

# Rockgrinders Gazette



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## Club rooms opening hours

Monday 9am till 1pm  
 Wednesday 9am till 1pm  
 Friday 6pm till 9pm  
 Saturday 9am till 1pm

October 2016 Opal Edition

## New members welcome

Interested in: Lapidary, Fossils, Gems, Crystals, Beading, Silversmithing or Lost wax casting in a relaxed friendly environment? Pop in and have a chat.

To all new members, we trust you will enjoy your experiences with us and benefit from our classes. If you have any questions there is a duty officer who will assist you. All members would also love to help you if they can.

### Membership

Single	\$15.00
Family	\$20.00
Pensioner Family	\$15.00
Pensioner / Student	\$10.00
Insurance	\$5.00 per member
Workshop fees	\$2.00
Joining Fee	\$10.00

**NOTE:** You must be an insured member over 12 years of age to use machinery & cutting implements

All visitors are welcome however only members can

## Silver Classes

Silver Casting Classes have resumed Barry and Dorothy will be happy to help you learn to cast sterling silver jewellery.

## Open Day 15th October

Help is still needed for our Open Day. Are you able to help set up or pack away? Do you have some rocks or gems that we can sell to make money on the club stall. Can you help out in the kitchen?

If you are planning on having a stall, you must contact Margaret Bryant and book your space, as there are only a few spaces left unbooked.

## AGM

On the 3rd of September we had our Annual General Meeting. I would like to thank the 2015 committee for all of their hard work. The new committee are as follows.

**President** Suzy Brandstater

**Vice President** Margaret Bryant

**Vice President** Carolina Cordova

**Secretary** Leanne Muir

**Treasurer** Ray Jones

**Committee Members**

Carolina Cordova, Bob Owens, Ann Thompson, Inez Patterson

**Min Secretary** Leanne Muir

**Publicity Officer** Margaret Bryant

**Newsletter** Suzy Brandstater

**Duty Officers:**

1st Saturday Eugenio  
 2nd Saturday Eugenio  
 3rd Saturday Margaret  
 4th Saturday Ray  
 5th Saturday/Spare Suzy  
 Friday nights Barry  
 Mondays Margaret  
 Wednesdays Ron  
 General / Spare Bob Owen  
 Ron Dean Spare  
**Public Officer** Ron Dean  
**Patron** Bob Thompson

## Vale Bob Pullan

After we finished the AGM we were given the sad news that our longest serving member Bob Pullan had passed away. His time and service to the club will be greatly missed.



I was given the privilege of speaking at Bob's funeral. Thank you to all of the club members who were able to attend. For those who couldn't attend here is an abridged version of the eulogy that I delivered.

## **Bob Pullan's Eulogy**

As you know, his name was not Bob, but he didn't like his real name which was Newton; and Bob suited him. So I will refer to him as Bob.

Bob Pullan was the longest serving members of the Campbelltown and Districts Lapidary Club. Right from the start he was more than just a member. He took responsibility to get jobs done, and in 1977 he was a signee for the first Bensley Rd clubhouse lease. Over the years, he served in the club in many ways, including as Vice President and President. Until he died, he was a committee member and Duty Officer. He spent every Monday, Wednesday and 1st Saturday of the month at the club being a Duty Officer. He wasn't at the club to work on stones himself, he was there to help other people.

Bob had the most incredible knowledge about rocks. We've never been able to show him a rock that he couldn't identify. He could not only identify them but can tell you what country they came from. For example when shown a piece of agate he said it is was a specimen of Mexican agate, not Peruvian agate – and he is was right. Another lovely thing about seeing Bob identifying rocks was his interaction with young children. No matter how boring the piece of rock a child brought in to show him, he took the time to look at it carefully and explain how it probably got to where it was found. Then he would explain its properties and industrial or jewellery uses. One of standing jokes about Bob was that there wasn't a rock he couldn't name, he'd tell you everything about the rock including what side of the hill you found it on.

