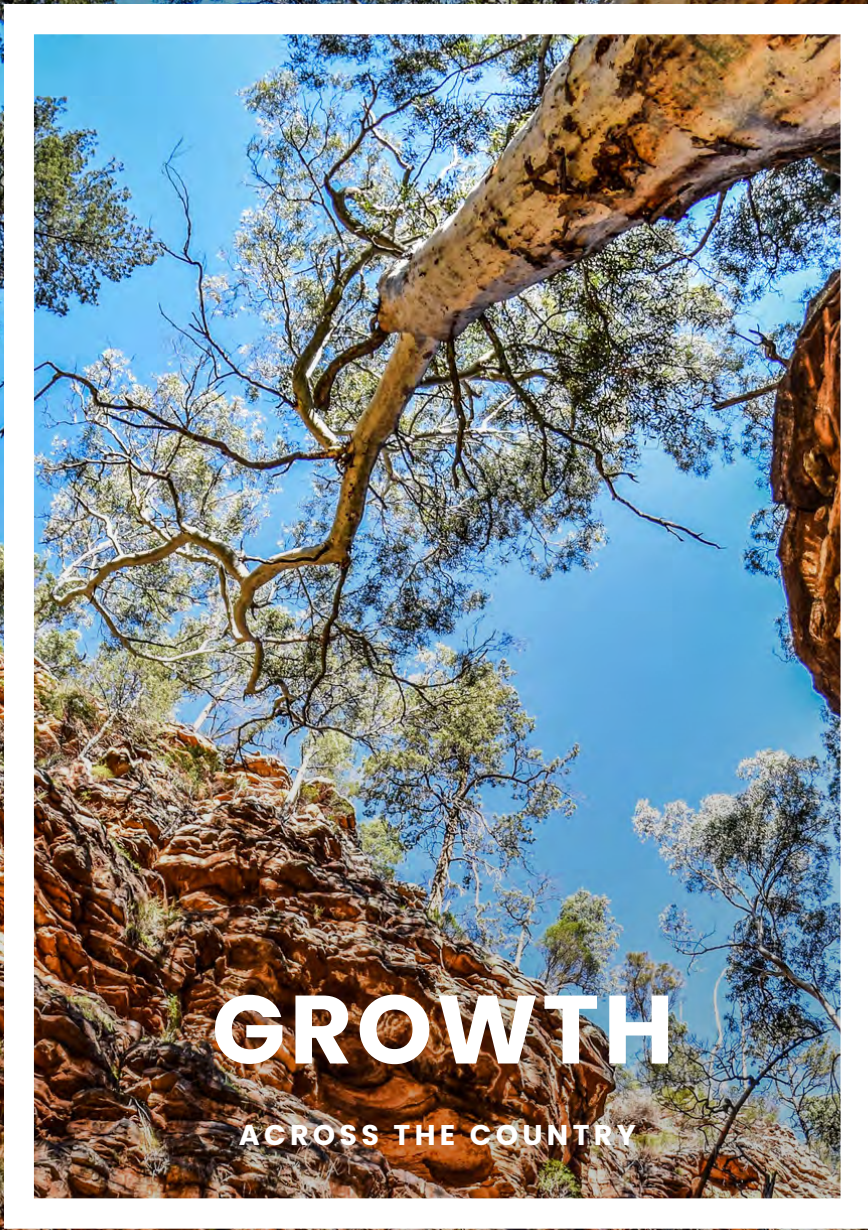


THE COUNTRY NETWORKER

REACHING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

FEB/MAR 2023



GROWTH

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

MEET YOUR
COMMITTEE

2023 AGM
ANNOUNCEMENT

A RIGHT
ROYAL AFFAIR

Calling all photographers!

The Country Networker cover photo competition!

Would you like your landscape photograph featured on the cover of the Country Networker?

Send your Australian Landscape photos to networker@countrynetwork.com.au and the best photo each month will be chosen as the cover photo for the magazine.

Photos should be in portrait orientation if possible, and not contain identifiable people.

Show off your part of the world to other Country Network members.

Please also include a short introduction about your photo, a little about yourself and where the photo was taken.

So get clicking and we look forward to featuring the winning photograph on the cover of the next issue of the Country Networker.

Entries Close: 15 March 2023

OOPS! Ok, so the digital team were a little overworked with the new website and forgot to add photography as an interest. For all you keen photographers out there, you can easily add this to your list of interests on your profile and find other photographers by updating your profile, simply click on the 'Your Account' button and then update profile, select photography under interests and your profile will be updated!



new email



CONTACT US COUNTRY NETWORKER

networker@countrynetwork.com.au

Write a book review, Report on a group activity. It doesn't have to be a literary masterpiece, but of interest to our members

Any article ideas are accepted for review. Our member interests are wide and varied, so share your favourite topic with our members!.

Happy New Year. I hope that everyone had a great Xmas and New Year.

The new year signifies lots of new plans for the Country Network committee. There are many things planned for the next twelve months after a very busy last few months. The committee is also keen to make CN relevant and attractive to more and more people and build the membership. So, stay tuned for more changes! And as always, we welcome your help, support and suggestions.

In this newsletter, we are asking for your help and thoughts on organising and running events. It would be great that as we are now growing our membership and developing a great new online presence, that we start offering more and different events. So, please have a look at the survey and let us know what you think. And remember, if you would like to run an event, there is always someone who can help you and support you.

