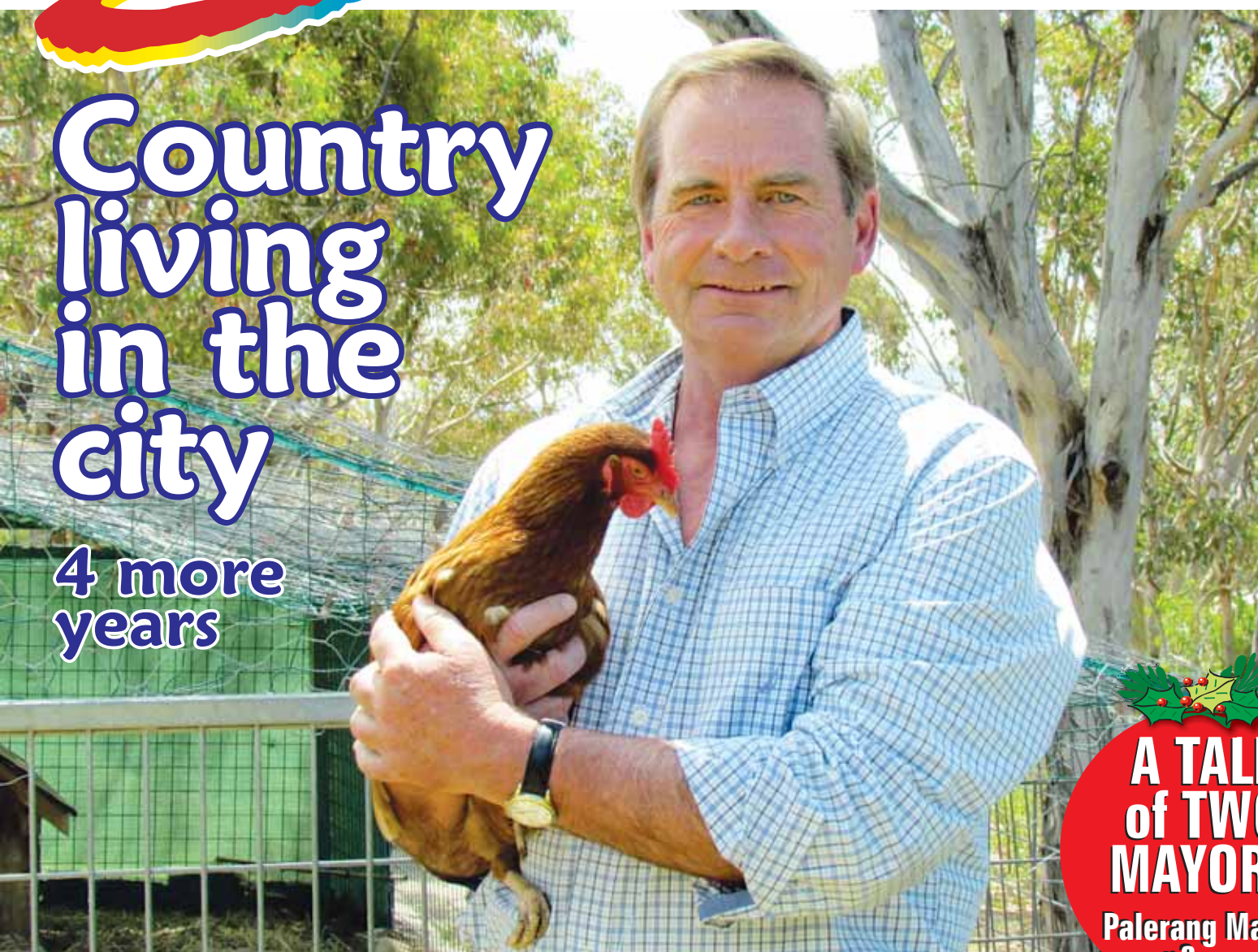


Bulletin

COUNTRY LIVING in Queanbeyan, Bungendore and Palerang

Country living in the city

4 more years



Tim Overall handily won re-election as Mayor of Queanbeyan and his ticket scooped four of the other nine Councillor positions.

So who is the man heading the Queanbeyan agenda for the next four years? What drives him and what is his background? Maria Taylor sat down with the Queanbeyan Mayor to find out.

THE KEY to Tim Overall in public life is both his early experience as the son of National Capital Development Commission head and architect Sir John Overall (appointed by Menzies in 1958) and his own fascinating career in corporate administration.

His dad did much to build Canberra as we know it, growing from a town of 30,000 in the late 1950s, "We grew up in a family that was all about urban planning". Tim Overall therefore also knew Queanbeyan from an early age.

Queanbeyan in the 1950s and 1960s was actually the commercial centre of the region,

the place "where you came to buy things" and also the industrial and tradies centre. He recalls his past in a relaxed interview punctuated by some humour at his own expense.

"So there I was, unemployed again!" he exclaims more than once, describing the highs and lows, takeovers and mergers that marked an international corporate career from the mid 1970s through the 1980s.

This was followed by a stint as the chief executive of the Ambulance Service of NSW in the early 1990s which he loved. Fate intervened there as well, when he became one of many department head casualties as the political party in power changed and made its own appointments. Then came a return to Canberra as the executive director of the Australian Red Cross, and then to local politics.

A heady era: corporate life in the 1980s

Overall studied economics at the ANU, then was conscripted for military service with officer training in the Vietnam war period of

the late 1960s. In the end he opted for a business career rather than the military, which he says, would have been choosing "the rest of your life" at an early age.

The rest of his life turned out to be much more varied. Hired by CSR at a university recruiting stand where you simply filled out a form, he started with a clipboard counting sugar shipments at Darling Harbour.

Soon he was called up for national service. It was the Cold War era and at the end of his service he found himself recruited by ASIO. What did he do? Something in intelligence and counter-terrorism, counter espionage. "It was interesting," he smiles.

Thereafter, he entered the corporate and marketing world starting with developer Mainline, a major Australian construction company that built the Lakeside Hotel in Canberra but went broke nine months after he joined in 1974. The credit squeeze of the mid 1970s with short-term interest rates at 24 percent was blamed.

Overall was out of a job with two mortgages to support, but soon landed on his

It's moved!

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A TALE of TWO MAYORS

Palerang Mayor p3

feet at Dillingham Corporation, a Hawaiian-based conglomerate that did everything from construction of a township on the Gove Peninsula to shipping, forestry, mining – you name it they did it all around the Pacific.

He moved rapidly into executive ranks at Dillingham, developing strategic plans. He was seconded to the Boston Consulting Group "complete with a Chevy car and the big office in Honolulu and not so big one in Boston" that offset the steep learning curve he was undergoing.

But Dillingham became the target of corporate raiders who stripped and sold off assets and restructured the rest, leaving Overall once again at loose ends. That's when he joined McIlwraith Group as a general manager for the shipping and coal mining operations.

Epiphany in Singapore, then on to community service

He was sent to Singapore to seek out opportunities when McIlwraith acquired the Singapore Shipping Corporation. Cont'd p17

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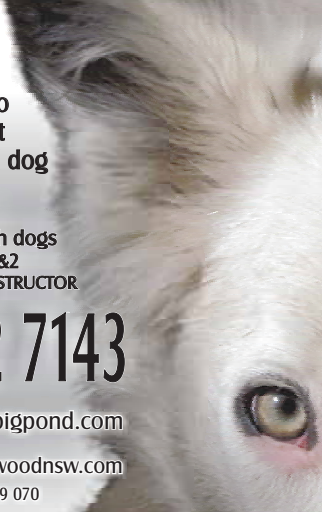
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Deadline for contributions and advertising booking
For February issue – 25 January 2013

Website: www.districtbulletin.com.au

In addition to mailbox delivery, this free monthly publication is available from:

Braidwood: various cafes. **Bungendore:** Bungendore Newsagency, Feedshed, Foodlovers.
Palerang Council Chambers: Bungendore and Braidwood. **Queanbeyan:** Queanbeyan Library foyer;
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Published monthly by: The Bungendore Bulletin Pty Ltd ISSN 1035-1299

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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 2013 ISSUE
[Deadline 25 January 2013]

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New Palerang Mayor: a different stellar career and today's approach to policy

NEWLY-ELECTED Palerang Mayor Pete Harrison was probably the only recent councillor who sat through several years of council meetings before winning a seat, in his case at the May 2011 by-election.

This is typical of his approach to the council and its role in the community: understand both the process and where everyone is coming from to make better policy.

To Harrison, a retired corporate IT services executive, a local council is not so different from other professional service providers. The job of the councillors and mayor is to listen to the 'clients' and solve their problems. Before you can solve the problems you have to understand what people, in this case segments of the Palerang community, really need.

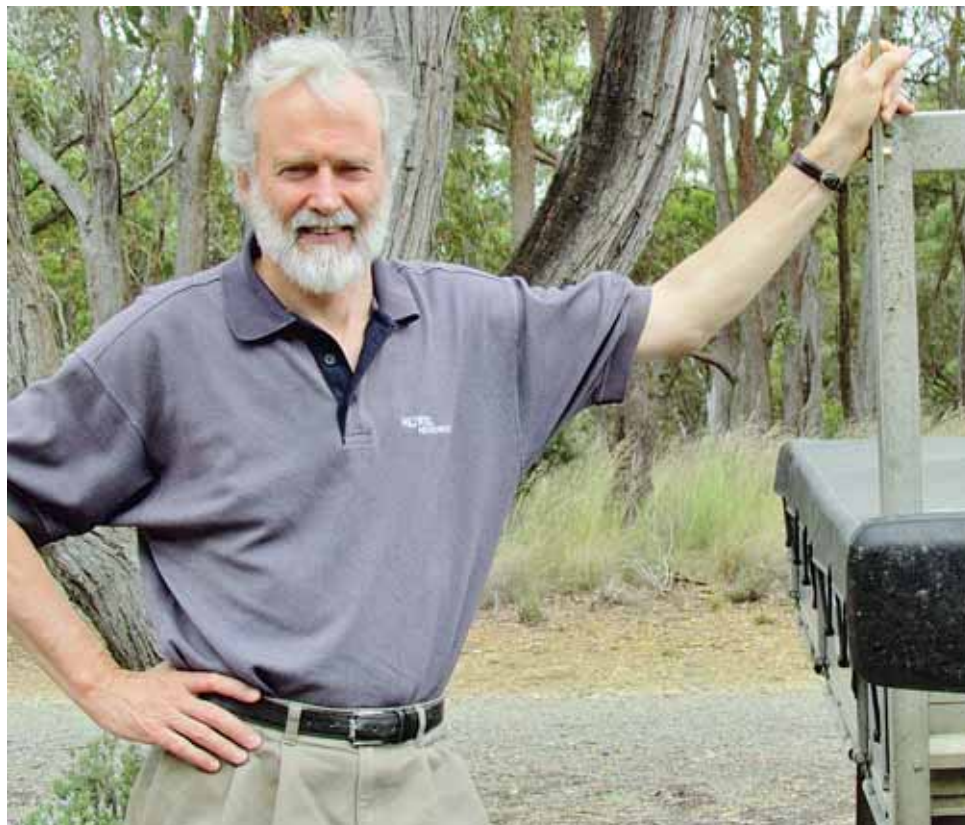
"It's been a difficult journey for Palerang to date. People don't think their problems are heard, let alone addressed," he said. "In my first couple of months as mayor, I'm getting a handle on what resources council has to address these things. My priority is to see how policy can be set to deliver the outcomes that people need to make our communities thrive."

