



TIS THE SEASON ...
GOODWILL
TO ALL !

> Summer reading starts 15

A walker's feat: 800km pilgrimage

Bywong resident and Bulletin associate editor **Sonja Chandler** one day announced that she was taking five weeks off from the family and her work and, together with a friend, would walk the Camino de Santiago in Spain, like thousands of 'pilgrims' do every year. What she saw, why so many people do it (and how the feet held up), is the subject of her fascinating report.

THE FAMILY gathering chestnuts on the cool late-October day barely looked up as we passed; so many generations of Galacian farmers have seen so many generations of pilgrims that the sight of two middle-aged women carrying backpacks was nothing new. However, for us, everything on the Camino was novel and remarkable!

Since the beginning of the 10th century, the Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St James, has been a Christian pilgrimage; a network of routes leading from all over Europe to Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain, the place where James the Apostle is thought to be buried. By the time my friend Robyn and I reached those chestnut orchards we had been walking for 30 days and were less than one week away from Santiago.

Our modern-day pilgrimage passed through many of the same towns and villages as the earliest travelers and crossed rivers on bridges that had been built for 'peregrinos' (pilgrims) by royalty and engineering monks from the 12th century onward. As we walked along stretches of Roman road or ate lunch under ancient oak trees, as a monastery founded in the 6th century came into view or we approached towns crowned by crumbling castles, it felt as if we had somehow slipped through a wrinkle in time and were back in the Middle Ages.

Start in the Pyrenees

Robyn and I started walking in St Jean Pied de Port, in the beautiful, green foothills of the Pyrenees in southwestern France. For 36 days and

more than 800km we followed the yellow spray-painted arrows that marked the route as we moved through an amazing kaleidoscope of landscapes and experiences.



Camino waymarker – a welcome sign when we were feeling a little lost.

There was beautiful Cirauqui, a village with no trees or grass; its medieval cobbled streets and buildings completely cover the hilltop on which it is built. In Burgos we visited the magnificent cathedral and ogled the house where Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand welcomed Christopher Columbus in 1497 on his return from his second journey to the New World.

We saw interesting, quirky places like the tiny village of Manjarin (official population of one) and the larger Molinaseca with its statue of a huge ham taking pride-of-place along the main road. O'Cebreiro has thatch-roofed, rounded stone buildings that look like they belong to Asterix and Obelix.

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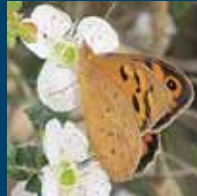
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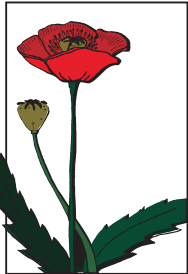
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A special HOME with community spirit

Story and photos by Karen Lovatt

FOR THOSE living with a severe mental illness, the lack of independence can be very difficult. Nobody ever likes to feel reliant on others for everyday living, and yet that is exactly the situation some people find themselves in.

Fortunately, the region now has a non-profit organisation dedicated to helping those affected by mental illness keep their independence.

HOME in Queanbeyan is a unique facility that offers independent living within a safe community environment. HOME can accept up to 19 residents at any one time – and a year and a half after its opening, HOME has reached full capacity. People either self-refer or are referred by family or services.

According to HOME manager Anne Pratt, the spread of ages and genders is exactly what



HOME dog Benny with resident manager Anne Pratt who was named Queanbeyan Citizen of the Year at the Australia Day awards.

she had hoped and expected to see. “Our youngest resident is 25, and our eldest is 65. We have five women and 14 men, which is

probably how I thought it would go. A lot of them have been here for just over 12 months and have just re-signed their lease.”

The beauty of HOME is that while residents are living in a safe, community environment, they are able to be financially responsible for their home. “The residents pay rent and electricity,” Pratt said. “It makes them feel independent, and it helps with our costs.”

Non-profit model relies on community, not government support

HOME is run by a community board and started with Father Peter Day’s desire to help the mentally ill. The board was formed and started on a long journey of fundraisers. It took four years from inception to building.

Pratt says that while HOME probably could apply for government funding to help with the costs, they haven’t for a number of reasons. “We did receive help with capital works, and that was just fantastic. The state and federal funding enabled us to build HOME in one stage,” Ms Pratt explained.

However, day-to-day “we don’t receive government funding, we haven’t sought it and we hope not to get it. HOME is about being a community place, and we want the community to be involved. Too often the community backs off when government funding is involved”.

HOME runs several fundraising events throughout the year, including five in the month of November. These fundraisers vary in type, from bake sales to the Royal Military College band putting on a concert at ‘The Q’ theatre in Queanbeyan, with all proceeds going to HOME. More workplace contributions will be sought next year.

A life-changing experience

But it’s not just the financial aspect that makes residents living at HOME feel more independent. In a supportive, caring environment, where their self-esteem is already boosted through their independence, many residents are changing their whole lives.

“The residents are growing, becoming more confident. Most of our residents are now working, and we have four studying,” Pratt said. “When you’re working with people with a mental illness, there’s always that sort of fine line between when people are stable and not well.

“But seeing the people, they’re happy, and I just think that’s a sure sign that people are feeling good. They’re laughing, they’re studying, and they’re going out to social events in the community. Are we doing what we thought we would do? Yes, I would say we are.”

HOME is planning to shift into a more supportive role for Christmas. “Christmas can be a very difficult time for some,” Pratt said. “Some do go home to their family for Christmas, but for some of our residents they’ve had family breakdowns, so it’s not a good time. We just make sure we’re here over Christmas for them.”

A couple of stars are born

“I AM CONSTANTLY amazed at the level of young talent in our communities,” said the Queanbeyan Performing Art Centre’s program director Stephen Pike, introducing Maia Gavel and Jett Atkins at the launch for ‘The Q’s 2012 theatre season. “You’ll look back on tonight one day and say *I saw them when...*”

Indeed, Maia who is now the ripe old age of 8 years and Jett who just turned 6, wowed the theatre audience with their channelling of a couple of megastar celebrities with assurance and polish seemingly well beyond their years.

Maia delivered the big voice of English pop/blues diva Adele with *Rolling in the Deep* and Jett did his dead ringer Michael Jackson dance routine that had the audience clapping and whistling.

Both were ‘discovered’ by Pike when he judged the Riverside Plaza’s Star Search young talent show recently where Jett (right)

won the Junior competition and Maia (left) was the runner-up. Indeed, a chat with the respective parents divulged that both youngsters had embarked on their public performances ‘big time’ (ie other than at school or social club) with the Star Search competition.

Now there may be no looking back with Maia, who lives in Queanbeyan, telling her mother she’s got her eye on *Australia’s got talent*



PHOTO: RIVERSIDE PLAZA

and Jett’s parents looking for a dance group that he might join. As the Atkins live in Yass that is not proving so easy, but his father Dan says they will find a way.

The secret in both cases seems to be incredible focus and dedication since the age of two.

“Jett’s always been very musical, dancing to any song he heard,” said Dan Atkins, who says his other son is totally into rugby, which

was more Dad’s thing as well. However little sister may follow Jett’s dancing footsteps, as she follows him around.

“Ever since Michael Jackson died and all the coverage on TV he has developed his Michael Jackson routine. He’s totally dedicated and passionate and totally self-taught,” said his Dad. Atkins said his son owns every Jackson DVD and CD and half a dozen Michael jackets.

If there is a ‘born performer’, Jett seems to be it, loving the audience feedback.

Maia meanwhile, with three younger siblings, has nurtured her talent in the ambience of a Maori cultural club, a New Zealand Tumanako group, said mother Toni Gavel who is Maori. There is much dancing and singing with the group and Maia also knows Maori songs.

“She was singing before she could read, picking up songs and memorizing them word for word,” said Gavel. “But in the last 12 months she’s really developed as a singer,” teaching herself by exploring heavy metal and country numbers as well as pop megastars. Her mother says she’s always had a strong voice, which is striking with her slender build.

Maia goes to Queanbeyan Public School where her classmates have also seen her perform following her Star Search win.

Around 70 contestants from across the region entered the 2011 Star Search contest. The primary and highschool-age performers were scored on stage presence, appearance, technicality and audience appeal.

> *New season at ‘The Q’, p12*

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Proud community achievement



The official opening of the multi-purpose building and new public toilets at the Mick Sherd Oval in Bungendore on 3 December. An outstanding community effort by sporting clubs and others with assistance from Palerang Council was matched by state and federal funding and support from Bendigo Bank and the Veolia Mulwaree Trust.



PHOTOS: MARIA TAYLOR

South Ellendon Street subdivision

ROAD DESIGN and block density remain the issues for a new subdivision proposed for the southern part of Ellendon St in Bungendore.

Following much neighbourhood opposition and a divided chamber at its November meeting, Council delegated to the General Manager Peter Bascomb the authority to determine the development application (DA) and conditions for 128 Ellendon St.

Bascomb said in early December that the applicant had sought further discussion with Council and it was therefore too early to say what modifications to the DA, if any, might be on the drawing board.

"I'll look at it and if it looks like it is still going to be controversial, will take it back to Council," he said. One question from the developer's budget perspective as much as from the neighbourhood's perspective, is whether a standard village road should be required through a five block subdivision, as was proposed.

The issues raised by this subdivision proposal foreshadow the planning challenges for subdivision in this part of the village characterised by large 3–5 acre blocks. More DAs for the area are in the pipeline.

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Queanbeyan alfresco

EIGHT MEN and two trucks can move the Riverside Café in Queanbeyan in two hours – away from any impending floodwaters – according to the new café's lessee Brent Richter. And that's just the way Queanbeyan Council wanted it.

"It was paramount that the cafe be designed to also allow quick removal in the event of flooding. Hence the clever adaptation of two shipping containers", said Queanbeyan Mayor Tim Overall. "The walkway pillars have been designed to withstand impacts of debris and floodwaters. (But) the December 2010 flood, the most severe in close to 40 years did not reach the cafe site," he said.

The cafe now sits across the Queanbeyan River from Riverside Plaza, next to the old house that is the Art Gallery. The adjacent open space stretching to Wanniasa Street is on the drawing board to become a 'sensory' botanical garden by 2013.

It's all in response to a community visioning workshop in 2006 that set a top priority for Council to develop the potential of the river for passive and active recreation, said Councillor Overall.

"In 2008 I put forward the concept of a riverside cafe that would be a drawcard to the

Cont'd next pg

Palerang News

MR92

When the NSW Government held the Queanbeyan Community Cabinet in October, Palerang's General Manager and Mayor took the opportunity to speak to the Minister for Roads, Duncan Gay, about Main Road 92 (MR92) between Nerriga and Braidwood.

MR92 is a Regional Road linking Nowra and Braidwood. In March 1998 the Australian Government identified MR92 between Nowra and Nerriga as a Road of National Importance. Late last year a 54km section was upgraded between Nowra and Nerriga, funded with \$95million by the Australian and NSW State governments, with around 15 percent contributed by the local Shoalhaven City Council.

Since then, 18kms of the 50km section of MR92 which is located in Palerang, has been left with a comparatively poor road surface – being the original gravel road. As was anticipated by the then RTA and the governments involved – the road is attracting increasing traffic coming from the South Coast.

In this direction of travel, drivers are unprepared for the sudden change in road standard and it is becoming a serious safety concern – especially during holiday periods. Palerang Council is working to find funds to complete the upgrade of this section as traffic flows have more than doubled and are continually increasing since the upgraded section was completed.

Palerang Development Control Plan (DCP) and LEP

Consultation is now underway with the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure on the Working Draft Palerang Local Environmental Plan (LEP). The last details and final maps are being completed. After Government agencies and the department are satisfied, Council will get approval for public exhibition of the LEP, which is expected to be in the first half of 2012.

The new Palerang Development Control (DCP) is also underway. After amalgamation, Palerang inherited a total of twenty different DCPs and six LEPs. At its last LEP meeting (24 Nov) Council agreed to start work on preparing one single DCP that will apply to the whole Local Government Area (LGA). The new DCP will incorporate specific sections eg to cover area-specific provisions such controls affecting the villages and drinking water catchments.

Moving all the information into a single comprehensive document is complicated, and the new DCP must be in place at the time the Working draft PLEP 2012 is gazetted. The Palerang DCP must be consistent with the draft Palerang LEP and legislation. It is intended to

exhibit the Draft DCP together with the Draft LEP so that all of the proposed planning controls can be considered together.

The LEP is the principal legal instrument for Council to manage the ways in which land is used. The LEP document and maps describe localised planning objectives and development standards such as minimum lot sizes. It includes zoning tables that set out which uses are permissible and prohibited, and identifies land that may be affected by constraints such as flooding or land-slip. It identifies Palerang's heritage items and also reserves land for open space, schools, transport or other public purposes.

The DCP complements the LEP by supporting and supplementing the LEP controls. It provides more detailed planning and design guidelines, and covers a wide range of matters. Examples of these include issues such as a site's environmental features; biodiversity issues; flooding and stormwater management; building setbacks, views, and access to sunlight; open space, privacy; landscape and soil issues.

Environmental award

Congratulations to Palerang's Environmental Services unit which has won yet another award. They have taken a first place in the Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards 2010–11, presented by the Local Government and Shires Association. Council's project, in the category of Natural Environment Policies, Planning and Decision Making, involved the development of digital maps of water resources across the western Palerang Local Government Area. The work was funded through the Federal Government's Strength-ening Basin Communities program.

The project resulted in the mapping of more than 6,000 farm dams, over 7,000 potential pollution sites, and more than 200 climate grids, with associated population density mapping. The datasets created have proven to be an excellent resource for the longer term water sustainability program, and will improve other Council activities such as development assessments, compliance monitoring and state of the environment reporting.

Holiday closure

Council's offices in Braidwood (144 Wallace Street) and Bungendore (10 Majara Street) will close at 3pm on Friday, 23 December 2011 and re-open at 8.30am on Tuesday, 3 January 2012.

We wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and New Year!

PALERANG COUNCIL



Queanbeyan City Council

Queanbeyan update with Mayor, Cr Tim Overall

Message from the Mayor

Crawford St was reopened to one-way traffic on Tuesday 29 November as the contractors continue to make progress on the \$4.45 million Lifestyle Precinct. Crawford St was closed to through traffic on 27 October to allow the contractors to undertake vital work at the Morisset St intersection with Crawford St. It was estimated that the closure would last for 4.5 weeks and despite some rain delays the road was reopened prior to the 4.5 week mark. Two-way traffic and parking is expected to return to Crawford St by mid-December. Before that can occur the contractors have to finalise the intersection with Crawford and Monaro Sts, finish the parking bays and then lay the final seal along the road and undertake line marking. The project remains on target to be complete by May 2012. Also on Crawford St, Council has agreed to consider providing ex-gratia payments (up to \$22,000 in total) to businesses in Crawford St which are more reliant on passing trade and have been affected by street closures during the construction of the Crawford St Lifestyle Precinct. A decision on the payments will be made at Council's meeting on 25 January 2012.



