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Meet Our Contributors



Caroline Baum is an author, journalist and the host of the Life Sentences podcast. She is also an enthusiastic home cook. Caroline wrote the article 'Whole lobster love'

about a father-and-son sustainable fishing business in Wombarra (see page 38). She made mayonnaise from scratch to enjoy her Lobfish lobster.

A medium size was enough for three people.



Rob Brander – aka 'Dr Rip' – is a coastal geomorphologist and professor at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. A resident of Coalcliff, he's been studying beaches

for more than 30 years, starting in Canada where water temperatures convinced him to come to Australia. He is an international expert on rip currents and beach safety and runs a community education program called The Science of the Surf.



Dr John Deady is a General Practitioner working at Bulli Medical Practice. He has a special interest in sports medicine and is currently working professionally with both the

St George Illawarra Dragons NRL Club and Wellington Phoenix A League Club.



Duncan Leadbitter is a director of fisheries and natural resource consulting company, Fish Matter. He is a Visiting Fellow at the Australian Centre for Ocean Resources and

Security at UOW. A keen scuba diver, snorkeller, spearfisherman and photographer, Duncan has lived in Stanwell Park for 20 years.



Iris Huizinga migrated to Australia from The Netherlands, where she was a screenwriter. She graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. Since 2009 she has been

involved in the local area as a volunteer at the surf club and later with the local fire brigade.



Susie Crick represents the Surfrider Foundation and sits on three environmental Boards. Her day job is the director of Planet Childcare in Coledale. In 2022 Susie will be

heading to remote Australian beaches on a research mission exploring plastics and toxics in our oceans. Protecting the marine environment is her passion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The publishers acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their cultural and spiritual connection to this land. Their stories are written in the land and hold great significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, from the mountains to the sea.



New Year, New Name

Last month, we announced that change – driven by the soaring price of paper and other Covid-related challenges – was coming.

Now it's here and we hope that everyone enjoys January 2022's new big read.

The Illawarra Flame is a merger of 2508 District News and 2515 Coast News. The name is a tribute to the region's famous flame trees, and to its natural beauty, indigenous heritage and community spirit. (Read more in our editorial on page 32.)

Thanks to Bulli photographer Chris Duczynski for capturing the trees' incredible spring display.

Brachychiton acerifolius is, of course, January 2022's Tree of the Month (see Kieran Tapsell's Banksia Bush Care article on p20).

And on our first cover, we're thrilled to feature a group that embodies the spirit of the Illawarra and its seaside villages. The Surfing Mums take turns to watch each other's children, so everyone can enjoy time out in the ocean. (See page 28.)

Happy reading, everyone.
Gen and Marcus, the editors *



NEXT DEADLINE Jan 19 for the Feb edition

EDITORS Gen Swart, Marcus Craft

CONTACT theillawarraflame.com.au; 0432 612 168; PO Box 248, Helensburgh, 2508. 🙀 🌀 TheillawarraFlame

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NEXT DEADLINE January 19, 2022

COVER Front row, L-R: Becky with son Jasper, Nancy with son Henley, Grace and Molly Maebh. Back row, L-R: Essi, Nadine holding daughter Saoirse, Anna holding son Torben (her daughter Freja is on the sand in the background), Desiree. Photos by Anthony Warry

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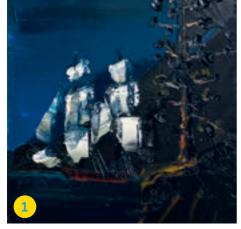
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Top talent at Art Fair

By Caroline Baum

Clifton School of Arts members and volunteers are gearing up for the first CSA Contemporary Art Fair, which will be opened by Professor Tim Flannery on Friday, 21 January at 6.30pm.

Curated by David Roach and Vyvian Wilson, the Art Fair's theme is "On the Other Side". The idea was initially developed to support local artists during last year's multiple Covid lockdowns.

Showcasing the region's finest artists, the Art Fair is a fundraising event with a percentage of sales going to the CSA's building project. The plans will mean that for the first time in 110 years the CSA will have accessible parking, wheelchair access and facilities for all members of our community.

With the buzz already building from collectors, the CSA is offering a special Early Bird preview on Friday, 21 January, from 4-6pm. Tickets \$20, \$15 for CSA members. Only a few spots left so booking is essential. Email Vyvian: vyvwilson@gmail.com.

Meet the artists

Paul Ryan (1) – a finalist 13 times in the Archibald Prize – is a long-time surfer, whose powerful and provocative paintings often draw on the Illawarra's wild coastline and its sometimes brutal history.

Stephen Dupont (6) takes searing photographs that have earned him the most prestigious prizes in the world including a Robert Capa Gold Medal.

Ivor Fabok is a teacher at the National Art School who finds inspiration in the freewheeling

improvisation in jazz: "When I listen to music I see colours. I read music as forms and structures."

Michele Elliot (5) creates emotive textile works. Michele steeps cloth in natural dyes, weaves and stitches, creating meditations on love and loss.

Ashley Frost (3) says he immerses himself in "a convergence of light and space". In 2021 he was a finalist in both the Wynne and Sulman prizes.

Karen Hook's practice includes digital media, drawing, painting and analogue photography. It's inspired by flaws that can hold the key to beauty.

Anita Johnson uses salvaged, familiar objects in her poetic sculptures, which evoke memories of place and experience.

Hal Pratt (4) draws in graphite and paints in watercolour. A Thirroul local, Hal spends much of his time on painting trips to the Outback.

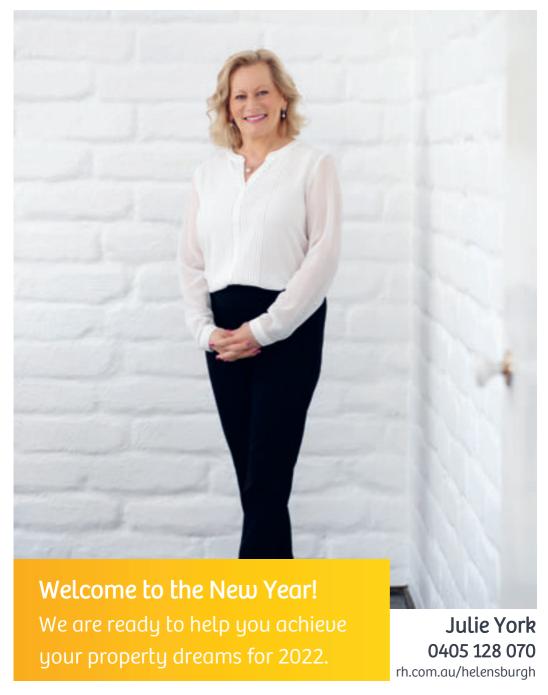
David Roach is an interdisciplinary artist and filmmaker. His work explores ideas of loose continuity and implied motion.

Catriona Stanton weaves delicate skeletal forms. She constructs works out of a maelstrom of toothpicks that seem to flow in swirling eddies.

Vyvian Wilson's work is "intoxicated and seduced by light". Her dappled, layered work reflects a deep connection to land and memory.

Tanya Stubbles (2) creates intricate, abstract constructions that are a vivid expression of the rural and industrial landscapes where she fossicks for her materials.

Raine&Horne



P&C publishes Artbook

Instead of its annual Art Show, Scarborough Public School has released a showcase of 35 amazing Northern Illawarra artists

The members of Scarborough Public School P&C are masters of reinvention.

In 2020, when Covid stopped their Art Show, parents came up with The Tea Towel Project, printing art on organic cotton cloth. Now they've made an Artbook, showcasing acclaimed local artists such as Tanya Stubbles, Diana Wood-Conroy, Ashley Frost, Anthea Stead, Heather Froome, Anh Nguyen, Christine Hill and Nikki Main. Money raised will help fund the school's Art Literacy program,

The two parents who've played a big role in publishing the Artbook both have strong creative backgrounds themselves. P&C president Michelle McCosker is a textile artist and freelance web designer who is studying to become an art therapist, and P&C member Melissa Barnard is a cellist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

They kindly took time to answer questions.

Whose idea was the Scarborough Artbook?

Michelle: After hearing the news that the Art Show was to be cancelled again I had a cold winter swim in Austinmer pool ... the idea just sort of revealed itself. What if people could still see the artworks, but in the comfort and Covid-safety of their home? I really loved the contrast of having a tangible mini-exhibition in a traditional book format but combined with a newer digital purchasing process.

Tell us how it all came together...

Melissa: We have had a crazily short lead time to make a plan, have it approved within our small school budget, approach artists, collate artist information and high quality photographs of their artworks, design, layout and proof a book... plus design and activate a website.

Michelle: Other parents have also offered their time – Fraggle with his exceptional eye, Jenny Bouwer, Kate Tracey, Sam Nuttall, Jasmin Tarasin and Amanda Bennett.

What mood does the book aim to evoke? Michelle: Jasmin Tarasin, a parent and filmmaker,

actually had the stroke of brilliance in titling the book *Between the Mountains and the Sea*. It is the first line of the Scarborough school song, and for me it evokes an almost nostalgic atmosphere. It feels beautiful, mysterious and romantic.



I wanted to capture this mystery on the cover which is why when I saw Kurt Sorensen's photography I knew it was perfect. The misty and soft tones he has captured remind me of those beautiful and slightly eerie days we have here sometimes, where a cloud sits right down over the escarpment, or the sea mist rises up and over the coast in the afternoon after a hot day.

How have school children been involved?

Melissa: Oh, this is one of my favourite things about the book! We sent along copies to school of some of the photographs of the artworks for the kids to reflect on and write about. Their comments are in turn beautiful, hilarious, charming, perceptive, thoughtful...

How has working on this project changed the way you see the world around us?

Melissa: Driving along the coast road doing normal things I suddenly see the paintings, the landscapes and the textures in front of me...

Michelle: I agree with Mel. Whenever I drive along Lawrence Hargrave Drive and gaze up at the beautiful escarpment, I feel like I'm in a Kate Broadfoot painting.

Visit www.scarboroughart.com



Scan the QR code to read the full story and see more artwork at theillawarraflame.com.au



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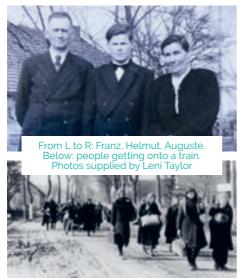
By Leni Taylor

My grandpa Helmut was born in 1940 in a part of far Eastern Germany, which is now in Poland. Opa – that's German for grandpa – was the middle one of three boys, with a younger brother (Uli) and an older brother (Alfred). They lived on a nice farm and enjoyed a fairly simple life, until World War II struck and their father Franz was forced to join the war as a medic.

In 1944, Germany started to lose World War II and Auguste, my great grandmother, didn't know where her husband was, only that he was in the war, and they didn't know if he was okay. They had not heard from him in two years.

That's when the Russians, Germany's enemies and neighbours to the east, started bombing and attacking the eastern side of Germany. The Russian forces started pushing through Poland and Germany and, once the fighting was finished, many Polish families were forced out of their own homes further east by the Russians and placed into German homes in towns and villages further west. A Polish man was put on Helmut's family farm and basically 'owned' the place. But this man felt sympathy for them, since he had lost his family and home, so he was never cruel to them and they made do together on the farm as best as they could.

When Germany officially lost the war the Russian soldiers, worn out from the war and angry about their own people's treatment by the Germans, became cruel in return.



Whenever they visited Helmut's village, they would pluck someone random out of the crowd and declare them a 'traitor'.

One of my Opa's first memories as a small child was seeing someone from the village getting hanged.

In 1946, Auguste realised they couldn't stay any longer. She took the boys, hid all the precious family things like silver in the garden so no one could find them, and together, they all fled. They ran over 20 kilometres of fields in the bitter cold, just to get to the refugee train to West Germany.

