

# THE CUTTING EDGE

A periodic magazine that celebrates the activities of the Shed and its members

Volume 1 No. 21

Summer/Autumn 2020



## Member Profile ~ John Talbot

*John has been a member of the Shed since October 2003. He has earned a reputation for being available to fix or improve all things electrical around our workshop. Life has not always been easy for John.*

I was born in England in the very cold winter of (February) 1947. Post war restrictions, such as rationing added to the gloom of that period. However, though we had very few toys, we had lots of friends about us. There were no car rides to school – I rode a bicycle to school when I got older. My early years were spent in Leeds – (North Yorkshire) and my teen years in Birmingham (the UK Midlands).

My father was a mechanical engineer with a very inquisitive mind. He built and repaired valve radios and audio amplifiers, I loved “helping” him. He had a very organized workshop in the cellar of our house. All the screws and bolts were arranged and sorted into carefully labelled tins and jars. He kept a powerful magnet on his bench that I used loved to playing “fishing” with. I would line up a few opened containers and lower the magnet into each one in turn and see how many nails and screws I could pick up. All the items became permanently magnetized! My father was very patient which accounts for why I am still alive to tell this story!

I built cubby houses in the trees in the front garden using lots of nails and wood from the workshop. When autumn came Mum insisted that I dismantle them as our visitors would think they were unsightly!

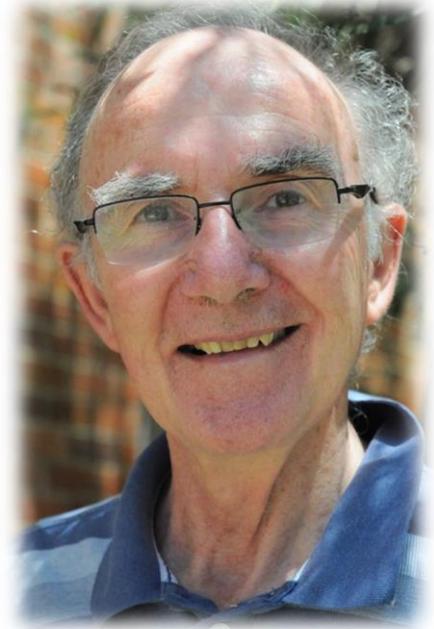
With the encouragement and help of my father I built crystal sets, simple valve radios and amplifiers. As a teenager I built transistor radios and amplifiers.

I was an average student academically and not well coordinated in sport. I just made it into the grammar school. There they played Rugby; I was short sighted so kept as far away from the ball as possible, for my own preservation!

I was not able to go to university but I obtained an apprenticeship at a small industrial electronics and motor control company about 15 miles from home. I went to technical college and studied for a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Electrical Engineering. I lived in “digs” during the week and came home at weekends. My father helped me keep my old Austin car roadworthy. Clutch starts were common, especially in winter!

In 1969 my father was offered a position in Australia. I was still doing my HND. I stayed in England to complete my diploma and migrated to Australia about 18 months later as a “£10 Pom”. (I have justified the principle of subsidized fares to attract migrants. I have been good value to Australia!!). The weather was bad throughout the voyage and it was still raining hard coming through Sydney Heads – just like England! Family and Home Life (much more important than work!) When I first came to Australia I lived with my parents in Roseville on the North Shore. I attended the local Anglican Church of St. Andrews and was invited to join the church youth group (the Over 21's). I met Sue in this group. There were several other blossoming romances in the Group that turned into marriages around the same time as we were married, in 1975. We bought our home in Castle Hill for under \$40,000. Our bank loan was \$10,000 which we paid off in three years because we were both working. This is the house that we still live in and where we had three children.

Our son Michael survived a cot death episode but needed 24-hour care until his death at the age of 18.



Our daughter Katherine is married but still relies on our help from time to time.

Our son, Richard is currently an IT consultant to the Department of Defence, Telstra, Optus and others. He is much smarter than me but getting him to come and fix our



computer is difficult and time consuming! He has built his own two-seater aircraft which took about five years. He gave an entertaining talk to the Shed in February 2012 about its construction. *Pictures at right* I fly with him sometimes and several years ago we flew to Perth for the Red Bull air race. Australia is a huge and wonderful country when seen from the air, at 5,000 feet.

