



1 Avoca Cres  
Pascoe Vale  
Victoria, 3044  
Australia  
16<sup>th</sup> December 2012

Hello Everyone

Another year has flown by and as usual, we are writing our Christmas letter as Christmas day fast approaches. Now it is time to sit back, contemplate the year, think of our many friends and family and prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, the true reason for this Christmas holiday period. Yes, another big year for us all so let's get into it without further ado!

Lois has now completed her fifth year working at Broadmeadows Community Legal Service. She continues to enjoy the challenging work. Church and parish kindergarten responsibilities manage to occupy much of her 'spare' time. Much more relaxing is time spent 'grand-parenting' Oliver and attempting to keep fit through 'Curves' gym, although the latter might be offset a bit through post-gym coffee and monthly social gatherings with a small group of fellow 'Curvettes'.

Tim continues to enjoy his retirement and is 4 years down and counting. He started off the year with a flurry of activity, heading off in late December 2012 and spending 5 weeks at racewalking camps at Falls Creek and Thredbo alpine villages. Then off to Canberra followed by Hobart in February for more walking commitments, then off to Russia on a 2 week trip with Chris in May for the World Race Walking Cup. Then to Canberra in June for the annual Lake Burley Griffin walks carnival, closely followed by a trip to Sydney to crew for some entrants in a 24 Hour endurance walk. Then to Europe with Lois for 5 weeks in July/August. Then to Adelaide in late August with the Victorian team for the Australian Roadwalking Championships, followed by a trip to Canberra in September to help with an Athletics Australia U19 camp. I think that is what you call 'life after work'! He keeps well and continues to coach several evenings per week and manages to get out most days for some exercise of one sort or another. It is a busy but enjoyable lifestyle that still allows time for plenty of gardening and socializing of varying sorts.

David swapped jobs this year from his position in the Fosters Group wine and beer department after being headhunted by a pub in Essendon. He is now working as a manager at the O'Sullivan's Sibeon Bar and Restaurant and the more flexible hours have probably made his final push towards his Bachelor of Accounting degree which he completed last month. We are so proud that he has been able to commit some 5 years of part time study while holding down full time work and see it through to a successful finish. He is now busy applying for Accountancy Cadetship positions and we are hopeful that he will soon pick one up. In August, he joined us in London to watch Chris walk in the Olympics. He stayed with friends while there and enjoyed it immensely. The last time he was in London was as a baby in 1980 so it was very much a first time experience.

Chris and Rachel have had an eventful year, made special by 12 months of watching young Oliver grow from a small baby to a little man. The joys of seeing him crawl and then walk for the first time and watching him develop his own personality are memories that will last with them forever. It was also a tough year far from their families and it eventually led to the shared decision to move back to Melbourne after the Olympics. Thus in September, Chris handed in his Australian Institution of Sport scholarship and they packed their bags and headed south. After a few weeks staying with us, they moved into their own rented house in Essendon, found jobs (Chris is working in the Grants department of Melbourne University) and started the process of settling into a new life in Melbourne with Oliver. And that new life in Melbourne will become even more exciting and busy next year as they await the birth of their second child, due in April 2013.

Paul continued this year with his job at the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), working in the campaigns area. It continues to be demanding and time consuming job as the organization works to address many of the issues

which we as a nation will have to answer in the next few years – issues like the casualisation of the work force.<sup>1</sup> This has led to lots of talks by Paul to various organizations on the issue of job security in Australia. And of course, he continues with his heavy involvement with the Victorian Labor Party. We were lucky enough to accompany Paul recently to a dinner which celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the election of Gough Whitlam and the Labor Party to federal government in 1972. It was a huge night which brought back many heady memories. And finally, Paul continued with his social football career, playing with the newly formed Lomond Hotel Football Club which is part of the Melbourne Renegade Pub Football League.

