

THE COUNTRY NETWORKER

REACHING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

AUG/SEP 2023



TOGETHER

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

PRESIDENT'S
MESSAGE

2023 AGM
BOOKINGS NOW OPEN

NEW
TASMANIAN EVENTS



president's report



Hello members,

Hopefully by now the renewing of memberships has settled down and we are sailing smoothly at last.

It has been a trying couple of months which I could well have done without, but as with all things where one steps up to lead a group the shoulders must be broad. My thanks to all those members who have renewed their membership with Country Network, we can now move forward and look at and work at making the group stronger within our LGBTIQ+ community Australia wide.

During August you will receive an updated version of the Country Network Constitution. In October 2022 the NSW Fair Trading prepared a model constitution, which covers the matters required by law.

An association may:

- adopt this model constitution; or
- adopt a modified version of this model constitution.

We have adopted the 2022 version with modifications to suit Country Network. The Committee has worked on the Constitution changes and will send it to members late August. It will be voted on at the AGM in October.

I would ask all members to be aware of the protocols of Country Network (found under Member Resources on our website.) Those of us who have positions within the group do so on a volunteer basis, and as such should not be subjected to abuse online or over the phone. If you are upset and are about to make that phone call or write that email, I would ask that you step back, calm down before you commit to something where you could be accused of bullying. You will get a lot further being calm and rational rather than loud, aggressive, and abusive.

Recently we welcomed a new name to the job of Secretary. Pavan Lulla has taken the job and from all accounts is working well. For those of you who have not seen or met Pavan his profile, on the website, has a lovely pic and it will tell you a little bit about him.

Pete and I met Pavan recently when we travelled to Sydney to view Beauty and The Beast. One thing we did learn is Pavan doesn't drive a car but gets about the city on a bike.





This bike has been stolen three times and found by the police and returned a little worse for wear. After a fix up it was on the road again. Thank you Pavan for taking on the job of Secretary.

"Welcome Lyle Wentworth to the position of Membership Coordinator"

Our two previous incumbents, Tony Bayfield and Colin Armstrong, I must thank for taking on the position of Secretary when things were changing within Country Network. The group can only function to its best ability when we have volunteers step up to take on jobs. Thank you both for your contribution to Country Network.

I must also welcome Lyle Wentworth to the position of Membership Coordinator. Lyle hails from Hobart, Tasmania and is doing a superb job with our membership. Thankyou Lyle for taking on the position. Lyle recently also became an Administrator for our Facebook page. Well done, Lyle.



I would like to thank Hector Vera for his contribution to Country Network. Hector recently decided that the time had come to leave CN. As you know Hector was our Events Coordinator and did a great job organising our Events Magazine and bringing those details of events to members' notification. Thank you, Hector.

The AGM is to be held in the Hunter Valley at Charbonnier Hotel/Motel Singleton, NSW 2330. The information for our AGM is now out and I do hope you have had a look and decided to join us at Singleton.

Adding a picture to your profile!

You may have noticed that some members have added their photo to their member profile. Want to know how?

[Read More →](#)

The Meet and Greet is Friday night at the motel, Saturday is our AGM and Saturday night we have a formal dinner with a cabaret. Sunday we are out and about visiting the Army Museum and a winery. Monday, we travel to the Williamtown Air Base to visit Fighter World. Monday night we have a farewell dinner. Full program with lots to see and do. I do hope you will join us. I have spent a great deal of time organizing the AGM and would like to see a great roll-up of members. This is our major get together and one where decisions are made affecting Country Network.

We have a new Area Coordinator for the Brisbane City/Gold Coast area in Craig Bowen. I thank Craig for stepping into the role. We still have a number of areas that do not have a coordinator. These are published elsewhere in the Networker. Have a look and see if you can take on the role of Area Coordinator in your area.

Members, we have a wonderful web site that is full of interesting news and information, and I would encourage you to visit the site and explore what we have on offer. In the Articles section look for The Camp Candidate and read this interesting article from the archives. The newspaper article is most interesting and on reading you will come across the owner of a newspaper "The Aeroplane Press". He had his nasty fingers in the pie way back in the 70's.





It was from The Camp Candidate that the modern LGBTIQ+ and Pride movements formed. David Widdup was a man who did much for the progression of the gay movement.

