

WESTERN AUSTRALIA SELF FUNDED RETIREES INC.

State and Federal Advocates for Fully and Partly Self Funded Retirees



WASFR NEWS

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2 SPRING 2013

NOTICE OF SPECIAL EVENT

We will be holding our end-of-year meeting on Friday, 8 November 2013, (from 10 a.m. until noon) at our usual venue, Cambridge Bowling Club (in the Bar area, not the main meeting room).

We are following the same format as last year: There will be no guest speaker. All members are invited to come along and partake of some festive cheer. We are again having the event catered for by outside caterers, and there will be the usual raffles and good companionship.



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

to Annual General Meeting held on 9 August 2013

As we enter our fourth year as an independent body dedicated to the well-being of retired members of the community, it is worth taking a look at the past few years and reflecting on any achievements.

To begin with, the establishment of a new organisation has, in itself, been an achievement. We have established contacts with several other similar organisations and continue to work with them. We have lodged several combined submissions to the WA State Government, but mainly due to the financial problems that have existed over past years, have only been successful in a few issues.

One success was to extend the eligibility limits for the State Seniors Card from working less than 20 hours a week to now working less than 25 hours a week.

We are still pursuing the (once only) abolition of stamp duty when a retiree moves into more appropriate accommodation, in addition to the provision of hearing aids to those retirees who are not in possession of a Pensioner Concession Card, but who do hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card. These matters are recognised by many as being fully justified. However, we are going to have to wait until the State's finances take a turn for the better before enjoying the fruits of our labours.

Continued Page 2



PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Continued from Page 1*

We have voiced our opinion on matters such as the Carbon Tax (as have many others), and endeavoured to maintain a 25% discount on the mandatory limits of drawdown from account-based pensions. Sadly, this has not happened for the current year.

We have been successful in obtaining two separate grants from LotteryWest—firstly for our PA system and recently for the purchase of a laptop computer and a data projector. We are currently in the process of setting up a website for WA Self Funded Retirees Inc.

As one would expect, the matter of aged care is one that we take particular interest in. This is a costly and complex subject that does not have any easy solutions. Successive governments profess to have this as a main area of their policies. However, the years roll on and very little seems to happen. Legislation was passed in the Federal Parliament a few months ago but implementation is not imminent. One example is the new NDIS legislation that will not be fully implemented until 2019. We still have a problem with this legislation as it does not apply to those who become afflicted with a disability after reaching the age of 65 years. We have written to the Human Rights Commission.

As you are aware, we have spent some time on attempting to change the restrictions on those over the age of 80 and 85 years when they have to renew their drivers licences. Emails and letters have been sent to other retiree organisations in an effort to gather support for lifting the restrictions but, so far, only a few have responded. We are in contact with the RAC and hope that, one day, we will be able to advise that WA has finally got into step with the rest of the country.

Financially we are on a sound footing. Our expenses are not huge—we do not have to pay any capitation fees to any State and Federal bodies so we have been able to keep our membership fees down to a very modest level.

The most recent news is the announcement of the Federal election on 7 September. The result, though not absolutely clear, should open a new era in negotiations in relation to the list of Federal issues that are of concern to us. While we accept the financial problems that exist (whichever party is in power), we can still point to several matters that will be of minimal cost to the Government.

We have tried to maintain interesting guest speakers at our monthly meetings and have aimed to have a diversity of topics for you to enjoy. Should you have a particular topic that could be of interest to others, or happen to know of an entertaining person or subject, then please let one of the Committee members know. We will do what we can to bring them along. *Continued Page 3*

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:

Colin Atkinson

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.

Address:

Margaret Harris

201 Bagot Road, Subiaco, 6008

Phone: 9381.5303

Email: marg39201@optusnet.com.au

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Continued from Page 2*

Finally, I would like to thank all of the current Committee members, together with those not actually on the Committee, but who still assist with certain activities, research etc, for their input over the past year. Without such support it would be nigh on impossible to progress as we have.

We continue to look for additional members who might be able to spare a few hours each month serving as a Committee member. The duties are not onerous and you will be helping your fellow members. It goes without saying that, without the necessary volunteers who assist in the routine tasks of preparation and cleaning up afterwards it would be extremely difficult to continue to operate as an efficient organisation.

I find it difficult to finish without giving special thanks to Bob Arnold and Pat Ellis. These two people have been around for 17 years (from the early days of the Perth Branch of A.I.R.) and continue to front up at each monthly meeting to prepare for your morning tea, long before any of us arrive. Thank you Bob and Pat.

