

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a large, ornate dome ceiling. The dome is composed of many triangular panels, each a different color, creating a vibrant, multi-colored pattern. The colors transition from deep reds and oranges at the edges to bright purples and blues towards the center. In the center of the dome is a large, circular skylight. The skylight has a decorative, ornate metal frame and a glass pane that shows a reflection of the dome's structure. The overall effect is one of grandeur and architectural beauty.

# NEWS & VIEWS

Brisbane Seniors Online Newsletter

JANUARY  
2021

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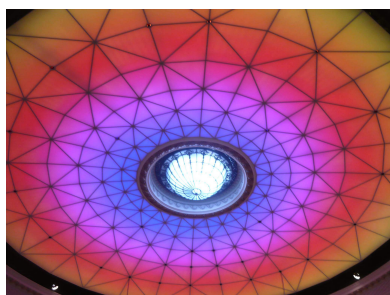
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Brisbane Seniors On Line (BSOL) is a voluntary, not-for-profit organisation established to help the over-50s navigate the maze of computers and the internet. Our mission is to provide seniors of the greater Brisbane area with computer literacy while promoting social and recreational activities. BSOL does not endorse the views expressed in this newsletter. No person should act on the basis of views contained in this newsletter without first obtaining specific professional advice. BSOL does not guarantee, and accepts no legal liability whatsoever arising from or connected to, the accuracy, reliability, currency or completeness of any material or views contained in this newsletter. The BSOL newsletter may carry paid advertising. This does not constitute an automatic endorsement by BSOL of the products being advertised.

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# Editorial

A new year, a new decade, and a new look for News & Views; but links are still red, including the photographers name. Sections are bookmarked; jump to any by selecting them in the table of contents.

637 active members, nineteen new this past month, six of which are Mentors. Welcome everyone.

The Management Committee don't meet in December thus there isn't a report to publish this month.

Articles to the Editor via the email address below. Do not send Microsoft Word attachments. Note: submissions may be edited, or not published, due to space restrictions or policy.

Here are the usual month's worth of coronavirus articles:

[We Had the Vaccine the Whole Time](#)

[Indoor SARS-CoV-2 Transmission from 21 Feet Away in Just 5 Minutes](#)

[Covid-19 vaccines are a marvel of science](#)

[How 700 Epidemiologists Are Living Now, and What They Think Is Next](#)

[NSW, the gift that keeps on giving](#)

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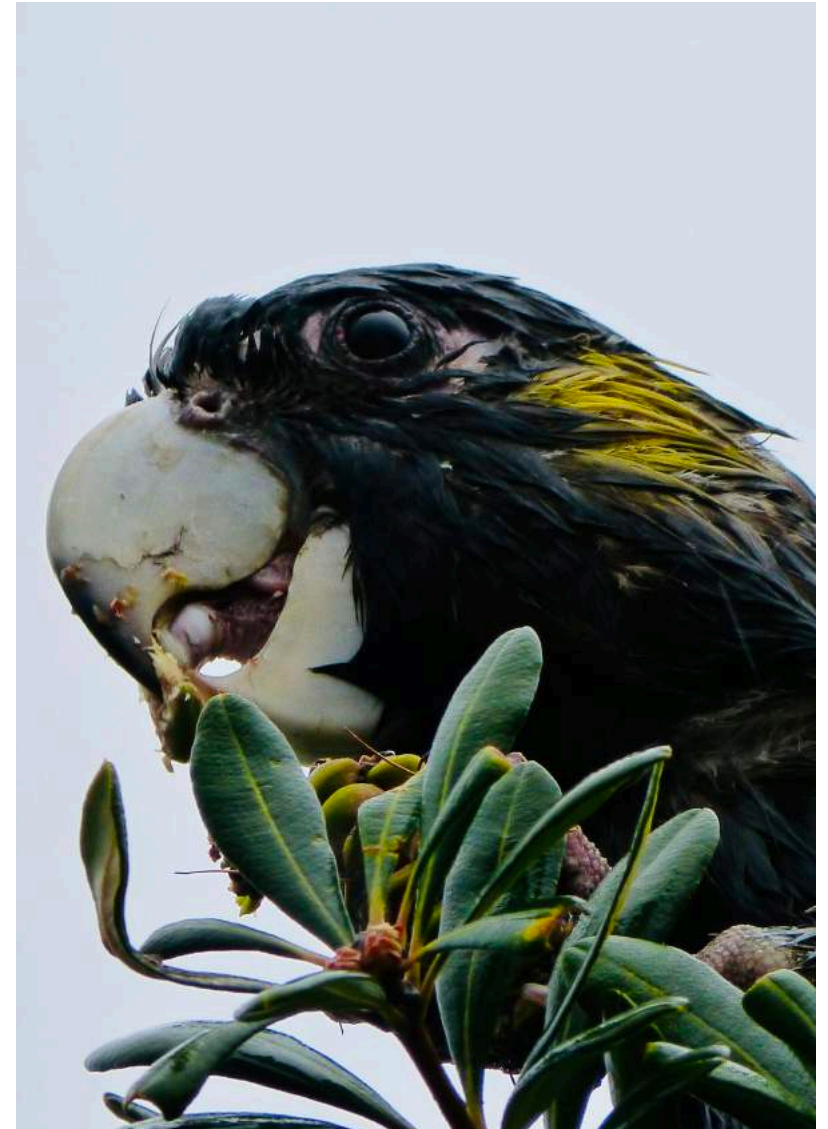
# From the President