Palerang a rural shire with a big difference

That's going to remain hard. Palerang is not your standard rural shire, even though some planners and former councillors might have wished to approach it this way. As Harrison likes to point out, Palerang has the largest rural residential sector of any shire in NSW, which is also its largest block of voters.

Palerang's proximity to the ACT and its job markets also makes it quite different from the traditional rural model where the agricultural sector supports an urban centre and vice versa. In Palerang, the rural residential, village and farming sectors often have quite different aspirations or problems with such issues as growth and subdivision, water resources, waste management, road maintenance or conservation of heritage and natural features.

That challenge plagued the often bitterly divided last council as it grappled with baseline planning policies in the Local



Environment Plan and the vision of what residents want and how they see themselves in the Community Strategic Plan.

Harrison notes that the council still does not have a coherent social policy that would address other needs – special needs of children and the aged, public transport, more facilities for recreation etc. "It's now time to look at internal efficiencies to free up more resources for those things."

Plans for aged care and ambulance

Two social priorities have already emerged from the new council starting blocks. These are the quest for an aged-care facility and the quest for an ambulance service out of Bungendore.

Aged care is now progressing under a Bendigo Bank-led planning committee, merged with one that the former council set up in its last months. Former councillors Anne Goonan and Judith Turley are on this committee.

How can the current council contribute to the effort? Harrison thinks it could be via

making land available or with finding funds, using its borrowing powers or its power to leverage grant money from other levels of government.

"We are also trying to attract an ambulance service to the district," he said. This has so far proven a delicate negotiation, hampered by a lack of interest from the NSW Ambulance Service. But with an election year coming up, Harrison thinks it may be possible to find federal money for a joint emergency services facility for fire and rescue services. These in turn may consider taking a 'first responder' role with ambulance training.

Community service and assisting at birth of the electronic revolution

Pete Harrison comes from an Albury family with a strong tradition of community service, he tells the *Bulletin*. His grandfather and father ran a hardware store there and his grandfather was one of the earliest members of Rotary in the district.

After completing his PhD studying

chemistry at the ANU he joined the computer revolution in the early 1980s as a systems engineer ("anyone involved in computers in the '70s and '80 was called an engineer, it took a one semester unit"). He worked for Control Data Australia setting up scientific mainframe computers to suit the needs of research operations.

Control Data was at the time the largest computer services organisation in Australia. Clients included the federal department of environment as it set up the Australian Inventory of Chemical Substances (AICS), the Australian Tax Office and the CSIRO.

By the time the Internet went mainstream in the late 1980s, Harrison was working with universities to help establish their data communications infrastructure and travelled regularly to the United States to source new products and technologies.

When the internet exploded, Boston startup router manufacturer Wellfleet Communications offered him a job. As a senior technical manager his job was still to interpret the needs and problems of clients.

Wellfleet was eventually acquired by Nortel Networks, a company with 80,000 employees globally, and Harrison ran an Asia Pacific division of their Global Professional Services organisation.

In classic US startup fashion, Harrison's Wellfleet stock options rode the financial roller coaster until coming to rest with the bursting of the dot com bubble in 2001. He was nonetheless able to retire early with his family in Wamboin.

Nowadays he and his wife Barb live a typical rural residential lifestyle (other than their preference for goats as lawn mowers) and he has thrown himself into community work, notably with his local Scout Group and the Wamboin Community Association where he was president before going on Palerang Council.

The next four years promise to be a new experience for most Palerang voters as Pete Harrison and a majority of new councillors wield the 'new broom' on policy and ideas for the community. ■

Opportunity to comment

NSW proposes radical change, job losses for rural production and catchments

OVER the years, many people in our region have come into contact with Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) or Livestock Health and Pest Authorities (LHPAs). The NSW

designed to develop catchment action plans and deliver natural resource management programs at a local level. LHPAs as their name suggests provide assistance to

that our LLS would have a boundary running from Bombala in the south up to Bathurst. That's an area that covers five catchments, the Snowy River, Murrumbidgee, Shoalhaven, Macquarie and the Sydney catchment.

Catchment management will lose

It's impossible to see how a body covering those areas is going to produce a 'catchment action plan' for its area and I fear that the cut of 110 existing CMA staff is effectively signalling the end of coordinated environmental or natural resource management activity across our catchments.

We will certainly be seeing the loss of staff who work with land-care groups, other community-based bodies and landholders on

projects like willow removal, tree planting, native grass programs and even fencing our riparian corridors.

Claims of better service for farmers are also dubious at best. Currently farmers have the services of rangers and vets from the LHPAs and extension officers including district agronomists and specialists

in livestock or particular crops from DPI. They will all be rolled into the LLS to be governed by a local board with funding models yet to be determined.

Extension once again on chopping block

There are some 30 fewer extension positions being offered with

Continued next page

NSW Capital Watch



with
Steve
Whan

landholders with managing livestock health and pest programs (*foxes, wild dogs, rabbits etc*).

Even though both organisations deal with landholders they have very different objectives and it is a concern that this government's focus on cost cutting will see both objectives fail.

The first place we should look for the government's intentions are the draft boundaries of the new LLS. In our region the proposal is

CSIRO TOLD TO CLEAN UP ITS ACT

THE CSIRO administration, which has been slow to react to numerous complaints of staff bullying while protecting executive staff who are accused of harassment, earlier this month was ordered by the federal workplace safety authority Comcare to remedy this situation.

The *Bulletin* wrote about the evidence of outspoken staff being bullied and senior scientists terminated despite excellent research results, published by former CSIRO staff on the website victimsofcsiro.com. Charges extend to undue workplace conflict, psychological stress and summary and unfair dismissal.

A group of former employees hired a law firm in 2012 and asked for a Comcare investigation, according to the website.

Following a months-long review, Comcare has now handed a stern list of remedial procedures to the CSIRO administration which told the Canberra media it would comply.

Stalled in traffic: NSW lip service to regional concerns

PALERANG and Queanbeyan officials were amazed at a recent unveiling of the NSW department of transports' regional master plan.

Palerang Mayor Pete Harrison said the document is very Sydney-centric and barely mentions regional concerns, whether the inadequacy of bridgework on the coast for current populations, or the road and traffic needs of Queanbeyan and Palerang – all dealing with the infrastructure costs of

rising numbers of households and cars, and a lack of public transportation alternatives.

Perhaps most amazing to the local attendees at a workshop with Transport for NSW in Moruya was the document's ignoring the 'elephant' in the middle of the regional picture, the ACT and its impacts on its neighbours. The document also does not line up with any of the specific priority projects identified by local councils.

Queanbeyan Council's Group Manager

OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

Cont'd from p3

the new bodies than currently exist within DPI. The second problem is that by moving DPI staff into a locally run body we will separate them from the researchers and biosecurity staff (also being cut) operating within DPI. That removes a couple of the key reasons for the success of NSW Agriculture – research with direct on-the-ground application and trials and a workforce that can work across boundaries on research projects or, critically, assist in responding to a disease or pest outbreak or natural disaster.

I'm not saying there should never be any change in the current models; however, in my view there is a better synergy between LHPAs and local government (who look after weed control) than in the model the minister is putting forward.

Rural residential not immune

Rural residential land holders in our area should look at the fact that under the new

model the minister proposes to let the LLS decide how it will raise rates and she has not ruled out landholders with less than 10 hectares receiving a new bill.

All up these changes in Primary Industries have already seen 300 jobs cut, all those jobs are located in regional communities, every one of the 300 jobs lost will mean the loss of an income in a country community potentially flowing on to kids out of the local school and less money in local businesses.

Have your say now

In the midst of debate on massive cuts to education and community services it might not be top of everyone's minds to comment on new structures in Primary Industries, but I do think this has real potential impact on our region and I would urge readers to comment on the proposals (visit haveyour.say.nsw.gov.au/locallandservices or dpi.nsw.gov.au).



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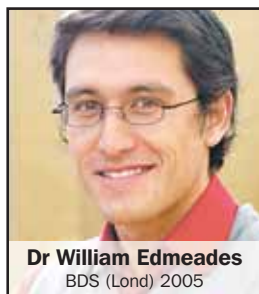
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City Infrastructure Phil Hansen pointed this out to the assembled officials. He told the *Bulletin*: "Queanbeyan City Council's view is that it does not seem to be a very strategic document at all."

"There is little/no reference to any of the hundreds of representations/priority projects/critical safety issues or transport plans that have been provided to the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS*) over many years by the constituent councils."

He said the document demonstrates little understanding of the actual problems faced in regional areas. "In Queanbeyan's case, the only mention is to 'work with Queanbeyan City Council to develop a comprehensive traffic plan'. This work has already been done by QCC with the full knowledge of RMS. Council is now ready

to implement their plan, not develop another one.

"There is a total failure by the plan to recognise the significant impact the ACT and the Canberra airport will have on the NSW road network in the southern region."

Palerang Mayor Harrison added that the impost of ACT traffic on major trunk roads through Palerang has a significant financial impact on the council's maintenance budget, but has been ignored in this document along with the ACT's population impact on the whole south-east region.

He said Palerang's highest maintenance costs were for the four state trunk roads linking the ACT and the local government area; roads that are in desperate need of long-term repair. ■

*RMS, combining the former Roads and Traffic Authority and NSW Maritime

Palerang Council News



Palerang Local Environmental Plan

Following some minor amendments by the new council, the draft Palerang Local Environmental Plan (PLEP) received certification for public exhibition and was released for public comment on 5 December.

