seen newspaper articles saying that the Government just might consider privatising the NDIS!

The WA Seniors Consultative Forum (WASCF) continues to get support from other retiree organisations. It is now almost six years since we started it up, so we must be doing something right! As we have done in the past, a combined 2014/15 State Submission was completed and distributed to 51 State politicians. We visited Tony Krsticevic (Member for Carine) prior to Christmas and, once again, received a good response to our submission. As an ex-Australian Taxation Officer, Tony was able to relate easily to the items we submitted and was even able to offer some advice. Further visits to other politicians had to be postponed due to a small medical problem that prevented me from driving for a few weeks. (*Editor's note: See end cartoon—Page 10—and still Ron was able to type up his report.*)

In addition to the WASCF, we have tried to keep up with any other retiree organisations that might be of interest to us. Last month we invited Committee members of the Superannuated Commonwealth Officers Association (SCOA) to attend our February Committee meeting.

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**YOUR COMMITTEE****President:**

Ron de Gruchy: Ph. 9447.1313

**Vice-President**

Colin Atkinson

**Secretary:**

Position vacant.

**Treasurer and Editor:**

Margaret Harris: Ph. 9381.5303

**Committee:**

Bob Dewar

Joe McPhail

Ian Moller

Vera Payne (Membership and Speaker  
Liaison)

Rosemary Stevenson

Margaret Walsh

John Yeatman

**Meetings:**

Meetings start at 10.00 am and are held at Cambridge Bowling Club, Floreat Sporting Precinct, Floreat on the Second Friday of each month excluding December and January.

**WASFR NEWS**

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## CLEANING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

***This article is reproduced with the kind permission of Baillieu Holst Stockbroking***

With the year still young and reporting season underway, it is as good a time as any to consider cleaning up your stock portfolio.

If there is one certainty in stock market investing, it's that everyone will make mistakes and pick stocks which just don't work out as planned. It's just part of the game that we all have to learn to accept. What is key, however, is to ensure that those you do get wrong don't wipe out all of the strong returns generated elsewhere in the portfolio.

If there is one piece of advice that has stood the test of time it's to cut your underperformers quickly and let your winners run. While most investors have heard this, there are still many that do the complete opposite by quickly selling for small profits and letting their losses run.

At best, the underperforming positions, which are usually accompanied by large unrealized capital losses, are "dead" money. At worst, they fall further and never recover.

For most investors investment capital is limited. Therefore, it is important to have that money working as hard as possible rather than tied up in stocks that drag on overall portfolio performance and take up a disproportionate and unnecessary amount of investment thinking time.

Instead, this time could be spent focusing on constructive investment ideas that are either already performing well or have the potential to do so. Worrying about when XYZ will recover to the purchase price, if it ever does, so as to sell out with your ego intact is not a wise investment strategy.

Having said all of this, it's a lot easier said than done. When a stock falls most investors believe they bought the stock at the wrong time or it was simply a case of

bad luck. They seldom acknowledge behavioral biases are at play. A couple of psychological biases include:

**Humans hate admitting they made a mistake—** Under the false illusion that it is not a loss until it is realized, investors elect to keep holding the position and therefore avoid admitting to themselves they made an error in judgment.

**Hope—**Despite the relentless flow of bad news and underperformance, investors will continue to hold their position based on the faint hope that the stock will one day return to its purchase price. Unfortunately, the decision to hold is rarely based on rational analysis or a well thought out strategy. Wishing and hoping don't actually make a stock go up, as much as we all would like it to.

**Carelessness—**When the market is booming and most stocks are rising, investors tend to pay closer attention to their portfolios. However, during leaner times, and especially during downturns, investors tend to lose interest and neglect their portfolios at a time when they should be paying close attention. Rather than cutting their losses and cleaning out the portfolio, investors do nothing and inherently let losses grow.

**"Stocks always recover"** - Knowing that the major indices always recover and rise over the long term, investors wrongly believe this to be the same for individual stocks. What they fail to realize is that the major indices frequently reweight by dropping losers and replacing them with winners. The major indices tend to overstate the resiliency of the average stock.

