

Vol 13 No: 5, May 2019

President's message



Our Club couldn't exist without our many volunteers, and I'm delighted to announce that we've received a grant from LEEP

to celebrate and thank you all. We are planning a morning tea at Rosehill Bowling Club during June. Once we've worked out the date, all our volunteers will receive an invitation (and we'll also be inviting local dignitaries, to show off what a great team we have and what wonderful work we do). More details coming soon!

Speaking of volunteers, our AGM is coming up in October and several positions on the Management Committee will become vacant. Jon Bayley, who has been our Training Course Coordinator for several years, has done a fabulous job of organising each term's program of courses. Jon has indicated that he would

like to hand this job over to someone else. The job involves preparing for and chairing the Planning meeting each term and then following up to make sure all the scheduled courses have trainers and assistant trainers. Jon is very happy to be a mentor for anyone who would like to have a go.



Jon Bayley with secretary Silvia Vega

I hope to see you on Thursday at the monthly meeting.

Keep learning.

Deborah

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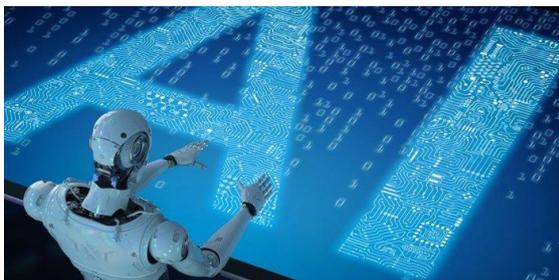
Monthly meeting fee

The Management Committee received some useful and positive feedback from members about whether to increase the fee for the member meeting from \$2 to \$5.

We have decided to go ahead with this increase from the July 2019 meeting. This will allow us to cover the costs of room hire and catering so the meetings, which we think are very worthwhile, are not a drain on our budget.

Members' Meeting speaker

Deborah says she is looking forward to Kim Fitzpatrick's talk at our May meeting about the social impacts of **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robots**. She read his e-book, *New Era Dawning*, and since then has noticed how many stories there are in the media these days about AI.



British author Ian McEwan has just released a new novel of speculative fiction, *Machines Like Me*, on this theme. (Don't you love ebooks? Hear an author interviewed on radio, have the

book on your Kindle app ten minutes later!)

The meeting will be held as usual at the UNE premises on Level 1, 232 Church Street, Parramatta on Thursday 16th May between 9:30-11:30 am.

Join many members for lunch afterwards. You are most welcome.

New Members in April

Please welcome the following new members:

- Louise & Robert Brown
- Robin Bush (Ms)
- Beris Cartwright
- Irene Maier
- Richard McQueeney
- Jie (Janice) Shi

At the end of April the club had 218 members for the 18-19 financial year.



Above – your editor Margaret with new member, Irene Maier.

Help Desk – our new initiative



Above – Julie Nixon with a student

We've had some interesting Help Desk enquiries so far:

- Messaging and Instagram
- Installing Linux operating system
- Synchronising contacts and calendar between phone and laptop
- Updating iPad
- How to cut and paste
- Where are attachments and downloads saved on an Android phone?
- Setting up PayPal account

There are still vacant slots, and we think one hour of personal advice for \$5 is great value. Contact the office or respond via the Weekly Update to book a session with your personal trainer.

Term 2 courses may be viewed as a pdf document on the website at:

<https://parramattacps.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Term-2-2019-Timetable-090419.pdf>

Suggestion box



There were a number of suggestions from members this month. All were considered

by the Committee.

Suggestion 1: Consider getting businesses to sponsor Club for a fee

Committee response: Yes, but we need a volunteer to co-ordinate it.

Suggestion 2: Promote ParraPals through Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association (CPSA).

Committee response: Yes, and maybe ASSCA is better placed to do this for computer clubs as CPSA is Australia wide.

Suggestion 3: Could we set up a book-shelf for book sharing?

Committee response: Suggest that members share books through the Learning & Leisure Centre's well-established book sharing system (Next door to our training room).

Your Brain Matters – the power of prevention



John Senior with president Deborah

The appropriately named John Senior, from the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, addressed the April Members Meeting about actions to help prevent declines in brain function. After listing some of the many functions of the brain, John explained the rise in the old (65+) and OLD old (an official government term, 85+) populations in Australia. In 1974-5, there were 122 people over 100 years of age in Australia but by 2054-55, this population is expected to be over 40,000 people. This growth will be associated with a rise in all chronic illnesses including dementia.

The distinction between the normal slowing of information processing and absent-mindedness of ageing and the persistent general decline of brain functions in dementia is important and people should first discuss any problems with their General Practitioner. Many issues can increase forgetfulness (including fatigue, stress, grief, pain, depression, some medications, nutritional deficiencies and dehydration) but the permanent decline of dementia may have the following symptoms.