Welcome to 2021!

As I write this a few days before Christmas, a new sense of pessimism has hit eastern Australia; the Sydney Northern Beaches Covid outbreak. Let's hope as you read this, that we are all feeling pretty good about ourselves; having brought the outbreak totally under control.

I was pleased to receive quite a few Merry Christmas emails in reply to my Merry Christmas email sent to all members on 14th December. Thank you. Through the wonders of modern technology, I know that just over half the recipients of that email actually opened it within two days of it being sent.

Long-time member and current Redlands Hub Coordinator Paul Boulton is stepping back from being Redlands Hub Coordinator next year, though he will still mentor. Paul and wife Elaine hope to do more travel, within Australia obviously, and Covid permitting. Paul has been a pillar of support for BSOL over the years. He joined as a Mentor in early 2011 and has mentored 70 learners. He served as IT Manager for many years; Vice President for several years, and Hub Coordinator in recent years. He oversaw the relocation of the BSOL Office from Harris Terraces in George St to the Land Centre, then from the Land Centre to Gabba Towers. He installed all the IT systems with each change-over and



Alison Muirhead: This stormy weather makes a bloke peckish



installed our AV screen in the meeting room. When Windows 10 was launched he acquired a number of Windows 7 laptops at no cost from his corporate contacts, upgraded them to Windows 10, and they were circulated to Hubs so mentors could upskill. He also ran a number of Windows 10 training sessions in Harris Terraces. Thank you Paul.

Fortunately, we seem to have found a replacement Hub Coordinator already. Once Hub Liaison Kevin has finished inductions, we will proceed with an introduction.

Given our demographic, ie age, we all have interesting stories. Let's hear them. For a short while last year a Let's Meet column was published in News & Views. Time to resurrect it, adding even more variety to the Newsletter. Submissions to [editor@bsol.asn.au](mailto:editor@bsol.asn.au), before the last Friday of each month.

In my recent Merry Christmas email I suggested I would write an article explaining why I pulled a cow's tail in Kathmandu in 2015. Well, that hasn't happened, but I have written a Christmas themed tale instead.

**RON HORST**  
[president@bsol.asn.au](mailto:president@bsol.asn.au)



Galina Rasmussen: Christmas

# Digital Photography Group

The last meeting of the year we would rather forget, was held Tuesday 8th December. It was very much a planning meeting and we were fortunate to have BSOL News & Views Editor Simon present to assist.

First on the agenda was a reallocation of tasks associated with the group, many of which Pat Noad has handled with aplomb for some time. Undoubtedly a shared load will be a lighter one.

Each month several photos taken by our group are featured in the newsletter. There is general agreement amongst us that the training sessions we have had are responsible for a big improvement in our techniques. Most of this training has been from sharing our experiences, rather than bringing in outside experts.