With these psychological issues in mind, here are a couple of ways to help cut those underperformers before they wreak havoc on your portfolio.

Have an investment strategy. Nearly every investor will have reasons as to why they bought a stock, yet seldom do they have an exit strategy. It is important to know the reasons why, or at what price you would be prepared to sell the stock.

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## CLEANING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO (CONT.)

On a regular basis review your portfolio holdings and ask this simple question: "If I did not own this stock, would I buy it today?" If the answer is no, then it should be sold and replaced with a stock you would like to own.

While no one deliberately buys a stock they believe will go down in value, it's a part of investing that is impossible to avoid over the long term. Rather than expecting to completely avoid losses, the secret to investing success is limiting the losses before they get out of control.



## SENIORS AT A COFFEE SHOP

A group of seniors were sitting around talking about all their ailments in a suburban coffee shop.

"My arms have got so weak I can hardly lift this cup of coffee," said one.

"Yes, I know," said another "My cataracts are so bad; I can't even see my coffee".

"I couldn't even mark an "X" at election time because my hands are so crippled" volunteered a third.

"What? Speak up! What? I can't hear you" said one elderly lady.

"I can't turn my head because of the arthritis in my neck," said one, to which several nodded weakly in agreement

"My blood pressure pills make me so dizzy!" exclaimed another.

"I forget where I am, and where I'm going," said another.

"I guess that's the price we pay for getting old" winced an old man as he slowly shook his head.

The others nodded in agreement.

"Well, count your blessings," said a woman cheerfully.

"Thank God we can all still drive."

## DE-CLUTTER YOUR HOME

### (and keep it that way)

*This article appeared in a recent edition of the Little Aussie Directory and is reproduced here with the kind permission of the Little Aussie Directory. It is of particular relevance to your Editor.*

De-cluttering means much more than just tidying up. Letting go of items that you don't need, don't use, or are keeping 'just in case' will lead to a feeling of well-being, as well as an organized and more spacious home that you'll love to live in. De-cluttering is not always easy and can be overwhelming if you're a bit of a hoarder, so here are some tips to get you started.

- Tackle clutter a little bit at a time; one drawer, one shelf, one tabletop. Or take the 10-10-10 approach. Choose 10 items to throw away, 10 items to give away and 10 items to put away. It's a great way to quickly organize 30 things in your house without making the task of de-cluttering seem overwhelming.
- Items that are to be given away, sold or donated should be dealt with as soon as possible so you don't end up with boxes of stuff (ie clutter) waiting to be removed.
- Designate a place for everything in your home. Take the time to think it through, a few things at a time. Always put those items back in their proper place when you've finished using them.
- Wait until you've made decisions on what to keep before you go out and buy boxes to keep it organized. That way you won't be tempted to simply put everything in attractive new boxes and not address the clutter problem.
- Papers can account for a lot of clutter. Decide on a spot for an inbox and make sure that all papers (bills, receipts, manuals, flyers etc.) go in the inbox. Then create a simple filing system and, most importantly, keep on top of it.

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## GUEST SPEAKERS

### MEETING : 11 OCTOBER 2013 NEIL GRAY: TRAVEL INSURANCE: WHO NEEDS IT?

Neil Gray, General Manager of Willis Group Holdings in WA, has been 37 years in the insurance broking industry. Coming from the UK with his wife and two children, he has been a “proud Australian citizen” for 10 years. He is a committee member of the peak broking body, the National Insurance Brokers’ Association, having served two years as its Chairman. He is also a board member of two not-for-profit organisations in Perth.

The answer to the rhetorical topic title is, of course, everyone who travels. A show of hands indicated that the vast majority of our attendees intend to travel in the next six months. What are you getting when you buy travel insurance? Peace of mind, and much more if it turns out that you need it! The broker possesses “financial literacy”; it is his job to get you the best cover possible, but it’s your job to know what you need. Always be aware of (and *read*) the fine print, a pain though it be, and make sure you know what is covered and what is not.