They made it. The train had big carriages called 'cattlewagons' and they were overcrowded with people with metal barricades surrounding them, to stop partisans getting into the carriages during the journey West. There was one bucket for a toilet, one with drinking water. My great grandma's job was to fill the buckets with water. They were on the train for two days and stopped at a city called Greifswald, to clean buckets and get fresh water. As Auguste was on the platform and filling the water bucket, she ran into someone from their village. The person recognised her, and told her: "If you're on the refugee train, get off it. Your husband is working here as a medic."

So Helmut, Uli, Alfred and their mother snuck off the train. Sure enough, they found their father at the Red Cross, an organisation that still runs many refugee camps around the World today.

Franz had been working as a medic, someone who carried wounded soldiers off the battlefield, and he had seen some awful things. But he was overjoyed to see them.

Though he was never quite the same after the war. They were put on a farm with two other families and eventually Franz made the farm his own again being the clever and ambitious farmer that he was. Unfortunately, they had ended up in the part of Germany which was occupied by the Russians and eventually became the GDR (German Democratic Republic) so they lost everything all over again when people's property got taken away under the socialist government.

In 1961, when Helmut was 21, he fled to West Germany, just before they built the wall that would split East and West Germany. There he met a beautiful woman in a red dress, who he married. In other words, that's how my German grandparents met, but that escape is another story.

Hundreds of other refugee families tried to escape East Germany the same way my Great Grandmother Auguste did and didn't make it out alive.

But my family did. *

Well done, Leni



Congratulations to young writer Leni Taylor. Leni is the joint runner-up in the 9-12 years category for the South Coast Writers Centre/Young Archies Writing Competiton.

The competition asked young writers residing on the South Coast of NSW to write a story from real life. The competition was run in partnership with Shoalhaven Regional Gallery and Shoalhaven Libraries, and was supported by Create NSW.

Leni is 10 years old, attends Bulli Public School and she loves her family, books, writing, surfing, cuddling her cat Loki and her friends. Read her story, *The Journey West*, on page 10.

Books for parents

By the team at Collins Booksellers Thirroul

Reading an inspiring text, starting a journal or learning a new skill are all positive ways to kickstart 2022. It's also a great time to think about how we can support our offspring. Here are a few of the titles in our Parenting section that we recommend for those of you with teenagers:

- Be Resilient: How to build a strong teenage mind for tough times
- Talk with your kids about things that matter
- The New Teen Age
- The Musical Child
- FLY Financially Literate Youth
- Raising a Secure Child
- Being 14

All our very best for a wonderful 2022.









Artists of the Illawarra

Painter Edith McNally introduces Otford artist Mimi Kind

I have never encountered the art of making "sound sculptures" until coming across Mimi Kind, who makes kinetic sound sculptures and installations. Mimi lives and works in Otford using electromagnets, motors and fans to drive her moving sculptures.

While at their core her sculptures are machines, Mimi incorporates a liveliness and organism-like quality to their motions in order that they imitate the movements and sounds you might find in nature.

She recently won the Kinetic Prize in "Sculptures on the Farm Online 2021" for her sculpture *Elma VI*, which consists of five self-built electromagnet sculptures interacting together. They are a playful celebration of copper and electromagnetism, with attraction and repulsion occurring between neighbouring sculptures, and with parts of the sculptures touching from time to time.

Historically, machines were designed and constructed to work for us in a huge variety of ways. An intrinsic element of a machine is their capacity to do work. Mimi's art re-conceives the purpose of machines, creating pieces in which the machines are not doing work 'for us' but, instead, are just being a machine, as and for 'itself'.

Her works elicit personal responses to mechanical components and energetic operators such as electricity. She hopes to inspire reflection upon our relationship with the substances and energies making up our world.



Mimi has presented works in various spaces in Sydney, Melbourne, and Berlin, including Sydney Non-Objective Art Projects (SNO), Airspace Projects, Testing Grounds, XTRO Ateliers, and is in the Substation's 2021 Development program.

You can see more of Mimi's work on Instagram @mimi_kind or at www.mimikind.com

To be featured, write to Edith at mcnallyedith@gmail.com

Hot summer reads

Our friendly local librarians shared some of their favourite books of 2021.

Thanks to the Thirroul librarians who picked their favourite titles, ranging from musical memoirs to tales about regret, family dynamics, uncertain futures and the lives of whales.

- Julie: Acid for the Children: A Memoir by Flea
- Tracey: *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig
- Kirsten: *The Labyrinth* by Amanda Lohrey
- Katrina: The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles
- Jenna: *Utopia Avenue* by David Mitchell
- Lindsay: Nina Simone's Gum by Warren Ellis
- Louella: *Fathoms: The World in the Whale* by Rebecca Giggs

Thanks to Cara at Helensburgh Library for these picks:

 A Room Made of Leaves by Kate Grenville. An engaging historical fiction based in Sydney, it tells the story of Elizabeth Macarthur, wife of the notorious John Macarthur, wool baron.

 For the people who love Indian and also love simple cooking, try *The Curry Guy Easy* by Dan Toombs. It contains 100 fuss-free British Indian restaurant classics to make at home.

All titles are available to borrow via the library. For more recommended reads, visit www.wollongong. nsw.gov.au/library •













LUNCH 7 days 12pm - 3pm

DINNER Sunday - Wednesday 5pm - 8pm

Thursday - Saturday 5pm - 8:30pm



History of Aussie cossies

By Local Studies librarian Jo Oliver



Swimming costumes in the Illawarra have changed over time.

In the early 20th century, neck to knee outfits were worn by men and women. By the 1940s, men were wearing shorts and women one-piece, thigh-length costumes with shoulder straps. Bikinis became popular from the late 1950s and men were wearing smaller briefs.

This summer all manner of swimming costumes will be seen on the beaches of the Northern Illawarra from the briefest bikinis to burkinis.

Wollongong City Library is always looking for photographs for Illawarra Images. If you have any images you would be willing to donate or share, contact the Local Studies team at localhistory@ wollongong.nsw.gov.au *



Top row, L to R: Thirroul Beach 1915 (P18290); Coalcliff - NSW Combined Ladies March Past Champions 1959 (P03938). Below: Thirroul Beach 1915 (P10292). Next row: Austinmer beach 1950 (P21413); Stanwell Park 1920s (P02459); Austinmer Pools 1940s (P21411). Bottom row: Stanwell Park Surf Lifesaving Club 1920s (P10109); Bikinis at Wollongong 1956 (P04238). Photos from the collections of the Wollongong City Libraries















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Backyard Zoology

With Amanda De George

Well, would you just look at this cute as a button, likely murderer!

We've known that kookabubbas, that's baby laughing kookaburras to the uninitiated, were in our future a couple of months ago with some serious domestic situations happening.

Lots of tackling of other kookaburras out of the sky and so much laughter, the kind where it's instantly clear that the laugh is territorial in nature.

Basically once spring is sprung, like many in the animal kingdom, the local kookaburras' thoughts turn to love and all of the associated dramas. So it was only a matter of time (around 25 days for the eggs to hatch and another 35-40 days for the babies to start to leave the nest) before we started to hear the begging cry of newly fledged kookabubbas.

There's usually three eggs laid but it's a tough world out there and siblicide – murder by a sibling – is high in kookaburras. There's only a 50 percent chance that the third chick will survive as the first two babies use the hook on the end of their beak, a hook that only the chicks have, to stab their nest mate to death.

Sometimes it's not about the stabbing but the starving, with two of the babies hogging all the food until the third chick starves to death. Yikes. It's a bit of a brutal start to life but raising the young ones is a bit of a family affair. Rather than getting kicked out and having to find their own territory as soon as they are able, the chicks from the previous season or two hang around helping to feed and protect the newest members of the family

By the time you read this, our kookabubbas will have started to laugh themselves, which is a cute thought and a much nicer sound than the persistent, throaty 'feed me' call that we are currently hearing.

They breed from September to around January though, so if you keep your eyes on any hollows in local trees or see any stumpy tailed, blue/grey-eyed balls of adorableness, with a hint of murderous aggression, you may just have your very own kookabubbas.

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Dr Rip's Science of the Surf

What's behind our La Nina beach summer? Rob Brander explains

You've probably heard by now that we are experiencing a La Nina weather pattern that has given us a wet and cold spring and potentially a distinctly average summer. But what is a La Nina and, more importantly, what does it mean for our beaches and waves?

Our climate is linked to whatever the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is doing. ENSO is a natural cycle of climate variability linked to sea surface temperate differences between the eastern and central tropical Pacific Ocean (think Darwin and Tahiti) that cause changes to atmospheric circulation patterns.

A La Nina cycle occurs when equatorial trade winds become stronger, changing the surface ocean currents and drawing cooler water up from the depths below (upwelling). This ends up pushing warmer surface waters to the western Pacific - that's us! Sounds good right?

Unfortunately, warmer water promotes rising air, more cloud development and more rainfall, including more storms. There's a lot more to ENSO and La Nina than that, but given word count constraints, I recommend doing some Google searching! The good news is that this La Nina phase won't last forever, although they can last for several months and even a few years.

For surfers, La Ninas are not necessarily a bad thing as there will be more large swell events from the east compared to the north-easterly winds that dominate during an El Nino, when there is less swell and the waves are pretty messy.

For beachgoers, we know that ENSO cycles have a big impact on the amount of sand on our beaches and where it is. We know this because my old PhD supervisor from Sydney University, Professor Andy Short, started manually

surveying beach profiles along Narrabeen-Collaroy beach on Sydney's northern beaches in 1976 and kept doing it monthly for 30 years! It's still going, but with more modern surveying techniques and is the longest continuous beach survey dataset in the world.

That dataset has shown that embayed beaches (with headlands at either end) respond to changing wave directions during ENSO cycles by rotating. During El Nino phases, the northern ends of beaches tend to build up with sand, while the southern ends erode. The opposite occurs during La Nina phases.

However, not all beaches behave like this. There are a lot of other factors to consider, such as embayment shape, orientation, headland protection and beach length. The easiest rule to remember is that because of the higher frequency of storm events, our beaches tend to have less sand and are much narrower during a La Nina. During El Nino periods, we might have drought and bushfires, but the beaches tend to come back and are nice and healthy. *

Have a question for Dr Rip? Email rbrander@unsw.edu.au



Giving back to our local community





BANKSIA BUSH CARE'S Tree of the Month

By Kieran Tapsell

Brachychiton acerifolius (Illawarra Flame Tree) is the region's most famous tree, although its natural range is from the Shoalhaven River to Far North Queensland. It normally takes about 15 years to flower, and the photos above are of one of the six I planted in the Banksia Bush Care site some 30 years ago. They flower intermittently, but this summer, they were spectacular. I was even surprised to find that one of the 70 we planted five years ago has started to flower, albeit on only one branch.

They are relatively easy to germinate. The seeds are in a large pod covered in prickly hairs. Wear gloves, rub off the hairs then place seeds in hot (not boiling) water and allow to stand for 24 hours before planting. If your parks are bothered by deer, Flame Trees will be eaten, broken and ringbarked, so they will need to be caged.

The large leaves are variable in shape, and form an attractive, glossy tree even when not flowering. They flower best when planted in full sun.

Our First Nations people used the bark for making string, traps and fishing nets. They also ate the seeds, after removing the prickly hairs by roasting.

Banksia Bush Care at Stanwell Park Reserve

Recent rains have produced a lot of growth in trees - but also in weeds, such as ochna, lantana, senna and asparagus fern. Bush care requires constant maintenance. Tree planting has started in No. 33 Stanwell Avenue, next to Doran House and will continue throughout this year, together with the planting of littoral rainforest trees, native grasses and ground covers. A big thanks to residents who have supplied us with star posts and wire mesh to make cages to protect young trees from deer. .