I wanted to learn faceting and I asked Bob to teach me. He told me he wasn't teaching faceting anymore, he was too old to take on anymore students, he would die of old age before he finished teaching me because he was only in at the club one Saturday a month and he didn't have enough Saturdays left in his life to spend anymore at the club. I said I understood and thought that was the end of it. The following week he called me over and said gruffly, do you still want to facet? I said yes. He said be here at 9.00am next Saturday, don't be late. I wasn't. At the end of my first lesson I thanked him and said, I'll see you Saturday next month. He said, I'll die of old age before we finish if we learn once a month, I will be here every Saturday until you can facet.

Bob was one of the most impatient people I know, but when he was teaching me faceting, he was incredibly patient. He explained each step and patiently corrected me if I went wrong. I felt that Bob teaching me was an incredible gift that money could not buy. Bob was a member of the Master Faceter's guild and a master craftsman in cabbing.

I received many messages expressing grief at Bob's passing, the things people said about him were echoed my sentiments. One quote was "A true gentleman who said it how it was", there was no subtlety with Bob. Another quote "Bob was a lovely, lovely man who taught me so much and was (almost) endlessly patient with me whenever I screwed something up on my cabs - no small feat, that. He will be dearly missed". I don't think Bob ever realised how much he meant to so many people.

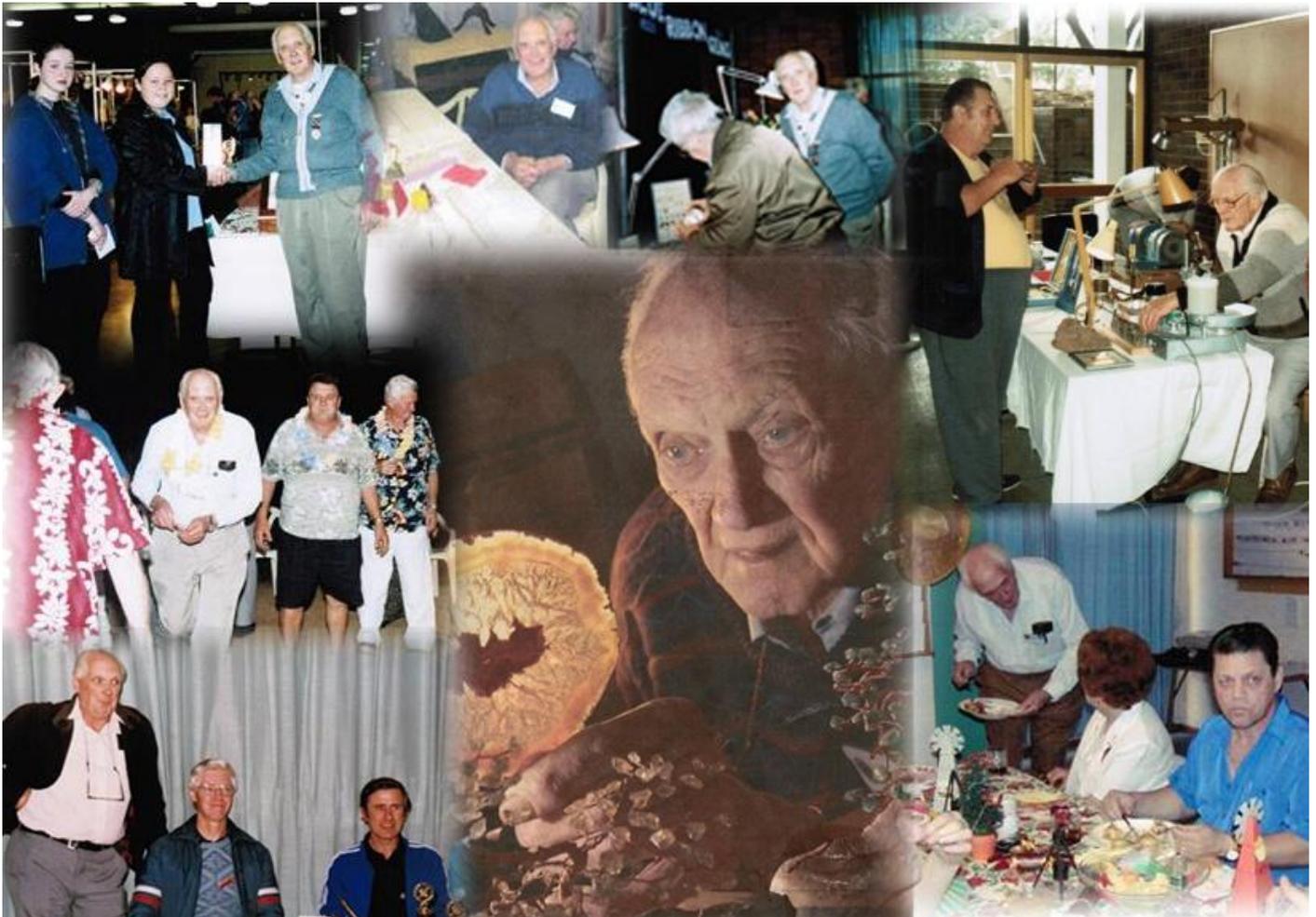
In 2012 Bob was absent from a committee meeting at which we received nomination information for Campbelltown Council Australia Day Awards. I volunteered to nominate Bob. I was told that he wouldn't like it but, go ahead and we'll keep it a secret. When Bob received the invitation to the award ceremony to receive his award he was furious. He stormed into the club demanding to know who did it. Everybody denied it. He fronted each committee member and demanded to know if they did, he didn't think about me, I wasn't there, I was in Queensland. I figured out that I was just far enough away to be safe. Received a phone call from the award coordinator. She said she had a very irate Bob Pullen on the phone demanding to know who nominated him. He said he didn't know why he was nominated, he'd never done anything good in his life. I told her she could tell him because I was safely in Queensland. A month later when I came back from my trip he fronted me. He pointed at me and shouted "you, you shouldn't have done it" and then in a very quiet voice said "thankyou"