As some of you may recall, we are looking for a new editor of the CN newsletter. An ideal situation would be that we have a few members who can guest edit a newsletter once or twice a year. It's not an onerous task and we have set it up so that it is easy to do. Again, there are a few of us who are happy to support and help you.

So if you are interested or would like to know more, please feel free to contact me on networker@countrynetwork.com.au

Andrew

Acting Editor

new email

EDITORIAL

Andrew Jeffery
Acting Editor

DESIGN

Cameron Mason

CONTRIBUTORS

Jeffrey Sproal
Hector Vera
Paul West
Roderick McKay
Thomas Tiltmann
John Conway
Cameron Mason

*We acknowledge and pay respect to the past, present and future
Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation in which we work, play and live.*



president's report

Hello members,



I write to you with a heavy heart this month. On 9th February, one of our long-standing members Ross Wilson passed away. Ross and partner David, a life member of Country Network, were married several years ago and lived together in Canberra. We were most sad to hear of Ross' passing and pass on our deepest condolences and sympathy on behalf of all your Country Network friends to David.

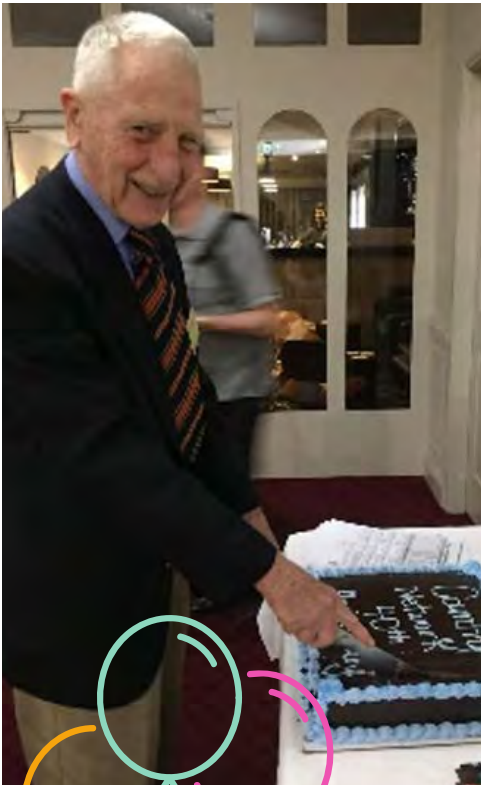
It is with sadness that we had to cancel the Autumn Gathering in Mannum this year. The river was still in flood and the Kia Marina was still under water. I know those who were going on the boats were disappointed, but I would like to suggest that you try and organise a weekend at a venue in your area and invite Country Network members to join you for a fun time.

The 2024 Autumn Gathering will need to be organised by a member or group of members in an area that can cater for a gathering of queer men. We can offer a lot of help to assist you in organizing the Autumn Gathering. Basically, it is a three-night affair, (Friday, Saturday, Sunday out Monday.) You need to organise an activity for Saturday and Saturday evening. Sunday is left to attendees' choice as to what they do. Last meal together is on Sunday night. We definitely need a group of members to step up to the plate and start thinking about 2024 AG.

The 2023 Annual General Meeting will be held in Singleton NSW. This is a four-night extravaganza in the Hunter Valley, which is a very interesting area. The dates set are October 20th to October 24th. We will be staying at the Charbonnier Motel, Singleton. There will be a Registration Form on our website after we have planned and costed all the details.

There is a small group looking at revising and updating our Constitution which is a fun affair. We needed to update several items. Later on, we will send the new constitution to members who will either vote on it at the AGM or via email.

Recently we heard from a member who told us the whereabouts of our founder David Sergeant. He is in a retirement home in Leichardt with regular contact from his family and in good health. It is good to know that David is alive and well. I well remember his visit to the 2017 AGM when we celebrated our 40 years in Dubbo. Thanks to Bernie for the photo of David cutting the 40th anniversary cake at Dubbo.



"Recently we heard from a member who told us the whereabouts of our founder David Sergeant"



"May I welcome
the 35 new
members who have
joined Country
Network"



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 →](#)

We have a member who is keen to have a float in next year's Mardi Gras Parade in Sydney. He has had experience before in organizing floats, so this is a great chance to strut the stuff of Country Network. If you are interested in helping [Robert Ryan](#) get this off the ground, get in touch with him through the green [Connect](#) button on the Country Network Membership page. You will find this young man in Northern NSW right on the border.

I am amazed that there are so many member profiles on our website without a photo. It is so easy to do, and we even give step by step instructions. Go to the [Member Help page](#) in the Member area and then scroll down till you find Adding A Picture To Your Profile. Have a read then add your picture. It improves your profile and members can see who they are reading about. I know some of you definitely do not want your picture on your profile and that is your prerogative. However, if you have no objection upload a fabulous photo and await the results.

Country Network is split into a number of membership areas with an Area Coordinator listed as the first point of contact. We have a number of areas that do not have a Coordinator and we would like to rectify that problem. The following areas need a body:

- NSW Inland North
- NSW South Coast
- QLD Brisbane Metro
- QLD Inland
- Vic Mildura
- VIC Bendigo
- WA Rural North
- WA South West and Great Southern.