'Oh, the flame trees will blind the weary driver'

Flame trees have been immortalised in song. The lyrics in the headline come from one of Cold Chisel's greatest hits, 1984's Flame Trees. Presumably Council is not too worried about the safety risks, however, as the iconic tree has been planted in many public places, from the bus stop at Stanwell Park to the high street of Thirroul to the grounds of Wollongong Botanic Garden.

We asked Wollongong City Council: 'How many flame trees has Council planted around Wollongong and what makes it a good street tree?' Here's what a spokesperson said:

The Flame Tree (Brachychiton acerifolius) is an iconic Wollongong and Illawarra native tree and one that our community loves to see planted around the city. Our records show that there are approximately 500 Flame Trees planted in the Wollongong Local Government Area. However, as our tree database is a relatively recent introduction to our tree management planning, we have not recorded every tree yet. There may be an even higher number of Flame Trees in Wollongong.

The Flame Tree is a type of local rainforest tree which provides a spectacular display of red flowers on bare stems. It's a partially deciduous tree - which means that it may shed leaves during spring. At the same time, each individual tree is highly variable in form, flowering and leaf cover. Due to the Flame Tree's deciduous nature, these trees are at their best when planted in groups or clumps in parklands instead of as street trees or in avenue plantings (where a consistent tree cover is required). When choosing a suitable location for a Flame Tree, Council arborists will investigate the proposed location and consider important factors such as soil volume, and any neighbouring obstructions such as footpaths, roads and overhead powerlines.





Looking to move in 2022? We are here to help!

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Ways to Water

The Illawarra Flame reports on the University of Wollongong's Blue Futures project and how it spawned an art show

Ideas about our Blue Future are exciting. This is clear, talking to researchers Michelle Voyer and Hugh Forehead at UOW's Innovation Campus. But embrace an Aboriginal perspective and those ideas become transformative.

Michelle: "I was very keen to unsettle the accepted wisdom of how we do business. Because it's not working.

"Rather than trying to look at things in isolation ... it [an Aboriginal-led perspective] really forces you to embrace the messiness of it all and that everything's connected."

Hugh: "This really is the way to save the planet."

A big philosophical shift

UOW's Blue Futures, a Global Challenges keystone project, started off with a question: how can ocean-based sustainable development be achieved in the context of coastal change?

Over the past two years, it's involved about 30 people, including scientists, economists, policy makers, social geographers, writers and artists.

Michelle, a Blue Futures team leader and a senior research fellow at ANCORS, said the project changed entirely when it became a partnership with the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council, led by CEO Paul Knight.

"The whole project shifted towards being a more Aboriginal led, Aboriginal co-developed model. It's completely flipped the mindset ...

"And that's largely been through the influence of our colleagues, Paul Knight and Jade Kennedy and Catherine Moyle, who were all embedded in the project, to challenge us to think differently."

Hugh, a research fellow at UOW's SMART Infrastructure Facility, agrees. "We've come up with ways of doing things that are different. There've been big philosophical shifts."

Hugh led the technology side of Blue Futures, helping South Coast oyster and seaweed farmers boost productivity via 'internet of things' sensors and data analysis, and the creation of a central water-quality data base.

At the end of 2021, Blue Futures opened up to the general public with a fascinating series of Spring Seminars (find recordings on UOW's website); a poetry competition; and the Ways to Water exhibition at Wollongong Art Gallery.

Michelle will now take what they've learnt to her



next project in 2022. "It's an Australian Research Council linkage grant between UOW and the Land Council, as well as some of the South Coast mob, which is about looking at our ocean governance through an Aboriginal lens.

"Reciprocity is an absolutely central part of Aboriginal ontologies. This notion of you give and you take. Some of the ideas that I'm really excited to explore is what would a fisheries management process look like if reciprocity was embedded in it? What would that look like in law and policy? What would that look like in a government system?

"We've got lots and lots of questions."

Science meets art

Curated by Agnieszka Golda and Jo Stirling, the Ways to Water exhibition features 40 historical and contemporary artworks and makes great use of augmented reality technology. QR codes, artworks in themselves, invite viewers to venture deeper - to listen to a scientist's story, for example.

Michelle's tip: "Make sure you've got a charged device. It's a great exhibition.'

Hugh: "There's a mangrove tree in there [the gallery], but you can't see it until you scan the QR code with your phone. It's beautiful."

Ways to Water is at Wollongong Art Gallery until February 6.

What's on at the orchard

By Jo Fahey at Darkes Glenbernie Orchard



We are looking forward to January when white peaches bring in the New Year!

Later in January, towards Australia Day we will begin picking our first apples of the season. These are our 'gala', a sweet crunchy apple, the perfect size for a lunchbox or snack.

You can visit 'The Paddock' by Earthwalker & Co, have a bite to eat, sip a cider and there will also be days when we'll have live music! Watch out for local live artists from Tillee Music, and young talent like Olivia Coggan and more!

Go to darkes.com.au





Paddock (8.30am-2pm, Fri-Sun). Photos:

Sasha Faint, Oliver Risi

Risky walkway at Wombarra

A local resident is worried that a dangerous section of footpath has fallen into the 'too hard' basket. The Illawarra Flame reports

During the past 18 months, Wombarra resident Irene Lesniewicz has written almost a dozen letters to our local and state governments, flagging a problematic and potentially dangerous section of footpath on Lawrence Hargrave Drive.

No safe solution has been found.

Irene told Wollongong City Council that one section – between 623 and 625 LHD at Wombarra – was particularly dangerous to navigate when residents put out their bins.

In a letter to council that included the photo above, Irene wrote: "You will also see that one of the delineators has been hit so many times by cars that it has been moved to the opposite side of the footpath, how is this safe for pedestrians?"

"I initially contacted council approximately June 2020," Irene told the *Illawarra Flame*. "I have written to council and Cr Mithra Cox 10 times and once to Transport NSW recently."

Irene is worried about pedestrian safety during summer, when thousands of tourists descend on the region. "The new sub-division (Wombarra Vista) opposite this section of footpath will add further chaos and danger to the community and pedestrians. I would like council to address this as a matter of urgency, and not wait for a serious injury or death before they consider it a priority.

"A perfect solution would be a new footpath with barriers, however, council insists this is not possible. A minimum of kerb and guttering which



outlines a definite road and footpath should be considered immediately, and at least re-install the delineator to the correct side of the footpath."

The issue is complicated by a shared responsibility – Council maintains the footpath; Transport for NSW looks after the state road.

"Transport NSW will inspect the road adjacent to the footpath between 637 and 619 Lawrence Hargrave Drive in the coming weeks to help inform future work at this location," a TfNSW spokesperson said last month.

A council spokesperson said: "This particular location is particularly challenging as the road drops away significantly where it connects to private property. The terrain impacts the potential to build a pathway without affecting resident access. Council has no plan to construct a footpath at this location at this point in time."

Readers can find Council's full statement on our website, theillawarraflame.com.au

You glow girls!

A new wellness program for tweens and young teen girls is starting at Helensburgh in 2022

Created by Sammy Mahler, of 'A Fountain of Youth', the new Glow wellness program will be run in partnership with the 2508 Salvation Army. It aims to empower and enrich the lives of growing teens.

"This has been a passion of mine for more than 10 years," says Sammy, who recently graduated as a qualified youth worker.

"Most people know me as a stylist, but my real passion lies in journeying with young girls to have the resilience and belief within themselves to navigate their teenage years."

The course guides participants through self-worth, resilience, healthy friendships, body acceptance, boundaries and social media.

"I aim to provide a safe and supportive environment where each young girl will learn to feel empowered and inspired.

"And, as I'm a true creative," laughs Sammy, "there will be a session on fashion styling in which I aim to help them create a sense of self-awareness about their own style."

The Salvation Army's 2508 Mission Leader, Lauren Martin, says she jumped at the chance to partner with 'A Fountain of Youth' on the project. "This is such a unique and much-needed initiative.

"As The Salvation Army, we want to invest in building healthy communities, particularly in building up youth and young people in Helensburgh. We have sponsored the first cohort for 'Glow' and I look forward to working alongside Sammy as a co-facilitator."

The 10-week Glow Program starts in early January. Facebook 'A Fountain Of Youth' or contact Sammy, 0418 344 714; sammahle@bigpond.com

Heathcote Community Update A letter from Lee Evans – your State MP

Dear Residents. I trust you've had a safe and happy Christmas enjoyed with family and friends and I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy New Year!

There is much for our community to look forward to in 2022 as we glimpse the other side of the pandemic. In our region there are a number of very exciting events planned for 2022 including the always popular "Illawarra Folk Festival" in January and "Wings Over Illawarra" in November.

The NSW Government is amping up NSW's live music

scene with the return of "Great Southern Nights". A star studded line up of Australian artists are playing from 18th March to 10th April throughout NSW. The Illawarra will host some amazing artists including Missy Higgins, Jessica Mauboy and James Reyne, Baker Boy and Sneaky Sound System.

For details visit www. greatsouthernnights.com.au Then in September Wollongong will host more than 1,000 of the world's best cyclists at the 2022 Road World Championships. This Olympic scale sports and



community event will have cyclists from more than 70 nations competing. Watched by more than 300 million viewers around the globe, the event will showcase the Illawarra at its best.

For details visit www. wollongong2022.com.au

Lee Evans. Member for Heathcote

www.leeevansheathcote.com.au (02) 9548 0144 Shops 1 & 2, 17-23 Station St, Engadine NSW 2233

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Neighbourhood Forum 1 report

By NF1 convenor Warwick Erwin

Change in Zoning names

As part of the State's Employment Lands Reforms, as 1 December 2021 the E zones have now been renamed to:

- C1 National Parks and Nature Reserves
- C2 Environmental Conservation
- · C3 Environmental Management
- C4 Environmental Living

This change frees up the use of E for the proposed Employment zone changes.

Darkes Forest Planning Proposal

A Draft Planning Proposal for Lot 86 DP 752054, 117 Darkes Forest Road, Darkes Forest. The proposal seeks to enable development of a cider processing facility and associated uses on the site. Submissions will be received until 31 January 2022, via writing or email. The site is legally described as Lot 86 DP 752054 at 117 Darkes Forest Road, Darkes Forest. It is 41.4 hectares. Darkes Forest Road bisects the parcel of land into two portions. The northern portion contains the former mine buildings and infrastructure. The southern side portion contains an occupied dwelling house. Go to our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au

Liquor Licence Application for corner of Walker and Short St by Coles Group

APP-0008817690: Status shows Under Assessment on ILGA noticeboard at time of writing.

Thirroul Plaza development

This development was taken to the Land and Environment Court when the developer enacted their right of the "deemed refusal" clause of the EP&A Act last year. An NF1 member has brought up a concern: that Lawrence Hargrave Drive is the major evacuation route in a bushfire (as the motorway and National Park would be closed as

bushfires usually come from the west or southwest) and that this has not been taken into account as part of the development's traffic impact.

Planning Proposal request for land located at Lot 10 DP 260258 and Lot 24 DP 260258, 20 Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Stanwell Tops. Also known as Wagon Wheels.

Council will now prepare a report for the Wollongong Local Planning Panel (WLPP) seeking the panel's recommendations. After the report to the WLPP, a report will be prepared for Council's consideration. The report to Council will consist of an initial assessment of the draft Planning Proposal request, which will include the WLPP recommendations and comments received as part of the preliminary notification. This report will help Council determine whether to start preparing a draft Planning Proposal. If Council resolves to prepare a draft Planning Proposal, it will be referred to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) seeking a Gateway Determination. Should DPIE issue a Gateway determination to progress the draft Planning Proposal, a formal exhibition period will be held, providing a chance for community input.