In 2021 we hope to add new members. We are a low-tech, self-help group and are quick to encourage each other in our photographic endeavours. If this sounds like your kind of photographic club, please don't hesitate to join us on the second Tuesday of each month. from 10.30 am to 12 noon. Contact us via the email address below.

Beginning February 9th there may well be a change of venue for our meetings, and perhaps a 30 minute earlier start. Yet to be confirmed, but the Brisbane Square Library at the top of



David Petchell: young chick in city gardens



Queen Street, would make meetings more accessible for members, particularly those who have difficulty getting to the Gabba training rooms. It is serviced by bus and ferry nearby.

Excursions also play a big part in developing our skills. In the coming year we are considering destinations such as Parliament House and the QUT grounds on George Street. Those unable to attend excursions, there is always a theme for the monthly submission of photos which are critiqued in a friendly, constructive way at meetings. This year we will also be working on a photo essay of up to ten photos on a topic of our own choice.

We look forward to meeting old friends and new at our first meeting for 2021 on Tuesday 9th February; venue to be confirmed.

ALISON MUIRHEAD  
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A sociable bunch finishing the year off with a gathering at the Gabba Pub

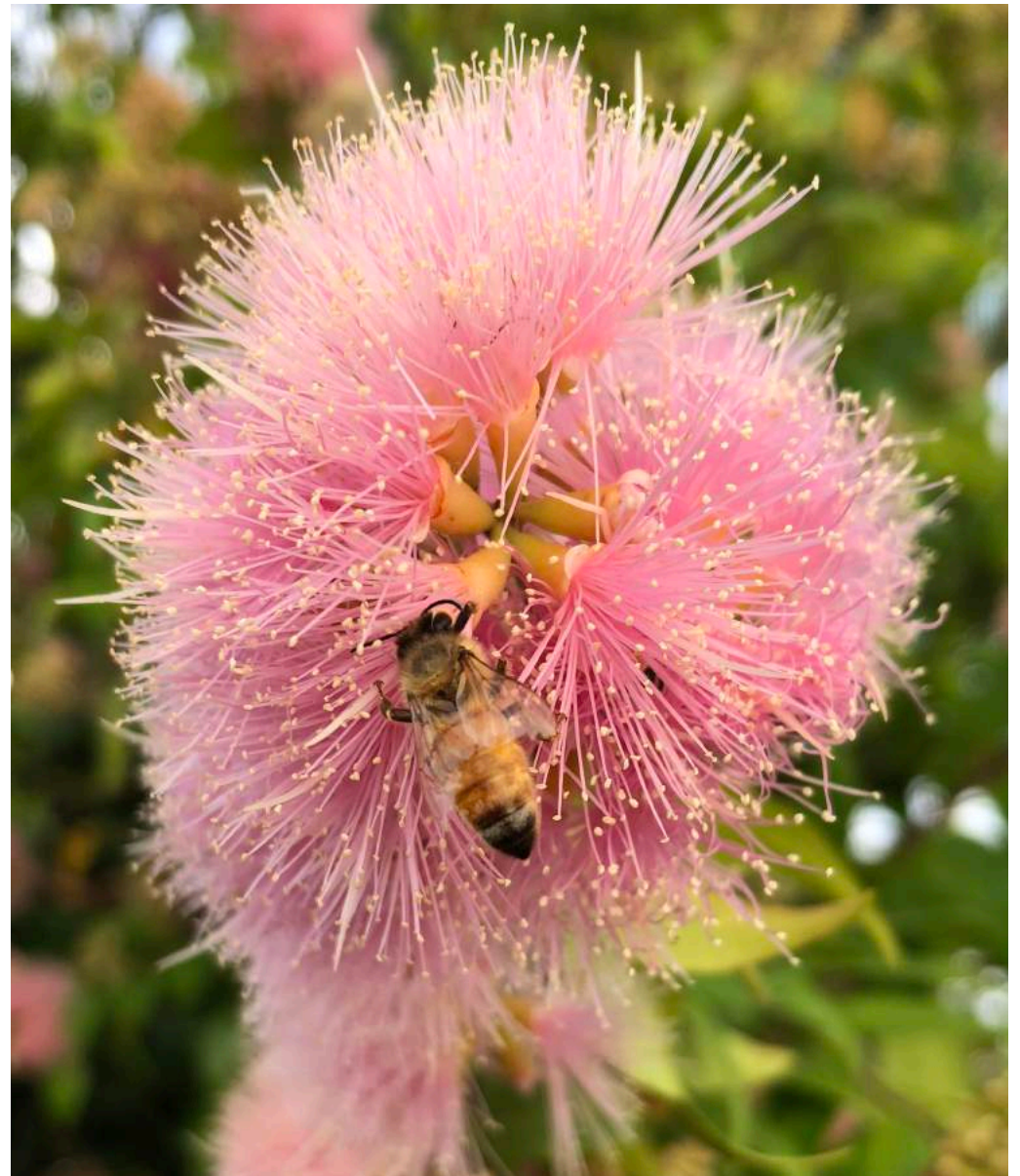
# Publicity

Happy New Year. I hope all Brisbane Seniors Online members and families had a safe and enjoyable Xmas and now settling into a New Year that we hope will be less eventful than 2020.

Advertising and promotion of Brisbane Seniors Online continued right up until the office closure on the 11 December 2020. Thank you to the volunteers who have offered to remotely monitor phone messages left, respond to emails and collect incoming mail from the post office box.

Thank you again to the **Lord Mayor**, Brisbane City Council staff, and the councillors who have generously supported Brisbane Seniors Online throughout the year by way of grants from the **Lord Mayor's Community Fund**, and donations from individual Ward allocations.

The most recent promotions in December, as posted on the **BSOL's Facebook page**, include the Ascot and New Farm December editions of **My Village News** funded by **Cr David McLachlan** (Hamilton Ward) and **Cr Vicki Howard** (Central Ward).



Marilyn Hooper: Sweet Nectar



The December **Chermside Guide**, published every two months, included an advertisement and story funded by **Cr Fiona Hammond** (Marchant Ward).