Work in Australia: I went technical college (NSWIT) on a part time basis and completed my degree in 1975. I obtained a job with the Australian division of GEC Electrical Projects Division of England where I stayed for about 30 years. (I also worked for other companies for short periods of time). The company designed and supplied industrial electronic control systems for many areas of Australian industry. We supplied motors, AC control gear, control cabinets, electronic controls and computer systems plus the control software and installation and commissioning services to go with them. During my career I worked in many areas – engineering, sales and tendering, site installation and commissioning and project management. Electrical Engineering is a tough and demanding profession – as my son told me when looking for a career: “I do not want to be like you – you work too hard and do not get paid enough!

Hobbies and Holidays – I have a good sound system at home and enjoy classical music. Sue likes photographing Australian wildflowers so we have made many trips to WA over the years. We have had several overseas trips, the most memorable of which was a cruise down the River Rhine from Amsterdam to Budapest and Prague. We have also visited other countries including England, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Israel, Jordan and Greece. We will be travelling to the South of France and to Tuscany in a few months’ time.

Sue and I are committed Christians and have worshipped at St Paul’s Anglican Church in Castle Hill since 1975. Without our faith and support of the Church family we would have not survived a very stressful life especially in the first part of married lives together. I am a Bible Study Group Leader at Church and our group meets once a week.

#### The Hornsby Woodworking Men’s Shed:

My interest in woodwork started in my father’s workshop when I was young. I built speaker cabinets and boxes for my radios and amplifiers. At the shed, I initially started doing woodturning; learning a lot from our resident guru, Harry Jones, in the early days followed by Ian Raper. My first turning project was a clock which still sits on my bedroom wall. I replaced the mechanism only

last week because it was worn out. I have made coffee tables, storage cubes on wheels and lots of toys. Also, with the help of my wife, Sue, I made children’s ‘hobby horses’ for Rouse Hill Farm. Sue was the ‘artistic director’ for the painting.



I have turned many different types of bowls over the years.

I was appointed a Supervisor several years ago because I come from a practical engineering background where safety was an integral part of my profession and these skills were recognised by the Shed.

I came across the Shed during a Triton demonstration I saw at Bunnings and joined in 2003. I enjoy coming to the shed and fixing electrical things – (“John this doesn’t work” and “please fix it now!” I have become used to hearing over the years). Seriously though, I find the friendship and chats during work and lunch very beneficial. I have suffered from depression for many years and have found the support and companionship the Shed gives to be very therapeutic, not only for me but others with similar conditions.



*(the series of pictures above show John working on a bowl; woodturners, in the Shed, are identified as the people covered in shavings).*



# Bunnings Dural BBQ 2 February 2020

It was a nice day at 7.30 am when we started to set up the BBQ and marquees supplied by Bunnings. The member support for the past few events has been very good, so most people only had to do a two hour shift.

We ended up taking just under \$1,000 which will leave us with only \$550, after costs. The donation of drinks by Coca Cola helps but sausage prices have risen and Bunnings prices remain fixed at \$4 for a sausage sandwich and can of drink. However, the freezer is full of the left-overs so can be bought by members at a reasonable price. Fund raising events such as this are vital to the Shed, as our operating costs are over double the amount of fee income.



The following pictures show the early start and first sales.





In 1995, I was offered a role on the Advanced Australian Air Traffic System (TAAATS) by AWA, running the Voice Switch segment of the Project. The Project was delivered on time and on schedule and was presented with a Telstra excellence award.

In 1998, AWA was bought out by Plessey South Africa (they wanted to acquire the Commander Telephone system), and they promptly made most of the staff redundant, including myself.

In 1999, I secured a job with Australian Defence Industries (ADI). ADI had recently bought the assets of Stanilite (who had gone into liquidation as a result of winning some very questionable Projects). My title of Program Director – Distressed Projects, speaks for itself.