DA-2021/1058 Lot 2 Short Lane, Helensburgh

This is the laneway next to Bear Trader. Council officers will now assess the DA. Council has refused previous DAs for this laneway. We wait.

UCI 2022 Road World Championship Courses Helensburgh will be the start of the road races for the weekend of 24 and 25 September. Find course details at wollongong 2022.com.au ♣

NF1's first meeting of 2022 will be at 7pm on 9 February at Helensburgh Community Centre.

Justices of the Peace at libraries

NSW Justices Association Wollongong Branch provides free JP services at Community Desks at Thirroul, Corrimal, Wollongong and Dapto libraries.

The association holds a monthly meeting for its members and other JPs on the second Tuesday of the month at the City Life Church in Jardine Street in Fairy Meadow from 7pm.

Meetings include some training and special training sessions also take place throughout the year to keep JPs up to date with any changes in the law regarding the duties of a

JP. Help is also available for the exam that new JPs have to take, and then repeat every five years to keep their accreditation.

All services given by JPs are free of charge. They cannot give legal advice and there are certain forms and documents that they are unable to sign or witness but they can assist you in finding where these can be dealt with.

Representatives of the NSW Justices Association will be available at Thirroul Library on January 6 from 10am to 1pm.

More info: Ray Vaughan on 0419 293 524. 🍍



WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Draft Planning Proposal 2016/4 for land at 117 Darkes Forest Road. Darkes Forest

Council is seeking feedback on a draft Planning Proposal for Lot 86 DP 752054, 117 Darkes Forest Road, Darkes Forest. The proposal seeks to enable development of a cider processing facility and associated uses on the site.

The draft Planning Proposal is on public exhibition from Wednesday 1 December 2021 to Monday 31 January 2022. Copies of the draft Planning Proposal can be viewed at:

- Helensburgh and Wollongong Libraries during library opening hours
- Council's Customer Service Centre, Ground Floor Administration Building, 41 Burelli Street. Wollongong, on weekdays between 9am and 5pm
- Council's website **our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au** and follow the link from the front page. Submissions should be addressed to: The General Manager, Wollongong City Council, Locked Bag 8821, Wollongong DC NSW 2500 or emailed to records@wollongong.nsw.gov.au. Please note that submissions become public documents and may be viewed by other

Submissions close: Monday 31 January 2022.

Enquiries: Phone (02) 4227 7111.



persons on request.

RayWhite.

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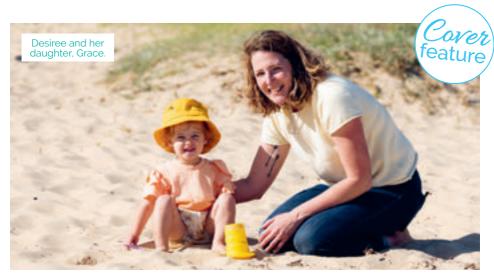
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Every Wednesday night, a Thirroul mother makes sure her car is packed with toys, towels, baby wipes, sunshade and a surfboard in an attempt to help the next morning run smoothly.

It can take a lot to get a tantrum-prone toddler out the door on time, but Desiree Savage doesn't like to let other people down – plus she's itching to get a wave.

Desiree is the co-ordinator of the Coal Coast Surfing Mums and can often be seen at a northern Illawarra beach on Thursdays and Fridays surrounded by children.

"I took over as coordinator in January of this year," she said.

"The organisation has had a presence in Wollongong for several years now, but I'm constantly surprised by how many people don't know we exist?

Getting wet is obviously a big part of what they do, Desiree said, but it's also about building friendships and supporting each other as parents.

The volunteer-run not-for-profit organisation was founded in 2008 in Byron Bay, by two mums who discovered regularly meeting to take turns surfing and watching each other's kids helped revive the soul.

The organisation now has close to 40 groups around Australia, where members buddy up to swap time in the water while their children enjoy supervised play.

Desiree said joining Surfing Mums helped her to feel herself again and meet some "kick-ass people with beautiful kids that my daughter loves too".

After learning to surf in Western Australia, she's been a "casual" surfer for about 15 years, as for a long time martial arts was her main focus.

"After I had my daughter I struggled with

post-natal depression as well as recovering from a birth injury," she said.

"I couldn't go back to my love of kick-boxing so returned to the ocean where I've always felt at peace. The more I surfed, the more I felt like me again."

She said any mum, dad or carer is welcome to join whether they're a surfer, bodyboarder or just like to swim. Even mums-to-be can join and use the "me time" to have a walk by themselves or grab

Current members range in occupations and interests but they all share a love for the sea.

"Ocean people are like-minded people so everyone I've met through the organisation is really cool," Desiree said.

"Earlier this year, I was lucky to tag along with the Newcastle Surfing Mums (sans kids) to Mollymook on a retreat with former world champion Pam Burridge. That was an epic getaway with some awesome women and it lifted my surfing game."

She said some people join a gym or play soccer, but she chose waves.

"I'm not going to lie, sometimes there is a bit of chaos if all the kids decide they want to be cranky," Desiree said.

"But once you've had time in the water you feel relaxed again, so you don't mind."

It's \$52 to become a Surfing Mums member, with \$5 donated to the Waves of Wellness mental health charity. Memberships also include a member gift, public liability insurance for the group, help fund a sun shade and flag, as well as give access to getaways and giveaways. For more information, email CoalCoastSurfingMums@gmail.com or visit www.surfingmums.com



What does being part of the Surfing Mums group mean to you?



Becky

"My little one's one of the younger ones, so I haven't actually been out surfing yet. It's been really good to connect, just to see how other mums are managing to do that. It is nice to have something to think about other than being a parent.

"I have done a little bit of surfing but I'm more into kite-surfing. I don't know if that will work with the mums group, because usually when you want to go surfing is when it's not windy and kite-surfing's when it is windy. But there's another mum in the group who has kite-surfed in the past and it'd be great to connect with her and try that again."



Anna

"Being part of surfing mums means that there is always space in the week to pause and be by the coast with a great group of people. The beauty of the group is that it is very relaxed and supportive.

"You don't have to be a surfer either, often people will just go for a walk on the beach or a have a dip in the ocean."







"For me it's about connection, and about recognising the kind of duality of caring for a little one and also being able to enjoy the outdoors as an individual, as a woman, and as a surfer.

"It's about connecting with other mums who love to be outdoors and love the water and love surfing.

"There's the social connection ... but also the ability to be able to get out and have half an hour, 45 minutes in the water to myself and that I come back as a much calmer, more present parent.

"I did Surfing Mums in Maroubra as well ... all up in the Surfing Mums overall, it's been six and a half years."



Nancy

"The transformation into motherhood can be so isolating. We start to put a new human ahead of ourselves in just about every area. I really struggled to get back out into the world and out into nature and doing things that nurtured my body so that I could be a better human for my little person.

"Surfing Mums really gives us that opportunity to connect with nature, to bury our feet in the sand, to let that cold water just wash over our body and soothe so many parts of ourselves whilst having a community of like-minded women, of other people who are going through this early parenting journey.

"And that's really hard to find."



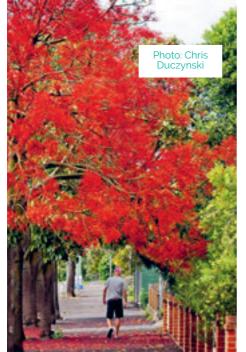
Essi

"For me, it's about the friendships that I've made by being part of a couple of different groups - first in the Northern Beaches and now in Wollongong.

"It's a great group of likeminded women. I've had the opportunity to be able to go surfing, especially when my children were little, when the challenges are quite hard.

"It's for mental and physical wellbeing." "





What's in the name

The editors share the story behind the magazine's rebrand

It was time for a change. Our family business had been producing community news for the northern suburbs for almost a decade. Both magazines had outgrown their postcodes. *2508* was heading north to Waterfall (aka 2233) and *2515* was going south to 6000 people in Bulli (aka 2516).

Then came the Black Summer, when what our young boy called the Blood Sun rose daily and smoke shrouded the coast. We went into crisis mode, covering the massive loss of wildlife on the South Coast and introducing Free Ads for Firies, a small contribution to Rural Fire Service volunteers.

Crisis mode never let up.

Then came Covid. Back in March 2020, hundreds of regional papers instantly folded around the country. Responsible local journalism had never been needed more, but faced its biggest crisis since the advent of the internet.

It was something of a small independent miracle that we survived this time, continuing to publish 2508 and 2515 each and every month throughout the pandemic, come rain, hail or home schooling. Like many local businesses, however, we took a big hit during 2021's long lockdown.

Then came the paper price crisis. The news broke in November, with costs increasing by up to 40%, driven by a perfect storm of Covid drama, including

supply chain problems, shipping and taxes.

After consulting readers, our solution has been to retain the editorial quality and – unavoidably, as print becomes a premium product – raise the advertising rates. We've chosen not to diminish the news, lower paper quality or quit letterboxing. Because we know – after 30 years of working at titles in London, Cape Town and Sydney – that those decisions spell the end of local papers.

So, welcome to the first *Illawarra Flame*, a merger of 2508 *District News* and 2515 *Coast News*. The new name is a tribute to the region's famous flame trees, and also to its natural beauty, indigenous heritage and community spirit.

We're not the first to find inspiration in the iconic tree. The name already has a strong appeal at a community level in the Illawarra. It's been adopted by sports teams, cheerleaders, a beekeeper, a winemaker, a business coach, UOW's sustainable house and, of course, those environmental thought leaders who founded Thirroul's Flame Tree Co-op more than a decade ago.

Now the new *Flame* has launched, we will be introducing a series of digital innovations to support it, from QR codes, linking to 'Long Reads' and videos online, to a newsletter delivering a weekly mix of updates and events to email inboxes.

A huge thank you to the many people who have talked to us about the region, and helped shape the rebrand. A few of those include Thirroul Village Committee's Annette Jones and Murray Jones; Neighbourhood Forum 1 convenor Warwick Erwin; Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council CEO Paul Knight; Green Connect general manager Kylie Flament; Clifton School of Arts president David Roach; Destination Wollongong general manager Mark Sleigh; South Coast Writers Centre director Sarah Nicholson; Banksia Bush Care's Kieran Tapsell, Jim Powell and Jenny Donohoe at Helensburgh Historical Society; former NICC president Greg Watts; Symbio's Matt Radnidge; Glenbernie's Jo Fahey; and the journalists who came to our first media networking lunch last year.

For a long time, local newspapers have survived on the basis of going where Facebook and Google cannot (into letterboxes); producing grassroots news grounded in fact; sharing stories elevated by the status of being 'fit to print'. No one's grandmother, let's face it, is impressed to learn that your story has appeared on Instagram.

Local news stories are cut out, treasured and posted to friends and family around the world. Shortly before going to print in December, we received a handwritten request from a Helensburgh reader in rehab, asking if we could send her some copies of 2508 to read in hospital. We packed up a parcel of local news and posted it the same day.

Our readers are why we carry on.

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On Board With Surfrider

By Susie Crick, president of the foundation's South Coast Branch

Happy New Year – I'm excited that Surfrider South Coast can share in the first issue of the *Flame*. I've got some great news and an invite too!

Last May the surfing and ocean-loving community came together for a paddle out at the Farm in Killalea State Park to oppose the proposed tourist park development on sacred Dharawal land... and we won!

We are pleased to announce that National Parks has taken over the care of Killalea State Park and the community can continue to enjoy access and the beauty of the natural landscape.

To celebrate we ask that you bring your board to the 'YES' paddle out party at the Farm on February 6 at 11am.