Council will be conducting public meetings in Bungendore (10 Dec), Burra (11 Dec), Captains Flat (13 Dec), Araluen (16 Dec), Braidwood (16 Dec) and Wamboin (17 Dec) to brief residents on the new planning instrument (check Palerang Council's website for details). The exhibition period is being extended to compensate for the Christmas/New Year break, and will run until Friday 8 March. Following a review of public submissions, council will make any necessary amendments prior to final submission of the plan for adoption.

This is the first major revision of planning regulations in some parts of Palerang in over 20 years. It will replace the six individual LEPs currently in use in various parts of the shire and, for the first time since Palerang was formed, bring planning across the whole shire under the control of a uniform planning instrument.

Captains Flat Flood Study

Work is progressing on the Captains Flat Flood Study. Council's consultants have completed the terrain and catchment elements of the model, and calibrated these with existing rainfall records. The flood model will be completed in the coming months and will then move into the calibration phase.

Early in the New Year, council will conduct a second round of community consultation to seek feedback on the validity of the initial flood model. The community will have the opportunity to see the degree of flooding predicted and offer their views on how accurately this reflects their experience. This will be an important part of calibrating the model, so that it can be used to predict the results of different rainfall patterns and the impact of floods of various degrees.

The consultation meeting will be held in Captains Flat in early March, with details provided closer to the date. First-hand knowledge of any flood events in the area will be of particular value during this process.

There is also a casual vacancy for a third community representative on the Captains Flat Floodplain Management Committee. Anyone interested in participating should contact one of the current community members, John Cameron or Gennene Hopkins, one of your local councillors, Trevor Hicks or Peter Marshall, or one of the council staff members, Bill Ellison or Brendan Belcher (contact details available from the council office or website) for information about the

committee's function and details on how to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) in the position. An EOI should be submitted by mid January to enable appointment before the next committee meeting in March.

Council office solar array



The new photovoltaic array on the roof of the council offices in Bungendore was officially commissioned in conjunction with the recent Renewable Energy Day event in Bungendore. The installation was approved by council earlier this year after analysis of the initial proposal for an 18kW system indicated that it would fund itself through savings in grid power consumption in around seven years. By the time the contract was awarded, panel prices had plummeted to the point where the system capacity could be almost doubled, and include a new solar hot water system, for well under the forecast cost.

Comprising 126 individual panels, fitted to the north-facing roof sections of the office building, the new solar array is rated at 31.5kW. Operating at capacity, the system, costing \$62,500, could save council in excess of \$14,000 per year and pay for itself in less than five years. Council is investigating a range of initiatives to further reduce its energy costs.

Holiday office hours

Council administration offices in Braidwood and Bungendore will be closed over the holiday period from 3.00pm on Monday, 24 December 2012, to re-open 8.30am on Wednesday, 2 January 2013. The switchboard will be unattended during this time.

The Braidwood Library will be closed from 3.00pm on Monday, 24 December 2012, and re-open at 10.00am on Wednesday, 2 January 2013.

The Bungendore Library will close as normal at 12.30pm on Friday, 22 December 2012, and re-open at 1.30pm on Wednesday, 2 January 2013.

All council waste management landfills will remain open at the usual times except for Tuesday, 25 December, Christmas Day.

For emergency calls relating to council's works and services during this time, please call 1300 735 025.

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> **Palerang development approvals p8**

The waterbirds return

Martin Butterfield shares his discoveries and photos of waterbirds that have returned to the district.

MANY families of birds are closely linked to the presence of water. Best known of these are the swans, ducks and geese; the herons; and the waders (Plovers, Sandpipers etc).

With water returning to Lake George, good flows in the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers and many farm dams remaining full, the numbers and diversity of waterbirds in the district is currently very high.

In the urban parts of the district a good place to start with waterbirds is the Queanbeyan River near the weir. Many waterbirds can be found there and will often stay close enough to be viewed for identification purposes.

Those with small dams on their properties will be very familiar with Pacific Black Ducks, Australian Wood Ducks and Australasian Grebes. White-faced Herons and Little Pied Cormorants are also frequent visitors.

As well as these common species, some damp sites have attracted unusual birds.

Many farm dams have hosted the large White-necked Heron.

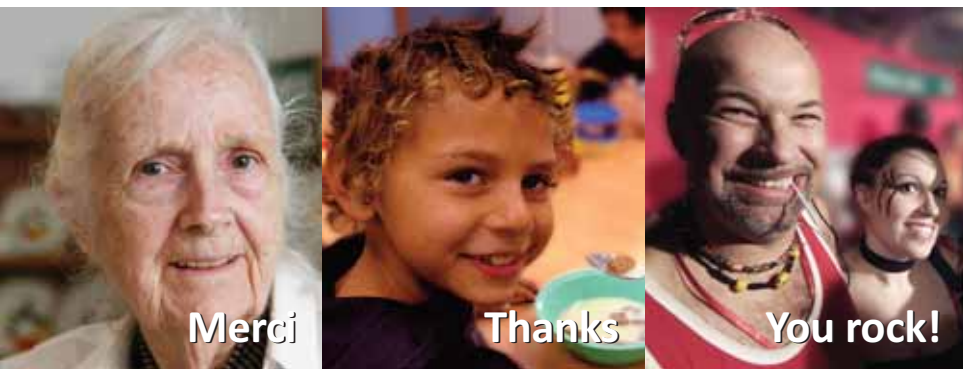


Apart from the very obvious long white neck (see above) they are twice the size of the familiar White-faced Heron. Often seen as single birds, up to 15 White-faced Herons have been seen on the Hoskinstown Plain.

The paddocks on the south side of Bungendore village often support Australian Shelduck in numbers ranging from 2 up to 30.



They are usually found in pairs as shown above, with the female having a white ring



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the power of humanity

National recognition for young Bungendore writer

Abby Poore, Year 6 student at Bungendore Primary, wowed and delighted her teachers, friends and family by scooping a huge and talented pool to win the Sydney Youth Writing Competition in November. Abby won the short story section for Years 5 and 6. Finalists were chosen from over 3,000 entries from 140 primary schools in NSW, Victoria, Northern Territory and the United Kingdom.

Her original and moving story about a seal and her young pup was written as part of a class assignment studying Antarctica earlier in the year. Her teacher Claire Davis was so impressed that she suggested Abby enter the competition last June.

Abby's Mum Penny told the *Bulletin*: "We were all actually quite stunned, not taking anything away from Abby and her talent!"

"They announced encouragement awards initially at the ceremony and a dozen kids got up on the stage when their names were read out, closely followed by third place, and then second. Russ and I glanced at each other just as the realisation was sinking in – for one moment we considered that her name had been missed on the encouragement Award list, but then the announcement came and all the



handshakes had it! We are very proud parents."

Said Abby, "I didn't think that it could possibly be true, but when I realised that I had won the award I was very happy! I can't decide whether I am going to be a writer, guitarist or an entomologist".

We at the *Bulletin* are delighted to bring you Abby's story *Beyond the Ice for You* on p20. Incidentally Abby's mother Penny was the Bulletin's first ever book reviewer. Literary interests run in this family. Congratulations!

around the base of the bill. Shelduck also feed on lucerne and the birds can be seen in these crops on the Hoskinstown Plain.

Banded Lapwings are closely related to the common Masked Lapwing (sometimes called the Spur-winged Plover).



As shown above the Banded Lapwings differ in not having a yellow mask but showing a black band across the breast. They have been very uncommon in this area (other than on private property around Lake Bathurst) for about 50 years. A few were reported near Lake George last summer but have recently been reported in good numbers from south of Bungendore and on the Hoskinstown Plain. It seems the wetter seasons have been good for their breeding and they are now spreading out to sample the goodies a little further afield.

The least common (in this area) waterbird seen recently has been a party of Plumed

Whistling-Ducks seen below in the paddocks off Trucking Yard Lane.



The upwards pointing plumes beside the wings are an easy field mark when standing but less so when in flight. ■

Poplars rezoning back on public exhibition while koala reported next door

READERS may want to take a fresh look at the woodland values and wildlife corridors in the Jerrabomberra valley after a koala was reportedly found in a Jerra back yard in early December.

A proposed rezone of 210 hectares of grassland and woodland off Lanyon Drive next to Jerrabomberra is back on public exhibition until 21 December.

The Poplars, north of the Tralee development, is being put up for community and industrial land, requiring a rezone from rural land use. Threatened species concerns and aircraft noise have previously stalled rezoning attempts. It is part of a master plan to transform the Jerrabomberra Valley into residential communities.

The Poplars plan is back on exhibition because of redrafted boundaries between private recreation and business park proposed areas.

The re-exhibition allows residents to submit concerns about all aspects including on nationally-threatened ecological communities in the grassland and woodland sections or raise questions about environmental corridors and retained environmental land.

An earlier report in the *Bulletin* in August quoted a Greens spokesperson who said the area is environmentally sensitive also because it "forms part of the biolink connecting up the Queanbeyan Nature Reserve, nearby ACT grasslands and the grasslands and woodlands at Environa and Tralee". ■

PALERANG COUNCIL

EXHIBITION OF DRAFT PALERANG LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2012

Palerang Council has prepared a draft Principal Local Environmental Plan for public comment.

The *draft* Palerang Local Environmental Plan 2012 will replace the six existing Local Environmental Plans that apply to the Palerang local government area.

The *draft* Palerang Local Environmental Plan 2012 is on public exhibition at Council's Administrative Offices, 144 Wallace Street, Braidwood and 10 Majara Street, Bungendore between the normal business hours of 8.30am to 5.00pm, from Wednesday, 5 December 2012 until Friday, 8 March 2013. The *draft* Local Environmental Plan is also available from Council's website www.palerang.nsw.gov.au under *Feature programs* or on a USB stick or CD if requested from Council.

Any person may make a written submission to Council about the draft Local Environmental Plan before the close of business on **Friday, 8 March 2013**.

Enquiries on the *draft* Palerang Local Environmental Plan 2012 should be directed to Council's Strategic Planning Coordinator, Ms Sue Robb, on 1300 735 025 or 6238 8111 or by email: records@palerang.nsw.gov.au.

Council Chambers
10 Majara Street, Bungendore
PO Box 348
BUNGENDORE NSW 2621

P Bascomb
General Manager

Draft Palerang Local Environmental Plan 2012 community meeting dates

Date	Time	Location	Venue
Monday 10 December	6-8pm	Bungendore	Bungendore Council Chambers
Tuesday 11 December	6-8pm	Burra	large community hall
Thursday 13 December	6-8pm	Captains Flat	community hall
Sunday 16 December	10-12am	Araluen	community hall
Sunday 16 December	2-4pm	Braidwood	National Theatre
Monday 17 December	6-8pm	Wamboin	community hall

Gifts: where did we get the giving idea?

