THE COUNTRY NETWORKER

REACHING ACROSS AUSTRALIA





editorial



Country Social Network Inc. (Reg Y2063541)





CONTACT US COUNTRY NETWORKER

editor@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!.

I was listening to Dance Hits on Spotify (I know, I know, I'm 76 and I still like techno) and heard Calum Scott singing his version of "Dancing On My Own", with the pronouns slightly changed to put it into a gay context. I thought it was great that in many (but not all) places, gay/queer people can have a mainstream musical career without having to pretend they're straight.

Instagram is good for looking at cats, but it's also good for exercises, I've found. During the Melbourne covid lockdowns, I couldn't go to the gym and I ate too much comfort food, a bad combination.

Consequently, I put on weight and it all went to my stomach, it seems. And it's really REALLY hard to get rid of. Anyway, through my Instagram research watching good-looking men doing exercises, I discovered a series of exercises to do at home. I've been doing them for a month so far and I can already notice a difference. Staying away from too many desserts and cakes is the hard part though.

The Zoom meetings are starting again soon. Goodie! And a big thank-you to Jeff for organising them.

John Holden

Editor

EDITORIAL
John Holden
Editor

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president's report



Hello members,

Welcome to the New Year and a new year of activity with Country Network members. This is the second Networker produced by Editor John Holden. Excellent work John and I would encourage all members to contact John: editor@countrynetwork.com.au with any articles for the Networker. It will make John's job easier, and we will have a Networker that shows the best of Country Network.

A big welcome to the new members to Country Network. It is great to see new people joining the group. You find a list of those new members elsewhere in the Networker.

At the present time we have 284 members, and the very pleasing thing is that we pick up new members on a regular basis from all over Australia. As these new members join us, they will be looking for activities that they can join into and meet the members. However, if those activities are not available then they will become disinterested and not renew their membership when the time comes. It's not up to the president, to the area coordinator, or to members of the committee to start up, coffee mornings, lunches, meet and greet activities. It is up to you, the member. If you want something in your area it is up to you to start it. We can help by providing you with the names and email addresses of members who are nearby to the town in which you live. But it is up to you to contact them, to talk to them about what you propose to do. We can give you all the help you may need to start that group activity, but you have got to be the driving force.

In past years we have had an Autumn Gathering and an Annual General Meeting where members have come together to firstly discuss things in relation to the running of Country Network, but more importantly to meet new members and make new friends. Our AGM is held in October and runs over 4 nights while the Autumn Gathering runs over a weekend. For these two events to take place this year we need members to step up and organise the event.

Perhaps it may be a little late to organise the AG but our AGM in October will have a long lead up time which is what you want the plan successfully for the event. Can a small group of members come together and put in place a weekend outline for running the AGM and send it to Secretary Colin -

<u>secretary@countrynetwork.com.au</u> and it can then be forwarded to the Committee for discussion.



The Sunday Zoom sessions are cruising along, we usually have between 10 and 15 guys turn up for a lively discussion about all things sexual and anything else that takes our fancy. For those who haven't joined us in the past or those new members you will receive an email detailing the topic and the login details. It will look like the following:



Topic: Sunday Sips and Slips

Time: Dec 3, 2023 05:00 PM Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82663344120? pwd=HbvPV9WRmmsM0bjUALcErgbJK0bdEG.1

Meeting ID: 826 6334 4120

Passcode: 711353

All you have to do is to click on the link, which will be highlighted in blue and that will take you to the Zoom Meeting. Looking forward to seeing some new faces in 2024.

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 →

I hope some of you are thinking about organising an event in your area. If you are you can receive a grant from Country Network to help defray the costs.

You can find more information at https://countrynetwork.com.au/member-news-1/eventgrants While you are there have a look around the website there is some great information for you to read and digest.

Jeffrey P. Sproal

President

email: <u>president@countrynetwork.com.au</u>

mobile: 0412 651 429



membership update

Welcome new members!