“There is no aspect of human endeavour that is not touched by insurance.” The first basic insurance policy we know of was in 2001BC in Babylonian times, with the Code of Hammurabi. In 1347 the first actual insurance contract was signed in Genoa, Italy, the person or group writing their names and the amount of risk they were willing to assume, hence the term “underwriters”. Imagine the pay-out three hundred years later in 1666 when “London burnt like sticks”. Insurance—home, health, car, life, travel, public liability—is a global business today. When Neil started out in 1976 there were no computers and no faxes, only basic calculators, accounts ledgers, lady typists. Still, all was done then as today, without the technology. In 1989 the internet began and today online purchase is common. Vero (Suncorp) issues a document each year showing how people buy insurance; those over 30 mainly do it themselves, online.

The role of an insurance broker is to listen to the client’s need and ascertain what needs to be covered. He obtains quotes from the many worldwide insurers, collects the premium, checks and issues the policy. Most importantly, he assists the client when there is a claim.

Again we were urged, read that policy. The word comes from the Latin, meaning contract, which it is between you and the insurance company. Exclusions may even be in **LARGE** print! The PDS, the mandatory Product Disclosure Statement, shows the *specific and general exclusions*. **Check which of the following you need and whether your insurance covers them:** cancellation fees (specific reasons are given) and loss of deposits; travel agent fees; overseas medical and hospital costs; overseas dental; accidental death or disability; funeral; emergency expenses (cash needed quickly—your credit card may not have sufficient credit on it); luggage (but don’t rely on expensive luxuries being insured); travel delay and missed connections; legal liability (if it’s your fault, let your insurance company know what has happened); vehicle hire excess. Kidnap, hijack, terrorism are excluded, because in these instances the Government is expected to step in. You must take “reasonable care” with travel insurance as with home and car insurance.

“Insurance is the only product you buy that you hope you don’t have to use!” When you buy insurance, disclose in “utmost good faith” all relevant information which may influence the acceptance and cost of cover. You need to tell where you are going, because some parts of the world are difficult to get cover, eg. Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, Iraq, etc, even Cuba. The better insurance companies have medical specialists and even army personnel who *should* know about the medical situation in any particular country. Advise how long you are going for, and with whom. Extreme sports will probably not need to be declared by most of us! Pre-existing health matters *must* be disclosed. If you don’t tell about a medical condition and then make a claim for it, they won’t pay. (A member gave the example of getting prostate cancer after having problems but because he didn’t know about it he couldn’t disclose it, and eventually he did win his case.) “Make it your hobby if you have to” over disputes in a claim;

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**MEETING : 11 OCTOBER 2013****NEIL GRAY: TRAVEL INSURANCE:**

Make a bloody nuisance of yourself”, i.e. persist. One of our members who bought expensive travel insurance for himself and his wife (who then became very ill) did persist when a big fight ensued over recovery of all the expenses. He was *finally* successful. Disclose your age: over 70, insurance starts to cost more; over 85, it becomes difficult to obtain—but not impossible.

The key to getting immediate help is getting the right person in the insurance company to help you.

Who pays the insurance broker? You do. There is a commission of 5—10% in the premium. If you are not happy with your claim, you can make a formal complaint. If this fails, you can go to the Financial Ombudsman Service (Google for information).

**Managing Travel Risk:** Our speaker urged constant checking of the government website *Smartraveller.gov.au*. Here you will get the latest travel advice updates. *Register your details before you leave.* Twenty-four hour consular assistance will be available to you. In addition:

- Photocopy all travel documents and leave the copies with a family member or friend.
- Check with your doctor on vaccinations needed.
- Take as many medications as you will need (preferably in their original package), but check that they are legal in the country of destination, and keep a list of all prescriptions.
- In some countries there is a reciprocal health agreement, in which case your Medicare card will be valid.
- Keep a record of emergency numbers—in your suitcase *and* in your hand luggage.
- Let your credit card supplier know when you will be travelling and check the overseas limits and costs.
- Take some local currency (“pretty bloody obvious”).
- If you are taking a mobile phone, check the costs and limitations.

