



A Note From Our President

I hope you all had a terrific rest over the new year break, and are now ready for an exciting 2026 in Club photography and videography.

First, some very exciting news to start the year – over the next few weeks the FCC will provide each Club with unique username and password so a limited number of Committee members can access the resources in the new FCC website on behalf of their Club. Club Secretaries – keep your eyes open for that email. This edition of F-Stop is mostly about the FCC competitions you can enter this year.

We also have some articles to inspire your photography as well.

Here are key FCC competition dates to pop into your calendar:

- **Nature Photography Competition:**
Opens 1 February;
Closes 29 March
- **TopShot Competition:**
Opens 30 March;
Closes 10 May
- **TopShot Exhibition and Awards, and FCC AGM:**
14 June
- **InterClub Competition:**
Opens 17 August;
Closes 4 October
- **InterClub Exhibitions and Awards:**
25 October

Some excellent photos have been entered into FCC competitions in the past, but were disqualified because they didn't fit the definitions. Check out the article on what the judges are looking for in the various FCC categories. Also, for those of you entering nudes into FCC competitions, please read the FCC's new requirements.

The FCC has just released our fifth DIY photography presentation for member Clubs. The new topic is Maximalism. As well as showing you how to take Maximalist photos, this resource will strengthen everyone's composition skills. See the article on the five DIY presentations available to your Club so you can choose the presentations which best suit your members.

You may also like the three inspiring photo stories in this F-Stop on the Young Camera Club's very successful photography exhibition held as part of the 75th National Cherry Festival, the UK's RSPCA Young Photographer competition for animal photographers, and a review of the work of the famous British photographer, Martin Parr, who died at the end of 2025. Was your New Year's resolution to get fitter and healthier this year? If so, you will enjoy the article on how photography affects our physical and mental health. And we also provide a special report on actions Committees can take for successful, low-stress committee meetings this year.

Happy creating.

Michelle Kennedy
FCC President

NEW FCC NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION OPENS 1 FEBRUARY - CLOSSES 29 MARCH



Photo: Twister, by Bronwyn Hughes,
Ryde Eastwood Leagues Camera Club

The new FCC Nature Photography competition opens on 1 February, 2026 and closes on 29 March. It will be judged by Nature-specific judges. Winners will be announced at the TopShot Exhibition and Awards planned for 14 June, 2026.

The FCC Nature competition will use the definition agreed to in January 2025 by the two major international photography bodies - the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP) and the

Photographic Society of America (PSA).

The **Nature categories** will be:

Birds

Fauna

Flora

Aquatic Life

Scapes

The entry fee will be \$10 per section, capped at a maximum of \$40. Entrants may submit 3 images per section.

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NEW FCC NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION OPENS 1 FEBRUARY - CLOSSES 29 MARCH

As a guide to your photography, the weakest to the strongest Nature images are likely to be:

- (i) an image which shows the physical characteristics of the subject;
- (ii) an image which shows the subject interacting with its habitat, other members of the same species or other species;
- (iii) an image which shows a story, feature or state of the subject which is often not seen and other aspects or is commonly overlooked; and
- (iv) an image with a story and that uses light, colour, tones and other aspects of composition to create a strong visual or visceral impact.

The Nature definition, in full, is:

PSA/FIAP Nature Definition Content Guidelines

Nature photography records all branches of natural history except anthropology and archaeology. This includes all aspects of the physical world, both over water and underwater.

Nature images must convey the truth of the scene. A well-

informed person should be able to identify the subject of the image and be satisfied that it has been presented honestly and that no unethical practices have been used to control the subject or capture the image. Images that directly or indirectly show any human activity threatening a living organism's life or welfare are not allowed.

The most important part of a Nature image is the nature story it tells.

High technical standards are expected, and the image must look natural.

- Objects created by humans, and evidence of human activity, are allowed in Nature images only when they are a necessary part of the Nature story.
- Photographs of human-created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domesticated animals, human-created hybrid animals, and mounted or preserved zoological specimens are not allowed.

