

THE ILLAWARRA flame

June 2023



Keeping community news alive



Home town heroes

RFS Group Captain Craig Robertson
honoured for river rescue

Meet Our Contributors



Daniel Brokenborough is a local musician, writer, community worker and father of two. He plays bass guitar and yells a bit in local band Birdsville, and has been known to occasionally don a corset and wig alongside his partner Anastasia in the (usually) all-girl cover band Toxic Dolls. He also works for the Good Shepherd No Interest Loan Scheme at Bulli Community Centre. In his spare time he tinkers with electronics and instrument building and he has enjoyed writing since childhood.



Caroline Baum is a journalist, author and the ambassador for the Older Womens' Network (OWN) in NSW. She is a co-founder of the True Story festival of non-fiction, to be held at Coledale hall on November 18 and 19.



Chris Reid lives in Helensburgh and works at the Australian Museum as a research scientist. His job is a combination of research, teaching or supervising students, and dealing with public enquiries. A NSW government beetle expert, Chris describes identifying beetles as "a bit like detective work". He says, "Working on insects means I get to indulge in two favourite pastimes: travel and bushwalking."



Brittany Dignam graduated in 2013 with a Master of Publishing from the University of Sydney. A former copywriter, she is now a full-time mum of three who finds joy amidst the pages of a book, in a plate of good food and when exploring Australia with her family.



Janice Creenaune is a retired English teacher. A wife and mother of three, she sees the life of a retiree as an evolution, something to be cherished, enjoyed. Janice is a volunteer for PKD Australia and her interests include travel, Letters-to-the Editor SMH, letterpress printing and film study.



Kasey Simpson is an Illawarra mum, born and raised, now living in the northern suburbs. She has three young children and her life is a self-confessed glorious mess. Kasey is the *Flame's* social media and parenting editor, and a freelancing creative communications specialist.

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.

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THE ILLAWARRA
flame

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DEADLINE 21 June. Contributions welcome.

COVER Craig Robertson, Phillip Rook and Jim Strickland of NSW RFS. Photo: Anthony Warry

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Cost-of-living crisis hits home

2508 Salvos sees surge in demand for assistance

A local Salvation Army Mission Leader, Lauren Martin, says cost-of-living pressures are causing a huge amount of stress for local families, with the number of people she supports doubling over the past year.

“We are also seeing a rise in the number of people we are supporting through family/domestic violence situations and housing stress,” Lauren says.

The Salvation Army has released the results of national research revealing that in the past 12 months, 93% of respondents who reached out to The Salvation Army for support were struggling to afford basic living necessities.

Lauren says even in the fairly middle-class suburbs that she works in (Woonona to Helensburgh), she’s seeing many people unable to afford things like health-care and other essentials.

“One family that I supported for a while became vegetarian, but not by choice, because the cost of purchasing meat was too much,” she says.

2508 Salvos assists in a range of ways in our community, from journeying with people through relationship breakdown, housing stress and re-location, family/domestic violence support, and helping people access financial support and food relief.

“We have links to a huge network of support services,” says Lauren. “But I think the key thing about the Salvos is that we stand alongside people for the whole journey, so that people know they have someone supporting them who truly cares, as they take brave steps to reaching their goals.”

One community member being supported by 2508 Salvos gave this feedback: “The Salvation Army has helped give me back my life, I know that I’m not alone. With every aspect of mine and my family’s life, there has been support and encouragement. It has enabled us to get on with

our lives after a very traumatic incident.”

The Salvation Army has launched its major annual fundraiser, the Red Shield Appeal, with 2508 Salvos hoping to raise enough funds to employ a one-day-per-week case worker to help support the growing number of people needing assistance.

“We rely completely on donations to operate our 2508 Salvos Mission,” says Lauren. “If you can afford it, please give generously. And if you’re struggling, please reach out for assistance.”

“Money donated to our local 2508 Salvos stays in this area to assist local residents.”

To donate, please scan the QR code ✨



Volunteers welcome

Northern Illawarra Neighbour Aid (NINA) was one of 30 organisations with stalls at May’s Volunteering Expo at Wollongong Town Hall.

NINA’s client intake and volunteer coordinator Fiona Lawson reported a “great crowd of interested volunteers”, including corporate volunteers, retirees and people in their 20s looking to volunteer for experience in that field.

“Volunteers need to know why they want to volunteer, this being their volunteer dollars,” Fiona said. “What makes you want to do this? Giving

back to the community, keeping busy, meeting new people, helping someone. Then work out what area you want to do this in – aged care, animals, hospital, driving.”

To volunteer with a provider of aged care services, please contact Fiona as NINA has positions available and you may start immediately.

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Old Thirroul inspires new song

By Daniel Brokenborough

Anyone old enough to have been around the thriving Wollongong music scene during the 1990s would probably remember the Rex Hotel in Thirroul. It was a slightly dingy, small-town pub that hosted gigs from most of the local punk and alternative bands of the time. Beer flowed freely, and security was lax enough to allow the odd underage punter a chance to see a show that they legally shouldn't have been able to.

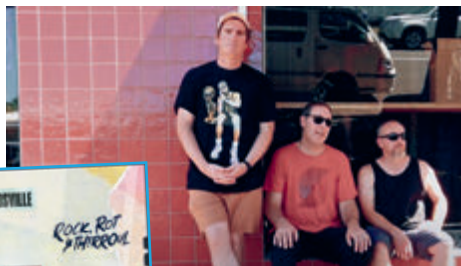
The Rex is now the Beaches Hotel, a much classier establishment that still gives local bands a chance to perform (but they tend to be cover bands, who are far less likely to spray a mouthful of their schooner into the front row of the audience). This is one example of the theme of the first single, *Rock, Rot and Thirroul*, off the new album by our band Birdsville.

Inspired by a conversation overheard outside another Thirroul bar named Frank's Wild Years, *Rock, Rot and Thirroul* is a song about how it has changed from a unique working-class artist haven to a very hip suburb with housing prices way above the wildest dreams of most aspiring artists.

It's not really about gentrification – we are deeply cynical Gen X kids, but we are also aware that places change and there is nothing necessarily wrong about that. Two of the three of us grew up in the area and as we walked around the town making the film clip, it was obvious that as much as it has changed, there are still signs of the old Thirroul.

The mini jungle at the nursery is still going strong; Thirroul Plaza still looks like it houses a Franklin's; and on most streets, you can see a '60s fibro beach shack next to a modern architect-designed mansion.

The thing is, Thirroul itself hasn't lost its character. It has just been discovered by people who have a bit more money but want to maintain the character that drew them there in the first



Local band Birdsville has released a single called 'Rock, Rot and Thirroul'

place. Nowhere is this more evident than the recent pushback against developing the above-mentioned shopping plaza and the subsequent victory against reckless overdevelopment.

As much as some people might write Thirroul off as a hipster enclave, it's still a great spot for a good feed and a night out. Sure, it's almost impossible to walk 100 metres in any direction and not see a coffee machine helmed by someone with \$1500 worth of tattoos, but I don't know anyone who would have a problem with that.

We released *Rock, Rot and Thirroul* on all streaming platforms in May; the film clip is on YouTube. I highly recommend watching it as chances are someone you know is in it. Also, if you recognise the kids riding a bike across the footy field, let them know, but don't put their names out on social media. They seemed like they would be the types of kids who would have snuck into the Rex 25 years ago to watch FUGG rip through a set, and while we don't necessarily endorse that kind of thing, we can definitely relate to it.

Follow @birdsvilleband 🌟

Join new garden trail

By Anna Jane Linke

Ever wanted a sticky beak in your neighbour's garden? Or to show someone around yours? Well now's your chance!

The Illawarra Edible Garden Trail is happening 11/12 Nov 2023 from 10am-4pm in partnership with Food Fairness Illawarra. It will be a fun weekend opening edible gardens between Helensburgh and Woonona. It's all about connecting budding gardeners, well-rooted

growers and sticky-beakers, and sharing all the growing tricks and tips for different environments.

Perhaps you're growing fruit and veg in the shade of the escarpment, or with the full brunt of the coastal breeze. Or maybe you have a balcony or a verge of herbs to pick from. Or maybe your school has a veggie patch to show off. Whatever it is, we want to hear from you!

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Thank you for the wonderful turnout to our Solar Rollout Launch (to watch a recording, head to our website) Photos: @billielikes



Steps to our electric future

Electrify 2515's Kristen McDonald provides an update on the 'lighthouse project'

Some of you may have been following the Electrify 2515 journey from the start and others may be less familiar with our work so we wanted to give a quick snapshot of where we have been and what you can do right now.

How did we get here?

In 2022 Dr Saul Griffith and his team at Rewiring Australia wrote the blueprint for creating Australia's electric future. They went looking for a community willing to become a lighthouse project to show how this could be technically and socially achieved.

Community members from 2515 joined together to see if their own community would be willing to put their hand up and were thrilled when the response was so positive (thanks, everyone!). Since showing this community willingness, our area has been selected by Rewiring Australia as the site to apply for potential funding from The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

The funding dance

ARENA is a government body that typically funds projects run by energy network providers and energy retailers. Their application procedures are very lengthy and the good news is that, despite being an atypical grant applicant as a non-profit research organisation, Rewiring Australia has successfully advanced through each stage of the application process. The challenge has been that with each stage ARENA has reduced the project scope (to cost them less money!).

Initially the project was designed for \$20 million to fully fund 500 households to electrify appliances, cars and community assets. The target of 500 households was the minimum amount that

would make the technological impact within a concentrated area valid (along the transmission lines connected with Wombarra substation).

We're now applying for about \$6 million, which would still be remarkable for our community if we can secure it, but there is less money to put into subsidies for households. If successful, the money would go towards some subsidies for 500 households (for instance, a possible \$1000 off a reverse-cycle air conditioner), smart technology to control energy loads, research, hard to electrify homes and community assets.

We hope to submit the final application proposal (all 260 pages!) in June/July.

Rewiring Australia and the 2515 community were also instrumental in lobbying the previous NSW Government to put up money for community electrification pilots. With the change of government, that money is thankfully still on the table but the department is reviewing the scope of the project and has yet to release details.

Community Solar Rollout

Whether we receive funding or not, there is so much we can do as a community to reduce our emissions and save on energy bills through renewable-powered electrification. That is why we recently launched our Community Solar Rollout, vetting and partnering with two trusted local solar providers (who are generously offering a 10% discount for rollout participants!) to encourage more homes in our community to join the solar revolution and set us up for an electric future.

For more information on our Solar Rollout, including FAQs & videos, and to request a quote, visit www.electrify2515.org/solar 🌞

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Time to become a Buddhist nun

Janice Creenaune meets Ani Dorje Lhamo (Dorlha) whose life has taken an unusual path. From a varied career background, most recently as a psychologist in cancer care, Dorlha is now an ordained Tibetan Buddhist nun and a volunteer helper. Photo supplied

Most people have an image of Buddhist nuns and monks living within religious communities. Since she was ordained three years ago, however, Dorlha has chosen to continue to live in Austinmer and to serve her community.

Dorlha was born in the UK and in 1985 immigrated to Australia, believing that Australia would offer greater opportunities for her two children. Dorlha's varied career began in the UK where her occupational pathway took her from professional dance to being a stall-holder in Portobello Road and Camden Lock markets, after which she trained then worked as a schoolteacher in London. Once in Australia, Dorlha continued for a time as a teacher before retraining again, as a homeopath, as well as undertaking a Psychology major at Charles Sturt University and finally moving from Sydney to Wollongong to complete her studies in psychology at the University of Wollongong. She completed a PhD in 2002. Dorlha's PhD research explored people's experiences of life-threatening illness, how they might make meaning of their experience and how they might best be supported. She subsequently worked as a psycho-oncologist in Liverpool and Westmead Hospitals before joining the oncology team at Wollongong Hospital where she worked until retiring.

