



FORUM LIFE

January 2026

Hello and welcome to 2026! As Forum's newly appointed Marketing Officer, it is my job to present the newsletter, kicking off with this edition - the first for the new year.

I look forward to working with Rosie, Kate and Elaine on the State Committee. Rosie, our State President is perfect for the role and has a quiet strength and a funny way of getting you to do things without you thinking you are volunteering. I often laugh after I have agreed to do something without thinking I've agreed!!

As for my background, I have a 30 year career as an IT Business Analyst and Project Manager. I have always envisioned having my own business, which I started in 2020. This business, Drive South, will restart car manufacturing in Australia. The first prototype will be completed in 2026, and from there, sales will commence. Have a look at Drive South on the web / Facebook for more information. In addition, I like to road trip, watch motorsport, follow current affairs and spend time on my property.

As a newbie in this type of position, I wanted to understand Forum's marketing strategy from some of the longer serving members. For this reason, I met with a range of members to gain some understanding of our history and get a sense of what we are looking to gain from marketing. This highlighted the fantastic work done in the past, and many new and different ideas were tabled. Like many volunteer based organisations, we are always seeking new members. Now more than ever, there is a need for Forum to thrive. We live in a connected world where we have become more disconnected than ever. Since I joined Forum, I have noticed the lack of confidence that many people experience when it comes to public speaking, particularly in the workplace, where meetings are often run poorly, rarely with minutes or agenda.

The core purpose of Forum is public speaking. When I have asked members why they continue to be part of Forum, the overwhelming answer is "friendship". We live in a socially disconnected world and humans are social beings. Whilst our core purpose is "Public Speaking" and "Being Confident", perhaps our message to the wider community should be "Join our Community". I'll leave you with that thought!



Please enjoy this newsletter. It's yours, so feel free to email me with content, thoughts, and feedback.

Wishing you all a prosperous New Year!

Andrew South, Marketing Officer
forummarketing@beconfident.org.au

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 2025



Forum Communicators' State Committee for the 2025-2027 biennium was elected and consists of: President – Rosie Arnold; Secretary – Elaine West; Treasurer – Kate Gilloway; Marketing Officer – Andrew South.

Specialist Officers: Chief Assessor – Leanne Walker; E-Forum Co-ordinator, Constitutional Advisor & Syllabus Co-ordinator – Pam Tranter OAM; NCWQ Delegates – Dr Pat Pepper & Ronda Nix OAM; Historian – Elaine West; Forum Support Officer - Irene Henley; Website Coordinator – Rosie Arnold. All Forum members extended a hearty congratulations to our incoming State Committee, and heartfelt thanks to the outgoing State Committee members for their hard work over the previous biennium.



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

Four outstanding women, Dr Pat Pepper, Elaine West, Margaret Townsley and Leanne Walker, were awarded with Life Membership of Forum Communicators - the most prestigious award our organisation offers.

DR. PAT PEPPER, a member of Ashgrove Forum since 1980, was awarded Life Membership in recognition of her decades of service, leadership, and commitment to our organisation. Pat's connection to Forum runs deep as she comes from a true Forum family: her mother, Mary, joined in 1963, followed by her sisters Dorothy and Gay, and her sister-in-law, Linda. Within Ashgrove Forum, Pat served repeatedly on the management committee, taking on the roles of President, Secretary, and Treasurer - positions she approached with equal measures of challenge and enjoyment. Her contributions extended to the State Committee, where she held several senior roles, including that of State President from 1999 – 2001.



ELAINE WEST, a long-serving member of Bayside Forum was awarded Life Membership recognising her commitment, leadership, and service to the organisation over a period of more than two decades. Elaine first joined Forum when she wanted to learn how to run effective meetings at work and speak confidently in front of colleagues. Fortunately, she was invited to attend a Forum meeting - and, as Elaine says, *"the rest is history!"*

Elaine joined Bayside Forum, and has held many roles over the years within that Forum, including Treasurer, Secretary and President. She recalls that being encouraged to join the State Committee, and later stepping into the State President's role, was a steep learning curve — but one she embraced with the support of her fellow members.



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

LEANNE WALKER, has been a driving force in Bremer Forum (Ipswich) for 26 years. In that time, she has formed enduring friendships, mentored countless members, and consistently modelled the confidence and generosity that strengthen the Forum community. In responding to her award, Leanne reflected on what the future holds for Forum and reminded us that it has never been more important to care for the brain. Activities such as listening and responding with insight, researching content, constructing speeches, and developing impromptu speaking techniques, all enhance memory by stimulating the growth of dendrites in the brain and strengthening neural connections. Although some dendrites may naturally atrophy with age, those who continue to challenge themselves cognitively retain a valuable reserve.