Brett Higgins, Beverley, WA

George Vossa, Kangaroo Point, QLD

Steve Ward, Howlong, NSW

James Cockshell, North Adelaide, SA

Phillip Goode, Moe, VIC

Garry Harrington, Springvale Heights, NSW

Peter Gow-Hills, Neerim South, VIC

Shane Green, Applecross, WA

Trevor Murdoch, Brisbane, QLD

Simon Stephenson, Coolgardie, WA

Barry Gray, Bonny Hills, NSW

Robin Roberts, Geilston Bay, TAS

Eak Sriwattanaporn, Greta, NSW

Ray Carter, Greta, NSW

Chris Capper, Georgetown, NSW

Mark Fischer, Yessabah, NSW

Chris Kemp, Bannaby, NSW

Jon Marshall, Noosa Heads, QLD

Richard Wardell, Junee, NSW

Bart van der Wel, Kilkenny, SA

David Jones, Woodford, QLD

Michael Blishen, Watchem, VIC

Keith Brownjohn, Carrum Downs, VIC



Membership Coordinator



on the page



"I'm sorry I have to tell you this, Harry, but Daley Morrison was murdered. It was no heart attack. He was stabbed through the heart and then staked out, naked, in the middle of the Sydney Cricket Ground as some sort of warning to someone."

Clyde Smith is brought into the investigation by his former colleague, Sam Telford, after a note is found in the evidence bags with Clyde's initials on it. Someone wants ex-Detective Sergeant Smith to investigate the crime from outside the police force. It can only mean one thing—corruption at the highest levels.

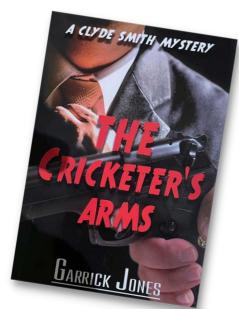
The Cricketer's Arms is an old-fashioned, pulp fiction detective novel, set in beachside Sydney in 1956. It follows the intricacies of a complex murder case, involving a tight-knit group of queer men, sports match-fixing, and a criminal drug cartel.

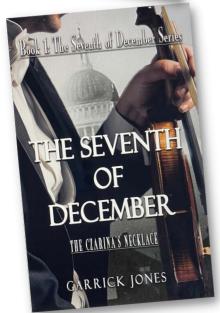
Was Daley Morrison killed because of his sexual proclivities, or was his death a signal to others to tread carefully? Has Clyde Smith been fingered as the man for the case, or will the case be the end of the road for the war veteran detective?

The Seventh of December Garrick Jones

As bombs rain down over London during the Blitz, Major Tommy Haupner negotiates the rubble-filled streets of Bloomsbury on his way to perform at a socialite party. The explosive event of the evening is not his virtuosic violin playing, but the 'almost-blond' American who not only insults him, but then steals his heart.

The Seventh of December follows a few months in the lives of two Intelligence agents in the early part of World War Two. Set against the backdrop of war-torn occupied Europe, Tommy and his American lover, Henry Reiter, forge a committed relationship that is intertwined with intrigues which threaten the integrity of the British Royal Family and the stability of a Nation at war.





Garrick Jones is an Australian author who writes mostly historical gay fiction. The Cricketer's Arms is the first novel in a series featuring Clyde Smith, while The Seventh of December is the first novel in a series of the same name.

John Holden



TEN WAYS TO TELL IF YOU'RE BEING CATFISHED ONLINE

By Emen8

You've been chatting online for a while and swapped a few pics. He's charming and flirty and sexy and you start sharing a few things about yourself and your life – maybe you've even done a little <u>sexting</u>. But whenever you suggest meeting up in person, there's always an excuse. You notice little inconsistencies in the things he tells you. You start to wonder.

'Am I being catfished?'

Different to a guy who's just <u>wasting your time</u>, a catfish is someone who's deliberately lying to you about their identity online. You may have even seen the documentary or the <u>TV show</u> that made the phenomenon famous.

There are a bunch of reasons <u>why people catfish</u>, from loneliness to insecurity, to plain deliberate scamming. However, there are no good reasons to deceive someone on a dating app (or IRL for that matter!).