GIVING GIFTS has been a tradition among human beings since ancient times. Many historians believe that this practice led to the development of the barter system, which was the economic basis for many societies.

In the ancient Roman culture, people would exchange gifts during a celebration held during the winter solstice. The gifts were originally evergreen branches, and later developed into pastries to symbolise happiness and sweetness in the coming year, coins to represent prosperity and lamps to provide light on one's journey through life.

Ancient tribal leaders would give one another gifts in exchange for peace, protection, food or just simply to maintain the status quo.

Gifts and love

The idea that gift giving and love are closely associated developed alongside the growth of the Christian religion. The main



theological basis of this religion is based on the fact that God himself gave humanity 'His only begotten Son', Jesus Christ, who was a 'gift' to mankind.

Even at the time of his birth, Jesus Christ was associated with gift giving. When he was born, the three wise

men brought gifts to the newborn babe to honour him. These gifts were gold, frankincense, and myrrh; gifts that would normally have been given to a king. Frankincense was a base element used to make fragrances and perfumes, myrrh was used in anointing oils, and gold was as valuable then as it is today.

The idea of giving gifts to newborns may have started with this Bible story, as well as the giving of gifts at Christmas.

Who brings your Christmas gifts?

The idea of gifts at Christmas developed differently as Christianity spread into various countries. In England, Father Christmas was responsible for delivering the gifts, while in France this was the work of Pere Noel.

In Italy the gift giver was named La Befana. The belief was that La Befana became lost on her way to deliver gifts to the Christ child and began delivering gifts to all youngsters.

And in Holland, where I was born, Sinter Klaas rides a white horse and gets help from numerous Zwarte Pieten (Black Petes) handing out gifts and candy.

Gift giving and tradition making

Today, while gifts are given for a variety of holidays and special occasions, the largest of these gift-giving occasions is, and will probably remain, Christmas.

The tradition of selecting and exchanging gifts with people we love and care about has, to me, more significance at this time of year as family members come together and reminisce about Christmases past, and more importantly, those people with whom we shared those Christmases.

I like to choose gifts which create memories – or even start collections. Of course I can help you to do that too when you drop in to see me at 'Annie's'.

— We wish you, your families and special friends a happy, peaceful and safe Christmas.
Till next year, Annie



This article was composed with online help from: *The History of Gift Giving at Christmas* by Beverly Sugarman and *What is the history of gift giving?* on wiki.answers.com.

> Check out the bargains at the Canberra Mower Centre on the back page!

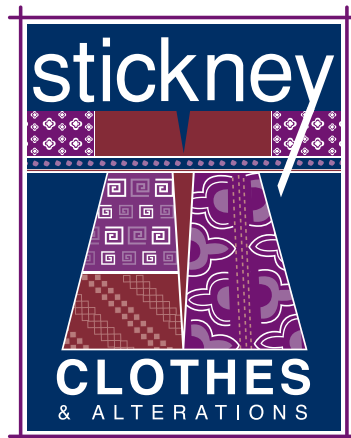
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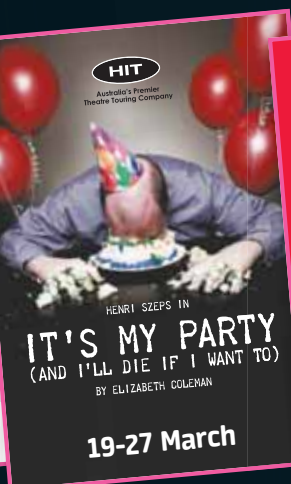
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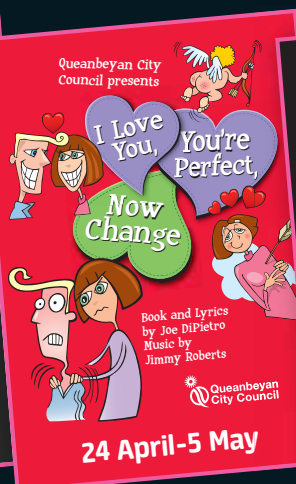
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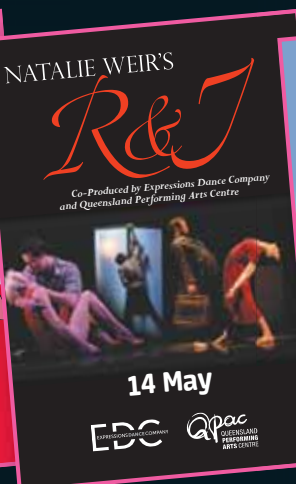
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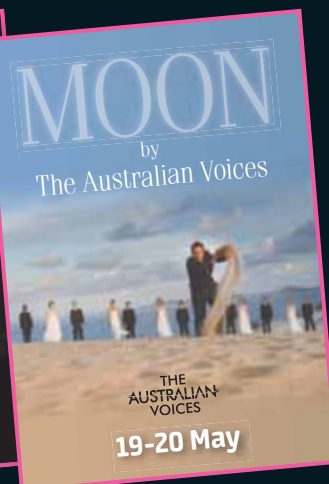
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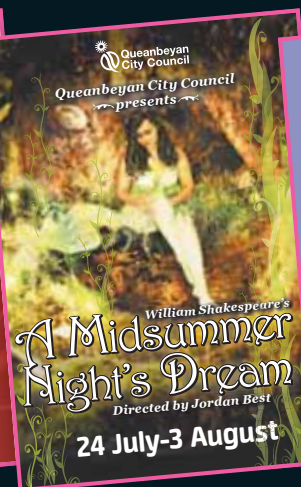
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- ✦ Season ticket \$60 (includes all three shows)

- ✦ Group bookings of 10+ welcome, \$20 each per show
- ✦ Box Office opens 1 hour prior to show time. We recommend you arrive at least 30 minutes before to pick up tickets.

McGrath Dickson wins industry award, offers smart innovations



INNOVATION, customer service and teamwork have earned Chris Dixon, pictured, and the team at McGrath Dickson a third

consecutive win as 'medium agency of the year' in the ACT and region.

Local rural residential and village agents John Sneddon and Richard Manning are the familiar faces of this team in Palerang while Chris Dixon is a very active member of the Gundaroo community.

The professional recognition comes from the Real Estate Institute of Australia (RIA) which looks at a range of criteria including also business growth, property marketing and community integration.

Since joining McGrath earlier this year, the

agency (previously in Palerang under the Peter Blackshaw brand) has added a large unified database to its resources on behalf of clients.

This offers significant advantages, says Chris Dixon, allowing local agents to look further afield and reach a wide range of markets in NSW and southern Qld for both buyers and properties.

The more common model is that each individual office, even each agent, guards their own databases of properties.

Dixon says that statistics show that 50 percent of buyers come from the immediate area of the property while 20 percent come from interstate.

Video the new big thing

Other innovations now propelling the industry are being adopted by Dixon and his colleagues. They include the creative use of both print and internet marketing and blending the two.

Video marketing of properties is the latest direction. This allows buyers to virtually meet creators or sellers of interesting properties (like the Gundaroo store, featured on this page) as well as getting an internet walkthrough.

Even more amazing, codes on the printed page can now be scanned with a smart phone application, taking interested parties directly to the web link for that property. This may be available next year in the *Bulletin*.

"It's a competitive business as everyone knows, with the trend towards fewer salespeople establishing greater market share," says Dixon. "But the innovations we are working on, the database and the teamwork, will make a big difference for the client." ■

Only a few days left to register interest on this historic Gundaroo property



ACQUIRE a piece of history with enormous potential and charm. 30 Cork St comprises The Gundaroo Store (c1893), an attached cottage residence, Sally Paskins' store (c1886), a potter's shed and picnic garden with water features. The residence has three bedrooms, two baths and a garage.

The store would suit an entrepreneur looking to take advantage of the charming village atmosphere, high ceilings, Kauri floors and expansive interiors. Gundaroo's award-winning cafes and restaurants are very popular with day trippers from Canberra as well as interstate visitors.



Given the ever-increasing commercial popularity of Gundaroo, there are many possibilities here – antiques, art and crafts, accommodation space, art gallery?

Features include: multiple commercial opportunities with up to four separate leases; live onsite in the cottage or store while running a business from home; Sally Paskins' is ideal for any boutique business; the shed, originally a potter's studio, is perfect for a nursery or secondhand store;



beautifully landscaped gardens with sandstone water feature; the store is currently a gift shop popular with local and interstate visitors. Tenants are ready to formalise leases for Sally Paskins' and the Cottage.

Contact Christopher Dixon on 0414 819 377, or at christopherdixon@mcgrath.com.au.

Googong development

HAVE YOU noticed all the activity going on around the turnoff to Googong Dam? It's the new Jerrabomberra.

It's coming, and coming fast. If you're interested, there's a load of info about the development and all the dimensions involved in such a big exercise at <http://www.googong.net/news.html>.

It covers everything from traffic to the new Anglican primary school to protection of the pink tailed worm lizard.

— Greg Hedger, reprinted from the Burra Intermittent



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PALERANG COUNCIL

Development Approvals

Notification in accordance with Section 101 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Council approved the following development applications in November 2012.

Development Consents are available for public inspection free of charge at Council's offices during ordinary business hours.