If you live in these areas and are interested in helping your fellow members, please get in touch with me at president@countrynetwork.com.au

Finally, may I welcome the 35 new members who have joined Country Network since our new website went live. You have joined a great social group where lasting friendships are made. Enjoy your time in Country Network and please do join in the many activities that are on offer. We drink a lot of coffee and eat many dinners, all the time remaining a great bunch of friendly blokes.

To all members who have been a bit off colour or in hospital here's hoping you are well on the road to recovery. A big shout out to Nev Power who has had a tuff trot recently. Good to see you are on the way back Nev.

Happy networking

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.

More information will be available soon, with bookings via the Country Network website opening in the coming months.

There will be a host of activities, meals and perhaps some cheeky wine tastings over the weekend.

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



committee news



For those of you who are wondering what the committee have been getting up to since October, here is a bit of the breakdown:

- Launched the new website.
- Developed a new brand for CN with a new look and feel.
- Moved most of the CN members from the old website to the new website.
- Started reviewing and updating the CN constitution to make it more relevant.
- Reviewed and updated the member protocols and conditions.
- Started the process of registering CN as a charity – this will allow us to apply for grants and be more involved in the community.
- Revamped and updated the CN Events Guide.
- Revamped and updated the CN Newsletter.
- Made it easier for members to interact and connect with other members.
- Made it easier for people to join CN and renew their membership.



We are hoping that these changes, and a few other things that we have lined up, will make CN more relevant to our community and set up us for the next 5 or 10 years.

As always, we would love to hear from you and let us know if there are any other changes that you would like to see. Any ideas are welcome. Please email Jeffrey at president@countrynetwork.com.au



It is with sadness that we had to cancel the Autumn Gathering in Mannum this year. The river was still in flood and the Kia Marina was still under water. I know those who were going on the boats were disappointed, but I would like to suggest that you try and organise a weekend at a venue in your area and invite Country Network members to join you for a fun time.

Jeff



meet your committee



Jeffrey

President

My name is Jeffrey P. Sproal. The P stands for Paul and not any of the other derogatory names that people think up.

Where do you live?

I live with my partner Peter in an over 55's gated village in Laurieton. This is not an old folk's home as some of my Country Network friends prefer to call it. It is the Laurieton Residential Resort.

Why did you join the committee? What do you hope the you and committee will achieve?

I joined the Committee because I wanted to revitalize and rejuvenate the Committee. One of the major things I wanted to do was to set Country Network up with a new modern website that would reflect the needs and wants of our members. I am so happy that this is well on the way to being achieved.

Tell us something quirky, funny about you? Something surprising that we don't know.

I go dancing with Peter. We go to dance parties where the deejays play trans dance music. In April, we are going to Synthony No 3 which is a celebration of dance music performed by a 60-piece orchestra.

I am also a Coffee Bitch at the Laurieton Resort where I make the best coffees.



My name is Andrew Jeffery.

Currently I live in Melbourne but have sold my home and after a bit of travelling, I am hoping to end up in country Vic or NSW.

I made the mistake of telling Neil Warner that the CN website is sh*t and it needed to be fixed. So, I guess I had to put my money where my mouth is! Hopefully, we can update and modernise CN, make it a more appealing to rural and regional gay men.

I'm recently retired and intend to travel as much as possible. I also love writing, and there are a few things in the pipeline!



My name is Tony Bayfield

I live in Albury and joined the committee because Jeffrey blindsided me. However, I hope to achieve a revived Country Network that will encourage new members.

I'm too old to be quirky. If I tried I would probably hurt something.



Tony

Secretary





meet your committee



John

Treasurer

My name is John Conway

I live on a property outside Bellingen NSW

I joined the committee as Treasurer was suggested by my partner Hector as I have had experience being a volunteer Treasurer on other non-profit organisations.

After the difficult years of COVID, I am hoping that the Committee with my participation will revitalise and grow Country Network as an organisation to better support and to enrich the lives of members throughout Australia, especially those in remote and isolated areas.

Despite being an oldie of 76 I have taken to TikTok and enjoy making videos of our dog Millie to load to it. My record is having 740 views of a Millie video I loaded of which I was pleased however I was belittled by the 12 year old son of a friend who had over a million views of one of his TikTok videos.

I follow 46 others on TikTok ranging from a woman soldier on active duty in Ukraine to a gay couple with twin boys in Dallas Texas to a drag queen in New York, the four young Elevator Mansion model boys in Germany and the four Old Gays in I think California.



David

My name is David John Peplow (known as Dave)

I live in Coffs Harbour NSW.

I first joined the committee during a Country Network AGM in Wodonga in 2019 after my partner was made a life member of Country Network for his contribution to Country Network for opening up Facebook to Country Network and its members.

Hopefully, that the new younger fresh committee will take Country Network into the future as it was stagnating over the years with Covid, so far with the new website its starting to look great.

I met my partner in 1960 in London UK we lived on and off together in London, then both joined the same ship, a Shell Tanker and sailed the world, eventually coming back ashore in the UK where we lived until 1969 then we emigrated as 10 pound POMs to Australia, we lived in Sydney, then to Tasmania where we bought a farm, and a takeaway business , then back to the mainland to retire gracefully in Coffs Harbour - I am still with the same partner!