Fake profiles on social media are nothing new — in 2022 TikTok removed almost <u>160 million</u> <u>fake accounts</u> and X (formerly Twitter) 'challenges' about <u>10 million suspected fake accounts</u> every week.

But a fake profile on a dating app like Grindr or Scruff can be harder to pick. On social media there is usually a whole lot more information, like timestamped pictures and followers, to help you make your mind up.

Some dating apps, such as Scruff, have verification processes. However, you just have to trust that the app has done its job. And apps like Grindr have such a basic verification process that even the technology-challenged amongst us could probably get around it. Gay dating apps are also full of guys who don't want to show their faces for entirely non-sinister reasons.

Fortunately, there are a few ways to distinguish between a guy who's just discreet and one who's deliberately hiding his identity.

JAN/FEB 2024



1. He's using someone else's pics

Often a quick <u>Google reverse-image search</u> will tell you if his pics belong to someone else. If this is the case, he's the very definition of a catfish — block and delete.

2. He only uses high-quality, professional pics

Even if he's a full-time model, most guys should have a few regular shots captured on a smartphone. If all of his profile pics are professional photos or posed headshots, or he looks a little too #instagay, then it's time to do a little digging. You could use the aforementioned Google reverse-image search, or even just ask if he has any other pics.

3. His social media doesn't add up

If his social media accounts are very new or he's only got a few followers, it's not a good sign. The same goes if he follows a lot of people and nobody follows him, or if he's got thousands of followers and has only posted twice. These are usually signs that you're dealing with a fake account, a scammer or a bot.

Content can also be a good indicator. A simple gut check can be useful, asking yourself 'Do I think this person is real?'. But, if you're still unsure, ask yourself:

- Do people comment and like his pictures?
- Are his posts spread out over a number of years, or have they all been posted in the last month or two?
- Are his captions in a similar tone and writing style to his messages?
- Does he post a variety of images or is it the same thing over and over again but from different angles?

Answering these questions will start to give you a pretty good indication of whether the profile is real or not.

4. He refuses to send you a spontaneous pic

Now, there are a lot of good reasons why he might not be able to send you a pic immediately – he might be at work or driving, for example. But if he can't ever produce a pic in the moment, there's got to be a reason.

Of course, it's always a good idea to check if he has a verified profile (offered on some apps). But if he doesn't, or the app's verification process is average at best, then you could ask him to take a photo with his face in it while doing something specific (e.g. biting his thumb, holding a houseplant — anything will do). If he can't or won't, you've got your answer.

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5. He won't give you his number or social media details

Now, a lot of guys understandably aren't keen on giving out their number or socials on a dating app. He may not want every thirsty guy on the grid to have access to the details of his job, his friends and his family.

But if you've been chatting to him for a few weeks, or are even planning to meet, and he still won't cough up the digits, you've got every reason to be suspicious.

6. He won't answer the phone or video chat

If he won't ever let you hear his voice or see his face in real time, be careful. Again, people can have all sorts of legitimate reasons for this one, but if he's usually very responsive with messaging then this might be a cause for concern.

7. He gets very intense, very quickly

If he starts talking about his strong feelings for you after a few 'woofs' and a bit of flirty banter, that's a <u>red flag</u>.

Overwhelming you with flattery or '<u>love bombing</u>' you is a manipulative behaviour designed to get you to lower your defences and trust him. Don't take the bait.

8. He always has an excuse for why he can't meet in person

Your chat always gets right up to the point where you're arranging to meet, and then something comes up, he disappears for a week, or he has to go away for work. If he's always making excuses not to meet you in person, it's very possible he's not who he says he is. In this situation, we recommend being up front with a boundary to see how he responds. You could say 'Hey I'm really keen to meet up but it seems like something always gets in the way. I'm not interested in chatting forever, so if we're not able to lock in plans in the next week I'll need to politely unmatch and wish you luck in your hunt.'

9. He asks for money

If you haven't met someone (or only met them once or twice) and he asks you for money, you're almost definitely being lined up for a scam. He's also very likely breaching the terms of service for whichever dating app you're on. It's important to report this behaviour using the app's reporting function, as it's likely he'll be trying it with others too.