An application for the annual **Lord Mayor's Seniors Celebration Donation** was successful with funding provided for some end of year activities. Due to COVID-19 restrictions on venue numbers at the BSOL Office, no major annual end of year event could be held. A letter of thanks has been sent to the Lord Mayor and an acknowledgement has been received.

In the last few days, I have contacted around 80 new members by phone to find out where they heard about Brisbane Seniors Online that encouraged them to join. For those I spoke to, thank you for providing the information. I ascertained the primary source of where new members heard about BSOL so I could develop future effective strategies on what advertising media and format to use. What I found was that a significant number of people joined as a result of word of mouth including from existing BSOL members as well as neighbours and friends. So I encourage all members to promote BSOL amongst your friends, family, and neighbours as this costs nothing. Increasing new learner membership maintains BSOL as a more viable organisation, as new learner funds help support the operational costs. It was disappointing to find that some expensive advertising, that I considered worth trying, was quite ineffective with very few members citing publications that had been their source.

One thing that came to notice from speaking to several new learners was the positive feedback they voluntarily offered about their experience so far with BSOL and the praise they had for their mentors who they named. Glowing comments were given which I have passed on to individual mentors as well as to hub coordinators. This was incredibly pleasing to hear.

I am looking forward to a better 2021 and hopefully a significant increase in the number of new members, as well as the retention of existing satisfied members.

DICK BENNETT  
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# Mentor Support Group

A total of 11 members joined the Zoom call this month.

Ken started the discussions with a report of a learner who has been well-prepared for sessions with a long list of questions. This has been helpful and demonstrates that the learner is spending some time between sessions and is keen to ensure that particular issues are addressed. It is suggested that all mentors try to get learners to practise between sessions and pro-actively lead the discussion.

There was a substantial discussion about the on-going need to encourage learners to implement secure password processes. Too many learners are observed to be writing passwords on paper or using the same password for many services. There are various password manager applications available and these should be promoted by mentors to improve learners' on-line security. It is also important to make some arrangements for passwords and usernames to be accessible by our survivors after we pass on.

