

QLD STATE AWARD

Winners!

The Older Mens Network won the State Award for
Suicide Prevention at the recent LiFE Awards.
See the story on page 3.

An Exciting Start to 2026 at TOMNET

An exciting start to the year for TOMNET Members, with plenty happening across our groups – from supporting local students to shaping research on healthy ageing. Here's what's been going on.

Welcoming New Doctors to the Region

Back in January, five of our Volunteers – Bernie, Bevan, Graham, Leo and Ross – fired up the BBQ at the UQ Rural Clinic to welcome new doctors to our region. They cooked for around 120 people, giving medical professionals a warm introduction to our community and showing exactly what TOMNET members are all about.

Supporting Students Every Week

Rod, JT, and Ross from Lockyer have been cooking breakfast for students at Laidley State High School's Breakfast Club twice a week. It's simple work with big impact – a hot meal and a friendly face before school starts. For many students, it's more than just breakfast; it's a connection to positive male role models in their community.

Several new TOMNET Volunteers have joined the EAL/D team at Centenary Heights State School to support migrant students who are learning to read. Helping students learn basic skills that enable them to gain a driver's licence or apply for a job, benefits everyone in the community. Volunteers also attend Newtown State Primary School to read with students, encouraging the children to ask Mum or Dad to read at home to them. Volunteers continue to support the Smith Family at both Wilsonton School and Fairview Heights State School.

Regular BBQs Across the Region

Our BBQ presence is growing steadily:

- **Lockyer Basketball (PCYC)** – 3rd Thursday each month
- **Mitre 10 Gatton** – Last Saturday of each month (starting March 29th)
- **Mitre 10 Toowoomba (Stenner Street)** – Monthly from 9:30am–1:00pm

Whether it's raising funds, building community connections, or simply cooking a great sausage, these events are a regular fixture on the TOMNET Calendar.

(Cont.)

Shaping Research on Healthy Ageing

Our Members made their voices heard recently when six of our team – Mike, Pat, Bernie, Jim, Darrell, and Charlie participated in a focus group with QUT to explore what healthy ageing really means. Topics included understanding healthy ageing, access to health and social services, how social inclusion and connection benefits us, and the affects of discrimination on older people.



This research is crucial, it puts real lived experience at the heart of understanding how older men can age well and stay connected to their communities.

The results of the research will be provided in the future.

Learning from our Monthly Meeting Guest Speakers

Our Monthly Meetings have been packed with valuable speakers sharing their knowledge:

- **Peter from Dementia Australia** spoke about understanding and supporting people living with dementia.
- **Andrew from Mary Street Pharmacy** shared insights on managing health through pharmacy services including diabetes.
- **Kym Briese from Briese Lawyers** discussed important legal matters for Members including Wills, Power of Attorney, and Trusts.
- **Brian**, one of our own TOMNET Members, presented on the topic of depression in older men.
- **Azriel from Queensland Fair Trading** provided practical advice on consumer rights and protections.

Workshops at the TOMNET Centre

Luke has been running workshops that dig into topics close to our Members' hearts. Recent sessions covered:

- **"The Year Ahead"** (28th February) – Looking forward with intention and planning
- **"Loneliness"** (17th January) – Understanding connection and how to build meaningful relationships

These sessions are designed to be practical and real, tackling issues that affect older men but don't always get talked about enough. The next workshop is on 11th April, 2026, see the flyer on page 10.

Getting Involved

Whether you're interested in cooking at a BBQ, joining a workshop, attending a monthly meeting, or simply connecting with mates, there's something for everyone at TOMNET. If you'd like to get involved in any of these activities, reach out to either **Ben (Lockyer Valley)** or **Anthony (Toowoomba)** for more information.

TOMNET receives award in Queensland State Finals for Suicide Prevention

Fantastic News! TOMNET has won the Queensland State Award in the LiFE Awards hosted by Suicide Prevention Australia.

The Older Men's Network is honoured to receive Suicide Prevention Australia's 2026 Queensland LiFE Award for 'Communities in Action'.

TOMNET's approach is community-led. Through peer support, volunteering, and mentoring, men reconnect with their communities and rediscover purpose. Our members mentor refugee students, visit aged-care residents, support local schools, run community barbecues, and contribute thousands of volunteer hours each year.

In doing so, we create something powerful - safe spaces where men feel comfortable talking about life's challenges, supporting one another, and seeking help when they need it. Lasting suicide prevention begins with connection at the local level.

