



**July 2022**  
[www.countrynetwork.com.au](http://www.countrynetwork.com.au)  
 E: [editor@countrynetwork.com.au](mailto:editor@countrynetwork.com.au)  
 Country Social Network Inc. (Reg Y2063541)  
*The Newsletter that reaches across Australia*

[www.countrynetwork.com.au](http://www.countrynetwork.com.au)  
 Postal address: 24 Pinnocks Rd, Emerald, Vic 3782

### Why Renew your Membership?

Because we're worth it and we need your continued support.

We're aware we are unable to provide social opportunities to all members, and if you're one of those who are questioning the worth of your membership, we please ask that you consider your continued support because we do make a significant difference to enough members to make our organisation worth supporting, even if you're not getting much from your membership personally.

Obviously Covid has impacted our organisation with our inability to offer social outings through 2020 and 2021. But as we adjust to life without travel and hospitality restrictions, we have a few new enthusiastic volunteers already organising events helping to rejuvenate our fine organisation. Coupled with record high membership numbers and a new website (finally) on the horizon, we have good reason to be excited about the future of Country Network and we want you to be a part of that future and help us expand further across the width and breadth of this vast country until no man, regardless of where he resides, feels socially isolated.

**How to renew?** Go to page 2 for details.

If you don't wish to renew, please advise E: [registrar@countrynetwork.com.au](mailto:registrar@countrynetwork.com.au)

## membership

### Welcome to New Members

- David G - Paddington, NSW
- Michael M. - Tamworth, NSW
- Peter H. - Inverleigh, Vic
- Chris M. - Cairns, Qld
- Rod M. - Warriewood, NSW
- David T. - Swansea, Tas.
- Brian W-S - Hope Valley, S.A.
- Armour R. - Temora, NSW
- Ian G. - Coolah, NSW
- Raymond W. Esperance, W.A.
- Trevor B. - Wynnum E, Qld.
- Rob C. - Wallu, Qld.
- Glenn M. - Nagambie, Vic.
- Frank B. - Buderim, Qld.
- George S. - Midland, W.A.
- Alexander Z Cronulla, NSW

**CN currently has 403 members**

### Contacting fellow members



When was the last time you had a look through the membership list and gave a fellow member a call? Have you ever done it? Maybe you should give it a go.

With so many cold-sell calls these days for solar panels and new electricity deals, we tend to answer our phones to unknown callers with greater suspicion, so be sure to let them know who you are and you're just calling to say hello.

If you are keen to give it a try, why not choose someone that appears to reside in a more remote area. Usually, those residing in more remote or regional areas, don't get the same opportunities to chat about 'gay' matters.

**You just might make a friend too.**



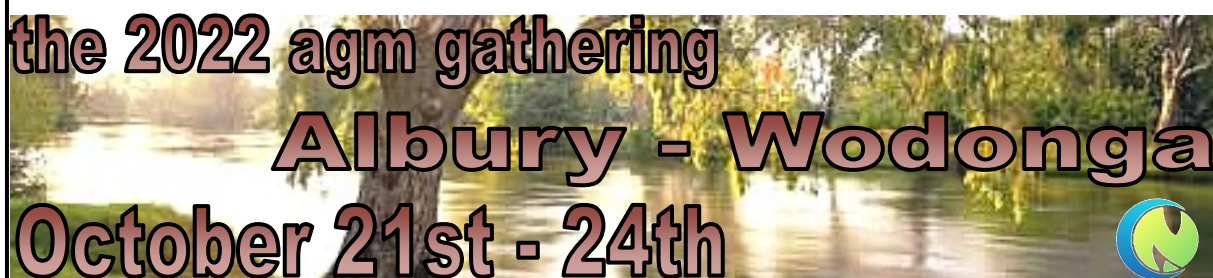
## 2022 Country Network AGM Gathering

The committee has made the decision to hold the 2022 AGM in Wodonga, Vic over the weekend of October 21– 24.

Firstly, before we all get too excited, our sincere apologies to our West Aussie members for once again postponing the proposed Bunbury AGM. It was not an easy decision but after nearly three years of significant, detrimental travel restrictions and uncertainty, it is imperative our organisation maximise the attendance to our next national gathering, being the 2022 AGM.

Upon reviewing the results of the recent survey, it is evident that members' unwillingness to step onto a plane due to Covid concerns remains high. Thus, in order to maximise numbers at the 2022 AGM, the decision was made to shift the event to Wodonga, Vic; the location of the 2019 AGM.