And thanks to all of you for your support over the past year.

Ron de Gruchy

4 August 2013

**Comprehending accountants #1**

An architect, an artist and an accountant were discussing whether it was better to spend time with the wife or a mistress. The architect said he enjoyed time with his wife, building a solid foundation for an enduring relationship.

The artist said he enjoyed time with his mistress, because of the passion and mystery he found there.

The accountant said "I like both". "Both?" The accountant replied "Yeah. If you have a wife and a mistress, they will each assume you are spending time with the other woman, and you can go to the office and get some work done."

Editorial

I have been doing a lot of thinking since David Cook spoke at our last meeting (see Page 8). What is going to happen to those of us who are not completely computer literate in the near future.

David was right when he said we were in the group most likely to succumb to cyber criminals, simply because we were born too early.

Seniors are being hung out to dry in this age of technology and, yes, greed. Not only are they the main target for online scams, more and more elderly folks are afraid to leave their homes because of the risks of being assaulted and robbed. But, then greed also afflicts many otherwise sensible citizens who fall for obvious scams when they are told by persons unknown that the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is theirs just by providing their bank details. It is difficult to believe it happens when there are so many warnings in the media, but according to David Cook the problem is escalating.

I don't do online banking. I sometimes feel I am a dinosaur, but I am happy because if anyone hacked into my computer what a disappointment I would be. The most interesting things they would find would be all past issues of WASFR News! Not a sign of bank account details or personal information. And my emails are very mundane—most relate to WASFR.

But then, what is going to happen to others like me when banks and other utilities stop using snail mail. Will they be allowed to do it? Many of my older friends do not even have a computer. It is their choice. What are they going to do? They will have to pay extra for a service that is not a service.

Today's technology, overall, is great and we have come too far to think of retreating back to the "good old days".

Stop the world—I want to get off! I don't know where we are heading.

Margaret Harris

Editor



WESTERN AUSTRALIA SELF FUNDED RETIREES INC (WASFR)
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2013

INCOME

Members' Subscriptions 2012-2013	2,460.00
Raffle Proceeds	827.50
Donation	15.00
Morning tea excess	<u>100.00</u>
	3,402.50

EXPENDITURE

Printing and Stationery	120.31	
Postage	248.80	
Venue hire	425.00	
Christmas expenses	568.80	
Sundry	368.25	
Depreciation provision	<u>423.15</u>	
		<u>2,154.31</u>

EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE\$1,248.19**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2013****ASSETS**

Cash at Bank		6,442.15
Printer written off		-
PA System	1,536.80	
Provision for Depreciation	<u>384.20</u>	1,152.60
Sandwich Board written off		-
Recorder	38.95	
Provision for Depreciation	<u>38.95</u>	-
		<hr/>
TOTAL ASSETS		7,594.75

LIABILITIES

Members' Subscriptions paid in advance	<u>2,110.00</u>
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NET ASSETS\$5,484.75**EQUITY**

Opening balance	4,236.56
Net Surplus 30 June 2013	<u>1,248.19</u>

TOTAL EQUITY\$5,484.75*M HARRIS*

HON. TREASURER 30 JUNE 2013

QUEST SPEAKERS

MEETING : 12 JULY 2013 COMMODORE BOB TROTTER, OAM, RAN (Ret'd)

SEARCH FOR HMAS SYDNEY II

Our Guest Speaker on 12 July was Commodore Bob Trotter, OAM, RAN (Ret'd.)

Before Commodore Trotter arrived, our Cruise Supremo, Michael Powell, told us he and Ann had had the pleasure of hearing Bob speak during their most recent cruise on the *Dawn Princess*. He told us of the very moving experience when they were returning to Fremantle and the *Dawn Princess* stopped above the wreck of *HMAS Sydney* for a memorial service.

Commodore Bob Trotter has had an amazing career in the Australian Navy since he joined the Australian Naval College as a 17-year-old Cadet in 1964. He retired from the Navy in 1998 and since then has held appointments in many fields, but he will be remembered mainly for his involvement in the Finding Sydney Foundation. For his work in finding the *Sydney* he was awarded the OAM in 2009.