Also mentioned, mentors should ensure learners' devices are secured against malware. This should be the first topic covered with all new learners.

Peter mentioned that he had noticed a recent reduction in the frequency of spam calls. It will be interesting to see if this continues. It was noted that there is legislation under way to force telecommunications companies to take on more responsibility for minimising spam calls.

Some members indicated that they routinely use VPN services to improve security and reduce web tracking.

Peter mentioned that he had successfully installed a Linux distribution called **WindowsFX** on some learners' computers. This operating system provides a user interface that is almost identical to Windows 10 without some of the downsides of the Microsoft operating system.

A discussion about connecting bluetooth headphones or earbuds to televisions to assist people with hearing difficulties. Some late model televisions will handle this quite well, but older models will not have the necessary



bluetooth hardware to provide a smooth experience without audio lag and lip-sync problems. **Bluetooth adapters** are available that can be connected to the TV audio output.

The January meeting will be via Zoom, but February's meeting is to be held in the BSOL office. We may also pursue the option of running a Zoom online meeting in combination with the in-person meetings.

You can view a video of the December meeting **online**.

**MAL GAMBLE**  
**[msc@bsol.asn.au](mailto:msc@bsol.asn.au)**



# Linux Group

There were seven participants who joined the December Linux Zoom meeting. After the usual round of banter where Ken gave us an update on his home repairs following the recent storms and Dick extolled the virtues of selling items on Gumtree (from memory), current Queensland domestic fire alarm regulations, expired credit cards, and alternative energy sources we finally got down to serious discussions on things other than Linux.

However, they were more or less computer related and covered subjects such using [Lastpass](#) for your passwords and doing online accommodation bookings

Ken then gave a short demonstration of [Xtra-PC](#), a commercially available Linux system on a USB stick. The idea behind it is that you can use the USB anywhere you can access a computer that allows you to boot up from the USB stick. You can store your documents on it, work on them and save them, as well as checking your email and web browsing. Once you have finished what you are doing, the USB is removed from the computer without leaving any trace of it being there. People familiar with Linux will recognise these as a live Linux system and may be readily made using your favourite distribution.

Gary demonstrated a new Linux distribution mentioned in last month's APC magazine. It is [LinuxFX](#) and everyone was surprised at the similarity of the interface to Windows10, even the white Start window and menus appearing identical to the Microsoft ones. The distribution is pitched at making it easy for Windows users to convert to the Linux environment. Pete has introduced it to some members of his Mens Shed group who are now converts.

We won't be meeting on the first Friday in January but plan to do so in February when we look forward to a few new faces joining in. Drop us an email if you are interested.

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# Let's Meet: Ron Horst

## Christmas in Singapore

During 2015 I lived in Kathmandu for 6 months, doing a volunteer IT Project for the Nepali Government within the Australian Aid program. I arrived one month after the Anzac Day earthquake, celebrated the new Constitution, and struggled with gas, electricity, and fuel shortages due to an Indian blockade. My project was not a success, but the experience was wonderful.

My partner Robyn and I departed Kathmandu on 22 December. For some reason we thought a few days in Singapore would ease the culture shock of transitioning from third world Nepal to Brisbane; settling back into normal life can actually be a problem for returning volunteers. We played tourist: Raffles Hotel, Hop On/Hop Off bus, Christmas lights tour, and the Botanic Gardens.

Our very modest hotel was around the corner from the Raffles Hotel, so we contemplated Christmas lunch there. The prices were astronomical so we booked at another venue within walking distance. Our path took us right past Raffles where we spotted a very reasonable lunch offer in another Raffles restaurant, not one I'd seen before. So we settled in after asking the staff to cancel our booking at the first place.

Smorgasbord lunch, red carpet, a choir, unlimited drinks. All in honour of us. Well actually the President of Singapore was coming, but we were happy for the attention. Five hours later; one of the best Christmas's ever.



Ron Horst: President of Singapore

# Visa Scam

A friend recently received a call from a person claiming to be from Visa. The caller stated that they were from Visa Security and that they had detected two suspicious transactions on my friend's Visa account, and to fix the problem, please download the attachment as forwarded, and go to your online banking.