Memory – reduced ability to form new memories, or to recall older memories, Inability to learn new names, use of incorrect names for people and everyday objects (often using a word starting with the same first letter)

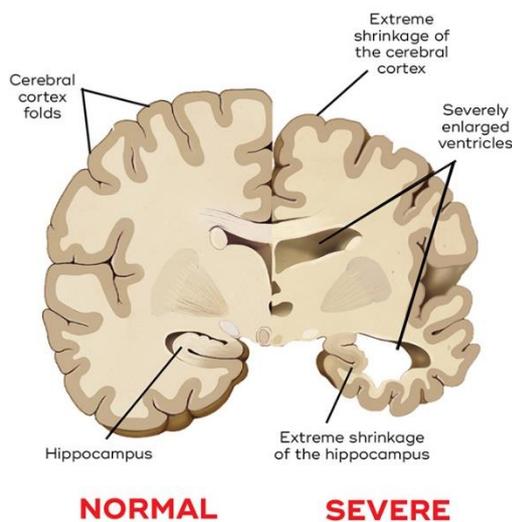
Counting – inability to handle money, inability to complete mental calculations

Saying – perseveration – a brilliant word meaning telling the same story more than once

Reduced spatial awareness that impacts on driving and increases accidents/falls in the home

Behaviour changes – changes in character and social skills
Reduced emotional control

Causes of dementia



The three major causes of dementia are Alzheimer's disease (70% of all dementia), Lewy Body disease (associated with Parkinsonism) and Vascular dementia (either catastrophic loss in a stroke or slow declines in function associated with reduced blood supply).

Interestingly, high blood pressure reduces the supply of nutrients to the brain, Bernoulli's Principle in physics explains this.

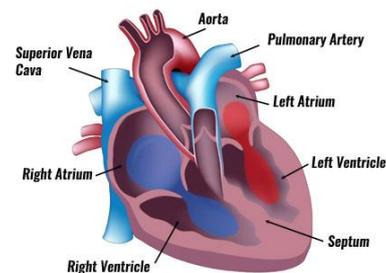
Understanding which form of dementia a person has can assist in treatment so assessment by a geriatrician or neurologist is advised. Depression, if present, needs to be treated separately to any dementia.

Currently, 1 in 10 people over 65, and 3 in 10 over 85 have dementia. The affected population in Australia is 413, 000 with 1.2 million carers. Twenty-six

thousand people have early-onset dementia (starting before age 65). There is a genetic component to Alzheimer's (inability to properly metabolise Amyloid – B proteins) but the major risk factor is age. Poor heart health, low physical activity and poor diet (which are all interrelated) and smoking are preventable risk factors in dementia.

John outlined **Five steps to help delay/reduce dementia.**

Step One – Look after your heart



- Keep BP normal (about 120/70 mmHg, BP doesn't naturally increase with age). This reduces damage to blood vessels and helps with brain and kidney blood flow.
- Keep cholesterol low. Cholesterol forms plaque that reduces the diameter of blood vessels (see Bernoulli's principle again)
- Keep Blood Sugar in normal range. This reduces inflammation and oxidative

stress on the body, especially blood vessels.

- Keep body weight under control. Lifelong obesity doubles the risk of dementia. Also, fat does not equal fat. Abdominal (toxic) fat indicates that fatty coverings are building around body organs reducing their function.
- Smoking – just don't.

Step Two – Be physically active



Elizabeth and Bev on ParraPals excursion

- Regular, varied exercise is not optional. Some cardio and some resistance exercises (3-5 x 20 mins) each week. BUT anything is better than nothing.

Step Three – Mentally challenge your brain

From 0-4 years of age, the most active period of brain

development, large numbers of stronger brain cells and more interconnections are developed. At this age 40% of daily nutrients are devoted to brain function. Brain growth and specialization continues until about age 25 and then starts to decline. Although new interconnections are developing continuously through life, the rate of growth slows by about 1% per year (so by 125 years old there would be no new growth – lucky we don't live that long).

- Vary your mental activities, do frequent enjoyable activities
- Involve children – this is demonstrated to increase memory in the adult.

Step Four – Have a healthy diet



The website www.healthdata.org/gbd states that obesity has increased to 27.5% of adults and 47% of children, with long-term consequences.

- Old messages such as 5 veg and 2 fruit/day, fish 2-3 times per week and using a smaller plate still help. On

your plate about half should be vegetables, with a quarter each for protein and carbohydrates. Lean meats and polyunsaturated fats help while saturated fats, trans fats and added salt are not helpful.

- The [website](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eating-well/healthy-eating-throughout-all-life) <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eating-well/healthy-eating-throughout-all-life> summarises all these issues.

Step Five – Be Socially Active

- Social activity provides mental stimulation and encourages the release of endorphins (feel good proteins)

Step Six – Protect your head

You only have one!

- Old people don't bounce, particularly during falls. John was adamant that no-one over 60 should climb a ladder as traumatic brain injury (due to vascular damage and bleeding) is most often irreversible.

John supplied two leaflets covering the issues he addressed. He also recommended an app (from brainapp.com.au) and the

National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500.

Contributed by Deb Neyle

Social lunch

Keep aside 4th June (12-2pm) for lunch with fellow members at the Commercial Hotel, Parramatta.

Now don't take us seriously ...

If you work as a security guard in a Samsung store, does that make you a guardian of the Galaxy?



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