Bob's superbly illustrated lecture started at Mount Scott in Geraldton where, in 2001, a memorial was constructed to commemorate the loss of *HMAS Sydney II*. A very poignant image at the memorial site is the bronze figure of a woman looking out to sea, waiting for a sighting of the *Sydney*. Eerily, when the *Sydney* was discovered in 2008 it was found that this lone figure was looking straight towards the position of the wreck.



HMAS Sydney II and her crew had an illustrious service record in the Mediterranean in the early years of World War II. She took part in the aggressive and successful bombardment of Bardia (?) in Libya. Off the Greek island of Crete she was instrumental in sinking two Italian cruisers.

In February 1941 *Sydney* returned triumphantly to her namesake port and here we saw historical movie clips of her arrival.

Nine months later on 11 November 1941 she took up the escort of the troopship, *HMS Zealandia* to the Sunda Strait, where she handed over the escort to another ship. On 20 November *Sydney* was overdue on her return to Fremantle. While it was not unusual for ships to be overdue for one reason or another and maintain radio silence, when she was asked to break radio silence and she did not respond, a search was started. All they found were lifeboats full of German sailors. These seamen were from the German raider, *HSK Kormoran*. The hospital ship *Centaur* towed some lifeboats into Carnarvon. Other survivors had been picked up and taken to Carnarvon. More than 300 survivors were subsequently taken to a POW camp near Harvey.

In 2000, a small group of volunteers, of which Bob was one, formed the Finding Sydney Foundation and took over from what Bob referred to as "The Australian Institute for Slowly and Painfully Working Out the Surprisingly Obvious" who for 60 years pondered the "what, why and who", rather than the "where". The Foundation members believed if they solved the "where" the other questions would be answered. In short, the Foundation believed the search area could be narrowed from the entire Indian Ocean to a small search area. The clue lay with the *Kormoran*. Over 300 men had taken to lifeboats and survived. Some of those survivors must have had the coordinates of their ship. When interrogated, the survivors said the last they saw of the *Sydney* was a glow on the horizon and then the lights went out. From a lifeboat the horizon would be about 15 nautical miles; the *Sydney* was in fact found 12 nautical miles from the *Kormoran*.

The German Navy had instructions from its highest command, Adolf Hitler, that their prime object was to disable allied commerce, but to leave warships (which were numerically superior) alone unless it became necessary to attack. Most warships were similarly designed, and the crew of the *Kormoran* had instructions to attack specific points on the ships to disable their firing power. And this is just what the *Kormoran* did. *Sydney* was disabled within a minute, preventing a full response. The *Kormoran* was scuttled in the area of 26 degrees south, 111 degrees east, so the Foundation agreed that this would be their search area. They had no reason to believe the Germans were not telling the truth.

SEARCH FOR HMAS SYDNEY II (cont.)

Then came the matter of fundraising to pay for the search. After failing to get tax deduction status from the Tax Office, the Foundation went straight to Peter Costello who approved their application. The Western Australian Government gave \$500,000, and surprisingly, the NSW Government came up with \$250,000 without being asked. No other State governments contributed towards the search. After much to-ing and fro-ing the Federal Government promised, initially \$1.3 million, and later another \$2.9 million. Just before the Federal Government paid their money another search group announced they had found the *Sydney* in only 150 metres of water very close to the WA coast. As we all know this was not the *Sydney*, so the Foundation went ahead, acquired a search vessel and sonar equipment and a crew. The result was, firstly the *Kormoran* and then the *Sydney* were found. After 66 years of wondering where they were, it took only 60 hours of actual search time to locate both vessels.

Bob's talk was superbly illustrated with historical film clips, maps and drawings. The excitement of the crew on the search vessel when they found, firstly the *Kormoran* and then four days later, the *Sydney*, almost brought tears to my eyes. *Sydney* was found on 10 March 2008 in 2,468 metres of water.

With money left over, the vessel was taken back to Geraldton and was re-equipped with imaging equipment and a "vehicle garage". This was "parked" on the sea floor and the pilots on the search vessel remotely operated the vehicle inside. With the whole world watching the vehicle refused to leave the "garage". The skipper refused to be defeated by technology, raised the "garage" off the sea floor and then manoeuvred the search vessel around on the surface to capture amazing film and still photographs of the wreck. Bob finished off his talk with descriptions of some of the still photographs taken of sections of *HMAS Sydney*.