Over time Dorlha has found herself increasingly drawn to Buddhism, identifying in particular with the humanity and joy she saw in Tibetan Buddhism as epitomised by the Dalai Lama, and in time to a particular lama/teacher and community of nuns in the high mountains of Tibet, the Gebchak nuns.

After visiting Tibet and spending time with her principal teacher, Wangdrak Rinpoche, and the community of Gebchak nuns, Dorlha set herself her greatest physical and psychological challenge yet. "I was going to return to Tibet and trek Mount Kailash in Western Tibet. Mount Kailash is a very important place of pilgrimage for Buddhists and Hindus. I spent months prior to the trip preparing myself for the physical challenge with Diamonds In



The Rough, a fabulous women's trek training group in the Illawarra. I embarked on the trek in 2019 and though it was extremely challenging, being a test of resilience of mind and commitment, I achieved it. Over the following months after this experience, I wondered: What next? Why did I do the trek? I came to the realisation that for me the trek was a pilgrimage and the logical next step seemed to be to commit to a Buddhist path, to become a nun. I was ordained by Wangdrak Rinpoche in Singapore in early 2020."

Perhaps contrary to her expectations, Dorlha has felt enormous freedom in wearing the robes of a Buddhist nun. Prior to ordination she loved bargain shopping for unusual clothing and jewellery. Wearing robes helps take away attachment to material objects. Similarly, the shaved head. "I get up in the morning and put on my robes. There is no wondering what to wear."

She also believes that wearing the robes helps to keep her mindful of her own actions. "If I was living in the nunnery in Tibet, I would be living in a community of nuns away, to a large extent, from the attractions and distractions of everyday life in Australia. Living in community, the robes remind me that I took vows. I have made a commitment to live my life according to Buddhist principles. To engage in the world with compassion and kindness for the benefit of sentient beings. To live each day as mindfully as possible taking responsibility for my own actions."

Dorlha is kept busy sharing Buddhist teachings and practices with people from a range of cultural and spiritual backgrounds, across the age spectrum and, with the aid of technology, across the globe.

While she has retired from her professional work in cancer care, she continues on a voluntary basis to be a non-judgemental presence for people whose circumstances bring them to confront their mortality, whether through illness, accident or ageing, and to assist them to make sense of their experience. ✨

Exercising as we age

It is no secret that our bodies change as we age. Aging muscles, bones and joints can affect our ability to participate in activities. Yet regular physical exercise can help to counteract this and keep us active and doing the things we enjoy.

Exercise also has significant mental health benefits such as helping to reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety, improve cognitive function and overall increase a feeling of wellbeing.

Exercise can also help to manage chronic conditions such as arthritis and osteoporosis. While exercise may seem counterintuitive for people with these conditions, it can actually help to manage symptoms.

Factors such as mobility issues, chronic health conditions and associated pain and access to safe exercise facilities can make it challenging for older people to exercise regularly. At Elossa Fitness, founder Lilliana Barone has tried to remove as many barriers as possible to provide a space for older people to feel comfortable, safe and supported whilst exercising.

Elossa is a specialised gym for people aged 60 years and over and led by a team of expert Exercise Physiologists who safely challenge members to become stronger and fitter to ultimately be able to Do More of what they love.

The colder and shorter days in winter can make finding the motivation to exercise harder, which is why Elossa has a winter offer of a 20% discount on new memberships for the winter months, as well as an Elossa tote and towel.



Q&A with Elossa Members – Deb and Wayne Knight

How long have you been with Elossa?

Deb – 15 months and Wayne about 12 months.

What benefits have you seen since joining?

We have noticed better balance, flexibility and general strength.

Deb: I have been able to walk on the beach which is something I have not been able to do for ages and I am no longer needing regular knee injections.

Wayne: I have noticed an improvement in my surfing and mountain biking and I also have reduced knee pain.

Did you have concerns before starting?

We both have differing knee issues and were concerned that exercising would aggravate the problem or cause pain.

But what we found was that our knee pain actually disappeared – we do not have any more knee pain. Having exercise physiologists supervise the circuits and providing advice and support, gives us confidence that the exercises we are doing will not aggravate our injuries.

Any other comments?

We have been really impressed with the professionalism and kindness of all the staff.



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Connecting Threads at Coledale

By Coledale Public School parent Amy Geddes

Giving old bike wheels a second life.
Photo: Amy Geddes



What do you do with old clothes or textiles that can't be donated or given away? Most likely they end up in landfill.

'Connecting Threads' is a new uniform and textile upcycling initiative at Coledale Public School. Its aim is to engage the creative minds of students to find ways to keep textile waste out of the bin.

Through the receipt of a Department of Education Sustainable Schools grant, Connecting Threads is a fully funded project that will educate the school community about the challenges of textile recycling and offer inspiration by showing existing creative solutions, such as turning the waste into construction materials and furniture.

Students will then work closely with theatre designer Imogen Ross and artist Samantha Arnall (both local art teachers at Go Create Art, Thirroul) on a creative project of their own and learn design, weaving and sewing skills using over 90kg of waste textiles that were donated by the community.

The creative component of the project is in the initial material preparation stages with 66 old sheets and quilt covers being measured and torn into fabric strips (a very satisfying process) and countless T-shirts cut up into loops and yarn ready for weaving. We are repurposing some old bike wheels, so look out for future updates as we reveal what we will be making with all of our old clothes!

Last term the students were lucky enough to hear from Lindle Ruiz, The Earth Stylist, as she came and shared her knowledge on textile waste, sustainable fashion and pineapple leather! ✨



See your MP at Bulli

On Friday, May 19, Heathcote MP Maryanne Stuart opened a new satellite office at Bulli Community Centre.

She'll be there from 9am to 1pm once a fortnight, making it easier for her to meet residents who live in the southern end of Heathcote, which now stretches from Kirrawee to Bulli. Appointments are not essential but they are advised. More info: (02) 9548 0144 or email heathcote@parliament.nsw.gov.au ✨

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Cost-saving architecture

By architect Ben Wollen

Generally, hiring an architect costs more – you're getting a custom home. Compare, for example, buying a suit off the rack versus from a tailor. The mass-produced version is cheaper. Yet if you buy a quality product at some point the value of the quality make/design begins to outweigh initial savings.

It's a strange point in time for the construction industry when there's a profit-squeezed building boom and a record number of builders going into liquidation. Inflationary periods pose significant challenges for building projects, leading to soaring construction costs and budget overruns.

Strategic architectural design can mitigate the impact of inflation, allowing for savings without compromising quality or functionality.

Maximising Space Efficiency:

This is the best way to save money. Optimising the overall square metres required can significantly reduce construction costs. By adopting smart design strategies such as open floor plans, flexible layouts and multi-purpose spaces, architects can eliminate "space waste" while maintaining functionality. Careful consideration of movement through a building, efficient storage solutions and optimisation of the expensive areas – like kitchens and bathrooms – all help keep costs down.

Prioritising Energy Efficiency:

Architects can incorporate sustainable elements such as passive design, daylighting, optimised insulation, energy-efficient heating and cooling systems to minimise energy consumption. By integrating renewable energy technologies like solar panels, heat pumps and smart building



technologies into their designs, architects can create efficient homes with zero to low utility bills.

Value Engineering:

This term has become a point of cynicism amongst some architects, where a client's initial budget doesn't match expectations and some heavy carving is required to bring the project back into line. The original intention of the term is when architects work closely with engineers and contractors to identify cost-saving alternatives for materials, construction methods and structural systems. Examples include reducing the requirement of steel or being judicious in the placement of concrete.

Long-Term Maintenance and Durability:

Good architectural design can significantly reduce a building's long-term maintenance costs and durability. By selecting high-quality materials, specifying low-maintenance finishes, and integrating durable construction techniques architects can reduce the need for frequent repairs and replacements. Investing in resilient design features that withstand wear and tear, natural disasters and climate change can contribute to substantial savings over the life span of a home.

These are only some of the ways architectural design can battle the inflation dragon. Architectural design contributes not only to immediate savings but also to a more sustainable future. To go back to my suit analogy, a tailor-made suit should last a lifetime – that is, unless we can't slay the belly dragon! ✨

Picnic with Probus

By Pete Dawson

It's been a lively couple of months for Helensburgh Probus Club. Firstly, a very enjoyable Bass and Flinders Lunchtime Cruise from the Sans Souci Wharf. Then 37 of us took a five-day luxury coach trip to Parkes and surrounding region, including The Dish and Dubbo Zoo. Then a group of us enjoyed a delightful High Tea at Parliament House!

Our monthly "Foot and Mouth" walks included a ferry to Manly in March, then in April a very interesting historical tour of The Rocks. All that, plus our usual monthly Bowls and Golf days.

Most recently we held our President's Picnic at



Woronora Dam to welcome our 2023/24 President, Pam Carter. We enjoyed a lovely sunny day.

It proves, to me anyway, how important these social events are for mental and physical wellbeing.

For more information please contact Lilian, our Membership Officer, on 0408 668 987. ✨

Congratulations, Grand Pacific Homes!



Well done to Marlowe Richards of Grand Pacific Homes on winning the 2023 Illawarra Women In Business award for Outstanding Executive Employee.

With an extensive background in architecturally designed homes, Marlowe brings her Interior Design expertise, as well as her empathy and understanding of our clients' individual needs to every project. She helps plan beautiful interiors,

explains council requirements and guides clients when selecting materials and finishes, staying engaged until the build is complete.

Marlowe is passionate about educating and empowering clients, women in particular, so

they can contribute to the building process with confidence and advocate for their vision. She spends time explaining building jargon and processes to help reduce the stress that can sometimes overwhelm clients. With challenging decisions, including budget concerns, Marlowe helps clients make good choices to ensure the best possible outcome.

During her time with us, Marlowe has contributed to our positive business culture, both behind the scenes and as an ambassador in the community, speaking to people throughout the Illawarra and representing our core values of trust and integrity.

Working in a male-dominated industry, Marlowe is supporting change by implementing a mentoring program to encourage girls at school to enter a career in design, architecture, engineering or a trade in the construction industry.

Have a renovation, new home or duplex project? Get in touch with Marlowe: (02) 4227 6405 or info@grandpacifichomes.com.au



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Why cubs loved Mt Keira camp

Thanks to Paul Rustomji for this report from 1st Austinmer Scouts

1st Austinmer Joeys (5-8 years)

The Joeys have a big say in what sort of activities they do each week. They have tried new knots, constructing things with recycled materials, growing plants and using a compass. They especially loved climbing and sandcastle building with the cubs. We're looking forward to a night-time bush walk, bike riding, and cooking (and eating!) special treats, as well as a bunch of other activities. Anyone interested in joining the fun is very welcome, we'd love to meet new Joeys.

Scouts (11-14 years) and Venturers (15-18)

They have been busy with multi-day competitive hikes (Pigskin and Dragonskin) in nearby state forests, district leadership camp in April for Scouts and early in term 2 a bike hike in Canberra. Plus evening abseiling training for the Venturers at Mt Keira. Two scouts, Emily and Natalia, will attend the New Zealand Scout Jamboree in January 2024. Scouts and Venturers meet at 7pm on Monday nights at Austinmer Scout hall in term time.