According to the <u>ACCC</u>, online dating apps and sites are one of the most common ways people get scammed in Australia — in 2022, reported losses to 'dating and romance scams' were over \$40 million.

10. Something just doesn't feel right

Trust your gut! If you're getting the feeling that something doesn't add up, you're probably right. Think about why you're suspicious and confront him with it. His reaction should tell you everything you need to know.

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WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU AND YOUR PARTNER HAVE DIFFERENT SEX DRIVES?

By Emen8

At some point in many long-term relationships, when the initial excitement of dating fades and you're not worried about impressing each other anymore, differences might start to surface. Most likely, one of you will want more sex than the other. This means that, maybe more often than not, the answer to 'dtf?' will become 'no thanks' or 'not tonight'. Rejection sucks, especially when it comes from someone you care about. What's worse is not knowing why the rejection is happening. If you're the partner who wants more sex, it leaves you to come up with all of your own reasons — most of them terrible — for why it's not happening.

The other side sucks too — it feels like your boyfriend is running a stakeout on your libido. If you're the one who's less interested in sex, it can be really stressful when your partner is constantly circling, waiting for an opening (so to speak).

What this often means is that the sex dries up altogether. It can be especially hard to relight the fire when you're both feeling defensive or angry, and so the cycle continues. If this is sounding familiar, don't worry — a mismatch in sex drives is very common, and it's usually something you can work through together.

1. Remember that there's no 'normal' amount of sex to be having
First up – ignore what you think is 'normal' or any advice you find on the internet (except this, obvs). There are a bunch of opinions on minimum standards out there, everything from once a week to once a day, and they all belong to people who aren't you

'Enough sex' is exactly the amount that helps you maintain a sense of intimacy with your partner and makes you both happy. That's it. Bear in mind that your libido will also <u>fluctuate naturally</u> with things like diet, stress, sleep and age, so there's absolutely no amount of sex you 'should' be having.

2. Learn to communicate about the hard stuff

If you're reading this, chances are there's room for improvement in your communication so far. Which is absolutely understandable — sex is one of the most difficult things to talk about. But if you don't communicate about it, your whole relationship could become tiptoeing around the elephant in the room, whose name is We Haven't Had Sex Since Christmas. That can start to poison all of the stuff you actually love about each other.

Q,



You both need to learn how to talk honestly about what you want from your sex life. This takes vulnerability and a willingness to move outside what's comfortable. Be open to sharing things you haven't before and don't hold back. When it's his turn, listen and be receptive to change. Be especially careful not to turn it into a list of complaints or accusations. A good way to get started is the 'when you do (behaviour), it makes me feel (emotion)' format.

While your friends might always be up for a chat, intimate elements between you and your partner might be off-limits. Speaking to someone might be a good thing, especially if you struggle to articulate your emotions. This might be the time to see someone professionally, like a relationship counsellor. Don't put it off — ignoring the problem is not going to make it better.

3. Broaden your definition of what 'having sex' is

There's a lot more to intimacy than penetration. It may be that the partner who wants less sex actually wants different sex, and is afraid to say so. He'd love a <u>blow job</u>, or a massage, or watching some porn together — he just doesn't want the expectation of fucking every time.

This is particularly true if he bottoms. Because — some real talk, just for us guys — sometimes a dick in the ass is not fun or sexy. These times can include after you've eaten a big meal, or dairy, or curry, or you've got a haemorrhoid or a tear, or you haven't had a chance to shower or any of a whole bunch of reasons which make spontaneous anal a terrible idea.

If sex is always about penetration and one of you isn't keen, he may be afraid of initiating anything at all, because he's worried it will lead to the expectation of fucking. Again, communication and compromise are key. Talk about what intimacy means to both of you, and what you can do together that's not always penetration. You may find your sex drives align a lot better in categories that aren't just 'anal sex'. Don't forget, you can take the pressure off penetration with toys to help put in the work for you.

4. Try bringing in some structure

Scheduling sex may sound like the least sexy thing in the world, but here's the thing – you used to do it all the time.