Margaret Harris



MEETING : 9 AUGUST 2013

LISA GILES: Unlocking the Secrets of the Balance System

Lisa Giles has a Master's Degree from the University of Western Australia in Clinical Audiology. She began working at the Ear Science Institute Australia in 2010, specialising in adult assessment and hearing-aid rehabilitation, before going on to specialist training in **vestibular audiology**. Last year she studied vestibular assessment and rehabilitation therapy at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

We rely on our balance system every day, though we rarely think about it until something goes wrong. Lisa introduced us to the three main systems which give us our sense of balance (which she calls the sixth sense, after smell, taste, touch, hearing and seeing) and gave us an overview of the disorders which can cause dizziness or imbalance, especially as we age.

These three main systems of balance are:

1. **Vision.** The eyes send information to the brain, so much so that with the eyes closed, postural sway increases from 20—70%. (Try sitting on a fit-ball with your feet off the floor, hands not touching anything and your eyes closed! VP) Eye problems such as glaucoma or macular degeneration can also affect balance.
2. **Proprioception** - Our sense of the relative position of neighbouring parts of the body without directly looking at them. Feedback from skin, muscles and joints enables us to use our body in seemingly simple but actually complex ways. Lisa gave the example of feeling a stone on the path under our shoe and compensating with appropriate movement so that we don't topple over.
3. **Vestibular organs** -The inner ear attachments, which consist of (a) three semi-circular canals, each at right angles to the other two, sensitive to head rotation, and (b) two otolith organs, sensitive to straight-line movement—the utricle sensing left-right, forward-back motion, and the saccule sensing up-down motion. Each of the vestibular organs is filled with fluid. These systems are coordinated by the nervous system, which requires a good supply of blood and oxygen.

Continued Page 7

Unlocking the Secrets of the Balance System (cont.)

Balance can be affected by many factors (apart from alcohol!!) which are not related to the ear. **Medical conditions** include peripheral neuropathy (nerve damage), tumours, cerebellar disorders, TIAs (Transient Ischemic Attacks or mini-strokes), multiple sclerosis, respiratory disorders, migraine, diabetes, low blood pressure, allergies. **Medications** for these and other illnesses and for severe pain can also affect balance.

Psychological factors influence almost everything we feel and perceive in our lives, including our balance. Anxiety, for example, can lead to hyperventilation, which gives oxygen problems, and thence to bad balance.

Vestibular or Inner Ear Disorders include the following:

1. **BPPV** (Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo) is provoked by head movement, but is of short duration, seconds or minutes only, and can be treated. It is caused by otoconia, tiny crystals of calcium carbonate which are a normal part of the utricle—one of the otolith organs. These can come loose; if they stay in the otolithic vestibule, fine, but if they get into the semi-circular canals, a very strong sensation of spinning results.
2. **Unilateral Vestibular Dysfunction** can be caused by trauma which as a head injury, by post-surgery effects, by a tumour, or by a viral infection such as 'flu or herpes, where the patient may not even feel sick with the usual symptoms. The resulting violent spinning does not go away, even when the eyes are closed.
3. **Bilateral Vestibular Dysfunction** may be caused by medications which are toxic to the vestibules.

Treatments:

1. Repositioning, i.e. moving the head and torso very abruptly, to shift the crystals out of the semi-circular canals and back into the vestibule; very dizzying, nauseating, but with 80% success.
2. Habituation, i.e. getting used to moving the head from one side to the other and back despite the vertigo—also distressing.

3. Physiotherapy, with eye and head exercises to encourage compensation.
4. Medication, which is generally not the preferred treatment, because it simply suppresses the symptoms. Long term use of one of the most often prescribed medications can cause Parkinson's Disease!!
5. Surgery (which would surely be a last-resort choice?)

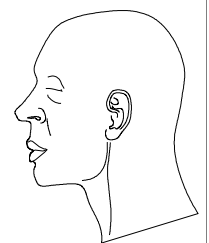
Where to go if you have balance problems:

1. Your GP, who will try to assess the cause. A cocktail of medications, or one particular one, can be the villain. Your blood pressure is important—low blood pressure can floor you.
2. An audiologist, a specialist in this field.
3. An ENT specialist, who might order an MRI for you.
4. A neurologist.
5. A physiotherapist.
6. A hospital emergency ward, if the symptoms are extremely distressing. On a personal level, when I had my own dramatic episode of vestibular dysfunction, I was not able to lift my head from the ground a few centimetres to sip water for a tablet, due to the overwhelming nausea and vertigo.
7. The Balance Centre at the Ear Science Institute Australia, where Lisa works, 1 Salvado Road, Wembley, Phone 6380.4944—but a referral is needed from your GP.