Application No	Development Description	Date	Property Description
DA.2012.259	Change of Use – Old Mill Building to Temporary Gallery	02/11/2012	Lot 1 DP 1134457 664 Majors Creek Road MAJORS CREEK
DA.2012.210	Continued Use of Dwelling and Solid Fuel Heater	07/11/2012	Lot 1 DP 1004265 23 The Forest Road BYWONG
DA.2012.227	Concrete Slab Outside Building Envelope	08/11/2012	Lot 26 DP 270309 37 Essendon Road BUNGENDORE
DA.2012.229	Shed	08/11/2012	Lot 18 DP 261590 8 Merino Vale Drive WAMBOIN
DA.2012.230	Shed	08/11/2012	Lot 4 DP 1059163 120 Rossi Road ROSSI
DA.2012.234	Shed	08/11/2012	Lot 27 DP 270309 38 Essendon Road BUNGENDORE
DA.2012.235	Shed with Amenities	09/11/2012	Lot 552 DP 1059913 5 Keefe Place BUNGENDORE
DA.2012.172	4 (Four) Unit Residential Buildings	09/11/2012	Lot 2 DP 1046170 18 Lascelles Street BRAIDWOOD
DA.2012.186	Fence	13/11/2012	Lot 51 DP 1018536 303 Cartwright Avenue SUTTON
DA.2012.208	Continued Use of Dwelling	14/11/2012	Lot 19 DP 1007140 371 Butmaroo Road BUNGENDORE
DA.2012.253	Pergola	15/11/2012	Lot 1 DP 844086 88 Hogan Drive WAMBOIN
DA.2012.187	Shade Structure	15/11/2012	Lot 6 Sec 4 DP 758636 Recreation Reserve Trust, Hill Street MAJORS CREEK
DA.2012.233	Shed	15/11/2012	Lot 1323 DP 1112117 46 McCusker Drive BUNGENDORE
DA.2012.255	Alterations and Addition to Dwelling	19/11/2012	Lot 6 DP 861554 90 Snowgum Road BYWONG
DA.2012.236	Alterations and Additions to Existing Dwelling	20/11/2012	Lot 46 DP 259114 159 Hutchinson Place BURRA
DA.2012.246	Dwelling	20/11/2012	Lot 10 DP 1137460 62 Quong Tart Close ARALUEN
DA.2012.238	Shed	20/11/2012	Lot 5 DP 252579 1585 Burra Road BURRA
DA.2012.244	Shed	22/11/2012	Lot 1 DP 1156923 109 Candy Road BURRA
DA.2012.245	Manufactured Home	22/11/2012	Lot 2 DP 1139522 75 Finlay Place BURRA
DA.2012.249	Dwelling, Outbuildings and Pool	23/11/2012	Lot 2 DP 1157324 Harts Road KRAWARREE
DA.2012.263	2 Lot Subdivision	23/11/2012	Lot 25 DP 1102366 112–114 Wallace Street BRAIDWOOD
DA.2012.232	Alterations and Additions to Existing Dwelling	27/11/2012	Lot 50 DP 518212 54 Rylie Street BRAIDWOOD
DA.2012.217	Garage	27/11/2012	Lot 1 DP 1039349 52 London Bridge Road BURRA
DA.2012.226	Shed	29/11/2012	Lot 222 DP 754915 94 Mathews Lane BUNGENDORE



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Hakeas that grow well here

Story and photos by Jo Walker

HAKÉAS are in the Proteaceae family, and the approximately 150 known species are all endemic to Australia. Although Western Australia is home to most of the more spectacular Hakeas, members of this genus are found in all of our states.

The narrow, curved tubular flowers are usually borne in dense clusters – very attractive even when, in the case of our local species, they are white or pale yellow. The striking red or bright pink flowers seem to be confined to Western Australia or other distant parts of the country.

Leaves are needle-shaped or flat and of various shapes, with the upper and lower surfaces of similar appearance.

The winged Hakea seed mature in woody, often large, seed follicles which can remain unopened on the plant for many years until the branch they are on dies. An exception to this method of seed dispersal is the yellow-flowered *Hakea macrocarpa*, the small seed follicles of which open annually before the next flowering season. The follicles of other species are so dense that they can survive fire, opening afterwards to release their seed.

Some species of Hakea overcome fires and other disasters by sprouting new growth from lignotubers, a swelling on the underground part of the stem.

Species that make good garden plants

Most of the Hakeas found growing in the Southern Tablelands will make good garden plants in this area. Tree Hakea (*Hakea teriantha*) is, as its name implies, one of the tallest (growing to over five metres) and is useful as a screening plant. Another large



shrub, the Silky Hakea (*H. sericea*), above, grows on the coastal ranges, its often prolific white or pink flowers contrasting with the large, dark green needle-shaped leaves.

A similar, but much smaller species is *H. decurrens*. This one grows on the Queanbeyan escarpment and on Mount Jerrabomberra. It is a suckering shrub with reddish stems and honey-scented white flowers which appear during winter and early spring.

Two species that grow in areas towards the east of the shire (and are very similar) are *H. dactyloides*, below, and *H. laevipes*.



Both have long lanceolate or elliptical to ovate leaves. *H. dactyloides* is a tall, upright shrub growing from a single stem, and *H. laevipes* is a smaller, bushy shrub with several stems usually growing from a lignotuber.

H. dactyloides seems to inhabit mostly rocky area, but is an attractive addition to a garden. Silky brown buds are clustered along its upper stems during winter. These open to dense clusters of white flowers, giving an almost candle-like appearance to the stems. The new growth maintains a silky bright bronze tone for a considerable period before maturing.

Another Hakea with colourful new growth is the Willow-leaved Hakea (*H. salicifolia*). This one comes from further away, from north-eastern NSW and across the border in Queensland, but does well here. In this species, the new growth has a strong reddish or orange tinge. The white flowers

are in only small clusters, but this shrub makes a dense screen plant.

Easy to propagate and attractive to birds

Hakeas are easily propagated from seed – just pick the woody follicles and leave them in a dry place for a while and they will open up to produce two winged seed.

The species mentioned are all tolerant of our cold and frosty winters, but all seem to prefer moist soil. Hakea flowers are usually scented, some more sweetly than others, and this attracts a lot of interesting insects.

Species with needle-like leaves attract small birds who use them as safe nesting sites – there were four Red-browed Finch nests in one large, pink-flowered *H. sericea* one year. And the woody seed capsules are an attractive food source for Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos who spend hours on *H. salicifolia* and *H. sericea* gnawing on the hard exterior to claim the obviously tasty seeds. ■

> *Catching up with Spring flowers, p19*

— Open Gardens Australia —

BURRA OPEN GARDEN IN FEBRUARY



Woowoolahra

Beautifully constructed rock walls divide areas in a mature garden where lovely old trees embrace lawn and frame valley views. Magnificent stands of flowering hydrangeas. A cypress woodland opens to dams abundant with birdlife and water lilies. Espaliered fruit trees enclose a berry garden.

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- Vintage and antique jewellery from Tasmanian dealer, Merry Conway on display and for sale.
- Paintings by local botanical artist Sharon Field on display and for sale.
- Garden Cafe: Lunch, tea, coffee, cold drinks and cakes for sale.

Supporting The Cancer Support Group ACT Eden Monaro's Own, and Burra Community Association.

Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Woowoolahra/440651245970684>

Garden address: 6 London Bridge Rd, Burra.

Opening: Saturday 9 & Sunday 10 February 2013, 10am to 4.30pm.

Admission: \$7 as part of Open Gardens Australia. Proceeds to charity.

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RRP: \$45.00

If you've always wanted to own a Group One winner and aren't

likely to, this is the book for you.

If not, read it anyway.

Whateley tells *Black Caviar's* story from the early days of teaching her to win, through the racing purgatory of injury, to her dominance in Group One. She raced the best sprinters in her generation and routinely thrashed them. Easily. And then she went to Ascot.

This is not your average book about the Sport of Kings. Racing books are not known for fine writing: they tend to be lists of statistics which can only be interpreted by racing tragiics. This book is different.

Whateley is a multi-award winning journalist, known for combining sharp analysis and emotive broadcasting. He's also a skilled storyteller.

He introduces you to a range of characters in *Black Caviar*; most of which are keen to share the sense of being fortunate to have been a part of it all.

There's the group of old friends on holiday who wonder why they don't have more time to catch up. They might buy a horse together. "At least it will be a good excuse to have lunch."

And the trainer from the back of Bourke who rose to the top of the Melbourne establishment, and found the horse of a lifetime. He would repay racing for all it had given him by showcasing the sport, doing every interview and photo shoot, answering every query from an interested soul, and see if he could convert a few of the uninitiated.

And the mare herself. Her remarkable size and speed are gifts of nature. Her desire to win, her grace under pressure and her character are her own.

"Like all good athletes she was able to run through the pain barrier. I think any great sportsperson who has had to carry injuries during their career, it shows their courage and their willingness to get on with the job."

Just when you're being carried along on the 'incredible high' of the win in the Newmarket Handicap and starting to wonder about hyperbole, Whateley pulls you up short.

"When faced with the rare sight of perfection in sport, the mind can be drawn in a couple of directions: to accept it for the beauty and wonder it represents, or to attempt to rationalise, quantify and classify. Both are perfectly legitimate reflexes."

So, what about those stats? Well, obviously she is an Australian champion. Let's talk winning streaks. Phar Lap won 14 consecutive wins, Bernborough 15; Ajax, 18; Zenyatta, 19.

Black Caviar won 22 consecutive wins. It is the Australian record.

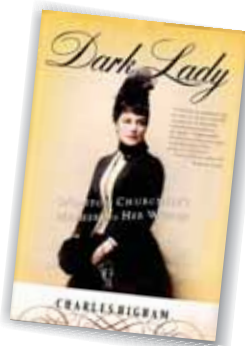
Black Caviar is also officially a world champion, based on her ratings in the World Thoroughbred Rankings. She is the highest rated horse in the world, and her rating outstripped those of other Australian legends, Makye Diva and So You Think.

Black Caviar would make an excellent Christmas present. It's the sort of book that will appeal to most, from racing die-hards to the once-a-year punters. It could make a whole new generation fall in love with racing.

Remarkable American beauty, mother of Winston

reviewed by Di Johnstone

Dark Lady: Winston Churchill's Mother and her World
by Charles Higham
Publisher: Carroll and Graff, New York
RRP: various on [Amazon.com](#)



ALTHOUGH much has been written about Winston Churchill, far less is known about his mother, Jennie Jerome, later Lady Jennie Churchill. This book brings us the story of a beautiful, impetuous, willful and determined woman who lived a fast-paced and often scandalous life. It was one that had a significant influence on her famous son.

This author begins with Jennie Jerome's American family, which while wealthy and influential was perennially on the brink of fortune or ruin. Jennie's father invested in grand schemes that often came undone and did deals with a breathtaking

disregard for morality. He mercilessly used media contacts or his own media column to publish stories that affected company share prices, allowing him to make substantial financial windfalls or to eliminate competition.

Jennie's childhood was lived in a subdued center of this family rollercoaster and when the time came to marry, she settled for a conservative British aristocrat, Randolph Churchill. An unprepossessing man, the beautiful and confident Jennie was attracted to his slightness and delicacy of stature, and it seems his somewhat overwrought professions of affection. It was a marriage of love rather than convenience and one both families initially resisted. There is some dispute about the

Continued next page

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Continued from p11

marriage date and whether young Winston may have already been conceived.

On marriage she moved to the massive Blenheim Palace, a vast estate with artistic and other treasures. However it was in their London home that Jennie and Randolph became high stakes players in the politics

of the day. Jennie, unusually for a woman at that time, helped her husband write his speeches and campaigned for him in his seat.