"Now is the time for you to join the committee, bring your ideas and changes to Country Network, and make it an even better place for members."

It is time to start thinking about the Committee of Management for Country Network. Soon you will receive a letter along with a nomination form from our Returning Officer, Lindsay Sheppard asking for nominations for the listed positions.

As you know, Country Network has undergone a lot of change in the last year or so, and we hope that the change has been positive and for the better. I also realise that some members have not embraced the changes, as much as others. So now is the time for you to join the committee, bring your ideas and changes to Country Network, and make it an even better place for members.

The elected positions to the Country Network Committee are:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership Coordinator
- Four Ordinary Committee Members

To all our members who are on the sick list we wish you a speedy recovery and hope that you are up and about real soon, and I look forward to seeing you all at our AGM in October.

Keep well, keep safe!

Jeffrey P. Sproal

President



2023 AGM

2023 AGM 20 - 24th October 2023 Singleton, NSW

Keep the date free!

The AGM will be held in **Singleton** this year, October 20th to 24th.

Situated on the banks of the Hunter River in New South Wales. Singleton is 197 km north-north-west of Sydney, and 70 km north-west of Newcastle. The Hunter Valley is within easy reach of Newcastle Airport

Singleton is a beautiful riverside town in the Hunter Valley, with rolling vineyards, colonial heritage and outdoor adventure. Just north is beautiful Lake St Clair, a popular waterway for fishing, kayaking, sailing and waterskiing.

Bookings are now open, simply log into the member section of the Country Network website and click on the 'BOOK NOW' button in the blue section at the top of the page!

We look forward to catching up with everyone at the 2023 Country Network AGM!



2023 AGM

Booking your accommodation.

Please note that accommodation bookings are per room, not per person. Simply select the room size you would like. Just make a note during the checkout process who you are sharing with if your booking includes other members.

We are staying at the **Charbonnier Hotel Singleton, 44 Maitland Road, Singleton, NSW, 2330.** Charbonnier.com.au

PLEASE NOTE: THE COST IS PER ROOM, NOT PER PERSON. Please divide the room cost by the number of people in the booking to work out a cost per person. For example: If the room houses three people, divide the cost by three, and that is the per-person cost. However, booking can only be made per room, not per person.

Booking your activities.

Activities are booked per person. You can book for multiple people under your purchase, select the quantity for the number of people that you are booking for and make a note during the checkout process who you have booked for.

If you wish to attend all activities, add the all activities booking to your cart. You can book just for yourself, or you can book for everyone in your room. If booking for others, please select the number of people you are booking for, and add their names during checkout. If you find yourself unable to attend certain activities or would rather skip some, we have a solution for you. You can customise your AGM activities through the website booking system..

Getting to and from Singleton

The drive time from Sydney to Singleton is: 2 hours, 21 minutes.

The local airport is Newcastle. As Australia's sixth largest regional airport, Eastern Air Services, FlyPelican, Link Airways, Jetstar, Qantas and Virgin Australia deliver direct flights to Australia's major centres and onward connections to other overseas destinations.

NSW Rail station is Maitland or Broadmeadows. A connecting bus is available to Singleton.

AGM Activities

- **Friday:** Arrival and Meet & Greet
- **Saturday:** AGM
- **Saturday Night:** Formal dinner and Cabaret performance
- **Sunday:** Full Day Bus Tour including [Army Museum tour](#), then tour around the Valley. Visit a winery and tour Singleton.
- **Sunday Night:** Dinner at [Harrigan's Irish Pub](#) (Bus to Pub)
- **Monday:** Full-day bus tour to [Fighter World](#), Williamtown Air Base.
- **Monday Night:** Farewell Dinner, Informal Dinner with Selected Menu



member services

What are the Men's Community Couch Conversations?

This is YOUR online space to learn, listen, share and be heard. Topics are guided by participants but may include loneliness, sexual health difficulties, stress, anxiety or depression.

What happens during these sessions?

These facilitated online group gatherings provide a safe place for men in similar circumstances to form connections, make friends and talk openly about their issues.

What's the benefit of attending?

Men's Community Couch Conversations provide:

- a safe space free of judgement where gay men's privacy and vulnerability are treated with the utmost respect and understanding.
- connection with others who have similar issues or interests.
- a voice that promotes social interaction.
- an opportunity to help others as 10% of fees from every session are donated back to organisations assisting Men's Mental Health.