- Check (well in advance) that you have six months left on your passport after the return date, and make two copies of the detailed page—one to leave with family/friend, one to keep in a separate place from where you carry the actual passport.
- Do you need a Visa (no, not the credit card).
- Do you need an International Driving Licence?
- What is the baggage allowance? (be aware that if you fly Business Class you have a nice big baggage allowance, but then if you fly on a smaller plane between or within countries, it may be much less).
- Be aware of time differences.
- And, finally, watch what you bring home—customs inspection, quarantine.

If you have dual citizenship, e.g. UK and Australian, you may not need insurance in the UK—but if you need to be repatriated home, you had better have it! Neil mentioned costs of up to \$300,000—be very careful not to get sick in, nor need repatriation from, the USA! (see below). Stopovers for a couple of days, e.g. in Dubai, raise the cost of insurance enormously.

Each year, there are up to 20,000 incidents involving Australians in difficulty overseas. These include hospitalisation, medical evacuation to another place for treatment, death (return of the deceased’s remains to Australia). Recent events have shown how tragedy can strike in unexpected places like shopping centres (Mumbai and Kenya) and even in marathon races, as in Boston. Treatment overseas can be very expensive, whether for pulmonary, gastric, heart, appendix, accident injury, et cetera. Where there is no insurance, long-term financial burdens may ensue. Daily hospitalisation in SE Asia regularly exceeds \$800; return of remains from Europe is in excess of \$10,000. The cost of medical evacuation (don’t even think hospitalisation!) from the USA regularly ranges from \$75,000 to \$95,000 and sometimes up to \$300,000!!! Costs of medical evacuations from our neighbour Bali have exceeded \$60,000. All insurers have emergency help numbers. **IF YOU DO NOTHING ELSE, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THIS NUMBER ALONG WITH YOUR POLICY NUMBER.**

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**MEETING : 11 OCTOBER 2013****NEIL GRAY: TRAVEL INSURANCE (CONT)**

So, from whom to buy travel insurance? Compare the market. Neil's wife and daughter were visiting her mother in the UK for two months. Insurance quotes varied from \$90 to \$650! (He bought the \$400 option). Compare what each insurer is offering. Neil believes that "you get what you pay for" - though some of our members have been very happy with their platinum credit card free insurance. In summary, travel insurance is not straight forward, and there are many suppliers in an ever-growing market. Options are to Google, or ask your travel agent, or ring up Neil at Willis. Cost is, of course, a consideration, but not the only one. Probus has travel insurance (not free) for its members, as does COTA.

Travel is not cheap; factoring in the added cost of insurance is a bagatelle, when considering the peace of mind we buy "just in case", and the refund we get when the unwanted happens. That this topic is of vital interest to self-funded retirees was borne out

by the fact that we had more visitors for Neil's talk than for any previous speaker. Bon Voyage!



Vera Payne.

**IRISH FIRE INSURANCE**

A man and his wife moved back home to Cork, from London. The wife had a wooden leg and to insure it in Britain was 2,000 pounds a year!

When they arrived in Cork, they went to an insurance agency to see how much it would cost to insure the wooden leg. The agent looked it up on the computer and said 39 Euros. The husband was shocked and asked why it was so cheap here in Ireland to insure because it cost him 2,000 pounds in England.

The agent turned his computer screen to the couple and said "Well, here it is on the screen, it says:

\*\*Any wooden structure, with a sprinkler system over it, is 39 Euros.\*\*

**MEETING : 14 FEBRUARY 2014****BILL EDGAR—"LAGS"**

Our first guest speaker for 2014 was one of our members, Bill Edgar, who has researched WA's convict history and has written a comprehensive book on this most fascinating subject, interesting even for those of us whose ancestors did not arrive in this country with arrows on their shirts.

Western Australia's first free settlers arrived in the colony in 1829. These early settlers struggled to make progress and many left, disillusioned.

Captain James Stirling, in 1827, had surveyed the Swan River as far upstream as present day Guildford. He observed the abundance of water and excellent soil for cultivation. Stirling recommended to the British Government that a British presence was necessary in the region as it was known that the dastardly French were on the lookout for more lands. The government agreed and Stirling was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of this proposed new settlement and accompanied the first brave settlers.