Bob served with the Australian forces in the Vietnam War and took the attitude of community service into his life after that. He was a quiet achiever, and never expected any reward for what he did. Because of his efforts for over 50 years with the Campbelltown Lapidary Club, many people now have access to a constructive and rewarding

activity. For many of our members the club is a major focus in their life. They may attend three days a week pursuing different aspects of lapidary and jewellery making, and Bob was the person that helped to make that possible.

We are going to miss Bob very much. When he had his fall, one of the first things he did was ring and let us know that he wouldn't be in to open up the club for the next few days. He was also worried about the bins being put out. Bob did so many things around the club, we only think we know what he did. It is when things don't get done that once again the pain of his loss will flare up when we remember, "Bob used to do that".

My condolences to Bob's family, a very special person has left this world and we will all miss him very much.



### **Club 50th Anniversary**

Our club is turning 50 this year. We are planning on have a special 50th anniversary dinner on the 26th November. This dinner will be in place of the Christmas party. Please put your name down on the list on the whiteboard if you intending to participate.

## **President's Report 2016**

Well, another successful year for the club. Lots of new faces have arrived and are settling well into the club.

The expertise amongst our members is quite extensive. Our members are generous with their time and skills and many assist our new members as they begin to learn the craft of lapidary.

We have made a quite a few improvements to the club this year and each improvement had a person being a driving force. Carolyn and Eugenio have moved existing display units and organised new display units for the club. Our main room is now much brighter and you can see our display mineral specimens so much better. Betty has been working hard on the gardens spreading topsoil and filling holes. Richard and Don have continued improving the lighting in the club, putting new lights and fans in the silver room, so now you can see what you are doing when working on your silver. The new bench top is in and our new (second hand) machines are being repaired and serviced ready for installation. Our club Patron Bob Thompson was the driving force behind our new air conditioners. Now we can work in the main club room and grinding rooms in air conditioned comfort. Bob Thompson organised the repair of our fence and is in the process of organising a whole new fence for us.

Our workshops have been going very well with large numbers attending. The workshops are very good for getting new members started and refreshing the knowledge of our more experienced members.

I'd like to thank our duty officers who work tirelessly for the club. Without our duty officers, we don't have a club. Bob, Eugenio, Margaret, Ray, Barry, Dorothy and Ron, the time you give to the club is greatly appreciated.

We have had two field trips in the past year, one to Lightning Ridge and one to Inverell. Both trips were a lot of fun and we found lots of rocks and some lovely gems.

Our Christmas party was a great success. Good food, good company and lots of stories told. It was a lovely way to spend a Saturday night.