Council's financial position improves

Council has adopted its Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2010–11. The Annual Report provides an overview of Council's achievements against the projects identified in the Delivery Program and also includes a number of Statutory Declarations while the Financial Statements provide an in-depth look at Council's financial performance during the financial year. The Financial Statements show that Council has \$73.75 million in cash of which 97.1% is restricted for specific purposes, leaving \$2.218 million in unrestricted funds. The operating result for the year was a deficit of \$9.73 million before grants and capital contributions and after depreciation provision of \$15.03 million. Excluding provisions for depreciation, the operating result was a surplus of \$5.3 million. In 2006–07 depreciation was only \$7.7 million and has subsequently increased to \$15.03 million as Council now has a better handle on depreciable assets through a new asset management system. Given that depreciation has risen by \$7.3 million and that a deficit after depreciation has been reduced by \$3 million indicates a positive trend. The External Auditor's report confirms that Council's position has improved from satisfactory to sound and their report states "Council's overall financial position, when taking into account the above indicators is, in our opinion, sound". Copies of the Annual Report and Financial Statements can be obtained from Council's Customer Service Centre at 257 Crawford St or can be downloaded from Council's website at www.qcc.nsw.gov.au.

Council to seek IPART review

Council has agreed to ask the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to review the application made by Council in 2010 for a Special Rate Variation to fund the CityCARE program of works. Following extensive community consultation in late 2009 and early 2010 Council applied for an ongoing Special Rate Variation of 5.8% and approval was given for a three-year period. At the time of Council's application the authority for approval sat with the Minister for Local Government, however following the 2011 election this authority was transferred to IPART. Throughout the consultation in late 2009 and early 2010 Council communicated that it would be applying for an ongoing Special Rate Variation and the majority of feedback from the community was supportive of this application. Unfortunately the Minister only approved Council's application for a three-year period. The CityCARE program has been very successful since its implementation and in 2010–11 Council used the funds raised to repair 758 footpaths, reseal 17 roads, stabilise another three roads and upgrade five parks and sportsfields.

Work underway on new library

Contractors have commenced refurbishment of the building which will become the new home of the Queanbeyan Library. When the refurbishments are complete the Library will move from its current Crawford St location to the former NSW Parks and Wildlife Building in Rutledge St. Work will include the removal of existing fit-out, construction of new internal stairs and ramp, installation of a lift including shaft, upgrade of mechanical lighting, security and electrical systems, removal and replacement of floor covering and ceilings, repairs and replacement of roof sheeting, roof drainage and associated works. When the move is fully complete, the vacant ground floor area of Council's administration building will be transformed into extra office space with plans to create an integrated customer service centre, or one-stop shop, for all Council enquiries.

What's your vision for Queanbeyan?

Throughout November a number of community consultation exercises were undertaken to help Council review the Queanbeyan Tomorrow Community Vision 2021. I thank all of those people who have contributed so far and encourage any others who haven't had the chance to have a say to log on to our website — www.qcc.nsw.gov.au — and fill in the survey. The survey is located under the Community Vision link on the front page and should only take a few minutes. All of the information gathered will be collated and the final document is expected to be presented to Council in April 2012. For more information call 6285 6000 or visit www.qcc.nsw.gov.au.

Cr Tim Overall

257 Crawford St Ph: 6285 6000 Web: www.qcc.nsw.gov.au

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challenge of ventilation and insulation and are now insulated “like an esky”. A high glass shield at the front of the patio solved the problem of a site that was quite “breezy”.

The café seems already to be the drawcard the Mayor had in mind. Café owner Brent Richter reports that people have been finding their way by ‘bush telegraph’ to the largely outdoor venue overlooking the river. He said he and his wife Elaine added a deck and front pergola which

now allows for 60 outdoor diners, which is their gift to Queanbeyan.

Queanbeyan alfresco 2

AFTER A STORMY period of complaints from Crawford St merchants alongside the construction site, Queanbeyan Council accelerated the works schedule to reopen two-way traffic on the street at the end of last month.

The \$4.5 million ‘lifestyle precinct’ has been another favoured project of Mayor Tim Overall to inject new life into a central part of downtown Queanbeyan.

A council spokesperson said two-way traffic and parking is expected to return to Crawford St by mid-December after further

roadworks and parking bays are completed.

The project remains on target to be complete by next May. Meanwhile, Council says it has responded to merchants’ concerns about loss of revenue, by offering ex-gratia payments (up to \$22,000 in total) to businesses in that part of Crawford St reliant on passing trade.

The payments will be equivalent to the rates instalments for the first and second quarters 2011–12 for the relevant property. A Council statement stressed this is not to be seen as ‘compensation’.



Artists impression of Crawford St

The eligible businesses are the Mid City Motor Inn, City Florist, Canton Chinese Restaurant, Continental Hairdresser, Bloom’s The Chemist, Punjabi Hut, Queanbeyan Health Foods, Dominos, Pizza Hut, Bells Dry Cleaners, Continental Cakes and Mirage Hair Design.

\$\$\$ for maintaining parks and footpaths: Queanbeyan Council seeks independent review

QUEANBEYAN City Council is asking the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to take another look at Council’s 2010 application for a Special Rate Variation to fund the CityCARE works program.

The goal is to return to the original model of an ongoing rate surcharge of 5.8 percent to fund road, footpath and park repairs and maintenance.

Following extensive community consultation the rate variation proposal was sent to the then Minister last year. The majority of feedback from the community was supportive of this application as ongoing, Queanbeyan Mayor Tim Overall said.

“Unfortunately the then Minister only approved Council’s application for a three-year period. This means Council would have to undertake an extensive and expensive community consultation exercise again in 2013 to continue the CityCARE program.

“The decision to limit approval to three years appeared contrary to the Department of Planning and indeed the Minister’s often-stated priority for Councils to introduce long-term integrated strategic planning and to focus on both asset management and ten-year financial planning,” Councillor Overall said.

In the first year of the program Council used the levy funds to repair 758 footpaths, reseal 17 roads, stabilise another three roads and upgrade five parks and sportsfields. Some \$65,000 was returned to pensioners in the form of rebates from the levy.

2011–2012 plans

The 2011–2012 CityCARE levy will raise \$1.011 million exclusively for the CityCARE program, according to Council. The works program includes:

- pavement repair on four sections of local roads – \$350,000
- footpath repairs – \$196,760
- bitumen resealing of around 10 local roads – \$165,000
- playground works at Cassinia Park – \$35,000
- upgrade of water supply at the Queanbeyan Showground – \$45,000
- equipment upgrades at Railway Park – \$45,000
- upgrade of amenities at Blundell Park – \$75,000
- erosion control, grass cover on banks of Halloran Drive – \$25,000
- upgraded amenities at Wright Park – \$75,000.

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— RURAL FIRE SERVICE LAKE GEORGE —

Where does our weather come from and what's in store?

Doug Palmer has been doing a little investigating of climate patterns that influence the fire weather of our district.

He was surprised to learn there are three climate patterns that influence fire weather: El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO); the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD); and the Southern Annular Mode (SAM).

Fire weather

Fire conditions and climate have a sort of back-door relationship. The landscape has a 'memory', which connects the two in a number of ways.

The actual weather (including heat, humidity and wind) has an obvious, immediate and huge effect. This is particularly true for grass fires, since dead grass wets and dries quickly.

In contrast to grass, forests have a longer 'memory', in the form of moisture trapped in soil and ground litter. If regular rain keeps things moist, then a forest fire will not be able to burn much of the available fuel. Soil moisture has a long, slow cycle and the amount of rain in the lead-up to the fire season can affect things for months.

At the far end of the spectrum, we have the yearly fuel build-up. A nice warm, wet summer or spring will do wonders for the plant life that will eventually die and form the next season's fuel load.

El Niño-Southern Oscillation

ENSO is like the poster-boy of Australia's climate patterns. In most years, cold water from the Humboldt Current off Chile and Peru flows westward along the equator across the Pacific, warming up as it heads for Australia and Indonesia. At the same time, trade winds run east to west towards Australia. The warm water and winds favour rain in northern and eastern Australia.

However, during an El Niño, warm water spreads eastwards and the trade winds also weaken. The rain shifts towards the centre of the Pacific and away from Australia.

La Niña is the opposite of El Niño, where the temperatures in the east Pacific are lower than normal and trade winds drive towards Australia, bringing rain.

ENSO quite clearly influences fire weather in eastern Australia, particularly in the Canberra region. However, only about 15–35 percent of changes in the yearly total fire danger are attributed to ENSO.

Indian Ocean Dipole

The IOD is an imbalance in Indian Ocean temperatures. When the dipole is positive, water off the east coast of Africa is relatively warm and water off north-west Australia and Indonesia is relatively cold. In that case, the rain heads off to Africa. When the dipole is negative, this state of affairs is reversed.

Changes in the IOD have quite an effect on rainfall across Australia. IOD events tend to happen in winter and spring and precondition the soil for the fire season; a positive IOD

tends to ensure that the soil doesn't have a reservoir of moisture.

Southern Annular Mode

But wait, there's more. The SAM is a ring of high pressure surrounding Antarctica which can push weather patterns towards or away from the poles. A high SAM tends to mean higher summer rains and lower winter rains in southern Australia.

The SAM seems to be quite sneaky, causing unexpectedly dry autumn and winter seasons and providing a dry run-up to the fire season.

ENSO, IOD, SAM and you

What's the future? Current predictions from the Bureau of Meteorology are for a weak La Niña – nothing like last year's – through December and into January and possibly February. In contrast, the predictions for the IOD over the next few months tend towards neutral or mildly positive. All of this looks cautiously promising as far as rain and temperature goes (from a fire point of view, if not a sunny summer point of view).

The Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre publishes a fire season outlook every year. Even with all the rain, the Palerang district is still rated as having an above average fire risk this season. This is largely down to all of last year's growth and the April–July dryness providing perfect conditions to turn all that growth into fuel. You can see the handiwork of last season's La Niña and the SAM in this.

Good season, bad season, middling season, you still need to prepare your property. Whatever the climate, there will always be enough hot, dry windy weather every fire season to make it worth the effort.

I would like to thank David Jones, of the National Climate Centre, Bureau of Meteorology, for his help with this article. I'm no climate expert (or even a bushfire one, for that matter) so any mistakes are, of course, my own.

Geek's Corner

The current fire season outlook is at www.bushfirecrc.com/resources/southern-australian-seasonal-bushfire-outlook-2011-12

The Bureau of Meteorology's overview for ENSO is at www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/ and forecasts for ENSO and the IOD at www.bom.gov.au/climate/coupled_model/poama.shtml.

SAM data is harder to come by, but the British Antarctic Survey has a SAM index at www.nerc-bas.ac.uk/icd/gjma/sam.html.

Sale of public assets continues in NSW

by Maria Taylor

UNDER pressure from its new infrastructure board and bowing to the recommendations of a judicial review, the NSW government in November announced it would continue to sell-off the state electricity system, begun under the previous government.

Power generating plants will be sold but the construction and maintenance end (poles and wires) will remain in public ownership, for now.

The sale is both ideological (ie the economic rationalist argument that the private sector is always better and more efficient at running public services, an

idea that has been in vogue since the 1990s – but is not supported by the evidence in many cases). It has also been charged that this is a short-sighted grab for cash to build Sydney roads and rail, bringing no long-term benefit to the taxpayers of NSW.

The Electrical Trades Union, representing jobs in the industry, has been most active in campaigning against the sell-offs, but so far has not swayed the government. In November the union noted in a press statement:

“Prior to the March state election the Premier gave a commitment on more than one occasion that his

government would not sell off the generators or the poles and wires. The announcement to sell off the remaining publicly owned electricity generators demonstrates that the Premier is beholden to the powerful business lobby that will benefit from this decision.”

“More than half a billion dollars every year will now flow through to the private sector and their shareholders rather than the people of NSW,” said a union spokesperson.

The union warns that a lack of private incentive to invest in baseload electricity while the demand increases “will create power shortages and result in higher prices and more profit”.

Paying off debt cuts the profit in half

“The electricity generation sector is worth approximately \$5 billion but

these generators are carrying almost \$3 billion worth of debt.

“This means that the government will receive around \$2 billion from this sale once transaction costs are deducted – this is the equivalent of four years dividends,” said the ETU spokesperson.

Former Member for Monaro and now state Senator Steve Whan added his voice to those warning that privatization has meant higher electricity prices elsewhere, including South Australia and Victoria.

However the current Member for Monaro, John Barilaro, has defended the partial backflip on election promises, citing the economic rationalist arguments of the judicial inquiry that recommended the generator sale.

“The Tamberlin Inquiry found that the status quo would not achieve the objectives of a competitive electricity

market, as state-owned corporations may not always operate in a commercial way, impacting on the level of competition in the market. This reform will result in more competition and efficiency in the electricity market and help to contain electricity prices.

“The Government is honouring our election commitments by ruling out the sale of poles and wires,” he said. “This move protects over 370 highly skilled local jobs in the Monaro while providing desperately needed capital for infrastructure investment.”



SEVEN STEPS TO STORM RECOVERY

With low pressure systems stretched from one end of the state to the other this season, here's some advice from Essential Energy on what to do and how a state-wide utility copes when the power goes out.

Step 1 Notification

If you are a customer and your power goes out, call Essential Energy's Supply Interruption line on **13 20 80** – the line is attended 24/7.

Step 2 Emergency Response

First priority is to respond to emergencies like fires or downed live lines, working with emergency services. Always treat fallen lines as live and dangerous.

Step 3 Critical Repairs

Next priority is restoring electricity to services such as hospitals, fire and police stations, and water and sewage treatment facilities.

Step 4 Mobilisation

Call in extra field crews and equipment from the region and further away if needed; isolate fault areas and clear fallen vegetation from powerlines; where possible, back-feed power from other areas to restore supplies.

Step 5 Prioritisation

Concentrate on major powerlines first to restore electricity to the majority of customers. Individual faults and broken house service lines, next.

Step 6 Keep in touch

Get updated information on **13 20 80**.

Step 7 Power restored

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Analog TV is being switched off in areas of southern and central NSW, the ACT and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area on 5 June 2012*.

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You'll need one of the following:

- One set-top box or a digital TV recorder for each analog TV you use
- A TV with a built-in digital tuner or subscription television

Importantly, you don't have to buy a new TV if you don't want to.

How does this affect you?

- If you're not ready for digital TV by 5 June 2012* you'll be unable to keep watching your favourite free-to-air shows

Remember, your approved Digital Advisor (at participating retail stores) can talk you through your options.

If your current analog reception is good, in most cases your digital reception should be fine as well. If you have any concerns about your reception, before you purchase any new equipment, you may consider asking an endorsed Antenna Installer to check your antenna and cabling.

To find your nearest approved Digital Advisor or endorsed Antenna Installer, call 1800 20 10 13 or visit www.australia.gov.au/digitalready and click on *mySwitch*.