Questions from the floor included one on Hyperacusis, a condition where there is an over-sensitivity to certain frequency ranges of sound and another on Tinnitus, ringing or other noises in the ears—very common in mature folk and very poorly understood medically.

Balance: A pertinent topic, presented by an excellent (and very easy on the eye) young speaker.

Vera Payne



MEETING : 13 SEPTEMBER 2013

DAVID COOK: Computer Fraud for Seniors

(No, not how to do it, but how to avoid it happening to YOU)

David Cook is a lecturer at Edith Cowan University in the School of Computer and Security Science. Recent technology advances have brought with them new ways of stealing personal information.

David introduced his subject by appealing to seniors to come forward if they get into trouble with cyber security, and not to be afraid to ask questions. Many clever people who have succeeded in life have been duped by cyber criminals. He asked us to think about it. We did not grow up with computers. We learned how to use them in our later years, quite often after retirement. They were not part of our lives when we were 10, 15 or 20 years old.

Here, David told us about how his six-year-old son “hacked” into a computer at Ikea. These computers are provided for the public to design their own kitchens, and after a few minutes the lad had on the screen the wages records of the staff. The boy is not a computer wizard but has an understanding of them. This proves that out in our world there are people much smarter than we are who are capable of negotiating around firewalls and our cyber security systems. Senior citizens are easy targets for cyber criminals. We are perceived to be rich. Most of us have paid off our homes, have superannuation, and most likely have more than \$50 in the bank. In the eyes of a 20 year old we are rich. What they want most is our identity. They do not want to take all our money at one time, they just want to share it with you - \$50 a week here and there – this is how the clever ones work.

He then asked how many of us present had been contacted by someone telling us there was something wrong with our Microsoft program. This drew a huge response – most of us have received these annoying phone calls a number of times.

Online Banking: David asked how many of us used online banking, then how many used Windows XP.

Those who answered “yes” to both questions are in the highest risk category of being defrauded by cyber criminals. Since 1 January 2013 Microsoft no longer provides security updates on Windows XP. You may think you are updating your system, but in fact it is the same update – there has been nothing new since 1 January 2013. Microsoft has abandoned Windows XP.

E-health records: David recommended that everyone take control of their own health records.

Utilities: A current scam that is capturing many seniors in Western Australia is the phone call advising you that your - phone – electricity – in fact any utility - is overdue. The voice is usually Australian and the amount they tell you is owing is feasible. Then they ask you to go to the Post Office and pay the amount to a Western Union account. Now, Western Union only sends money overseas so why pay a (supposedly) overdue Telstra account through an overseas organisation. Thousands of Western Australians are falling for this scam.

Social engineering: Seniors are very good at identifying a snake oil salesman if one comes to the door, but are not adept at recognising an online scam. Scammers are clever at copying an older person’s style of writing – they are looking at all your email and Facebook records so they know how you think and express yourself.

Real websites vs fake websites: In our last newsletter on page 8, there was an article on this very subject “http vs https”. David reiterated all the information that was in that article.

Multiple scam emails: According to David, seniors are often too polite. He suggested that, after receiving a number of scam emails which we have promptly deleted, we then get to the stage of replying, asking the sender (usually politely) not to send any more emails as we are not interested in what they are trying to sell us. This is gold to a scammer as it tells him your account is active and probably provides him with your name and, possibly, your address and phone number. He gathers all this information from you and other gullible people and then he has a valuable “list” which he can sell to multiple organisations and companies. The important thing is: NEVER respond to any of these emails, no matter how much they annoy you. DELETE them all.

Continued Page 9

Computer Fraud for Seniors (cont.)

Passwords: If you have a router, the chances are you are using it with the default password. David says that in 90% of cases the password is either “password” or “admin”. This will allow cyber criminals access to most of the computers in Australia. **CHANGE** your password. A phone call to your internet service provider will help you do this. By law your provider must assist you and the service is free.

National Broadband Network: Australia will have some form of NBN. High speed internet brings high speed challenges to block out criminals. Therefore, password settings are very important.

Selling your old computer: Do not give away or sell your old computer without checking that you have permanently deleted all old information. The easiest way to do this is to buy a new hard drive (very cheap) and destroy the old hard drive by drilling holes in it. Unscrupulous people go to auctions and buy old computers for a few dollars, pay an IT student from a university to retrieve data, and then they sell this data for a huge profit. This is not illegal; they are not breaking the law. They are not stealing your data – you are giving it to them!

