

Let's Listen Let's Talk

March 2026

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Welcome to our March 2026 newsletter

The start of 2026 has been dark and wet but at last we are seeing warmer and brighter days. However flowers seem more confused this year, as in my garden snowdrops and daffodil's came into bloom at almost the same time, which has never happened before in my memory.

So what's new at the CCM? Well as I review the last few months I realise quite a lot has happened. The great news that has really encouraged us all is that our local authority housing department has signed a contract to help fund us. Whilst we will still need to gain grant funding to keep us developing our service, this boost to our financial security is a great step.

We have also developed a new part of our service; which is a set of three community workshops entitled 'Transforming Conflict' These were developed in partnership with St Ethelburga's Peace and Reconciliation Centre and supported by our local charity Croydon Almshouses Grant Fund (formerly Croydon Relief in Need Grant Fund) I am very pleased to say that we have delivered four of these workshops so far and they have been very well received. We will expand this service in the coming months as we partner with more local organisations. This service will also give more opportunities for our mediators to expand their skills .

So as always there is much to celebrate and I want to again pay a huge vote of thanks to all our mediators and trustees for their great work. Thank you as well for supporting our newsletter.

If you would like to get in touch, meet for a coffee or if you have ideas about improving the service, my contact details are:

neilselby23@gmail.com or 07905 168285

I look forward to hearing from you

Neil



Interview with a Mediator

Greg has been a practising mediator in Australia for 34 Years. He sold his legal practice in 1996 to work full time as a mediator. He has mediated more than 1,500 disputes in a diverse range of conflicts including multi-party disputes involving government institutions, commercial and industrial disputes, agricultural disputes, franchise disputes, matrimonial disputes and disputes involving conflict in the workplace.

Greg has been a Director of the Mediator Standards Board that regulates the Australian National Mediation Accreditation Scheme.

He has mediated over 200 face-to-face mediations between religious leaders and individual victims of sexual abuse in the Catholic, Anglican and Protestants religions in Australia as well as abuse within the Australian Defence Forces.

Greg has been a member of the Supreme and District Court's Mediation Panels of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and the Federal Court of Australia.

He has lectured in mediation, dispute system design and Project Alliancing in a number of Australian universities, including the University of Queensland and Southern Cross University Law Schools. Greg has conducted dispute resolution training for a number of public and private Australian and international institutions.

Greg together with Margaret Ross have run annual mediation retreats in Tuscany, Italy since 2012.

Greg Rooney

How do you encourage clients to engage in the mediation process and to attend joint meetings when they are reluctant to do so?

I always offer an intake session free of charge for them to meet me and see if we are comfortable with each other to proceed. I tell them that it is important for them to be comfortable with me. I humanise the process right from the beginning.

It's important to make the human connection with each party. It starts with the first telephone conversation and the first intake meeting.

You gain so much information about the parties in that first unstructured meeting that can help guide you as you progress. It's only if the parties trust you that they will allow you to proceed with the mediation and to

agree to work in joint session.

The success or otherwise of the mediation is built totally on the intake.

Can you share any advice on how to successfully conduct a shuttle mediation meeting?



I always work on the basis that I will get the parties into the same room even if it takes all day to get there.

Private meetings with each party are part of the mediation process. Most of the time it is back and forth between joint session and private meetings. As with comedy, timing is everything. As my English colleague Barbara Wilson has said 'time is the mediators friend.'

Are there any key mediation skills that you had to work harder on and how did you go about improving?

Can you provide a specific example of when you have used one of the key mediator skills to good effect?

I don't have any mediation skills. I don't have a toolbox of skills, insightful questions, or any mediation theory that I bring to the room.

I have no desire to change people, to teach cooperation or to understand their emotions or their so-called bias.

I don't look for patterns, create hypotheses and I don't try to predict or control what will happen.

As a mediator, I am no hero. I don't seek to help, find a solution or solve the parties' problem.

I am a blank canvas. I have no answers. See [The Art of the Simple in Mediation - Mediate.com](#)

Can you share any advice as to how a mediator can self-evaluate their performance, learn and improve?

The only advice I can give is to treat each mediation like it's your first.

Don't assume anything that has happened in the past will repeat. If you do that, you're in the wrong mediation.

It's about interaction rather than analysis. You can only do analysis after the event when it's too late to change anything you did.

Don't overthink it. Just stay fresh.

Do have any tips on how to encourage parties to generate solutions?

No, I don't. I just create the space for something to emerge. Solutions often emerge unbidden. They can't be predicted.

Have you ever found it challenging to maintain your impartiality during a mediation? How did you manage this?

Every mediator in every mediation changes the dynamic by their very presence. As long as you understand that then you can monitor yourself in each moment. If you try and help the parties, you immediately lose your impartiality. The way I look at it is that I walk beside the parties on their journey, not my journey.

Can you share any examples of where you used a breakout room to good effect?

See the YouTube role play I did with drama students of a hard money commercial mediation that I conducted many years ago, as an example [Observing a Mediation, Greg Rooney Mediator. The Tennis Club Lease](#)

Do you have any phrases or questions that you commonly use in mediation to good effect?