*Please note: switch off may occur earlier or later in some towns. Residents in these towns will be informed about the switchover dates. See the website for more information.

Want more information?



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www.australia.gov.au/digitalready

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Why do people buy in Bungendore? AN ESTATE AGENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Richard Manning
Peter Blackshaw, Inner North and Rural

THANKS for the kind comments in response to my article in the last issue. It is nice to be invited back.

I was in conversation recently with someone about 'supply and demand'. In particular that conversation related the real estate of Bungendore and its surrounds. It got me thinking.

Canberra is expanding. It was reported in *The Canberra Times* that 8,000 new units are planned for Canberra over the next few years. Queanbeyan is growing. Bungendore is growing and both the town and its surrounds are seen, increasingly, as desirable places to live. Why? Why do we live here?

Village lifestyle is the thing

Might I suggest that people move to Bungendore – or choose to stay – for the lifestyle of the village community. They quite often want and seek a rural way of life but also the conveniences and work that Canberra and Queanbeyan afford.

We live here for the room, for the peace, for the fact that weekends feel like they used to when we went 'away' for the weekend. We live here for the night sky, for the familiar faces, for the mighty Mudhooks, for the best, neatest and most organised tip on the planet!

Travel from any number of Canberra's northern or southern suburbs to the city and it can take you 45 minutes. Travel from Bungendore to the city and it can take you 45

minutes. Where do you want to live? I know I am speaking to the converted but "Bungendore" as a response is a bit of a 'no brainer'! So what about the real estate?

Supply in Bungendore and rural residential

There is a lot of property for sale in the district of Bungendore and surrounding rural residential at the present time (133). That property is varied, consisting of cottages, townhouses and larger historic homes in the village; acreage with substantial homes in the immediate surrounds of Bywong and Wamboin; plus the choice of established homes or new home developments in Carlton Estate, 'Old' Elmslea, 'New' Elmslea, Bungendore Meadow etc. There is demand for this stock and there is good supply. The demand is perhaps not as great as it was for a multiplicity of factors, but nonetheless, the buyers are there, they can just afford to be more circumspect in their property of choice.

Demand relates to quality of life

Any supply and demand issues facing Bungendore specifically do not relate directly to the numbers of properties for sale, rather, to the continuation of Bungendore as an attractive place to live and bring up children, or even retire. Developers and council need to be mindful of maintaining the qualities that

have made and make Bungendore *and* surrounds a desirable area in which to live.

If it looks and feels too much like a suburb of Canberra, if it loses its quintessential village feel, why would you live here? Don't get me wrong, development is good (I think you'd find most people whose business is in real estate would be of a similar opinion!) but let that development be in concert with what is good about a place or in the further creation of that which is good.

Of course, this sense of what is good is subjective. There have been many evils perpetrated on the world in the name of

development and progress – no I am not going to enter into the wind farm debate!

But within the context of the place we choose to call home, if development does not meet the needs of those who live here, or aspire to live here for the reasons we do at present, then perhaps those people will ultimately choose to move and cease to come.

If people move it creates more supply. If they cease to come it creates greater supply. But is there the demand now? Make no mistake the answer is yes.

Food for thought!

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The Scholarship is a part of the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank scholarship program and aims to support first year students who, due to social or financial circumstances, would not be able to further their education.

Please ask our friendly branch staff for further information.

Applications are now open!

Applications are invited until 27 January 2012 from eligible students in the Palerang shire area attending university for the first time in 2012.

Please see www.bendigoadelaide.com.au/scholarships for further information.

The Braidwood & Bungendore Community Grants Program is a management account of Community Enterprise Charitable Fund
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Does a growing Australia need to chop its public service?

ACT POLITICIANS and commentators have charged that the Federal Government is again treating public services and public service jobs as the sacrifice area to achieve easy budget cuts. The latest efficiency drive, announced at the end of November, is on behalf of achieving budget surplus, a compulsion afflicting both major political parties.

As the population increases, the general public might be more interested in good frontline services, health, education, environmental protection, roads and rail etc, than a few more million in the bank.

The economists at The Australia Institute argue that this surplus "fetish" has more to do with politics than economics and should be seen in perspective.

"The announcement of a \$20 billion dollar hole in the budget is a storm in a teacup," said the Institute's Executive Director Richard Denniss.

"Australia's GDP is more than \$1,400 billion per year, and government spending is around \$370 billion per year. Revenue was to be around \$5 billion per year less than forecast, 1.3 percent of spending or 0.4 percent of GDP. This is the equivalent of rounding error," said Dr Denniss.

Continued p10

BUNGENDORE AND DISTRICT — PUBLIC TRANSPORT —

Train Services – CountryLink (www.countrylink.nsw.gov.au) or 13 22 32

CountryLink tickets can be booked online, by phone or at the Bungendore Post Office.

Trains from Bungendore to Queanbeyan & Canberra

Monday to Friday 10:42, Sat & Sun 10:36, Daily 15:44 and Mon, Wed, Fri & Sun 21:48.

Trains from Canberra to Bungendore

Daily 06:43, Daily 11:55 and Mon, Wed, Fri 17:03.

Trains from Bungendore to Goulburn, Southern Highlands and Sydney

Daily 07:22, Daily 12:34 (with connection from Moss Vale to Wollongong) and Mon, Wed, Fri & Sun 17:42.

Trains from Sydney to Bungendore

(all with connecting services from Wollongong to Moss Vale) Daily 6:58, 12:05 and 18:11.

— * * * —

Deane's Buslines

(www.deanestransitgroup.com.au) or 6299 3722

Service 850 runs on ACT school days leaving Old Elmslea at 07:17, Gibraltar St (opp Post Office) at 07:27 and arriving in Queanbeyan at 08:03 for connections to Civic and Woden. The return service departs Queanbeyan at 16:05. In addition a service 850 also runs on Thursdays, the bus leaves Bungendore at 09:50. This service will pick up from your door in Bungendore but needs to be booked the day before travel on 6299 3722. The return service leaves bay M3 in Queanbeyan at 13:35 delivering you back to your door. This service also passes Queanbeyan Hospital.

Murrays Coaches

(www.murrays.com.au) or 13 22 51

A daily service to Narooma via Braidwood and Batemans Bay leaving at 08:20 (opp the Bungendore post office), and Braidwood at 8:55 (Braidwood post office). The return service arrives at Braidwood at 16:05 and Bungendore at 16:40 and continues on to Canberra.

Rural Property Guide

SALES | AUCTIONS | PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



Luke Jamieson
Property Manager



Chris Dixon
Sales Agent



John Sneddon
Sales Agent



Richard Manning
Sales Agent

Oh my!



BUNGENDORE 12 DAY CIRCUIT

The moment you set eyes on this expansive and beautiful home you will be lost for words. With a passion for federation architecture the current owners have designed their home marrying the period detail and scale of yesteryear with the comforts of a modern lifestyle. The owners have been careful to source sympathetic materials that create a sense of warmth not often achieved in a large home. However, and most importantly, is the functionality this home provides, particularly for families. There are 5 large bedrooms, each with floor to ceiling (10ft/3m) BIR's plus a WIR and double shower head ensuite in the master bedroom. The spacious designer kitchen is well equipped with gas cooktop and self cleaning electric oven, thick 40mm stone bench tops and a 'huuuge' walk-in pantry with dishwasher. The main bathroom includes a stunning carved marble topped double vanity and a large, 21 jet spa. The multiple living areas are also generous with a very large formal lounge, dining room a big rumpus/study/or 6th bedroom off the kitchen and a large family room which flows seamlessly onto the back deck. There is a full-size triple garage, a 55,000 litre rainwater tank, a glasshouse. **Offers over \$745,000**

Richard Manning 0408 616 840

5 bedrooms 2 bathrooms 3 cars

5 bedrooms 3 bathrooms 2 cars

CARWOOLA 34 BERNALLAH ROAD

An exceptional property on an elevated 10ac blk just 8km from Qbn. This spacious home has 360sqm^{approx} of living inc. 5 dbl-sized bedrooms, ens, study & 2 bathrooms. The kitchen features granite benchtops & large walk-in-pantry. Vaulted ceilings, dbl glazing & in-ground salt water pool provide for luxurious living. Sealed drive, dbl gar, bore, l'scaped gdns & panoramic views complete the picture. **By Negotiation**

John Sneddon 0403 139 701

"You've got to be kidding!"



BUNGENDORE 8 EYRE STREET

"This place is magnificent!" "Why are you selling?" Built by a master carpenter, the quality of this build is exceptional. The home boasts four large bedrooms each with a BIR and a WIR and exquisite ensuite in the master bedroom. There are spacious lounge, dining and family rooms with glorious, rich polished hardwood flooring. This home is equipped with the convenience and comfort of ducted reverse cycle heating and cooling. There is a beautiful and spacious kitchen with electric hot plates and oven, granite bench tops and a roomy 'Butler's' pantry. In addition to the town water supply there is a 25,000 litre rainwater tank and a further 200 litre grey water tank for the garden. There is a very spacious 4 car garage on a concrete slab. **By Negotiation**

Richard Manning 0408 616 840

4 bedrooms 2 bathrooms 6 cars

'Strawberry Cottage'



GUNDAROO 21-32 MORNING STREET

Built in the 1880's 'Strawberry Cottage' is on a 1 acre block & comprises 2 self contained residences. The front residence features 2 bedrooms + study, country kitchen, open plan lounge & 3 fireplaces. The rear residence is privately metered & features 3 bedrooms, 2 living areas, country kitchen & renovated bathroom. Nestled amidst cottage gardens with an enticing in-ground salt water swimming pool, prolific raised vegetable gardens, there is also approval to subdivide a half acre to the back of the property. 'Strawberry Cottage' has a bore, rear lane access and is 25 minutes to Canberra's CBD. Call Chris today to view this beautiful & versatile property. **By Negotiation**

Chris Dixon 0414 819 377

5 bedrooms 2 bathrooms 3 cars

Gundaroo UNDER OFFER

3797 Sutton Road

'The Bridge' - admired by many!

Gorgeous 3bed, 3bath + study cottage. 16ac of rich alluvial soil, tennis court, pool, park like grdns & 30 min to Canb. **Chris 0414 819 377**

Lake Bathurst

Offers over \$645,000

868 Covan Creek Road

A 276sqm brick home; 4 beds; dbl gar, games room, modern kitchen, 104ac, 4 dams, cattle yard, 15m x 6m shed. **Richard 0408 616 840**

Gundaroo UNDER OFFER

3 Morning Street

3 bed, ens home with open plan din/liv, s/comb fire, timber kitch, verandah. Rear lane access to dbl gar/studio with its own bath & kitch. 1/2ac blk & 30min drive to Canberra. **Chris 0414 819 377**

Gundaroo

\$269,000+ each

Lots 17 & 18 Cork Street

Two 2000m² (approx) building blocks located on the main street. Gently sloping with rear lane access. Walk to school & shops. **Chris 0414 819 377**

Gundaroo UNDER OFFER

\$625,000

17 Rosamel Street

Spacious 4-bed + ens home with approx 234sqm of living on 1/2 ac block in popular Gundaroo. Freshly painted. **John 0403 139 701**

Mullion

By Negotiation

Doctors Flat Road

80ha (200ac) bush block with creeks, wildlife and privacy. Ideal getaway for hunting, riding or walking. **John 0403 139 701**

Wamboin

\$789,000

1458 SUTTON ROAD

75ac premium dual-occ block. Must be sold. Only minutes to Civic and the airport. Stunning views to Canberra & Brindabellas **John 0403 139 701**

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Peter Blackshaw Real Estate would like to wish all their past, present and future clients a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

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A WALKER'S FEAT

Cont'd from p1

Eunate enchanted us with its beautiful, austere 12th century Romanesque Knights Templar church.

A pilgrim continues rain or shine – feet permitting

Lots of sun and a little hail, snow and rain – which created a lot of mud! We trekked alongside hectares of wheat, oats, corn, grapes, sugar beets, sunflowers, pine trees, chestnuts, pears (not on the path of the modern-day Camino, but we got lost that day!), hops and eucalyptus (yes, huge tracts of gum trees in Galicia).

Many of the peregrinos we met had trouble with their feet; some merely had lots of blisters, others more sinister things. Robyn came prepared for any foot trouble and we managed pretty well; although my left foot developed a very tender tendon.

Most days we covered about 20–25km and our longest day was 34km. Our first day was only 8km but I think that was the hardest day of

whole trip for me – my daily walks along the greenways in Bywong hadn't prepared me for that relentless climb in the Pyrenees!

Feet were one of the main topics of conversation amongst people each night at the albergues (hostels). The Camino is lined with businesses – hotels, bars, restaurants, shops, masseurs, hospitals – ready to serve the pilgrims; as it has been ever since the Middle Ages.

Our favourite type of accommodation was the albergue run by a family. In these, we had bunk beds in a dormitory and enjoyed a communal dinner with other pilgrims. At these meals we could share how our journey was unfolding and how our feet were holding up! Even though everyone walked at their own pace, at the end of the day we would often meet up with the same people; we became a moving community of friends. Some had started before us, some later; some were going shorter distances and some longer.

Why they do it

Originally a spiritual pilgrimage, today's peregrinos travel the Camino for varied reasons including its cultural richness, its physical challenge and its being a cheap holiday! One of the main motivations we heard was people's desire to take time out – to consider their direction in life after school or retirement, after children had grown up, after the death of a partner, parent or child.



Sonja at the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

In our non-stop world, walking the Camino does give people time out for personal reflection; in many ways it is still a 'spiritual' pilgrimage. Travelling on the Camino de Santiago is truly an amazing adventure – exhausting, exhilarating and empowering!

> *Travel tips for the rest of us, p18*

CHOP PUBLIC SERVICE?

Cont'd from p8

"The international ratings agency Fitch upgraded Australia's currency rating to Triple A (in late November). The only people that appear to be panicking about the Australian economy are the government and the Opposition."

He said an analysis of Treasury documents by The Australia Institute shows that the government could raise tens of billions of dollars if it were willing to cut corporate and high earner welfare and close tax loopholes.

"If the government was serious about finding savings in the budget it should look beyond the populism of public sector job cuts and focus instead on the generous tax concessions and loopholes created by the Howard Government."

Possible savings measures identified by The Australia Institute include:

- abolishing the discount on capital gains tax that ensures that speculators who receive \$100,000 when the price of an asset increases pay half the tax of someone who went to work to earn \$100,000.
- abolishing the estimated \$10 billion per year in tax concessions received by the mining industry.
- abolishing the \$10 billion in tax concessions for superannuation that Treasury estimates go to the highest 5 percent of income earners.

Bungendore showground gets taste of Middle Ages

by Claire Hollis

THE SOUNDS of thundering hooves and the clash of swords will fill the air as the Bungendore showground gets transported back to the Middle Ages. On 17–18 December the local Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) group is hosting the spectacular Fields of Gold tournament.