Jennie's American individuality and adventurous spirit saw her live a freer life than many contemporaries and she found a

comforting companionship with other American women married into the aristocracy. Much of her life involved partying, including court events – although a falling out with the Prince of Wales brought that to a temporary halt – high-end travelling and an extraordinary degree of

bed-hopping. Jennie's lovers were legendary and included Austrian diplomat and horseman-extraordinaire Prince Carl Kinsky and, reportedly, both the Prince of Wales and, Count Herbert Bismarck, son of the German Chancellor. After Randolph died there were also two more husbands, both considerably younger.

However Jennie also took on meaningful projects such as nursing wounded soldiers in South Africa during the Boer War, setting up a hospital during World War I, an expensive but failed theatre enterprise to bring Shakespeare to the masses, and a short-lived literary magazine.

Jennie had two children, Winston and Jack and there are insights into Winston's personality and early life. The family despaired of his antics and behaviour at school. When in the army he and his fellow officers were publicly accused of a nasty piece of bullying. His early political career was beset with disasters, often brought on by impetuous behaviour. All, of course, was redeemed much later by remarkable heroism.

This book uses many recently discovered British and American sources and both the wealth of detail and the many twists and turns of mid-19th century British politics can be a bit daunting. Although the writing is a little turgid at times, Jennie Churchill's story is truly fascinating and occasionally disturbing. Ideal for a slow summer read. ■

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For young adults: Dark, psychological and suspenseful, first in the series



The Passage
by Justin Cronin
Publisher: Orion Books
RRP: various on Amazon.com

reviewed by Nick Overall

"AMY Harper Bellafonte is six years old and her mother thinks she's the most important person in the whole world. She is ... Anthony Carter doesn't think he could ever be in a worse place than death row. He's wrong ... FBI agent Brad Wolgast thinks something beyond imagination is coming. It is."

Justin Cronin's series has really taken off with the first book in the trilogy becoming a *New York Times* bestseller within days. *The Passage* was released in 2010 and in October the second title in the series, *The Twelve*, appeared to the delight of fans. Given the complexities of this series it is highly recommended that the first book is read before the second and to encourage this I shall review it accordingly.

The Passage is a dark, psychological and suspenseful book unlike others you may have read before in this sci-fi horror genre. It takes some elements from books like Stephen King's *The Stand* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and offers character perspectives on the build-up and aftermath of a world ravaged by a virus that transforms the population in ways that are completely at odds with all that we know.

Summer science reading, you can even do it on the beach

The beginning of summer inevitably brings the (im)possible image of lying on a beach somewhere escaping into the pages of a book! So why not with a good science book? This month's Big Idea compiles a few reviews and recommendations of the year's top list of science reading and finds there are some fascinating options available.

The Bragg UNSW Press Prize for Science Writing

The UNSW Press awards an annual prize to the best short non-fiction piece on science written for a general audience. Published in November, the anthology *The Best Australian Science Writing 2012* (edited by Elizabeth Finkel) showcases competition winners and other entries.

This year's topics include: How were Ned Kelly's bones finally identified? What makes cockroaches some of the most successful creatures on the planet? Could some obscure bacteria finally rid the world of dengue fever? How did infant reflux become the disease of the moment?

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The Royal Society science book awards

The UK's premier science organisation is the world's oldest scientific academy and in November announced its book awards.

Science Experiments (published by Dorling Kindersley) by Robert Winston and Ian Graham won the Young People's Book Prize 2012. Its subtitle *Loads of explosively fun activities you can do* helps explain its huge appeal! Adult judges made a shortlist of books which was then judged by more than 1,000 young people from around the UK. The kids said: "This book caused a storm at our meeting – loads of excited chatter, interesting facts and a real eagerness to get experimenting."

The Information: a history, a theory, a flood (Fourth Estate/Pantheon) by James Gleick won the Winton Prize for Science Books 2012. The judges said: "*The Information* is an audacious book and offers remarkable insight. Gleick takes us, with verve and fizz, on a journey from African drums to computers, liberally sprinkling delightful factoids along the way. This is a book we need to give us a fresh perspective on how we communicate and how that shapes our world."

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From the Wall Street Journal

In his exhilarating but alarming *Spillover* (Norton), David Quammen documents how "zoo-

notic" diseases – like AIDS, Ebola, and SARS – can jump from animals to humans with terrifying outcomes.

Quammen, in compelling and sometimes gory prose, takes the reader along as he tracks gorillas in the Congo, traps monkeys in Bangladesh, and nets bats in China on a quest to discover how this process happens, when and where the next big "spillover" will occur, and what, if anything, can be done to stop it.

Richard Fortey's *Horseshoe Crabs and Velvet Worms* (Knopf) reminds us of a time before humans were part of nature's ecosystem. Fortey, a paleontologist, introduces us to fascinating creatures – Charles Darwin called them "living fossils" – that have hardly changed since they first appeared. A "journey through time as well as around the globe", this book takes us to places like Shark Bay, Australia, which is filled with stromatolites, "slimy mounds" made of layer upon layer of cells lacking an organized nucleus, far predating the cell types that predominate today.

An equally skillful writer-scientist is Oliver Sacks, whose *Hallucinations* (Knopf) presents a "natural history" of experiences that are, as William James put it in 1890, "as good and true a sensation as if there were a real object there". Sacks describes a patient who is blind but "sees" exotically dressed men walking around the room, another for whom mineral water smells like bleach, others who hear music when none is being played, and shares his own experiences with drug-induced "altered states". With elegance, empathy and wit, he shows how hallucinations are in fact an "essential part of the human condition".

— * * * —

From Australasian Science magazine

The Cochlear Story (CSIRO Publishing) by Veronica Bondarew and Peter Seligman. Professor Peter Seligman worked on the cochlear implant for 30 years, in the process helping one-quarter of a million people hear. Veronica Bondarew's interest lies in organisational behaviour, and the two combine to explain both the technical and institutional challenges involved in this

outstanding Australian achievement.

Sentinel Chickens (Melbourne University Press) by Peter Doherty. Legend has it that geese saved Rome by

warning of invaders, but Nobel Prize winner Peter Doherty argues that modern society is just as dependent

on avian alarms. From the disease detectors from which the book gets its name to the canary in the coal mine and raptors endangered by DDT, birds provide early warnings we ignore at our peril.

Australia's Fossil Heritage (CSIRO Publishing), The Australian Heritage Council. Fascination with Australia's extinct megafauna is rising – what's not to love about 3-tonne wombats? For the serious enthusiast The Australian Heritage Council has provided a guide to the sites where these, and more ancient, fossils can be found. Accompanied by beautiful watercolour paintings, along with some photographs, this book provides a guide to where to go to seek Australia's distant past.

— * * * —

From Lovereading.co.uk

This is Improbable: Cheese string theory, magnetic chickens, and other WTF research (Oneworld) by Marc Abrahams. Marc Abrahams, the founder of the Ig Nobel Prizes, offers an addictive, wryly funny expose of the oddest, most imaginative, and just plain improbable research from around the globe. He looks into why books on ethics are more likely to get stolen, the best way to slice a ham sandwich (mathematically), and what time of month generates higher tips for Vegas lap dancers. Abrahams' tour through these unlikely investigations of animals, plants, and minerals (including humans) will first make you laugh, then make you think about the world in a new way.

Will we ever speak dolphin? and 130 other science questions answered (New Scientist) (Profile Books) by Mick O'Hare. Why do birds sing at dawn? What's the slowest a plane can fly without stalling and falling out of the sky? And how long can you keep a tiger cub as a pet? *Will We Ever Speak Dolphin?* the eagerly-awaited new Last Word collection, has the answers to these questions and many more. ■



What's the Big Idea?



with
Sonja
Chandler



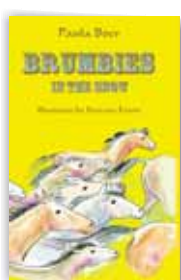
One of the key elements for the success of *The Passage* is the writing. This component of the novel cannot be overstated. It is written in the third-person from the point of view of many characters, each giving a perfect idea of which one you are reading about. The writing is evocative, thought-provoking and will keep you mulling over the events and situations long after you've finished.

Of course with good writing, the other components that make a book like this fantastic come easily. Adrenaline-fuelled and sometimes even terrifying action scenes, emotionally engaging chapters that make you realise what it is to be human in a world coming to its end and beyond, and an epic conclusion that ties it all together.

The only real criticism I have is that in a book where characters play such a vital role, it sometimes keeps you a bit distant from them and what they are feeling, but this is easily forgiven for all the things the novel gets right.

The Passage is a mature, edge-of-your-seat thriller. For any enthusiastic reader to miss this book and the rest of the series would be to commit a literary crime! **9.8/10** ■

— * * * —



Christmas Brumbies

THE RELEASE of *Brumbies in the Snow*, the second book in the fiction/young readers Brumbies series, on 1 December has

come just in time for horse-lovers' holiday reading!

Taming a wild horse is no easy task, as Ben and Louise soon discover. Their progress is slowed by a runaway horse and a desperate search for two lost hikers. Concern for an injured brumby adds to the complications. Follow the wild twists and turns of the sequel to Amazon best-selling *Brumbies*, as Ben and Louise explore the High Country of Australia in winter.

Created by Cooma residents, writer Paula Boer and illustrator Rowena Evans, the Brumbies series can be ordered direct from leading online bookstores in paperback or ebook formats. It is published by IFWG Publishing Inc. ■

Portraits of warfare and landscape

from the Canberra Petrov Affair to Afghanistan and drone strikes

Nichole Smith interviews Andrew Croome

A WOMAN wedged between two burly men loses her shoe in the middle of an airport runway, her distressed expression caught in the glare of the photographic flash.

It was one of the most sensational espionage dramas of the Cold War era, and for Canberra-based author Andrew Croome, the unfolding of the Petrov Affair in the nation's capital has long held a fascination.

The subject of his first, much-acclaimed novel, *Document Z*, Croome's exploration of the defection of the high-ranking Russian official Vladimir Petrov and subsequently, his wife Edvokia, amidst an atmosphere of suspicion, deception and betrayal was originally the basis for his PhD thesis examining the relationship between history and fiction.

Much like the current Petreus Affair involving the former head of the CIA and his female biographer, the Petrov Affair was the major media story of its day – spies, divided loyalties and political intrigue proving a heady combination for the 1950s Australian public.

"Despite what some said, both then and now, this was a major event in the international world of espionage," said Croome. "The defection was critical to Russian intelligence and was a huge coup for ASIO. I think Petrov revealed something like 300 agents."

"This story is a great one with a great cast of characters and I wanted a story with a lot of documentation – the archival material and local histories were a fantastic resource. It was important to rely on fact as much as possible and the ASIO files were invaluable, not only for the everyday things, but the more personal aspects from gossip to people's sex lives."