Please be assured the committee will endeavour to reinstall the balance in 2023 and beyond, to ensure Country Network remains a truly national organisation. And when we do, all West Aussies in attendance can expect a drink from those in the East.



Those who attended the 2019 AGM at The Blazing Stump, know what a great success it was with both the Motel and Hotel perfect venues where our group was greeted with a warm, friendly welcome.

There is still much work to be done but we hope to have a booking form available to members in the coming weeks.

Now, you can get excited .....

### Membership renewal payment.

- ◆ Firstly, check when your subscription is due by logging on to the website and selecting "Profile" from the menu.
- ◆ If it is due soon, click the renew button, complete any necessary details, then hit "send". If paying by direct credit, just hit "send" and complete your bank transaction separately.
- ◆ If you want to just pay (\$20 single, \$25 couple) directly into the bank without logging on, please make sure you provide an identifiable reference.

CBA Bank: BSB: 065 521 A/C 1009 6483

ANZ Bank: BSB: 015 881 A/C 4779 37562

- ◆ Paying by cheque: Mail to Registrar, 24 Pinnocks Rd, Emerald 3782

If you're unable to log in to the website or need any other further assistance, please contact the Registrar at E: [registrar@countrynetwork.com.au](mailto:registrar@countrynetwork.com.au) or T: Neil on 0419 551 245



## President's Report

Hello Members,

It is my fervent hope that things will begin to happen again within Country Network now that all restrictions have been lifted from our lockdowns over the past two years. The pandemic caused mayhem with our social activities, and I feel the sooner we restart them the better. Many groups have restarted, and some are in the process of gathering information to bring a group of our members together in a social activity. One of the great things about Country Network is the fact that we can come together and enjoy each other's company and talk about things that matter to and are a concern with us. I would encourage you to think about getting a social group together if there is not one in your area. They are great fun. Recently the Area Coordinator for the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, Thomas, organised a luncheon for members. Have a look at the report elsewhere in the Networker. This has turned into a monthly meet. The life and soul of Country Network is the social contacts we make and that is best done by coming together in a social group and enjoying each other's company. Go to it, get those coffee mornings, group bike rides, lunches, games afternoons, bush walks and nude bush walks up and running and help strengthen our Association.



Remember that we have an avenue to publish all events happening in Australia through our Country Network Events magazine. This is published monthly by Events Coordinator Hector Vera and sent to all members. If you are organizing an event, get in touch with Hector at [events@countrynetwork.com.au](mailto:events@countrynetwork.com.au) by the 19<sup>th</sup> of each month to publicise your event.

Neil's zoom meetings are continuing with a hard-core band of brothers coming on board each week. This is great to see as it brings us closer to each other, even if it is on a computer screen. If you would like to join these Zoom sessions get in touch with Neil ([secretary@countrynetwork.com](mailto:secretary@countrynetwork.com)) and he will send you the link to join the Saturday sessions at 5:00pm.

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Have you thought about joining our Facebook page? This is a private group page and only Country Network members can join. The page is open to all members to post or comment anything they feel maybe of interest to other members. To join it's a simple matter for you to go to the public Country Network Facebook page where there is a join button. Press the button and answer the simple questions and our Admin for Facebook will check to see if you are a member of Country Network. If you are bingo, you are into the private CN Facebook page. The link for the page is: <https://www.facebook.com/countrynetworkaustralia>

Play safe and Keep safe

Regards,

Jeffrey P. Sproal

### ***For all your (gay) travel needs .....***

Contact fellow CN member Adam Bold at Points of Difference

[www.pointsofdifference.com](http://www.pointsofdifference.com)

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE  
*Travel & Events*



# 2022 midyear gathering Port Macquarie Held April 1 - 4

countrynetwork



This was a very successful Autumn Gathering, after having been so long since we had one. 32 members came together, and a very enjoyable time was had by all.

We stayed at North Point Apartments, some stayed in the caravan park nearby and others stayed in B&B's. One of the wonderful things to happen was the number of new members who attended a Country Network event for the first time. I know they thoroughly enjoyed themselves and left having made many new acquaintances and in some cases friends.

Friday night saw us gathered at Chop'n Chill for our meet and greet, New and old faces a plenty. Saturday saw us +up early and on the bus to visit the Koala Hospital, then onto Laurieton for lunch and returning via Sea Acres Rainforest Centre, a NSW National Park. Saturday night was a fabulous trip on the Hastings River with a three-course dinner. A fabulous night once again with great company.

