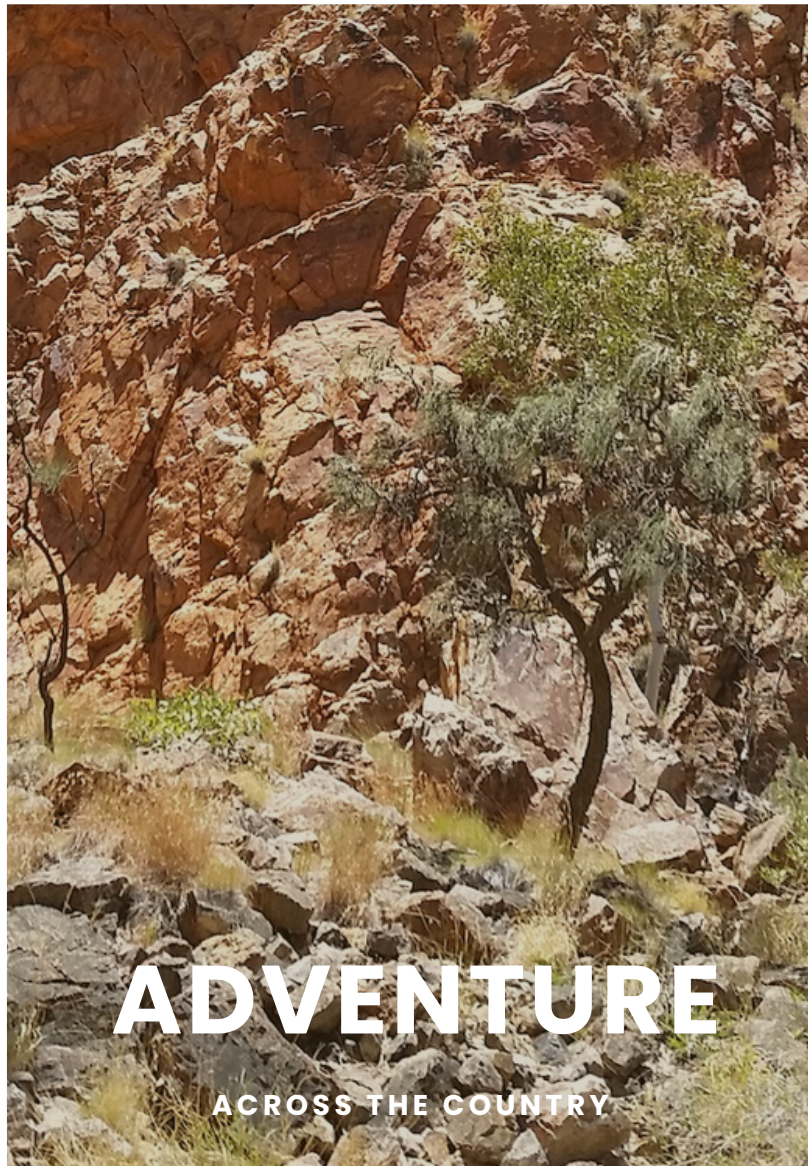


THE COUNTRY NETWORKER

REACHING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

OCT/NOV/DEC 2023



ADVENTURE

ACROSS THE COUNTRY



new email

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 flicking through Instagram reels (short videos) and came across an American guy saying that there was “an epidemic of loneliness amongst gay men”. I don't know what his qualifications are or where he got his data from, but loneliness in the Western world is well documented. From the Beatles in the 1966 song Eleanor Rigby—

“...All the lonely people
Where do they all come from?
All the lonely people
Where do they all belong?”

—to the American Surgeon General, as reported in Newsweek on May 16, 2023:

“On May 2, the U.S. surgeon general, Dr. Vivek Murthy, sounded the alarm about an American epidemic which predated COVID-19: the phenomenon of reported loneliness, now affecting half of all Americans.”

We humans are social animals, there's no getting away from it. Online, you'll find tons of information about beating loneliness. But what happens when you're a gay man and isolated somewhere: in the Outback, in a small town or even a suburb of a big city? You can't always get up and leave for somewhere else. That's where Country Network could help. Why not join our Zoom chat meeting, Sundays at 5pm, Sydney/Canberra/Melbourne time? Email President Jeff and he will send you the link. It could be your first step towards something better.

John Holden

Editor

*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.*

EDITORIAL
John Holden
Editor

DESIGN
Cameron Mason

CONTRIBUTORS
Jeffrey Sproal
Patrick Smith



president's report

Hello members,

Welcome to the November/December edition of the Country Networker.

Recently we had our AGM which was held online as we had to cancel our AGM which was to be held at Singleton in the Hunter Valley because of lack of numbers. As a result of this we lost \$2250.00 with the Charbonnier Hotel. We had a \$3000.00 deposit of which \$750.00 was returned. It was money we could ill afford to lose. All other events were cancelled with no penalties to Country Network. With the cancellation of the AGM this year we need to think about holding the AGM going forward. Whether it be face to face or online via zoom, the face of Country Network will be changing over the coming months and years.

If members want to have an Autumn Gathering and a face-to-face AGM, then members will have to come together as a small group and discuss how they could organise and hold the AGM for 2024 and also the Autumn Gathering for 2024. They take time to organise and put in place, so an early start needs to be applied to ensure the success of the event.

From our AGM the following members have been elected for the following 12 months.

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----|
| President: | Jeffrey P. Sproal | NSW |
| Secretary: | Colin Armstrong | VIC |
| Vice President: | Craig Bowen | QLD |
| Treasurer: | David Turner | VIC |
| Membership Committee | Llyle Wentworth | TAS |
| | David Peplow | NSW |
| | Ian Howells | NT |
| | Lindsay Sheppard | NSW |

We have one more place for a Committee Member. If you are interested, please let me know at president@countrynetwork.com.au

I would like to thank John Conway our Treasurer over the past few years. John did a great job leading us through the process of changing databases and setting up our bank accounts. Thank you, John. While speaking of John I send best wishes to John's partner Hector who is in hospital. I do hope you get well soon Hector and back home with John and Millie.





president's report

To Andrew Jeffery a big thank you for your year as Vice President. Andrew was my sounding board and did a great deal of work with Cameron setting up the new website. Thank you, Andrew, and do enjoy your new abode in Wodonga. To Tony Bayfield, Colin Armstrong and Pavan Lulla, thank you for undertaking the job of Secretary. Thanks also to Rob Clisdell who served as committee member.