Who runs it?

Shaun, our facilitator, is a registered Counsellor with the Australian Counselling Association. He has dealt with many complicated issues, and as a gay man coming out later in life, he understands many difficulties men need to discuss on the couch.

How much is it and what does the price include?

Each session is only \$19.95 per person.

1.5 hours of group connection (limit of 15 participants) with a nationally qualified counsellor. Price includes a complimentary copy of 'The Couch Commentary' which includes tips and hints on the topic that was discussed during the session. Each participant receives a 10% discount on their first 1-on-1 online Counselling session at Bent Couch Counselling.

Link: https://www.meetup.com/en-AU/bcc_mens_community_couch/



Anyone who identifies as a man is welcome at Bent Couch Counselling, where they will find a supportive and therapeutic setting. In addition to online group support sessions geared specifically towards men, I also provide individual online counselling sessions for those who require it.

I'm compassionate, deal with insight and empathy and I can assist other men in dealing with these and similar challenges. By dealing with my own personal experiences to seek inner healing, it has allowed me to find purpose in helping others.

Shaun Williams
Counsellor & Facilitator
0499 487 492

Bent Couch Counselling. "Let's Connect"
www.bentcouch.com | admin@bentcouch.com



happenings

Find out about all upcoming events in the following locations:

- Country Network Private Facebook Group
- Country Network website

Don't forget if you would like to organise an event: contact our events coordinator, events@countrynetwork.com.au

It's great to see new events popping up around the country!

Don't forget, anyone can start an event in their area, it's really easy and we will support you by letting all members in your area know about your new event.

There is an easy to follow guide to hosting an event found [HERE](#). To get started just fill out the [event submission form](#) and we will help you with the rest, it's that easy!

Happy Networking

Events Coordinator

Event Grants

Country Network is excited to introduce Event Grants. This is a brand-new concept where we provide members with a financial grant to arrange an event in Country Network (CN).

Why are we doing this?

We would love to see our members come together, get to know each other better, and spend some face-to-face time. And hopefully encourage you to arrange more events.

What do I need to do?

All you have to do is arrange an event for your fellow CN members.

What sort of event?

It could be anything, but some ideas could include:

- Weekends away
- Attending a LGBTI festival or large annual event in your area
- Camping
- 4WDing
- Fishing
- Bushwalking
- Caravanning
- Winery tours
- Photography weekend
- Christmas get-together
- A tour of a historic area or an area of natural beauty.

The list is endless so feel free to use your imagination.



event grants

What else do I need to know?

We are open to hearing all your ideas, but there are a few guidelines as to what sort of an event:

- It needs to be open to all CN members and be inclusive.
- It needs to be something that all members would be comfortable attending and participating in.
- It needs to have a focus on country/rural Australia.
- It needs to be easily accessible by car, public transport etc. Or you can provide lifts or car share.
- It needs to be something substantial like a weekend away, not a coffee morning, pub night or lunch.
- It needs to have a minimum of five people.

How much is the grant?

The amount will vary depending on how many people attend your event, the number of overall submissions we receive and the overall costs of your event, but as a general guideline, we will offer between \$500 to \$1000 as a grant. The money, to be shared among all event attendees, can go towards accommodation, food, transport, general costs etc. However, you can't claim more than the event cost.

What do I do next?

Just submit the following event details by 15th October 2023 via email to president@countrynetwork.com.au

- Event idea
- Location
- Type of accommodation (if applicable)
- Time of year (approx. is okay)
- Number of people you require to attend, or hope to attend (approx.)
- Planned/possible activities for the event.

Don't worry if you cannot get your idea to us by October. We will have other rounds of Event Grants over the 2023/34 year.

Note - if you want to arrange an event before the cut-off date, we are happy to consider your submission earlier.

What else do I have to do?

The event organiser or an attendee will need to write a short article for the CN newsletter (100-200 words) plus supply some photos within a month of the event happening.

What if I have some questions?