On Sunday we had a free day, and many visited the sights and sounds of Port Macquarie. Some ventured far afield to Ricardos, a well-known tourist spot where you can pick your own strawberries and taste all things tomatoes. Sunday night we gathered under North Point for a Thai meal This was a great event to finish off a great weekend.

I would like to thank those members who attended and showed us that we can travel again after covid and if we take care all is well. I know that several wanted to know if we could have other major events over a weekend during the year. All it takes is someone to organise the event. Several have mentioned where the Autumn Gathering would be next year and among the suggestions was Echuca. Something to think about.

Jeff Sproal  
Event Organiser.



I'm taking this opportunity to congratulate The organiser for the excellent program provided for the time in Port Macquarie. The "Meet and Greet" was a great venue with ample food and variety provided The Visit to the Koala hospital was excellent and the guide very informative. The river cruise and dinner finished off an excellent fun-filled day. All in all, a great gathering; new friendships made, old ones renewed.

Congratulations Mr President and your capable assistant. I enjoyed my mid-year gathering.

Peter Kennett.



## 2022 midyear gathering continued ....

Thirty two gentlemen, albeit of only one persuasion but covering a variety of ages, assembled on the Friday night for the traditional Meet and Greet. It was really nice to walk into a group of friendly, welcoming faces, to greet many from previous gatherings, and to meet newcomers (Autumn Gathering virgins!) Though it had been a long time since the last Gathering, reconnecting with old friends was as though we'd seen each other only last week. The 'new boys' really got into the vibe and, despite the significant background noise, it most certainly set a positive tone for the rest of the weekend.

Was it the weather, the location, or were we all starved of social intercourse? For whatever reasons I'd rate this 2022 Autumn Gathering as one of the most relaxed and friendly I've attended. And while it was fun to catch up ("haven't seen you in years - are you still together?") it was good to bed down new, shared experiences.

The Saturday coach trip, in perfect weather, was comprehensive in providing an idea of the size of the region, the facilities, and the scenery (we all seemed to like the koalas. Had we been in lockdown too long?), and a most pleasant lunch break in Laurie-ton. The waves were crashing over the breakwater putting on an impressive show.

We drove past Jeffrey and Peter's new swanky abode (what, no scones jams and cream? Not even cream?). Again, a fast developing area, surprisingly densely populated. But still a seaside village atmosphere.

Saturday late afternoon Port Macquarie wharf was humming with people. We just walked straight through them on to our very own boat. It left pretty much on time and the boat and crew were at our disposal. Well, maybe not the crew, but they were first class anyway. The river was still very swollen from the recent rains, however we mozied around a considerable stretch, gawping at the macmansions lining the marinas. They reminded me of the earlier days in Surfer Paradise. The region is developing really fast. It will be interesting to observe how the expansion is handled.

The food on board was good, and we kept the bar busy. For us it was quite spacious and we moved from the more open upper deck to downstairs where the cooler night air off the water didn't impinge. Given that this was the last formally arranged event there were a few nice words to round off the trip. And very well deserved thanks to Jeffrey. It was certainly a case of third time lucky. A good weekend, good company, and good location. It was an excellent catch-up, and now we look forward to the next opportunity to get together again.

David Breaden



[www.primetimerswa.com.au](http://www.primetimerswa.com.au)

**Brisbane Mature Age Men (BMAM)** is a new Facebook Private Group  
They plan dinners and other social outings. CN members are invited to join their FB group



***Please allow me to introduce myself .....***

Members join Country Network for a variety of reasons, but the vast majority do so with the view to form friendships with like-minded men. We are raised to wait until we are invited, yet we state in our membership profile if we wish to host. Take that as your invite; that's why its there.

Our Protocols outline the accepted and expected behaviours, which are simply follow common courtesy and common sense. You can find our Protocols on the website under "Admin" "Forms & Documents"

Hi, I'm Chris from Clifton Beach, Cairns. I'm fairly new to Country Network and I'd love to have visitors come and visit; even stay. I've got a comfy bungalow or you're welcome to stay in the house. Come and escape the cold winter weather down south, or even just give me a call to say hello.

**From Maleny Queensland**

I have been involved in Bonsai for thirty + years and recently been working with Maleny Hardware and Rural Supplies helping set up a bonsai nursery here in Maleny as well as running workshops for them.