Our two open days were a great success. Each open day brought new members to the club and helped us raise some money. The success of the open days is due to all members helping out in whatever way they can: from organising publicity, to serving food, to running stalls to preparing the club for visitors, everyone working together produces great results. One of the lovely things that has come out of us gaining new members is that so many of them have stepped up straight away and started to help with the running of the club.

The club is 50 years old this year and we look forward to have a celebration dinner in November. The club was awarded a certificate for its 50 years of service to the community. Bob Pullen was awarded a medal and certificate for the incredible amount of time and effort he has put into the club.

The Exhibition was a great success. Everything ran smoothly, which is due to our Exhibition Coordinator Margaret Bryant. She was tireless in her attention to detail and this meant that everything went more or less according to plan. Our group members who stepped up to take charge of a team allowed the huge workload of such a big event to be spread amongst a number of people. It meant that everyone was able to help in some way if they could. Our dealers were very happy. A quote from one of our regular dealers was "best Campbelltown exhibition ever". Our club stall looked amazing and brought in quite a lot for the club, again, thank you team Cordova.

This brings me to my executive. What a team. Ray, you are an outstanding treasurer. Our club is in good financial condition and much of this is due to your financial management, always looking for the best deal for us, looking for other ways to raise money for the club. Leanne, you are a fabulous secretary. I have worked on a number of committees and organisations and you are the best. Your quiet efficiency and organisation skills have been greatly appreciated. Adam, the times you have helped out new members, your expertise with teaching people how to polish opals is legendary. To my committee members, Carolina, Clarice. Alison and Dieter, thank you so much for your tireless efforts. Our public Officer Ron, I continue to appreciate the wisdom of your experience. Eugenio, all the work you do around the club, maintaining equipment is the reason our club still runs, thank you.

Finally Margaret, thank you so much. Your organisation and coordination of the day to day running of the club this year has been fantastic and the club would not have run so smoothly without you.

Our Patron Bob Thompson has supported us well this year and I thank him for his continuing support. It has been a fantastic year and I look forward to next year.

## Boulder Opal

Boulder opal is one of the most valuable varieties of opal, second only to Australia's black opal. Fine specimens of boulder opal can exhibit all of the spectral colours through their distinct play of colour. Boulder opal may be considered to be less valuable than black opal, but it is actually much rarer. Boulder opal accounts for approximately 2% of all of Australia's opal, however, black opal equates to around 8% of the entire yield. Australia produces over 95% of the world's entire supply of opal gemstones, clearly establishing it as the world's leading opal supplier. Boulder opal was first discovered in Quilpe, Western Australia, around the year 1870. Almost all boulder opal available today is from Western Queensland's opal-rich fields, confined to an area of about 200 to 300 square kilometres.



Boulder opal is found embedded in large boulders of ironstone, which is how it earned its name. Occurring as pebble rock, precious opal develops within thin veins, fissures and hollows. As opal miners attempt to remove the embedded opal from the ironstone, some of the host matrix is preserved during the process. Boulder opal is similar to layered opal doublet, but rather than being assembled, boulder opal's layering is a natural occurrence.

Compared to other varieties of opal, boulder opal has a much higher density because of its ironstone matrix. As a result, boulder opal precious gems are much smaller in size compared to common opals of equivalent weight. Boulder opal is often cut in irregular, free-form shapes, in attempt to maximize the size and value of the finished opal stone

Boulder opal is not typically treated in any way. They are naturally layered with host rock matrix. Boulder opal is often referred to as 'natural opal doublet', because of its shared similarities with opal doublet. However, opal doublet gems are assembled, whereas boulder opal is naturally layered with its host rock matrix.

### Boulder Opal Gemstone and Jewellery Design Ideas

Opal is one of the softer gem types and it is considered to be quite delicate compared to most other gems. However, as a result of its ironstone composition, boulder opal is much more durable than other opal, making it much more suitable for jewellery use.

Boulder opal is best worn in protective style jewellery that is less prone to hard knocks and blows, such as earrings, pendants or brooches. It is not very common to find boulder opal set into bracelets or gemstone rings, because boulder opal stones are very flat with very low domes, which is not the ideal form for bracelets or rings.