Remember dating? Remember going online to make plans that were specifically about having sex? Remember taking an hour to get ready to go to his place on a Friday night, knowing you were going to be spending the whole time in the bedroom?

In a long-term relationship, that horny glow will inevitably fade, but it's still important to set aside time specifically for your sex life. It doesn't have to be the same day at the same time every week, but try making regular plans that are about getting naked together.

Q,



This gives everyone advance notice to prepare (see above, re: dietary precautions), brings some physical intimacy back into your lives and takes the pressure off the rest of the time you spend together. If date night is on Thursday, cuddles can just be enjoyed as cuddles in the meantime.

5. Create the right conditions

Getting each other in the mood is a big part of satisfying sex (some people call this 'foreplay'). What are your turn-ons? Do you want rose petals in the bath or sweaty jocks in your mouth? What time of day works for you both? He may not want to go to Pound Town after a long day at work – but he could still be very interested in joining you in the shower for a soap-and-grope first thing in the morning.

Does he like making out on the couch for a while before you get naked, or does he want to come home and find you waiting and willing? Putting a little thought and effort into setting the mood can mean the difference between 'no thanks' and 'no mercy'.

6. Have a serious chat about monogamy

This one is a risk and takes a level of honesty that can be confronting. If you can't work out your sexual differences but you don't want to sacrifice a really great relationship, it may be worth discussing whether monogamy is right for you.

If this is what you want, you should put it on the table. You can absolutely have a mutually fulfilling relationship with your partner and still be having <u>sex with other guys</u>. But be aware that it's definitely not an easier road — anyone in an open relationship will tell you it takes every bit as much work, love, communication and commitment as monogamy.



Tamworth Country Music Festival



This year Tamworth is once again presenting the Tamworth Country Music Festival. The ten-day festival of music and fun begins on Friday, 19th January, and winds up on Sunday, 28th January.

For those who are fans of Country Music, this is a chance to be part of the festival. Besides the stars of the various stage shows, there are street performers as well. Is your interest piqued? Then now is the time to book your tickets.....



Michael Gordon



Melbourne's Midsumma Festival





Daylesford's Chillout Festival



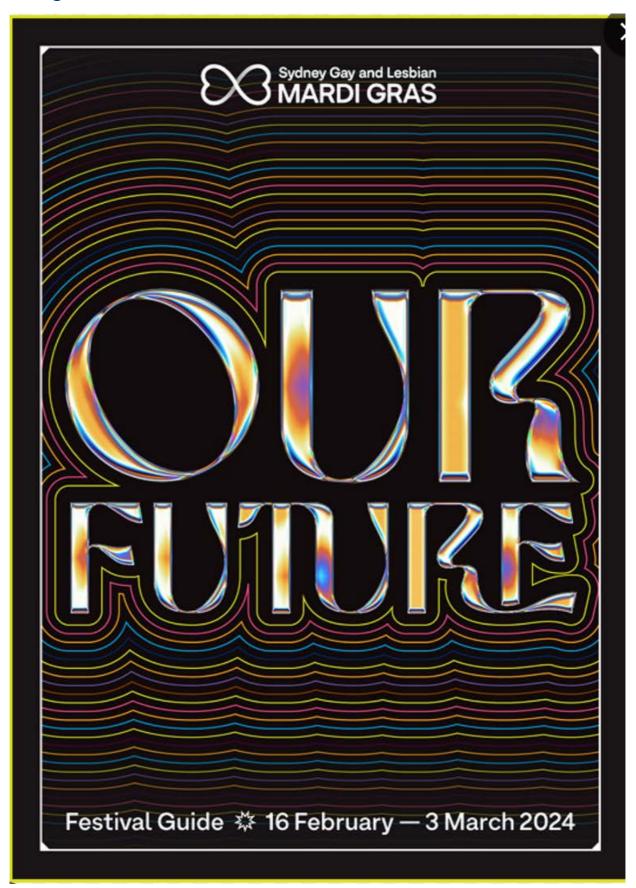








Sydney's Mardi Gras





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 <u>event submission form</u> 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



Tasmania

Tuesday 16 January 2024 Queer Quest

QueerQuest is supported by the TasGove. It connects people with nature, migrant LGBTQ+ and local communities through a variety of day trips.