Assistance from family and friends to access banking and make financial transactions: A survey conducted last year by David found that most seniors relied on family or friends to assist them in setting up online banking. Are you sure the person helping you is the right person to have access to your password? As well as having checks for working with children, perhaps there should be the same checks to cover working with seniors.

Phishing: Really, the same as fishing. Those emails that appear to be from, say, your bank telling you there appears to be some suspicious activity on your account and asks you to “click here” to confirm your details and password. That is the hook, and if you provide the information, the fish is caught.

Trojans: If you get a message from your anti-virus provider that they have found a “Trojan” – get in touch with your bank IMMEDIATELY.

What type of anti-virus protection is the best: All are very good, provided you update them regularly. David used ‘flu vaccinations as an example. If you had one three years ago, it is no good now. The same applies to whatever anti-virus you have.

More than one anti-virus provider: If you have two anti-virus systems on your computer delete one, because they can contradict each other.

Phone calls: You may receive a phone call from someone who says they are from your bank asking you to confirm certain personal details. They may well be, but to be on the safe side, say you will phone your bank back later to deal with the matter.

Dictionary of computer terms: This is very confusing for seniors as many of the terms used signify something else for people of our age. Some of these are:

Spam: Unsolicited emails (Tinned meat)

Worm: A Virus (a garden creature)

Trojan: The worst kind of virus (Trojan horse)

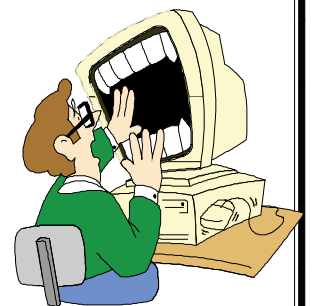
Cookies: A program to speed up your computer (biscuits)

Cloud: Off-site storage (where rain comes from)

A member asked what “cyber” meant—It simply means “computer”.

David runs workshops called SIT (Seniors Identity Training). These workshop sessions are for a maximum of six people at any one session. He has very generously offered to hold at least one (or possibly more) at a time suitable to himself and will probably be held at Edith Cowan Mount Lawley Campus. The first session was eagerly snapped up by six members who put their names forward. If you are interested in another session give your name to Vera Payne (9387.1520) and she will pass on to David to arrange a time.

This was an amazing talk, presented by a man who understands computing, seniors, and the risks when these two come together.



Margaret Harris



PARLIAMENT HOUSE, PERTH

A couple of months ago I was travelling on the 27 bus west up St Georges Terrace. One elderly man sitting near me asked the other man with him “Where was the original Parliament House?” This sparked my curiosity and I decided to look into it. Here is what I found:

Parliament House, Perth is located on Harvest Terrace, West Perth. It is the home of the Parliament of Western Australia, including the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. It features Greek Revival architecture elements.

Initially, the Legislative Council was housed in the small 1830s government offices in St Georges Terrace, and the Legislative Assembly in Howick Street (now Hay Street) near the Town Hall. An 1897 Royal Commission recommended proposals to house the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly in the same building, and suggested two possible locations: the site of the existing Legislative Council in St Georges Terrace, and the hill in Harvest Terrace, behind the Pensioner Barracks. After designs were completed for both sites, the Royal Commission recommended the St Georges Terrace site. Politicians JW Hackett and George Leake favoured the Harvest Terrace site, which was eventually chosen by Parliament.

An Australia-wide competition was held for the design of Parliament House, adjudicated by the government architect of New South Wales. He did not recommend any of the entries, but gave awards of merit. One of the awards went to four officers of the Public Works Department. The decision was then referred to the parliamentary committee, which awarded the design to the Public Works Department, whose chief architects were John Grainger and Hillson Beasley.

Construction of the first stage of Parliament House commenced in 1902. The walls were constructed of local brick with tile facing from Rottnest Island, Donnybrook stone, and jarrah woodwork and locally made clay tiles. A large general room for members and a library were added to the initial design during construction, which was completed in 1904. The building opened on 28 July 1904, and *The West Australian* commented:

“When the assembly members trooped into the Council Chamber to hear the Commission read, the visitors had time to criticise the extraordinary colour scheme of the Assembly Chamber, count the hundreds of black swans swimming in the blue sea of carpet, comment on the dizzying height of the galleries, and draw comparisons—born of the wearying display of stained glass and coloured wood—between the general appearance of the Chamber and that of a glorified saloon...”