Matt returned to study this year, completing his Diploma of Education at Victoria University. He did well in this one year post-graduate course, doing his teacher training at Point Cook Prep to Year 12 College. He has now started applying for music teaching positions and we are sure that he will soon be successful. Apart from that, his year was full of his usual wide selection of musical activities, whether it be teaching guitar or playing in a number of different bands.

Lois' mum, Win, is now 98 years of age and still in the care of the nursing home. She has an incredibly strong constitution which keeps her going, despite dementia and Parkinson's disease.

One of the highlights of the year was our trip to the Olympics, but it was not an easy road to London for any of us, especially for Chris. He had hoped to cement his Olympic spot in his preferred 50km event and duly contested the Australian trial in December 2011. Alas, although his time qualified, he was the fourth Australian on ranking (such is our depth in racewalking) and he missed out on a berth. He then turned his attention to the 20km distance, chasing one of the three spots on offer there. He hoped to finalise his selection with a good race in the Australian trial in Hobart in February 2012. But as luck would have it, the race was held in 38°C, the hottest day in Hobart in over 10 years. He raced superbly, coming second only one minute behind Jared Tallent, the world number one walker. But all the times were slow due to the heat so the spots remained unfilled. Chris was in the box seat but still needed a time under the qualifying standard. His spot was finally sealed in May when he raced as part of the Australian team in the World Race Walking Cup in Saransk in Russia. His time of 1:22:20 was a 30 sec PB and saw him the first Australian to finish in the event. But even more importantly, it was an all important Olympic qualifying time. In late May, his Olympic spot was confirmed and he and we could finally plan our European campaigns.

Lois and I headed off in early July for our 5 week European expedition which saw us catch up with so many of our relatives and friends. We started our trip in Sweden, visiting Tim's relatives in Stockholm and Goteborg and spending some days with Marianne at the Eriksson holiday house in Orrviken, south of Goteborg. From there, we flew to Dublin for a few days with Janet and David and Elsie, then to Fanore on the rugged west coast, staying with Tim's cousin, Patsy Carrucan and his wife Anne and meeting for the first time his many Irish relatives. Then to Belfast and a ferry trip to Scotland where we picked up a hire car for our UK travels. Driving first through the Lakes District, we then had stops at Birmingham (to stay with Fred), Norwich (to stay with Kath and Laurie), Thame (to stay with Rosemary), the Isle of Wight (to stay with Jill), Maidstone (to stay with Beryl) and finally London. After spending a few days in Earls Court, we moved to Woking and stayed with Peter and Fiona for the duration of our time in and around London.

We saw quite a bit of Chris, Rachel, Oliver and David while out and about in London (including celebrating Olly's first birthday with a trip to London Zoo) and we were able to watch all three Olympic racewalk events. For Tim, the Olympic walks provided a wonderful chance to catch up with many of his old friends from the racewalking world. We cheered long and loud as Chris completed his laps on the walks course outside Buckingham Palace and were proud of his 38<sup>th</sup> position finish in the large field. For him it was a second Olympics, having also competed in 2008, so he joins the very elite group of sports persons who have participated in more than one Olympic Games.

So it has been another big year for the Ericksons of Pascoe Vale. If you want to see our most recent photos and you have internet access, point your web browser at link <http://members.optusnet.com.au/~terickso/2012.shtml>

To all our friends, local and remote, we wish you a Christmas filled with peace and joy and hope that 2013 will be a year where the world moves closer together in unity, tolerance and mutual love and acceptance.

Kind regards .... Tim and Lois

1 In Australia, the term 'casualisation' refers to the increasing trend that sees more and more workers employed in 'casual' jobs. The current description used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics applies the term to workers who are not entitled to sick leave or paid holidays and who are compensated for these losses by a theoretically higher rate of pay. According to the ACTU, this is applicable to roughly 25% of the twelve million Australians who make up this country's workforce. In addition to casuals, there are other forms of non-permanent employment: fixed term contracts, labour hire, and independent contracting. Put together, approximately 40% of Australian workers are employed in this way. From our perspective, it is a disturbing trend.