Harbour clean-up nets 34kg of rubbish

Being a volunteer for the Surfrider Foundation not only allows you to make your stretch of the beach a better place, it has also brings together like-minded people. On World Oceans Day last year, a group of us gathered at Wollongong Harbour to do a clean up. Despite Surfrider South Coast recently having installed 15 Ocean Friendly Drain Buddies to capture and sieve garbage before it hits the beaches and the harbour, we still managed to collect 34 kilograms of garbage.

While many Australian beaches appear to be quite clean, recent research calculates that 70 percent of garbage that enters our oceans sinks to the sea bed, 15 percent floats and the other 15 percent ends up on beaches. That is what we can see anyway; however, the microfibres, tyre dust and unidentifiable microplastics that are not visual are expected to double by 2025.

The impacts of plastic not only affect the health of our oceans and marine ecosystems, it also affects human health. As individuals we can make choices with our wallets by refusing to buy plastic products,

and with our pens by writing and posting our dislike of unnecessary plastics to companies who refuse to move away from plastic.

Next Clean Up on Saturday, January 29

Every bit of plastic we use now will be there for future generations. As a society we are far too reliant on plastic, so unless we STOP and find solutions that are compatible with nature, the planet will continue to choke on plastic. We cannot recycle our way out of this mess, and reducing use of something so permanent is a temporary fix.

Our Earth contains one contiguous body of water – we are one ocean and we all live downstream. Plastic is leaching into us and our oceans. We need to reuse what we already have, repair what we can, reduce our dependence on plastic, recycle whatever plastic we must buy and REFUSE plastic whenever we can.

Please meet us at the Wollongong Harbour boat ramp for our January clean up on Saturday, 29 January at 9am. See you there!





Become a member and get involved! For more info: www.surfrider.org.au

The 'corked wine' challenge

By Green Connect general manager Kylie Flament

It's funny how things work out sometimes. You do someone a favour and that sets off a chain of events that comes back at you in ways you can only shake your head at in bemusement.

Recently a neighbour called me up in a panic because the demolition crew had been in and knocked down their house and she had forgotten about some well-established potted plants in the backyard that they had intended to save. In the chaos of moving house in the midst of a pandemic it had slipped her mind until 6pm on a Tuesday night. I agreed to pop over the road and see what I could find, locating her three most precious plants in the rubble but also discovering four unopened bottles of white wine on her driveway.

I rang to update her. She told me the wine was corked and they were throwing it away. Me being me, interested in zero waste and home cooking projects, I asked if I could take them home and make wine vinegar from them instead.

As I walked down the road with four bottles of wine in my arms, another set of neighbours stopped me, chuckling, to ask what I was up to. I told them, offered them a bottle (which they laughed at and declined) and went on my way.

That night I opened a bottle and had several things to tell my first neighbour. Firstly, the bad news... after searching online I had discovered that you cannot make wine vinegar out of corked wine. Corked wine contains a mould that keeps its odour and taste even when turned into vinegar. Then the good news... the wine wasn't corked! And finally the best news... the wine was not only drinkable, it was absolutely delicious! In its old age, this chardonnay had turned into a rich dessert wine.

It turned out that by "corked" my neighbour had actually meant "past its best". Given how well it went down in my house, I would say its teenage years might have been rough but it had come into its own as a 20-year-old vintage. She didn't want the other three bottles back, despite my assurances, and my husband and I agreed they were too good for vinegar, so we gained some wine but lost an opportunity to make wine vinegar for the first time.

The following night though, there was a knock at the door. "These two reds are past their best. I thought you might want to have a go at making red wine vinegar too! To be honest, I've been wondering what to do with them for ages, so this is perfect."

It was my other neighbour, bearing gifts. And I can report I tasted his wine too and it was truly the worst red wine I've ever tasted, so there's now some red wine vinegar ageing its way (hopefully) to perfection in the back of my pantry. *



BEE HAPPY: Summer workshops planned at Green Connect's permaculture farm in Warrawong include Introduction to Beekeeping (15 January) and In-depth Beekeeping (5 February). Book online at green-connect.com.au



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When Two Norms Meet

By Paul Blanksby, Helensburgh Men's Shed Publicity officer turned emergency services guide

Thursday, 2 December. Weather: fine, warm and sultry. The sea was placid that day, the bush bursting with growth and the creeks flowing. It was a lovely day for Norm and Kerry to explore the Kelly's Falls area.

Keen bushwalkers, the couple enjoy life in Hillcrest Village and love to explore the environment. But this day of soaking in nature's pleasures was to have an unexpected ending.

Crossing the creek in Gills Gully, Norm slipped on algae-coated rocks and fell, breaking his left humerus (upper arm bone). Not humorous at all! (Sorry.)

Both Norm and Kerry are made of strong stuff, and Kerry was able to find my phone number and contacted me for assistance in guiding the ambulance service to where they were stuck.

As Norm said: "We hoped we could find a local to help. Your number is in 2508 so we rang another village resident to get it. And, like the genie out of the bottle, you appeared."

I had previously met Norm through the Men's Shed and he knew that I bushwalked too, and had spent time in the Kelly's and Gill's creek areas, exploring around the base of the falls and downstream – a difficult but rewarding hike.

I was keenly anticipating using my newly updated First Aid Training, but those wonderful paramedics were already in the carpark preparing for the Rescue of Norm.

And, unbelievable as it seems, the name of the Ambulance Chief Inspector in charge of the operation was ... Norman!

It was awesome to observe the team going

through their planning and protocols, getting their equipment together and ensuring all involved were kept safe.

Ollie, the Special Operations officer, made certain each twist and turn on the track was marked for a safe retreat. Jessica and Rhian, the paramedics, were wonderful in their gentle treatment of Norm, particularly during the difficult moments when he was carefully moved on a 'Sked' stretcher from his precarious position at the top of a small waterfall onto more level, dry land.

Inspector Norman kept Injured Norm fully informed through each step of the rescue and treatment process, maintaining eye and voice contact with him. Kerry also was reassured and kept aware of all that was happening to her husband.

And Norm's memories of Wollongong Hospital? "They looked after me well at Wollongong Hospital, but by the time they got a cast on it was too late to go home. In the morning, they gave me an excellent white bread and ham and sweet mustard pickle sandwich."

This year's Christmas stocking may have a new pair of hiking shoes in there, hey Norm?

From all of us – thank you to the NSW
Ambulance Service and Wollongong Hospital for a job well done.





Helensburgh Probus

By Helen Durham, Publicity Officer

Our Probus Christmas party at Austinmer's Headlands Hotel was a fabulous day. Eighty-five members attended for a day of great food, lots of laughter and companionship. It was great to celebrate our end-of-year luncheon together after so many other activities had to be cancelled in 2021.

Unfortunately our first walk for many months was cancelled due to the bad weather. Despite the rain, 18 members ventured out and met for an enjoyable lunch at the Woronora RSL Club.

The monthly golf game in November was also cancelled because of bad weather.

Our December bowls at Scarborough – Wombarra Bowling Club was played in lovely sunny conditions. A little breeze was blowing to keep us cool. We had 23 players before our enjoyable lunch with about 18 staying for the afternoon session. Hopefully in the New Year we will be able to enjoy many more activities.

For membership details, please contact John Ingle on 0425 323 352 or visit www. probussouthpacific.org/microsites/helensburghanddistrict

Helensburgh Lions Club Report

By Fran Peppernell, Publicity Officer

Happy New Year for 2022! We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and terrific beginnings for the New Year. As we move into 2022 we are looking forward to organising some fun events for our community.

We are currently hoping to hold a "Mini-Fair" on Easter Saturday, 16 April 2022.

There's lots to organise so we'll keep you posted. We'll also update the community next month with the Winners of the Christmas Raffle.

Keep checking on our Helensburgh Lions Facebook page for updates. We meet every 2nd Monday of the month at Helensburgh Hotel from 6.30pm if you'd like to join us. .



1st Helensburgh Scouts

Bagheera reports

Scouts, Cubs and Joeys had a very busy Term 4 to round out an interesting year. Big thanks to our families who supported these fabulous kids.

Our Scouts took part in the Great Scoutdoors - a virtual competition with participants all over NSW undertaking challenges in patrols.

They were also able to attend the annual Environment Camp in person to complete multiple badge requirements.

In regular meetings they have spent time climbing and preparing for overnight hikes, with one of our Scouts planning his peak award Adventurous Journey in the school holidays.

Our Joeys and Cubs had their term campfire in the second last week of term and the Cubs on cooking duties did well.

The marshmallows were also a success, although we had the usual number of them sacrificed to the fire from being left in there too long (marshmallows – not Cubs and Joevs!)

We are looking forward to a very busy 2022, with camp dates already booked.

New Joeys, Cubs and Scouts are welcome; contact bruce.crawley@nsw.scouts.com.au



aces of the Rebellion

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is a global movement that uses controversial but non-violent direct action – such as blockading traffic in major cities to make governments take climate action. What drives an ordinary person to join XR? Kristen McDonald introduces a local member

Austinmer father of two Pat Grant is an artist who donates his creative skills to the issues he's passionate about. When he's not creating, you'll find him skateboarding or regenerating bushland.

"My art practice is telling stories through comics and illustrations. I teach in the Animation program at UTS and I'm also part of a small visual storytelling business. My art practice is directed towards two things at the moment: environmental justice and community building. Making graphics for XRNI and other protest movements means I can pursue both of those directions at the same time.

"I have always been a bit of a hopeless activist because I get overwhelmed by complexity and I don't like planning events, but I can do things like run camp kitchens, dig toilets and make drawings. I like to contribute in practical ways so that movement organisers feel supported.

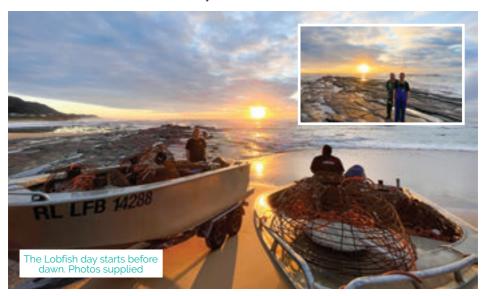
"I think the usual channels for change sometimes forget about community. All of the great and successful social movements share the quality of bringing people together. Protest shouldn't burn us out. It should fill our bellies, warm our hearts and make us excited about life. Part of political organising is doing the slow practical work of creating physical community spaces, safe spaces for the sharing of ideas, listening and learning. We need these places to imagine futures that don't exist yet.

"I want to see northern suburbs residents slowing down and listening to each other more." .

Visit www.xrnorthernillawarra.org

Whole lobster love

By Caroline Baum



You may have a noticed a small fishing vessel bobbing about in our bays on the swell in the past few months. It's the BJ2, one of two boats (the other bigger vessel, the Junee, is based out of Kiama) belonging to the father-and-son team who have rebranded the family lobster-catching business as Lobfish, in response to the double whammy of the collapse of the Chinese market and Covid.

Father Mark Horne has been a lobster fisherman from his home in Wombarra for 20 years, supplying the Sydney Fish Market. Son Bradley joined him five years ago. When the export market out of Sydney tanked, (pun intended), it was time for a rethink, coinciding with a fresh wave of residents moving to the Illawarra with an appetite for local and sustainable seafood.

"The public created the awareness and the demand," says Mark, admitting that he has been on a steep learning curve to meet consumer expectations. "They want to know where the lobster is from, is it caught sustainably, is the supply chain humane. We have a very positive story to tell."

His pride and enthusiasm for the quality of local produce is infectious. Turns out that the bays and deeper water are the ideal environment to produce the juiciest, most tender specimens, thanks to careful husbandry of fishing quotas.