We also acknowledge the incredible work of the other nominees. It is inspiring to be associated with so many organisations committed to grassroots suicide prevention.



For over two decades, the Suicide Prevention Australia LiFE Awards – Living is For Everyone have recognised outstanding contributions to suicide prevention.

The LiFE Awards aim to showcase the important work being done in states and territories across Australia by individuals and organisations to prevent suicide and support those in need.



Aged Care Visiting

Jim, Bernie, Darrell, and Bevan on their way to Brownsholme Highfields to have lunch with the male residents and bring the men some social interaction.



Jim, Bernie, Darrell, Bevan (Glenn missing)

Flexischool Volunteers

TOMNET has partnered with the Flexischool for over 20 years, providing Mentors and Volunteers during this time. A vital component of the Flexischool is providing students with healthy and nutritious meals.



Allan, Simone, and Ray at Flexischool

Allan, Simone, and Ray volunteer in the Flexischool kitchen three days a week cooking healthy meals for the students.

Member Spotlight

Jim Aulbury

What is a favourite memory from your childhood that still makes you smile?

I remember a teacher at school who was a geography teacher and a keen spearfisher. We encouraged him to talk about spearfishing during class, hence no geography was ever studied!

What's something you've accomplished that you're particularly proud of?

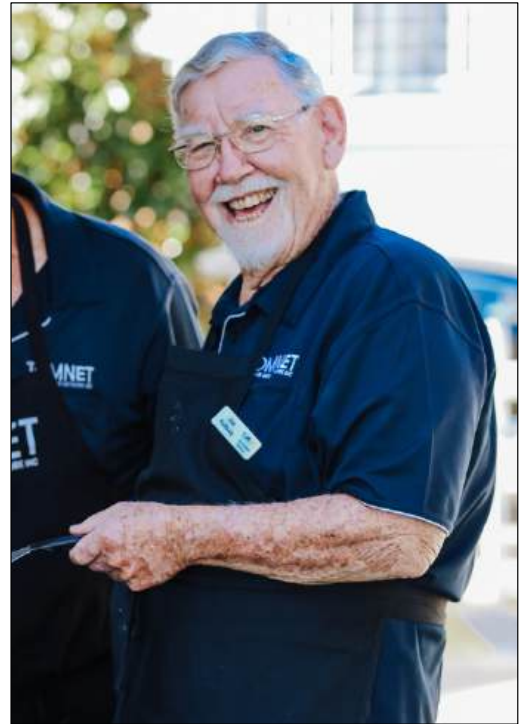
Watching my (now adult) children grow up and have successful lives and knowing I played a part in their success.

What is a skill or craft you wish more people appreciated or learned today?

I think the lost art of building wooden boats, it's not appreciated anymore.

What song or type of music always gets your foot tapping?

Rock 'n' Rock all day long, especially anything from The Eagles.



If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and why?

I think I would choose John F Kennedy, we have visited Kennedy Island to see his shrine dedicated to the PT-109 incident and it would be fantastic to talk to him about his life.

What's the most memorable meal you've ever had - and what made it special?

There was a cafe in Parramatta called Bar Roma that served the best Crepe Suzette's, it's my go-to meal when I am out to impress.

Lunch with mates

Toowoomba

Friday, 17th April
Friday, 15th May

RINK 46
46 Gipps St,
Drayton

Meals at own cost
Meet at 12.30pm

Lockyer Valley

Friday, 10th April
Golden Lor,
Plainlands

Friday, 8th May
Location TBA

Meals at own cost
Meet at 12.00 noon

Venue may change please, contact TOMNET to confirm.

BOOK NOW

TOMNET on 4638 9080 or email
admin@tomnet.org.au



Finding Friendship in Volunteering

One thing my chess and gardening friend Stephen and I have in common is we do not drive, but we are able to volunteer. Stephen previously volunteered as part of the TRC Library mobile book lending program. Hoopla has replaced some of these programs.

I was able to Volunteer at a Child Care Centre teaching the children woodworking skills and now I provide support to TOMNET Members with TOMNET's Telephone Support Service. It was through this program that I met Stephen and find our friendship rewarding.

Stephen has been a member of TOMNET for more than 12 years and stopped attending meetings when Covid broke out.

The TOMNET Telephone Support network is a very important service, and we need more Volunteers for this and other important programs. Many men live on their own, so through friendship we can keep an eye on each other. Thank you for reading this and I hope you would think about volunteering if you were not already doing so.