This is the first Networker produced by our new Editor John Holden. Congratulations John and I thank you for taking up the cudgels and producing our Networker. Members this is your Networker, and it is a means of communication among members so I would like to strongly encourage you to support John and contribute articles to the Networker. If John doesn't get the support the Networker will slowly dwindle and die, and we do not want that to happen. I must thank Cameron Mason and Andrew Jeffery for producing our Networker in the interim period. Thank you, guys, for keeping the Networker alive. Members, if you have an article, whether it be a book report, a report on what you have done in the community or a holiday you have undertaken send it in as it will be of great interest to our members. John can be contacted at editor@countrynetwork.com.au

Sadly, we lost members with the change over to the new website and the new membership data base. I am pleased to report that we are steadily gaining new members. Elsewhere in the Networker you will see a list of new members. On behalf of all Country Network members, I would like to welcome our new members. I do hope you have a long and happy association with Country Network. Members, if you are not on our Facebook private members page, I would urge you to join the page to stay up to date with CN happenings. Bernie, our administrator, does a fantastic job publishing all sorts of information of interest to members. To join go to Country Network on Facebook, click join and answer 3 simple questions. You must be a paid-up member of Country Network to join.

To all our members who are off colour, not feeling the best or are in hospital, we wish you a speedy recovery and hope you are up and about very soon.

Jeffrey P. Sproal

President





ANOTHER QUEER ORGANISATION FOLDS

Living in regional areas, we know first-hand the difficulty in getting things up and running - especially face-to-face and for a specific section of the LGBTIQ+ community. Limestone Coast Connect is yet another one of those community efforts that tried its best to best service the region it aimed to make a litter bit gayer than before and a little bit brighter along the way.

The challenges faced by LCC were not new or not surprising either. A small handful of passionate dedicated volunteers getting together to try a few things to show the rest of those in a dark blue conservative seat that the gays are here, they're queer and would probably like to have a beer in peace without the threat of being attacked while holding his husband's hand when walking down the street.

Over the years, LCC has achieved notable successes, including:

- Hosting inclusive social events that fostered a strong sense of community and belonging.
- Advocating for the rights and well-being of LGBTIQ+ individuals, raising awareness and promoting equality.
- Building collaborative partnerships that strengthened the LGBTIQ+ community in the Limestone Coast.
- Sharing vital resources and information to support individuals in their journey.
- Welcoming memberships and donations that allowed LCC to make a meaningful impact.

LCC even tried to have gay and bi men's social events - which in itself created a minefield to walk through and created more questions than answers. Where do gay and bi men go, if not lurking in the apps or cruising around the parks and toilets? Where are these spaces? Where are they in rural and regional areas?

Eventually, burnout and a lack of volunteers spelled the end for LCC, with the final winding up taking place by the end of 2023. The LGBTIQ+ community bleats for groups, for events, for services, but for some reason these great and noble ideas cannot be sustained nor supported for a long time. Country Network being an exception and going for over 40 years. Let's hope we can keep Country Network going and not also consign our organisation to history.

Patrick Smith (he/him)





area coordinators

CALLING ALL MEMBERS

There are several vacant Area Coordinator positions within Country Network. This is an important first point of contact for new members and older members of Country Network. If you are interested in taking on the Area Coordinator position for your area, please get in touch with Jeff Sproal at president@countrynetwork.com.au We need you, because the Committee feels this first point of contact position is a most important one.

The areas with vacancies are:

Victoria North Eastern
Queensland Inland
Queensland Northern
Queensland Central Coast
Queensland Gold Coast
NSW Albury/Wodonga
NSW Inland North
NSW Central Coast/Hunter Valley
WA South West & Great Southern

It is important that we have an Area Coordinator in these areas because members of Country Network are missing out on the contact with the group. Your help and support in this matter would be much appreciated.



membership update

Since the 1st of August 2023 we have welcomed the following members to Country Network:

Queensland

- Norman Payne (Noosaville)
- Taylor Mitchell (Brisbane)
- Craig Burgess (Sherwood)
- Barry Le Breton (Morayfield)
- Raymond Martin (Gold Coast)
- Paul Cannon (Mount Morgan)
- Leif Popovic (West End)
- John Goes (Kangaroo Point)

Victoria

- Keith Pritchard (Sale)
- Lawrie O'Dwyer (Riddell's Creek)
- Russell Wilson (Balaclava)
- Glen Barr (Lilydale)
- Don Fraser (Mentone)
- Philip Abbott (Taradale)
- Alan Moore (Sale)
- Aaron Gore (Blampied)
- Diego Brass (Ebdon)

New South Wales

- Mark Hyde (Uralla)
- Richard Baldwin (Dulwich Hill)
- Paul Thompson (Newington)
- Le Toh (Pomeroy)
- Guy Fitzsimmons (Old Bar)

South Australia

- Rod Gale (Whyalla Norrie)

Australian Capital Territory

- Timothy Maher (Evatt)

Western Australia

- Jamison Watson (Wagin)