Lords and ladies will be pulling on up to 20kg of armour or mounting their trusty steeds in the quest for chivalry. Competitors will converge on Bungendore to compete in a week-end of tournaments including sword fighting, a rapier competition and equestrian skill-at-arms.

"Medieval equestrian skill-at-arms is a growing activity in Australia and we are hoping this becomes one of the leading events for medieval equestrian activities in the country," says Lady Alesia, one of the riders leading medieval equestrian activities in the region. "But this event isn't only for the riders; the Fields of Gold tournament will encompass two days of competition. There will be armoured fighting, a rapier competition and an arts and sciences program."

Apart from the spectacle of the tournaments there will also be a feast on Saturday night which will showcase historical recipes from the Middle Ages.

The local group of the SCA, based in Canberra, is the Barony of Politarchopolis. The equestrian training takes place in Wamboin.

"Training our horses for skill-at-arms activities such as tilting at the rings and 'beheading the enemy' is lots of fun," says Lady Alesia, "not only do the horses have to get used to the sights and sounds of the tourna-



Above: Claire in character. Inset: Chevy, the horse, gets his first taste of a knight in armour. It takes a few weekends, for both horse and rider, to get used to riding in period garb and armour.

ment but as riders we have to get use to riding in medieval clothes. Trying to ride in a dress while wielding a lance is very different to riding in jodhpurs."

For more information on the Fields of Gold tournament or the SCA email Alesia at polittfieldofgold@gmail.com or visit <http://lochac.sca.org/politarchopolis/>. Members of the public are invited to the daytime activities. See 'What's On' for details.

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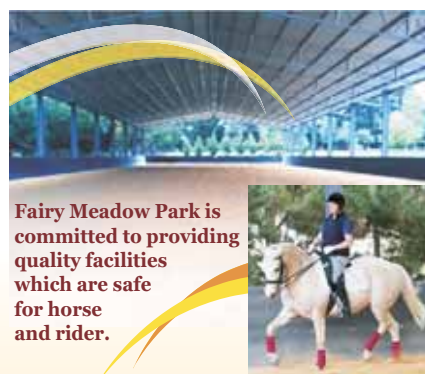
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The deep mysteries of Christmas pudding

MANY households have their own special recipe for Christmas pudding, some handed down through previous generations. Here's the Davies/Hills/Morey Tasmanian family recipe which has stood the aforementioned test of time and is very popular when we serve it at Shepherds Run. You can compare it with your own (possibly better?) recipe.



by
Peter Davies

The plum pudding's association with Christmas goes back to medieval England with the Roman Catholic Church's decree that the pudding should be made on the 25th Sunday after Trinity, that it be prepared with 13 ingredients to represent Christ and the 12 apostles, and that every family member stir it in turn from east to west to honour the Magi and their supposed journey in that direction.

King George I, sometimes known as the Pudding King (I always thought this referred to his rotund profile) requested that plum pudding be served as part of his royal feast in his first Christmas in England. A recipe for 'plum porridge' appeared in *Christmas Entertainments* in 1740.

As techniques for meat preserving improved in the 18th century, the savoury element of both the mince pie and the plum porridge diminished as the sweet content increased. The mince pie kept its name, though the porridge was increasingly referred to as 'plum pudding'. It was in the 1830s that the cannonball of flour, fruits, suet, sugar and spices, all topped with holly, made a definite appearance, becoming increasingly associated with Christmas.

Most recipes bring together what traditionally are expensive or luxurious ingredients, notably the sweet spices that are so important in developing a distinctive rich aroma, and usually include suet (mutton or beef fat). The pudding is very dark in appearance, effectively black, as a result of the dark sugars and black treacle in most recipes, and its long cooking time.

The mixture can be moistened with the juice of citrus fruits, brandy and other alcohol (some recipes call for dark beers such as stout or porter but we enthusiastically support the brandy industry). We also use eggs and butter in our puddings instead of suet, mainly to avoid the heart attack in every slice associated with suet pudding.

Christmas puddings are often dried out on hooks for weeks prior to serving, in order to enhance the flavour. We have lost a few owing to various mould invasions, so it is important to have good air circulation and a dry environment. Our puddings are prepared with a traditional calico cloth cover rather than cooked in a basin, which is a Victorian-era fashion, steamed and placed on a serving platter, and decorated on top with a sprig of holly and often flamed brandy.

The custom of placing silver coins in puddings is interesting. In ancient Rome 'good luck' coins were in common circulation. Coins were struck by new emperors, promising peace for a set number of years (if you believe that you'll believe anything). Citizens would hold such coins in their hand when making a wish or petitioning the gods (ditto).

Silver coins were placed in Christmas puddings and birthday cakes to bring good luck and wealth. A variation on this custom was that in some families each member added a coin to the pudding bowl, making a wish as they did so. If their coin turned up in their bowl it's said their wish was sure to come true.

So please have a happy and safe Christmas!
— Peter Davies, *Shepherds Run*

Bye bye VB, Carlton, Cascade, Blue Tongue?

THE HISTORY of foreign investment takeovers of Australian iconic brands continues with the \$12 billion takeover deal in November of Fosters and associated brands by British conglomerate SABMiller.

SABMiller produces rival brands like Grolsch and Miller Lite, according to an ABC report.

The Australia Institute reviewed the history of takeovers in Australia and says the track record is not reassuring. The think tank found undertakings like those given by SABMiller PLC to retain Foster's iconic Australian identity are likely to be worthless.

Undertakings include: keeping operations in Australia and not moving production off shore; and keeping the brand portfolio intact.

"Past commitments by foreign investors to retain the Australian identity of the companies they buy out have been ignored," said Senior Research Fellow David Richardson. "Undertakings are easily given but commitments are not monitored and blatant violations of agreements are overlooked.

"When National Mutual was taken over, its new owners (AXA SA) promised to retain National Mutual's identity, its Australian headquarters and to maintain the strong Asian investments that National Mutual had developed. Since then, National Mutual's identity has vanished, its Asian business was absorbed into the parent company and the Australian business sold to AMP Limited.

"In 1977 Roderick Carnegie the Managing Director of CRA (now Rio Tinto Limited) promised the then Treasurer, John Howard, that CRA would move to 50 percent Australian ownership as soon as possible. Rio Tinto Limited remains overwhelmingly foreign owned.

"While the current Treasurer might believe the Foster's takeover is in the national interest, history suggests that foreign buyers are free to ignore Australian concerns," concluded Mr Richardson.



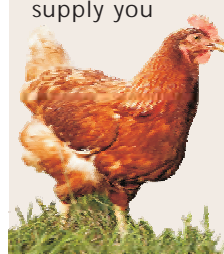
Please extend the Christmas spirit to all creatures

CONSIDER where ham and eggs come from (too often factory farms and battery cages) There are alternatives!

Free-range and organic meat and eggs are available locally. Foodlovers in Bungendore offers a good range of free-range ham, pork, turkey, rabbit and chicken as well as organically produced meats and smallgoods. Free-range and organic often overlap in meat production.

The revamped Coles in Riverside Plaza also offers a range of free-range and organic pork and ham chicken and turkey.

Most food stores now offer free-range eggs. The farmers markets and the Saturday morning market at the Canberra Expo grounds also have stalls with free range and organic meat. That is true as well for beef. Locally, Greenhills Beef can supply you with organic grass-fed beef via the internet.



So enjoy a happy but kinder holiday season and go free-range.

> Behind closed doors, p16

The Morey Family ... Christmas Pudding ...

[makes 2]

Ingredients:

- 500g sultanas • 500g raisins
- 500g currents • 100g mixed peel
- 500g brown sugar • 500g butter
- 1 loaf of white bread • 8 eggs
- 500g plain flour • 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt • 1 tsp each of all spice and nutmeg • 2 tsp of cinnamon
- 100mL brandy

2 pieces of calico approx 500mm square. String 1 broom handle to hang puddings from.

Method:

Previous day: Combine fruit in a large bowl and pour over 30mL of brandy. Leave overnight to infuse. Leave bread out overnight to become stale.

Day of making: Crumb bread and add to bowl containing infusing fruit. Combine all dry ingredients and sift into another bowl.

Cream butter and sugar until light brown (doesn't have to be fully dissolved).

Add eggs one at a time until the butter is dissolved.

Fold in dry ingredients.

Combine sugar mix, fruit and bread.

Add the remainder of the brandy.

Split mixture into 2 parts and place on each piece of calico. Tie with string so it can be hung.

Cook for 4 hours in boiling water. Once cooked, hang from broom outside until Christmas.

On Christmas day boil for a further 2-4 hours and serve with whipped cream. For added drama, pour over more brandy and light at the table.



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by Judy Thompson

Don't tangle with a grieving chef

Burning Man is a film about an English chef working in Bondi. Mathew Goode plays the central character, Tom, a young man trying to

look after his son while he grapples with grief. An impressive female cast play the women who try to offer support.

The film is not a linear sequence of events and it is quite difficult to work out what is happening at the start of the film. I started to use Tom's bandaged hand as a visual clue to timing. The chaotic timing, fire sequences and flashbacks convey Tom's hellish grief experience.

Jonathan Teplitzky, who also wrote the screenplay, directs the film. The film is based on his personal experiences of grief. After the screening, he said that it was fascinating how tolerant people were of his grief and that he wanted to explore this in the film.

The film delivers a graphic cautionary tale about sending food back to a restaurant's kitchen when Tom does not cope well with a customer's criticism. Teplitzky said his family are chefs and he has seen worse!

I have to agree with the director that this film could be a marketing challenge. However, Margaret and David on the ABC's *At The Movies* rated it very highly. The film is funded by Screen Australia. Are they linked to a company selling anti-depressants or does their film selection panel need a really good holiday?

Stock up on DVDs for the holidays

The silly season is nigh. You can stock up on DVDs, music and games with one of our advertising partners, *Revolution CD*. They offer an online shop where you can find new or second-hand music, film or games available at their Queanbeyan, Tuggeranong or Woden shops. You can also trade in your unwanted music and games.

> See p15 for a feel-good classic from the catalogue

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A funny thing (or two) is happening at 'The Q'

THE 2012 theatrical season at 'The Q' promises to be one of the most 'accessible' yet, with a strong suite of comedies and musicals and an enticing line-up of original shows, including two just for kids.

Program Manager Stephen Pike, can take much of the credit for steering 'The Q' into its fifth year of strong theatre entertainment, year by year increasing its reputation as a regional theatre powerhouse and a source of local pride.

At the recent season launch, Pike said last season brought in 28,000 theatre patrons. In 2012 they're hoping to top 30,000 seats sold.

Blood Brothers in January, Gruffalos in May

Local productions and musical shows have proven enduring favourites: with last year's *Oh What a Night*, the Council-produced musical *Blood Brothers* and the outstanding touring play *Tuesdays with Morrie*, topping the list. *Blood Brothers* will be back in January by popular demand. Two other musicals, the Queanbeyan Players' *Jesus Christ Superstar* and Free Rain's *Oklahoma* also sold out.

Taking a cue from this success, the 2012 season will feature three local productions and two children's shows. The children's show *The Gruffalo's Child*, based on the award-winning book of the same name, will feature in May with physical theatre, music and puppetry offering scary fun for kids aged four years and up. In September the excellent Erth company returns with magical puppetry in *I Bunyip*, exploring the Australian bush as you've never seen it.

Look at the ad to your right for the adult shows. The season starts with a rousing tribute to The Everly Brothers, later, *Motherhood the Musical* (by the same mob that brought us the hilarious *Menopause the Musical*), a new David Williamson comedy *Let the Sunshine*, and an old Agatha Christie mystery *The Mousetrap*, (the longest running play, ever, in London), plus classic comedy with *The Imaginary Invalid* by Canberra's own Centrepiece Theatre Company.

All singing, dancing, laughing

Amongst the new creations is *Syncopation* in March, a story of two people with a dream, billed as a "smash hit fusion of comedy, drama, romance and ballroom dancing", featuring the music of Joplin, Gershwin and Berlin. Director Stephen Lloyd Helper spoke at the launch and said the actors' brief to deliver dialogue while dancing is probably the hardest task in theatre.

The Queanbeyan Council took a deep breath, overlooked the nudity (it is 2012!) and in September is gamely reviving the counter-culture classic from a more hopeful time, *Hair*.

Rounding out an outstanding line-up, August will feature Aboriginal stand-up comedian Mark Sheppard and a special treat in May: one of Australia's finest Indigenous singer songwriters, Shelley Morris, a woman with an amazing voice and stories to tell that we will want to hear.

Consider becoming a season subscriber and support your local theatre. It may be raining outside, but this season promises to be hot!

— Maria Taylor

— CORALIE'S CORNER —

TIME passes so quickly and here it is already December with many interesting bits and pieces to report.

It seems to be that time of year when all arts awards and nominations are announced and everyone is becoming quite excited to see if they have received a 'nod'.

The nominations for the 17th ActewAGL Canberra Area Theatre Awards will be announced at a 'nominations' party at Teatro Vivaldi Restaurant on Monday 12 December at 5.30pm. This party is always a show stopper... well everyone stops to leaf through the 42 nominations to see if they have received a guernsey.

Once they are announced, the black-tie gala evening is on the way, being held at the School of Music, Llewellyn Hall, on Saturday 25 February 2012.

Some of the 'stars' who will be mingling at the gala will be Simon Gallagher (singing star) John Wood (sensational actor) Toni Lamond (TV and theatre personality), Mark Grentall (director of the musical *Rock of Ages*) and Lola Nixon (Granny in *Billy Elliot*). After 12 December, go to www.catawards.com.au to see who has been nominated and get more info on the gala evening!

Cracker Christmas show and 'our Mary'

Speaking of Teatro Vivaldi Restaurant, the Christmas show will be a cracker as the glitz builds momentum with appearances by Wayne Rogers (*Australia's Got Talent* finalist) and guests with his 'Divine Diva' show – glamour, sparkles and feathers and a remarkable voice – think Danny La Rue.

Tim Stephens, maître d' at Parliament House members dining room, had the honour and pleasure of looking after Princess Mary when she dined for a special luncheon during her visit to Canberra. You may remember Tim from the School of Arts Café Queanbeyan,



Simon Gallagher

where he learned his trade from parents Pat and Bill Stephens.

He says that he has always looked after 'Princesses' because everyone who went to the Café was always treated as a princess... however, this one was very special!

If you have any news on theatre gossip, please don't hesitate to contact me on cfw@ozemail.com.au. See you floating in a foyer soon...Coralie

REGIONAL PERFORMERS TAKE A BOW

The ACT Arts Awards at the end of November hosted by the Canberra Critics' Circle lauded a number of artists from this region or associated with the 'Q' productions.

They included: Robert Foster – visual artist, Queanbeyan; Elizabeth Cameron Dalman – dance artist, Palerang; singer Christine Forbes – theatre practitioner for her strong performance in the Queanbeyan Council's production of *Blood Brothers*; Chris Neal – theatre practitioner, Queanbeyan.