Report from 1st Austinmer Cubs (8-11 years) on 9th Regional Environment Camp

By Matilda Bradburn and Bon Madden

A couple of weeks ago we went to an Environment camp at Mt Keira with our Cub group and others from all around the region. We camped for two nights in tents, which were water proof for most but not for us! The worst thing about the camp was all the rain (obviously) and all the leeches but there were many great things so it was worth it.



Things we loved were:

- Our group were called the 'Powerful Owls' which was the best name
- Eating together and being able to talk with our friends at lunch and dinner
- Learning about Wires and the SES and how to tie a bowline knot
- Learning about types of frogs, water pollution and how seeds are spread. Did you know that the Illawarra Flame Tree needs black cockatoos to spread its seeds?! And some of the biggest trees have the smallest seeds.
- Learning about decomposition and that some things never break down, like foil
- Learning about how different types of plants and animals are dependent on each other and so our food is dependent on them. Did you know that if the bee population all died then almost all food would no longer be able to be produced?!
- Free time to play on the big rock (which we claimed as 1st Austinmer's – thanks Jack!)
- The big fire on Saturday and doing our first skit.

Next term we are looking forward to another camp and Wednesday night activities. Hopefully we will be able to do laser tag, rock climbing and a chalk chase so we can try to catch the fox! ✨

Lego fans rejoice

The Brick Fair is back, writes Fran Peppernell, Helensburgh Lions Club publicity officer

We hope everyone is keeping warm this winter. Now is the time for casseroles and soups plus maybe getting knitting needles out, ladies!

On Saturday, May 13 we were outside Coles doing a BBQ and would like to thank those of the community who stopped to buy a sausage sandwich, make a donation and have a chat, with the proceeds going towards our Lions community projects.

Our next big event is the Brick Fair to be held at Helensburgh Tradies on Sunday, 25 June from 10am to 4pm. Entry is \$5 and there will be amazing

displays, rare and retired sets and Mini Figures! A Brick Pit for the budding masters, raffle prizes and a fun day for the whole family. The event proceeds will support local schools.

So keep the date free and come along to this amazing event. We would like to acknowledge our corporate supporters: Tradies, Ray White Helensburgh and Peabody Energy.

Lions continue to plan for the Annual Helensburgh Country Fair in October. Please keep updated by visiting our Facebook page for applications for stalls. If you would like to be involved in the fair, please contact us via email.

Please note we have a new email address:
info.helensburghlions@gmail.com ✨

Depression looks different in men

By Dr Mike Hanson, a GP at Bulli Medical Practice

As part of this year's Men's Health Week, there is a focus on spreading awareness regarding mental health and emotional wellbeing. This can often be overlooked or downplayed by men themselves and others.

Throughout their lifetime, one in five Australian men experience anxiety and one in eight suffer with depression. Depression is a considerable risk factor for suicide and contributes to the higher rates of suicide for men compared to women.

Depression Symptoms

Men's experience of depression often presents differently to that of women.

Depression can make men feel sad, irritable, empty and lose pleasure in things they normally enjoy. Unfortunately, outdated definitions of masculinity have made it even more difficult for men to acknowledge or talk about their feelings.

Men are more likely to be aware of physical aspects of depression such as feeling tired or losing weight, rather than recognising changes in how they feel. They are also more likely to abuse alcohol



and other drugs, and to withdraw socially when they are depressed.

As a community, it is vital we encourage help-seeking for everyone with mental health issues, but men may require more encouragement due to existing social norms and mental health stigma.

Depression Treatment

Your GP can help in assessing your symptoms and develop a mental health plan which includes subsidised visits to psychologists or counsellors for ongoing support.

As part of a management plan, your GP will assess your physical activity, diet and sleep habits which are important factors in the recovery process. They may also undertake investigations including blood tests and scans, and consider the potential benefits of antidepressant medication.

There are many useful online resources specifically tailored for men via Beyond Blue and Black Dog Institute.

MensLine Australia provides online counsellors and 24-hour telephone support via 1300 78 99 78. 🌟

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'I always liked organising a party'

Rick Warr is a Flame Tree Co-op volunteer who organised a special celebration concert for the Flame Tree community at Wombarra Bowlo on Saturday, May 20

Ever since I first came to live here, beside the big cliff, I felt it was a place with a strong sense of community. The idea of a community-owned food co-operative appealed immediately so I became member no.50 and a Flame Tree volunteer.

Now I feel even more strongly about the need for stepping forward and actively shaping the way we want our world to be. Recent political voting demonstrates an increased care for environment, especially among young people. Since our choice in shopping is a vote for the kind of food that sustains us and the community, I see even more reason to shop at Flame Tree.

If I had to choose a favourite from Flame Tree's range of products it would be shoyu, which is simply soy sauce in the Japanese style. It's a useful savoury salty addition to many dishes. However, the discovery of interesting unknown foods in the shop continues.

I was delighted to co-ordinate an event held recently at the Wombarra Bowling Club to celebrate this community and the spirit of volunteering that sustains it. I always liked organising a party, which is partly why I became a contract project manager, an IT manager and a venue manager for music festivals.

The Flame Tree Celebration Concert brought together the local music talent of Lara, The Mad Pride, Fiona Johnson, Singongo, Cloudbird and The Numbered to celebrate the Flame Tree community spirit. 🌟

Book soon to Improv Your Mind

By Bethan Farmer of Stanwell Park Arts Theatre

First things first – huge congratulations to the team that brought *The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Murder Mystery Play* to the stage over two weekends in May. Special thanks to the Stanwell Park CWA for their hard work in helping to put on the very popular Sunday High Teas.

Next up: We are very excited to present a new SPAT workshop: *Improv Your Mind*. *Farndale* co-director and panto arch-villain Nurina Simpson will run classes focusing on learning improv skills through a series of games (not on preparing a show). Nurina first got into improv to overcome anxiety of public speaking, and has been part of the improv-comedy theatre scene in the Illawarra ever since. She brings a wealth of experience, energy and a fondness for the absurd to the task. "One of the great joys of improv is its transferability to everyday situations... professional networking, social interactions – in a way, every conversation is an improv!"

The classes will run at the Stanwell Park CWA Hall, on Tuesdays from 18 July to 14 August, 6:30-8:30pm. Open to people of all abilities aged 18+, the cost for a block of 5 classes is \$100 per person, and places will be limited, so if you're interested book now!

Also on sale are tickets for our 40th Anniversary Singers show, coming up at the end of July/beginning of August. Tentatively named *Forty and Still Going Strong*, this will be a Greatest Hits of the last four decades of SPAT Singers, according to musical director Rod Lander: "There will be high and low brow offerings... pretty much something for everyone!"

SPAT Films is hoping to screen that great Danny Kaye comedy from 1955 *The Court Jester*, in June. Keep an eye on our website and the sign at the top of Bald Hill for details!

spat.org.au for bookings and information 🌟



Warm Up Your Winter Evenings with a Spiced Delight

By Jo Fahey of Darkes Glenbernie Orchard

Immerse yourself in the comforting embrace of a steaming cup of mulled cider or juice, with the aromatic scent of apples and spice filling your home.

Darkes Cider 'Howler' is the perfect base for our mulled cider recipe. You can use any Darkes Cider variety and even blend ciders together. To make a non-alcoholic spiced cider, just substitute Darkes apple juice or Little Blue cider.

Follow these steps to create a soul-warming concoction that will elevate your evenings with its captivating blend of flavours.

Ingredients:

4 x 375ml cans Darkes Cider 'Howler'
(or a mixed Darkes Cider 4 pack)

1 orange

4 cinnamon sticks

6 cloves

4 cardamom pods

1 star anise

1 teaspoons brown sugar (adjust according to taste, use more if you like it sweeter)

Optional garnish: orange slices and cinnamon sticks

Instructions:

Prepare the Orange Zest: Wash the orange.

Using a fine grater or zester, grate the outer zest of the orange, taking care to avoid the bitter white pith. Set aside for later use.

Create the Spice Bag: Take a small piece of cheesecloth or a clean muslin cloth and place the cinnamon sticks, cloves, cardamom pods, star anise and orange zest in the centre. Gather the edges and tie it with kitchen twine, creating a spice bag. This will allow the spices to infuse the cider while keeping the liquid free of debris.

Simmer the Cider: Pour the Darkes Cider 'Howler' into a large saucepan or pot. Add the spice bag to the pot, along with the brown sugar.

Place the pot over medium heat and bring the mixture to a gentle simmer. Allow the cider to simmer for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally to dissolve the sugar and infuse the flavours.

Serve and Garnish: Once the mulled cider has infused and developed its rich flavours, remove the spice bag from the pot. Ladle the



SHOP ONLINE AT
www.darkes.com.au

Glenbernie's AppleShack farm store is
open 10am-4.30pm daily in Darkes Forest

warm mulled cider into heatproof mugs or glasses.

For an optional garnish, add a fresh orange slice and a cinnamon stick to each mug.

Enjoy the Delightful Blend: Savour the enticing aroma as you take your first sip.

The cinnamon sticks provide warmth and a comforting touch of sweetness. Cloves add a distinct, earthy flavour. Cardamom pods contribute a fragrant, slightly citrusy note. The star anise lends a subtle licorice flavour, complementing the apple base.

Finally, the orange zest adds a fresh, zesty kick, intertwining the flavours harmoniously.

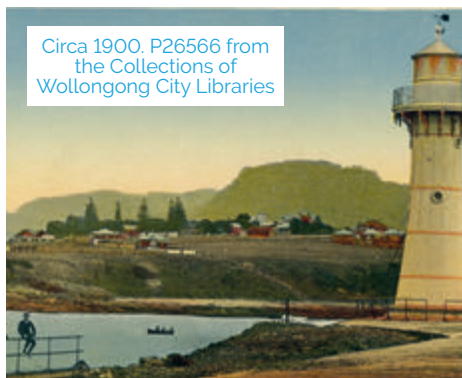
The enticing blend, mixing the medium-sweet apple notes of our cider with a delightful mix of spices, is the perfect companion to cosy evenings and festive occasions.

Christmas in July is only a month away so practise this recipe in preparation for an Australian mid-year celebration.

Cheers to unforgettable moments! 🌟

Beautiful by day, haunted by night

By Jenny McConchie



Is the Wollongong Breakwater Lighthouse really haunted? Wollongong City Library staff looked at information about two potential ghosts.

William Edwards, the first harbour pilot at Wollongong, guided thousands of ships in and out of the port without harm. However, in 1867, as he battled in wild weather to save the crew of the wrecked ketch Margaret Edwards, he drowned. It is claimed that in stormy weather he can still be seen on the observation deck of the lighthouse watching out for ships in distress.

George Smith was the lighthouse keeper in the 1920s and 30s. For many years, he climbed the stairs at dusk to light the lantern. Some claim that his footsteps are still heard on these stairs at night and that, although the lighthouse door is kept locked, wet footprints can sometimes be found on the stairs.

If you want to find out more about this or other ghostly phenomenon in our city, email localhistory@wollongong.nsw.gov.au ✨

Resort revived

Selwyn Snow Resort is reopening, and it's worth a visit, writes Austinmer's Brittany Dignam, owner of Lake Eucumbene Units

Here for a good time, not a long time – that's snow in Australia. So when the white stuff starts falling this winter, our family will be making the most of it at Selwyn Snow Resort.