MARGARET TOWNSLEY joined Chermside Forum in 1984 and quickly became deeply involved with club life, serving as Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-President and finally President. Her dedication to our organisation led to wider leadership roles on Forum's State Management Committee, including that of State President from 2013-2015. As State President, Margaret organised major events, including a Civic Reception hosted by Lord Mayor Graham Quirk at Brisbane City Hall to honour Forum's founders, and a Life Member investiture at Government House, conducted by the Governor of Queensland, Ms Penelope Wensley - Forum's Patron at the time.

Reflecting on her journey, Margaret says Forum has given her more than she could ever repay. "Forum is a welcoming and inclusive group where members respect those who came before them," she says. "Without Forum, many wonderful things would not have happened in my life. I learned from the best, was supported by extraordinary people, and owe much of my success to this remarkable organisation."



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

FORUM SPEAKING AWARDS

Our biennial conference always includes the Forum Speaking Awards which are the highlight of the weekend. Our three happy winners were Elaine West (Bayside Forum) who won the Ruth Don Grand Champion Award, Rosie Arnold (Bremer Forum) who won the Lady Jessie Groom Award (Members' Choice) and Kate Gilloway (Bayside Forum) who took out the Marjorie Purreger Impromptu Speaking Award.

Congratulations to everyone who participated in our speaking competition, you were all fantastic and set the bar very high!



SHOWCASING OUR FORUMS

All members were invited to showcase their Forum, and the ladies from Cleveland Forum entertained us with an original musical skit – highlighting their vast array of talent! We love their enthusiasm and originality!



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Pam Spence (Cleveland Forum) and Dr Toni Risson (Bremer Forum) were both presented with the inaugural '*Strengthening Community Connections Award*' in recognition of their ongoing activities in the wider community.

Pam, in her role as President of the Birkdale Progress Association, has been instrumental in the preservation of Willards Farm at Birkdale, a heritage listed property with a high level of significance to Queensland's history.

Toni is a published author, an active member of Women Writers Queensland, an accomplished artist and recipient of the prestigious 2021 Ipswich City Council - Australia Day Cultural Award. Recently, Toni was engaged by the State Library to speak about culinary diversity in Queensland, and, in the same week was interviewed on Sydney radio about lollies – the subject of her PhD.

Pictured (L-R) Irene Henley (outgoing State President), Dr Toni Risson, Rosie Arnold (incoming State President), Pam Spence



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

2025 NCWQ Forum Bursary

Members were thrilled to meet Jessica Ruhle - winner of the 2025 NCWQ Forum Bursary.

Jessica is an exceptional young woman and a most deserving Bursary recipient. We all look forward to seeing her again at future events.

Forum is excited to be participating in the 2026 NCWQ Bursary, details of which may be found [HERE on the NCWQ website](#).



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

STATE RECOGNITION

State Recognition was awarded to four members to celebrate their meritorious service to Forum: Anna Bowman, Francine Field, Richard Hallson and Rosie Arnold.

ANNA BOWMAN has been an integral member of Bayside Forum since 2007 and has held all positions on the committee during that time. In 2021 Anna stepped into the role of Forum State President after serving as Vice President from 2019-2021, and Constitutional Advisor from 2017-2019. Anna continued on the State Committee as Secretary from 2023-2025, and she has always supported others with a smile and a willingness to help.



FRANCINE FIELD - Since joining Chermside Forum in February 1998, Francine has been an invaluable member, repeatedly stepping into the roles of Treasurer, Secretary and President. She has represented Chermside members in the Forum Speaking Awards on multiple occasions, and has served as a voting delegate at many of our conferences. Within the broader Forum community, Francine also made a significant impact as Treasurer of the Metropolitan Council, a role vital to the continued strength and success of our organisation. Francine's warm, witty and engaging speeches are a highlight at Chermside Forum meetings, and her fellow members were delighted to see her honoured with State recognition.

ROSIE ARNOLD, a member of Bremer Forum for many years, was recognised for her contribution to the State Committee over several years in a variety of roles.



RICHARD HALLSON has been a valued member of Bayside Forum and the State Committee, serving as Marketing Officer, Website Coordinator and our unofficial technical support specialist. His readiness to assist whenever needed, combined with his calm manner, positive attitude and extensive technical expertise, has been greatly appreciated.