### Boulder Opal Gemstone and Jewellery Care and Cleaning

Boulder opals are extremely fragile and delicate gemstones. If boulder opal jewellery is not properly taken care of, the layer of precious opal can crack and fade, which is known as 'crazing'. Opals are fairly soft compared to other gemstones, making them extremely vulnerable to scratches and loss of polish. Although boulder opals are slightly more durable, they do still require a high level of care. It possible, store your boulder opal gems and jewellery in a dehumidified room, especially if you live in a dry climate. When storing opal gemstones for extended periods of time, place them inside a tight plastic bag with some type of moisture source, such as a damp tissue or cloth. This will prevent your precious opal from dehydration. Boulder opal is very sensitive to sudden temperature fluctuation, so try to keep boulder opal gemstones in a stable environment.

### Boulder Opal Gemmological Properties:

Chemical Formula:	SiO <sub>2</sub> ·nH <sub>2</sub> O Hydrus silicon dioxide
Crystal Structure:	Amorphous
Colour:	All colours - play of colour
Hardness:	5.5 to 6.5 on the Moh's scale
Refractive Index:	1.37 to 1.52
Density:	1.98 to 2.50
Cleavage:	None
Transparency:	Opaque, translucent, transparent
Double Refraction or Birefringence:	None
Lustre:	Waxy - resinous
Fluorescence:	None

This information came from <http://www.gemselect.com/gem-info/boulder-opal/boulder-opal-info.php>

### October (Opal) Birthdays

<b>Norma Castro</b>	<b>Rita Raman</b>	<b>John Dom</b>	<b>Heather Dodson</b>
<b>John Lahiff</b>	<b>Chris Schlegl</b>	<b>Barbara Perkins</b>	<b>Christine Millar</b>
<b>Bryant, Margaret</b>	<b>Corlett, Robyn</b>		

## Brad Smith's Bench Tips

### REMOVING SOLDER FROM A BEZEL

Sometimes when you solder a bezel to a base plate, you end up with excess solder that needs to be removed before setting the stone. My choice of tool for this is called an "Inverse Cone" bur used in a rotary tool or flexshaft. It cuts on both the bottom and the side and is shaped so that there's less chance of cutting into the bezel wall than if you used the more common cylinder bur shape. I find the 2 mm size useful for almost any bezel.



### TESTING FOR SILVER

Often you need to identify some of those unknown "silvery" pieces in the bottom of the toolbox or some piece of old jewellery. Is it silver or something else?

Of course, if you need to know exactly what you have, it's best to send your metals off for refining. But inexpensive silver testing solutions can be used to help distinguish higher silver content alloys from alloys that have the same appearance but with little to no silver content, like German Silver or Nickel.

I purchased a half-ounce bottle of JSP Silver Testing Solution #GT41. It's not a rigorous analytic test, but it lets you know if you're on the right track. And it's inexpensive. Mine was only \$3.

With a fresh solution you have an instant reaction after applying it to the metal being tested. The procedure is simple - as you apply a small drop, look for a colour change. Note that the acid will leave a slight mark, so choose a spot that is out of the way or will be easy to polish.

If you suspect the object is silver plated, you should file a little notch somewhere inconspicuous to expose what metal is below the surface. Otherwise, all you test will be the surface plating.

Here's the reaction I got when testing various materials:

Fine silver	Red/Orange
Sterling silver	Brick Red
80% silver 20% copper	Dark red changing to gray
Brass	Yellow changing to blue
Nickel	Gray-green
Copper	Yellow changing to blue
Steel	Black
Stainless Steel	No colour change

Caution - If you do any of this testing, know that you are handling a reasonably strong acid. The GT41 label says it includes nitric acid and potassium dichromate.

Wear safety glasses.

Do not get any testing solution on your skin.

Use a solution of baking soda and water to neutralize acid.

Wash and clean up well when you're done.

*See all Brad's jewelry books at [Amazon.com/author/BradfordSmith](http://Amazon.com/author/BradfordSmith)*

### October Workshop - 29/10/16

9.30am start

Flat Spiral Bracelet.

Everything provided.