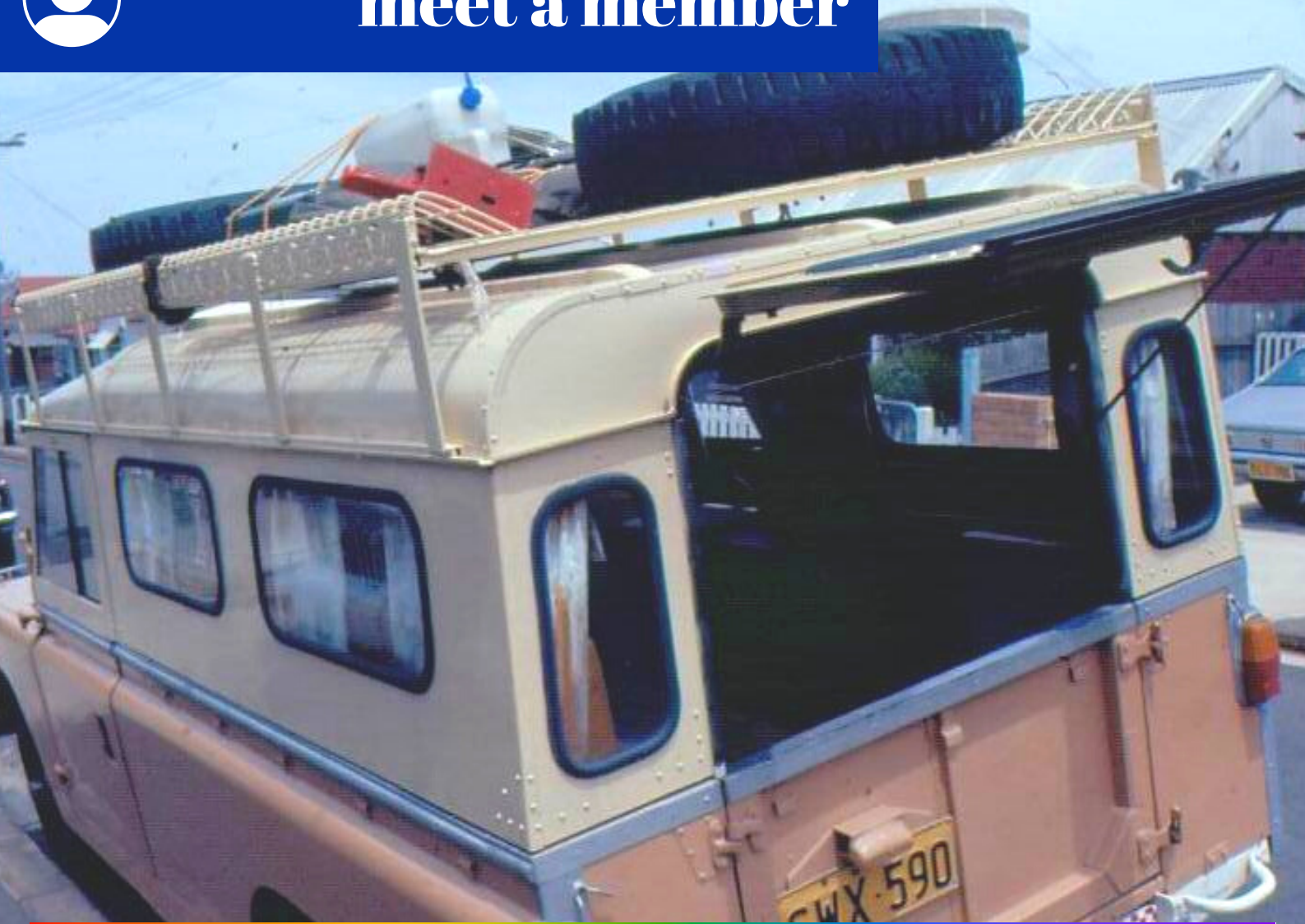


Hyle Wentworth

Membership Coordinator
OCT/NOV/DEC 2023



meet a member



CALLING ALL 4WD ENTHUSIASTS

A big hello to all you Country Network 4WD enthusiasts.