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NEW FCC NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION OPENS 1 FEBRUARY - CLOSES 29 MARCH

- Photographs made where the scene is natural and the animal is unharmed in a carefully managed environment, such as Zoo, rescue centres, and ethically managed natural environment farms are permitted.
- Attracting or controlling subjects through the use of food or sound for the purpose of photographing them is not allowed. Maintained situations such as provided supplemental food due to hardship caused by weather conditions or other conditions beyond the animals' control, where photography is incidental to the feeding of the animal does not fall under this provision.
- Controlling live subjects by chilling, anaesthetic, or any other method of restricting natural movement for a photograph is not allowed.
- Human-made elements shall be permitted under the following circumstances:
 - a) When they are an integral part of the nature story, such as a songbird singing atop a fence post, a manmade object used as nest material, or a weather phenomenon destroying a man-made structure.
 - b) When they are a small but unavoidable part of the scene, such as an unobtrusive footprint or track in the background.
 - c) Scientific tags, collars, and bands are specifically allowed. When photographing at a zoo, sanctuary, or rehabilitation centre, it would be construed that the photographer had ensured that it is properly accredited and conforms to best practices.

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NEW FCC NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION OPENS 1 FEBRUARY - CLOSES 29 MARCH EDITING GUIDELINES

Processing or editing must be limited to making the image look as close to the original scene as possible, except that conversion to grayscale monochrome is allowed.

Allowed editing techniques:

- Cropping, straightening and perspective correction
- Removal or correction of elements added by the camera or lens, such as dust spots, noise, chromatic aberration and lens distortion
- Global and selective adjustments such as brightness, hue, saturation and contrast to restore the appearance of the original scene
- Complete conversion of colour images to grayscale monochrome
- Blending of multiple images of the same subject and combining them in camera or with software (exposure blending or focus stacking)
- Image stitching - combining multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively (panoramas).

Editing techniques that are not allowed:

- Removing, adding to, moving or changing any part of an image, except for cropping and straightening.
- Adding a vignette during processing
- Blurring parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene
- Darkening parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene
- All conversions other than to complete grayscale monochrome
- Conversion of parts of an image to monochrome, or partial toning, desaturation or oversaturation of colour

The definition of Nature, and a guide for judges, can be found at PSA's website:

<https://www.psa-services.org/ES/>.

HOW NOT TO GET DISQUALIFIED IN FCC COMPETITIONS

The FCC wants to encourage the creativity and skills of all photographers. Images which tell a story, evoke a feeling, inspire change or have some other creative intention will get higher scores. A pretty photo of a pretty subject is not enough to win: photos with an underlying idea or emotion will receive a

higher score.

However, in all competitions, there are still some basic requirements which must be followed so that everyone is competing on a level playing field.

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HOW NOT TO GET DISQUALIFIED IN FCC COMPETITIONS

Here are three general tips, and then some specific tips, so your entries are not disqualified.

Tip 1:

Read the definitions. They are at <https://fccinterclub.myphotoclub.com.au/conditions-of-entry/>. If you are entering a nude subject, read the definition discussed in this F-Stop.

Tip 2:

You are entering a photography competition, so any image which includes elements produced by image-generating software (AI) is not allowed. The core distinction is: an AI tool which modifies an image you captured as a photo is allowed; but an AI tool which generates elements from its database and incorporates them into your photo is not allowed. The FCC will ask to see the original RAW files if necessary to confirm all parts of the entry originated as a photograph.

Tip 3:

Make sure any impartial observer can clearly see your photo is consistent with the FCC definitions. If there is any ambiguity about whether a photo fits the definition or not, judges are most likely to disqualify the image.

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HOW NOT TO GET DISQUALIFIED IN FCC COMPETITIONS

Here are some specific tips to consider.

Fine Art Print

Definition:

A printed photograph of any subject; which communicates a story, idea, mood or other creative intention; and where the printmaking significantly contributes to the impact of the photo

Tips:

The colour, texture, weight or other qualities of the print surface (paper, canvas, metal etc) should enhance the subject matter

All entries must be mounted as described in the FCC Policy on Print Handling

Digital Art

Definition:

A digital image that originated as one or more photographs taken by the photographer; which has undergone significant post processing; and which communicates a story, idea, mood or other creative intention

Tips:

There must be significant manipulation or modification of multiple elements in the creation of the digital image. A photo with minimal post-processing – such as adding a filter, a texture or a layer, or using HDR or a selective colour – is not deemed significant

Editing and post-processing must be consistent with the FCC Digital Art Editing and Post-Processing Policy

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HOW NOT TO GET DISQUALIFIED IN FCC COMPETITIONS

Portrait

Definition:

A digital image of a person or persons who are participating in the creation of the photo. At least one person in the image must have all or part of their face visible