"Back in the 90s, numbers were depleted, but they have been built up by protecting the breeding stock and putting a limit on the upper size of what is caught. From Coalcliff to Sandon Point, stocks are at their best in over 30 years."

The Lobfish day is long, starting at 3am preparing the bait of salmon or ocean mullet, and going out for up to 12 hours, followed by marketing (with the help of Bradley's partner Rachel Hardy, who came up with the logo and manages the brand's presence on Instagram) and deliveries.

Consumers can choose to have their lobster live or cooked. Orders are taken online, three days ahead.

To date, 25 per cent of Lobfish's business is in direct sales to the public, 25 to local restaurants including Beaches at Thirroul, and 50 per cent to the Sydney Fish Market.

"Our most popular with local customers is the small and medium sizes. Larger lobsters suit cultural events like big Asian weddings.

"We love it when clients are brave enough to buy the lobster green, we explain how to euthanase it gently in the freezer, which keeps the flesh tender - if you stress any animal, that is reflected in the texture of the meat, whether it's lobster or beef.

"My favourite way to eat it is the simplest – cooked on the barbie or slowly baked with butter to keep it moist."

Gourmet cooking does not get tastier than that. .



Going solar

By Michelle Newland, Operations Manager, Mountain View Crematoria

H.Parsons Funeral Directors is committed to supporting the community through the Parsons' Pillars of Environmental Sustainability, Social Responsibility, Local Community and Local Business.

Accessing renewable energy, reducing our carbon footprint and ensuring everything we do can be as environmentally sustainable as possible has been a major priority for H.Parsons Funeral Directors. In July 2021, we began sourcing quotes from local providers for the installation of solar panels to be carried out across all of our chapels and facilities.

In September 2021, the transition to solar power began, with local company, Clean Coast Solar & Electrical being successful in attaining the work to carry out the installs across all of our facilities. This project has been guided strongly by our values, and our commitment to Environmental Sustainability and supporting Local Business as part of the Parsons' Pillars.

Mountain View Crematoria (MVC) was the first of our facilities to be converted to solar power in September, and already we are seeing a 43% reduction in electricity costs for MVC alone. The installs across H.Parsons

Wollongong, Bulli and Dapto chapels and our other locations has all been carried out since then, with the same level of professionalism and proficiency by Nick and Shane of Clean Coast Solar & Electrical (www.cleancoastsolar.com).

Our organisation is now able to track the efficiencies of this system via the Solar Analytics application, which provides comprehensive data associated with daily energy use, solar savings and the overall system performance.

With our first step towards achieving a carbon neutral outcome well underway, H.Parsons is also working hard to contribute to this goal in other ways.

With guidance by the NSW Government Resource Efficiency Policy (GREP), all new appliances for water meet the WELS (4.5*) or above, all lighting across our facilities have had the incandescent and halogen light bulbs replaced with LED and we have installed green waste and recycling bins at every site.

This approach to sustainability is part of our culture and we are always looking for ways to implement innovative practices that are environmentally friendly. We welcome ideas and partnering with the community to achieve this.





H.Parsons has chapels in Bulli, Wollongong, Warilla and Dapto Phone 4228 9622 or visit hparsons.com.au

The Spirits of a Pub

By architect Ben Wollen

Many of us have been waiting with bated breath (or should that be thirst?) for the grand opening of the Imperial at Clifton. It's been fascinating to watch the renovation evolve via the Imperial's Instagram account. Many of us would have got excited when they saw bottles of spirits lined up in the windows – but alas they sat there taunting us, suspended on the horizon of the sea while we endured long lockdowns.

Finally, I got to attend the preview event, which was supposed to be on 24 June but ended up being in November (thanks Covid). Truth be told, I've been writing this article, in my head, ever since I found out who was behind the renovation. Welsh Major is a Sydney firm behind some extraordinary works. One of my favourite projects of theirs is the renovation of the old police station in the Rocks. They are adept at working with heritage buildings, balancing the preservation and form of the existing fabric while inserting contemporary additions that marry the old and the new in what I would describe as a complementary juxtaposed dance.

Apart from the visible spirits suspended in the windows and perhaps the spirits inhabiting the metaphysical realm, what I love about this new Imperial are the details. It might seem strange but one of the details that has had me excited for some time is the custom steel capitals atop the balcony posts. A lot of you are going to say, 'What?!?'

Perhaps for you it's the bay windows overlooking

the ocean, or the truss bridge-like spirit holders behind the bar, or the round oculus introducing the sky deep into the building's

Maybe your preference is for the interweaving of the pub's history into its interior or the murals depicting the same. You might love the older details beautifully renovated like the ceiling roses, arches, fireplaces, timber stairs or decorative plasterwork.

If you're not that fussed about the building you might just love being outside in the new landscaping or in a window seat, spotting whales.

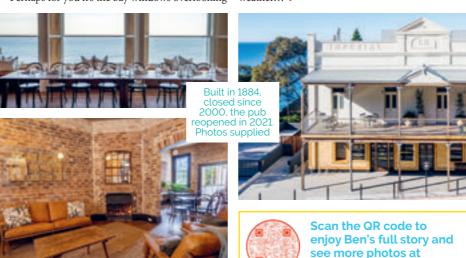
Of all the great things in this building you might ask, why the steel thingy bit on top of the balcony posts? At this point I could give you some lengthy architectural interpretation of these somewhat innocuous minor elements. I could suggest they represent the architects' response to stitching the new into the old and a contemporary structural response to the traditional iron lacework that would have stood there in the past.

But, hey, I'm not a dedicated architectural critic, so I'm just going to say that I like them and I've liked them for a looooong time from a distance and they look just as good upfront as they do from Lawrence Hargrave Drive at 50km/h.

Oh, and while I am definitely not a food critic, you have to give the restaurant a go!

Now, if we could only get some sunny summer weather... *

theillawarraflame.com.au





John and Justin are giving distilling a pink hot go in Heathcote, writes Iris Huizinga

"Justin loves a good beer, but I've never really liked beer. I'm a big sweet tooth. I love a good cocktail. So for me, it was just about making some more drinks I actually like."

As John Williams says this, he grins widely, then pours me an strikingly pink liqueur. It's raspberry, and it's delicious. Not too sweet, not too alcoholic. The coffee liqueur is equally amazing.

John and Justin Atic are the founders of Scylla distillery and are just as likeable as their liqueurs.

"There weren't really any liqueurs here in Australia, especially not Australian-made," says Justin.

John: "The raspberries are from a farm in northern NSW. We work with farmers directly."

They distill all their liqueurs in Heathcote. Justin says: "We make drinks for the everyday person."

"But we focus on things that the average person doesn't care about," John adds.

"For instance, the average person doesn't care that you carbon filter it five times instead of four, they care that they don't wake up with a hangover and that it tastes really smooth.'

"And that it is made local," says Justin.

John: "Yes, something we're really big on and that we love is being next to the Royal National Park. We donate 2 per cent of our profits to the park."

Justin: "Ever since high school, John really wanted to distill spirits. Both of my grandparents dabbled in it throughout their life, making rakia, which is this Eastern European spirit. About a year and a half ago, John says, 'I really want to start distilling.' And I said, 'That sounds awesome, let's give it a go.'

"It's been awesome. It's been so much fun so far. It is all self-funded, just the two of us, as well as John's wife, Zoe."

As well as raspberry and coffee liqueurs, Scylla also sells vodka. Shop at www.scylla.com.au, and at Dan Murphy's and BWS in the Shire.

Zookeepers

Saving our species is end-game work, writes Symbio's Kevin Fallon



As part of our Conservation Partnership with the Aussie Ark (Barrington Tops) Zookeepers Zoe and Maritza made the five-hour trip north-west to help the Aussie Ark team with vital conservation and breeding programs conducted within their 500-hectare site.

The two Symbio Zookeepers assisted in the care and management of some of Australia's most endangered species such as the Tasmanian Devil, Eastern Quoll, Rufous Bettong, Parma Wallaby, Southern Brown Bandicoot and more, while also sharing their knowledge and expertise.

For Zoe, Maritza and the team at Symbio, partnering on a program such as this creates real-world change, and being part of saving species from extinction is end-game work. It is one thing to be able to educate people to advocate for animals, but playing an integral part in endangered species conservation projects is at the heart of all that we do.

Zoe Ridge said: "It is a huge honour to be able to help contribute to such an amazing cause and potentially save these amazing creatures from extinction. I'd like to think that the work we do today will enable my grandchildren's grandchildren to not just think these animals live on the pages of a

Australian mammals are unique and our fragile ecosystems are heavily reliant on their inclusion. With an estimated three billion animal lives lost in the 2019 bushfires, now more than ever they need our help. For more information on how you can help, visit Aussieark.org.au

Q&A with a local GP

Dr Jennifer Bowler is the practice principal and owner of Seacliff Healthcare in Thirroul



Please tell us a bit about yourself. I am a mother of four great kids (plus two

cavoodles) and resident of Coledale, who started Seacliff Healthcare in September 2021. Originally from Brisbane, I have been a GP for 21 years and most recently set up and worked at Campus Clinic at the University of Wollongong. We moved to Wollongong in 2015 when my husband, who is an Intensive Care Physician, got a permanent position at Wollongong Hospital. We are passionate about the beauty of the landscape here in Wollongong and appreciate the relaxed lifestyle and vibrant local community.

How did you come to open a medical practice in Thirroul?

A medical practice in Railway Parade came and sadly went in 2020 during the initial Covid outbreak and the opportunity presented to start a new practice there. I was aware that local residents can have difficulty getting an appointment in the existing clinics in Thirroul and the population is increasing. I thought another practice would be welcome. Campus Clinic was a fantastic medical

service for the students and staff at UOW, but unfortunately was too small to be financially viable for the long-term. After seeking assistance from the UOW executive, we made the very difficult decision to close Campus Clinic and move the practice to Thirroul.

How many GPs are on the team at Seacliff Healthcare, and what are their specialties?

There are currently two doctors – Dr Brendan Leslie, and myself – and we each work five days per week. We are both general practitioners and see patients at all stages of life.

Brendan was born and bred in the northern Illawarra and is particularly interested in adolescent medicine. When conditions allow, he and his family travel to the Northern Territory to work in remote Aboriginal communities once a year. I have special interests in skin, women's and children's health and have diplomas in these.

We are also excited about our new female doctor starting in February.

You opened the practice during 2021's long lockdown – how did that go?

In retrospect, it was a crazy time to open a new practice! Everyone was at home and few people knew we were open, but we continued to see our patients from Campus Clinic.

We were authorised to give Pfizer early on, which brought in some local people.

How busy has it been since?

We are going really well but would love to meet more local residents! We have on-the-day appointments available every day and are able to see emergency cases. Please ring us if it looks like there are no appointments online – we are happy to squeeze in a few more appointments! We do face-to-face, video and telephone appointments.

After two years of the pandemic, what is the biggest issue in local health?

Locally, we have been fairly shielded from the worst of Covid, and the mental health effects of social isolation, and the stress of uncertainty about the future and the physical effects of being at home more, eating and drinking more and exercising less, seem to have been the greatest health issues we see. Those Covid kilos are catching up with people now. The effects of delays in non-urgent procedures and health screening are likely to become apparent over the next few years.





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2022 property market predictions

While the commentary around price falls is again ramping up, the reality is that at this stage it's looking unlikely that property prices in our area will see a sharp decline in 2022. We're heading into a period of strong economic growth, rather than a recession, and business and consumer confidence is high. Nevertheless, it's unlikely that we will continue to see the same rate of growth over the next two years that we have seen over the past two years. Barring an

unforeseen event, there are three things that could slow the market. The first is an increase in the number of properties for sale, the second is an interest rate rise and the third are heavy restrictions on finance. We already saw more properties on the

market especially in the run up to Christmas but it remains to be seen when interest rates will rise and whether lending is tightened further.