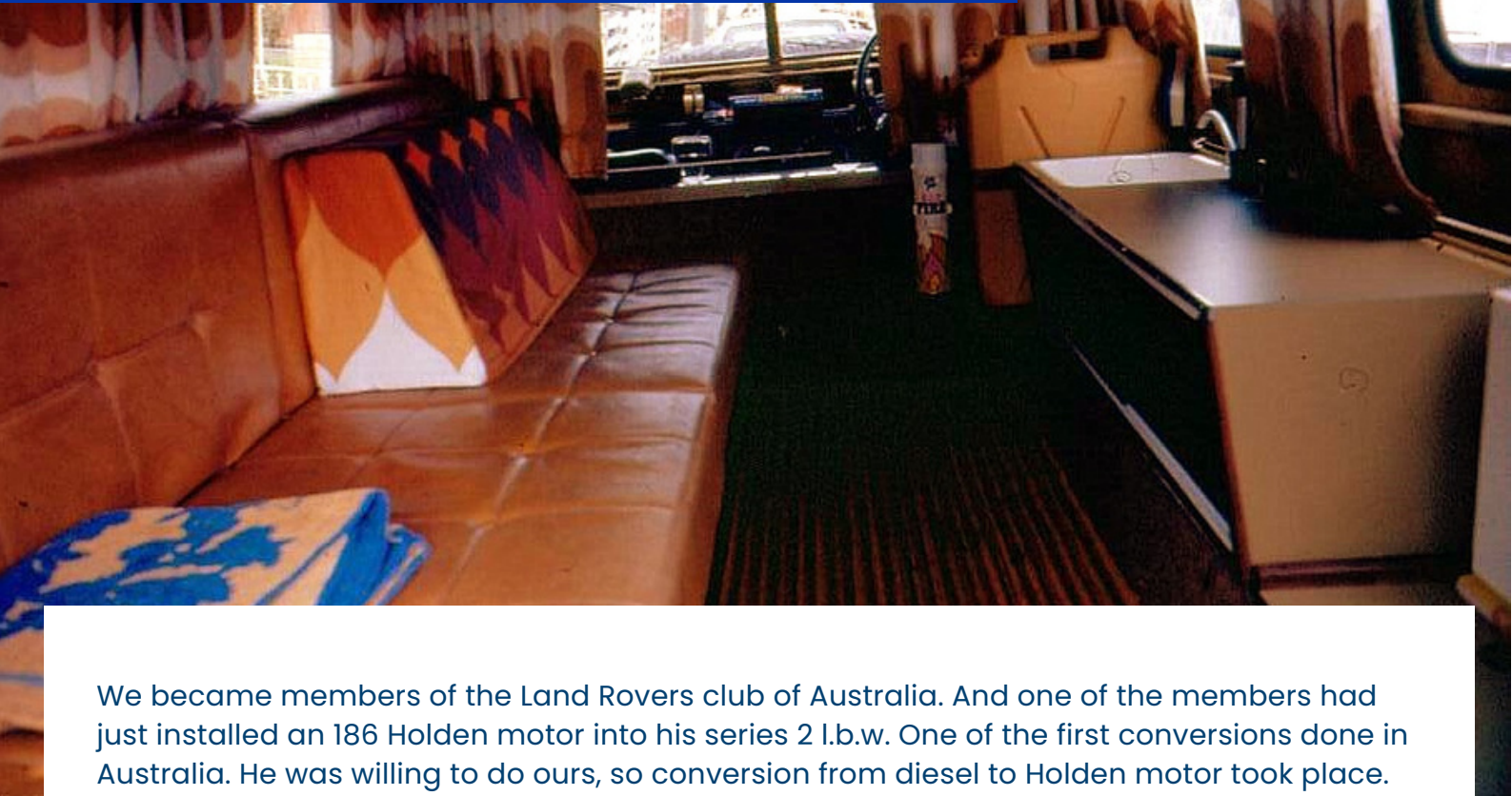


It seems that a fair amount of members are either present or past off roaders, and im sure lots of tales/stories that could be told of your experiences, and would be most interesting.

I myself acquired my first 4x4 a Landrover in the early seventy's, a 1962 series 2 L.W.B. it had a four cylinder diesel motor, and was immediately called (a rolls canhardly) YES, rolls down hills can hardly get up them..



meet a member



We became members of the Land Rovers club of Australia. And one of the members had just installed an 186 Holden motor into his series 2 l.b.w. One of the first conversions done in Australia. He was willing to do ours, so conversion from diesel to Holden motor took place.

Oh Boy, what a difference that made, not much modification required, a larger flywheel and a move forward with the radiator. We converted the inside with a pull out bed one side and a sink, stove and cupboards the other side, fully carpeted floor and ceiling curtains on all windows,

Our first big trip took us from, Sydney to Cooktown. In those days you got two weeks holiday from work!! People kept saying "your mad" or its "the wet season in Queensland" or "you will never make it" "BUT WE DID."Sights along the way were fantastic. Going up through the

centre of N.S.W. using back roads rather than the Pacific Highway we entered Queensland via TEXAS. Through Injian, Roma, Miles. using development roads, onto Charters Towers, thence to Cairns from there to Cooktown. Four days there and then the turn around to head home.Came back over the Atherton tablelands followed by a huge lightening rain storm. Into Goondiwindi. Then on to Sydney and home. Kept that vehicle for fourteen years with many more 4 x 4 trips in it...I'm sure there are quite a few of you out there with interesting stories of trips that you have done. "Tall tales or true". I would love to read them all.....

David Peplow

Long time off roader and Country Networker.



meet a member



BEYOND THEM THAR HILLS: A REGIONAL RAINBOW PERSPECTIVE

In South Australia, there are natural physical barriers such as rivers, mountains, and tunnels that arbitrarily tell us where things start and where things end. These barriers also create a buffer between the plains of the west and whatever lies to the east of them, encircling the state's capital city. I happen to live east, south of the ranges, which has had interesting consequences based on previous choices I've made.

Growing up in the Adelaide Hills, access to the city became easier with the opening of the Heysen Tunnels in 2000. However, a barrier still existed in the hearts and minds of those on either side of the Tunnels. Despite being only 15 km from the CBD, it was challenging to get new friends to come my way because it was deemed too far and the 'wrong side' of the Tunnels to visit, which was extremely isolating.

In 1994, *The Adventures of Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* said that the suburbs were there to keep them out and keep us in. The further east you head, the more rural it gets. Although located 40 km from the CBD, The Adelaide Hills are still considered to be quite rural with services dropping off further as you go further east. This lack of service increases isolation and disconnection from the Adelaide community.

A small country town anywhere in the state typically has a few things going for it: a pub, a church, and a football team. The quirky patch of soil where I live has nine churches, footy teams, and pubs, along with three primary schools and a high school. Some families have lived in the area for generations, and there are also professionals who flitter in and out for their one-year teaching or nursing contract straight out of Uni.



meet a member

After six years at Uni, I decided to pay down my accumulated HECS debt and leave the Hills. I managed to get a job by knowing where the town was, the name of a nearby hamlet, and being aware of the moratorium on shopping hours potentially being an issue. With the growing unrest toward the LGBTIQ+ community in 2017 that emboldened people to express themselves, leading me to fear for the young people, who are still unable to be their true authentic selves. We held our first rainbow flag raising at the high school, which has slowly grown over subsequent years.

As a teacher, I have a profound impact on young people's lives, with opportunities to broaden their horizons. However, it can come at a terrible cost, including poor work-life balance and continual confrontation of what I value and what I am willing to let slide. I teach a bit of C# and colour theory, along with strong warnings against using Comic Sans. I take country kids to Melbourne for a pottery class and art appreciation, and we discuss living in a rural and regional town, how it works, and how it is connected to the world.

Each year for at least the past 10 years, a regular callout goes to the local government in South Australia to fly the rainbow flag on days of significance. And each year, the number slowly grows, but the same few holdout Councils trot out old and tired arguments about why they're not flying the flag, likening it to flying the flag for extremist groups. Wattle Range had to revisit the issue again in January 2023, when the local Baptists took a problem with the rainbow flag being flown.