The novel has won numerous accolades including *The Australia/Vogel Literary Award* in 2008. It blends historical fact with fictional supposition, and Croome says that while the case has



PETROV IMAGE SOURCED FROM ABC.NET.AU

been much dissected, he set out to achieve something more telling.

"While there are other works and Petrov has been used as a character in fiction, the style of my project was to capture the whole affair in a fictional way. It was such a controversial event, and continues to be today, and I was really interested in trying to get to the truth of it through fiction, the idea of what you can learn by looking at the factual set of circumstances in a different way."

Canberra of the 1950s: a place for sweeping around in cars

Croome was born in Canberra but raised in Hobart, Melbourne and Albury-Wodonga before returning to the capital 18 months ago. The city he describes in the book is of a time when its population was less than that of Queanbeyan today and icons including Lake Burley Griffin existed only in architectural drawings. Interestingly however, the Canberra of over 60 years ago is still remarkably recognisable: "It was a strange town where the roads curved by design. It was a place for sweeping around in cars."

"Canberra was such a great landscape

for this story. It's a fascinating place in terms of the concentration of political stories and at that time, when the population was so small, virtually everyone was someone – politician, diplomat, mandarin, spy. In many ways it was a manufactured city, but also a powerful one."

New novel, war and poker

The nostalgia of *Document Z* is replaced in Croome's second work, *Midnight Empire*, with a more emergent concern; the increasing sophistication and more insidious nature of war in modern times.

Released in September this year, it centres on a young Australian computer programmer, Daniel Carter, whose work brings him to the Creech Airforce Base in Las Vegas, where he spends his days monitoring unmanned aerial drones over Afghanistan and his nights entrenched in the casinos playing poker, two situations more closely linked than it might initially seem.

It becomes increasingly apparent that while thousands of miles from the action on the ground in the Middle East, Daniel is in it up to his neck. And it is the card game in all its intricacies that provides the parallels for the faceless war-mongering technologies of the 21st century.

Croome says he wanted to write about how these changing technologies are blurring moral and geographic lines.

"With the 'Cold War' it was existential stuff – the threat of nuclear war was omnipresent – but drones are more visceral and it's less an act of war than it is targeted assassinations. In this way, it's still a form of 'Cold War'; they can wipe you out and you'll never see them coming. And so how does this alter our concept of warfare?"

From the serenity of the bush capital to the deserts of Nevada and the war-ravaged cities most of us will never know except through news bulletins, Andrew Croome's books offer a unique and interesting meld of landscape, history and the games people play. ■



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Happy Christmas! From Charlie Brown to Teheran

A PERUSAL of the lists of the best and worst Christmas films shows that both feature *Home Alone*, *White Christmas* and *Love Actually*.

For young children various parenting sites recommend *A Charlie Brown Christmas* as an antidote to a consumerist Christmas.

Many sites recommend *The Muppet Christmas Carol* with Kermit the frog battling to save the Muppet theatre from a mean and scrooge-like bank owner who wants to build a nightclub on it instead. This is a 1992 film featuring Michael Caine and can be purchased as a DVD online if you cannot find a copy to rent.

Argo gets the votes for adult viewing

Argo will probably be off the big screens by Christmas but if you haven't seen it this could

be a good one to watch for the adults as a DVD rental on Christmas Day if you can't face *Love Actually* or Bing Crosby in *White Christmas* again.

This film is based on a true story and is set in late 1979 when militants stormed the US embassy in Tehran. While embassy staff frantically destroy classified documents, six people walked out of the embassy and were taken in by the Canadian ambassador. The remaining staff were taken hostage and subsequently released in 1981.

The Canadian ambassador managed to keep their location secret and the US State Department started planning potential ways to smuggle them out of the country. Ben Affleck directed the film but also played Tony Mendez, a CIA consultant brought in to help with the covert rescue.

FILM REVIEWS

with Judy Thompson

In the film Tony Mendez is inspired after watching *Planet of the Apes* with his son to come up with the cover story that there is a Canadian film crew looking for exotic locations in Iran.

Stranger than fiction

Nate Jones has written an article, *The True Story Behind Argo*, an internal CIA account of how the Iran rescue really happened which you can read at www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/10/18/the_true_spy_story_behind_argo. Jones points out that there has been some dramatic license, however, both the film and the CIA's account have many similar nail-biting moments.

Both suggest that the "Mafia and many shady foreign investors were notorious for backing productions in Hollywood" and so the CIA felt it was the perfect environment in which to operate. The help of Hollywood's Jerome Chambers was enlisted. Chambers



was responsible for make-up in *Planet of the Apes* and allegedly worked on many previous disguises for CIA operations. In the film John Goodman plays Jerome Chambers.

The fake film was publicised in Hollywood and the press to build credibility. As Alan Arkin the movie producer in the film says "If you want to sell a lie ... get the press to sell it for you."

According to the CIA account the Canadians completely outclassed the US

at forged passports. For example one of the CIA's forged Iranian passports had made a mistake in the Farsi calendar that put the date of issue in the future.

Truth can be stranger than fiction! This film certainly has you on the edge of your seat and could be a good antidote to post pud sluggishness.

If you don't fancy the cricket on the television Boxing Day suggestions on the big screens are *Les Misérables* featuring Hugh Jackman and *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. The latter film has attracted criticism for animal cruelty by People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), while the film producers are alleging disgruntled sacked animal wranglers are the problem. ■

Oh what a Night! Frankie Valli Tribute returns to Queanbeyan

by Sarah Newsome

I thought Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons were something only my nanna could love, until I was reminded of some of their classic hits: *Grease is the Word*, *Sherry*, *Big Girls Don't Cry*, *Walk like a Man* and more.

A musical tribute to Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, *OH WHAT A NIGHT* has thrilled audiences in theatres, showrooms and on cruise ships around the world, including its sold-out engagement in Las Vegas at The Suncoast Showroom.

Now the show will return to The Q in Queanbeyan by popular demand for January 16-27. Local shows last year were sold out and extended as part of their Australian tour.

"The audience often find that the show exceeds their expectations," says a spokesperson Wal Bishop. "The boys are the epitome of professionalism. Their vocal ability is quite amazing. More than a dozen times last year there were standing ovations – particularly in the four part a-cappella, *Silence is Golden*. Standing ovations, right in the middle of the show."

George Solomon will again be joined on stage by the other original cast members Paul Holmquist, Brandon Albright and Rick Morgan. "We can't wait to get back down under," says Solomon. "We all had just the best time, the crowds were wonderful every night and they sure let us know how much fun they were having."

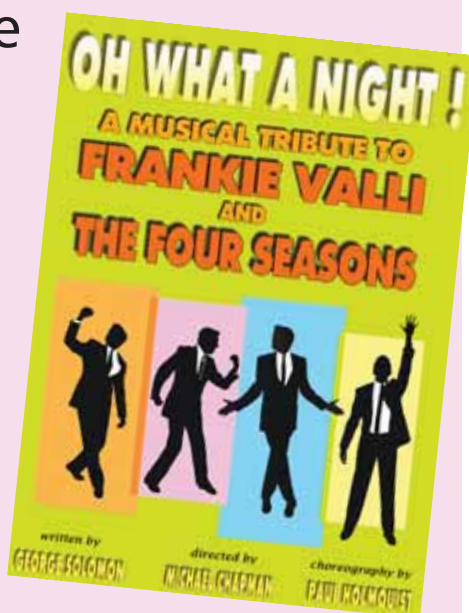
Between the score of recognisable tunes, *OH WHAT A NIGHT* delivers informal and often hilarious banter between the cast. And best of all, their interpretation is so true to the original recordings it's hard to believe cast members aren't lip synching.

Tickets available at The Q, phone 6285 6290 or visit theq.net.au.

NON-SUBSCRIBERS: \$56.00 – Full price; \$51.00 – Concession and Groups (10+).

SUBSCRIBERS: \$51.00 – Full price; \$46.00 – Concession and Groups (10+).

ALL MATINEE TICKETS: \$46.00.



EVERYTHING theatrical is happening at the moment! The 2013 theatre season announced by The Q Theatre in Queanbeyan, Caroline Stacey named as Arts ACT artist of the year, Canberra Area Theatre Awards nominations appearing on the web very soon and every dance school has its final year concert!

The first children's shows for 2013 will both be commencing on 11 January. *Winnie the Pooh* is especially for tiny tots and will be on at the Courtyard Studio, Canberra Theatre Centre and *Oliver!* the musical for children a little older will be at the Belconnen Theatre.

Don't miss this one in 2013

Tickets are on sale from 5 December for Christmas stocking fillers for the wonderful musical *The Phantom of the Opera* which shall be on at the Canberra Theatre in August 2013. Two outstanding national stars will head the line-up as the Phantom and Christine, with a national director and a superb cast of local actors and singers.

The launch is taking place at Benedict House in Queanbeyan, which has the ambience of candelabras, mirrors and

the exquisite theatrical look that befits the Phantom.

If you have never seen this magnificent show, book now and secure your seats as it will be such a popular show that you may not be able to get in later in the New Year. Should you have seen it before and liked the show ... go again. This will be a blockbuster of a production!

Calling all up and coming actors

Sophie Benassi is a popular well-known drama teacher at Canberra Girls' Grammar and is the creative director for *Off the Beaten Track* a workshop for musical theatre, and acting for camera and stage.

Two professional actors Olivia Simone (NIDA) and James Monarski (WAAPA) will be running the advanced acting workshop which will take place on 14, 15 and 16 December at Canberra Girls' Grammar in Deakin.

This workshop is for actors from 16+ with the cost being \$275 for theatre and musical theatre and \$375 for theatre/musical theatre and acting to camera with a professional showreel edited together. For further information, contact 0408 466 006.

For opera lovers and all others

If you went to *Voices in the Forest* you must go to *OperaMania* which will be in Canberra in April. For the first time in Australia, Russia's finest opera singers will be seen in a seamless theatrical presentation with the Moscow Novaya soloists, dancers and orchestra.

Tickets are available now from Ticketek for the three performances at the ANU School of Music 23, 24 and 25 April 2013. More information on these fabulous performers will be in my next column.

Meanwhile have a safe and happy holiday season!

— Hope to see you in a foyer very soon,
Coralie Wood

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of locally produced wines as well
as some international flavours
as well.

Catchment Champions village block yields cornucopia of fine food

by Heike Hahner



THE SOUTHERN Rivers Catchment Management Authority hosted its inaugural ‘Champions of the Catchment Event’ at the Garanvale Woolshed in November.

