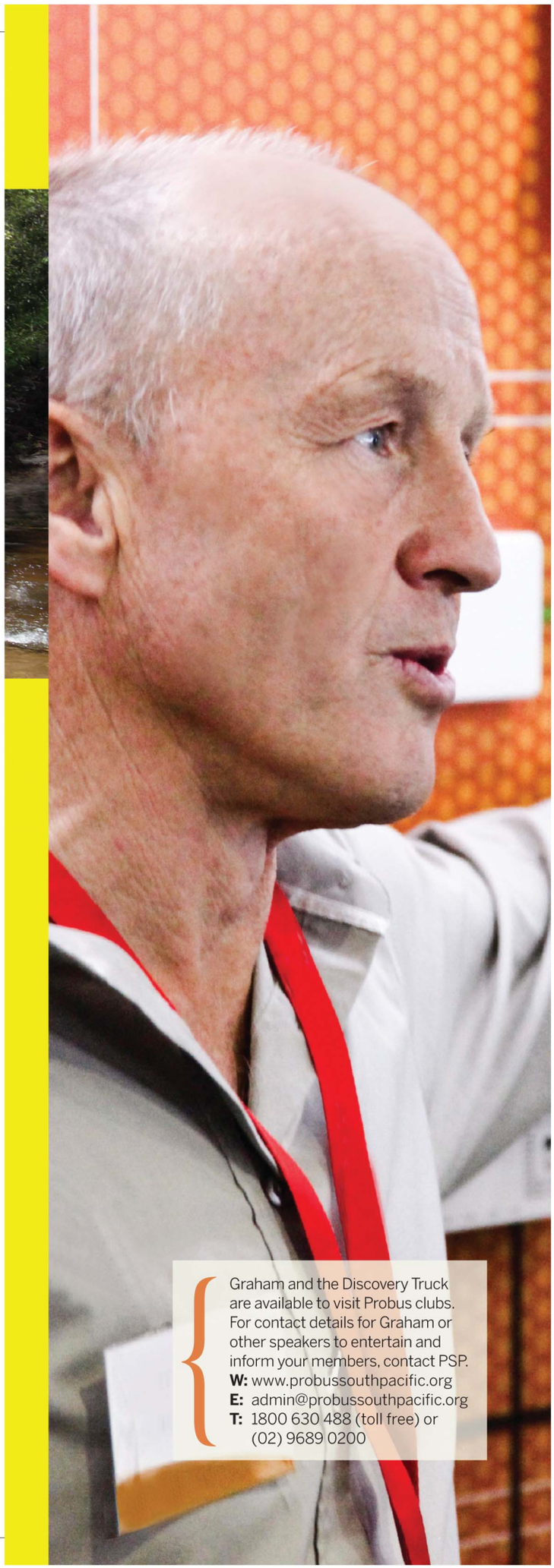


Keep on trucking

One of NBN Co's five demonstrators, **Graham Soawyer** travels the country with the Discovery Truck, helping Australians understand the National Broadband Network. He told **Jessica Goulburn** about the truck, the NBN and his adventures.

As a National Broadband Network (NBN) demonstrator, I travel around Australia in the Discovery Truck showing people what the NBN will eventually allow them to do online.

The NBN is the biggest infrastructure project the nation has ever undertaken. It will replace the copper telecommunications networks, which were started over 60 years ago, over a ten-year period and will give everyone, no matter where you are located, the opportunity to have an online presence.

The Discovery Truck, with expanders on each side, is close to double the size of the inside of a semi-trailer. We have a large screen wall and three additional screens on the inside. We've had more than 6000 people through the truck. Overwhelmingly, the feedback is positive, although some are perplexed when it comes to the technological side of things.

We show people what high definition videoconferencing is like and I'm finding a lot of mature-aged people now are using Skype. It's the old story: you wonder what your kids or grandkids are doing in New York or London. The ability to see them and talk to them in real time, that's the tip of the iceberg. With the NBN, no matter where you are in Australia, you will have that capability.

We also run a range of videos in areas of health, business and education. We have games such as fruit ninja and the new dance mat, which actually has a medical application. The NBN will also allow you to communicate with your doctor online.

My role is talking to people on a one-on-one basis. I find that if people come into the truck a little confused, by the time they leave, they have a pretty good understanding of how the network will make their lives easier.

There are three questions we get everyday: when, how much and what technology? The mature age groups are mostly concerned about cost. I'm from rural Victoria and it's really nice to be able to go out and talk to people and say: "Look, it doesn't matter where you are, you'll have access to the same service at the same price as someone in the middle of Sydney or Melbourne." That's a pretty special message to be able to deliver.

Being able to talk to people and educate people on how the NBN works, and its benefits, is a very valuable opportunity. ••

Graham and the Discovery Truck are available to visit Probus clubs. For contact details for Graham or other speakers to entertain and inform your members, contact PSP.
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