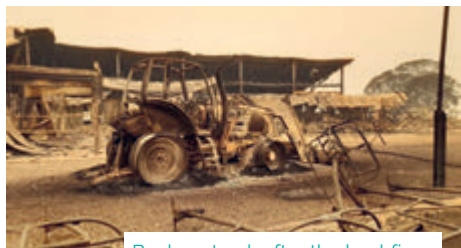
On June 10 its lifts will start spinning for the first time since bushfire destroyed the resort in 2020. It had to be entirely rebuilt, an undertaking made even more difficult by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, when construction came to a halt.

Three years on, Selwyn Snow Resort is ready to welcome us back and general manager Lucy Blyton-Gray says it'll be worth the wait.

"Guests can expect a state of the art visitor's centre that houses guest services, rentals, gift shop, food and beverage offerings, toilet facilities, kids club, lockers," she said. "Everything you need is in the one building." Selwyn is also Australia's first snow resort to have "an entirely accessible guest facilities centre".

In terms of terrain, the resort has something for everyone – advanced trails for Mum and Dad, as well as lots of gentle slopes for kids and first-timers. Our first stop will be the 180m toboggan park. "We have the largest magic carpet in the southern hemisphere that can transport our tobogganers up the hill, to then slide down," Lucy said.

Selwyn is known for its family-friendly and affordable snow holidays. A day of tobogganing is



Back on track after the bushfires.
Photos: Selwyn Snow Resort



just \$25 per person, and you can pre-book online.

Where to stay

@lake_eucumbene_units is a tranquil two-acre property with bush and lake outlooks in Old Adaminaby. In town, @ivy_cottage_adaminaby is cosy and dog-friendly. @adaminabystonecottage is a stylishly restored cottage with mountain views.

Where to après

Try the new Selwyn Centre bar and bistro, or stop in at The Snow Goose Hotel, a family-friendly, country-style pub in Adaminaby. ✨



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Buyers shrug off rate rises and budget

Inspection numbers and sales over the past month indicate buyers are somewhat dismissive of the surprise rate rise earlier this month and there were also no signs the Federal budget caused any concerns either.

Meanwhile, economists remain divided on whether the budget will be inflation flaming or cooling so only time will tell if the government's plan to increase spending in a "non-inflationary" way will work.

If the Shire is any indication of where our local market is headed then we are in for an influx of buyers as the real estate market there is enjoying strong growth at the present time.

 [ianpepperraywhite](https://www.facebook.com/ianpepperraywhite)
 [@peppersrealestate](https://www.instagram.com/peppersrealestate)

'We have super foods here'

By Amanda De George

As a horticulturalist, landscape and permaculture designer and educator, if it's flora based, Narelle Happ can do it. She has a passion for teaching people how to grow and use bush foods and she's sharing this knowledge through her workshops.

Narelle has gardening in her blood. Her grandparents were farmers and her parents owned a property that backed onto the bush where her father only permitted native plants to be grown. She noticed, however, that her grandfather, who started gardening in the 40s, "grew all these weird and wonderful things but never grew a native bush food. I found that really fascinating".

Nowadays there's a real appetite, figuratively and literally, for bush food. Narelle said, "I asked permission of some of the local Elders if I could teach people how to grow the plants because obviously that's my expertise and it just took off. People really wanted to know."

She teaches everyone from preschoolers, some of whom are lucky enough to have thriving bush food gardens on school grounds, to the kids at Campbelltown's Juvenile Justice Centre, where they've recently added a sensory garden.

"Bush food sustained Indigenous people for more than 65,000 years," Narelle says. "We are always looking for the next super food, often turning to food from overseas. We have super foods here. A lot of our native bush foods exceed the nutritional value of exotic food. Bush food plants grow well in our climate as they are endemic to here. The stories behind the food, the ceremonies, totems, medicinal uses and dyeing qualities make them an extraordinarily important part of the history of this country."



Workshops ahead

Bush Food Garden Workshops: 17 June at The Servo, Port Kembla; 22 July at Sydney Wildflower Nursery. Cultural Immersion Day with Elders Uncle Dean Kelly, Dr Jodi Edwards, Corrine Tillett and Amy Lee Hill, Mt Keira Girl Guides Camp, 15 October. Book via A Garden for Life on Facebook.

Welcome to the Weekend!

On May 19, the *Flame* team launched our first digital-only magazine. The new *Weekend Flame* is a traditional newspaper supplement delivered in 21st-century style, a celebration of the people who shape our community, with great accessibility features so it can be enjoyed by everyone. You can read it on any device, save a favicon to your homescreen, or even download a PDF and print it, if you like. Sign up via our website – the *Weekend Flame* is delivered free on Fridays to inboxes across the Illawarra. ✨



The Grevillea Park in winter

By John Elton



What better way to brighten up a Winter's day than to visit the Illawarra Grevillea Park Botanic Garden. It's amazing how much colour can be seen when you explore the acres of display gardens.

One of the most fascinating flowers at this time of the year is *Grevillea venusta* (pictured). The colour combination on the flower is found on no other plant. The flowers are a rich almost transparent green with tinges of olive.

The tips display a gorgeous yellow, orange, red combination. Look closely and you will see that the most unusual black styles with purplish tips are covered with fine white hairs. This large shrub hails from Queensland and is a most rewarding plant to grow.

The Park will be open during the first two weekends in July from 10am to 4pm. ✨



Tree of the Month

By Kieran Tapsell, of Banksia Bushcare

Ficus rubiginosa (Port Jackson fig)

The Sandpaper Fig we dealt with last month is easy to identify just by feeling the leaf – the underside is like rough sandpaper.

There are four other figs native to the Illawarra: Moreton Bay Fig, (*Ficus macrophylla*), the Small Leaf Fig (*Ficus obliqua*), Port Jackson Fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*) and the Deciduous Fig (*Ficus superba*). These are not so easy to distinguish as they are often of a similar shape and size, being almost as wide as they are tall.

The Moreton Bay Fig is readily identifiable in wind which exposes the brown underside of the leaf. The Small Leaf Fig has a much smaller leaf. There is a good example of it on the western side of Lawrence Hargrave Drive at Thirroul.



The Port Jackson Fig's leaf size is in the middle of these two. It has some rusty colour on the underside of the leaf, but it is not so pronounced as with the Moreton Bay Fig. There is one example of the Port Jackson Fig that has regenerated by itself in the Stanwell Avenue Reserve and two large ones planted in the 1980s. One is near the signpost to the entrance of the picnic area, and the other on the northern side of Stanwell Avenue, just before the deer fence. Five others have been planted in more recent times.

An appeal from Banksia Bushcare

Bush carers have their job cut out for them trying to stem the spread of foreign invasive species. The job is made more difficult when residents throw lawn clippings into the bush. They often contain the seeds of these invaders. We would appreciate people taking full advantage of their green garbage bins to dispose of their lawn clippings. 🌸



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'Drag is the most fun I ever had'

Ahead of Pride Month in June, Kasey Simpson spoke to Illawarra drag queen Roxee Horror

With anti-trans protests in Melbourne, drag bans in Tennessee and, in our own city, graffiti attacks on North Wollongong's rainbow crossing earlier this year, it is no wonder Roxee Horror feels it is a scary time for the queer community. She believes that it is a huge step back after making progress.

"The art of drag allows us to be ourselves and express who we are. If it ever becomes illegal in Australia, then send me to jail because I'm not stopping!" says Roxee.

Roxee originally came from Western Sydney and moved to Wollongong when she finished Year 12.

She came out to her uncle at 14 then told the rest of her family at a family dinner. They were all very supportive, although she had to keep it a secret while she was attending a strict Christian school.

At 17, Roxee was invited to share her story in *Girlfriend* magazine. Then *Sunrise* asked her to appear on morning TV. Excited, she jumped at the chance. The next day, her whole school knew, which led to a big meeting with her parents and the school executives. It was decided that Roxee would have counselling for her final months at school. Despite the school's lack of acceptance, she stayed strong and finished Year 12.

Roxee's journey to becoming a drag queen started when she was young, as she loved dressing up as women at Halloween. After joining her sister's Tupperware team, Roxee started to explore further. Crystal Clearmate, her name at the time, became the No.1 saleswoman across most of NSW. From there, her career bloomed. She played a drag character in a show in the Blue Mountains, started entering drag competitions and hosted MTV's coverage of 2017's Mardi Gras with Courtney Act.

Roxee has always had a supportive family, with her parents coming to every gig they can.

"Roxee is the best thing that's ever happened to me," she says. "When I was growing up, people like myself were only on TV, but I'd never seen anyone in person. And until people see a queer face in the community, we will never be able to move forward or have others be inspired by it."

For anyone considering doing drag, Roxee encourages them to go for it. "Doing drag is the most fun I've ever had," she says.

Roxee Horror's Movie Maniacs will be at the Wollongong Spiegeltent on June 17.

See her at Rainbow Storytime at Thirroul Library on June 24 and follow @roxee.horror ✨

What's On

Stay up to date with events, subscribe at www.theillawarraflame.com.au/newsletters

Thirroul Seaside & Arts Festival

2-4 June. Art in the Shops + Art Exhibition at Thirroul Community Centre from Friday evening. Markets, entertainment, food and rides round out the festival on Sunday, 4 June from 10am to 3pm.

Sharkeys Bushcare Open Day

6 June, 8.30-9.30am. RSVP to Mark 0407 412 360.

National Reconciliation Week 2023

27 May-3 June. Theme: Be a Voice for Generations.

24 clubs & community

June at your Library

Thirroul Library

5 June Retirement Planning Workshops

5 June New monthly Boomerang Bag workshop in conjunction with CWA Keiraville.

7 & 21 June Young Yarners gathering, for ages 8+ interested in crochet and knitting.

24 June Rainbow Storytime with Miss Roxee

Helensburgh Library

10.30 Fridays Storytime with books, sing-a-longs, felt boards, finger rhymes and crafts.

7 & 21 June Lego Club at 3.30pm, take on a different challenge each time. ✨



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VIVID 2022 photo by our volunteer Richard Smart



2023 JUNE & JULY OUTINGS

Bookings made through the office. Please call in advance as some tickets need to be pre purchased. Limited number on buses. Pick up and drop off direct to your home.

DATE	JUNE/JULY OUTINGS AND SHOPPING TRIPS	COSTS
Friday 2nd June	Warrawong Shopping	Transport \$11
Tuesday 6th June	Bunnings Bellambi & Op Shop Tour	Transport \$11
Thursday 8th June	Music & Tea at Wollongong Art Gallery	Transport/Admin \$10.50
Friday 9th June	Shellharbour Shopping	Transport \$11
Thursday 15th June	VIVID Cruise	Ticket \$48, Transport/Admin \$21.50, Buffet dinner on board \$20
Friday 16th June	Figtree Shopping	Transport \$5.50
Tuesday 20th June	Coffee Break, Austinmer Beach Café	Transport \$5.50
Thursday 22nd June	Memory Lane Café with Dementia Australia	Transport \$5.50
Friday 23rd June	Macarthur Square Shopping	Transport \$11
Friday 30th June	Engadine Shopping	Transport \$5.50
Tuesday 4th July	Bunnings Kirrawee	Transport \$5.50
Thursday 6th July	Music & Tea at Wollongong Art Gallery	Transport/Admin \$10.50
Friday 7th July	Sylvania Shopping	Transport \$11
Tuesday 11th July	Movies at NINA – The Dressmaker	Transport/Admin \$10.50
Friday 14th July	Dapto Shopping	Transport \$11
Tuesday 18th July	Nursery – Sunrise Nursery Helensburgh	Transport \$5.50
Friday 21st July	Warrawong Shopping	Transport \$11
Wednesday 26th July	Archibald Exhibition at Art Gallery of NSW	Ticket \$22, Transport/Admin \$21.50, plus Lunch
Friday 28th July	Shellharbour Shopping	Transport \$11

NINA receives funding from the NSW Govt to assist commuters who find it hard to access general public transport. If you have limited or no access to private or public transport due to your location, financial resources, physical or cognitive capacities, when you need to travel then NINA can help you! If you think you are transport disadvantaged and need assistance, then please give the office a call 4294 1900

**Monday–Friday (8.30am–4.30pm) | telephone 02 4294 1900
18 Walker Street, Helensburgh**

Defying the odds

By Caroline Baum



Anyone who watched the 2018 ABC TV *Australian Story* about Professor Justin Yerbury will remember him: the basketball player turned scientist who embarked on a personal crusade to find a cure for Motor Neurone Disease, which he discovered ran in his family.