However, what is clear is that physical barriers, distance, and lack of services can increase isolation and disconnection in rural and regional areas, making it difficult for individuals to find their communities and for communities to come together. This is where initiatives such as raising the rainbow flag can have a significant impact, providing a visible symbol of inclusion and acceptance, and bringing together like-minded individuals who might otherwise feel isolated.

Living in a regional town can have its challenges, including physical barriers, distance, and a lack of services. However, with these challenges come opportunities to build strong, tight-knit communities and to create meaningful change. Whether it's through initiatives like raising the rainbow flag, or through education and discussion, there are ways to bridge the gaps and bring people together. As someone who has lived and worked in a rural town, I have seen firsthand the power of community and the resilience of individuals who are committed to making a positive difference.

Patrick Smith (he/him)



meet a member



CAMEL TRAVEL

Many moons ago, back in 1965 I decided to leave Australia, initially for a period of two years. It was a great adventure, beginning with a sea voyage from Sydney to Genoa. The ship named Galileo Galilei, sailed through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. I opted to disembark with a group of other passengers for a day's excursion in Cairo. It began with an extra early ship's breakfast and a long bus trip through the desert at sunrise to Cairo. There we visited a famous mosque, the more famous Egyptian Museum in Cairo, as well as a short camel ride up to the Khufu (Cheops) Pyramid and its neighbour, the Sphinx. They are definitely wonderful landmarks, though it was disappointing to discover the burial chamber had neither paintings nor hieroglyphics in it.

At night we rejoined the ship which had meanwhile travelled through the Suez Canal and sailed on to Messina, Naples and the final destination Genoa. The duration of the voyage was from the 1st May to the 28th May. This was the start of what became a seven year sojourn in Germany and Switzerland.

Michael Gordon





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?

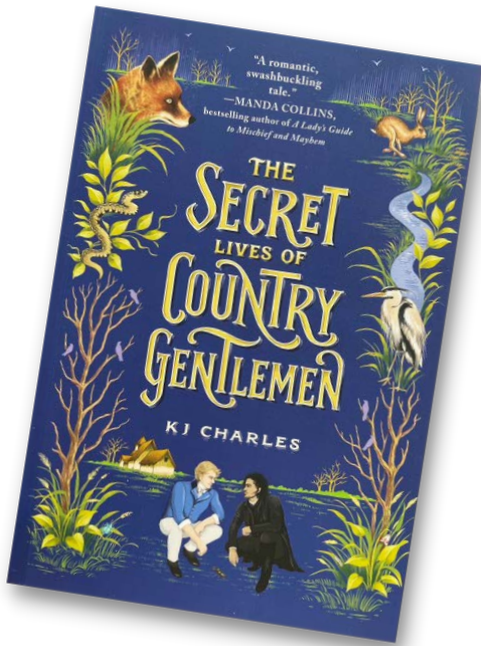
If you have any questions or would like to run an idea past someone, please contact President Jeff on 0412 651 429 or at president@countrynetwork.com.au



on the page

I really like a good historical novel, and these are two of the better ones I've read. The second book is a sequel to the first.

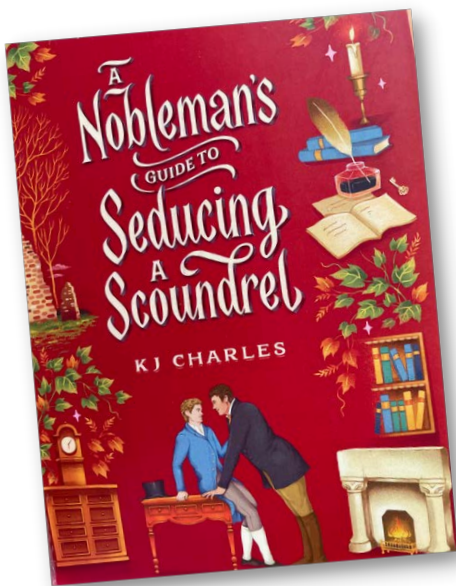
The Secret Lives of Country Gentlemen by K J Charles



It's 1810. Gareth Inglis grew up lonely, prickly and used to disappointment, but he longs for a connection. When he meets a charming stranger, he falls head over heels...until everything goes wrong, and he's left alone again. Then his estranged father dies, turning the shabby London clerk into Sir Gareth, with a grand house on Romney Marsh and a family he doesn't know. The Marsh is another world, a strange empty place, notorious for its ruthless gangs of smugglers. And one of them is dangerously familiar...

Joss Doomsday has run the Doomsday smuggling clan since he was a boy. When the new baronet, his old lover, agrees to testify against Joss's sister, Joss acts fast to stop him. Their reunion is not happy. Yet, after the dust settles, they can't stay away from each other. But the bleak, bare Marsh holds deadly secrets. And when Gareth finds himself threatened from every side, the gentleman and the smuggler must trust each other.

A Nobleman's Guide to Seducing a Scoundrel by K J Charles



It's 1823. Major Rufus d'Aumesty has unexpectedly become the Earl of Oxney, and master of a remote Norman manor on the edge of the infamous Romney Marsh. There, he is beset on all sides, his position contested by both his greedy uncle and Luke Doomsday, son of a notorious smuggling clan.

The earl and the smuggler should be natural enemies, but Luke is an expert schemer and a trained secretary, exactly the sort of man Rufus needs by his side. Before long, Luke becomes an unexpected ally, and the lover that Rufus never thought he'd find.

But Luke came to Stone Manor with an ulterior motive, one he's desperate to keep hidden, even from the lord he can't resist. As the lies and family secrets threaten to destroy everything they hold dear, master and man find themselves forced to decide whose side they're really on...and what they're willing to do for love.

John Holden



SCARED TO TEST FOR HIV? DON'T LET FEAR HOLD YOU BACK

By Emen8

Are you afraid of taking an HIV test? Maybe you think it's too scary, too time-consuming, or too embarrassing. Perhaps you think you don't need one because you've always been careful.