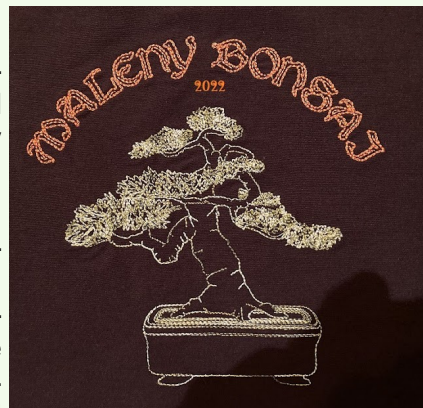
World Bonsai Day 14th May (actually the 15th) we held an exhibition to celebrate the day. The weather was atrocious and I was even prepared to cancel it on the day. However we went ahead, it only drew around fifteen people but were all interested in the art/craft bonsai. At the workshop later that day, I put to the attendees the possibility of setting up Maleny Bonsai Self Help Group they all were in favour, so a meeting was arranged which decided it would be a non profit group with no formal structure apart from Maleny Bonsai enthusiasts advanced and beginners getting together on the second Saturday of the month to discuss and exchange ideas and problems with their trees.

Whilst the group is aimed towards Maleny we would love and welcome members travelling through the area. You never know you may just have an interest but never had a go, come along and learn what is involved who knows we might be able to sell you a tree!

To our local members, if you have trees or are interested in learning, we would love to catch up with you on the second Sunday of each month. Hardware & Rural Supplies, 31 Coral St, Maleny QLD

For those out-of-towners, Paul and I are happy to host and guide here in lovely Maleny on the Sunshine Coast.

Cheers Jeff Reed and Paul Williams E: jefaul44@gmail.com



I'm Roderick from Eastwood, which is a suburb of Bairnsdale. I live at the gateway to the Great Lakes District so if you wanted to explore the area, I am happy to host.

My name is Rob and I live in Wallu which is a short drive from Tin Can Bay, Queensland. I have only just joined Country Network, hoping to meet new people. If anyone happens to be on the road with their caravan, they are welcome to park it on my property for a short stay.

I would love for you to advertise my place of willing to host for travellers to QLD and I am also willing to be a travelling companion for guys travelling through QLD. I love camping and love others to join me and I love to travel with someone in a caravan when they travel in QLD. I would love to have people visiting me. Thomas, Beenleigh.

..... ***we'd love to hear from you***



## Friends Gather for Lunch in Beenleigh, Queensland

On the 18th of June 2022, we had the first lunch get together which included CN members of the Gold Coast, Brisbane and Sunshine Coast and included members from the Mature Age Men (MAM) group from Brisbane and a few of their friends. A total of 17 guys met together for a very enjoyable lunch, chatter and building of new friendships and a catch up of old friendships who had not seen each other for a long time.



The staff of Club Beenleigh were very friendly and very accommodating to our needs with discounts on the meals, coffee, and cakes. A great time was had by all.

It is my goal and aim to bring guys together from Country Network of the Gold Coast and Brisbane areas but also invite and include other Mature guys (like MAM) and the Sunshine Coast into the social lunches as it is about connecting with others and building a bigger network and create a safe place and environment for all.



I hope to be able to organise a lunch at different locations every month and after having spoken to the Manager of the Club Beenleigh, we can organise and plan to have their facility available to us on a regular basis when needed as well.

I welcome and offer an invitation to all other Country Network guys for future lunches in the Brisbane/ Gold Coast areas.

Stay safe and healthy.

CN Co-Ordinator for Brisbane and Gold Coast  
Thomas Tiltmann

## North East Victoria

Paul is doing a great job in establishing the monthly luncheon in Shepparton, held on the fourth Sunday of each month.



If you're travelling in the region or know of friends who would enjoy a friendly lunch with a group of handsome men, then get in touch with Paul. He's doing a great job but he doesn't want your applause; he wants your hands on support.



## Coffs Coast Walkers

Local member Jack has inspired a band of enthusiastic others to join him on monthly walks in the district. A healthy pursuit for both body and mind as members enjoy the conversation and camaraderie equally with immersing themselves in nature whilst giving their legs a gentle workout.

Jack was a keen walker in the Blue Mountains but fortunately for the Coffs locals when he moved in to the area, he brought with him his enthusiasm to continue his group walks. Apart from a couple of cancellations due to serious weather fronts, the interest has remained strong.

The group are taking a short hiatus whilst Jack takes an overseas break for a couple of months. But he'll be back soon enough and treading those paths less travelled soon enough.