Tips:

All or part of the person's face must be visible

The person/s in the portrait must have clearly participated in the creation of the specific photo. Situations where the person/s are generally aware they will be photographed (such as a musician performing on a stage) is not accepted

Staged

Definition:

A digital image which is intentionally set up by the photographer; and which communicates a story, idea, mood or other creative intention

Tips:

It must be obvious that all elements of the photo (props, models, background, lights etc) were intentionally arranged in a structured way

Scapes

Definition:

A digital image of landscapes, seascapes or skyscapes that depicts their beauty, emotional impact, history, environmental qualities, spiritual, symbolic or other significance. Human made structures and people may be included as long as they are not a significant part of the image and do not dominate the image

Tips:

Where possible, have no human structures in your scapes. However, if you must have a human element in your scene, make sure it is not visually dominant and draws attention to itself. For example, a very small but bright red house in a very large, green landscape is visually dominant and will be disqualified

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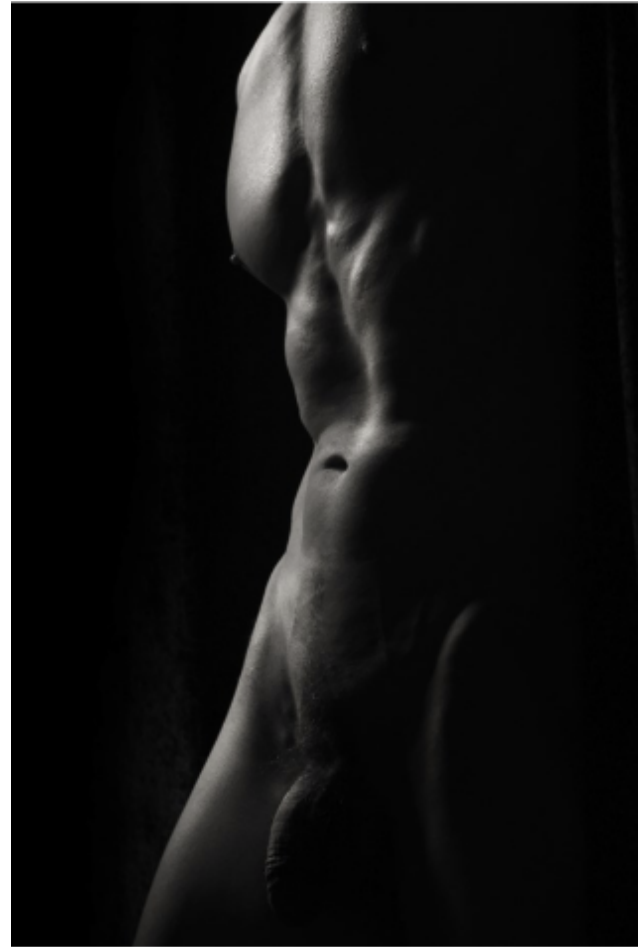
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FCC REQUIREMENT FOR NUDE PHOTOGRAPHY

Photo:
Male Nude
by Art Studios Huck



The FCC Committee has introduced a new requirement for nude photographs in TopShot and InterClub competitions. The change was introduced because photos of nude subjects may be published on the TopShot and InterClub websites, and it is important all photographs meet artistic and public decency standards. Each state of Australia has laws on what type of content can or cannot be publicly displayed.

The new FCC requirement is: Nude photographs must have a clear aesthetic, narrative or other artistic intention; must have been taken with the model's consent; and must not show the model in a sexualised way.

Nude photographs typically use light and shadow to show the form of the model's body, or use the nude to tell a story or to

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FCC REQUIREMENT FOR NUDE PHOTOGRAPHY

symbolise an idea.

The FCC recognises there will be a fine line in some images between what is acceptable and what is not. Most boudoir photographs, for example, are intended to show genuine self-expression, confidence, and empowerment of the model. On the other hand, most glamour, pin up and beefcake photographs show the model in a sexually-explicit way.

A nude photograph consistent with the FCC definition and entered into a FCC competition will be judged and scored, but may not necessarily be displayed, publicised or reproduced publicly if the FCC Committee decides that publication of the image is likely to cause offence to a reasonable adult or may harm or disturb a minor (under the age of 18).

For more information about the limits on the exhibition or publication of visual art (including photography), see the Arts Law Centre information sheet [Classification and censorship/](#).