Undaunted by his own diagnosis in 2016 and the inevitable ravages it would bring, Professor Yerbury retrained in molecular biology to arm himself with the best understanding of the enemy within. Not yet 50, today he holds the position of Professor of Neurodegenerative Disease at the University of Wollongong (UOW). He was awarded an AM in 2021 and last year he was awarded science's highest honour, the Eureka Prize for Scientific Research.

Recently UOW held a special event to honour Professor Yerbury: a gathering, via Zoom, of his colleagues and team of 17, including PhD graduates, who clearly adore him, to speak about the pioneering work they have been able to achieve under his leadership, leading to a clearer understanding of MND, its causes and possible cures. As one team member put it: "Our lives have been changed for the better by him." Under his guidance, UOW has been successful in applying for international funding to conduct research that sees it punching above its weight in this field.

His wife Rachel, whom he met when he was a shy teenager, also spoke about her husband's remarkable determination, even as the disease continued to paralyse him.

As if his scientific achievements were not enough, now he has gone one better and written a book, a personal account called *Fighting Fate*. And being Dr Yerbury, he did not write it conventionally. Now 99 per cent paralysed, he wrote the memoir with eye-tracking software – describing his idyllic childhood growing up in a modest family in Oak Flats where he did not exactly excel at school, his time playing for the Illawarra Hawks, his meeting with Rachel and the terrible dawning realisation that his family was being gradually felled by a mysterious disease. It took his uncle, his cousin and then, in a six-week period, his mother, aunt and grandmother. His sister died a few years later.

Like fellow MND sufferer Stephen Hawking, whom he met in Cambridge, Professor Yerbury has defied the odds to live much longer than most with MND: life expectancy from diagnosis is usually 27 months. And he has not wasted a second, even managing to go on logistically challenging holidays with his wife and two daughters, including a memorable safari in Africa. He also persisted with his passion for mountain bike riding against the advice of his doctors.

The word hero seems inadequate to describe Professor Yerbury's courage and commitment, but for now, it will have to do. A cure can't come soon enough.

Fighting Fate is published on June 13 by Affirm Press. All proceeds will go towards the fight to cure MND ✨



Meet the Friends

By Ann Middleton, president of the Friends of Wollongong City Libraries

The Friends of Wollongong City Libraries is a volunteer organisation that runs activities for its members while raising money for local libraries.

Our goals are to serve as a link between the library and the community, and foster an interest

in books and an awareness of library services. We organise author luncheons and dinners throughout the year. At these events we can gather with friends and other enthusiastic readers to hear popular authors talk about their books and their writing.

In July we are delighted to be welcoming author Kelly Rimmer. If you haven't read any of her books, I highly recommend *The Warsaw Orphan* and *The German Wife*.

If you would like to experience one of our events, tickets can be purchased on Eventbrite, at the Council or at some libraries. You don't need to be a member but there is a reduction in price on the tickets for members. If you're interested in becoming a member, you can find a form at your local library or on the library website.

We have some other exciting events planned for the rest of the year so please keep a look out for flyers and remember, all money raised returns to our community libraries. ✨



What's On at the Writers Centre

By Tilly Kidd

Join the South Coast Writers Centre for a film club event at Coledale hall on June 4. We will be screening a gripping 1998 neo-noir thriller, *A Simple Plan*, directed by Sam Raimi.

In the world of theatre, we will stage readings of six captivating new plays in development at the Playwrights Showcase on 10 June. The evening will include a speech by Merrigong Theatre Company's Leland Kean, a piece of musical theatre and a short, animated feature from talented emerging playwrights Diana McLaren, Tegan Ware, Tonya Lee, Ines Judd, Dale Watts, Emily Gray, Cicily Ponnor and program convenor Tom Peach. Entry is by donation, but registration is required.

On 17 June, best-selling author Alyssa Montgomery will run an all-day catered workshop at Coledale Community Hall. Alyssa will explore the essential elements of plotting. Gain valuable insights into selecting the right point of view, harnessing the power of emotion, and crafting hooks to keep readers captivated.

Illawarra Multicultural Services is hosting a celebration of cultures and the achievements of local communities at the Refugee Week Dinner on 24 June. The Writing Competition, run in collaboration with SCWC, is back for its 5th year and we'll honour the winners at a special dinner.

Our most exciting announcement for June is the 2023 South Coast Writers Festival launch! On 30 June we will unveil this year's incredible program. The night will include screenings of performances by indie-rock string quartet Fourplay, whose new album was produced in collaboration with novelist Neil Gaiman. And that's not all! David Stavanger of Red Room Poetry will be announcing the 2023 SCWC Poetry Award shortlist. This evening promises to ignite your imagination, connect you with fellow book lovers and leave you inspired.

Visit southcoastwriters.org 🌟

Join book club

By the team at Collins Booksellers Thirroul

This year's referendum is one of the most significant of our time, so let's get informed. *The Voice to Parliament Handbook* is in store and if you have questions or doubts, Jodi Steel will be hosting a series of Together, Yes



small groups in the bookshop. Come along to participate in a safe, respectful conversation. We absolutely love what's happening with Coledale RSL and we're very excited to be launching the Pages & Pints Book Club there! It's on the third Thursday of each month, starting June 15 with Alan Fyfe's *T*. Members can buy the chosen book through us with a 15% discount. Lastly, we're hosting a panel discussion in conjunction with BAD Sydney on June 28 at Ryan's Hotel Thirroul. Sue Turnbull will be leading a discussion with Robert Gott (*Naked Ambition*) and Dennis Altman (*Death In the Sauna*). Register your interest via thirroul@collinsbooks.com.au 🌟

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Craig Robertson AFSM
Group Captain Illawarra/Sutherland

Home town HEROES

RFS volunteers are often the unsung heroes of our district until disaster strikes. But their efforts are truly appreciated. The Illawarra Flame reports

On May 4, Stanwell Tops resident Craig Robertson AFSM (Australian Fire Service Medal, 2015) received the Commissioner's Commendation for Bravery for his role in rescuing a man from the flooded Hacking River in Otford on July 2, 2022.

The Group Captain of Illawarra/Sutherland, NSW RFS, Craig was presented with his award at a ceremony honouring about 80 volunteers, staff and teams for their bravery and exceptional service across a wide variety of emergencies, including bushfires, floods and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Held each year on the Feast Day of St Florian, Patron Saint of Firefighters, the ceremony took place at Dubbo's RFS State Training Academy.

Official RFS documentation describes the circumstances which led to Craig's commendation:

"After days of substantial rainfall and flooding, conditions were extremely dangerous when Otford Rural Fire Brigade and Illawarra Group 1 responded to a concern for welfare report on 2 July 2022.

"Upon arrival at the Otford Railway Station, the crews could hear screams from the Hacking River below. In torrential rain and poor light, the crews made their way to the river bank.

"Group Captain Robertson located a man wedged in a tree surrounded by the rapidly rising river and, deciding immediate intervention was required, secured a rope to himself and a member of the Otford crew before moving into the floodwater.

"He was in almost 1.5 metres of fast-moving water by the time he reached the man, whom he secured to his line before the pair was assisted from the water by the Otford crew."

Craig joined the RFS in 1983 in the Shire, and then became a member of Otford Brigade in 1991 when he moved to the district. He was captain there for many years – "I can't even remember how long," he tells us – and then he became a group officer in 2001. Craig looks after Otford, Stanwell Park, Darkes Forest and Helensburgh brigades but his official area of authority as a group officer starts at Kurnell to the north and goes all the way to Foxground in the south.

Craig said other Otford Brigade members played vital roles in the July 2022 Hacking River rescue, including Phillip Rook, Otford RFS Deputy Captain, who has served for 29 years; Peter



Jim Strickland
Firefighter, Otford RFS



Phillip Rook
Deputy Captain, Otford RFS

McCallum, Otford RFS Senior Deputy Captain, who has served for 29 years; and Jim Strickland, who has been an RFS firefighter for two years. (Craig, Phil and Jim are pictured on the June cover; Peter was unable to attend the photo shoot.)

Craig kindly took time to have a chat with us about the 2022 rescue and his years of service.

RFS volunteers deal with very difficult emergency situations. How are you doing in the aftermath of that particular rescue?

Look, to be honest, for months after [the rescue] I'd wake up during the middle of the night, just thinking: Did I do the right thing? What could have happened to me?

So that sort of thing affects you – certain jobs you can go through and do things and you'd be fine. Different jobs, they'll just hit you. This hit me more because of what could have happened.

It wasn't only this man's life at risk, was it? It was yours as well.

Yeah. And I had to convince that guy to let go of the tree, to trust me, by putting a rope around to know that we were going to get back to the shore.

He'd been in the water for probably about 15 to 20 minutes, he'd been hanging on for a while.

Phil had to tie the rope around himself because there were no trees or anything else to tie off to ... there was just a lot of lantana. And Phil was supported on the bank with Jim as well.

Once we got him back to the bank, we then had to try and get him up the bank because the waters were rising all the time.

It was probably about another 20 minutes before other services arrived on site to help us.

And, meanwhile, the water was rising fast – and there was nothing to hold onto because it's all lantana and dirt.

He was in hypothermia, he was fully drenched, so we had to try and keep him warm in blankets, which were thrown down from the top.

The scope of emergencies RFS volunteers have to deal with is incredible.

It just goes from one extreme to the other: you'll be doing car accidents, search and rescues, structure fires, floods, bush fires...

Our training helps us deal with what we do. But ... we haven't been trained for floods.

We're hoping now, moving forward, that brigades will get some basic [flood] training, and some basic equipment to do all these sorts of things if we have to do it again.

We're just lucky to have a lot of good volunteers in the area.

It must be nice to be officially recognised for your RFS service.

It is, but I don't do it for that. I do it for the people of the community – and my RFS colleagues, because they're like part of my family. That's who we do it for.

You don't join for medals – you join to help the community and be part of a great service, as well as the camaraderie among the people you work with. And that's what keeps you wanting to do the job.

The NSW RFS is the world's largest volunteer fire service, with more than 70,000 volunteers across NSW. For more information, visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au 🌟

Beetling About

With Dr Chris Reid

I begin this story with yet another insect scooped up off the steps of Helensburgh Railway Station, where it was in imminent danger of being flattened. What a great place for insects the station is!

This large moth is *Chelepteryx chelepteryx*, aka the enigmatically named 'White-stemmed Acacia Moth' (anybody seen a white-stemmed acacia? Its larger relative *Chelepteryx collesi* is called the white-stemmed gum moth – so maybe somebody forgot to drop the 'white-stemmed' bit for our moth. All the more reason for using the scientific name). The food plants vary from acacias to Gymea lilies. That's my amazingly clean hand for scale. This is a female – the male has feathery antennae and flashier underwings.