If you have any questions or would like to run an idea past someone, please contact President Jeff on 0412 651 429 or at president@countrynetwork.com.au



Coffs Coasters Walking Group

Second Saturday of the month
Various locations
There is lunch after the walk
BYO drinking water
LGBTIQ+ inclusive

Jack Ellis
☎ 0425 391 235



Port Macquarie Lunch Meet-ups

Third Tuesday of the month
12:00pm start
Settlers Inn
101 Hastings River Drive
Port Macquarie

Jeffery Sproal
☎ 0412 651 429



Bush Walks Sydney Region

Various dates & times
Usually 8 km and medium grade

Walks in and Around Sydney
Contact host for details

John Wenborn
☎ 0414 727 060

Meet your Coordinators

Australian Capital Territory

David Benger
☎ 0413 088 717

South Coast NSW & Northern Tablelands

Jeffrey Sproal
☎ 0412 651 429

North Coast NSW

Lindsay Sheppard
☎ 0429 225 222

Sydney Metro & Central Coast

John Wenborn
☎ 0414 727 060

Inland NSW North

Inland NSW South



Albury Wodonga Brunch

Third Sunday of the month
10:00am - 12:00pm
Reflections Cafe
(inside the Commercial Club)
618 Dean Street
Albury, NSW

Rob Charles
☎ 0407 461 363



Bent in Bellingen Queer Beers

Monthly Meet Ups
3:00pm-5:00pm
Federal Hotel
77 Hyde Street
Bellingen, NSW

 **join group on Facebook**

Queensland



Sunshine Coast Lunch Meet-up

Sunday, 7th May

12:00pm - 2:00pm

Palmwoods Hotel,

28-34 Main Street, Palmwoods

RSVP by 12pm Thursday prior to event

Rodger Thomson

 (07) 5491 6776



Tamborine Mountain

For a green fix, head to Tamborine National Park. In this subtropical wilderness, you can hike through tranquil rainforests and eucalyptus forests, see waterfalls, and walk through a dense canopy of trees on the 45-minute Rainforest SkyWalk guided canopy tour. Listen out for lyrebirds as you wander through the treetops.


Save time to take the short hike to Curtis Falls, where you can relax to the soothing sounds of gushing water.

After soaking up all this natural beauty, you can refuel at the little town of Mount Tamborine. Craft shops, cafés, boutiques, and art galleries line the streets, and you can also sign up for a pampering spa treatment or cooking class.

Meet your Coordinators


Brisbane Metro, Gold Coast & Sunshine Coast

Thomas Tiltmann

 0449 186 305

Inland Queensland

Jeffrey Sproal

 0412 651 429

North Queensland & Lockyer Valley

Jeffrey Sproal

 0412 651 429

South Australia

including Northern Territory



Gay Men's Catch-up at Divercity

Alternate Wednesdays
10:15am
Divercity
116 Grote St, Adelaide

Michael Stokes
☎ 0400 478 768



Dinner Group at Hotel Astor

Every Friday
6:00pm
Hotel Astor
433 Pulteney St., Adelaide

Michael Stokes
☎ 0400 478 768



1033 Coffee Group

Every Saturday of the month
10:15am
Muratti Cakes & Gateaux
114B Prospect Road, Prospect