You get less for murder - just a thought LOL





meet your committee



Paul

My name is Paul West

I live in Shepparton, Victoria

I joined the committee because I had been looking for a network of like minded individuals whom I could connect with and share experiences. Ultimately, looking for life-long friendships.

I like nothing more than to come home after a hard week at the office, smash down a Domino's pizza, and hit the frothies

Hi, My name is Cameron Mason

I live in Point Cook, Victoria with my partner of 22 years

I joined the committee because I was introduced to an organisation that was in desperate need of some digital assistance. I have volunteered within the LGBTIQ+ community and on various boards over the years and believe my experience can help invigorate Country Network

I have had an interesting and varied career, from grape picking, working on the team that developed the cheese flavour for Twisties to celebrity chef wrangling and writing for Neil Patrick Harris!

I have travelled extensively and look forward to exploring our own country (and meet CN members) with my partner as we set off on our next adventure!



Cameron

Invite a friend!

Why not invite a friend to join Country Network?

Country Network is a great place to introduce your mates to other great guys around Australia.

When they sign up, ask them to mention your name!

We're always looking for more members to join and experience the fun and friendship of the Network.





membership update

Our current membership is sitting at 227 FINANCIAL members in the new system. Of that, about 15% are completely new members and 36% were 'unpaid' members that are now financial. We have had 13 members resign from the network for various reasons, with only one of them being a financial member and one being a lifetime member.

We now have only 29 2022/23 FINANCIAL members that have not transferred across to the new website.

Bernie has also spent a lot of time tidying up our private Facebook group of all non-financial/resigned members. Many thanks to Bernie for all his work!

On the member listing extracted from the old system, we have remaining 109 "members" who may or may not have been active, but are all non-financial.

We will be soon commencing a pilot membership drive in Bendigo, Victoria led by Paul West.

Our new membership system is working well and has allowed us to gain a clear view of our membership base and hopefully made the process a little simpler for everyone involved!



Welcome new members

Take a moment to say hi to all our new members, either in our facebook group or via the member profile section of our new website!

New members, don't forget to check out the new member section of our new website! Found [HERE](#)





area coordinators

Happy New Year Country Networkers

Greetings from the Goulburn Valley in regional Victoria. I hope everyone has had a safe and festive Christmas. I can't believe it's 2023 already... where has the time gone?

The first anniversary of our monthly Shepparton luncheon has rolled around. I'm so proud that it has slowly evolved and became another conduit for Country Network members (and guests) to join together in a social setting while enjoying each other's company. It's exciting to meet members both locally and from further away, form new friendships while seeing most return each month.

My focus this year is to grow our membership in the Goulburn Valley area. I have already started an advertising campaign and along with the launch of the new CN website I hope to draw some new attention our way.



Paul

If you're in the Shepparton area on the 4th Sunday of the month, drop into the GV Hotel in High Street around 11:30am to say g'day. We will always find another chair to warmly welcome you.

With the start of a new year, let me wish you all a happy and prosperous 2023 and I hope to meet more members face to face as events continue to grow throughout the network.



Tell us what you think!

We'd love you to take 5 minutes to tell us what you think about Country Network Events!

We are running a short survey to find out what types of events you, as members, want to attend.

Click Here



Click here to get started!

Or visit www.countrynetwork.com.au/eventsurvey2023



area coordinators



Thomas

I would like to thank everyone (16 guys) for attending this lunch at the Grand Central Hotel in Brisbane for 2023. It was a combined lunch from 4 groups, Country Network members: Brisbane, Gold Coast, and Sunshine Coast), MAM Brisbane (Mature age Men), BAGS Facebook, & Harvesters (Gold Coast).

The meals were exceptional and everyone was satisfied. A great time was had by all and many guys made new friends and again some old friends were able to catch up.

At the finish, I thanked everyone for turning up and supporting the lunch. I mentioned that due to some changes of circumstances in my life that I cannot co-ordinate any more lunches and asked how many want me to continue.

Many guys put their hand up indicating that they want the lunches to continue. If anyone is interested to Co-Ordinate the lunches, please contact me on 0449186305 or freedom47@outlook.com.au

Once again I would like to thank everyone for attending and I hope that you all made new friends and please, please stay in contact with each other. I would love to meet you all and have a coffee and maybe have lunch/dinner together somewhere. You are all welcome to visit me at my place in Beenleigh for a coffee or a meal and a chat and even stay the night or two.

I will still be the Coordinator for Brisbane and the Gold Coast, but cannot arrange and facilitate any further lunches and I sincerely apologise for that.

I thank everyone for attending and supporting my lunches since last year and I hope that someone will put their hand up to be the lunch co-ordinator for the Brisbane/Gold Coast area. I am happy to assist in the transition period for the next person to co-ordinate the lunches.

Thomas Tiltmann

Co-Ordinator of CN, Brisbane, Gold Coast



meet a member

*Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh will be present
with Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Princess Anne*



The Honourable Wal Tife, M.L.A.
MINISTER FOR MINES AND PRESIDENT OF THE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL
and Members of the Council
on behalf of the Government of New South Wales
request the pleasure of the company of

R McKay

at A Reception
at the Trocadero, George Street
on Wednesday, 1st April, 1970, at 5.15 p.m.

A RIGHT ROYAL AFFAIR!