So began a 20-year period working for ADI / Thales (initially a Government entity, privatised in 2000 as a joint venture between Thales (a multinational company headquartered in Paris) and Transfield, and then wholly owned by Thales from 2006. My Program Director role continued until 2006, when I was asked to become the Chief Information Officer for Thales Australia. Thales Australia, a company of some 3,300 employees, was made up of what had been ADI, plus 3 other wholly owned Thales businesses already operating in Australia. The challenges to create one unified company were quite immense. Trying to balance the conflicting requirements of allowing full integration of many disparate business units while maintaining a strong cyber security regime for a major Defence Organisation was something that was a constant challenge.

In 2019, I decided that, after 49 years of working in various jobs, it was time to retire from full time employment.

I am a member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, the Australian Institute of Project Management and recently the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

I have been fortunate to have travelled extensively with my work and been able to take many holidays around the world as a result.

Interests include motor racing, photography and recently, learning to play Bridge.

I have always been interested in making things, having studied woodwork and metalwork at school. On retirement, I decided to join the Men's Shed for three reasons:

- To support my interest in woodworking
- To join an organisation where I could meet new people and have a regular place to go to and have some fellowship
- To be able to contribute to local charities through the Toy making program, and hence give something back to the community.

I initially looked at the Berowra Men's Shed, but they are still awaiting funding for a new building. My wife currently plays Bridge at North Turrumurra and got talking to Paul and Anne Wylie who play there regularly, and Paul recommended that I approach the Hornsby Club. The rest is history, and I have been a member since September 2019.

I am actively looking to join a "Not For Profit" organization as a Non-Executive Director.

*Robert lives in Berowra with his wife Helen.*

# Simon Begg On Wood Turning

## Developing a *Style*

I have been turning for ten years' now and, in that time, I have tried many different designs and styles. Some I love and have spent countless hours developing then there are others that remain hidden away on a bookshelf at my parents' place. Of the first two designs that I ever had accepted into galleries, one style was a commercial success - I can't make enough of them and the other just never sold. There are many elements to be considered that may lead to great design and also characteristics that can be worth developing.



Before I get into all that, a bit more about myself for those who don't know me because it's been too long between visits. I joined the Club (HWMS in Jul 2015) when I was 16 which, at that time, made me the youngest member by quite a margin. I learned the basics of turning and spent a lot of my time on the lathe making all sorts of basic projects. I learned quickly as I was always challenging my abilities, trying something a bit more difficult every time I was working on the lathe.

I loved woodworking so much that I dedicated most of my final year at school to my major project in woodwork where I was placed second in the State. From there I began to train as a cabinetmaker and completed my apprenticeship. After attending Turnfest in Queensland, I quit my job and started full time woodturning in 2016. In 2019 I was chosen to be one of the Turnfest demonstrators and this year (2020), I will be traveling to the USA to teach at the AAW Symposium and the Mid-Atlantic Symposium. These teaching opportunities are where I will be able to share some of the styles and techniques that I have been developing over the last few years.

Before trying to develop your own style of work, you have to master the tool control and knowledge of timber that only comes from much practice and experience on the tools. There are also great opportunities to learn from other turners that have made some similar mistakes before. A lot of the time we look back to our original works to see how far we had come. My bowls use to be fairly straight walled and flat bottomed, typical of most beginners. Eventually good design and shapes came into the forms that I made. Well-shaped curves, consistent wall thickness and appropriate foot sizes are important in that development of design. These aspects can be learned though others' works, even in other mediums.

After gaining an understanding of how to get good form and clean cuts into the bowls and platters, that's when I started to find my own style. At first, for me, that really came from adding carved embellishments. The first design that I really liked was my dot series. It was as simple as carving a few dots with my \$40 Ozito rotary tool that followed the patterns in the grain. Here are pictures of my first and one of my more recent ones.



These designs were inspired by 2 photos that I found by searching woodturning on Google. I saw a texture that was carved to follow a section of grain rather than a perimeter of a bowl. This intrigued me and I found a piece of cedar with some interesting wavy grain. I turned a simple shape that I found highlighted the grain. Rather than just carve one band like I saw on the other works, I decided to carve every couple of growth rings. I was so happy with how it worked out and that's how I developed my first design. Since then I have refined the shape with a larger rim to have a greater change in direction of the grain. I also look for particular cuts of wood. To me quarter sawn timber is boring in comparison with the back sawn timber that I use. I think I have now carved about



100,000 dots in similar bowls, including a few 530 mm diameter bowls that have about 3,000 dots each.