**Tutor:** Suzy

Cost \$15



## What's On

Events are generally from the Gem and Lapidary Council of NSW

<http://www.gemlapidarycouncilnsw.org.au/events.html>

Other contributions can be made via email to the club [ctownlapidaryclub@bigpond.com](mailto:ctownlapidaryclub@bigpond.com).

We are grateful for any submissions

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE
<b>8th to 9th October 2016</b>	<b>Gem and Mineral Festival</b> Saturday, 8th October, 2016 from 9am to 5pm and Sunday, 9th October, 2016 from 9am to 4pm by Central Coast Lapidary Club	Mingara Club, Tumby Umbi. For further details please phone 02 4362 2246. Festival organizer is Rob Scott phone number 0405 904 881
<b>14-21 October 2016</b>	<b>Inverell Gem &amp; Craft Show</b>	Various locations around Inverell, NSW <a href="https://sites.google.com/site/inverellsrock/sandgems">https://sites.google.com/site/inverellsrock/sandgems</a>
<b>15th October 2016</b>	<b>Campbelltown &amp; District Lapidary Club Open Day</b> Open Day on the 15th October and we will be open from 9am to 2pm.	This day will be held in our club rooms and grounds at Lot 1 Bensley Rd. Macquarie Fields
<b>Friday 28 to Sunday 30 October 2016</b>	<b>Gem and Lapidary Exhibition Beecroft.</b> Northern Districts Lapidary Club Gem Show –	Beecroft Community Centre, Beecroft <a href="http://ndlappidary.org.au/gem-show-at-beecroft/">http://ndlappidary.org.au/gem-show-at-beecroft/</a>
<b>Saturday 29 – Sunday 30 October 2016</b>	<b>Spring Gemcraft &amp; Mineral Show</b>	Saturday 29 – Sunday 30 October from 10am to 5pm at Mallee Pavilion, EPIC. Entry \$5 adults, \$10 family, \$2 children/concession. <a href="#">2016 Events Flyer Canberra</a>
<b><u>Saturday 29 – Sunday 30 October 2016</u></b>	<b>Come Fossick!</b> The Lapidary Club of NSW in Surry Hills is holding an exhibition day on Saturday the 29th and Sunday the 30th of October from 10am to 4pm.	Location is 136 Reservoir St, Surry Hills.
<b><u>Saturday 5th – Sunday 6th November 2016</u></b>	<b>Illawarra Lapidary Club Exhibition – Jewellery, Gems and Mineral Festival</b> Saturday 5th November 9am – 4pm and Sunday 6th November 9am – 2.30pm 2016	Heininger Hall, 109 Princes Hwy Dapto \$3 admission David 02 4234 1468 <a href="http://www.illawarralapidaryclub.com.au/maj-or-events/">http://www.illawarralapidaryclub.com.au/maj-or-events/</a>
<b><u>11-13 November 2016</u></b>	<b>Parramatta-Holroyd Lapidary Club Exhibition</b>	Clubhouse, Fullagar Rd, Wentworthville, NSW <a href="http://www.freewebs.com/parraholroydlapidaryclub/">http://www.freewebs.com/parraholroydlapidaryclub/</a>
<b><u>12th &amp; 13th November 2016</u></b>	<b>Newcastle Lapidary Club's Annual Gem Show</b> Saturday 12th Nov (9.00am to 4.00pm) – Sunday 13th November (9.00am to 3.00pm), 2016 at the Club	2 Dora Rd Adamstown
<b><u>26th November</u></b>	<b>Campbelltown Districts Lapidary Club 50th Anniversary Dinner</b>	Put your name down at the club or contact Suzy or Margaret.
<b><u>26th &amp; 27th November 2016</u></b>	<b>Windsor Gem &amp; Mineral Fair</b> Saturday & Sunday the 26th & 27th November 2016 to be held at Gem, mineral, jewellery & lapidary dealers	The Windsor Function Centre, on the corner of George & Dight Streets Windsor. Entry fees are \$7 for adults and children under 18 accompanied by parents are free. email peter at <a href="mailto:peterrare@optusnet.com.au">peterrare@optusnet.com.au</a>

Missed out on the last newsletter?

Contact [suzybrandstater@hotmail.com](mailto:suzybrandstater@hotmail.com) and it will be emailed to you.