I have attached, the invitation that was sent to me, to be presented at a reception held by the NSW Government where The Queen, Prince Phillip, Prince Charles and Princess Anne had the opportunity to meet members of various NSW Youth Groups. I was one of three from my then organisation.

The event was held in the Sydney Trocadero (dance hall) in George Street Sydney.

We had to present ourselves before 1715hrs and upon arrival, we were all briefed on how to bow or courtesy, how to address the royals if spoken to etc. Strange to read now, but the instructions said NO SMOKING.

We then moved to the main dance room and formed up in a hollow circle.

When the royal party arrived, they played the national anthem and the State officials welcomed the Queen and her party. The royals then moved around the circle, chatting to some and missing others. At a very discreet distance, waiters moved around with trays of finger food. No, the Queen does not eat at such functions.

"I was most impressed with how kind and understanding the Queen was"



I was 'lucky' that, the Queen stopped in front of me and we exchanged "greetings" The Queen asked questions about my organisation and was very knowable about its history and origins. Very well briefed. She then moved on to speak to others. A little time later, Prince Charles moved in front of me. I suspect that he noticed the wings on my tunic. We spent some time discussing flying and different types of training aircraft in both Australia and the United Kingdom. At the time, Prince Charles was often derided by the media. I doubt if many knew how to spell conservation, least of all what it stood for and just how important it is for today's world.

He then moved on to speak to others. Prince Phillip and Princess Anne passed us by.

These days I am very much a republican or I desire Australia to be a republic of suitable type and properly more so since my retirement. However, I was most impressed with how kind and understanding the Queen was. While we all understood that at such events time is checked to the minute and the Royal Party was later expected at the State Dinner, they never appeared rushed and took their time passing around. After all the politicians need their time in glory.

1970 was a long time ago, however the best points are still firmly in my mind and while it took questions raised by Neil's quizzes (at the AGM) to recall the event.

On the whole I was most impressed. I have never had that opportunity again.

So, I savoured.

Thank you for the opportunity to refresh my memory.

Roderick



We know that some members have their own businesses or have a side hustle that they would like to promote. So don't be shy, let us know what you are up to!

All you have to do is email us your:

- **Business name**
- **Some detail about what you do**
- **The address, email, phone number of your business**
- **Website details**
- **Your business logo or any graphic/photo**
- **Anything else that you would like us to know.**

Please send in all the details to networker@countrynetwork.com.au



member etiquette



A Gentle Reminder

Just a gentle reminder that Country Network is a space for all members to feel comfortable, welcome and safe.

We are a social group that promotes and fosters networking and friendship among male-identifying members of the LGBTIQ+ community across Australia.

We have recently updated the Member Protocols and they are available [here](#).

If you are connecting with a member via their profile, please remember to provide as much information about yourself as possible to ensure that the other member feels comfortable knowing who you are and why you are contacting them.

The other member is under no obligation to accept your contact and may choose to either ignore your message or reply with a polite decline if they wish.

As a reminder, please familiarise yourself with these sections of the Member Protocols.

BEHAVIOUR

1. Country Network is a safe space for all members and requires all members to embrace our core values of courtesy, respect, and tolerance for each other.
2. Country Network does not make any moral judgment on individual members' lifestyle, behaviour or actions, provided the member complies with Australian law or regulations and does not contravene the Member Protocols.
3. Members should appreciate that other members may have issues, incidents or situations in their lives of which others may not be aware. Please support members where possible and respect a member's request or wish.
4. All members must respect and support all other members' privacy, the extent of openness about and disclosure of themselves and their life/sexuality provided the member complies with Australian law or regulations and does not contravene the Member Protocols.



5. Country Network members may not always share similar views and opinions, but all member's views and opinions should be respected, provided the member complies with Australian law or regulations and does not contravene the Member Protocols.

6. Any non-members at Country Network events are the responsibility of either the event organiser or the member who invited them. They are expected to follow member protocols and behaviours outlined in the Member Protocols.

7. Country Network does not tolerate or accept the following:
- Discrimination, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, age, nationality, sexual orientation, sexual identity, employment, disability, religion, and political belief.
 - Abusive, coercive and bullying behaviour.
 - Harassment, including, but not limited to, unwanted attention/advances and inappropriate behaviour.

GRIEVANCES

1. A grievance may include, but is not limited to, discrimination, harassment, a disagreement and inappropriate/offensive behaviour.

2. Any member who may have a grievance or concern with any member and/or matter can complete a Grievance Form which is available in the Member Only section of the Country Network website. (countrynetwork.com.au/member-report-form).

3. The committee will deal with the matter in an objective, sensitive and confidential manner.



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



Isolated identities – growing up same-sex attracted in rural Australia

By Chris Williams, From the Emen8.com.au website

Being same-sex attracted might mean you identify as gay or bisexual, but doesn't necessarily have to. And if you happened to grow up in a rural area, you might be familiar with the challenge of isolation. Suicide is a leading cause of death in Australia and rates are three times higher for men than women. When combined with increased likelihood in same-sex attracted people, life in the country can be tough. Nevertheless, new innovative ways to provide support are at hand.

One such feature focuses on Ivan. Ivan hasn't returned to his rural hometown of Tumut, New South Wales since leaving 21 years ago. Equipped with a camera and the emotional sensibilities of adulthood, he's going back to meet one of his childhood tormenters.

