

## **Penrith Valley Seniors Computing Club Inc. Presidents Annual Report, July 2004**

Dear Fellow Member,

This is the first Annual Report for our club since its' formation and I thought it appropriate that I provide a brief overview of how the club came into being.

Around October 2002, Penrith City Council initiated the formation of our club by holding a public meeting to determine the level of interest among seniors in establishing a computer club just for seniors. The meeting was well attended by seniors and from those present a number volunteered to form a workgroup for the purpose of establishing the club's objectives and constitution.

It was from this workgroup that many members of the club's current committee were drawn. Some of the original committee have, for reasons of illness or relocation, left creating casual vacancies that have been filled by equally capable and dedicated members.

Penrith Valley Seniors Computing Club (PVSCC) was launched at a public meeting held in the Penrith Senior Citizens Centre, toward the end of February 2003. By the end of the launch meeting, we had a paid up membership of some 70 members.

Unfortunately, it was several more weeks before we had our PC workshop up and running and were able to commence addressing our club's main objective, that of encouraging seniors in the use of PC's.

With the wonderful assistance of our volunteer tutors and mentors we have been able to conduct two morning education sessions each day, Monday to Friday focused on educating club members, many of whom had very little experience in the use of PC's and quite a few with no experience at all.

It has been very gratifying for us, the tutors, mentors and committee, to assist our members gain the knowledge and experience that has given many the courage to obtain their very own PC and connect to the Internet.

At the end of our first complete membership year, June 2004, our membership numbered 238. I believe this is a fair indicator of the strong demand that exists in the local seniors' community for the unique services that only our club provides in a seniors' friendly environment.

To provide these services, it requires the time and effort of many members. They do it voluntarily and with a smile and unfortunately are not always shown the appreciation that they deserve. So next time you see the tutor or mentor that helped you in your 'moment of need', just a simple thanks may make them smile and continue to volunteer their services.

Behind the scenes the committee has been active in coming to grips with getting the club up and operating. It has been a fairly steep learning curve for many of us on the committee, not least of all myself.

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When we commenced we had 9 older style IBM type PC's, donated by the NSW State Government, that were able to access the Internet through our network. Since then we have, through generous donations, been given two scanners and two bubble jet colour printers.

Penrith City Council generously provided the start-up funding that enabled the club to be registered and has been very supportive of the club. During the past twelve months we also applied for grants from Penrith Local Government Area (LGA) Community Development and Support Expenditure (CDSE) Committee and the Seniors and IT Grants 2004 schemes.

Unfortunately we failed in our bid for a Seniors and IT Grant 2004, but we were fortunate enough to obtain a partial grant from the Penrith LGA CDSE committee. The grant was funded by Penrith Paceway \$10,000 (Club Paceway) and Penrith Gaels \$1,000 (The Irish Club), to whom we are very grateful for the financial support they extended to us.

The CDSE grant, supplemented with some of our own funds, was used to buy nine (9) new PC's that have the power needed to run the latest versions of popular software used for creating greeting cards, browsing the Internet, writing letters, processing email, doing budgets, digital photo editing etc. They also came with larger display screens that provide a brighter, clearer picture than the old screens do, which I'm sure most of us appreciate.

Our club hosted the TechnoSeniors Seminar/Expo at the centre during Seniors Week, March 2004. It was well attended by seniors from our region and we gained a number of new members from those visitors. The sponsors of the event, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) and Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA), the speakers and exhibitors were very impressed with the efforts of all our volunteers, which were coordinated very capably by our Vice President, Alan Lees.

The clubs' Social Committee was active during the year and conducted some well attended morning teas and sausage sizzle lunches for members and also provided the much appreciated catering services for the TechnoSeniors event. A very special thank you to all the members involved in conducting these events including those members that showed support by attending them.

The Centre Management Committee recently upgraded the audio and video projection equipment in the main hall so that it can now be used for PC generated audio/video presentations. Our club intends to promote the use of this capability by extending to relevant organisations the opportunity for them to conduct information sessions about products, services, activities etc that they may wish to promote to seniors.

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Several Special Interest Groups are being promoted within the club and members are urged to join those groups that they may have an interest in or are just curious to know what it is about. You are not expected to have any prior knowledge of the particular subject other than the ability to operate the PC (use a mouse and the keyboard). If you don't give it a go, you'll never know. Details of the Special Interest Groups and the contact person for each have been in the newsletters and on the clubs notice board. For your information the Special Interest Groups are:

Microsoft Publisher – doing artwork, making cards, calendars, letterheads, notices and family trees.

Digital Photography

Genealogy

Internet Web Site

Music

The club has also created an Internet Web Site for the Penrith Valley Seniors Centre on which we maintain information about the activities of all groups that use the Seniors Centre including our own club. The Web site is under the management of our very own Webmaster, Tom Lehane who, coincidentally, is the leader of the Internet Web Site Special Interest group.

The club is hopeful of being able to expand the computer area toward the end of this year. When this occurs we will have enough space to be able to reactivate the nine old PC's so that including the nine new PC's the numbers attending a session can be increased from nine to eighteen.

Earlier this year we again submitted applications for funding grants to the Penrith LGA CDSE committee. As yet there has been no announcement by them about applications that were submitted. If we are successful, these funds will enable us to purchase additional teaching aids, PC equipment and computer furniture.

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In closing, I want to reinforce to all our members the benefits and value of being a member of our club. You can -

Attend education sessions of your choosing during the next year, additional fees still apply each session and subject to attendee limits

Attend social events such as morning teas, sausage sizzles etc.

Get FREE help with solving your PC problems, a number of our members have saved themselves more than the annual membership fees in potential service costs.

Discuss with other club members those PC matters that are of concern or interest to you.

Get FREE advice/assistance in determining what type of Internet connection you need and which Internet Service Provider (ISP) to use.

Be a volunteer and HELP other seniors with learning how to use PC's.

Join or start up a Special Interest Group in the club, e.g., digital photography, genealogy, games, chatting etc.

Use the clubs PC's and broadband connection to 'surf the Internet' for a very small fee.

Continue to receive the clubs' newsletter (by email), you might even like to contribute an article to it or even help in producing it.

Contribute ideas and make suggestions about the sort of information that should be available to those that visit our recently established World Wide Web site - [www.users.on.net/pvscc](http://www.users.on.net/pvscc) - if you haven't seen it yet, it really is worth visiting - don't forget to tell your family and friends to visit it also.

Penrith Valley Seniors Computing Club Inc has been established for Seniors by Seniors.

It is our club and it will only be as good as we want it to be by all of us getting in and making it what we want.

Please invite your senior friends and neighbours to visit the club, they too can become members and enjoy the opportunity to expand their PC capabilities in the seniors friendly environment of our club.

Enjoy your computing and good health.

Regards,

Bob Ryan  
President  
Penrith Valley Seniors Computing Club Inc.