The Swan River Settlement, as it was known, wished to remain a free settlement, that is, it was intended to function without the introduction of convict labour as had happened in the colonies on the eastern seaboard. While the first settlers were aware the seasons were "upside down" they were not prepared for the vagaries of climate and soil conditions.

Therefore, it was not long before the settlers realised that without cheap labour the difficulties they were encountering would, over time, only get worse.

Then, shock! horror! The settlers, particularly those who had taken up land in the York area, petitioned for convicts to be brought to Western Australia. However, by this time, transportation of convicts had all but ceased to America and the West Indies, and also to New South Wales and Tasmania, and the do-gooders of the day very strongly opposed the idea.

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**MEETING : 14 FEBRUARY 2014****BILL EDGAR—"LAGS" (CONT.)**

So, on 1 June 1850 the first batch of 75 convicts arrived in Fremantle. All of them had served time in England in Pentonville Prison. After their time in prison and then in the prison hulks on the Thames, followed by an 88 day voyage, by the time they arrived in Western Australia possibly half their sentences had been served. It is interesting to note that no women convicts were sent to Western Australia. The convict ships also brought to the colony pensioner guards and a number of free settlers and their families.

Once the convicts had received their tickets of leave, they then presented themselves at hiring depots, from where they would present themselves for employment.

Of the 9,500 convicts brought to Western Australia only about 7 per cent re-offended after their release. Probably the reason for this was the treatment they received from their employers (they were given a degree of autonomy, they had opportunity, three meals a day, had a roof over their heads, free clothing, and they were isolated from their former fellow felons).

In 1854 only 7 per cent of prisoners re-offended. The 2010 Australian Crime statistics reported a 53 per cent recidivism rate! (Excluding aborigines).

So, Bill says, forget the New South Wales experience; the convict experience in Western Australia was, with a few exceptions, a positive one. The State was saved from disintegration and the benefits are still being felt today.

We have the convicts to thank for some of the fine buildings still standing today in Perth and Fremantle: Perth Town Hall, Fremantle Prison, the Round House in Fremantle, the Pensioner Barracks (only the arch remains), and the Governor's summer residence on Rott- nest (now the hotel), are a few that come to mind.

Bill concluded with a surprising statement: In the new National school curriculum NO 19th Century Australian history is included. This is despite the fact that this was when the foundations of our nation were being laid down. Today's children must look to the future! How sad is that!!

What is even more astounding is that no Western Australian convict history is being taught in Western Australian schools.

As a political plug, Bill encouraged us to contact our local politicians and ask them to do what they can to correct this oversight.

After Bill finished the formal part of his talk, the audience responded by asking a number of questions.

A member said her husband's grandfather came to WA from Bermuda. Bill was able to advise her that if he had survived Bermuda and was able to get to WA he was very lucky. Transportation was abolished in Britain in 1855, but the authorities conveniently forgot about Bermuda and Gibraltar where the convicts were engaged in building naval infrastructure under horrific conditions.

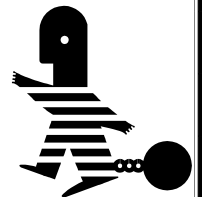
Where do you start to look for your convict ancestry? Fremantle Prison has all the information. Go to the Fremantle Prison website and all will be revealed.

Were any women transported to WA? Women were transported to NSW and Tasmania, but none came to Western Australia. Bill said it was interesting that very few family reunions took place. Having a family member transported was embarrassing to say the least, and often women just formed another liaison and the unfortunate husband in the colonies was forgotten.

Bill could have gone on talking and answering questions well past our noon deadline. But for anyone wanting more information about this fascinating part of our past, Bill has written a book entitled "Lags" which will enthral you. Bill writes with some authority: both he and his wife Jen have convict ancestors. No longer is it embarrassing to have a convict ancestor—you can be proud of it.

If you would like to purchase a copy of "Lags", see Bill or Jen at one of our meetings. It's a great read!

*Margaret Harris*





### Windows vs. Ford

For all of us who feel only the deepest love and affection for the way computers have enhanced our lives, read on. At a recent computer expo, Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the auto industry and stated: “If Ford had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25 cars that got 1,000 miles to the gallon.”