"Growing up gay in the country" - View on YouTube [HERE](#)

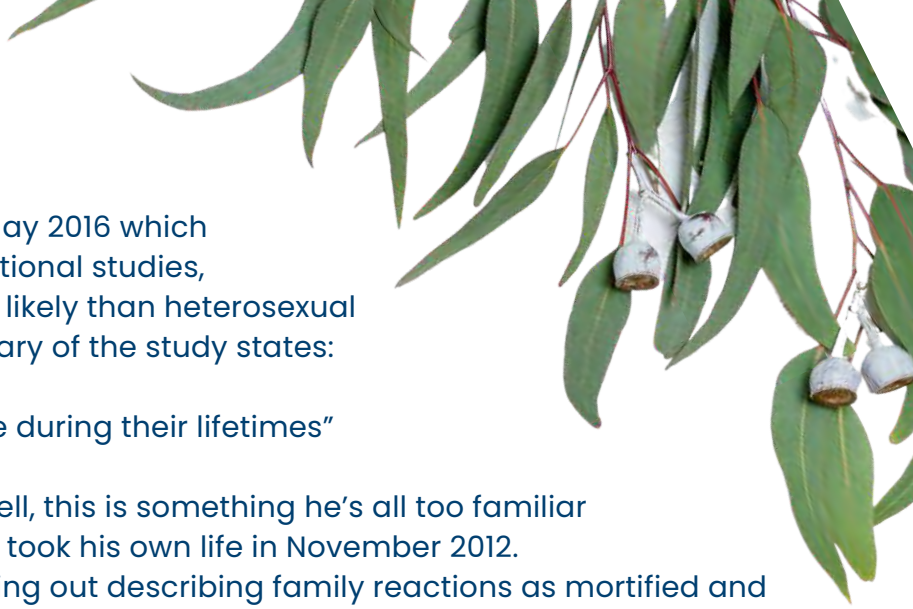
If playground taunts weren't troubling enough for someone like Ivan, perhaps the opinions of local leaders or political role models are sufficient for any young person to be affected by the words of an authority figure "A week never goes by anymore where homosexuals and their sordid behaviour don't become further entrenched in society," said Michael McCormack, 1993 – editor of The Daily Advertiser in Wagga Wagga.

After an out of court settlement with the Riverina Media Group over a case of unfair dismissal in 2003, McCormack has turned to a career in national politics as federal Minister for Small Business. His ongoing opposition to marriage equality is perhaps no surprise, although he allegedly made a 'vague apology' for his previous comments according to an article on SBS.

The reality of suicide

The mental health repercussions of loose-lipped politicians, social peers or anyone of influence are apparent in Ivan's story. Thoughts about taking one's own life aren't uncommon for men in rural areas, especially for guys who are same-sex attracted.





According to a medical publication from May 2016 which consolidated analysis from various international studies, lesbian, gay and bisexual people are more likely than heterosexual people to attempt suicide. In fact, a summary of the study states: “We found that as many as 20% of, or 1 in 5, LGB adults have attempted suicide during their lifetimes”

For Wagga Wagga resident Naylan McDonell, this is something he’s all too familiar with after his first boyfriend Cameron Vella took his own life in November 2012. McDonell recalls Vella’s experience of coming out describing family reactions as mortified and disgusted. “Even to this day there are still people in this community who will stand up and say homophobic discriminative things and feel they have a right to, but no-one’s going to stop them.” Reflecting upon past events he goes on to say: “Cameron’s death symbolises the tragedy of growing up gay in a country area, and it also symbolises that change is needed on a national scale.”

“Cameron’s death symbolises the tragedy of growing up gay in a country area, and it also symbolises that change is needed on a national scale.”

A new approach to intervention

For some men, the challenges of identity, same-sex attraction and isolation are more complex than for others. Support organisation Beyondblue is exploring innovative ways of using online platforms to reduce stigma around anxiety and depression, and to prevent the premature death of men in Australia.

One such initiative led by Thorne Harbour Health (formerly VAC/the Victorian AIDS Council) goes by the name of Dale. Dale is hoping to find out if an online resource is effective at giving men the tools they need to tackle stigma. By providing peer-based and facilitator led discussions for men in heterosexual relationships who are also attracted to other guys, the project aims to support men experiencing anxiety, depression or the stigma that can be associated with same-sex attraction.

Without means of a release valve, the pressure can be crippling for men living in this reality. Believing heterosexual support services may not understand, while also declining to seek out LGBTI oriented services can prevent someone from seeking help. Carrying the stress of being a minority, yet having restricted access to support risks exacerbating the problem. Innovative suicide prevention initiatives like Dale are essential for the quietest and most unseen of us all to feel connected.

Reducing harm

For some people, self-harm might manifest itself in atypical behaviours: increased use of alcohol or other drugs; changes to diet; changes in attitude towards sex and safety practices.

When already faced with anxiety or depression, what might seem like obvious consideration for personal safety can sometimes be overlooked. Even the choice to use a condom might not be considered. Choosing a strategy like PrEP, which doesn’t require on the spot decision making, can work as a useful approach to harm reduction. Information on accessing PrEP anywhere in Australia can be found through community support groups like PrEP’D For Change or PAN (PrEPaccessNOW).