New gym for over-60s

Want to be fitter and stronger, enjoy walks with friends, or simply keep up with the grandkids? Meet Thirroul dietitian Lilliana Barone, the founder of Elossa, a gym for ages 60+ opening in Corrimal this month

Please tell us a bit about yourself

I was lucky enough to move to the Illawarra 24 years ago and I feel very privileged to be living in such a beautiful area.

I grew up in country NSW, moved to Sydney to study and completed a Masters in Nutrition and Dietetics at Sydney University. I have worked as a dietitian for nearly 30 years and am a specialist clinical lead in aged care.

My husband and I recently became 'empty nesters' when our third and last child moved to Sydney to study and, being Italian, I miss the chaos of my family around the dinner table.

What inspired you to start Elossa Fitness?

Elossa is a specialised gym for people aged 60+ and it was born out of my passion to improve the



quality of life of older people.

Through my work I have fostered a deep interest in health and wellbeing as we age. I am especially interested in how to maintain muscle strength and function as we get older so that

we not only keep independent but also keep doing the things we enjoy doing for as long as possible.

I have been kicking around the idea for Elossa for five years and I am really excited about finally opening the doors.

How is it different to a regular gym?

Elossa is specifically targeted at the over-60s, which I think is unique. I want Elossa to be a place where members feel comfortable and supported without feeling intimidated. We have incorporated specialised equipment from Finland, which has been developed specifically for senior exercise, and our circuits are designed and run by expert accredited exercise physiologists to safely challenge and achieve results.

My hope is that people who come to Elossa will

Dawn of a new you

The New Year is a chance to reflect and renew, writes Dr John Deady, of Bulli Medical Practice

After the bushfires in late 2019, and two years of Covid, many of us are feeling worn out. We've had to adapt to new living, working and learning conditions and the constant change in is tiring.

Many patients have described feeling particularly fatigued as we've come out of lock-down restrictions and returned to seminormal life.

The New Year provides opportunity to reflect on what we've achieved over the past year, and re-charge for the year ahead.

It is also a time to do-away with bad habits and embrace positive change.

Here are a few tips to help you revitalise in 2022.

- 1. Move more and get outside: Many of us took to walking outside during the lockdown restrictions, discovering new and beautiful walks within the Wollongong LGA. While gyms and pools and group exercise classes have all started up again, you should continue exploring the natural beauty of our neighborhood.
- 2. Eat well: Try to eat more vegetables, including

different types and colours. Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars. Drink more water and less alcohol.

3. Rest well: Sleep helps to restore the body physically, as well as organise the brain. Try to get around seven or eight hours of sleep every night, and practice good sleep hygiene, such as going to bed and waking up at the same time every day.

4. Keep social: Socialising reduces stress and anxiety and improves mental functioning which helps guard against depression, heart disease and dementia.

Remember you can always socialise when exercising, by having an exercise buddy, or participating in a team sport or fitness group.

5. Get a check-up: An annual visit to your doctor is important for all ages. Your GP can check for current or emerging medical problems, assess your risk of future issues, help you maintain a healthy lifestyle and ensure your vaccinations are up to date.

achieve their fitness goals and will also feel a sense of community and connection.

What's been the biggest challenge in launching your new business?

My biggest challenge has been overcoming my own self-doubt. Starting a new business takes a big leap of faith – it is a big commitment of time and money. Having the support of my family and friends has played a big part in my being able to actually do it! I also really believe in what I am doing and that makes it easier to push through all the work required to get it launched in January!

Of course, COVID-19 has also been a big challenge - it delayed Elossa by two years.

Outside the gym, what are your favourite ways to exercise in the Illawarra?

I love walking with friends, family and my dog through the bush or on the beach and, of course, having a coffee afterwards! I regularly do a weights-based circuit. I enjoy mountain biking there are lots of great tracks and I am a new convert to the e-bike! I also enjoy splashing around in the ocean, although I am a bit of a wimp, so I only do this in summer.

Visit www.elossafitness.com



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When we all scream for nice-cream

By Stephanie Meades, functional nutritionist at Thirroul's Life Wellness Co.

Do we need any other reason other than the fact it is summer to enjoy ice-cream? I think not.

So let's create our own healthy home-made ice-cream sticks, using this simple base recipe matched with your favourite flavour combos.

Our all-time favourite combo is raspberry and coconut (as per the recipe below), but you can add just about any fruit or nut mix to create your own delicious delights. Simply use the base ingredients of coconut milk, coconut yoghurt and a little dash of raw honey and then add your diced or crushed fruit to the mix.

Raspberry & Cream Ice-cream

Recipe makes approx 4 ice blocks

Ingredients:

½ cup Coconut milk ½ cup Coconut yoghurt 1 tbsp Raw honey

1/4 cup Fresh (or frozen) Raspberries (roughly diced)

1/4 cup Coconut Flakes (or shredded coconut)

Method:

- Mix together all ingredients in a mixing bowl until well combined.
- Pour the mix into silicon (plastic free) ice-cream moulds and put them in the freezer for half an hour.
- Pull them out of the freezer after 30 minutes and put in the wooden sticks (for handles) and then put them back into the freezer and let them stay in there overnight.
- Be sure to take them out of the freezer 5 minutes before serving so you are able to get them out of the holders easily, and then it's time to enjoy!
- · Other flavour combinations we love are raspberry + basil, lemon + coconut, peaches + passionfruit, mango + macadamia. .











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All set for the Aquath

Iris Huizinga reports on the MMJ Aquathon 2022, when Greater Wollongong comes together for a fun start to Australia Day





The Aquathon is held at Wollongong Harbour. At right: Billy is looking forward to his second swim-run on January 26. Photo supplied



The highly enthusiastic Rob Battocchio has been organising the family-friendly MMJ Aquathon, held at Wollongong Harbour on Australia Day, for more than 20 years.

The exercise physiologist believes that "we bring something that's going to be positive and allows the whole community to get involved, whether it's volunteering, whether it's cheering on the sidelines, whether it's participating".

Billy Anderson (11) is one of about 300 kids who participated in the last aquathon. He says he "felt pretty happy with himself" afterwards, and also pretty shocked and very tired. I didn't think I could do the run because it was quite long for me."

He is looking forward to having another crack at the swim-run this January.

Billy reckons everyone can do it: "I think I got a stitch, like halfway. I put my hands on my head and just kept running so I could finish. I don't really like swimming, probably my least favourite part of it. I've always been nervous about the ocean, something could bite me, but I just put my head down, swim hard and don't think about what could be in there.

Billy's experience encapsulates exactly what MMJ Aquathon stands for: a fun and safe family sporting event, where everyone can have a go. Parents can swim alongside younger kids and there is a five-kilometre coastal fun run for any ability

that kicks off the event at 8am.

The aquathon – the longest adult race is a 900m swim and a 7km run - leaves enough time to relax afterwards with an Australia Day barbecue lunch.

"This year we have the Blue Mile 5 fun-run: jog, walk or bring a stroller," says Rob. "You start, you run and you come back. It is an opportunity for all."

Each year MMJ Aquathon also teams up with a worthy charity. For 2022 this is Lifeline South Coast, raising awareness of mental health and suicide prevention. They have an important message to get across: exercise is highly beneficial for you, and your mental health.

Rob: "We like to strongly advocate the link between exercise and mental health. I challenge anybody to go for a walk, yoga or swim and afterwards ask themselves, do I feel better now?

"The hard bit is just starting. You have to get changed. You have to get on the bike. You jump in that pool. But then you're doing it and you're loving it. And even in the worst conditions, you feel the reward of doing it." *

MMJ Aquathon: Wollongong Harbour and foreshore, January 26. Event distances for all abilities: Kids Aqua, Mini, Short or Long distances plus the new Blue Mile 5 fun-run offers everyone a chance to be involved. More details: aquathon.com.au



Hello Fish

By Duncan Leadbitter

2022 already has some positive aspects (noting I am writing this in December 2021). The new magazine has a lot of potential and Hello Fish will continue to be a feature.

In other good news, a new dive shop has opened in Wollongong to cater for those who want to say hello to the fish via snorkelling or scuba diving.

It's called Dive Near Me and is located at the top of Auburn Street (www.divenearme.com.au). The proprietor, Awie Thomas, brings a lot of international experience to the Illawarra, having been involved in the industry in South Africa, India and Myanmar. The shop will offer fills, gear, dive gossip and training, the latter provided by long-term Wollongong resident, Donna Rainer.

Last Thursday afternoon I stood on the headland at Stanny and noticed a large black stingray cruising the shallows. On Friday morning I went for a snorkel up to the Pinnacles (northern end of

Stanwell Park beach) and noticed a large black stingray resting up against a rock shelf and figured it was the same one.

Separately I was having a look at the website of Food Fairness Illawarra and got interested in the D'harawal seasonal calendar (foodfairnessillawarra. org.au/gooraymurrai), noting the characterisation of this season as a period of storms and heavy rain. I got distracted by the D'harawal dictionary and idly checked to see if there was a word for stingray. Not only was the word – Daringyan – listed but the Latin species name Dasyatis thetidis (now not used as its new scientific name is Bathytoshia lata) connected me to my friend from the beach.

Daringyan can grow very large, weighing over 200kg and measuring 1.8m across and 4m from nose to tail. The females produce sixt to eight pups, which are born after they use up the egg yolk inside the mother, but they are also sustained by a form of uterine milk.

They feed on crustaceans, worms and fish.

Daringyan are uncommon but well known to divers, snorkellers and spearos. They like a free feed and hang around boat ramps and one snaffled a fish from under my float at Bellambi a few months ago. They can be overly curious and intimidating if they smell food and have a very large spike on the tail.

However, they can get very used to people and visitors to Bendalong camping ground may well have interacted quite happily with them in the shallows.



Scan the QR code to watch Duncan's dive video or follow 'Illawarra Underwater' on YouTube

Sea Eels Report

By Peter McDonald, president of the Stanwell Park Sea Eels winter swimming club

Except for a few swims early in the season, we once again had to abandon our weekly swim and other social events.

Although we were denied any of our regular fundraising activities, we didn't wish to let our major charity down and the club presented the CRAM Foundation with \$1000 for the residents.

A report in the *Illawarra Mercury* by CRAM Foundation mentioned the \$1000 the Sea Eels had donated. The funds went towards a sensory garden and we are delighted that our donation will make that little bit of difference to the residents.

The Cram Foundation built the \$16,000 garden

at one of its 15 sites so the people it works with – many of whom have complex needs – could enjoy sensory experiences and time outside.

On a sad note, Adrian, one of CRAM's long-time residents, has passed away. Over many years, Adrian became a great friend to our members, being a bright young man with a sense of humour, and he will be sadly missed.

At our final get-together recently, discussion took place to plan for next year "fingers crossed" to host the South Coast Championship and attend the Australian Championships along with our annual visitations. It was also decided to donate to CRAM another substantial sum.

The Sea Eels pass on our sincere thanks and appreciation to the staff at our local magazine and thank them for their services to the community.

To all, have a safe Christmas and look forward to a brighter 2022. ♣

'Pretty awesome

The Scarborough team won December's Australian Boardriders Battle Regional Qualifier (Southern Clubs) at Kiama, Ian Pepper reports



Plenty to report on this month in the world of Scarborough Boardriders.

Kalani Ball completed his overseas venture on the World Challenger Series across US, Europe and Hawaii. In the final event in Haleiwa, Hawaii Kalani achieved an amazing result making it through to the semi-finals. Along the way he came up against some of the best surfers in the world including Griffin Colapinto, Kanoa Igarashi and Wiggolly Dantas. Kalani placed an incredible 5th in the event which was won by John John Florence. Well done, Kalani!