In response to Bill’s comments, Ford issued a press release stating:

If Ford had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics:

- For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash twice a day;
- Every time they repainted the lines on the road, you would have to buy a new car;
- Occasionally your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to pull to the side of the road, close all of the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason you would simply accept this;
- Occasionally, executing a manoeuvre such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine;
- The airbag system would ask, “Are you sure?” before deploying;
- You’d have to press the “Start” button to turn the engine off;
- Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna;
- Every time a new car was introduced car buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car;

*Thanks to Sid Breeden for this gem.*

### DE-CLUTTER YOUR HOME (CONT.)

- Find out what utensils you’re really using with the cardboard box test. Empty your kitchen drawers and put all your utensils in a cardboard box. Whenever you use one of these utensils, put it away in the drawer. Whatever is still in the cardboard box after 6 weeks is not needed and can be donated. This method also works well for the dreaded “junk drawer”.
- Clothes are best tackled in one hit, when you have a couple of spare hours and are feeling committed. Take everything out of your wardrobe and go through each item, quickly deciding whether you want to keep it or not. Ask yourself honestly if you’re likely to wear it again. If you need to make a “maybe” box, that’s OK but make sure you write a date on it and check back in a few months—if you haven’t missed it, you don’t need it. Sort the clothes you’re keeping and put away.

Once your home is clutter-free, keep it that way with the “one in, one out rule” - for each new item, get rid of an old one.

*I think the person who wrote this doesn’t live in my world!!*

.....Editor



### FROZEN WINDOWS ON A COLD WINTER MORNING

Wife texts husband on a cold winter’s morning:  
 “Windows frozen, won’t open.”

Husband texts back: “Gently pour some lukewarm water on it.”

Wife texts back 5 minutes later:  
 “Computer really screwed up now!”



**PRESIDENT'S REPORT** *Continued from Page 2*

We were able to exchange views on a range of issues that are common to both organisations, with the result that we discovered that we do have a lot in common. No-one expects that any major changes will follow. However, we felt that there was benefit in just seeing who is involved and knowing that we are able to converse with them if ever the need arises.

We have also had contact with the Community and Public Sector Union Retired Members Network (CPSU). This group has evolved from the CPSU organisation that represents their members still in the work force, but the Retired Members Network consists mainly of retired people and, therefore, has similar interests to ours.

Our website is nearly ready for all to access. However, further work is required to bring it up to a more satisfactory level. There are certain basic pieces of information that need to be included (e.g our Constitution, details of Government submissions, recruitment brochures etc) but we can say that the framework is there and all that is required now is for some enthusiastic volunteers to finish the job.

In closing, may I remind everyone that we always have a need for additional Committee members. I can assure you that you will not be landed with any huge workloads if you do volunteer, but we do need people in order to ensure that our organisation continues to flourish. You may even come to enjoy being involved!



Ron de Gruchy  
2 March 2014

**VALE****ED WHITAKER**

**It is with sadness that we report the sudden death on 20 December 2013 of our long-time member, Ed Whitaker. Ed will be sorely missed, both for his wisdom and humour.**

**Our sympathy is extended to Helen and family.**

**Editorial**

Back in the 1970's, while entertaining the two young children of friends, the subject of "The Year 2000" arose. The older child, the girl, announced that she hoped she would be alive in the year 2000. Her younger brother said he hoped he would be too. I then said I hoped I would be too. The response from the girl child came as a bit of a surprise. "Gee, Aunty Margaret, you'll be OLD". Her brother, thinking he was coming to my aid, decreed "Aunty Margaret won't be much more than 90".

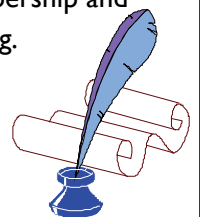
I often think of those children, now nearing 50 themselves, and how we cruised past the year 2000, and here we are well on the way to consigning 2014 to the history books.