It's important to remember that [HIV](#) doesn't discriminate — it can affect anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, race, or gender. And the only way to know for sure whether you have HIV or not is to get tested.

Maybe you're reading this because it's been on your mind... but we want to assure you that taking an HIV test isn't something to be afraid of. By getting tested, you're taking control of your health and your life. You're helping to protect yourself, your partners, and your community.

Every test is one more step towards ending the HIV epidemic..

Scared to test for HIV? You're not alone.

Many of us understand what it's like to be scared to test for HIV. Getting tested can be daunting. You may have heard stories of long waits, uncomfortable procedures, or insensitive healthcare providers. But things have changed.

Today, there are plenty of options for HIV testing that are quick, easy, and painless. You can choose from various testing sites, including sexual health centres, community hubs, and even [your own home](#). You can opt for a traditional laboratory blood test or get a [rapid HIV test](#) that gives you results in just 15 minutes. Many places offer free and confidential HIV testing without needing access to Medicare.

"... taking an HIV test isn't something to be afraid of. By getting tested, you're taking control of your health and your life."

In Adelaide, you can pick up a free [HIV self test kit](#) from a vending machine anonymously. Queensland residents can order a free HIV self test kit to use at home. And if you're in New South Wales, a Dried Blood Spot test is a free, easy and private way to test for HIV without needing to go to a clinic or see a doctor.

K



our community

know that your HIV test results are always confidential and private. In Australia, nobody can secretly perform an HIV test on you without your consent.

You can discover more about these HIV testing options in our [Knowledge Hub](#).

What would an HIV-positive diagnosis mean?

You may be worried about the outcome of the test. [What if it's positive?](#) What if I have HIV? And although these concerns are understandable, we want you to know that living with HIV is no longer the death sentence it was over 25 years ago.

Thanks to incredible advances in HIV treatment and care, people with HIV can live healthy, happy, and fulfilling lives. These incredible advances also mean that people living with HIV who use [treatment](#) cannot pass HIV onto to their sexual partners.

Unfortunately, for people with untreated HIV, this can be serious and potentially life-threatening. Untreated HIV can have long-lasting effects on your health and well-being. If you do have HIV, [starting treatment as soon as possible](#) is the best way to protect your health and prevent the virus from spreading further. It's also important to take care of yourself emotionally and mentally and to seek support from others who have been in your shoes. Just know that you won't be alone, and there are [plenty of allies](#) out there too. "Remember that testing is a big part of who we are ..."

Certain [HIV organisations](#) hire HIV Peer Support Workers. These workers can offer reassurance, link you with helpful services, help address your queries, and facilitate connections with other HIV-positive folks. There's a thriving community of people who understand what it's like to be diagnosed with HIV and are there to offer support every step of the way.

And if you're applying for an Australian visa, receiving an HIV diagnosis doesn't have to be the end of your migration journey. In fact, if you are thinking of migrating permanently to Australia, it is better to know your HIV status sooner so you can get the right advice. Here's what you need to know about HIV and immigration in Australia.

Put an end to your fears and book that HIV test

Don't let an undiagnosed virus cause you harm. Don't wait until you're sick. Don't let fear or shame hold you back. You're worth it, and so is your health and happiness. You're not alone, and there are people and resources out there to help you. Take advantage of them. Remember that testing is a big part of who we are; it's key for looking after yourself and your partners.



our community

So, go ahead and [make that appointment](#), or order that [HIV home test kit](#). And if you need help with understanding your options, know that we're here for you – [get in touch](#) any time. Need info on how HIV is (and isn't) transmitted? For an up-to-date overview, look no further than [HIV 101: 2023 edition](#).

Getting HIV doesn't always come with symptoms. If you're concerned, here's [how to recognise the signs](#).

If you'd like to find a gay-friendly doctor, we've compiled a [handy guide](#) to finding one. You can also find sexual health testing services and HIV self test kit stockists near you with our [interactive map](#).

Organisations specialising in LGBTQ health and support for people living with HIV operate in every state and territory across Australia. Find yours [here](#).

For community-led support for people living with HIV in Australia, check out the TIM (The Institute of Many) [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).



REJECT WITH RESPECT! HOW TO REJECT SOMEONE ONLINE (WITHOUT IGNORING HIM)

By Emen8

If there's one thing dating apps have given us, it's choice. No matter who you are or what you're into, there's an absolute buffet of men online, available to fulfil your every fantasy. But among all the guys you're hoping to meet, there are always going to be just as many who don't appeal. All that choice means you're probably going to spend at least as much time rejecting guys on dating apps as you are chatting to your next fb.

Rejecting someone respectfully is one of the great skills of online dating (others include 'advanced sexting', 'taking a magnificent dick pic' and 'notifying him when you've got an STI'). It's worth getting it right – he might be a stranger online, but he's still a person who deserves respect and kindness, just like you.

Here are our top tips for letting a guy down gently but firmly, so you can both move on to more promising connections.

1. Use your profile

When it comes to letting guys know you're not interested, your profile can do a lot of the heavy lifting. Fill it out with all the details of what you're looking for and how you like to use the app, so it's clear what you're about.

This includes stating your preferences when it comes to top/bottom/vers/side, HIV status, sending nudes, woofs/taps, blocking etiquette, any kinks, showing face pics and hooking up 'right now'.

Get it right and you'll weed out a lot of the unsuitable suitors straight away – and without a single line of awkward rejection chat.

Just remember, that there are people reading what you put in your description, so be respectful – avoid language that is racist, body shaming and fem-phobic. While we all have a preference, having an awareness of others and their feelings is a highly attractive quality.