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Oh what delight! family holiday fun with sing-along Mary Poppins! (G)

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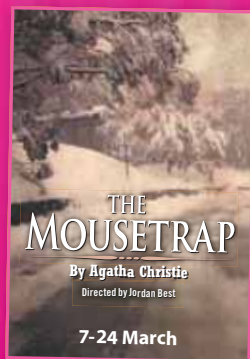
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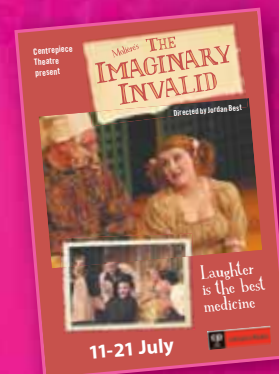
Optimism

David Williamson's satirical comedy has been described as part Romeo and Juliet, part Meet the Parents.



Compassion

A true story of family, strength and the choices we make. A powerful mix of sadness, loss, and love, laced with humour.



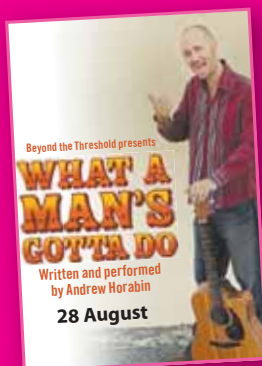
LOL Funny

An exuberant play full to the brim with naughtiness, flamboyance, hypocrisy and defiance. Enjoy!



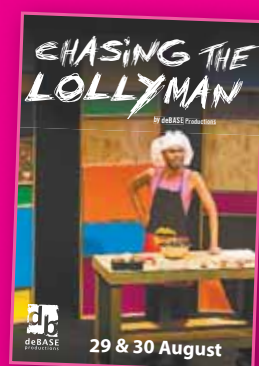
Laughter

Already receiving rave reviews during its 2011 Australian tour, you'll love this hilarious musical journey about the lives of four mums.



Hilarious

The themes are serious. The show is hilarious. The combination is powerful.



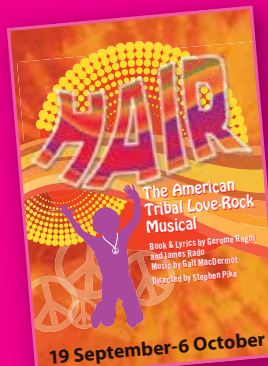
Insightful

A celebration of urban Indigenous identity, this show takes a satirical look at the media and popular culture.



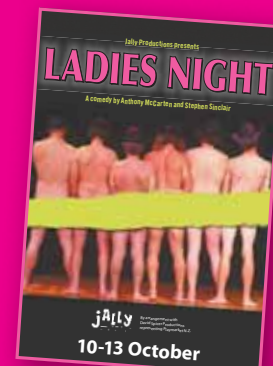
Outrageous

Some of our most beloved actresses bring this delightful new comedy to life and laughter on the stage.



Joyous

The iconic score is amazing, with *Aquarius*, *Hair*, *Good Morning Starshine*, *Let the Sun Shine In* and more than 30 others.



Sexy?

Cheeky, fun, a little bit naughty. Will they go all the way? Come along and see for yourself!

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Bill Stephens - City News

A return season of The Q's acclaimed 2011 production

Book now for performances 19-29 January 2012. What a great Christmas present!

WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

Bookings: 6285 6290 or www.theq.net.au

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Star search

With this issue, the Bulletin starts a new feature that will make all of us would-be stargazers much better informed as we scan our heavenly, clear night skies. Our guide is Bungendore resident and astrophysicist David Weldrake. Thank you, David!

DECEMBER offers the opportunity to see some spectacular night sky sights, including planets and a total lunar eclipse.

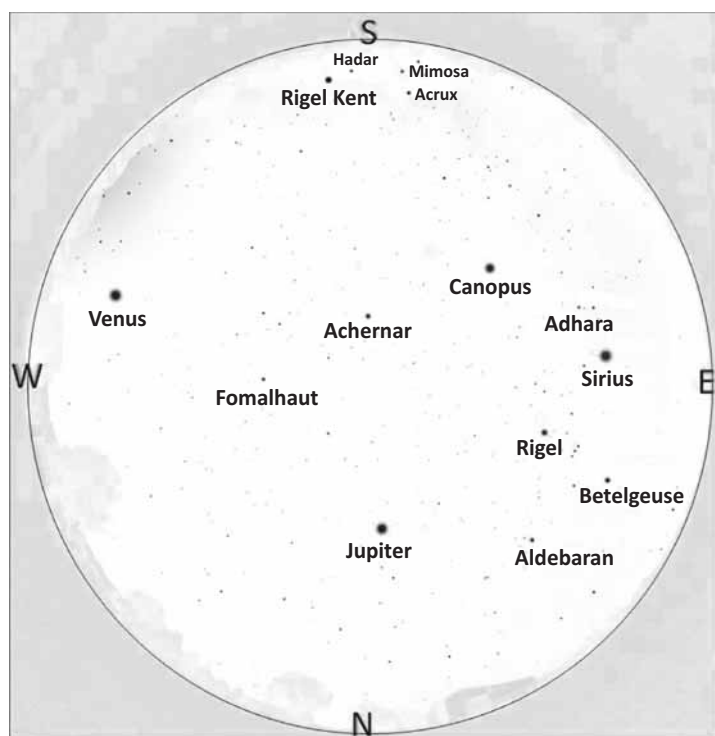
At sunset this month, Orion rises in the east. Orion covers a large area of sky and is easily identified by a string of three stars, known as 'Orion's Belt'. The stars Rigel and Betelgeuse straddle Orion's Belt, as seen in the sky map.

Betelgeuse is a red supergiant star, so huge that if it replaced the Sun, most of the solar system would be swallowed. Can you see a colour difference between them? Binoculars show Betelgeuse's redness while Rigel is blue-white.

Binoculars reveal a small misty patch between Rigel and Orion's Belt (in Orion's 'sword'), this is the Great Orion nebula, a vast cloud of hydrogen gas within which stars are born. Telescopes show it as a bright luminous cloud.

South of Orion is Sirius, in the constellation Canis Major, the brightest star in the whole sky and a white colour. Opposite Orion to Sirius is Aldebaran in Taurus, which is also orange.

Aldebaran was once very similar to our Sun, only it is a lot older, having evolved into a 'Red Giant', a smaller version of Betelgeuse and a fate which awaits our Sun, although not for a few billion years. When it happens, it is very likely Earth will be consumed.



Overhead is Achenar, in the constellation Eridanus, with Fomalhaut (in Pisces) the bright star slightly to its east. Making a line with Achenar and Fomalhaut is Canopus (in Carina), the second brightest star in the sky after Sirius.

Can you see the Southern Cross (Crux) skirting the southern horizon? It appears upside-down in December, and will start to rise again in the south-east as 2012 progresses.

The planets this month

Venus and Jupiter are both seen in the December evening sky. Mars and Saturn appear early in the pre-dawn sky and both will become visible earlier in the night as 2012 progresses, with Mars at its best in March.

Venus is a very bright star low in the west, visible for a time after sunset. Venus orbits closer to the Sun than Earth, and displays moon-like phases through a telescope.

During December Venus appears as a small white disk

showing a phase between half and full. Venus is wrapped in reflective and dense clouds laced with sulphuric acid. We never see its surface, hence its appearance as a tiny white cue-ball. The Moon is near Venus in December's first week.

Towards the east after sunset another unmistakable bright star shines, yellowish compared to Venus's white. This is Jupiter, the largest planet in the solar system. Jupiter will be visible all night in December.

Through a telescope, Jupiter is a slightly flattened ball with two dark bands stretched across its equator. These are giant clouds; closer scrutiny reveals smaller details and a storm called the Great Red Spot. Jupiter is huge, being ten times Earth's diameter, and this storm is more than twice Earth's size and at least 300 years old.

Four stars are seen close to Jupiter through a telescope (or even binoculars). These are four large moons; Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto. The Moon passed Jupiter on 7 December.

Half-Moon was on 2 December, which is the best time to see lunar mountain ranges and craters. Have a look with binoculars; you'll be amazed at the level of detail.

ATTENTION: Total lunar eclipse 10 December

Full Moon is on 10-11 December, and from 11.46pm on the 10th until 3.18am on the 11th the Moon will pass through the Earth's shadow. This is a lunar eclipse, occurring on average twice a year.

The moon will be seen to slowly plunge into darkness as it enters the Earth's shadow. When fully eclipsed (from 1.06am until 1.57am on 11 December) the Moon turns a dark coppery-red, caused by light being bent (or 'refracted') by the Earth's atmosphere.

All you need to see a lunar eclipse is a pair of eyes, and 10 December being a Saturday night provides an excellent opportunity. The next total lunar eclipse visible from Australia is in April 2014, and there will be a partial eclipse in June 2012.

Chart produced using the Stellarium software package.

— TOWN AND COUNTRY DOGS —

by Heike Hahner

Why we all want a puppy for Christmas

RICHARD Wrangham and Dale Peterson in their 1996 book *Demonic Males* (No, this is not a feminist book, but one that explores the origins of human violence by looking at the social interactions of chimpanzees) tell the interesting story of the young chimpanzee male Kakama who pretends that a log is a baby chimpanzee. He carries it around, makes nests for it and generally acts affectionately towards the log.

Reading the story of Kakama's doll makes one understand where our intense drive for toys and pets originates. That is if you believe that we are descended from apes, which I most certainly do.

All animals, even solitary ones, ultimately live in the company of other animals. They all know about each other, interact with each other (even if it is the prey-predator scenario) and understand each other's vocalisations and body language.

Humans are different. Our ascent as the dominant species has dumbed us down to not needing to understand other animals anymore. For most of the time we act from the point of "I say and you do".

This development to us being the 'ruling species' has lead to many modern-day troubles, including the vast number of animals, especially dogs and cats, being destroyed each year because no homes are available for them.

Australia rates poorly on destroying unwanted pets

Interestingly, a recent article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* brought into sharp focus that not all societies destroy such vast numbers of dogs as Australia does. In Australia 250,000 dogs and cats are destroyed because they are not wanted. Of these an estimated 140,000 are dogs. In Britain, however, "only" 25,000 dogs are put down each year.

When I asked the CEO of the RSPCA in Canberra Michael Linke during a recent radio interview why there was such a shocking difference between the death rates in the two countries, he suggested that there was a generally different attitude in the two societies towards dogs and the fact that 'old' money is supporting the good cause of re-homing dogs



PHOTO: KARL AMMAN

in Britain, which apparently is missing in this country.

As far as I can see Australia is not a poor country, at least if we go by the current real estate prices and the business section of the various daily papers. On average we would have the same or better living standards than the UK. Certainly the weather is better. So why these appalling statistics?

Let's return to Kakama and his log baby. We must accept that as humans we are genetically predisposed to want to have toys and pets, just as the chimpanzee does. But we must also be aware of the fact that dogs (pets) are not

logs, which we can just leave behind when we grow bored of them.

I believe with these statistics Britain is setting Australia its toughest challenge yet. Can Australians pull themselves together enough to reduce the current death rate of pets per year?

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us, two and four legged, at Town and Country Dogs.



Not everyone can adopt or foster a dog but you can help by purchasing an ACT Rescue and Foster (ARF) calendar this Christmas. All the photos this year have been taken on farms to celebrate 2012 being Year of the Farmer, making this a great gift for family and friends. To purchase go to www.fosterdogs.org.

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Something to cheer about

Little Miss Sunshine is about a family’s road trip to take their chubby little girl, Olive, to compete in the finals of an American beauty pageant.

Leading the family group is father Richard Hoover, a failed management motivational speaker. Olive’s badly behaved Grandpa is her pageant performance coach. Olive’s uncle is a Proust scholar on suicide watch and therefore forced to accompany the family.

Olive’s brother Dwayne, a sulky adolescent who has not spoken for some time, is also an unwilling participant. Toni Collette plays Olive’s mother, Sheryl, who is somehow relatively serene despite the chaos that surrounds her.

It is a terrific send-up of the American beauty pageant and the motivational management scenes. Olive’s performance at the pageant is hilariously awful. Even her family is shocked, but to give them their due, they rally in support of Olive.

Highly recommended for Christmas viewing. After watching this film you will have had a good laugh, an enormous appreciation for your own family and a renewed relief that you are free for the moment from the clutches of office motivational management speakers. You will also be very grateful that none of your little darlings have entered a beauty pageant.

Happy Christmas!

These losers good fun



Lapland Odyssey was shown as part of the recent Canberra Film Festival. Its Norwegian production team treated viewers to an absurdist comedy about a group of seemingly hopeless young people that manages to be witty and over-the-top all at the same time. Producers of recent big-budget ‘loser’ films that rely on gross bodily function humour might take note.

Unemployed Janne who lives in remote Lapland is given a final ultimatum by his long-suffering girlfriend Inari to bring home a digital set-top box by dawn or she will move out. A very long, dark (depth of winter) epic voyage follows in the quest for money to buy a set-top box on what may or may not be Christmas Eve.

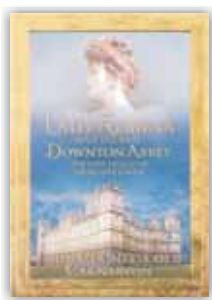
Along the way the Swedish women’s underwater rugby team prove the equivalent of Homer’s Sirens that potentially lure Janne to a nasty fate. Janne also has to cope with Inari’s old boyfriend, his own friends, Russian reindeer hunters, the police, and a blizzard.

The film makes room for some social commentary. For example, about globalised industry that tends to leave unemployment and depression behind when industries leave the country to chase a three percent better profit. We hear how this is from a sudden flight of astute oratory by one of Janne’s unbelievably loyal buddies. He is driven to this when a girl asks him for a dance and he foreshadows their whole depressing life together.

The Arctic scenery is very beautiful and the car chase scenes are amazing. Janne triumphs in the end with a Hollywood-style climax.

We have not been able to find this film as a DVD to rent as yet, but if you can find a copy it is well worth seeing. It is very funny.

— SUMMER READING —



Lady Almina and the real Downton Abbey: The Lost Legacy of Highclere Castle by The Countess of Carnarvon

Publisher: Hodder and Stoughton
RRP: \$33 (Paperchain, Manuka)

Review by Di Johnstone

DOWNTON Abbey has been a spectacularly successful TV series, now into a second series. With its glorious Edwardian costumes, great actors, insightful peek at upstairs/downstairs life in one of the grand houses of England, it has attracted millions of viewers around the world. The location of the series is the magnificent Highclere Castle, the family home of the Count

and Countess of Carnarvon. This book opens the door to life at Highclere as it really was in the time of the fictional *Downton Abbey*.