Thinking of WASFR, we had our first meeting on 16 July 2010, so we are nearly at the end of our fourth year since incorporation. Thanks to the foresight of people like Bob Arnold, Sid Breeden and Ron de Gruchy, to name just three, we are thriving. Retirees these days have so many interests, many of us wonder how we managed to go to work. So to have maintained attendances at meetings of between 50 and 60 members, we must be doing something right. Our bank balance is healthy and the money in the bank is all OURS. And, thanks mainly to Ron, our name is becoming well known among political circles. To take our name further afield a few of our clever members are almost ready to unveil our new website.

WASFR was instrumental in having the Drivers Licence regulations changed recently. Older drivers no longer have to have annual driving tests if their doctors believe they should be able to drive. Our Committee was really chuffed when the Barnett government took notice of our submission. Of course, other retiree organisations joined with us, (strength in numbers) but if I recollect correctly, the idea came from WASFR.

We do need more members, so perhaps you could encourage your friends, particularly younger friends, to join our organisation. We are an ageing membership and need new blood and ideas to keep us going.

Margaret Harris  
Editor



**RAILROAD TRACKS**

The US standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That’s an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used? Because that’s the way they built them in England, and English expatriates designed the US railroads.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that’s the gauge they used.

Why did THEY use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that’s the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So, who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since. And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing.

So the next time you are handed a specification/procedure/process and wonder “What horse’s a\*\*e came up with this?”, you may be exactly right. Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses.

Now, the twist to the story. When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters (SRBs). The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you now know, is about as wide as two horses’ behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world’s most advanced transport system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse’s backside.



**A RECIPE FOR A DELICIOUS SALAD**

*I was given this recipe a number of years ago, but it sounded so improbable I never made it. I was asked to take a salad to my cousin’s home on Christmas Day and I bit the bullet and made it. It took its place proudly with the ham, turkey and seafood. I thoroughly recommend it. It looks great in a glass bowl.....Editor*

**LAYERED GARDEN SALAD**

Serves 6—8

- 1/2 Iceberg lettuce
- 2 cups frozen peas
- 2 hardboiled eggs
- 250g. Mushrooms
- 125g. Tasty cheese
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons sour cream
- 2 teaspoons French mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 6 shallots
- 1 tomato
- 4 rashers bacon
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Shred lettuce coarsely, place in glass salad bowl.

Sprinkle uncooked frozen peas over lettuce.

Push eggs through a sieve and combine with finely sliced mushrooms, and spread over peas.

Top with grated cheese.

Combine mayonnaise, sour cream, mustard, lemon juice and shallots. Pour over cheese.

Cover and refrigerate—overnight if you wish.

Chop bacon finely, fry in pan until crisp and drain.

Top with tomato wedges, bacon, parsley just before serving.



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name/s: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

Pre-retirement Occupation/Interests  
(optional)

Annual Subscription: Couple \$30.00  
Single \$20.00

Please forward application and subscription to:

The Treasurer  
Margaret Harris  
WA Self Funded Retirees Inc.  
201 Bagot Road  
Subiaco WA 6008

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

**14 March**

Mary Sherborne: "Using your Mature Voice"

**11 April**

Ken Edwards, Garvans: Simple strategies to maximise retirement benefits and discuss investment guidelines.

**9 May**

Erika Persak: The Kerry Stokes Collection

**13 June**

Professor Ralph Martins: Alzheimer's Research

It is our aim to present guest speakers whose topics are pertinent to our members, i.e. people who are ageing gracefully, keen on preserving or enhancing their income and of quick wit and high intellect.

So, please let us know whom you would like to hear or the topics which interest you most. And as many of our members belong to more than one organisation it will be helpful if you can nominate a speaker whom you have heard and whose presentation was impressive and interesting, to a group such as ours.

Our Guest Speaker coordinator is Vera Payne and Vera can be found at most meetings, but if she is not present on the day that you plan nominating a speaker, any committee member will be happy to receive your suggestion.

DISCLAIMER

Please note that nothing written or spoken in the course of WASFR meetings, talks given, or in any publication is to be construed as advice to members or visitors.

THANKS

To the Cambridge Bowling Club for extending the use of their facilities to us for our Committee meetings, at no extra cost.

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As a Community Service