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

SPIRIT OF FORUM

ADELIA BERRIDGE was awarded the *Spirit of Forum* in recognition of her continual push to promote Cleveland Forum in the local community. Using her social media skills to

broaden our advertising, and her dedication to supporting her Forum members, Adelia has shown us that she is a dynamo who gives 100% to every project she takes on – including dressing to impress when she delivers her outstanding speeches.

Congratulations to Adelia - pictured right in her Cat Woman costume!



THE VALUES OF FORUM

Forum is a community of individuals who are unique and diverse, providing a space for everyone

- We respect individuality
- We share knowledge and ideas
- We value a well-run meeting
 - We aspire to speak well
- We support and encourage one another

What's Happening at our Forums?

BREMER

Leanne Walker wore the President's cap during the last session of 2025. Regular use of impromptu frameworks, eight prepared 10-minute speeches, and continued progress on our member-interview series made for ten full and engaging agendas. In a segment called Hot-Off-The-Press, Leanne shared global input into the discussion about what makes a great communicator. Every meeting included Toni's Tips, which avoided well-worn paths in striving to bring nuggets of wisdom, things like, *it's not about you*, and *how does writing for the ear differ from writing for the eye?*. Meetings began with the new Community Connections segment, which gave members the chance to hear from those who regularly use skills learned and developed during Forum meetings. Examples of these are highlighted below from our members Jannene Wall, Andrea Baumert Howard and Dr Toni Risson.

Now semi-retired, **Jannene** still conducts funeral services for a local funeral home, using her Forum skills as she sits with the family, drawing out information to write and then conduct a meaningful service for their loved one, and often, delivering the eulogy.

Andrea is an artist who joined Bremer Forum this year because her role as Captain of an artist collective called IPSARI requires her to run meetings and make all kinds of presentations. This year Andrea entered work in the Ipswich Arts Awards and was pleasantly surprised to win First Prize in the mixed media category. Accepting the award meant speaking to almost 400 people, and luckily, her Forum training rushed to her aid as she mastered her emotions to address her audience confidently and coherently.

The State Library engaged **Toni** to speak about culinary diversity in Queensland. Originally envisioned as an hour-long PowerPoint lecture—a format Toni is relatively comfortable with—this morphed into a panel session with two food academics chaired by the ABC's Jenny Woodward. The following day, Toni was on Sydney radio, doing a live interview about lollies, the subject of her PhD. Toni said "No matter how long you do this, the challenge never stops. I'm always trusting God, but those countless hours at the Forum lectern, they help too."



What's Happening at our Forums?

CLEVELAND

The key to creating a sustainable future is the ability of decision makers to understand the dynamics of change. Understanding and accepting are two different verbs. One is to consider something as true or valid while the other is to grasp an idea, or to be empathetic. In our last Cleveland article we wrote about the growth of our club.

Growth brings change but what is acceptable change? The problem we had to work with was new members needing confidence, time to adapt, friendship, security and a road map. The established members on the other hand needed to adjust, adapt to change, and manage the physical and mental pressure of carrying a much heavier load.

An approach to the Chamber of Commerce (CoC) brought support for working with the CoC inside four schools, stakeholder engagement with Dept of Small Business and Trade and Investment, partnership with immigrant groups, and finally, Redlands Women in Business. We took this back to our members, and the decision was to increase our exposure in a shopping centre for two days, while applying for a community grant for a public workshop as the first steps, before taking Cleveland Forum to where the people are.

"Staying power" is the ability to remain effective or successful for a long time, and is synonymous with stamina, endurance, and determination. We will persist and continue working to further our reach in the community. We are proud of our members who are supporting us through the changes to the new roadmap and look forward to our continued success.



Featured Member

HELEN GOLEBY

Bayside Forum members all display a range of talents and skills, and Helen Goleby is no exception!

Helen was born in Brisbane, the youngest child of Beryl and Gordon Cameron. The family moved from Holland Park to Greenslopes in 1954, and Helen attended Greenslopes State School, and then Brisbane Girls Grammar School in her secondary years.

She worked for five years as a legal secretary before studying for her Arts degree at the Australian National University, graduating in 1984, before continuing to study for an Advanced Diploma in Teaching at QUT, graduating in 1986.



Helen started teaching the following year at Wynnum West State School and later at Gumdale State School. While at Wynnum West State School, she completed further studies in Speech and Drama, qualifying as an Associate, and then gained a Licentiate with Trinity College London in 1996.

In 1997, Helen founded *Kids on Stage*, a children's drama group, and taught her young students for the next twenty years, providing them with the skills to speak confidently in public.