2. Be efficient

If you're not interested, let him know straight away. Whether it's because you're not enjoying the chat or you've checked out his profile and he's just not your vibe, ending it quickly means you can both move on.



our community

Some options include:

- 'I feel like we're after different things but it was nice chatting.'
- 'Thanks for the chat, I'm not interested in taking this further but I wish you all the best.'
- 'I've had a look at your profile and I'm not sure we're compatible. Hope you find somebody great!'
- 'I can see you're after a hook up right now, unfortunately I'm already in bed with a good book! Happy to chat, but I'm not looking for any action tonight.'

3. Don't just ignore him

If you're trying to avoid hurting his feelings, ignoring him is not the way. Being ignored can feel dismissive and rude, even if you're just hoping he'll take the hint. Most guys will appreciate you telling them you're not interested directly.

And if you're old enough to use a dating app, you're too old to be ghosting people. As awkward as it can feel to reject someone, pretending he doesn't exist doesn't benefit anyone.

That said, if you have politely refused (as mentioned above), then there is no need to continue engaging.

4. Keep it short

There's no need to coach him through it, you don't need to justify your disinterest (see below), especially if you haven't been chatting for long. Composing a lengthy apology or explanation can come across as a little patronising and is more than likely a waste of time.

If he has questions or is confused, he'll let you know.

"... if you're old enough to use a dating app, you're too old to be ghosting people."

5. Make it clear whether it's 'not now' or 'not ever'

Don't say 'maybe another time' when you really mean 'never in this lifetime'.

It might seem like a softer option to brush him off with a maybe, but it leaves the door open for him to approach you again. And again. And again — until you finally tell him you're actually not interested at all. By this point, he'll likely be a bit annoyed that you've been wasting his time.

6. Be tactful and kind

There are any number of ways to tell him you're not keen. The best ones are respectful, polite and direct, often with a friendly sign-off. They use 'I' phrases. They also make it clear that it's not up for discussion.



our community

Some possible options are:

- Hey, thanks for asking! However, I'll pass politely and wish you happy hunting.
- It's been nice chatting but I'm not keen to meet. Have a good night!
- Thanks for the tap/woof/message, but I'm not feeling it and I don't want to waste your time.
- I don't think we're looking for the same thing. Goodnight and have fun!
- I'm very flattered but I'm not interested, sorry. Enjoy the rest of your weekend.
- Thanks, but I'm not looking to date/hook up/swap pics.
-

7. You don't have to explain yourself

This is one of those times when 'I don't want to' is all the explanation you need to give. There's no obligation for you to unpack why you aren't attracted to him. Online dating is different for everyone, and you don't need to justify doing what feels good, fun and safe for you.

If he won't take no for an answer, getting into the specifics may only make it worse

8. Have strong boundaries

If he doesn't respect your decision and persists in contacting you, your best option is to block him.

You've made your position clear and it's okay to stick to it. Engaging with him on a dating app after you've rejected him may give him false hope. Plus, getting constant pings from people you're not interested in might distract you from pursuing the other babes you are keen on!

9. Rejection is not an excuse to get abusive

Every dating app has policies against abuse and harassment.

If blocking him doesn't work (for example, if he starts a new account) and his behaviour starts to bother you, use your app's reporting function to notify the moderators. You have the right to be safe and free from harassment online, and rejecting someone doesn't change that.

Online dating opens a whole new hot world. Whether you're after Mr. Right or Mr. Right Now, great sexual connections are only a tap and a text away. Staying respectful in your hunt is the best way to make the community a safe and fun place for everyone.



our community

Jeff Sproal, the president of Country Network, received the following letter from QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute seeking the help of members. If you feel inclined to help the Institute in its research, would you please get in contact with the research team at the following: GenDiveStudy@qimrberghofer.edu.au

Below is the letter with all information regarding the request.

Name: Dillensinh Jhala

Email: GenDiveStudy@qimrberghofer.edu.au

Message: Good morning Rural Rainbows,

We are conducting a study with QIMR Berghofer examining the opinions of the Australian LGBTQIA+ community on conducting genetic research on gender diversity. Our study is only interested in the qualitative opinions from participants and as such has been approved as Low or Negligible Risk (LNR) for participants by the QIMR Berghofer-Human Scientific Sub-Committee (HSSC) under the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) code P3892.

We write to you today to see if you would be willing to help us distribute our survey, either through an online newsletter or a physical noticeboard. Organisations such as yours are perfectly placed within the Australian LGBTQIA+ community to provide a large and representative sample of opinions. Aside from university collectives, we aim to contact organisations such as Rural Rainbows working with rural, and Indigenous, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queer Australians as well.

We believe our study will be instrumental in informing how genetic research on gender diversity is conducted going forward. If you are open to assisting us, I am happy to send through the consent form all participants will have access to when completing our survey. This document contains all the necessary information related to our study, which I'm sure will be instrumental in informing your decision.

It is important to centre the voices of Queer people in discussions surrounding any research being conducted about our community. We would appreciate any assistance you can provide us on our endeavour to achieve this.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Dillensinh Jhala (he/they/she – any pronouns) | Research Assistant

QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute

e| GenDiveStudy@qimrberghofer.edu.au

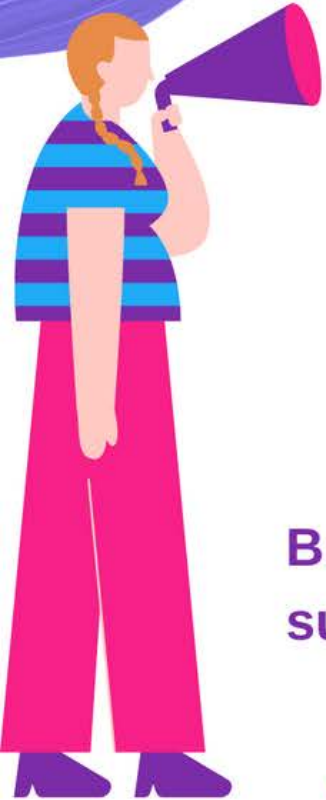
300 Herston Road, Herston QLD 4006

Locked Bag 2000 Royal Brisbane Hospital, QLD 4029



QIMR Berghofer
Medical Research Institute

HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD



As the field of genetic research grows, we are seeing an increase in interest on gender diversity. Genetic studies have already been conducted on homosexuality, to both celebration and controversy.