People thinking of entering a nude photograph into an FCC competition are welcome to contact the FCC (nswfccsecretary@gmail.com) to seek clarification before entering an image.

NEW DIY LEARNING RESOURCES FOR CLUBS – MAXIMALISM



Photo: Maximalist photographer, Alex Webb

The FCC has just published its fifth, free DIY presentation on Making Better Photography – this time on how to make better Maximalist photos. This presentation and workshop has a strong focus on how beginners and experienced photographers can improve their composition skills.

The FCC's Making Better Photography series was developed for Clubs to help build the photographic skills of members. These guides are not

about simplistic rules or trendy techniques – they are about helping photographers to see images and to develop their own skills and creativity.

The Making Better Photography series was developed with input from camera clubs for the benefit of beginner and advanced photographers. Each PowerPoint presentation has a script for a club member to read out to the Club as they

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NEW DIY LEARNING RESOURCES FOR CLUBS – MAXIMALISM

show the presentation. No specialised knowledge is needed. Most presentations also have a practical workshop where Club members put the presentation into practice.

Note: Two workshops require studio lights with different modifiers (such as a soft box or a snoot). Often clubs have a member with studio lights which they bring along for the workshop.

Clubs can access the learning resources from the Club portal at <https://fccnsw.com.au>.

Title:

What Judges Look For

Format:

Powerpoint Presentation (1 hour)

Requirements:

Nil

Title:

Minimalism

Format:

Powerpoint Presentation (45 minutes) + Workshop (45 mins)

Requirements:

Club members - bring your camera

Title:

Maximalism

Format:

Powerpoint Presentation (45 minutes) + Workshop (45 mins)

Requirements:

Club members - bring your camera

Title:

Portraits

Format:

Powerpoint Presentation (45 minutes) + Workshop (45 mins)

Requirements:

Club members - bring your camera

Clubs - have at least 2 studio lights with soft box, snoot or other modifiers

Title:

Flora

Format:

Powerpoint Presentation (45 minutes) + Workshop (45 mins)

Requirements:

Club members - bring your camera and a plant in a pot/vase
Clubs - have at least 2 studio lights with soft box, snoot or other modifiers



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FREE PHOTO STANDS AVAILABLE FOR CLUBS



Is your Club looking for some easy-to-assemble and disassemble photo stands? Recent changes affecting the St George Leagues Club Photographic Society mean that the club must reduce the amount of its equipment it can hold in storage. The Photographic Society now has 10 pre-loved photo stands that it is offering to clubs for free. The stands (photo above) are in good condition. They are made of lightweight metal, and are simple and quick to assemble.

For additional photos of the stands, see <https://www.facebook.com/share/1AEbv1m5m/>.

If the stands are not picked up by clubs before early March, they will be sent to land fill. If your club is interested in collecting some or all of the stands, contact Marianthi Karadoukas, President, St George Photographic Society on president@stgphoto.org or 0411 085 208.

YOUNG CAMERA CLUB HOSTS VERY SUCCESSFUL PHOTO EXHIBITION FOR THE 75TH CHERRY FESTIVAL



Photo: Champion Print Winner, Egrets at Dusk, by Tom Sheppard
(Port Macquarie Panthers Photography Club)

Local, state-wide and overseas photographers entered almost 450 prints into the annual Photographic Competition and Exhibition which was organised by the Young Camera Club. The very successful photo event was a major part of the 75th Anniversary of the National Cherry Festival.

“It was wonderful to be able to showcase the work of so many local, state-wide and overseas photographers,” said Narelle

Howard, Publicity Officer, Young Camera Club.

“This was our 27th exhibition and this event has become a major photographic event for country NSW.”

Entrants came from Young, Kingsvale, Harden, Cowra, Cootamundra, Murringo.

Binalong, Gunning, Orange, Port Macquarie, Sydney and Canada. Some 70 people attended the

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YOUNG CAMERA CLUB HOSTS VERY SUCCESSFUL PHOTO EXHIBITION FOR THE 75TH CHERRY FESTIVAL

Exhibition's opening night, and more than 160 people visited the exhibition which ran from 2 - 7 December 2025.

"Young Camera Club was very happy with the success of this year's event, which runs prior to and during Young's National Cherry Festival. This year saw a significantly higher number of entries and visitors to the exhibition, with many commenting on the quality of the photography," said Ms Howard. The competition had 13 Categories including one for Under 13 Years photographers and one for 13 - Under 18 Years photographers. The most popular categories included Landscape, Birds, Macro/Close Up, Animals and People Monochrome.