Then the Australian Boardriders Battle Regional Qualifier (Southern Clubs) was held at Jones Beach, Kiama on Saturday, 11 December 2021. It was an extremely exciting and tense day for those who made the trip down the coast to watch the event but it was worthwhile with the club taking out the title again for the second year in a row!

Nic Squiers - with just moments left in the final, neck and neck with Jones Beach after their surfer had just fallen - picked off a wave and pummelled all the way to the beach with multiple top-tobottom turns to clinch the win.

"As soon as I saw it I knew I had to go," he said. "I came home strong pretty much every time I surfed so it was really good to get the chance to get that done."

Ethan Smith from Surfing NSW described the win by Scarborough as "pretty awesome" in the testing conditions.

"We saw pretty much playful surf in the morning but it just increased in size throughout the day and became pretty horrendous," Ethan said.

Well done to our team - Nic Squiers, Fin McLaren, Will Clarke, Zahlia Short and Mannix Squiers – and big thanks to all our supporters who attended to cheer them on. The win sees the club qualify for the national finals in Newcastle in 2022.

The final pointscore of the year which was due to be held on 12 December was postponed to 19 December and our presentation will be sometime in early 2022, date and venue to be confirmed. .



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Ready to score in 2022

Like lots of winter sports, netball was hit hard when Covid stopped play last year. Helensburgh netballers are now looking forward to a fresh start. Iris Huizinga reports



Mia loves netball. The talkative eight-year-old was just getting into the season with her team, the Lollipops, when Covid struck after seven games.

"I was very sad because I also play tag and I really like playing both of them," says Mia.

Her family is heavily involved with the Helensburgh Netball Club: Mia's sister Tahli (15) coached the Lollipops and mum Cassy Cooper is the club's sponsorship coordinator and a coach.

Tahli made sure the Lollipops kept their skills up during lockdown by setting a team bingo challenge. All the eight-year-olds and their parents took part.

Cassy says: "They had to complete things like watching a game of netball, practising passing with somebody, a certain amount of shooting, drills. They loved it.

"Tahli will kill me for telling you this. She practised her jumping with balloons that were left

over from a birthday."

Mia: "All of the balloons had helium so they kept floating up. She had to jump up high and get them from the ceiling. My sister is pretty tall and got most of them. A lot went under the coffee table."

Mia says netball is fun: "You get to know everyone ... You don't have to do just one thing in a game, you can do different stuff. You can sometimes choose what bib you want to wear. With centres they both have Cs on their bib, they can go in the whole court except the circles. That's why it's fun to be in the centre when it is a cold day."

Mia makes it sound easy but confides: "It's really hard to get the ball from the other players."

Kylie Skiller is another key figure at the club: she's president, registrar and umpire coordinator. Asked about last season, she is philosophical.

"Once lockdown hit, that was it for us. It's a shame for the girls because they've lost their games and they just have so much fun playing."

Cassy: "Three or four teams were leading the competition and missed out on the opportunity of going the whole way to a grand final win. So for the ones at the top that was very disappointing."

Fortunately, the club did not run into financial trouble. "Our saving grace has been our main sponsors," Kylie says.

This year's new sponsors include Aevum Physiotherapy, Helensburgh Veterinary Clinic and Helensburgh Tyres. Player of the week awards were also introduced, thanks to sponsorship from Gelato Man, Gallardo's Pizza and Lee@The Bodyshop.

Cassy's wish for 2022 is to get a full season in. Kylie agrees. "We want to see as many players return as we can, and as many teams."

They also hope to start 2022 with a local ladies competition in February. The summer competition is scheduled for Tuesdays.

Registration will start earlier than usual, in early January 2022.

Kylie: "The competition itself is starting earlier as well. NSW and our district Illawarra have decided to have three pre-season games before the actual competition starts, to help grade teams. This way teams also have an opportunity to play more games and get more for their money.

There were 15 teams last season. "We had an extra senior team this year. We also had about four nine-year-old teams altogether, which was great, with a lot of new players. You can start playing from when you are seven. Boys can play at club level until they are 12, after that they have to outsource to New South Wales."

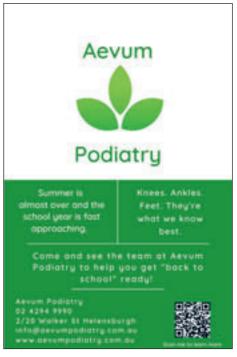
For Kylie and Cassy it is all about players enjoying themselves. Mia has one final thing to say about her favourite sport.

"It's very fun and anybody can play netball. I also made lots of new friends."





Netball Registration opens early January and closes mid February, Fees: 8-9yrs \$155; 10-17yrs \$170; 18+yrs \$185. Active Kids vouchers accepted. Three preseason games will be played in March/April. The competition will start 30 April.. Facebook 'Helensburgh Netball Club', email helensburghnetball@ gmail.com or contact Kylie on 0401 967 015.





Grand tradition of nicknames

How they arise at school, work and on the footy field. By the Northern District Tigers women's coach Tony Ryan

I was at Ryan's Hotel and there was a group of women all calling each other by their first names. There was Terrie, Peta, Clare, Lisa, Barb and Shervl. On the next table there were a bunch of blokes, all with pretty indistinguishable names like

"Thumper", "Jacko", "Jock-strap" and "Bongo".

From school to work to footy clubs, I've come across some unique nicknames. Some were created by simply adding a "Y" on the end – like a Smithy or a Jonesy. Same rule if your name was a colour - so Blacky, Greeney and Browny. Anyone with a Mc at the start of their surname was simply Macca.

Or if your surname was the same as a famous person you usually wore their name as well.

Dawson: "Smokie". Minogue: "Kylie". Hawke: "Bob".



Aussies love giving mates a nickname, usually born out of humour, like calling people the opposite was what they are. Big blokes were called "Tiny"; blokes with red hair were called "Bluey" (before "Ranga" became a thing).

I remember this old coach in Melbourne who would come up with nicknames (or have them pre-planned) when giving a speech or a spray. Many blokes would carry these names for decades.

Lantern: Dimly lit and needs to be carried. Pot hole: Needs to be avoided.

Bird brain: One bloke kicked the ball the wrong way and the coach said "You'd have to be a bit of a bird brain" to do that.

Pop Gun: "I heard you were a bit of a gun. Turns out you are nothing more than a pop gun."

Tic Tac: Told a guy that was the size of his heart. Ticker: Opposite to the Tic Tac, a bloke who showed plenty of courage.

Devon: Told a player his head was like Devon. He just did not know what was in it.

Silky Player: Had skills as smooth as silk.

Peacock: Strutting around like you're a darn

Time Bomb: The player would go off and he was waiting for the tick-tick boom!

Wobbles: When this bloke ran his head wobbled like a bobble-head doll.

Spud: His head looked like a potato.

Fig jam: Far-out I'm good, just ask me!

But a few names came out of one particular incident.

Wearing a brand-new white designer T-shirt, getting on a bus for an away game, a young bloke shook up his orange juice but did not realise the lid was not on properly so it soaked his new shirt. From then on he was known as "Juice".

Fish: As in he would drink like one on a Saturday night.

Stabber: A player was accidentally questioned by police after being mistakenly identified as a person who had stabbed someone.

Clunk: The noise a bloke's head made on the dance floor after falling over drunk.

Stamps: After a mate went to pick up a date, the girl's mother asked if he wanted to look at her stamp collection while he waited for the date to get ready. The night ended up with three hours of looking at stamps. Fair to say, it was their only date.

Rooster: This older red-headed bloke I worked with had the worst comb-over ever, which he would try and stick down with Brylcreem and when out in the wing, half would stick up like a rooster's comb. He thought it was because all the young ladies in the office reported to him and he oversaw the hen house.

As for me, there have been a few over the years. When I was at school it was "Red" as I had flowing red hair. The nickname and hair have long gone the way of the dodo. "TR": not too much imagination involved when you use someone's initials. "Skippa": Having married an absolutely stunning woman, I was (and probably still am) batting way above my division. I was deemed to be the captain, "Skippa", of the "How did he get her?" team.

As local papers seem to be becoming outdated, it is great to see this locally-made magazine come out each month. I would like to thank Gen and Marcus for all their hard work and allowing me to write these little columns each month.

Finally, I would like to wish all the readers a great start to 2022.



Helensburgh Sunday Social Golf Club Robert 'Indy' Jones reports

HSSGC members were pleased to end our run of cancellations, due to COVID and unpredictable weather, on December 5th with the President's Cup and Stableford events. The President's Cup was won this year, despite the steep learning curve of scoring, by David Flewin with 30 points arising from his championing.

Stableford winners were "The Money Man" Mark with 39 points from "El Presidente" Tony, edging out Peter Gardner on a count back with 38 points. On course Frank Morgan took a healthy four holes leaving a fairly even share of members taking the rest of the prizes. For those who were able to extend the day and witness another prize giving speech by Tony and together summarise the last 12 months, we welcomed the bar tab to quench our thirst.

We are looking to start the 2022 crusade on January 16th (TBC). For the dates of our traditional first Sunday of the month events for 2022 read our January report in The Illawarra Flame and emails.

Please support our business partners and contact Tony on 0418 863 100 for membership information.

Indy signing off: To all HSSGC members and their families on behalf of Tony and office bearers, we wish you all a safe, healthy and festive break with family and friends.

We look forward to seeing you all in 2022. Best wishes for a happy New Year!

Tradies Social Golf Barry Thompson reports

Despite his sartorial splendour, Greg Bell finished second to Mark Ryan in the loud shirt stakes. He then turned the tables to pip Mark* 40-38 in the Stableford event. Our newcomers Steve Facey and Ivan McMillan fared well: Steve carded a 33 and Ivan took out the Helensburgh Driving Range prize. I am completely perplexed; we downtowners fielded our best combination in years and still went down to the uptown crew. Congratulations, you blokes, but I support Bill Dodd's threat to revert to the original trophy for this historic Challenge. That would teach you to give us a drubbing.

The AGM saw the 2021 committee re-elected in its entirety - thank heavens for that! You don't meddle with perfection.

President Terry and Treasurer Rod presented NINA manager Sharon Gissane with a donation gathered at our fun day. Sharon thanked Tradies and the golf club and assured us it would be put to good use.

If you got a golfie present for Christmas, why not join us on January 22 at Boomerang to try it out? We are always looking for members of all standards. For any information about our club, give me a ring on 0484 351 913.

See you all around the course.

* Handicapper, please have a close look at this bloke! 🦊



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6 0523 1152 TH 1844	0.46 1.87 0.18	- 1	0047 0730 A 1423 2008	0.57 1.60 0.45 1.14		24 0 MO 1		1.31 0.59 1.49 0.38			
7 0047 0616 FR 1241 1931	1.28 0.51 1.73 0.27	10	0130 0810 U 1500 2049	0.56 1.65 0.39 1.17		25 0 TU 1)815 415	1.36 0.61 1.38 0.42			
8 0140 0713 SA 1330 2016	1.28 0.58 1.57 0.36	17 M	7 0210 0847 0 1537 2128	0.54 1.70 0.34 1.19		26 0 WE 1		1.42 0.61 1.28 0.46		TIMES AN HEIGHTS C)F
9 0232 0813 SU 1420 2100	1.29 0.65 1.41 0.44	10	0249 0925 U 1612 2204	0.52 1.73 0.31 1.21		TH 1	052	0.56 1.21		HIGH AND L WATERS LAT 34° 29 LONG 150°	9'

MOON PHASE SYMBOLS New Moon ● First Quarter ● Full Moon ○ Last Quarter ●

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