For anyone seeking help, MensLine Australia is a professional telephone and online support and information service. With experience in providing assistance for same-sex attracted men regardless of circumstances, professional counsellors can help provide:

- A safe and private place to talk about concerns;
- Confidential, anonymous and non-judgmental support;
- Coaching and practical strategies for managing personal relationship concerns;
- Relevant information and linkage to other appropriate services and programs as required

Are they OK?

Every year the second Thursday in September is dedicated to remind people to ask family, friends and colleagues the question, "R U OK?", in a meaningful way, because connecting regularly and meaningfully is one thing everyone can do to make a difference to anyone who might be struggling.

If you know people in rural or remote areas who might be depressed, anxious or isolated, you don't have to wait until September. Reaching out could make a huge difference to someone's life, and you might never truly realise how valuable the power of a simple act of connection can be.



Emen8 launched in May 2017 as Australia's biggest and boldest online sexual health and wellbeing initiative for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men.

Support services

Adult

Lifeline: [13 11 14](tel:131114)
lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: [1300 659 467](tel:1300659467)
suicidcallbackservice.org.au

Beyond Blue: [1300 224 636](tel:1300224636)
beyondblue.org.au/forums

MensLine Australia: [1300 789 978](tel:1300789978)
mensline.org.au

Youth

Kids Helpline: [1800 551 800](tel:1800551800)
kidshelpline.com.au

headspace: [1800 650 890](tel:1800650890)
headspace.org.au

ReachOut: ReachOut.com

Other resources

Head to Health: mental health portal
headtohealth.gov.au

Life in Mind: suicide prevention portal
lifeinmind.org.au

SANE: online forums saneforums.org

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: healthinonet.ecu.edu.au

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex: [1800 184 527](tel:1800184527) qlife.org.au

Culturally and linguistically diverse: embracementalhealth.org.au



our best friends



John & Hector & Millie

Tell us who you are, where you're from and who's your pet?

I am John Conway and I live on a property outside Bellingen with my partner, Hector Vera. Our dog is Millie, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel.

Where did you meet?

My granddaughter was living with us four years ago and wanted a dog. She decided she wanted a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. She found that puppies were for sale in Sydney's and I drove down with her and we selected Millie from the litter. Not long afterwards, my daughter moved away to live with her mother, who already had two dogs, so she left Millie with us.

Why did you choose them? Or did they choose you?

We selected Millie as she was cheerful, playful and affectionate and Ella loved seeing her run around and roll on the grass.

Tell us something quirky or funny about your pet.

Millie has regular habits. She loves me throwing a frisbee which she often jumps up at and catches it in her mouth. She likes to be let outside every morning, but she usually comes back very wet from the dew. I need to dry her down with a towel. We have a game that she runs around and won't let me catch her for a while, but then finally stops and sits so I can pick her up to dry her.

Anything else that you would like to share about your best mate?

Millie is a very affectionate dog. She loves cuddling up against us. She gets on wonderfully well with my daughter's much larger dogs, a Border Collie and a mixed breed Golden Retriever/Miramar, however she ignores little children.

Want to feature your best furry friend in the next Country Networker?

Send us a photo of you and your pet to the editor here: networker@countrynetworker.com.au

We'll send you a couple of questions to answer and before you know it you and your best furry friend will be featured in the Country Networker!

Seeking a guest editor

Do you have a way with words? Something to say to the world? We're looking for guest editors to join the Country Networker editorial team.

we have guest editor positions for our Aug/Sep, Oct/Nov and Dec/Jan Issues for the remainder of the year.

Email networker@countrynetwork.com.au to express your interest!

Our editorial team are here to support and assist you to present your vision for the Networker!

You will be provided with a complete guide to help you present your issue of the magazine.

We can also help with editing your writing if you are not confident!



happenings



Find out about all upcoming events in the following locations:

- Country Network Private Facebook Group
- Country Network Events Monthly Newsletter

Once the new website is up and running all events will also be listed on the website.

Don't forget if you would like to organise an event: contact our events coordinator, Hector or your regional coordinator.



Click cover to download

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!

Keep an eye out for the next issue of Network Events, hitting your inboxes on the 27th of Feb!

Happy Networking

Hector

Events Coordinator



Country Network Bendigo Luncheon

First Sunday of the month

Brougham Arms Hotel Bistro
150 Williamson Street
12:00pm - 2:00pm

Paul West
☎ 0408 497 273



Albury Wodonga Brunch

Third Saturday of the month

10:00am - 12:00pm

Albury Brewhouse
618 Dean Street
Albury, NSW

Gregg Wilson
☎ 0414 696 888

**Next Network Events
Guide Release:
March 2023
Released 27th Feb 2023
Submissions by 22 Feb**



pot luck

Hey boys, don't get caught out with a *store-bought* Pavlova! Oh the *horror!!*

A classic Pav is so simple to whip up and decorate. Super versatile and easy to cover up any cracks with cream and mango.

Or if things really go pear shaped, smash it up and turn into individual Eton mess, like you planned all along!

6 egg whites
1 1/2 cups caster sugar
2 teaspoons white vinegar
1 tablespoon cornflour
300ml thickened cream
1 just-ripe mango, cheeks removed, peeled, thinly sliced
2 passionfruit
Slivered almonds



Preheat oven to 120°C. Line an oven tray with baking paper.

Use an electric mixer to whisk the egg whites in a clean, dry bowl until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating well after each addition, until meringue is thick and glossy and sugar is dissolved.