Great work Jack.

**THE  
OTHER  
PLACE**

### Passing Through Rutherglen?

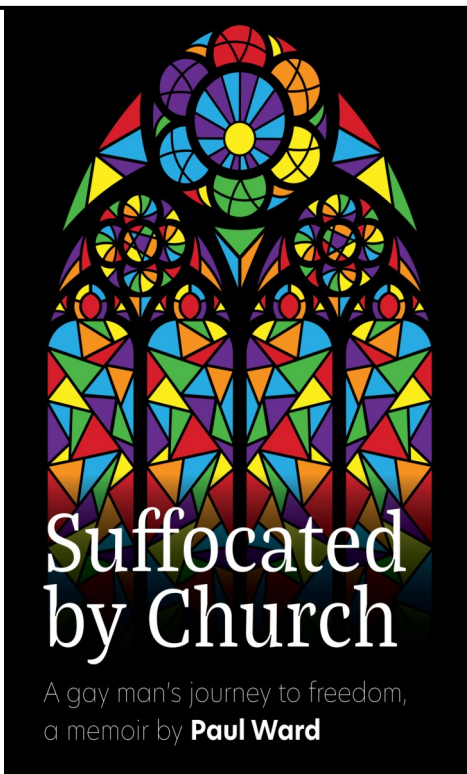
For the best coffee & scones in the district and the best patisseries this side of Gay Paris, be sure to drop into The Other Place and ask for Coxy.



### How does Paul become his authentic self?

Please let me introduce fellow member, Paul Ward. Sydney born, Paul was raised in a Catholic focused family during the 60s and 70s. Like so many others of that era, Paul felt the need to hide his gay sexuality whilst still keeping an examining eye on the Maroubra Surfies in all their glimmering splendour. And how he longed to jump off the bus and stroll the sexually charged streets of Darlinghurst and Kings Cross!

But the familiar story followed for Paul; aged in his mid 40s, he married a Catholic woman in an effort to 'cure' myself of gay tendencies. It didn't work! They divorced in 2012 and he eventually came out publicly in October 2014 at the age of 60. He quickly discovered gay haunts and social apps such as Grindr, which kept him amused for a couple of years, but he wanted more than they could offer. In 2017, thanks to a mutual friend he was introduced to Cheng via Facebook. Soon after they moved in together in Melbourne where they lived for five years till moving to Caboolture for a warmer climate.



And now over to Paul for him to tell you about his book .....

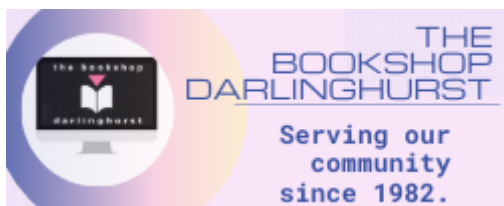
*The movie Spotlight drew focus to my own situation. Reflecting on my youth as a gay Catholic male, I saw the immense influence of the dominant white Sydney culture of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century, my traditional devout family and the ingrained, no, near intrinsic need to cover-up. The need to deny my own sexuality on one hand but also to deny my openly Catholic practice on the other.*

*My Memoir "Suffocated by Church - a Gay man's journey to freedom" is my deeply personal account of my life uncomfortably situated in that overarching paradigm as it focuses on my journey from childhood, through adolescence and a turbulent internal struggle to my eventual coming out later in life as a Proud Gay Australian.*

*I reflect on several stages of my life including: my time as an altar boy, two stints in Catholic monasteries as a teenager, Clerical Sexual Abuse, failed relationships with women - and men, a sojourn to the exotic Papua New Guinea and life in the Sydney Catholic Seminary, all prior to marriage in the Catholic church.*

**Paul Ward E: paul.30.social@gmail.com**

You can find the book at most good book shops, including our favourite, The Bookshop Darlinghurst. You could ask your local library to get it in for you, or you could even chat to Paul himself.



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CountryNetworkAustralia>

Q: Would you like to join fellow members on Zoom each Saturday at 5pm (AEST) for an hour of Relaxed Conversation?

A: Contact Secretary Neil @ [secretary@countrynetwork.com.au](mailto:secretary@countrynetwork.com.au) for details.