Michael Stokes
☎ 0400 478 768

Meet your Coordinators

Adelaide Metro & South Australia Rural

Michael Stokes
☎ 0400 478 768

Northern Territory

Michael Stokes
☎ 0400 478 768



Gay Men's Catch-up at Mylk

Alternate Wednesdays
10:15am
Mylk Cafe
53 Tynte St. Nth Adelaide

Michael Stokes
☎ 0400 478 768



Gay Men's Dinner Group

Third Thursday of the month
6:00pm
Arab Steed Hotel
241 Hutt Street
Adelaide

Michael Stokes
☎ 0400 478 768



Geelong Lunch Group

Third Sunday of the month

Various locations
12:30pm - 2:30pm

Peter Fairman
✉ fair01@bigpond.com



West Gippsland Dinner Group

First Wednesday of the month

Royal Hotel
2/4 Main S Rd, Drouin VIC
6:30pm

RSVP Essential
Ross Dawson
☎ 0418 724 455



Brunch in Blackburn

Second Sunday of the month

Enrik's Bistro
25 Railway Rd, Blackburn
10:30am

Please RSVP by 11am Saturday prior to
event for numbers

Glen
☎ 0418 724 455

Meet your Coordinators

Melbourne Metro

Neil Warner
☎ 0419 551 245

Western Victoria

Kerin Byrne
☎ 0478 229 730

North Eastern Victoria

Paul West
☎ 0408 497 273

Geelong Region

Daryl Jarvis
☎ 0429 347 796

Gippsland

David Adams
☎ 0473 951 736

Western Australia

Meet your Coordinators

Perth Metro

Cliff Moores
☎ 0422 799 929

South West, Greater Southern & Rural North Western Australia

Jeffery Sproal
☎ 0412 651 429



Coffee Morning Dome Hotel

7th May and 4th June
293 Albany Highway, Vic Park
10:00am

Cliff Moores
☎ 0422 799 729
cliff12@iinet.net.au



Cards and Board Games Afternoon

Second Wednesday
Venue to be advised
1:30pm start

Cliff Moores
☎ 0422 799 729
cliff12@iinet.net.au



Luncheon Group

Tuesday, 23rd May
Woodbridge Hotel, 50 East Street, Guildford
12:00noon

Cliff Moores
☎ 0422 799 729
cliff12@iinet.net.au



Wed Night Dinner

17th May
Location to be advised
7:00pm

Cliff Moores
☎ 0422 799 729
cliff12@iinet.net.au



Tasmania

Introducing some new events for our Tasmania members that you may be interested in.

Judy's A regular staple in the queer community, Judy's creates a LGBTQIA+ safe space for people to come, be themselves and watch amazing drag performances while dancing all night to amazing queer pop bangers. Judy's is on the last weekend of every month! Tickets and all details are available at: www.pussaypoppins.com Tickets on the night are subject to pending capacity.

Pride Coffee (Devonport)

Pride Coffee is a new monthly catch-up for the LGBTQIAQ+ community, friends and allies.
Location: The Laneway 2/38 Steele Street, Devonport,
When: The second Thursday of every month at 10:30am
RSVP/Enquiries: Email garry@workingitout.org.au to ensure enough space for us!
Hope to see you there!

Friendz Group

Coffee morning for the LGBTQIAQ+ community, friends and allies in two locations!
Location: Spencer's Café, 145A E Derwent Hwy, Lindisfarne
When: Every Tuesday at 10.00am.
Contact: Rod at hobartfriendz@gmail.com OR
Location: D&S Coffee Lounge, 12 Main St, Huonville
When: Every Wednesday at 10.00am.
Contact: Rod at hobartfriendz@gmail.com

Drag Bingo

At Society Salamanca featuring Pussay Poppins and The.Ana.Thema.
Location: 22 Montpelier Retreat Battery Point.
When: Every 2nd Thursday (check website for dates)
Cost: \$15.00 per head
Tickets: at www.pussaypoppins.com or the Eventbrite app.

Pride Coffee (Launceston)

Pride Coffee is a new monthly catch-up for the LGBTQIAQ+ community, friends and allies.
Location: Earthy Eats 19 Kingsway, Launceston
When: The second Wednesday of every month at 11:00am.
RSVP/Enquiries: Email garry@workingitout.org.au to ensure enough space for us!
Hope to see you there!



WE WANT YOU TO BE FAMOUS!

Are you secretly harbouring the desire for fame and fortune?

Do you want to see your name up there in lights? Don't we all!!

Well, Country Network can help you... kinda ...sortamaybe!

Okay, what we can do is include your stories printed in our very own full-colour, magazine-style newsletter when you write and send in an article. Who knew fame was so easy??

All you have to do is bash out a couple of paragraphs on something that interests you (and keep it clean, boys). Tell us about:

- Your favourite place to eat (so we know where to eat next time we're in your neighbourhood)
- A great place to holiday/go camping (here or overseas)
- Any great garden tips? (I think we'll be writing about what to do with excess fruit by the end of Summer the way my fruit trees are going)
- Any great recipes. Maybe ones that get rave reviews at your dinner parties, or childhood favs.
- Any interesting local gay history. (remember the 'keep it clean' rule)
- Your hobbies/past times (the nerdier the better as far as we're concerned)

Anyway, you get the idea. We would love to hear about what you get up to!

And don't worry if you don't think you are a good writer. We have an army of people (well, one or two really, maybe three on a good day) who can edit your writing and make you sound like the most interesting writer in the world.

Who knows, you may be a step away from a Pulitzer!! (OK, that might be a stretch). *We will also accept anonymous articles if you are not so keen on being famous!*

Email your masterpiece to networker@countrynetwork.com.au