Add the vinegar and cornflour and fold until just combined.

Spoon the meringue onto the lined tray and into a 20cm disc. Bake in oven for 1 1/2 hours or until pavlova is dry to the touch.

Turn off oven and leave, with the door ajar, to cool completely. Once cool, transfer to serving plate.

Use an electric mixer to whisk the cream in a medium bowl until soft peaks form. Spoon onto the top of the pavlova and decorate with kiwifruit, mango and passionfruit pulp.



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!

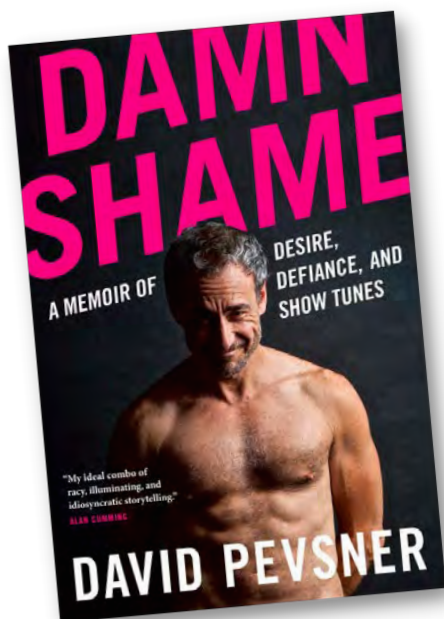
And don't worry if you don't think you are a good writer. We have an army of people (well, one or two really, maybe three on a good day) who can edit your writing and make you sound like the most interesting writer in the world.

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



on the page



DAMN SHAME a memoir of desire, defiance and show tunes by **David Pevsner**.

A funny, daring, bawdy, and incredibly honest memoir from the anti-ageist, antibody shaming, pro sex advocate and erotic provocateur.

David Pevsner is an LA-based actor and writer, with a little modelling on the side. His film appearances include Scrooge and Marley (as Ebenezer Scrooge), Spa Night, Joshua Tree 1951: A Portrait of James Dean, Role/Play, and Corpus Christi: Playing with Redemption. His guest starring roles on television include Silicon Valley, NCIS, I'm Dying Up Here, Modern Family. Grey's Anatomy, Liz and Dick, Law and Order LA, and he starred in the popular web series Old Dogs and New Tricks.

David has had a diverse stage acting career, from regional theatres to Broadway. As a songwriter, his work has been featured in the global hit show Naked Boys Singing, his CD of original comedy songs Most Versatile and his two one-man musicals including Musical Comedy Whore which is currently streaming and available on DVD. If you go to [HERE](#) you can watch David on stage. He continues his anti-shame, anti-ageism and pro nudity and sexuality mission with his work in erotic photos, videos, and writings.

Over the course of his 40-year career in show business, David Pevsner has done it all. He's acted on Broadway, off Broadway, in independent films, and on numerous TV network shows.

Damn Shame is David Pevsner's extraordinary story, and is a provocative, passionate, and poignant look at one man's journey from a thin, shy boy ashamed of his body and sexuality to a defiant, fearless everyman exploring his carnal desires. Along the way, he fights back against society's demonisation of gay sex, body shaming, and ageism while pursuing his own very personal definition of success in his search for love, validation, and self-esteem.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this memoir and can highly recommend it to LGBTQ readers.

Jeff Sproal.



THE
BOOKSHOP
DARLINGHURST

Serving our
community
since 1982.

You can find these books at most good book shops and online, including our favourite; The Bookshop, Darlinghurst. Phone: (02) 9331 1103.

www.TheBookshop.com.au

Shop online now: thebookshop.com.au

BENDIGO

PRIDE



FESTIVAL 2023

Discover Australia's most delicious queer arts festival in regional Victoria.

Join our hosted gay group tours with direct flights from Sydney or train from Melbourne. Tour includes arts, theatre, dining, wine, tours, drag, entertainment, parties, the famous "last drinks" tram and much more.

Tour runs from Thursday 30th March to Monday 3rd April 2023. Hosted by CN member Adam Bold with Dean Arcuri aka the Fabulously Fury Frock Hudson.

Event highlights

- Tour of Bendigo Art Gallery
- Performance: Pride Comedy Showcase
- Regional Winery Tour and The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion Tour (full day) • Discussion: Silver Rainbow: LGBTQIA+ Ageing
- Gay Stuff Markets
- Pride of the Mine Tour
- Performance: To Sir With Glove (Dean Arcuri)
- Glamaganza Ball
- Performance: "The Rebel Alliance" and "Hot Desk" from the BBC Series Double Acts • Last Drinks Tram
- Dinner: Harpoon Social Club
- Dinner: Ms Battershams

Tour inclusions

- Return flight from Sydney (option) or Return train from Melbourne (option) • 4 nights accommodation 4 star or 5 star option
- Most evening meals included
- Group Host and Guide
- Airport Transfers in Bendigo
- Transfers to main events with VIP access
- Daily events and experiences with the group • Free time to explore Bendigo

Tour pricing currently being finalised. Please register your interest for updates and further details. Note that group size is limited and you are welcome to self drive to Bendigo.

Visit <https://pointsofdifference.com/tours/bendigo-pride-tour-2023/> or call Adam on 1300 990

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE
Travel & Events