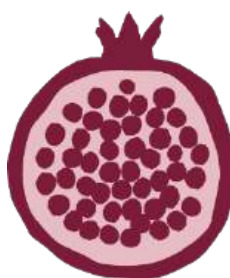
TOMNET Volunteer - Ralph Lee



Ralp and Stephen planting Clivias at TOMNET.

Maggie Beer Foundation Project

The Older Mens Network has been invited to participate in the Maggie Beer HomePlate Project later in the year. Representatives from the Foundation will be attending TOMNET and asking questions relating to eating at home, the challenges, and how these experiences impact our independence, social connection, and well-being.



**MAGGIE BEER
FOUNDATION**
CREATING AN APPETITE FOR LIFE

The HomePlate Project puts older people at the centre of a conversation about food at home. Through data collection and collaboration, we want to understand the central place of food for health, pleasure, dignity and independence as we age. Running until 2027, this project will uncover real stories, practical solutions and new ways to support eating well at home.

TOMNET will be in contact with Members to inform them of dates and times that the foundation will be attending to conduct the survey. Stay tuned.

Monthly Lockyer BMS Barbecue

The Older Mens Network Lockyer group are commencing a Barbecue at BMS Mirte 10 in Gatton. The barbecue at Mitre 10 will commence on the last Saturday of March and each month onwards.

Mitre 10 BMS are fantastic supporters of TOMNET in Toowoomba and we look forward to working with the Gatton branch.

Contact Ben to get involved - 0468 858 087



MEN'S MEETINGS

OLDER MEN SUPPORTING OTHER OLDER MEN

TOOWOOMBA

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.
inc. Tuesday afternoon 1.00 p.m.

Weekly Meetings - 223 Hume St,
Toowoomba

Monthly Meeting

2nd Wednesday of the month

10.00 a.m. to midday.

279 Geddes St, Toowoomba

Call Anthony for more information:
07 4638 9080

**MONTHLY GUEST
SPEAKERS**

FREE BARBECUE

MEET NEW FRIENDS

GET INVOLVED

All men over 50 years are welcome.
Our Members come from a wide
variety of backgrounds and walks of
life. All come with a wide range of
skills and life experiences, all men
are considered equal.

LOCKYER VALLEY

Monday & Tuesday

9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.
Lockyer Community Centre

Wednesday

9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.
Glenore Grove Hall

Thursday

9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.
Laidley Library

Monthly Meeting

Last Monday of each month

9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

Call Ben for more information:
0468 858 087

LEARN MORE:

www.tomnet.org.au

07 4638 9080

MAIN CENTRE:

223 Hume Street,
Toowoomba QLD

admin@tomnet.org.au

Member Spotlight

Chris Martin

What is a favourite memory from your childhood that still makes you smile?

We made our own entertainment, one of my great memories would be finishing my first 'billy cart' and driving it down my street, which was on a steep hill.

What's something you've accomplished that you're particularly proud of?

Gaining a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism, as a very mature aged student, at 65.

What is a skill or craft you wish more people appreciated or learned today?

Home gardening - I still grow some of my own vegetables - there's nothing like eating ripe tomatoes off my own plants.

What song or type of music always gets your foot tapping?

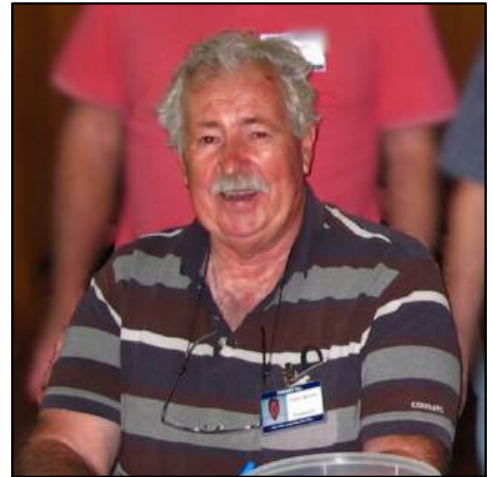
Music of the late 50's and 60's, in particular the band "The Shadows" famous for their backing & individual music - in particular 'Apache', the first instrumental I learned to play on my guitar.

If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and why?

I would choose James Cook, the explorer, as a dinner companion, perhaps as a modern day figure, or me going back in time to his era.

What's the most memorable meal you've ever had - and what made it special?

One of the most memorable, an evening meal on a European River cruise, the food, wine, company and scenic views, travelling along the Danube River, made it a very special evening.