The eastern wing was constructed between 1958 and 1964. The building was extended to the south in 1978. During the 1980s, uneventful proposals were put forward to extend the structure eastwards by covering the adjoining Mitchell Freeway, incorporating commercial development, and connecting the Parliament House precinct with St Georges Terrace.

Margaret Harris

Source: *Wikipedia.*

And now for a little “Punography”

I tried to catch some fog. I mist.

Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.

A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.

Energiser bunny arrested. Charged with battery.

How do you make holy water? Boil the hell out of it.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary?

A thesaurus.



THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

As seen by Chris Caton, Chief Economist, BT Funds Management

The Australian share market rose by 1.6% in August, bringing its year-to gain to 10.5%. For once, the domestic market out-performed the US share market, which registered a fall of 3.1% in the month, leaving its year-to gain at 14.5%.

We are told frequently that economic management is a (perhaps the) key issue in an election. What is interesting about this is that there is no clear evidence that one side is a more competent manager of the economy than the other. In recent times, the Coalition got to manage the commodity-price boom while the Labor government got to deal with the GFC. Who is to say that if the roles had been reversed the results would have looked very different.

The fact is that most of what determines how the Australian economy performs has little to do with the government. The rest of the world matters a lot, monetary policy is independent and the private sector goes about its business every day. In Hamlet's words, "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will". The Federal government does the rough-hewing. This is not to argue that government makes no difference. Indeed, both sides should be given credit for the bipartisan approach to economic reform that dragged the Australian economy into the 20th century in the 1980s and 1990s. The days of bipartisanship are, unfortunately, long gone.

Election campaigns are frustrating for economists because they see their discipline misused time and time again. Here there is bipartisanship; both sides are equally guilty.

One of the biggest distortions is this endless hammering away at the idea that Australia has amassed this huge pile of government debt that will, somehow or other, impoverish us or our children (or perhaps their children).

The plain and simple truth is that, measured relative to the size of our economy, Federal debt is less than a quarter of the average for the developed world. One could legitimately argue that the Budget should be closer to balance, but not that it has left us with a major debt problem. The phobia about debt is not without consequence; the day a country succumbs to it is the day it begins to under-invest in infrastructure.

There is also an apparent assumption, on both sides and certainly in the media, that the state of the Budget is the most important indicator of the economy. It is not; the unemployment rate is a far better candidate. We have lost sight of the fact that the Budget is there to serve the purposes of the economy and not the other way around.

The Australian dollar fell marginally in August, from 90.7 US cents to 89 cents. This leaves it above fair value. During the month, the Reserve Bank characterised it as still high, and I share that view. The downward move may not be over!

In early-August, the RBA cut the cash rate to a record low of 2.5%, a move that was "fully passed on" in mortgage rates. Financial markets remain convinced that there is a further cut out there. I'm less certain; the RBA would probably like to think that it is finished. The key for a further cut is the unemployment rate. It's currently 5.7%, which is relatively low by international standards. But it was 5% as recently as April last year and the trend is ominous. If it continues, unemployment will soon be higher than it was at the worst point of the GFC. If it hits 6%, expect a further rate cut.

The views expressed in this article are Chief Economist, Chris Caton's and are reproduced with the permission of BT Funds Management.

And some more bad jokes:

My daughter asked me for a pet spider for her birthday, so I went to our local pet shop and they were \$70!! Blow this, I thought, I can get one cheaper off the web.

Statistically, 6 out of 7 dwarfs are not Happy.

A teddy bear is working on a building site. He goes for a tea break and when he returns he notices his pick has been stolen. The bear is angry and reports the theft to the foreman. The foreman grins at the bear and says "Oh, I forgot to tell you, today's the day the teddy bears have their pick nicked."

Murphy says to Paddy "What ya talking to an envelope for?" "I'm sending a voicemail ya thick sod!"

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GUEST SPEAKERS

11th October:

Neil Gray—Travel Insurance

8 November:

End of year meeting. No guest speaker.
Come along and enjoy the companionship of
fellow members.

**There will be no meetings in December and
January.**

14 February 2014

Bill Edgar, a WASFR member, will talk about his
book on convicts in WA ,“Lags”

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 inter-
esting, 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 com-
mittee member will be happy to receive your suggestion.

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