While the request to download an attachment should ring alarm bells, some of the rest was understandable to some extent.

Some years back, I too received a call from my bank on a similar subject. But the call from the bank was more specific, they knew my name, and the caller from the bank asked specific questions, in particular "Have I made any purchases in recent days from a merchant in San Diego?" I confirmed that I had not made any such purchase, so the Bank advised that my card would be cancelled, and a new card will be forwarded to me. I replied that this was rather inconvenient as we were setting off on a holiday to Tasmania in the next day or so. "No worries said the Bank - your new card will be at the bank in Hobart on Tuesday - and it was!

Banks constantly monitor your credit card transactions for possible fraud, and it will be your Bank who calls you, not Visa or MasterCard .

- Your Bank will know all about you. Your Bank might ask questions to confirm that you are the authorised account holder, or for you to confirm that that you hold card "ending in number 1234".
- Your Bank will know these details, they will not be asking you to give them the card or account numbers.
- Your Bank will never ask you to download a file.
- Your Bank will never ask you for user names and passwords.

You can also have your own security check - a common one that I use is to ask "Just so that I can be sure that I am talking to the bank, can you please tell me the details of my last credit card transaction?" While you may not recall the exact sequence and exact amounts, the bank's answer will be something you recognise, yes, I did shop at Woolworths on Monday.



The outcome of my friend's attempted scam was rather fortuitous, most scams are developed for Windows PCs and when the scammers determined that my friend was using a Mac, they quickly hung up. The offending downloaded files were deleted, a new virus scan run on the whole computer, and life returned to normal.

For more information on the latest scams, make it a habit to visit [ScamWatch](#) and read the latest news and advice on current risks.

Your bank will also have a web page which discusses scams and what to do if you feel that you have been exposed. Type scams into the search box on your internet banking website, or select these popular banks to go to their scams page:

[NAB](#), [CBA](#), [Westpac](#), [ANZ](#),  
[Suncorp](#), [BoQ](#)

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Pat Noad: Hong Kong Nostalgia

# Top Five 2020 Be Connected Courses

BSOL is a member of the Federally funded **Be Connected** program and they have published a summary of their most popular 2020 courses. These courses can be accessed via the included links, and while you can complete these courses without signing up or logging in, we encourage you to sign up and log in. The process is not onerous but please use Brisbane Seniors Online in the “Name of support centre” field.

Be Connected course material is created (or at least edited and vetted) by the Federal Office of the eSafety Commissioner, and is directed towards people with more limited ability and confidence in accessing information online.

## Great summer learning: BeConnected's Top 5 courses, get cluey on QR codes and more

It's been a year of big challenges but BeConnected have kept the great courses coming so that you could keep learning, connecting and staying safe online. In this final edition of the year, we wrap up with a list of our top 5 courses for 2020. It's your chance to get the best of the best.

If you're buying a new device, we're here to help with a handy new guide on choosing between a laptop and a tablet. Are you getting asked to scan a QR code at cafes and even the hairdressers? We tell you all about what QR codes are and how to use them.

## The 2020 Top 5 courses

Take a look at our top 5 courses from this year. It's your chance to revise or, if you missed them the first time, learn something new.

- 1. Connecting to others.** It's no surprise that this course on video calls was the most popular of 2020. In the year of physical distancing, we show you a variety of apps so you can chat 'face-to-face': Skype, WhatsApp, Facetime and Zoom. [Click here.](#)
- 2. Safe passwords.** A strong password is vital to protect your personal details. Find out how create robust passwords - and how to remember them! [Click here.](#)
- 3. Avoiding scams and tricks.** Learn all about how the latest scams work so you can avoid them and stay safe online. [Click here.](#)
- 4. Buying & Selling.** We have everything you need to know about online shopping including comparing prices, paying for things securely with **PayPal** and buying and selling online from traditional retailers and online marketplaces, such as **eBay**. [Click here.](#)
- 5. Games for smart devices.** Test your tapping, swiping and zooming skills with these fun games, designed for use on a smart phone or tablet. [Click here.](#)



## Your guide to QR code's

Increasingly, retailers, cafes and restaurants are asking customers to check in via QR code. Don't get stopped at the door: find out what QR codes are, how to scan them and what to look out for.