Details and Tickets available through <u>eventbrite.com</u>

9th to 13th February 2024 Tas Pride

On 1 May 1997, Tasmania became the final Australian jurisdiction to repeal its anti-homosexuality laws. If it were not for the brave people within our GLBTQI community of the time, the unjust discrimination deployed by our State Government may have existed for many more years. The Parade is the signature event of the TasPride Festival and is the time for the LGBTIQ+ community to be visible and to celebrate our pride. Gather your friends, family, colleagues, or teammates; pop your pets on a lead; don your pride colours, costumes, and appropriately themed face masks; prepare your banners; and get ready to PARTY!

Details and Tickets available through pinkuk.com

18 February 2024 1.00- 7.00pm New NorFUNK TasPride Festival Edition

Welcome Swallow Brewery
99 Ring Rd, New Norfolk TAS
A fun filled Sunday afternoon of iconic
Tassie drag performance, burlesque,
dancing, beverages, and a tasty food
truck (TBA) in the beautiful indoor beer
garden at queer friendly Welcome.
More information and tickets at
trybooking.com

23 February 2024 5.00 – 9.00pm

Out and Proud Together

Boodle Beasley
315 Elizabeth St, North Hobart TAS
A PRIDE celebration gathering...A Twist of
Lemons is a welcoming social space for
queer women, diversity and allies. Come
on your own, come with a friend, everyone
welcome!
More information at
https://allevents.in/glenorchy/out-and-proud-together/200025853875442



Mestern Australia



Australia Day Celebrations

You are invited to join us in the Australia Day holiday luncheon.

FRIDAY, 26TH JANUARY AT 12.30 PM 4a Corrigan Way, Greenwood (Cliff & Richard's home)

Please bring a small plate of salad, or nibbles or dessert to share. Also any speciality drinks. BBQ meat and bread rolls will be provided, as well as tea and coffee. It will be a hot day so dress as casually as you wish. If you have any queries please call me (Cliff) on 0422 799 729.

Card/Board Game Afternoon Wednesday, 14th February—1.30 pm

Nothing too serious but a bit of fun playing cards etc. The venue for this event is at Ton's home at Waikiki. Afternoon tea will be provided.



For address information call Cliff on 0422 799 729

Coffee Morning-10.00 am

Sunday, 4th February and 3rd March Hyde Park Hotel, 331 Bulwer Street

Table booked by Cliff Moores for CN/Prime Timers. No need to RSVP just turn up.

Food costs are quite reasonable. The \$12.50

breakfast and coffee can only be ordered through their table app. with your mobile. You will need a QR reader on your mobile.

Other menu options are available by ordering at the counter near the entry of the hotel.



Wednesday Night Dinner 21st February —7.00 pm

Full Moon Thai Restaurant
310 Walcott St., Menora

Join in with the Prime Timers for a great Asian meal and socialising. We've visited this restaurant on a number of

occasions and have always found it very good. It's a BYO venue for wine.

Please RSVP to pteventswa@gmail.com or Terry on 0428 428 072.



Luncheon at the Bentley Hotel Tuesday, 27th February, 2024 - at 12 noon.

The food is always good at the Bentley Hotel and prices are very reasonable.

Please RSVP to me (Cliff) on 0422 799 729

Hope you can make it!



CN News:

Happy New Year everyone. Perhaps a bit late as we're almost through January. Now that we've returned from our travels, I will need to follow through my new year's resolution - CONTACT EVERYONE!

We welcome two new members Shane Green and Brett Higgins. Great to have you with us. Please contact me if you have any concerns. But as I said, I will be ringing everyone to touch bases and see what members would like to do and how to achieve that. As most of you know, we usually combine events with Prime Timers which is a Perth based gay men's group. This gives us some social options.

Looking forward to catching up with you all. Hugs—Cliff 0422 799 729 or email: cliff12@iinet.net.au