The best cognitive performance with sleep?

New research using data from the brain-training program Lumosity suggests there may be a “sweet spot” for sleep when it comes to thinking clearly. An analysis led by Dr Anne Richards at the University of California, San Francisco, used 20 months of anonymized data from hundreds of thousands of Lumosity users worldwide. Before playing three online games that measured processing speed, memory, and attention, users reported how many hours they had slept the night before.

Performance improved as sleep increased, but only up to about seven hours per night. **Beyond roughly seven hours**, additional sleep was linked

to gradually poorer scores, creating an “inverted U” pattern where both too little and too much sleep were associated with worse cognitive performance. Strikingly, people reporting ten hours of sleep performed at about the same level as those who reported only five hours.

While the study cannot prove that changing sleep duration will directly cause better thinking, it supports other large studies suggesting that **around seven hours of**

sleep may be optimal for adult brain function and long-term cognitive health.

The full article is here:

<https://tomnet.org.au/SleepArticle>



Drinking 2-3 cups of coffee a day tied to lower dementia risk

Marked differences between caffeinated, decaffeinated drinks in analysis of more than 130,000 people.

Evidence from a study of more than 130,000 people suggests that two to three cups of coffee a day can reduce dementia risk and slow cognitive decline.

“When searching for possible dementia prevention tools, we thought something as prevalent as coffee may be a promising dietary intervention - and our unique access to high-quality data through studies that have been going on for more than 40 years allowed us to follow through on that idea,” said senior author Daniel Wang, associate scientist with the Channing Division of Network Medicine in the Mass General Brigham Department of Medicine and assistant professor at Harvard Medical School.

Our study suggests that caffeinated coffee or tea consumption can be one piece of that puzzle.”

“While our results are encouraging, it’s important to remember that the effect size is small and there are lots of important ways to protect cognitive function as we age.” Daniel Wang

Early prevention is especially crucial for dementia, since current treatments are limited and typically offer only modest benefit once symptoms appear. Focus on prevention has led researchers to investigate the influences of lifestyle factors like diet on dementia development.

Coffee and tea contain bioactive ingredients like **polyphenols and caffeine, which have emerged as possible neuroprotective factors**

that reduce inflammation and cellular damage while protecting against cognitive decline. Though promising, findings about the relationship between coffee and dementia have been inconsistent, as studies have had limited follow-up and insufficient detail to capture long-term intake patterns, differences by beverage type, or the full continuum of outcomes - from early subjective cognitive decline to clinically diagnosed dementia.

Data from Nurses’ Health Study and Health Professionals Follow-Up Study help to overcome these challenges.

Participants repeated assessments of diet, dementia, subjective cognitive decline, and objective cognitive function, and were followed for up to 43 years. Researchers compared how caffeinated coffee, tea, and decaffeinated coffee influenced dementia risk and cognitive health of each participant.

Of the 131,821 participants, 11,033 developed dementia. **Both male and female participants with the highest intake of caffeinated coffee had an 18 percent lower risk of dementia** compared with

those who reported little or no caffeinated coffee consumption. Caffeinated coffee drinkers also had lower prevalence of subjective cognitive decline (7.8 percent versus 9.5 percent). By some measurements, those who drank caffeinated coffee also showed better performance on objective tests of overall cognitive function.

To read the results of the a higher tea intake and genetic factors visit the article online at:

<https://tomnet.org.au/CoffeeDementiaLink>



Morning Tea at Hub99 with the Laidley Men's group

TOMNET was invited to Hub99 for morning tea on Friday, 13th March. The Laidley Meeting is usually held at the Laidley Library every Thursday, but relocated to Hub99 for the morning. TOMNET Member Ross Rubie organised

the morning tea which was thoroughly enjoyed by Members. TOMNET appreciates the support of local businesses and we look forward to supporting your cafe in the future. Hub99 is located at 99 Patrick St, Laidley.



NEED COMPUTER HELP?

CALL CHARLIE

Internet problems?

Help with emails?

Help finding that app on your iPad?

How to stay safe online

Meet at TOMNET, or talk over the phone.