I loved how basic texturing could transform a good piece into a really great piece that was quite unique. I found my niche in the market as most people that added carved embellishment do very detailed relief carving. I was just adding a basic pattern. By experimenting with different cutters and tools, I found other patterns that I really liked. I would always have a scrap board next to me as I worked to test out new ideas that came to mind. By understanding the capacity of the carver and the different bits, I could develop ideas as I worked on the process of others. As they are simple, I found the carving would be quite quick and a small bowl like this rosewood one would only take me about an hour to turn and carve.

After meeting Nick Agar in 2017 I saw that a lot of his textures were inspired by nature. Half of his travel photos were of the ground, plants or structures. I realised that inspiration can come from anywhere and anything. On my next holiday, I found a texture that I really liked in the rockpools in Kiama where I had holidayed since I was three. I used my knowledge of the carving tool to add that into the rim of a bowl. It is a rough, organic shape so, if I slipped, it looked as if it was intentional, hidden in the design.

My next nature inspired design was when I went for a walk and saw some dried-up mud. With the country going through drought, I thought that it would be a texture that would capture an element of Australia. The lines were simple enough with a star cutter but the challenge came in scalloping the individual sections. With these complex textures, it's all about layering techniques to get the final result. A few experiments later, I had a seven step process to get the pattern I was after. The red cedar once again was a perfect choice of timber to match the style of the carving.

As well as finding a style through carving, one of the techniques that I am gaining recognition for is



German ring turning. It's a 200 year old production method for making toys. I stumbled across it when looking at other turning ideas and thought how it could be used for sculpture. I also was interested by the technique as it would challenge my abilities, just as I was doing ten years ago, trying to push myself to achieve the next level. This technique involves turning a detailed ring that, when cut in half, reveals a profile. I had to develop my own methods as there was very little information available so now I was aiming to attain new levels of detail in the technique.



It's not a brand new technique but with the direction I'm taking it, it's recognisable as my original style of work. It's the same with the carved embellishment, the

techniques that I use are not new, but they are being used in different ways. Coming up with something brand new is not likely. With finding your own style, it's a matter of doing something that has been done before in a slightly different way. It's amazing that even a small difference in technique or design can make even a simple bowl recognisable as the work of a particular turner. There are some very creative turners out there and I recommend looking at their works to see what is out there. Turnfest really opened my eyes to the possibilities and I would highly recommend experiencing that just once.

I strongly recommend trying new things to develop your own style for what you make. Challenge yourself in all that you do and always strive to learn. Don't be afraid if it doesn't work straight away because it often doesn't. Look at what others are doing and think how you could change it or blend it. The more you turn and experiment, the easier it gets. Hopefully these tips will help in finding your own style in wood turning.

*Simon Beag*

# Manufacturing Finials to Order

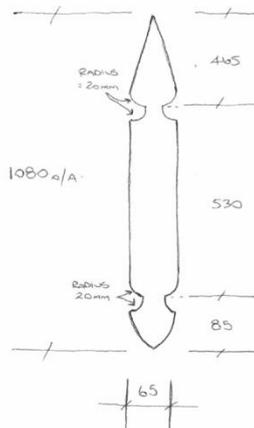
In May last year, we received a request from a builder – “Hi Phil, Thanks for taking my call this afternoon, I have a client that would like to have a finial made to match the others on her house. I have sent this detail off to Fedwood but they are unable to manufacture square finials.

I was wondering whether this is something you would be able to do and would be interested in? I only require one Finial.”

FEDWOOD.  
ATT. SALES  
FEDWOOD @ BICPOWD.COM.AU.

CAM I PLEASE GET A PRICE TO MANUFACTURE A TIMBER FINIAL I HAVE SKETCHED THE FINIAL & ITS DIMENSIONS BELOW. I HAVE ALSO ATTACHED A PICTURE OF FINIAL I REQUIRE. THE FINIAL = 1080 L x 65 C/A x 65 x 65

FINIAL SKETCH:



KIND REGARDS  
MARK ORTH  
FEARON PTY LTD.  
MARK @ FEARON.COM.AU.  
0417 449 260.