[Read more](#)

## Tablet vs laptop - which should you choose?

If you're looking for a new device, tablets and laptops are two popular choices. But which one will work the best for you? We have an informative guide to help you choose.

[Read more](#)



Helen Gibbs: Brisbane in the wet



# Brainteaser

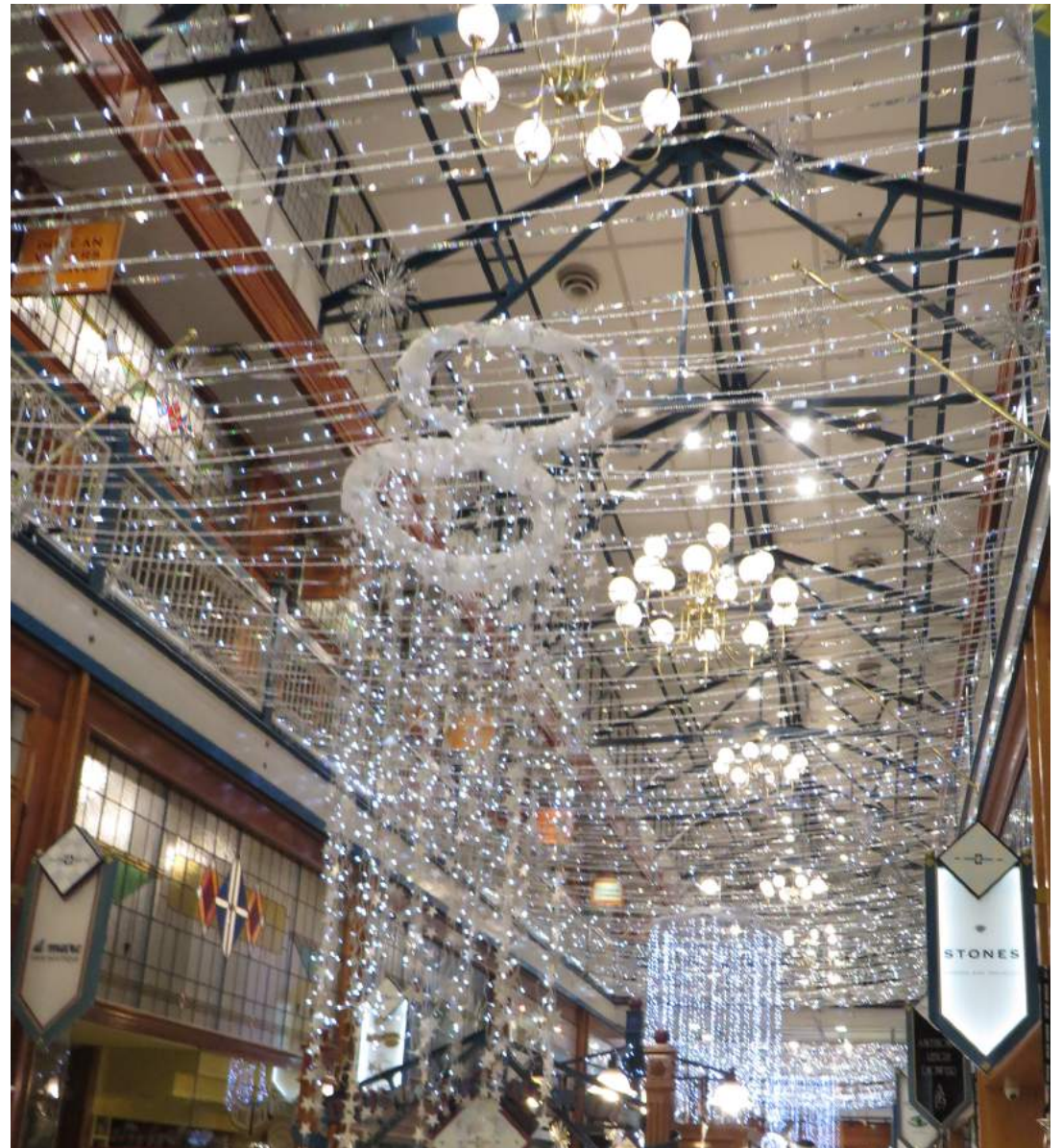
You've had it too easy for too long so here's one which should present a bit more of a challenge. The following 15 words can be divided into five groups of three words. The words in each trio will share a similar characteristic. What are the groupings? Why?