Call TOMNET to book - 4638 9080

by tech guru Charlie

Luke's WORKSHOP

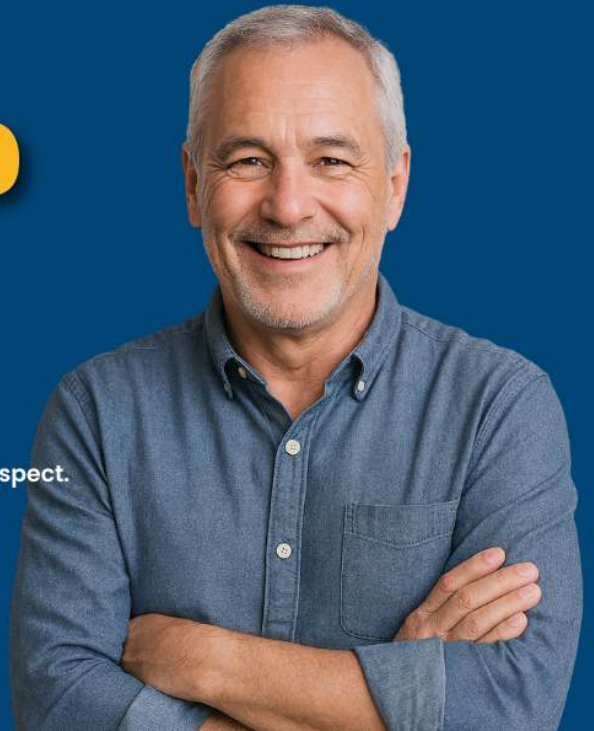
Retirement & Relationships

- ✓ Managing the "New Normal"
- ✓ How being home together more changes routines, space, roles, and expectations.
- ✓ Strategies to maintain harmony, independence, and respect.

SAT 11th April 2026  9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.

TOMNET Centre, 223 Hume St, Toowoomba

Register Now : 07 4638 9080



VISITING OLDER MEN IN AGED CARE HOMES

Join other TOMNET members visiting older men who are seeking friendship and lively conversation?

Facility	Times	
Bolton Clarke	1.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.	1st Monday of month
BUPA - Glenvale	10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.	4th Friday of month
BUPA - Rangeville	11.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.	1st Tuesday of month
OZ Care	2.30 p.m. to 4 p.m.	3rd Monday of month
Yukana	2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.	Last Monday of month
Lourdes	11.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.	Last Wednesday of month
Brownesholme	11.30 am to 2.00 p.m.	every 2 nd month
Palm Lake	2.00 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.	2nd Thursday of month
Regis Aged Care	10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.	every Thursday

Contact the TOMNET Centre for more information.

LOCAL BUSINESSES SHOW THEIR SUPPORT TO TOMNET BY DONATING PRIZES AND GOODS FOR OUR MEMBERS.



at the Hooper Centre



Stenner St store



at Westridge Shopping

SUPPORT BUSINESSES THAT SUPPORT TOMNET.

TOMNET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President Bernie Moran	Vice President Darrell Pierpoint	Treasurer Ross Lange
Secretary Charlie Brun	Pat Mc Namee	Rob Burey
Dan Turner	Angus Grant	Jim Aulbury

The Mgt. Committee meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Pioneers Room

A quiet and private space to relax after the ceremony and appreciate the value of reunion.



The Burstow Family
(A fifth generation family firm)



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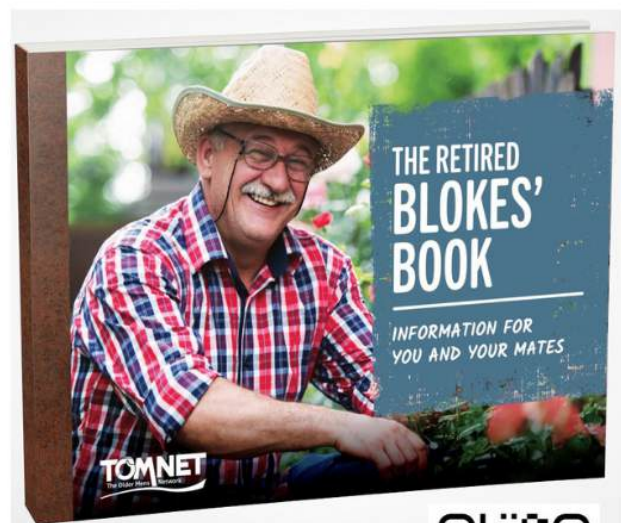


The Retired Blokes' Book

The Retired Bloke's Book is a directory of services, contacts, support groups, and current information from services in your community.

This book is a free resource to help you plan for a meaningful retirement and make it one of the best chapters in your life.

**Call TOMNET for your
copy 074638 9080
www.tomnet.org.au**



**Download by scanning
the QRCode with your
phone.**



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