The author, Lady Fiona Carnarvon, the current Countess, was clearly fascinated by one of her predecessors, Lady Almina Carnarvon, great-grandmother of the 8th Lord Carnarvon, the current Count. And what an extraordinary character Lady Almina was – a true celebrity, with an unusual past, beauty, flair, great wealth and capacity for spending huge sums of money with abandon.

Born the illegitimate child of the extraordinarily wealthy Alfred Rothschild and his French mistress Marie Wombwell, Almina was brought up in comfortable circumstances. Though Alfred didn’t formally acknowledge paternity of Almina (she was described as his “goddaughter”), he oversaw her upbringing and made sure she married well.

When at 19 Almina became Countess of Carnarvon, a social coup given her background, she quickly set about lavishly entertaining the great and the famous and Alfred pandered to her every financial request. The huge sums he provided bankrolled massive renovations to Highclere Castle and funded Almina’s grand parties; one of these, an elaborately costumed formal dinner among ancient ruins in Egypt, was a particular triumph.

However, with the coming of the First World War, Lady Almina refocused her attention and Alfred’s money on a better cause – caring for badly injured soldiers brought at first to Highclere and then to a London hospital that she personally supplied and equipped. Her approach was ahead of its time, ministering to the soldiers’ emotional welfare as well as their medical needs, which included selecting attractive nurses. The patients and their families were immensely grateful and she earned official admiration.

Continued p16

Advertisement



Australian Government

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***Please note:** switch off may occur earlier or later in some towns. Residents in these towns will be informed about the switchover dates. See the website for more information.

Want more information?



1800 556 443



www.australia.gov.au/digitalready



Authorised by the Australian Government, Capital Hill, Canberra

As for Lord Carnarvon, he was a somewhat distant figure. He clearly married Almina for her money and his grand obsession, which absorbed much of the money, was a search for the ancient treasures of Egypt. Teaming with archeologist Howard Carter, he famously discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen, after which he soon died, launching the legend of the curse of Tutankhamen's tomb.

The book is not very forthcoming on Almina's life after her husband died. It seems she remarried, became embroiled in a nasty divorce case and died in somewhat straitened circumstances – a long way from Highclere and her earlier immense wealth.

The research is careful, with terrific photos. There were many well-known names in the society in which Almina moved, and we glimpse them from her unique perspective. What the author does not mention, however, are claims that Almina might have had an affair with her husband's best friend and that Almina's son was the result. That is the real twist in this tale (that has led to tabloid speculation that life might imitate the TV series regarding a contest over the estate). An intriguing and enjoyable holiday read.



The Case of the Pope: Vatican Accountability for Human Rights Abuses

by Geoffrey Robertson
RRP:\$14.95

Is the pope directly responsible for protecting pedophiles? This provocative question is fully examined by never-dull human rights lawyer Geoffrey Robertson in his latest book reviewed by Sarah Newsome.

GEOFFREY Robertson has represented everyone from Julian Assange to Indigenous Tasmanians to Salomon Rushdie. He's known for his controversial views, and his latest offering doesn't disappoint.

He has made a case for prosecuting the Pope.

Now, perhaps once you've seen the impeachment of the US President on charges of perjury relating a sex scandal, its no stretch to imagine other leaders in the dock. But the Pope is no



Brumbies
by Paula Boer
Publisher: IFWG
Publishing Inc
\$16.99 + postage
and handling,
available from
www.Horseywyse.com.au

BRUMBIES is written by Paula Boer and illustrated by Rowena Evans and is the first of five novels in the *Brumbies* series. Former Member of Parliament Peter Cochran formally launched the series in Cooma on 19 November.

When city girl Louise moves to the country, she discovers the mountain brumbies are to be killed for pet food. She and Ben, a local farm boy, determine to save as many of the wild horses as they can. Despite opposition, they arrange a muster, but nothing goes according to plan.

Following in the hoofprints of *The Silver Brumby* and *The Man from Snowy River*, this horse-packed adventure encounters challenges through some of the toughest territory in Australia. This book will appeal to readers and horse-lovers aged eight to adult.

Author Paula Boer lives in the high country of New South Wales and has been an avid horse-lover since she learned to ride at age nine. She has worked as a hunt groom, caught and broken in brumbies, and mustered on remote cattle stations. A regular contributor to *Horseywyse* magazine, Paula's debut novel *The Okapi Promise* was published in December 2010.

Snowy Mountains illustrator Rowena Evans has worked as an artist, illustrator, writer, cartoonist, and in community art (among other things) and loves bushwalking, reading, playing musical instruments, attacking noxious weeds and cross-country skiing. She likes horse riding but usually has to make do with riding her bike.

ordinary leader, especially for those who subscribe to the doctrine of papal infallibility.

In *The Case of The Pope*, Robertson – best known for his provocative TV series *Hypotheticals* – makes a devastating case for prosecuting Pope Benedict XVI for protecting pedophile priests. But why this Pope in particular?

Simple. In his previous job, Pope Benedict XVI approved the policy adopted by the church in response to allegations of sexual abuse by the clergy.

The church chose to deal with perpetrators under canon law rather than handing them over to the police. Canon law is the church's own system of justice – a system “deliberately hidden from the public, police and parliaments” and run, so Robertson maintains, in defiance of international law.

A law unto themselves

As a result, the church routinely swore the victims to secrecy and moved perpetrators to other positions where they had access to children – while knowing the perpetrators were likely to reoffend. The church acted as a “worldwide sanctuary for child abusers”.

For over a quarter of a century, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the man who is now Pope, was in supreme command of this parallel system of justice. Robertson argues he has “command responsibility” for crimes against humanity perpetrated under this system. Guidelines for bishops dealing with allegations of sexual abuse came directly from his office.

There has been substantial legal action, in response to the revelations of pedophile priests, surfacing across the globe in the last decade. Perpetuators have been prosecuted in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and other countries, while parishes where offences are alleged to have happened face civil lawsuits. But a criminal prosecution for the Pope is a whole different matter.

Legally speaking...

So, is the Pope liable for the damage to victims by re-offending priests? Can he be prosecuted? Certainly a number of US court cases have tried. The Pontiff has sought and attained immunity from prosecution as the head of state. Does that mean that His Holiness is above the law?

Well, arguably... yes.

The Vatican is not only the seat of the Catholic Church; it is a sovereign state, owing to a ‘squalid’ deal between Mussolini and the Holy See. The Pope, as its head of state, can claim immunity from prosecution.

Robertson, however, argues that these claims have no basis in international law when the objective test of statehood is applied. The Vatican has no permanent population, no defined territory and no system of government outside its function as a church.

So, will the Pope be prosecuted? Robertson concedes that the Pontiff in handcuffs is an unlikely picture. However, that such a thing is possible provides a useful affirmation of the rule of law. No one – not even Christ's representative on earth – is above the law.

Vatican's response

In practice, the Vatican's response to the revelations of pedophile priests has been uncharacteristically quick. It has included requirements for background checks for all clergy and a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy (including reporting allegations to the police).

The Pope has denounced those who would harm children, and lamented that the church had not been vigilant enough or quick enough to respond.

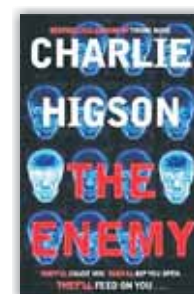
For many, this response is not sufficient, and does not go far enough – and rightly so. The revelations have created a tide of righteous anger and recrimination, and the Vatican's response does not provide a significant deterrent for the perpetrators, or justice or closure for the victims.

That sexual abuse of children is an outrage is clear, and Robertson makes a compelling case for the church to answer. The scale of the suffering seems overwhelming, with so much healing needed.

It's hard to imagine such a conservative and secretive institution suddenly responding positively to scrutiny, and finding a way to atone, and reform. For all concerned, moving forward is a daunting prospect.

We knew parents could seem monstrous, but really ...

Review by Nick Overall



The Enemy
by Charlie Higson
Publisher: Puffin Books

Imagine waking up one normal sunny school day to find your parents quite sick. When you get home from school they are feeling

worse than they were in the morning. They begin to violently cough up blood and seem to be acting a little strange and forgetful.

As the week goes on this becomes even worse until they start to lose teeth and their skin becomes dead and rotten. You can't understand their slow, slurred speech. You become scared and try to run but they chase you – unbelievably, they are trying to kill you.

In Charlie Higson's new adrenaline-fuelled, young adult horror series every human being over the age of fourteen becomes violently diseased and ‘zombie-like’. One small group of kids holding out in a shopping centre in central London fight desperately for their lives as the grownups try to break through their hideout.

They encounter a 13-year-old boy who claims he is from Buckingham Palace and tells the group that they need to travel with him to the other side of London to seek refuge in the palace with hundreds of other kids. They endure a daring journey, protecting young kids and fighting the blood-thirsty adults but soon after, when they start to lose close friends, they begin to wonder if this really was the best idea.

And all this only happens in the first book, *The Enemy*! The second book in the series, *The Dead*, focuses on a different group of kids and how they set off a chain of events that will continue to affect the characters from the first book. Higson cleverly mixes twists and turns into this series that will keep you on the edge of your seat.

Higson has now released the third book in the series, *The Fear*, and says that he is looking to release another three and depending on the popularity he will release another three after that!

The Enemy series is great for old and young alike and is especially perfect for any bored school boy who needs some action in his reading.

THE ENEMY series, highly recommended, 8.5/10

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

WHILE the pork industry has made some welcome progress on phasing out sow stalls as they promised, the industry copped a black eye with the November closure of a Victorian abattoir where workers were filmed torturing pigs.

In what has to be a brutal job situation, workers were filmed routinely stabbing pigs in the eyes and ears with stun guns, and one terrified pig that escaped from handlers was beaten to death with a sledge hammer while another ran into the scalding tank.

Prime Safe Victoria shut down the L.E. Giles abattoir after 60 years of operation saying it had breached animal welfare guidelines which are part of mandatory quality assurance projects. Animal welfare groups are calling for CCTV cameras in abattoirs as now occurs in the UK.

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Tis the season for Tea-trees

Story and photos by Jo Walker



Leptospermum rotundifolium



Leptospermum rotundifolium mauve form



Leptospermum macrocarpum

TEA-TREES are a widespread genus of Australian plants, with more than 80 species occurring in all states and territories. The genus name, *Leptospermum*, describes the abundant narrow seeds which are carried in woody fruit capsules. The common name, Tea-tree, refers to attempts by early British mariners to brew a familiar beverage from the coastal *Leptospermum scoparium*.

Many species like moist soil

Although Tea-trees are scattered throughout a range of climatic regions, they mostly grow in soils that are moist for at least part of the year. (Rural readers may notice new tea-trees cropping up around the block since wetter conditions started 18 months ago.)

One species that likes to keep its roots wet is *L. myrtifolium*. This greyish-leaved little shrub will often colonise creeks and soakage areas quite densely. Often growing close by, in moist but slightly better-drained soils, are populations of the taller, more upright *L. juniperinum* – named Prickly Tea-tree for its sharply pointed leaves. Both of these species have smallish white flowers.

L. multicaule grows on heavy soil, usually on flat open areas. Its name means ‘many stems’, and it has an open habit with slender long stems often covered in small white or pale pink flowers, and is usually only a metre or so tall.

A much larger species, one that can grow to the proportions of a small tree, is *L. lanigera*, the Woolly Tea-tree. To me, it seems more silky than woolly – the new growth is soft and often slightly pendant, covered in silvery hairs and with a dark pink or mauve tint.

L. lanigera grows in a range of habitats, from coastal areas to high in the mountain ranges, and it and the three species mentioned previously all grow in the Shire.

In the garden

Tea-trees seem to adapt well to a range of soil types in gardens, where they can provide a striking patch of white, pink or red. The red-flowered Tea-trees are mostly cultivars, although *L. spectabile*, from the NSW central coast, has dark red petals which contrast with the pale sepals visible between the petals.

An equally showy species is *L. squarrosum*, as its common name of Peach-blossom Tea-tree would imply. The young foliage is softly hairy and the stems are crowded with large pink flowers.

I have two of the local Tea-trees growing naturally at my place, but have added a few more species to the landscape. *L. scoparium* ‘Horizontalis’ is, as its name suggests, a low-growing form. This one grew for several years on a mound of rocks and heavy clay soil, the large white flowers covering the stems every summer. It did extremely well until the drought, when the site proved too dry for it.

More successful have been several *L. rotundifolium*, truly beautiful plants with small dark green leaves. The profuse flowers range from white to pink and can be more than 2cm across. One of these, planted at the edge of the dam, has grown into a neat shrub about 1.5 metres tall, and seed spread around has resulted in several smaller bushes – all presently covered in flowers.

There is a mauve-flowered form of this species, and also a low-growing dense form, *L. rotundifolium* ‘Julie Ann’. Growing to a

width of about two metres, it bears masses of pale pink flowers.

Another favourite is *L. macrocarpum*. A smallish rather woody little shrub, it earns its place in the garden with its flowers. The large dusky pink petals are separated by green silky sepals and the central green disc is full of nectar.

From seed or cutting – propagation is worthwhile

Tea-trees are easy to propagate from seed – the woody seed capsules will open a few days after removal from the plant, releasing lots of slender seed. To propagate a particular form, cuttings are needed, and usually seem to strike easily. It’s well worth making space for a few Tea-trees in the garden.



PHOTO: BILL TAYLOR

Ed note: *L. rotundifolium* tea-tree growing around our place has come back spectacularly with the break of the drought and with it a blizzard of brown butterflies that haven’t been seen for all those drought years. The interesting question is, where have the butterflies been?

DON'T LOVE THIS GRASS!

IT'S NOBODY'S FRIEND

African Lovegrass has been increasingly encroaching upon farmland, bushland, and roadsides throughout southern NSW and the ACT over the past three decades. African Lovegrass has the ability to quickly take over native grasslands and introduced pastures forming a dense monoculture.

African Lovegrass:

- is a fast spreading weed that is invading much of southern Australia. It is arguably the most invasive weed in the capital region;
- is found in all areas – suburban gardens, lawns, urban parks, road verges, farms and nature parks;
- has many forms;
- crowds out native grasses, reducing native plant diversity;
- crowds out pasture, reducing good food for animals.

Most graziers are well aware of Lovegrass and ways to limit its impact.

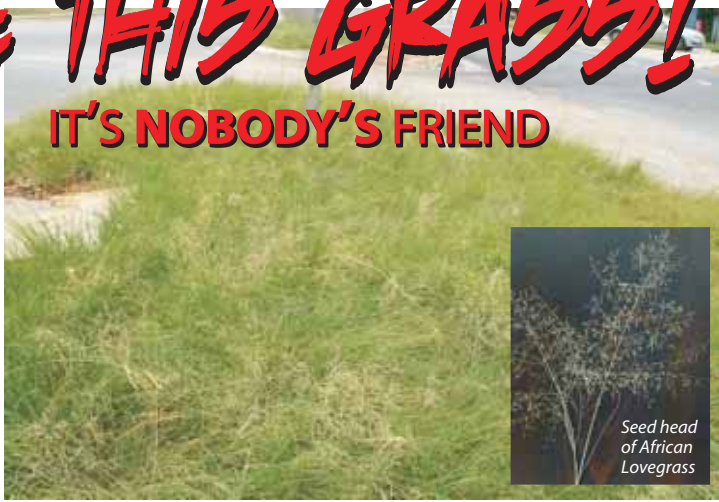
People living in urban and peri-urban areas however appear to be unaware of its existence.