astern, bony, con, deal, land, lien, nit, pending, pinion, range, slander, steroid, tile, vary, venue

Last month I asked what was missing in a series of instructions. Robert Cousin, Jonathan Smith, and Les Webb all identified Step no. 6 was missing from the list. I'd like to think that there are more than three smart people in BSOL and that everyone else was either too bashful or simply didn't get round to sending their entries in.

Answers to this month's puzzle to me at the address below.

BRIAN KORNER  
[msc@bsol.asn.au](mailto:msc@bsol.asn.au)



Helen Gibbs: Christmas Lights

# Techno Tidbits++

[Mount Everest is a multimillion-dollar business](#)

[How Poland Uses Clams To Control Its Water Supply](#)

[Tuvalu: a tiny island cashing in thanks to Twitch](#)

[The clean meat industry is racing to ditch its reliance on foetal blood](#)

[Africa's phone phenom](#)

[Inside the secret battle to save America's undercover spies in the digital age](#)

[Forensic Reconstruction of the Beirut Port Explosions](#)

[What is the battery life of an electric car?](#)

[Netflix drags streaming TV backward](#)

[LG shakes up loss-making phone business](#)

[TikTok deadline lapses: no action from Orangeman](#)

[Cloudflare and Apple design a new privacy-friendly internet protocol](#)

[Web skimmer hides within EXIF metadata, exfiltrates credit cards via image files](#)

[6-year-old racked up \\$16K on mom's credit card playing video games](#)

[FTC Sues Facebook for Illegal Monopolization](#)

[Russian hackers are behind an espionage campaign that has compromised U.S. agencies](#)

[Apple's anti-tracking plans for iPhone](#)

[Adding Encrypted Group Calls to Signal](#)

[Facebook Takes Out Full-Page Newspaper Ads to Attack Apple's iOS Privacy Changes](#)

[Texas Accuses Google and Facebook of an Illegal Conspiracy](#)

[Australia sues Facebook](#)

[Facebook hits back at Apple](#)

[Commission clears acquisition of Fitbit by Google](#)

[Apple, Google, Microsoft, and Mozilla ban Kazakhstan's Man in the Middle HTTPS certificate](#)

[DOJ charges Zoom Exec with aiding Chinese Govt](#)

[Facebook gave Google exclusive access to encrypted WhatsApp messages](#)

[Shopping Scams On Facebook](#)

[Northern Lights Photographer Of The Year](#)



# 🍏 Group

**Restrictions** continue to limit the numbers businesses can accommodate so 🍏 Group remains on hiatus; I envisage this being the norm until we all get jabbed.

No 🍏 event in December, however there were a couple of new product announcements; **AirPods Max** and **Apple Fitness+**

This month's Apple related news:

Updated: Apple Privacy Policy

Apple Device and Data Access Safety Advice

Apple releases iOS 12.5 for older iPhones

Apple releases iOS 14.3

watchOS 7.2 now available

Apple releases macOS Big Sur 11.1

iPhone 11 Display Module Replacement Program

Microsoft 365 improving the Mac experience

Why Is Apple's M1 Chip So Fast?

iPhone 12 mini Teardown

Family Sharing Now Supports In-App Purchases

AirPods: Accessory Or The Next Big Thing?

macOS Big Sur supports Time Machine on APFS-formatted drives, but there are a few catches

Photo Books are quick and easy to create with Motif

Ecosia now a default search engine option on iOS, iPadOS, macOS

Google Chrome is Bad

macOS Big Sur: How to translate websites with Safari

Become a macOS Calculator App Power User

**SIMON**

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Helen Gibbs: Fairy Lights