The order was later extended to three, to the same specifications. Kevin Wallace took up the challenge which involved working out how to support the timber as the design was cut on all four sides.





Good morning Philip,

Attached are some photos of the finial. This is the "one-piece" finial, which is a little different from the original (three-piece) finials that I made for the original order. I had time to go and buy the appropriate router bits to achieve the desired outcome. It was a bit of a juggling act using a jig and two different router bits.

*Kevin Wallace*

# Hornsby Hospital Request for Wooden Card Stands

In February, I received a request from Trish Butler for twenty wooden card stands to her exact specifications for the work that she does at Hornsby Hospital. She was keen for the Men's Shed to make them, so I quoted her an amount that allowed a fair return for our time and the materials involved.

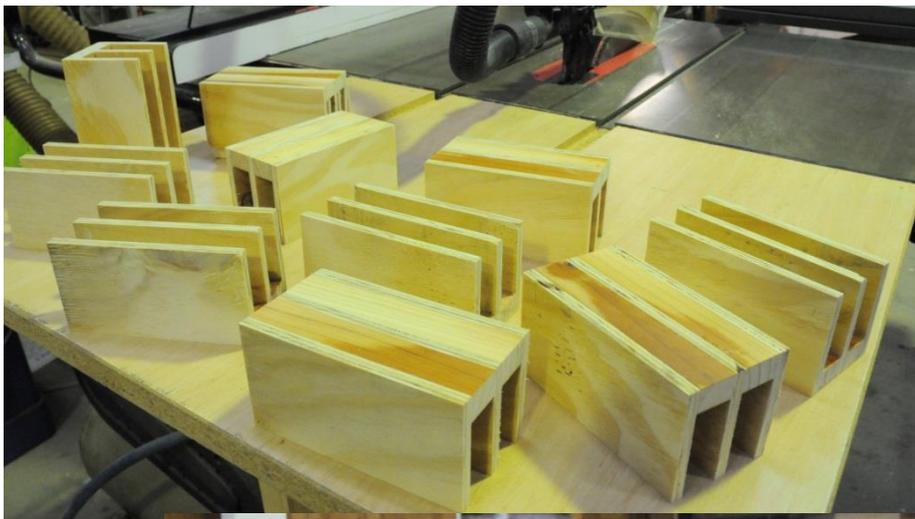
The stands were quite compact – 160 mm x 85 mm, so I thought of making them from the ply that we had in stock and cutting the to size. After overcoming some vibration issues, they were successfully cut on the smaller Makita compound mitre saw. The most time consuming part of the process was sanding, both by hand and using the new linisher.

In the end, I had to allow for the hospital's limited finances, we agreed on \$200 for fifteen.

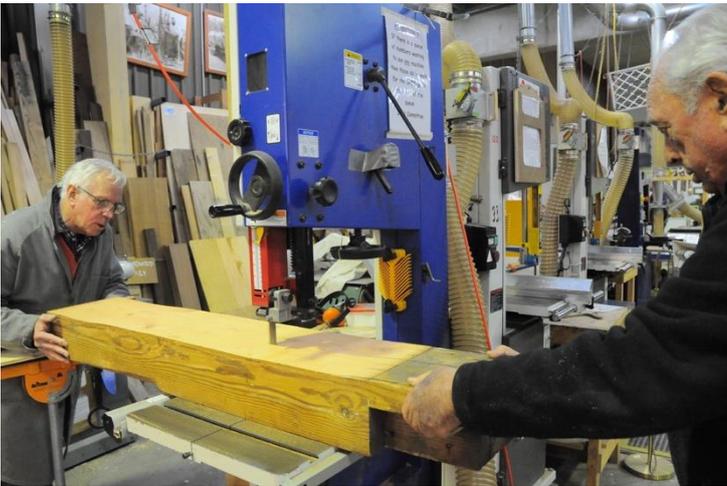
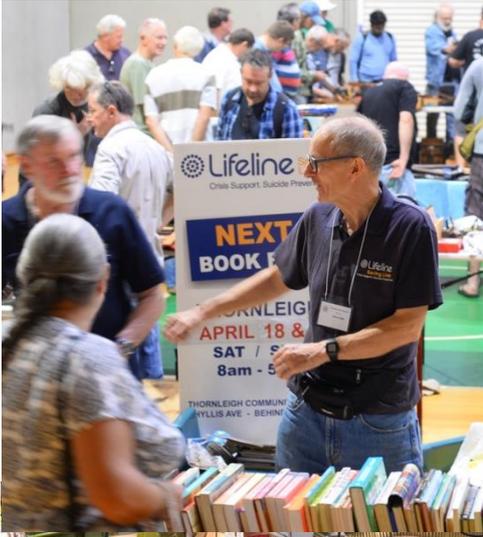
She was very happy with the result. See accompanying pictures.