Helen and her husband moved to Dayboro, where she worked backstage for the *Dayboro Players*, before moving to the front of stage and acting in several plays from 2016 onwards – a pursuit she has enjoyed ever since.

Another move in 2019 brought Helen to Wynnum, where she resumed acting with the *Redlands U3A Amateur Theatre Group* and as a member of the *Mercury Theatre*, taking on acting roles in “Ladies of Spirit” and “A Doll’s House”. Helen has also been a ‘prompter’ for “Steel Magnolias”, “The Revlon Girl”, “Scotland Road” and “Relatively Speaking”.

Helen started learning skills in public speaking with Toastmasters, and presenting her short stories at *Life Matters* with members of the *U3A Writers Group*, located at Cleveland’s Donald Simpson Centre. Helen joined Bayside Forum in January 2025 to continue developing her skills and confidence in public speaking. Helen enjoys the friendly, supportive atmosphere and the interesting topics presented at Forum, which provide her with an ideal opportunity to continue improving.

Featured Member

SANDRA TAM

Born in Hong Kong into a close-knit Chinese family, Sandra grew up in an environment that valued education, responsibility, and mutual support. These early values would go on to shape every important chapter of her life. From a young age, Sandra possessed an analytical mind, drawn to the clarity of numbers and systems. This interest eventually led her to pursue a degree in banking, a field that promised both stability and opportunities to serve others through financial planning. After completing her studies, she began her professional career at Westpac in Hong Kong. In 1992, Sandra's life took a significant turn. Her family made the courageous decision to migrate to Australia, seeking better opportunities and a fresh start. Brisbane became their new home, where they reunited with Sandra's only sibling and his family. Sandra embraced her new life with optimism. In 2009, however, life brought another turning point. Sandra's father passed away—a profound loss that deeply affected her. With a renewed understanding of the fragility of time, she made the heartfelt decision to retire from her banking career. She has published a book about her family's hard and interesting life journey over three countries with distant cultures. A Chinese version was also written for the family's relatives in China, which was very well received too. A new chapter began when Sandra's partner, Bruce Kent, invited her to attend a Forum's function celebrating the club's 77th birthday in 2018 where he was a member. Her involvement did not stop at participation. Eventually, she took on the role of Treasurer, a position she has faithfully held for the past three years.

Sandra's journey within the Forum community was also deeply intertwined with her partner, Bruce, who had first introduced her to the club. When Bruce passed away suddenly in April 2025, the loss was profound. Yet Sandra chose to honour his memory in a way that reflected both his passions and their shared values. Sandra enjoys a variety of activities that keep her grounded, healthy, and connected. One of her favourites is participating in a walking group. Her spiritual life is equally important. Sandra regularly joins Bible study groups, dedicating time each week to reflect, learn, and deepen her faith. Sandra also stays active by attending the gym, maintaining a balanced approach to health that includes physical fitness, mental engagement, and social connection. Today, Sandra continues to live a life shaped by gratitude, service, and connection. Her story is a reminder that personal growth does not end with retirement, that community involvement can enrich life at any age, and that giving time to loved ones is one of the greatest gifts we can offer.



Christmas Celebrations



Christmas Celebrations



Christmas Celebrations



WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR 2026?

***YOU HAVE TO SET GOALS THAT ARE
ALMOST OUT OF REACH. IF YOU SET
A GOAL THAT IS ATTAINABLE
WITHOUT MUCH WORK OR
THOUGHT, YOU ARE STUCK WITH
SOMETHING BELOW YOUR TRUE
TALENT AND POTENTIAL!!***

credit: Steve Garvey

**OUR ONLINE FORUM IS
ALSO AVAILABLE IF YOU
ARE UNABLE TO TRAVEL TO ATTEND
FACE TO FACE MEETINGS**

- Do you need to present confidently at work?
- Do you get nervous when asked to stand up and speak in front of others?
- Do you need to deliver a speech at a wedding?
- Do you attend meetings and want your opinion to be heard?

If you answered YES to any of these questions – then
FORUM is for YOU!!

**FORUM COMMUNICATORS
TAKING THE FEAR OUT OF
PUBLIC SPEAKING SINCE 1941**



Forums meet regularly in
the following areas:

[Chermside](#)
[Cleveland](#)
[Ipswich](#)
[Wynnum](#)
[Online](#)

Do You Need More Information?

If so - visit our website:

www.beconfident.org

or email:

forum@beconfident.org.au

**Watch out for the first
2026 Syllabus to be
published on our
website soon.**

