

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Meet the retired Australians who are thriving in isolation**

As life slowly goes back to normal for most Australians, vulnerable retirees are expecting to continue isolating for months to protect themselves from contracting COVID-19, encouraging many of them to step out of their comfort zone; and thrive.

Representing more than 113,000 members across more than 1,500 clubs, Probus South Pacific is connecting retirees across Australia and New Zealand and introducing them to new skills and interests.

Probus South Pacific has been guiding members to embrace technology to help keep connected to loved ones, learn new skills, and make new friends during social distancing.

Probus South Pacific's CEO, Silvana Martignago said it has been great to see so many retirees use this time to upskill and exercise their creativity.

"From photography competitions; to online exercise classes; to virtual BBQ's, we've seen retirees from all different backgrounds take on new challenges and come out feeling more confident," Ms Martignago said.

"Each week we have been sharing new tips and activities to keep our retired members engaged and connected while physically distancing," she said.

Club members have been staying connected through video calls, phone calls and the latest E-Pen Pal initiative which connects every member to another from Australia or New Zealand via email.

To stay connected to the outside world, Probus South Pacific has introduced members to new concepts such as virtual nature tours, podcasts, seminars, and interactive online games.

Queensland Director of Probus South Pacific, Judith Maestracci said the Clubs initiatives have been a valuable part of staying healthy and happy during this difficult time.

"Learning new skills and connecting to new and old friends through various communication channels has been the silver lining during this global pandemic," said Ms Maestracci.

"It's been very inspiring to see other members share their new crafting skills, favourite recipes, and recommend books and movies.

"We've all become more tech-savvy; a lot of members have even embraced technology for the first time to stay connected during lockdown," she said.

Ordinarily, Probus offers its members the opportunity to stay active and involved through its monthly Club meetups, activities, special interest groups, entertainment, and outings.

Probus South Pacific is a non-political, non-sectarian organisation helping retirees or soon-to-be retirees to find friendship, fellowship and fun through social interaction and activities with other retirees in the community.

For more information about Probus, visit <https://www.probusouthpacific.org/>

**ENDS**

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