so



# In and Around the Shed



# BAND SAW BLADES: FIVE FAST FACTS

BY [JOURNAL STAFF](#)

Probably no one goes into their shop and gazes on their [band saw blades](#) with awe and affection. So why should you? They're



reasonably inexpensive pieces of steel that don't draw attention until they break. But let's stop and consider for a moment how amazing they are and the useful services that they provide. It's time to give them a little respect!

**1. *It's all about the blades.*** A British band saw patent was filed in 1809. But the technology to create durable band saw blades (the welds broke quickly) kept band saws from being a practical tool for several

years. A patent by Anne Crepin, a Frenchwoman, who devised a welding technique in 1846 that overcame the problem made the way clear for band saws. The American band saw patent was filed in 1836 by Benjamin Barker of Ellsworth, Maine. (Apparently it had to wait for a suitable blade as well!)

**2. *Size matters.*** Woodworking [band saw blades](#) are generally made of carbon steel. The width of the blade is the key determinant as to how small a curve or diameter you can cut. A 3/4"-wide blade's minimum cut diameter (about 5-1/2") is much larger than a 1/4" blade (approximately 5/8"). On the other hand, wide blades usually cut straighter lines than narrow blades, if they are sharp.

**3. *Those are some fine teeth you have.*** Tooth count varies on band saw blades. In general, narrow blades have more teeth per inch and cut smoothly but require a slower feed rate. Wide blades have fewer and larger teeth per inch. They cut more roughly but are stronger, to handle much thicker material. The larger gullets between their teeth allow more swarf to be removed with greater efficiency while producing less friction.

**4. *Two to tango.*** There are two main types of tooth configurations: [hook tooth](#) and [skip tooth](#). The hook tooth has about a 10-degree rake angle, allowing more aggressive and faster cutting. Its trade-off: a rougher cut. Skip tooth blades will not cut as quickly but leave a much smoother surface on the wood, requiring less sanding on exposed edges.

**5. *Jack of many materials.*** While we primarily cut wood, band saw blades are available that cut many different materials. Plastics and non-ferrous metals (brass, copper and aluminium) can also be cut with the proper blades on a standard band saw. [Carbide tooth blades](#) are a relatively new technology that provide high quality cuts and remain sharp for a long time.

# Mental Health - Put Your Mind At Ease

Good physical and mental health will help you to deal better with life's ups and downs, now and in the future. Start by choosing a balanced diet, regular exercise, low-risk drinking and not smoking and– smart choices for your body and mind which will help you to:

- feel healthier;
- get on better with your family, friends and work mates;
- perform better in your daily activities;
- get more out of life; and
- reduce the risk of stress-related physical health problems.

**Our mental health is as important to our wellbeing as our physical health.**

## How can we care for our mental health?

There are simple ways to maintain good health.

- Spend time with friends and family and do at least one pleasant thing each day.
- Exercise and nourish your mind with interests and hobbies and meet new friends at the same time.
- Connect with your community: your local council, church, a social activity such as a Men's Shed or neighbourhood centre will be a source of ideas.
- Talk to your family or mates – don't bottle it up.
- Accept that it's normal to react emotionally to difficulties – don't be too hard on yourself for feeling down.