This moth belongs to the Anthelidae, a family restricted to Australia and New Guinea.

Chelepteryx is a typical anthelid genus, characterised by huge caterpillars having nasty urticating hairs, which are also embedded in the silk cocoon made around the pupa.

Urtication means severe irritation, and is named from the effect of handling *Urtica*, the nettle, but the name *Urtica* itself means a burn. Contact with the hairs from anthelid caterpillars may require hospitalisation. So this is not really the sort of moth to bring home to rear caterpillars from.

The moth itself seems harmless. Strangely, this large insect can't feed, it has no mouthparts. It has been a hungry caterpillar for a year but only lives for a few days as an adult, despite the careful details on the wings that help it to hide – the false scars



from insect damage and mottled browns of old leaves. Lack of feeding in very large adult insects seems quite common – for example, in some stag and longhorn beetles. Perhaps large adults are too easy to find and eat, and therefore have to get on with it as quickly as possible – i.e. mate and lay eggs. The literature for *Chelepteryx* notes that discovered females like mine often lay eggs, suggesting that they mate as soon as they hatch at the cocoon.

Another urticating caterpillar, which may be more familiar, is that of *Leptocneria reducta*, the White Cedar Moth. It completely defoliates white cedar (*Melia*) and then wanders around to pupate. We have a white cedar next to the house and always seem to end up with cocoons at the back of pictures or under chairs. *Leptocneria* is in the family Erebidae and completely unrelated to *Chelepteryx*, but is doing much the same thing, and also has short-lived non-feeding adults. This is a classic example of convergent evolution, like the wings of bats and birds. ✨



Photo: Safrina Thristiawati

Hiding Beauty

By Paul Blanksby of Helensburgh Men's Shed



We get regular commissions at your Men's Shed. So we were ready when Alice brought in a piano stool she'd found at a bargain price. Loose legs? Reattached and firm for more fortissimos and then polished. But that calico covering! All torn at one corner and, frankly, puzzling.

Carefully removing the rough material, Bruce and Michael discovered exquisite brocade fabric looking as new as ever. With help from resident seamster Wayne and Bruce's wife, Lee, a small tear in the corner pleat was repaired and trim sewn on.

We love to see our customer's reaction when we do the Big Reveal, and Alice was delighted indeed.

Thanks to all the visitors to our Open Day. We enjoyed tea and a chat with David Wilkinson, a speaker from Prostate Cancer Foundation as the lead-up to our Walk for Prostate Cancer in mid-June, a great event that everyone can join. ✨

Artists of the Illawarra

Northern Illawarra Art Trail chair Edith McNally introduces Thirroul's Ian Brown

Ian Brown's theme is "All things bright, bold and beautiful" and that is exactly what his art delivers.

Beneath his latest works are the titles *Macrophylla audax? Majus inquietus? Latifolia confertii?* Are these new species of plant life discovered in the northern suburbs? No, these are the titles of Ian's latest artworks.

Ian creates from his studio in Thirroul. His style is eclectic, moving between hand-printed monotype collages using unique Japanese papers, to contemporary zinc etchings, to his latest big, bold, bright beautiful canvas acrylic paintings.

A lofty studio overlooking tree canopies and looking through an array of plant life provided the inspiration for his latest works.

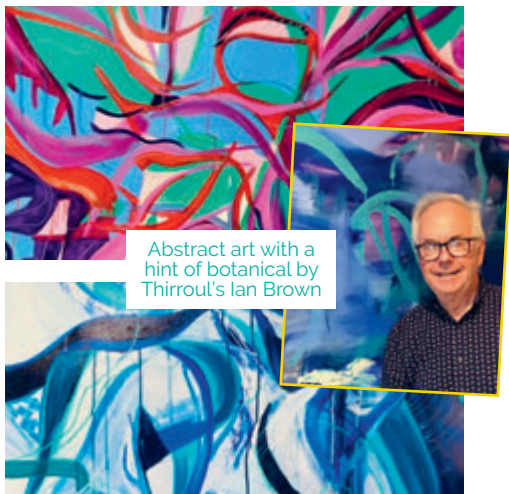
"My work is always abstract... always contemporary," Ian says. "I needed to look no further than my studio for inspiration. Hopefully, for the viewer the artworks jump out with just a hint of botanical."

Ian was hoping the viewer would look closely and catch a glimpse of Monstera, Alocasia or a little bit of Bird of Paradise. As for the titles... Ian says he'll leave it to the viewer to unpack the Latin.

His paintings – which are large and seek to live on large dramatic white walls – were shown in February at the *locus + botanica* exhibition at the

beautiful Clifton School of Arts. We are very fortunate to have such a great space for artists. Ian is also involved in the Illawarra Association for the Visual Arts and the Northern Illawarra Art Trail.

Follow @ianbrownthirroul on Instagram 🌟



Guides pay their respects

By Maya and Bella of Helensburgh Girl Guides



On April 25, representing Helensburgh Girl Guides, Maya, Bella and Guide leader Brolga went to Charles Harper Park to pay their respects to the brave ANZACS who fought for our country.

It was a dark and fresh morning. People gathered in silence, remembering the heroes who suffered or lost their lives for us. We first listened to the Acknowledgement of Country. We heard stories from the soldiers and said prayers for them. During the service we came forward to the memorial for Maya to place our wreath as a symbol of remembrance. I felt honoured and proud.

One by one the names were called out of those laying the wreaths, when they got to Girl Guides I was very nervous but that didn't stop me! Bella, Brolga and I approached slowly and stood together, made the Guides' salute and I stepped forward to lay down the wreath. It felt so important and was an amazing honour. The Australian flag was lowered and we had a one-minute silence for the fallen soldiers. This was one of the most important parts. As the bugle played the Last Post we all stood still remembering them. The silence made me feel a lot of respect and gratitude. 🌟

TVC Report

By Annette Jones, Thirroul Village Committee

On April 23 the Thirroul Village Committee (TVC) held a general meeting. The new member for Heathcote, Maryanne Stuart, attended and congratulations were extended to her from the members. Here are some points of interest:

Graffiti report

Graffiti attacks continue in all the usual places around Thirroul and Thomas Gibson Park. Of late spray-paint graffiti has reduced while marker pen graffiti has increased. If residents see graffiti, please report instances to directly to Council via this email: council@wollongong.nsw.gov.au. Council can send on to police or utilities.

Garden report

It was observed that the repair and maintenance work done at the children's playground near Thirroul Pool did not include the gardens, so the area looks rather tatty. The TVC has included this in its submission to Council on the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Program 2023-2027.

Development Application report

McCauley Lodge – nothing as yet from Council on this proposal.

Lot 101 Amy Street, Thirroul – The Land and Environment Court has handed down its decision which is: "Development Application No. DA/1324/2021 being for the proposed demolition of part of the elevated boardwalk section of Wilkies Walk and reconstruction of part of the boardwalk, and a 3-lot subdivision of land known as 1 Amy Street Thirroul NSW 2515 ... is determined by grant of consent, subject to conditions."

Read the judgement: <https://www.caselaw.nsw.gov.au/decision/1878ca3a562c3f72563eeade>

Update on the Plaza

The TVC Secretary contacted one of the local developers involved in the Plaza development to discuss what was happening with the plaza. It is believed that community involvement is necessary to achieve a workable outcome.

TVC response to WCC Draft Infrastructure Delivery Program

Since the meeting the TVC has lodged a submission to Council. Read it at <https://www.thirroulvillage.com/news/wollongong-council>.

The next TVC meeting (AGM) will be at 4pm, July 16 at Thirroul Railway Institute Hall 📍

NIRAG/NF3 Report

By NIRAG secretary Ross Dearden

Northern Illawarra Resident Action Group meets at Bulli Community Centre Hall at 7pm on the first Wednesday of February, May, August and November. Contact NIRAG@bigpond.com

Trinity Row cycleway news

Following representations by NIRAG to widen the cycleway to 4m along Trinity Row, community members have expressed concerns about the proposal to build a high safety fence at the top of the embankment between Alroy and Jardine Streets. Council has agreed to meet on site to look at alternatives. We have also had feedback from Council that the design of the entrance to the Bulli Beach carpark and cafe will be modified to improve safety for vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists, though this is not finalised. Signage to ensure vehicles Give Way to pedestrians and cycles on the shared way is recommended.

NIRAG is also concerned with the proposal to demolish the existing shelter which provides good protection from the weather and is valued for its heritage and character. An additional new accessible shelter and access ramp could be built close to the existing accessible parking.

EP&A Regulation Section 134 (5)

At the last meeting, Member for Heathcote, Maryanne Stuart, agreed to follow up and ask Planning Minister Paul Scully to make a change to the EP&A Regulation Section 134 (5) to require Private Certifiers to notify neighbours prior to issuing Complying Development Certificates. Private Certifiers in Wollongong LGA are currently not required to give notice to neighbours, yet this is required in metropolitan areas.

Lower Escarpment Walking Trail

At the last meeting it was reported that a reply had been received from Wollongong Resources refusing to allow access, citing safety and WH&S issues. It was resolved to request the Member for Keira, Ryan Park, to give support and assist WCC and Seacliff Coasters in efforts to legalise a right of way through the colliery lands.

Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS)

NIRAG/NF3 contributed to the first workshop for the Wollongong ITS to plan movement of people, freight and services. A second workshop is planned in June to identify ways to deliver the future vision of Wollongong's transport network.

Next meeting is the AGM on Wednesday, 2 August. All welcome 📍

NF1 Report

By Neighbourhood Forum 1 convenor Warwick Erwin

Draft Crown Reserves Plan of Management (PoM) for 32 Crown Reserves

The Draft Crown Reserves Plan of Management is on Wollongong Council's website and includes: Proud Park, Helensburgh; Helensburgh Flora and Fauna Reserve; Helensburgh & District Historical Mine Museum; Patrick McCarthy Hall, Helensburgh (Hall destroyed by fire); Helensburgh Pre-school; Helensburgh Community Hall; Helensburgh Baby Health Centre; Helensburgh Proposed Pound Site; Darkes Forest; Otford Park.

Please note: the Draft Crown Reserves PoM is a generic PoM and does not include Charles Harper or Rex Jackson parks. There is a draft Helensburgh Park Crown Reserves PoM that Council referred to the Minister in July 2022 that is still under review.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Conflict of Interest) Regulation

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Conflict of Interest) Regulation 2023 is now on Wollongong Council's website and council is asking the public to provide comments.

Sri Venkateswara Temple Event

NF1 contacted Council about complaints from local residents regarding a festival at Helensburgh's Sri Venkateswara Temple in April, particularly in relation to traffic, fireworks and crowd numbers. Council staff met Temple representatives to discuss impacts. Issues raised by TfNSW highlighted concerns with the adequacy of the Traffic Guidance Scheme. Temple representatives were given

guidance for future events and advised to liaise with TfNSW re traffic management, discuss events with council staff early on to ensure compliance, start early engagement with stakeholders and seek approval from the local traffic committee.

Helensburgh Bike Tracks Closed

National Parks & Wildlife Service found asbestos in-fill on tracks at Helensburgh Mountain Bike Park. Council is working with Helensburgh Off Road Cycle Club to resolve the issue. There will be monitoring of air and soil around the site.

Helensburgh Memorial Swimming Pool

Council will start the upgrade.