Tom Sheppard (Port Macquarie) won the Champion Print Award. Other winners included Kelsey Sorella (Cootamundra) winning the Junior Champion Print Award; Gail Douglas (Cootamundra) winning the Most Successful Local Entry Award; and the Winner of the People's Choice Award was Victoria Leov (Young) for her macro photograph of "Lake Rotoiti Mushrooms". Nick Sherwood from Young who has over 15 years' experience as a photographer working in veterinary research, is a travel photographer and is currently working on his fifth book, was judge for the competition. Congratulations to Young Camera Club for promoting photography and photographers in their region.

UK'S RSPCA YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER AWARDS 2025

Overall Winner:
Thomas Durrant,
for his Golden stag



Thomas Durrant, 17, was the overall winner of the UK's RSPCA Young Photographer Award, 2025 for his image of a Golden stag (pictured above).

"I'd been searching for this image for some time," Durrant said. "Here, everything came together: the stag, the light, the positioning. The golden outline shrouds the individual in mystery, while maintaining the iconic outline."

The annual photography competition is open to young people who are aged 18 or under and are resident in the UK. The aim of the competition is to help create a kinder world for animals

by creating and sharing inspiring images. Entry to the competition is free. Photographs had to show animals with their natural behaviour in their natural habitat. Dressing up pets or making animals perform tricks for the camera were not allowed. Only minimal processing was possible (such as using contrast and colour settings to make the pictures look good). Overall, the key was to make the images look real.






For the other inspiring animal photograph made by young people, see <https://young.rspca.org.uk/home>

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A PHOTOGRAPHER WITH A SENSE OF HUMOUR MARTIN PARR (1952-2025)



Photo: Martin Parr, taken from his book *Common Sense*

Must important photos always be of serious subjects taken in distant lands? Martin Parr thought not.

Parr was “the godfather of British photography.” He photographed ordinary people doing quirky things in everyday life, and in colour. His approach was very different to the old-style approach in documentary photography of taking black and white photos of major historical events.

Parr is best known for pictures

that document everyday English pastimes – holidays in seaside resorts, tea parties, people in supermarket aisles, vegetable-growing competitions, church fetes – but the humorous tone of his work gave him a global appeal.

Parr was also famous for his use of a harsh flash light. He often used a ring flash to create photos with harsh, saturated colours which both made his subjects pop and also made

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A PHOTOGRAPHER WITH A SENSE OF HUMOUR MARTIN PARR (1952-2025)

reality look more like fiction. He defined his approach to photography as “bright colours, and getting in close to your subject matter.... And humour. Life is funny. I try to bring that into the images.” Parr said he made serious photographs on themes such as class, leisure, consumer excess and other aspects of modern life, but they were always disguised as entertainment.

When making portraits, Parr would always ask people not to smile. “I want to show some sense of dignity and what they’re in front of, their relationship to that.”

He was also a strong supporter of emerging, established and overlooked photographers. He established the Martin Parr Foundation to support British and Irish photographers into the future. His 50 years as a photographer included being President of Magnum from 2014 – 2017.

Parr died in England in December 2025, aged 73. He is survived by his wife Susie, his daughter Ellen, his sister Vivien and his grandson George. A recent documentary about Parr’s life and approach to photography, called I Am Martin Parr, is available from DocPlay or on DocPlay on Foxtel.