## Feeling sad or blue?

Most of us feel unhappy or sad if we are disappointed, argued with a friend or are frustrated at work. Sickness or the death of someone close can cause immense grief and sadness. And sometimes we feel 'down' or 'blue' for no apparent reason. These are normal emotional reactions that tend to last only a limited time.



## What if I feel sad all of the time?

Prolonged feelings of sadness, dejection and hopelessness could be a sign of a mental health problem, such as depression. Depression usually gets in the way of coping with everyday life. Getting out of bed, going to work, seeing friends – these everyday activities may become very difficult. If these feelings are preventing you from going about your normal routine, then you might need to take action.

**You are not alone. About one in five Australians experience depression at some stage in their lives. It is closely related to other mental health problems – particularly anxiety and alcohol misuse.**

## What are the signs?

When people are depressed they may experience some of the following:

- little interest or pleasure in usual activities;
- feeling sad or irritable most of the time;
- trouble falling asleep or waking too early;
- worrying and negative thinking;
- feeling helpless; or
- feeling tired all the time – everything seems like a major effort.

If you have been experiencing a number of these feelings for more than two weeks, then you should talk to your local doctor.

## Feeling anxious?

Because anxiety in everyday life is so common, it's important to understand the difference between feeling normal anxiety and the potential signs of an anxiety problem.

If your level of anxiety becomes so severe that it significantly interferes with your ability to cope with daily life, you may have a mental health problem. For example, your anxiety may interfere with you doing things you want to do, such as shopping, talking in a meeting, driving or going out socially.

**You are not alone. One in 20 Australians experience an anxiety disorder at some time. Anxiety is closely related to other mental health problems – particularly depression, misuse of alcohol and other substances.**

## What are the signs?

People with anxiety problems may experience:

- breathlessness;
- racing heart;
- sweating;
- trembling;
- nausea;
- dizziness;
- feelings of losing control;
- feelings of impending doom;
- excessive fear;
- excessive worry;
- irritability;
- racing thoughts;
- avoidance.

## Main types of anxiety disorders

- **Generalised anxiety disorder** – people worry excessively and unrealistically about everyday things, such as health, family, friends, money or career.
- **Panic disorder** – people have extreme panic attacks in situations where most people would not be afraid; these attacks often seem to come 'out of the blue'.
- **Acute stress disorder (ASD) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** – when people repeatedly re-live a traumatic event, such as war, torture, car accident or assault. They avoid reminders of the trauma. The 're-living' of the traumatic even occurs through intrusive, distressing memories or nightmares. Only a minority of people who experience trauma develop ASD or PTSD.
- **Social phobia** – people have strong and persistent fears of social or performance situations, such as public speaking, talking in a group or at a meeting.
- **Specific phobias** – people are intensely fearful of particular objects or situations and this fear interferes with their daily life. Examples include fear of heights, water, closed spaces and spiders.
- **Obsessive compulsive disorder** – people have constant unwanted thoughts that often result in the performance of elaborate rituals (like excessive cleaning or checking) in an attempt to control the persistent thoughts.

## What help is available?

Depression and anxiety problems can be very effectively treated. Doctors and mental health professionals use a variety of ways to help people recover from or manage their mental health problems, including:

- education to help better understand the causes, effects and available treatments;
- encouraging people to choose a healthy diet, exercise, stop smoking and cut back on caffeine and alcohol;
- psychological treatments with the aim to change negative patterns of thinking and behaviour;

- teaching anxiety reduction techniques, such as relaxation and breathing control; and
- medication to reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety, such as to restore normal sleeping patterns.

## How do I get help or find out more?

- See your local doctor.
- Call VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800 011 046.
- Visit [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au) and click on 'At Ease'.
- Call DVA on 1800 113 304.



**For immediate counselling assistance, contact: Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Veterans Line (after hours) on 1800 011 046**

### Further information

Organisation	Web address	Phone number
BluePages - The Centre for Mental Health Research, The Australian National University	<a href="http://www.bluepages.anu.edu.au">www.bluepages.anu.edu.au</a>	
Beyondblue	<a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a>	1300 22 4636
Clinical Research Unit for Anxiety and Depression	<a href="http://www.crufad.com">www.crufad.com</a>	02 8382 1730

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