No. Nothing I have ever done in a mediation has been repeated in another one. Everything I did was in the context of the moment it occurred. Never to be repeated.

Do you have any general advice about mediating where mental health issues are a consideration?

A separate intake session with each party is essential as often mental health issues are not obvious and don't present themselves until there is an interaction either with the mediator or with the other party. The 'do no harm' principle applies. If there's any doubt, then don't proceed without strict safeguards

Can you provide any advice on how to best prepare for a joint meeting following the initial discussions with both parties?

Do you have any tips on how to best prepare clients for the joint meeting?

See the YouTube video of the Tennis Club lease referred to above.

Gregg is the twelfth mediator we have interviewed for our newsletter and as always, we are very grateful to him for giving us his time and for sharing his wealth of experience.

He is the latest addition to the list of experienced professionals that have kindly devoted their time to help develop the knowledge of our team of community mediators.

Our back catalogue of interviews serves as a valuable knowledge hub for mediators of all levels of experience as well as those with an interest in managing conflict. You can access the previous interviews through the following links:

Gary Webber June 2022
Laura Kirkpatrick September 2022
Dr Mike Talbot December 2022
Gerry O'Sullivan March 2023
Emma McAndry July 2023
Tara West October 2023
Aled Davies December 2023
Andrew Goodman May 2024
Susanne Schuler November 2024
Clare Fowler January 2025
Freddie De Luca May 2025

Spotlight on a Mediator

What is your Favourite Country?

Italy. I love going there on holiday. I studied GCSE Latin and History up to A level, and find the history and culture of Italy fascinating. There is so much to do and see and, of course, the food and wine are amazing.

What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

I tried Alligator tail whilst visiting the Everglades in Florida. It was ok but I wouldn't be rushing back for more.

What do you want to see before you die?

I was born and grew up in Northern Ireland. I would like to see permanent peace and a united community with an end to religious and political divisions regarding the status and future of Northern Ireland.

Who or what would you take to a desert island?

I would like to take one of the guys from the TV programme SAS: Who Dares Wins. I think their survival skills would be invaluable.

What do you do when not mediating?

When I am not mediating, I volunteer at a free legal advice centre as I am also a non-practising solicitor. I am also kept busy looking after my three daughters. We have a dog so I enjoy taking her out for walks and I also go to the gym where I take classes in Zumba, Pilates and Weights. I love reading and watching films too. I really enjoy travelling and exploring new places.

Why did you decide to start mediating?

As a solicitor in private practice I specialised in clinical negligence litigation. I took part as a solicitor in one mediation which I found interesting. I very much liked the concept of this form of dispute resolution. However, when I was practising mediation was not very common, but having taken a career break to raise my daughters, I found that the mediation had become more mainstream. I therefore did the civil and commercial mediation training and have also now done the community mediation training and the peer mediation training. I am fascinated by the psychology involved in mediation and how effective having that conversation can be.

Where's your next holiday to?

Gran Canaria with my family during the Easter school holidays. We have not been there before and we are staying in a hotel rather than a villa which is new for us. I am very much looking forward to practising the Spanish I have been learning on Duolingo.

What's your favourite food or meal?

My breakfast. I have a large mug of tea and a bowl of cereal. I make the cereal mix myself with chia seeds, hemp seeds, flaxseeds, sunflower seeds, goji berries, dried blueberries, cinnamon, almonds and pecan nuts. I have it with Greek yoghurt and fresh berries.

Our Spotlight Mediator is Katie Baird, who joined Croydon Community Mediation early this year.

Welcome to the team Katie!



What's your favourite book?

Wuthering Heights. I studied it for my AS English Literature. Emily Brontë's father (Patrick Brontë) was born in Northern Ireland and lived near to Rathfriland where my Mum was born. You can visit the Brontë homeland, and outside the church where he preached there is a quote from Wuthering Heights. I definitely want to go and see the new film adaptation.

What was your favourite TV show when growing up?

LA Law. It inspired me to study law at university and to become a solicitor. The reality, unfortunately, was nothing like LA Law!!



We say goodbye to Rose!

The Trustees would like to express their sincere thanks to Rose as she steps away from her role as a volunteer mediator with Croydon Community Mediation.

Rose joined the service in 2008 and is one of the organisation's longest-serving mediators. She has been a highly valued member of the team, playing an important part in delivering the mediation service and supporting residents across Croydon to resolve conflict within their communities.

The Trustees are deeply grateful for the dedication, commitment and generosity she has shown to the service over such a long period. Her contribution has made a real and lasting difference, and Croydon Community Mediation has benefited greatly from her many years of voluntary service.

We thank Rose warmly for everything she has given to the organisation and wish her all the very best for the future.



If you would like to support the work of Croydon Community Mediation, please consider making a donation using the QR code. Your contribution helps us continue providing free, impartial mediation to residents across Croydon, supporting neighbours and communities to resolve conflict and build better relationships. Every donation, no matter the size, makes a real difference. Thank you for your support.