169 Walker St Development Application

A development application has been lodged with Council for 169 Walker St, Helensburgh. The DA is seeking approval for the construction of an industrial park with 15 units. Submissions closed in early May but Council accepts submissions until a decision is made and this DA should go before Wollongong Local Planning Panel (WLPP). DA was exhibited after the April NF1 meeting and closed for submission before the May meeting.

Meeting closed 7.45pm to allow attendees to drive home before the closure of Lawrence Hargrave Drive at Stanwell Tops for road maintenance.

Next meeting 7pm Wednesday, 14 June at Otford Community Hall. 📍



Your Letters

Dear Editor,

I live in Helensburgh and have almost run out of little green liners for my Fogo bin which was placed on my verandah when the council decided they would like to begin this service.

I rang the council to see if I could get replacement bags to be told, yes, you can come to the council

chambers in Wollongong and collect them.

As I am an elderly pensioner this is not easy. I would maybe suggest that the local library is also run by Wollongong Council – maybe they could place a few boxes of these green bags there for residents to use when they need them replaced.

Thank you,
Dorothy Patton, Helensburgh

Wollongong City Council's response:

Residents may pick up FOGO bin liners (up to two a year) via Helensburgh and Dapto libraries, Thirroul Community Centre, the Customer Service desk at Council's Admin Building and Remondis office in Unanderra. Other options: don't use liners and wash the bin between uses or buy compostable liners with the AS 4736 code and seedling at supermarkets or hardware stores. 🌱

Warm welcome for refugees

Ahead of Refugee Week (June 18-24), Allyson Pazos tells us how the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI) has embraced the SCARF community



Now her babies are teenagers, their family lives in Bulli and Allyson has spent the past six years at MCCI, which welcomed SCARF into its fold during the pandemic. Allyson's role expanded and she is now MCCI's general manager for refugee and youth support. "I'm super humbled, and I hope I can serve our community well," she says.

The focus on friendship that drove SCARF won't change, she wants to reassure supporters. "We just put in this robust structure, if you like, so that we can enhance that reach and broaden it. We have brought together a very strong team."

Allyson says the government runs "an incredible humanitarian settlement program" but volunteers are vital in extending the warm human hand of welcome to newcomers, helping with everything from driving lessons to homework.

"They're the energy, they're the core of our work," she says. "We couldn't really do without them. We're always on the lookout for volunteers."

Covid lockdowns led to engagement problems and now is a time to rebuild trust, as well as help people struggling with the cost of living crisis. "There is enormous need," Allyson says. "Our teams are really busy."

One of her favourite programs is Let's Chat. "It brings people in, in a really casual manner, to just come together and practise their English, but also connect with others. It's incredibly valuable." ✨

Twenty years after Sharyn Mackenzie befriended a Sudanese family, helped them learn English and then co-founded Strategic Community Assistance to Refugee Families (SCARF), another remarkable woman has stepped up to lead its programs.

Allyson Pazos grew up in Uruguay, moved to Sydney to study at age 18 and started her career as an accountant. "It was very corporate," she says. "Then I went on maternity leave and I said, 'That's it. This is not what I love.'"

"I was always quite a big advocate for refugee rights and human rights. I did voluntary work on the side. But then I decided I wanted to transition to community development work."

She studied further then worked with families in Fairfield. "I could combine my passion with the previous skills, with the ability to run projects."

Thanks to pianists

By Music and Tea's Felicity Woodhill

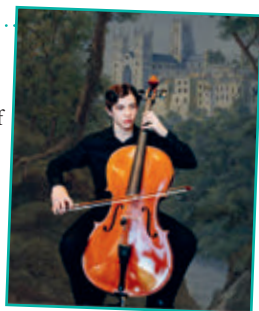
In classical music, young players and singers perform regularly with pianists. Established collaborative pianists are the custodians of a wealth of musical knowledge of value to younger artists.

Young musicians must also be encouraged to communicate their feelings and responses to music. Successful performance balances these individual interpretations and respect for the composer's intent. The role of musical mentors in creating this balance is invaluable.

Collaborative pianists have embraced the Emerging Artists Concert Series and gifted our young artists many hours of rehearsal time in preparation for performances.

This year, pianist, musicologist and mentor David Vance committed to preparing and performing with featured artists Daniel Kramer

(voice) and Annabel Wouters (flute). The depth of musicianship of an artist such as David, to guide their journey, clearly enhanced Daniel and Annabel's ability to present with confidence. In addition, David regularly accompanies the local, often younger, artists who open the Gallery concerts. Other local pianists contributing to the series include Lisa Baraldi and Elizabeth Stevens, and from Sydney, Laura McDonald. We thank them all.



Thurs, June 8: An Odyssey of Romance

Our next concert is with 16-year-old cellist Jack (pictured). He is fortunate to be working with Australian pianist John Martin. Join us on the 8th at 11am at Wollongong Art Gallery. ✨

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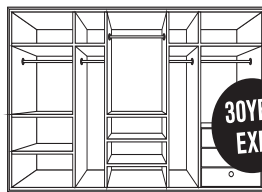
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Dr Rip's Science of the Surf

With Coalcliff's Prof Rob Brander. This month: Waves in Real Time

You certainly don't need to be a surfer to have a keen interest in ocean waves and while there's a range of surf forecasting apps and websites out there predicting what wave height and direction will be, there's not a lot of information available in real time that tells you just how big those waves really are.

The exception is the NSW Coastal Data Network Program run by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's Manly Hydraulics Laboratory (MHL). After a series of damaging storms in 1974, the MHL developed a network of offshore waverider buoys to monitor wave conditions along the NSW coast that now consists of seven buoys deployed 6 to 12km offshore of Byron Bay, Coffs Harbour, Crowdy Head, Sydney, Port Kembla,



Bateman's Bay and Eden. It's one of the best wave-monitoring networks in the world.

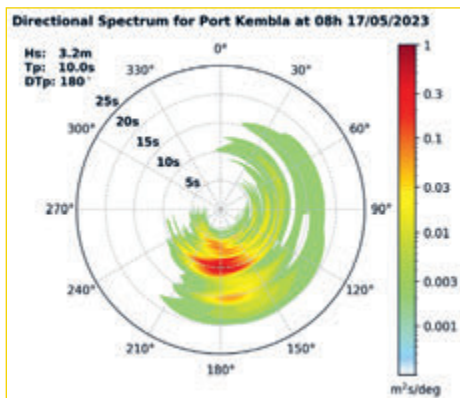
A waverider buoy is like a big soccer ball tethered to the ocean floor that bobs, pitches and rolls at the surface with the passage of waves. In-built sensors translate this movement into wave information and an antenna transmits the data continuously to a receiving station. Data collected is available in real time at www.mhl.nsw.gov.au/Data. On the website, you can look at graphs showing wave data from all of the buoy locations at once or you can focus just on the buoy nearest you – for us, that would be the Port Kembla and Sydney buoys.

The main data of interest are significant wave height (Hs), which is the average of the highest 33% of waves recorded over a given time. It's really a measure of the biggest waves and the average yearly Hs for our coast is about 1.6 metres. Anything bigger than 2.5m can be considered big.

The wave period (Tp) is the time between two wave crests to pass a fixed point and while typical wave periods along our coast are about 8 seconds, anything above 10 seconds represents long period swell from a distant storm.

Wave direction refers to the direction that waves are coming from, so a direction of 135° relative to true north represents waves coming from the south-east. One of the more interesting graphs is the directional spectrum (shown at left). These are generated hourly and provide the Hs, Ts and show the direction that the waves are coming from and the energy (colours) associated with the waves, which is really a measure of the wave height. One good thing about these graphs is that they show if there's waves coming from multiple directions.

There's plenty more to explore so if you are into waves, definitely go check out the website! 🌟



The directional spectrum from the Port Kembla wave rider buoy on May 17 shows waves coming from multiple directions with mostly large swell coming from the south (image courtesy Manly Hydraulics Laboratory).

Postcard from Qld

By Helen Slade

The Helensburgh Seniors Travel Group's Longreach to Fraser Island adventure trip far exceeded all our very high expectations. We had the most amazing holiday with the most wonderful company, sharing new experiences, friendships and happy memories. Accommodation and meals were excellent. A huge thank you to Kiama Scenic Tours for the wonderful itinerary and organisation of this trip.

Enquiries to Helen on 0427 043 774 🌟





Macey Jolley took 1st at the regional surfing titles on May 20. Photo: Ian Pepper

Stunning surfing!

By Ian Pepper and Emily Laurence

It's been a GIANT month. First up, a massive congratulations to all our junior competitors who took part in the Surfing NSW Billabong Oz Grom Cup at Coffs Harbour in the April school holidays.

Taking 2nd place in the under 8s (parental assist) was Micros Saxon King with Dad on the flippers. Epic result! In the under 14s, Ashton Mekisic progressed to the semi-finals; in the under 18s women's, Zahlia Short and Shyla Short went head to head in a same heat quarter-final finish. Well done to Sam Kornek for giving the under 14s a crack and to Noah Kornek in the under 12s.

Next came the inaugural Surfing State of Origin event at Burleigh Heads on 30 April. The invitation-only event involved 16 boardrider clubs competing in Australian sport's greatest rivalry

– QLD v NSW. Our small team, of Shyla Short and father-and-son duo Nic and Mannix Squiers, surfed impressive heats to win in pumping waves, leading our club to be No.1 overall. But in the overall leader board, QLD took the win.

Pointscore no.4, held at Stanwell Park in small conditions, saw the launch of our new mixed 10 and under division – well done to Fletcher Bell for taking out the first 10 and under division heat.

Finally, Scarborough Boardriders hosted the junior regional surfing titles over 19-20 May at Coledale Beach. The first day was the South Coast Regional School Surfing Titles, with a new tag team format, the brainchild of Geoff Latimer, head of surfing at Illawarra Sports High. Conditions were epic. Well done to the team winners: Junior Boys – Illawarra Sports High; Junior Girls – Kiama; Senior Boys – Bulli High; Senior Girls – Kiama.

On Saturday, there was stunning surfing by the club's juniors at the Surfing Illawarra & Surfing NSW Regional Titles in chunky, chilly offshore conditions. The waves were firing with a Karama's lookalike right-hander suiting many of our members who surf Coledale regularly. Our results speak for themselves: 1st u14s Girls – Macey Jolley; 1st u18 Girls – Shyla Short; 1st u12s Boys – Noah Kornek; 2nd u18s Boys – Mannix Squiers; 2nd u14 Boys – Jesse Fitzgibbons; 3rd u18 Girls – Zahlia Short; 3rd u14 Boys – Ashton Mekisic.

Shout out to Eddy Hamaty and Talina Wilson, and to our judges under direction of Shaun Warren and contest director Joshua Pepper. 🌟

CWA served 4000 scones a day

By the CWA's Jan Johnston

April is my favourite month with clear blue skies and gentle autumn heat. It is also the month the Royal Easter Show is held in the Home, Garden and Lifestyle Pavilion at Homebush. This is where the country brings its very best to show to the city.

The Royal Easter Show Devonshire Teas are a major fund-raising event which supports the NSW Disaster Relief Fund. This year was the 75th anniversary of serving scones at the show.

The CWA Tea Rooms are a long-standing show tradition, a very popular focal point for friends and family to meet up over a scone and a cup of tea.

Major sponsors donated the scone mix, cream, coffee and hot chocolate; volunteers cooked superb hot scones to be served with jam and double cream. Even the food critics were impressed.

CWA members, family and friends can volunteer in varied roles from cooking or serving delicious

scones as well as selling homemade cakes and jams. It is reported that 4000 scones were served daily. What a buzz!