## **CAMP: Australia's pioneer homosexual rights activists**

The Pride movement in Australia began with the founding of CAMP (Campaign Against Moral Persecution) in Sydney in 1970. CAMP's momentum spread quickly to other Australian states, fuelling the first LGBTQI rights marches and firing up political campaigns for changes to oppressive laws and systems. *CAMP: Australia's pioneer homosexual rights activists* brings to life the vital role that CAMP activists played. They inspired and initiated a social movement that continues to this day. Individual members of CAMP from across Australia now tell their own stories and highlight their lived experiences. They speak of the life-changing support their community offered, at a time when lesbians and gay men were despised by much of society.

Authors Robyn Kennedy and Robyn Plaister were both active members of CAMP NSW during the 1970s. They are 78ers who have stayed involved with the Pride movement. Robyn Kennedy is a former Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras board member and current Vice President, Global Outreach and Partnerships with InterPride, the international association of Pride organisers. Robyn Plaister started the first Lesbian Mothers group and co-organised the first Lesbian Teachers Group. She is a current member of 10/40 Matrix, a group organising supportive and educative programs for lesbians over 40.

To order your copy, or for more information, visit <https://rkam481.wixsite.com/website>

If you would like to contact fellow member, Kym Skinner, who is featured in the book, you can reach him on E: [kymski7@icloud.com](mailto:kymski7@icloud.com)

### **JOHN PRIDDLE** 18 July 1930 - 28 June 2022

Treasured companion of Chun-chiang.  
Loyal long term member of the  
Australian Society for  
Keyboard Music Adelaide Inc,  
Klavier Music Association,  
Canberra Keyboard and Organ Club and  
Canberra Long Yang Club.


*Loved friend to all.  
You will be missed deeply.*

The funeral service for John will be held in the  
Chapel of Norwood Park Crematorium,  
Sandford Street, Mitchell on Monday,  
18 July 2022, commencing at 1:30pm.

Burial will follow at Gungahlin Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made  
to the RSPCA.

For livestreaming details please go to  
[www.norwoodpark.com.au](http://www.norwoodpark.com.au)

 **WILLIAM COLE FUNERALS**  
Canberra - 6253 3655



Our condolences to Chun-chiang. Although it can be said John lived a fulfilled life worth celebrating, the loss is still palpable.

Those who knew John, knew him to be one of life's gentle men; always generous and smiling. Occasionally that smile would offer a hint of mischief, but being forever the gentleman, the thoughts behind the cheeky smile were never revealed.

John will fondly remembered by those fortunate to have shared happy times together.

The service will be streamed live. Unfortunately, I am unable to insert the live streaming link here. If any member would like to view the live streaming of the funeral, or any other details, please contact David Bengner at [croton@webone.com.au](mailto:croton@webone.com.au)



# Breaking News



## Our Country Network website

Our website has been a thorn in the organisation's bum for a number of years. Hindsight is wonderful but the decision a few years ago to try and work with the existing site has proved to be the wrong move. At that time, the thought of starting from scratch just seemed too overwhelming. But now, in the absence of any member(s) with suitable knowledge stepping forward to assist, starting from scratch is exactly what we need to do. We have little

choice.

Previously, the committee sought recommendations from members, and from those, chose a designer. The problem with that process is that no one on the committee had the required technical knowledge to guide the development. Just stating what we want from a website is not sufficient; the many nuances of how the website integrates internally and externally with other aspects, programs and media platforms is essential, otherwise we're taking a leap of faith. It's a leap we shouldn't make again, or at least it should be significantly lessened.

Thus, the committee is looking for **volunteers to form a sub-committee with the end goal of delivering the organisation a new website that meets the needs of members**. Any member with knowledge in any aspect of websites; wordpress, php programming, payment gateways, forms, etc are encouraged to join with the view that collectively, there will be the skill set to get the job done.

Without a new website, this organisation will not survive where, for social groups such assets are the bare minimum. So, if you have a little (or a lot) of knowledge and would like to see Country Network grow and provide better socially networking to men regardless of where they reside, then **the time is now for you to raise your hand and volunteer a little of your time**.

**E: [secretary@countrynetwork.com.au](mailto:secretary@countrynetwork.com.au)**



**Without volunteers, our organisation ceases to exist.**

## Congratulations

Phillip Jones has filled the vacant "Ordinary Committee Member" position. Phillip recently put his hand up to take on the Inland NSW Area Coordinator role and hit the ground running by making contact with most of the members within his region. If you're an "Inland NSW" member, Phillip would love to hear from you; either with ideas how to meet members' needs or just to say "hello".

Well done Phillip.