The greatest vector of African Lovegrass is mowing along urban and rural roadsides. Simple things like mowing so cut material is thrown back into the infestation area can help control African Lovegrass boundaries.

We need to act now with an effective, long-term and integrated plan to control the spread of African Lovegrass in our region. This starts by removing it from your backyard, street and neighbourhood to prevent it from spreading further, every single plant removed helps the cause.

Southern ACT Catchment Group has detailed information about African Lovegrass available on their website:

<http://sactcg.org.au/>



African Lovegrass growing along a median strip in an urban area



Mowing back towards infestation helps control the spread of African Lovegrass

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Around the house:

- **Act** – Learn to identify African Lovegrass. If you see a plant, always dig it, bag it, bin it.
- **Garden care** – if you have it in your lawn, mow it low before it seeds (it produces flowers and seeds from October to May);
- **Garden hygiene** – wash your mower to stop accidental spread;
- **Neighbourhood watch** – be vigilant, see that it doesn’t grow in your garden, your street verge or your neighbourhood park;
- **Speak out** – let everybody know, tell it, blog it, tweet it, write it;
- **Report it** – tell the Government Agency responsible and ask your local Member of Parliament to initiate and support an effective, long-term and integrated plan to control the spread of African Lovegrass in our region.

Around the bush block and farm:

- prevent establishment by being vigilant and control any small infestations;
- control boundaries of African Lovegrass infestations;
- keep desired ground cover greater than 70%;
- ensure herbicide spraying equipment is calibrated correctly;
- practice farm hygiene – clean vehicles and machinery of weed seeds before moving from infested paddocks to clean paddocks;
- avoid moving livestock from infested to clean areas on the property;
- undertake any supplementary feeding in a smaller ‘sacrifice’ paddock to minimise weed seed spread;
- stop seed set through strategic rotational grazing – plant sets seed October to May;
- act to influence all levels of government for an effective strategic plan for African Lovegrass.

Control requires an integrated approach to be effective.

SUPPORTED BY: THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT • SOUTHERN ACT CATCHMENT GROUP • UPPER MURRUMBIDGEE CATCHMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE • BUSH HERITAGE AUSTRALIA • ACT NRM COUNCIL • ACT REGIONAL LANDCARE FACILITATOR INITIATIVE

THE sun rises over the garret rooftops, the smell of fresh coffee and croissants wafts up to your balcony and you realise you have arrived – your dream destination is now a reality.

Making sure your romantic imaginings live up to expectations is your next Mt Everest. Last month, we discussed how best to avoid the ‘Fawlty Towers’ of accommodation, and next on the itinerary is how to explore a foreign setting and come home with your wits intact.

How do we get there?

It’s not too difficult to figure out that if you stay within cooee of Central Park, New York, or the world’s most expensive location, the West End in London, you can expect to pay more than if you stay in New Jersey. While it does put you right in the heart of the action and generally only a stone’s throw from many sightseeing hotspots, give some thought as to how you will feel after a sleepless week courtesy of your funky room perched atop Times Square.

Nichole Smith advises how to keep the budget and your dreams alive, while staying ‘en route’ and mingling with the natives in *Travel Tips Part 2*

Travelling smarter once you’ve arrived

Braving the ‘outer’ suburbs might seem way too adventurous but in most modern cities, public transport is not all graffiti-ridden, hell-on-wheels for the unsuspecting tourist. Overall public transport is clean, efficient, cheap and a great way to see ‘real’ people living their ‘real’ lives – especially places like Tokyo where while nary a conversation is heard, eyes are firmly glued to the screens of more mobile phones than can be found at Harvey Norman.

Driving on the opposite side of the road, down narrow, winding streets leading you anywhere but your destination, and costly or sometimes non-existent parking all mean the idea of car rental can be about as enticing as a trip to the dentist, but it can also be one of the

best ways to see more of the country you are visiting. On top of that, it offers the chance for that unexpected or exotic location when you decide against the extra \$20 for the GPS!

Car rentals, leases

When it comes to car rental, it is another of those times when the advice of a travel agent can be worth more than your ability to hunt down internet deals like a bloodhound. Rates will often vary more than the souvenirs and for the sake of your bank manager, be sure to confirm all costs prior to the arrival of your monthly credit card statement.

Some of those costs that might get lost in translation include additional insurances (come on, you’ve heard how Europeans drive!), the price you will pay when you don’t refuel the car (would have been cheaper to fly), and one-way fees if you are daring to inconvenience the company by leaving the car somewhere different to where you picked it up.

It is possible to inveigle better deals by joining the car companies’ membership programs and generally this doesn’t cost you more than the chance to have your details passed on to a dozen or so marketing firms – and it works equally well with hotel chains.

The other option is to lease and have no fear, you will not be committing to interest-free repayments for the term of your natural life. This European incentive (check out programs for new

French cars for example) is touted as a cost-effective way to hire cars for a longer period of time but in saying that, you really need to be looking at a month or longer for any real savings.

And then there is parking... and other considerations

Another consideration is to ensure your accommodation offers either on-site parking or confirms a secure facility nearby – and this does not mean within three stops on the subway. Again, be on the lookout for maximising your dollar – in Spain for example, you can go out during ‘siesta’ time. Nothing will be open but parking will be free.

Most importantly, take care to choose the most suitable vehicle for your purposes. Is it really an essential part of your adventure to channel Bogart and Bergman in *Casablanca*, hair streaming behind you as you head down the Champs Elysee in an open-top convertible or is something less inclined to encourage the local criminal element just as suitable?

Having said all that and having no doubt provoked just the right level of anxiety, hiring a car can offer the greatest freedom to see what you want at your convenience, and if travelling as a family or a group, can definitely be the most economical option for getting around.

Next issue we'll look at the potential pitfalls of looking like a tourist.

Hypnotic and mysterious landscape



Capturing the essence of our landscapes is the goal of the Countryscapes art competition, Australia's richest annual art prize for landscape painting.

The 2011 winner is Brunswick Heads artist, David Kas (left) with White Mountain. Competition judge and Sydney artist Ian Grant called the work hypnotic and "extraordinary in it's complexity".

Two highly commended works came from regional artists: Stephanie Sheppard of Cooma with Headwaters of the Snowy River and Kim Nelson of Yass with Flood on the Darling.

More than 3,600 artists entered this year's Essential Energy-sponsored competition. Finalists will be exhibited at the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery from 25 November 2011 to 15 January 2012.

SOUTH ELLENDON ST

Cont'd from p4

How to retain village character in the look and feel of new developments concerns neighbours and observers. On the subject of trees, which reflect much of the ‘feel’ of Bungendore, and whether they can be required as a development consent, Bascomb said the generous subdivided block sizes in the current development applications allow plenty of room for tree plantings.

He also noted that Council anticipates that no more than 50 percent of the larger blocks can be broken up because of formal restrictions on total block numbers in the village related to water supply. While currently-

lodged DAs could propose block sizes as small as 450m², the new LEP will restrict the size to 1,000m².

However, at the last LEP meeting Council staff advised that it *may* take as long as mid-next year before the new LEP goes on public exhibition, let alone is final. The LEP is now with NSW state agencies for comment, and the timing will depend on how fast they return.

Streetscapes are another other issue. Council has agreed to draft a discussion paper for the future development of south Bungendore and related road connections. Bascomb said some alternatives will be presented to the public in the new year.

PALERANG COUNCIL

NOMINATIONS

AUSTRALIA DAY 2012 AWARDS

Council is calling for nominations from throughout Palerang for community awards to be presented at celebrations in Bungendore, Captains Flat and Braidwood on Australia Day, Thursday, 26 January 2012.

The categories for the awards in each town and surrounding areas are:

1. Citizen of the Year
2. Young Citizen of the Year (under 25 years)
3. Community Event of the Year

Nominations, closing 5.00pm on **Friday 6 January 2012**, may be submitted by organisations, community groups or individuals.

Nomination forms are available from Council's offices in Bungendore (10 Majara Street) and Braidwood (144 Wallace Street) or by telephoning 1300 735 025 or (02) 6238 8111. They may also be downloaded from Council's website at **www.palerang.nsw.gov.au** under Community Services.

Completed nominations should be returned to Council in an envelope marked “Confidential – Australia Day 2012 Nomination”, Palerang Council, PO Box 348, Bungendore NSW 2621.

For further information, please contact Council's Community Services Officer, Mell Hayes, on (02) 6238 8111 during business hours.

WELCOME JOHN WRIGHT



PALERANG Council's General Manager Peter Bascomb announced the promotion in November of John Wright to the post of Director of Planning and Environmental Services.

Wright served as Palerang's Manager of Strategic Planning since the creation of the council in 2004 and prior to that was Manager of Planning Services at Yarrowlumla Council. Most recently he shepherded the complicated Palerang Local Environment Plan to its present situation of near completion (waiting for responses from NSW state agencies).

During his years in local government, Wright has won the respect and admiration of residents and colleagues alike, not least for his knowledge and willingness to take time to explain the workings of local government to non-planning professionals.

“John has over 15 years of local government planning experience as well as five years with the NSW Department of Planning,” Bascomb said. “This experience and his post-graduate qualifications in environmental science and planning make him well equipped to manage this challenging role.”

Priorities for the new Director include improving customer service, streamlining development assessment procedures and finalising the new Palerang Local Environmental Plan.

Scholarships available!

The Braidwood and Bendigo Bank Community Bank® Scholarship will support two local students with tertiary study-related costs.

Successful applicants who meet the criteria, will initially receive funding for one year and depending on academic performance, the scholarship may be renewed to assist the second year of study.

The Braidwood and Bungendore Community Bank® Scholarship is part of the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Scholarship Program, with about 40 Community Bank® branches and other partners taking part from across Australia.

Applications for 2012 will opened on 1 December and will be assessed in early 2012.

For further information please contact the Braidwood or Bungendore Community Bank® Branch or visit **www.bendigoadelaide.com.au/scholarships**

— * * * —

Palerang residents are encouraged to apply for one of the ten Veolia Mulwaree Trust scholarships being offered in 2012. The scholarships, valued at up to \$3,000 each, are available to students from any one of the seven Local Government Areas serviced by the Veolia Mulwaree Trust, which includes the Palerang Council.

Trust Chairman Paul Stephenson said the scholarships were established to provide financial support for students, but also to encourage professional relationships between students and employers from the region, to encourage graduates to bring their knowledge and experience back to the local area.

The University of Canberra will offer two \$3,000 Veolia Mulwaree trust scholarships. In addition, the University of Wollongong and Charles Sturt University will each be offering two \$3,000 scholarships and TAFE-Illawarra will award four scholarships valued at \$1,500 each.

Money received can be used for any purpose including travel, educational resources or course fees. Scholarship selection will be by the educational institutions and prospective applicants should contact their education provider for application forms.

Further information about the Veolia Mulwaree Trust Scholarship Program is available on the Trust's website **www.mulwareetrust.org.au** or directly through the relevant University/ TAFE.



Four years on, counting our blessings

THE *BULLETIN* is finishing its fourth year, 41 issues of publication as an independent, locally-owned paper. In the current media environment, that is something we can be proud of. We have increased our circulation and coverage from Palerang to include Queanbeyan and have established a distinctive regional voice as a community paper like no other (and that includes in Canberra if we went there!).

The *Bulletin* couldn't do it without our outstanding contributors and advertising partners and the core staff and I are ever grateful for that support and the support of our readers –

who do say nice things! (More, more!)

We're doing what we set out to do: be a showcase and a voice for the many positive and interesting people and doings in our region. We are also expanding our coverage to more regional arts and entertainment. Our support has been there from the start for our regional theatre 'The Q' in Queanbeyan which has resoundingly found its audience and voice in the same four years.

On the serious side, the *Bulletin* brings you accurate monthly Council updates and analyses. We also talk about state and federal issues that affect our lives – like jobs and the natural

environment. Too often these things get lost in the political bunfights and economic belief systems that pass as the daily news.

You might have noticed a couple of interlocking themes in this issue. Coming up to the annual Christmas celebrations we wanted to celebrate some true spirit of the season – kindness and goodwill.

As community spirit, this is evident in the inspiring tale of how HOME for people with mental illness was established in Queanbeyan (p3) and the great effort by the residents of Bungendore and surrounds to build a facility for sporting groups and visitors at the Mick Sherd Oval (p4). We see it in the community grants and projects of Bendigo Bank and Veolia Mulwaree Trust.

The true spirit of the season is also there when we extend kindness and respect to our non-human brethren, our pets, livestock and the wildlife we are fortunate to live amongst. On some fronts we still have a fair way to go – whether it is unwanted pets (p14) or our societal treatment of livestock — see story on p16 about the latest abattoir scandal.

Those of us in rural residential areas or on the outskirts of Queanbeyan can count ourselves particularly blessed – we live with so much native wildlife that foreign visitors are always astounded. The animals have often taken shelter amongst us from land clearing, house-building, guns and prejudice. Lest we take our wildlife for granted or say there are 'too many' of this or that animal, take a wide-eyed trip to other parts of Australia.

Drive to Melbourne through the lush grass and pasture lands of Victoria. You'll be hard-pressed to spy a marsupial amongst the sheep and cattle, even off the main highways. This is also true around our local farmlands.

Drive out to western NSW and the inland rivers. While emu numbers have made a lovely comeback, the place is also overrun by goats, which the western cockies cultivate as a source of income (sold to the Muslim meat market). One hundred goats for every kangaroo you might spy, day or night. Is this the way of the future?

So let's count our blessings, be kind to our extended community and have a great holiday break.

— Maria Taylor

Editor's note: the Bulletin has abbreviated the following correspondence for length but we did our best to retain the gist of the arguments.



SOURCE: CORTONA RESOURCES

Dear Editor ...

Dargues Reef mine activities defended

IN REFERENCE to your article 'Frog, turtle kill raises alarm' in the November *Bulletin* I really feel that Cortona's project at Dargues Reef has been misrepresented.

I have been watching the process of developing a mine at Majors Creek closely. As we are adjoining neighbours with Cortona owning land on three sides of us I have been watching very closely!

I feel that there is a lot of misinformation and manipulating of facts. If you have read the proposal you would have to wonder where the claim of heavy metals comes from. I am told that there is a certain amount of heavy metals occurring naturally in the rock but as Cortona has no intention of processing the gold in Majors Creek where would the toxic chemicals and extra heavy metals suddenly appear from?