CREATIVITY MAKES US HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER

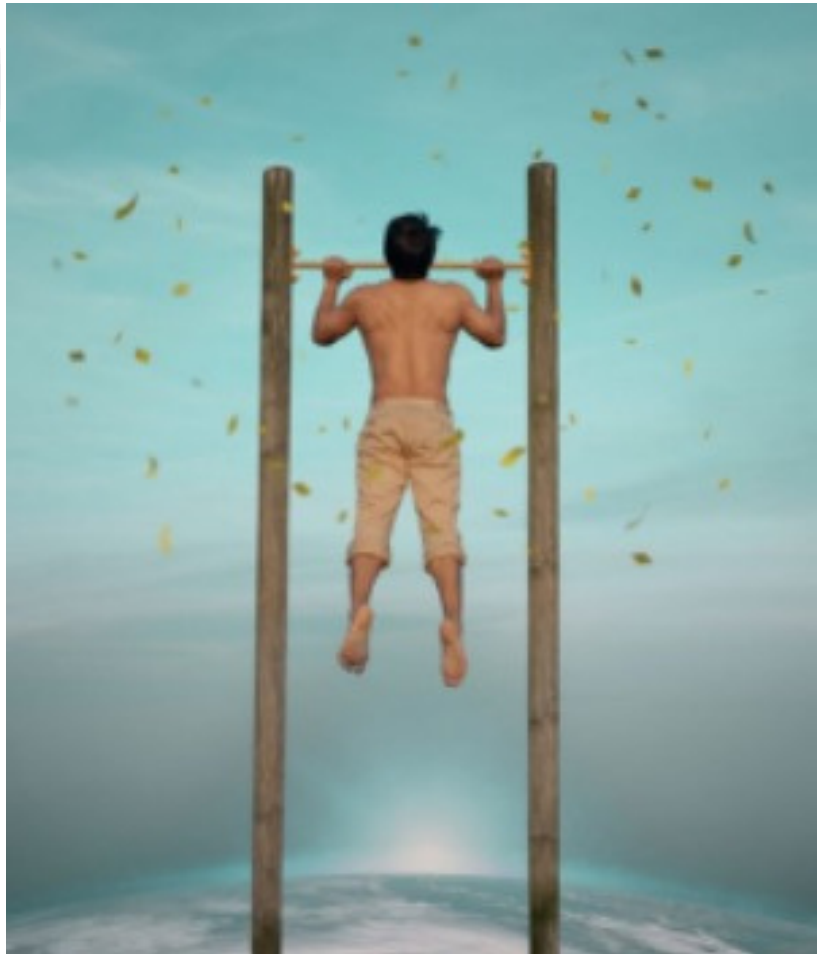


Photo: Adam Hague

Did you make a New Year's resolution to get fit and healthy? If so, recent evidence backs up what many club photographers know – engaging in creative activities has major health benefits.

A recent study in the UK asked more than 7,000 people about their involvement in art or craft activities (such as photography). Photography was defined as artistic activity (such as club photography) – not just taking family or holiday snapshots.

The study showed people who had participated in creating art or craft had higher levels of happiness, life satisfaction and the feeling that life was worthwhile. This research by Keyes and others was published in the journal, *Public Health* (2024).

Another piece of recent research into arts and creativity for people over 50 found organised arts participation for

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CREATIVITY MAKES US HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER

60 minutes once a week helped people regain a sense of control and mastery and improved their wellbeing in six weeks. The article by McQuade and O'Sullivan was published by *Perspect Public Health* in 2024. These are two recent studies of many which show that participation in photography clubs (and other organised arts and crafts groups) have a positive effect both physically and mentally. One reason these benefits arise is because doing photography doesn't feel like exercise. We are so focussed on making images, we don't think about the walking, lifting, carrying, crouching and other physical movement that gives the benefits of a work out. Photography also has positive effects because when we

engage in creative activities we activate the same pleasure and reward networks in the brain that are activated by food and sex. This produces hormones such as dopamine that improve our mood. Creativity also activates brain sensory processing, memory, pattern recognition and emotions (among others). Over time, regular arts activity can strengthen brain interconnections and increase the volume of grey matter. Joining a Club, rather than going it alone, also improves your sense of community and social connectedness which reduces depression, improves immunity and delays ageing. If you would like to know more about how photography supports physical and mental health, see <https://themframes.com/features/the-relationship-between-photography-and-mental-health/>

CARING FOR YOUR CLUB'S COMMITTEE IN 2026



A well-run Committee is essential for a happy and productive club, but limited funds, high workloads and unclear committee roles can cause stress.

A recent survey of not-for-profit organisations has identified steps committees can take to reduce the stress of being on a committee.

The survey by the Institute of Community Directors Australia was nation-wide and included health, welfare, environment and other not-for-profit organisations.

Arts, culture and recreation organisations were strongly represented in the survey, and one-third of the organisations were small with budgets of under \$250,000 per year. Most committee members reported they were part of a supportive committee. They had a strong connection to their club, were clear about their role on the committee and felt a sense of fulfilment from serving on their committee.

In well-functioning committees, committee members had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, meetings were run efficiently, and the committee had clear procedures to manage conflict if it arose.

The full report is at <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/research/2025-australian-community-boards-wellbeing-report>.

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