But does the LGBTQIA+ community even want such research conducted?

We want to hear from you! Scan the QR code below to access our survey to stand a chance to win 1 of 6 \$50 Gift cards!



Western Australia

Life goes on in the west. Perhaps it's because we're so isolated in distance from our eastern cousins, we become more insular. We are enjoying life post-COVID and things have got back to normal. It's great to see public transport is busy once more, as opposed to ghost trains and buses which were running during COVID without passengers.

Country Network has been powering on. We've lost a few members to various causes and it's difficult to attract the younger ones who, these days, have different interests and technology to keep them occupied. At the moment I have 30 members on my roll but I'm uncertain how accurate that number is. I haven't been able to get WA member's names from the website to confirm this figure. I have asked our members to email me if they have resigned or have decided not to renew their membership.

Each month I produce a monthly notice advertising social events our members can attend. I now send this notice to Bernie who very efficiently operates the CN Facebook page as we no longer have an Events Co-ordinator. Hopefully this may change in the near future.

I still combine our monthly events with Prime Timers who are Perth based and organise events each month for their members. Monthly we have a morning brunch at a coffee shop/hotel. We also have a card/board games afternoon each month. The 4th Tuesday is a luncheon for those of us who are retired (which would be most of us) and the last Sunday we occasionally have a picnic or sometimes a pizza by the river. This, at least, is providing a social get together for our CN members if they wish to take up the offer. My ultimate dream would be to have an active local committee where we could arrange our own functions but getting people to be involved is an ongoing problem most organisations are experiencing.

Once a year Ric from Esperance arranges a week's holiday at the Myalup Pines cottages or sometimes the Donnelly River cottages. Ric puts a lot of time and effort into this venture and it's always a fun get together and a chance for any of our members who like dressing up. We usually select March which means it's still warm and beach visits are on the agenda. We also enjoy the delights of the local area of Harvey which is a large grape and citrus growing area.

As ever, the tyranny of distance plagues Western Australia in getting new members in the country areas because of the vast distances to the north and not a lot of interaction happening between the country and the city.

Country Network has a lot going for it and Richard and I have met some wonderful men over the years we've been associated with it. I sincerely hope it can continue.

Wishing all our members the very best wherever they are.

Cheers

Cliff Moores
Area Co-ordinator
Country Network, WA

(October 2023)



Western Australia



PRIDE FAIR DAY—SUNDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER

Opens at 10.00 am at Hyde Park, Highgate. Join the fun of the Fair. All the gay organisations will be represented there. Prime Timers will be hosting a stall so visit us if you can. The Fair finishes about 5.00 pm

Dinner at the Bentley Pines Training Restaurant—Hayman Rd., Bentley Wednesday 15th November 6.30 for 7.00 pm start.

If you haven't dined at the Bentley TAFE Restaurant, you have an experience to enjoy. The staff are students and their enthusiasm to "get it right" is great so you can ensure great food and great service.

They only allow 30 places for a group booking so as there are only a few seats left, please contact Terry Fox **ASAP on 0428 428 072**. If Terry doesn't have any spaces left and you'd like to go, please contact me (Cliff) on 0422 799 729 and we'll see what we can arrange.

Perth Pride Parade Saturday, 25th November

Starting at Russell Square, Northbridge, the parade commences at 8.00 pm. We wouldn't have enough CN members to march as a group but if you'd like to participate you can join the Prime Timers contingent. Marchers need to gather at 6.30 pm at Russell Square.

Contact me if you'd like to join in—Cliff on 0422 799 729



Luncheon at the Bentley Hotel

(not to be confused with the notice above-Bentley Pines)
Tuesday, 28th November at 12 noon.

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



No need to book, just turn up.

Coffee Morning—10.00 am Sunday, 3rd December and 7th January Hyde Park Hotel 331 Bulwer Street Perth

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.

Card/Board Game Afternoon Wednesday, 13th December—1.30 pm

Nothing too serious but a bit of fun playing cards etc. For December it will be held at Don and Jim's home, 46 May Street, East Fremantle.

Please RSVP to Jim on 04239 902 689 or jim-sieler@hotmail.com.



HOBART

Weekly Coffee on Tuesdays

10.00am at Spencer's 145a East Derwent
Hwy
Lindisfarne
Contact: Rod at
hobartfriendz@gmail.com

Weekly Coffee on Wednesdays

10.00am at D & S Coffee Lounge Main Rd
Huonville
Contact: Rod at
hobartfriendz@gmail.com

Wednesday Quiz Night

7.00pm Quiz starts (Meals available from
5.00pm). Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday
of the Month Maypole Hotel
191 Newtown Road
Newtown

Drag Bingo

6.30pm – 9.00pm
Society Tasmania
22 Montpellier Retreat
Salamanca
Every 2nd Thursday
see website for details
www.pussaypoppins.com

NORTH WEST

Drag Bingo @ The Stables

Spreyton Friday 17 November 2023
7.00pm
Tickets \$ 54.26
Bookings: EventbriteApp

Drag Bingo @ Island State Brewing

The Pier Ulverstone
Saturday 18 November 2023
6.00pm
Tickets \$ 33.08
Bookings: Eventbrite App

Pride in the Park Ulverstone

Sunday 19th November 2023
Otto's Grotto
12 Dial Street Ulverston
Free Entry – Family event
Full information
<https://www.centralcoasttas.com.au/events-calendar/2022/11/20/pride-in-the-park-ottos-grotto-ulverstone-ay8sc>

BURNIE

Queer Drinks

First Friday of the Month
The Foreshore
2 North Ter, Burnie TAS 7320, Australia



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 editor@countrynetwork.com.au