Many volunteers develop lasting friendships and connections, later visiting rural communities to experience the country way of life. Not to mention, the free show entry they receive when doing a 4.5-hour shift of voluntary work.

Don't forget we are at the CWA Hall, 15 The Drive Stanwell Park, at 10am on the first Tuesday of the month and always welcome new visitors. 🌟

Butchers set to bounce back

By Brian Kelly

As this issue went to press, Thirroul Butchers were looking to lift their fortunes in a home game against Dapto after losing three of their first four games in the Illawarra rugby league top grade.

After a round-two win over Corrimal, the blue-and-whites faltered, going down 24-6 to Collies and 20-16 to Wests in the final game of the league's Magic Round at WIN Stadium. Thirroul is fourth place on the Mojo Homes ladder.

Despite the modest returns, two players have had something to celebrate: goalkicker Joshua Martin has posted 16 points, while Wayne Bremner has scored three tries to be on 12.

In first division, Helensburgh occupy third spot after securing two wins from their first four encounters. The Tigers were due to face Corrimal at Rex Jackson Oval in late May, having beaten Dapto 34-4 in mid-May before going down 36-22 to Collies in round four.

The best Tigers' result so far was a 34-4 win over Dapto in round three on the Canaries' home turf.

Helensburgh's juniors have a new committee and president in Tim Lloyd.

"New committee means new ideas – they have already created a different culture at the club," club president Kendall Ryan said.

Thirroul and Corrimal have yet to post wins after four rounds of first division matches, and both clubs have had fruitless starts to their under 18s seasons despite going close on several occasions.

In women's rugby league, Corrimal were due to face ladder leaders Stingrays in late May after a mixed start to their season in the open tackle division.

Jennifer Latu has posted two tries in the

competition as the Cougars hold down fifth place after four rounds. The club's best result was a 34-14 away to Warilla Lake South before the players were left kicking their heels with a forfeit against Nowra Bomaderry.

In under 18s open tackle, Corrimal's results have included a 10-10 draw with Cronulla Caringbah and an earlier 22-0 loss to Collegians.

In women's open tag, Thirroul occupy fourth spot on the ladder, with Woonona Bulli fifth, Helensburgh sixth and Corrimal seventh.

The Butchers will host a luncheon at Panorama House on June 11 as part of the club's 110th year celebrations (enquiries mitchgbate@hotmail.com). 🍴



Helensburgh's Liam O'Toole on the run during his side's clash with Thirroul. Photo thanks to Johann Cobb of Helensburgh Tigers



Winter swims in 'balmy' water

By Stanwell Park Sea Eels club president Peter McDonald

Winter swimming with the Stanwell Park Sea Eels is back in full swing. The club has held three swims, with 30 swimmers eager to get back into the water, which has been on average a balmy 20°C.

At our AGM, held on swim one on 30 April, we awarded Anne Woodward with Life Membership of the Club. Anne is an important part of our club and has helped raise hundreds for charity through her skills as Fine Master. Congratulations, Anno!



Cricket's rising stars awarded

Helensburgh Junior Cricket Club reports

With extra teams and new players coming on board, Helensburgh Junior Cricket Club wrapped up its successful 2022/23 season with a Presentation Night on Friday, May 5.

This year the club offered several ways for local kids to get involved, starting with Master Blasters, an hour-long session on Saturdays teaching basic skills to the little ones. Next was a step up and onto the field with games for Under 10s to Under 17s.

On the field our Under 11a's team never lost a game and were crowned Premiers for their age group. Both our Under 13 Gold and Under 15b teams made the Semi Finals in their divisions.

Rowan, the Under 17s captain, was named the Junior Player of the Year. He achieved the second most runs and wickets for the team.

Liam, from Under 13 Gold, was named Junior Developing Player of the Year. He also claimed the

Ella, the Under 13s Girls Illawarra Representative Player of the Year, and Liam, the club's Junior Developing Player of the Year.
Photos: Helensburgh Junior Cricket Club

batting award for his team with the highest amount of runs, including a 65 not out.

Many of our Junior Players have gone on to higher honours in representative cricket for Illawarra: Ella, Digby, Curtly, Sammy and Duncan in the Under 11s; Liam and Lewis in the Under 12s; Kaiden with the Under 13s; and Jack with Under 15s. A record number, not bad for our little club!

Ella from Under 11s had many achievements, including being named the Under 13s Girls Illawarra Representative Player of the Year. Later this year, Ella will be taking part in the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association (PSSA) team.

Digby from Under 11s was also awarded Player of the Ron Arendt's Carnival in Newcastle at the start of the year, along with the award of Under 11 Illawarra Representative Player of the Year.

Congratulations to our Under 13 Black Coach Brandon Waters on being awarded the Club Person of the Year for his service, including getting our grounds prepared for the start of the season.

Finally, thank you to the Junior Committee, volunteers and players' families their support.

We'd also like to thank all our local sponsors – Cattley Plumbing, Tradies Helensburgh, Stewart Building, Onsite Safety Australia, Luke Jones Electrical, John Dark Tiling, Potter's Premium Painting, Above All Locksmiths and the Helensburgh Hotel.

Registrations for the new season will open in August/September. Stay up to date via the [Helensburgh Junior Cricket Facebook page](#) 🌟

This year is our 35th season and our club has always been a family club, open to all swimmers who can swim 50 metres unaided. We swim at Coalcliff pool, 9am every Sunday until September. Swims are 50m, 100m and a relay, all swims are handicapped and as competitive as you wish.

Afterwards we head to Helensburgh-Stanwell Park Surf Club for delicious soups made by our members and drinks, if desired, and plenty of socialising. Perfect way to spend your Sunday.

Back at the Surf Club is where we raise funds for charity by means of fines, raffles and Joker Poker. Our main charity is CRAM Foundation, who provide a caring service to disabled adults and children. We have been supporting CRAM since 1999 and made many friendships with the residents. Last season we donated \$2000.

Our club enjoys inter-club visits with Bulli Sea Lions. The ladies from the Bondi Icebergs visit, we compete at the Invitational Champs at Bondi, the South Coast and the Australian Championships. One of our favourite days is the annual Bring-A-Friend day with a visit from the Gunnamatta Greys. After the swim we head to Wombarra Bowlo for soup, beverages and perhaps Barefoot Bowls.

This season we have five new members. All residents in and outside of the area are welcome. It would be great to see more surf club members join. Joining the Sea Eels, you also become an "Associate Member" of Helensburgh-Stanwell Park Surf Club and are covered by the surf lifesaving insurance.

Our club is a friendly club who enjoy a cool swim and socialising. Hope to see you on the blocks any Sunday up until September. 🌟

Port Kembla Tidal Chart

June 2023

TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M	TIME	M
1 0543 1.39 1144 0.49 TH 1817 1.66		10 0046 1.76 0750 0.34 SA 1403 1.34 1930 0.70		19 0317 0.40 0910 1.22 MO 1422 0.64 2101 1.81		28 0307 1.32 0929 0.54 WE 1607 1.47 2228 0.71	
2 0045 0.53 0631 1.38 FR 1221 0.49 1856 1.77		11 0150 1.66 0844 0.37 SU 1502 1.41 ● 2045 0.69		20 0357 0.41 0952 1.21 TU 1501 0.67 2140 1.78		29 0409 1.28 1013 0.54 TH 1654 1.58 2330 0.61	
3 0133 0.43 0721 1.37 SA 1300 0.50 1937 1.87		12 0256 1.56 0934 0.41 MO 1558 1.49 2200 0.66		21 0436 0.43 1033 1.20 WE 1543 0.69 2217 1.73		30 0510 1.27 1057 0.53 FR 1739 1.70	
4 0221 0.35 0813 1.36 SU 1344 0.52 ○ 2021 1.94		13 0400 1.47 1020 0.44 TU 1649 1.59 2309 0.60		22 0515 0.46 1115 1.19 TH 1625 0.72 2256 1.67			
5 0311 0.29 0906 1.33 MO 1430 0.54 2108 1.98		14 0500 1.39 1103 0.47 WE 1737 1.68		23 0555 0.49 1159 1.20 FR 1711 0.74 2337 1.60			
6 0403 0.25 1001 1.31 TU 1521 0.58 2158 1.97		15 0011 0.53 0557 1.33 TH 1145 0.51 1822 1.75		24 0636 0.51 1246 1.21 SA 1802 0.78			
7 0458 0.25 1100 1.29 WE 1616 0.61 2251 1.93		16 0105 0.47 0650 1.29 FR 1225 0.55 1904 1.80		25 0021 1.53 0719 0.53 SU 1337 1.25 1900 0.80			
8 0555 0.27 1159 1.28 TH 1716 0.65 2347 1.86		17 0153 0.43 0740 1.25 SA 1304 0.58 1945 1.83		26 0110 1.45 0802 0.54 MO 1430 1.30 ● 2008 0.81			
9 0653 0.30 1300 1.30 FR 1820 0.68		18 0237 0.40 0827 1.23 SU 1343 0.62 ● 2024 1.83		27 0206 1.37 0845 0.54 TU 1519 1.38 2119 0.78			

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Golf *news*

Tradies Social Golf

Barry Thompson reports

Once again, our numbers were limited by the unavailability of carts due to the weather. While we older members stayed home with our jim-jams and cocoa, 16 stalwarts contested the Stroke event.

Rod won the day with 63, while Kynan (with 70), piped Shane for second on countback. Nathan won the bucket-of-balls prize and the wheels fell off for Paul who, for the first time in memory, took the Bradmans.

The victors in the first round of match play were Iain, Kynan, Nathan, Rod and Dave. There should be some very interesting match-ups from these winners.

Please remember to support our sponsors – Helensburgh Butchery, Gallardo's Pizzeria, Helensburgh Driving Range – and our parent club, Tradies.

Let us hope that the weather improves before our next outing on Saturday, June 17th. We will meet at Boomerang for a 7am tee-off.

Hope to see you there.

Footnote: the brevity of this column is due to lack of input from my snitches – sorry, I mean informants. Please pick up your game.

Helensburgh Sunday Social Golf Club

Robert 'Indy' Jones reports

Mother's Day was our last date with the fairways entrusted to HSSGC and mothers won hands-down. Members celebrated with those close to them to keep golf in the future a top priority.

The tour continues at Hurstville on June 11th, followed by rounds 1, 2 and 3 of the HSSGC championship events on July 2nd, August 6th and August 20th, all at the resplendent Hurstville.

Updates to members via text and email, contact Tony on 0418 863 100 for membership information.

Please continue to support our sponsors – Christian's Premium Meats and Helensburgh Golf Range – and join us to enjoy a game of golf, the outdoors and good company.

Indy signing off ...

Comments to distract you after putting, whilst on the green: "It's still your turn!" 🌟

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RayWhite

What's happening in the property market???

After several turbulent years the market finally appears to be returning to 'normal'. Core Logic reports, *'After falling -9.1% between May 2022 and February 2023, Australian housing values look to have bottomed out, posting a second consecutive monthly rise. CoreLogic's national Home Value Index (HVI) increased by half a percent in April, following a 0.6% lift in March to be 1.0% higher over the past three months'.*

Sydney leads the charge in the market recovery with a 1.3% increase in April leaving the values 3.0% higher than recorded in January. In addition, the four largest capital cities all recorded a rise in housing values over the rolling quarter showing that this is not an isolated event.

With inspection numbers at a 12 month high, prices increasing and buyer confidence returning, there are plenty of positive signs for those who are considering making a move.

Mattias Samuelsson

Director | Chairman's Elite Agent

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