Majors Creek being described as "headwaters" of the Moruya River and a source

of drinking water is misleading.

Majors Creek is just that, a small creek, it rises just above the village and meanders down to the escarpment probably a distance of some three kilometres where it drops over into the Araluen Valley.

After Majors Creek flows into the Araluen valley it passes a series of commercial orchards. These orchards use pesticides, herbicides and anti-fungal chemicals. These chemicals must be having an effect on the life in the creek. This then has to have a flow-on affect with the birds and small mammals. The orchards (also) draw a lot of water, in fact I often wonder why their impact has not been studied by Coastwatchers and the South East Regional Conservation Alliance?

Upstream of the orchards you can find frogs and lots of other stream life. The water quality looks good. The stretch of the creek at Majors Creek is pretty good as well.

The mention of the Powerful Owl and the Spotted Quoll as being endangered by the proposed mine is fanciful. Powerful Owls are huge birds they inhabit dense forest and are known to prey on small mammals and possums. The Spotted Quoll is very shy and hard to see,

we have them near us and can hear them calling at night. Again they prey on small mammals and large insects affected by the commercial orchards spraying.

— Chris James, Majors Creek

Cortona rejects herbicide as suspect

CORTONA Resources rejects implications made by Jackie French and Araluen producers in the November issue of the *District Bulletin* and *Bay Post*. The claims and implications are totally unfounded.

The photograph published in the *Bulletin* article was actually of noxious weeds broom and blackberry. The weeds had been eradicated in January 2011 as part of Cortona's weed management plan approved by Palerang Council. The suggestion this weed removal program had negative impacts downstream contradict all of our environmental monitoring and reports.

We have maintained a perfect environmental record in more than four years exploring at Dargues Reef. The project has been subject to more than 21 months of scrutiny by the government and qualified professionals. Between us we have designed a mine that will be a model for environmental excellence that will not impact on the region's waterways, environment or threatened species.

Cortona is acting to help preserve wild and endangered species in the region by planting native species and removing noxious weeds. The misinformation campaign conducted by a few detractors of the project serves only to slow down a project that will deliver a broad range of benefits to the community. We are 100 percent confident in all of the scientific reports and findings delivered in the approvals process.

— Mitchell Fox, Professional Public Relations (PPR) on behalf of Peter van der Borgh, Managing Director of Cortona Resources

Jackie French responds:

WHEN something as major as the die off in Major's Creek happens it is reasonable to expect that there'll be some government inspection. It would also have been reasonable

to expect that Cortona could have given us some reassurance if they had been asked to investigate the cause of the die-off, and also asked us for more information about its extent and when it began. Pollution events affect us all, and surely we should be working together to try to find the cause and stop it happening again.

The creek species were totally absent from Major's Creek on 16 August. They may have been absent for some time before that, as I'd not had reason to inspect the deep water holes in the Major's Creek gorge area for several months over winter. By mid September many species were again present, although not in the numbers seen before. By late September the species appeared to have recovered.

I have never stated that the species devastation was caused by Cortona's activities, and have at all times made it clear that as there is public access to the point directly downstream of the Dargues Reef site, there are many possible scenarios for what may have caused the die-off.

The departments concerned have breached their duty of care in not testing the water on our property, and directly upstream upstream of our property, when something as extreme occurred.

Surely Cortona, too, would welcome a more rigorous independent inspection process by the various government authorities. We need to work together on issues like this.

— Jackie French, Araluen

Water the main issue, as coastal council goes to court

The Eurobodalla Shire Council and two environmental groups, Coastwatchers and the South East Forest Alliance, are appealing in the Land and Environment Court against the NSW Planning and Assessment Commission's green light of the proposed Dargues Reef gold mine.

A hearing is scheduled for the beginning of February. With gold prices at record levels, the mining company hopes to earn multi-millions annually from the project and promises to create up to 100 jobs for five or six years.

The appeal has put a temporary halt to the project, causing job uncertainty for people engaged by Cortona during the past two years doing tree-planting and other preparatory work. Six workers have been laid off pending the February appeal process, four from Braidwood and two from outside the area.

Eurobodalla Council, whose water supply is potentially affected (100,000 people at peak times), wrote in its submission regarding Cortona's environmental assessment (EA) process in October 2010:

"The proposed gold mine site is located within the Araluen catchment, at the head waters of the Deua River which in turn supplies 75% of the Eurobodalla Shire potable water supply. The EA, prepared by RW Corkery Pty Limited on behalf of Big Island Mining Pty Ltd in support of the Dargues Reef Gold Project, failed to identify Eurobodalla Shire Council as a stakeholder nor any potential impacts on its water supply.

"This is seen as a significant shortcoming of the EA and brings into question the adequacy of the Risk Assessment contained in the EA as well as the classification of the consequence category of dam failure which should have been considered in relation to the Tailings Dam (DSC 20 IO).

"The potential contaminants of concern (to Eurobodalla's water supply) were: pathogens, metals, hydrocarbons, turbidity, potassium amyl xanthate, IF6500, MF351".

The Council's submission goes on to say that during the construction phase the main risk would be human waste through a sewerage spill.

THE FEED SHED BUNGENDORE

- ★ LUCERNE, PASTURE & CEREAL HAY
- ★ LARGE RANGE OF HORSE FEEDS
- ★ PET FOOD, FISH FOOD & BIRDSEED
- ★ GOOD RANGE OF POULTRY GRAINS & PELLETS
- ★ FEEDERS, WATERERS, RODENT TRAPS & POISONS
- ★ ANIMAL HEALTH PRODUCTS & SUPPLEMENTS
- ★ STRAW & SAWDUST
- ★ ORGANIC PRODUCTS & ANIMAL HERBS
- ★ STEEL CATTLE & HORSE YARDS
- ★ HORSE FLOAT HIRE

OPEN 7 DAYS – 6238 0900

32 KING ST BUNGENDORE, FAX 6238 0902

What's On – December

Send your announcements to whatson@districtbulletin.com.au

During December... until Thursday 8

Mulwaree High Sculpture Exhibition

Council Foyer. Showcase of works produced by students of the Mulwaree Sculpture Project. All works are for sale and range from large kinetic works to small, sterling silver spoons.

until Saturday 17

Life Energy Photography: The Healing Art of John Diamond, MD

'The Q' welcomes back Dr Diamond for his second exhibition. This time the Dr will be filling the exhibition space with his Life Energy Photography, make sure to you come and experience this artist's unique way of seeing. For more see www.theq.net.au.

until Monday 23 January 2012

Michael Retter and Scott Mitchell

Bungendore Wood Works, Bungendore. Fine-art marquetry from an Australian master, and marquetry applied to furniture in collaboration with designer maker Scott Mitchell. For more see www.bungendorewoodworks.com.au.

Dec, Jan and Feb exhibition

Bungendore Fine Art

42 Ellendon St. Bungendore Fine Art presents the work of five new exciting artists: Jacqui King, Vivi Palegeorge, Emma Rooke, Mary Sowa and Lesley Wallington, together with one very popular returning favourite – Margaret Turner – through the holidays. For more see www.bungendorefineart.com.au.

Thursday 8 and Friday 9

A Christmas Carol – Gungahlin Dance Academy

'The Q', Crawford St, Queanbeyan. Gungahlin Dance Academy presents the Charles Dickens masterpiece. Ph 6285 6290 or see www.theq.net.au.

Friday 9

Closing the food loop

'The Q', Crawford St, Queanbeyan, 10am–3.30pm. Local food production, food chains and independent retail selling, smart buying and preparation, and composting food scraps for good soil health for good food production – and so the loop goes around! Enjoy lunch from food grown locally and cooked by a specialty chef. Limited tickets available, \$35pp. For further information contact Geoff Pryor, SEROC Resource Recovery Network Coordinator, on 6285 6272 or geoffrey.pryor@qcc.nsw.gov.au.

Saturday 10

Carwoola Community Association's Christmas Get-together BBQ

Stoney Creek Community Hall, Carwoola, 5–7.30pm. Contact Christine or Lynton Bond on 6238 2368.

Captains Flat Carols in the Park

Wilkins Memorial Park, Foxlow St, Captains Flat, 6.30pm. If wet, the carols will be held in the Captains Flat Community Hall. Contact Anita on 0423 203 041 or S355@captainsflat.org.

– GIG GUIDE: December –

Friday 9

Chemistry, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Bowling Club.

The Playmates, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Kangaroos Club.

The Jukes, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Tigers Club.

Saturday 10

Swizz, 7–11pm, Hotel Queanbeyan.

Friday 16

LAKE GEORGE IS BACK... (band TBA), 7.30pm, Lake George Hotel, Gibraltar St, Bungendore.

Touche, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Kangaroos Club.

Hit & Run, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Tigers Club.

Saturday 17

Kateroeke, 7.30pm, Lake George Hotel, Gibraltar St, Bungendore.

Sunday 18

Shed Sessions Christmas, The Artist's Shed, Forster St, Queanbeyan.

Friday 23

The Jukes, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Bowling Club.

Authorised Bootleg, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Tigers Club.

Saturday 31

Rob Wilson, The Loaded Dog, Tarago.

DJ – Beach Theme Night, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Tigers Club.

To our readers, contributors and advertising partners

We wish you all the very best for the festive season and into the New Year

THE *Bulletin* WILL BE TAKING A BREAK

UNTIL THE FEBRUARY 2012 ISSUE

[Deadline 25 January 2012]

www.districtbulletin.com.au

One2Step Dance Academy End of Year Production

'The Q', Crawford St, Queanbeyan, 2.30pm and 6.30pm. The Bungendore Dance Academy is again putting on its annual Christmas Concert to showcase what the students have learned throughout the year. The concert involves a variety of styles, jazz, ballet, tap, hip hop, zumbaticim, contemporary and modern. Ph 6285 6290 or see www.theq.net.au.

Windellama Landcare AGM & Christmas Party

Windellama Hall Grounds, 10am.

Windellama Historical Society Excursion

Windellama Museum, 9.30am. View what remains of St Colmin's Catholic Church sit-uated on part of 'Lawson'. Cost is \$7pp including morning tea. For more contact Joanna on 4844 5125 or email rg Hockey@bigpond.com.

Curtisglass Studio Sale

Uriarra Rd, Queanbeyan, 10am–3pm. Harriet and

Matthew Curtis are having their annual glass sale and open studio. Pick up some amazing original pieces perfect for Christmas.

Sunday 11

Tarago Sporting Association Community Christmas Party

Tarago Park, 4pm. BBQ food and soft drinks are provided and please bring a salad or sweet to share. Bring your gold coins for the traditional ham and turkey raffles. For more information contact Gillian Shepherd on 4849 4221 or mobile 0419 639 254 or email gillshpherd@optusnet.com.au.

National Capital Orchestra

'The Q', Crawford St, Queanbeyan, 3pm. The final concert for 2011. The orchestra will be joined by Rachael Duncan in presenting some fine examples of the vocal repertoire by Richard Strauss. Ph 6285 6290 or see www.theq.net.au.

Friday 16

Wamboin Community Christmas Carols

Wamboin Community Hall, 7pm. Expect an appearance by the jolly gentleman in red and enjoy a sausage sizzle. All welcome with proceeds to the Salvation Army.

Saturday 17 and Sunday 18

Eden Dance Academy Concert

'The Q', Crawford St, Queanbeyan, Sat 17 6pm, Sun 18 1pm & 6pm. Fans of dance will be treated to a visually stimulating showcase of jazz, tap, hip hop, contemporary, modern and classical ballet. The students of Eden Dance Academy are excited to present their 2011 concert. Ph 6285 6290 or see www.theq.net.au.

Politarchopolis Fields of Gold Tournament

Bungendore Showground, Sat 10am–4pm, Sun 10am–12 noon. Step back into the Middle Ages at the Politarchopolis Fields of Gold tournament. Cheer on your favorite fighter or rider and view medieval arts and sciences. Cost is \$5pp, \$15 per family. For more information see <http://lochac.sca.org/politarchopolis/>.

Saturday 24

Carols at St Barts

St Bartholemew Church, Windellama, 8pm.

– Plan ahead for January –

1 January

Windellama Annual Cricket Challenge

19 January to 28 January

Blood Brothers – The Musical

'The Q', Crawford St, Queanbeyan. Back by popular demand. Willy Russell's classic musical *Blood Brothers* is set in Liverpool and is a story of twin brothers separated at birth who reunite and become friends in

EVERY MONTH:

Every Saturday

Capital Region Farmers Market

EPIC grounds, Mitchell, 8–11am. A genuine farmers market offering a diverse range of fresh seasonal food straight from the producer to the consumer and an opportunity to discuss with growers. www.capitalregionfarmersmarket.com.au

1st Saturday of every month

The Captains Flat Country Markets

Community Hall, Foxlow St, Captains Flat, 10–2pm. Bric-a-brac, trash and treasure and local produce. Call 6236 6094 or email www.captainsflat.org

2nd Sunday of the month (except Jan)

Queanbeyan Cottage Markets

Queanbeyan River, on the corner of Morrisett and Collett Streets, 9–2pm. Craft, timber products, pottery, leatherwork, jewellery, toys, honey, jams, chutney, cakes, plants, food and refreshments. Call Kristen 6299 0219.

3rd Saturday of every month (except July/Aug)

Wamboin Produce Market

Wamboin Community Hall, Bingley Way, Wamboin, 9–12 noon. Fresh produce including cheese, eggs, honey, vegetables, nuts, seeds and plants.

3rd Sunday every month

Bungendore Markets

War Memorial Hall, Molonglo St, Bungendore, 9–2pm. Crafts, trash and treasure and general stalls.

Windy Hall Country Markets

Windellama Hall, 10–2pm, craft goods, Devonshire tea, deli delights and more. For more contact Bob Shaw on 4844 5001.

4th Saturday of every month

Braidwood Markets

Ryrie Park, Wallace St, Braidwood, 8am. Local crafts and cooking, plant and natural products. Call Geraldine 4847 5061.

More on regional and local events and local tourist attractions:

www.bungendore.com.au

www.visitqueanbeyan.com.au

www.visitbraidwood.com.au

their childhood, unaware they are related or of the consequences their relationship will bring. Regarded as one of the all time great British musicals, *Blood Brothers* has been playing on the West End for over 20 years.

26 January

Australia Day in the Park

Queanbeyan Park, 10am–4pm, come celebrate the day with a family fun day out.

30 January

Start of school Term One



**1st & 3rd Fridays
5-8pm**

The Sunset Markets offer enticing food stalls, live music and entertainment, a great range of markets stalls selling products by our local artists and crafts people, gourmet foods, collectables and much more!

Starting 7 October

**In the courtyard at 253 Crawford Street
adjacent to the Queanbeyan Library**



For more information contact:

Ros Hales 6285 6170

or ros.hales@qcc.nsw.gov.au



**The focus is on
high quality local handmade arts
and crafts, local produce and food suppliers as
well as local entertainment to enjoy as the sun goes down.**