First up on the night of four winners were Bronwyn Richards and Helen Lynch and their garden at Wynlen House in Braidwood. They grow and sell organic home-grown produce such as vegetables and seasonal fruit, as well as ducks, chooks and turkeys and they also keep sheep and pigs on an alternate basis – an awe-inspir-

ing cornucopia from their small 1.5 acre backyard.

Following them was the Ramm/Tozer family. They received their award for the “long sighted, sustainable and innovative management” of their mixed sheep/cattle farm ‘Barwood’. Next was the Marshall family, who over the last 20 years has transformed a run-down dairy cattle farm, ‘Sunningdale’, into a productive haven for trees and animals alike, both domestic and native.

Wynlen House – stand-out example of a productive oasis

Bronwyn Richards and Helen Lynch’s story stood out, not just because of their innate positive energy and good-humoured approach to life and gardening, but also because they demonstrated how much can be achieved with relatively little. Bronwyn and Helen’s garden is only marginally bigger than the average backyard but it produces enough food to feed them, as well as allowing them to sell their produce at a stall in Braidwood.

Bronwyn has been gardening for more than 30 years and after moving to Braidwood, in 2002, she became interested in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), around 2005. According to the Organic Food Directory:

“CSA is a relatively new socio-economic model of food production, sales and distribution. It is thought to have originated simultaneously in Germany, Switzerland and Japan in the 1960s.

“Community Supported Agriculture projects involve the creation of a direct relationship between producers and consumers resulting in a mutual gain relationship. CSAs have been developed as a strategy to connect local farmers with local consumers; develop a regional food supply, strong local economy; maintain a sense of community; encourage land stewardship; and honour the knowledge and experience of growers and producers working with small to medium size farms.”



Bronwyn stopped full-time work in 2005 to dedicate herself to growing vegetables and livestock. She had established a group of consumers agreeing to buy a certain amount of produce from her on a weekly basis. When asked how she found these people she says, “Be bold. Talk to people. Tell them what you want to do.” She says people love the idea of fresh, locally grown organic produce and will support you. These days her business and her confidence in being able to make a living from it, has grown so much that she relies mainly on selling from her stall in Braidwood rather than commissions via a CSA system.

Bronwyn and Helen’s work is important as they are demonstrating that it is achievable for anyone of us who has a backyard or even just a balcony to produce organic good-quality food – a purely decorative suburban backyard can be changed into a productive oasis.

They offer their extensive knowledge and experience in both webinars and workshops and people are welcome to drop by for a visit. No-one who has a backyard and wants to eat organic fruit, vegies and meat should miss out on such an opportunity to see that size (of the backyard!) really does not matter. Go and be inspired.

To find out more about the Wynlen House garden and CSA go to:
www.wynlenhouse.com and
www.organicfooddirectory.com.au.

Every holiday season the **Bulletin** encourages readers to consider sending a consumer message and buy free-range turkey, chicken, ham and eggs or consider alternative foods and recipes (easy to find via the internet). This year, major animal welfare organisations are joined by well-known names to remind holiday-makers of the terrible lives of meat animals that endure factory-farming conditions behind closed doors.

Before you buy, showing us how it is

ANIMALS Australia has just launched a well-researched and high-profile campaign against factory farming. Featuring a cute little pig with wings, the campaign called ‘Make it possible... imagine a world without factory farming’ has the support of numerous Australian celebrities, with Missy Higgins in a key role.

Hugh Sheridan, Claire Hooper, Pat Rafter, Mick Molloy, Dave Hughes, Rove McManus, Lehmo, Dr Katrina Warren, Santo Cilauro and Lyn White also feature in video spots. The centre-piece is a big-screen commercial set to the music of the Broadway hit *West Side Story* song ‘Somewhere’ and a feature video – see www.makeitpossible.com.

The campaign focuses on factory farmed chickens (both meat and egg-laying), and pigs and asks consumers to make the right choice for animals. It points out that, in addition to the terrible cruelty to animals in intensive farming practices,

livestock production contributes to climate change, massive pollution, loss of biodiversity, antibiotic-resistance in humans and food shortages in the developing world by using grain that could otherwise feed many more people than are fed by the products of the industry.

Viewers hear exceptionally beautiful vocals alongside material filmed in factory farms in Australia, exposing terribly cruel practices with hens crammed into tiny cages or (meat) chickens struggling under the weight of their own bloated bodies and the miserable lives of pigs in crates.

We learn that many millions of animals are being bred simply to spend their lives without access to natural light or the outdoors and to suffer from birth until they die.

Some of the hardest scenes to watch are those showing cruelty to animals whose beaks are chopped or tails cut off without anaesthetic. But the video also focuses on positive change and what consumers can



achieve with buying power.

The campaign will be a further wakeup call for supermarkets, some of which are already hearing the consumer message, with Coles and Woolworths committing to stock only sow stall-free fresh pork, and Coles also various pork products, by 2013. Supermarkets have also responded with more free-range eggs as a result of consumer demand.

This campaign suggests that the only way to end factory farming is to reduce demand and that everybody can play a role. The campaign asks consumers to make the pledge that’s right for them – to refuse factory farmed products; eat fewer animal products or go meat-free – an increasingly popular trend as more people see the health benefits of a vegetarian diet.

For more information about the campaign see www.makeitpossible.com/facts/what-is-factory-farming.php.

Industry attempt to defy the public re free-range standards stalls with ACCC

ON 2 November, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) issued an initial negative assessment on an application by Australian Egg Corporation Limited for a trade mark certification that would redefine industry standards for free-range eggs to much higher density stocking.

The ACCC is proposing to not approve the application saying the proposed standards may mislead consumers about the nature of eggs described as ‘free-range’; and do not meet other legislative requirements.

In its initial assessment, the ACCC noted strong public interest. It received over 1,700 submissions from consumers, egg producers, industry associations and consumer and animal welfare organisations. The ACCC assessment has been



welcomed by animal welfare groups and by consumer advocacy group CHOICE.

Parties had one month from 22 November for further submissions before a final assessment. Meanwhile the Australian Poultry Industries Association has withdrawn its similar trade mark application to the ACCC concerning free-range chicken meat.

— Di Johnstone, former public servant and supporter of Animals Australia

Free-range meats are available at Bungendore Food Lovers (see p2); some major supermarkets, and local farmers markets. Eggs are readily available.

New report on barbaric sow stalls

VOICELESS, the animal protection institute, is sending its new scientific report *Science and Sense: the case for abolishing sow stalls* to every politician in Australia, calling for a legislative ban on government-sanctioned ‘sow stalls’ before the industry-preferred phase-out date of 2017.

In Australia, over 170,000 pregnant pigs (sows) are confined individually in stalls during each pregnancy. These small cages are barely larger than the sow’s body and prevent her from turning around. Sow stalls are already banned in the United Kingdom and Sweden, while New Zealand will implement a ban from the end of 2015. Seven US states have passed legislation to phase out sow stalls, and the entire European Union will apply a partial ban by 2013.

Read the report at www.voiceless.org.au/content/scientific-review-finds-sow-stalls-cruel-and-unnecessary.



Importance of independent media

Bulletin wins award (and)

Warmest Seasons Greetings!

A RECENT article from a US independent monthly magazine highlighted why, more than ever, we need independent media ... like the *Bulletin*.

The New York host of independent broadcast program *Democracy Now*, Amy Goodman, put it this way: “The clearest example right now is reporting on [superstorm] Sandy. The mainstream media, like us, has been broadcasting non-stop day and night about the superstorm, but, unlike us, they have rarely if at all mentioned climate change.”

Much the same has been happening in Australia with reporting on extreme drought, flood, bushfire, hurricanes, tornados – almost daily news fodder now but rarely are the connections made, by either politicians or media. Just-published major international reports on the possibility of catastrophic change with 4–6 degrees warming this

century, while countries continue to whistle in the wind, should give pause to every parent and cannot be relegated to opinion pieces and the occasional forum article.

There is almost no independent, locally owned media left in Australia. You may have heard that print itself is a threatened species (but never fear, we soldier on with your support). The mass media companies that own our local papers, News Limited and Rural Press/Fairfax, and their broadcasting counterparts, too seldom canvass the biggest issues facing our children in the future. Daily trivia and distraction and political cynicism are too easy.

A backward-looking state government’s funding attacks on public education *will* affect our children, as we explain p18. On that page too there’s a sobering analysis seldom discussed – the impact of meat production in the greenhouse gas emission mix.

From the Editor



Maria Taylor

Dear Editor ...

THE CARS THAT WILL EAT QUEANBEYAN

SO, Queanbeyan City Council wants to spend up to \$7 million it doesn’t have on more car parking, possibly a multi-level car park in the CBD. It’s difficult to see the sense in such a proposal that council resolved in November to investigate. Anyone who has bothered to visit, walk or cycle through the Collett St carpark knows it is rarely used. There are some 360 spaces. So where is the case for more car parking? Queanbeyan CBD has a lot of potential to attract more people to enjoy what remains of its ‘country town’ scale and heritage buildings, river, and views to the escarpment, and the expanding number of interesting places to shop and eat.

That doesn’t mean we want or need everyone to come in a car. Plenty of local people live close to the city and are within easy walking and cycling distance. But cycle parking is restricted to a few places – it’s not convenient to go to the supermarket, the post office and the chemist in one trip.

Cities should be for people, not cars. Wasn’t that part of the point of creating the ‘Crawford St lifestyle precinct’?

Adding more car parking spaces, which patently are not needed, in the CBD sends all the wrong messages.

— Katrina Willis (pedestrian, cyclist and car driver), Queanbeyan

CLASS ACTION SUIT AGAINST DEMANDING LEVIES

HERE’S THE LATEST on our Class Action against the LHPA because of its ‘demanding money with menaces’ methods of levying rates upon those of us who live outside of cities and towns on hectares of fewer than ten – then four – then ten again (depending on the LHPA zone in which you live – some are 400ha!!) and who haven’t turned their land into a funeral parlour or golf club etc.

Yes – the LHPA is still pursuing me for levies on our eight hectares, charged to us

HEARTLESS?

I DROVE to Bredbo a couple of weeks ago to enter my dogs in sheepdog trialling. The drive there was hell as I narrowly avoided having an accident twice. But to top it all off, just when we were about to drive into Bredbo’s 50kph zone, someone had smashed into a kangaroo so hard that the body was an almost unrecognisable mess in the middle of the road. The kangaroo’s heart was lying a good 20m away from the body on the road. Had it been propelled there by the impact or did an animal carry it there?



Who knows? But a more important question is ‘who cares’? Dozens of drivers passed the smashed carcass and its lone heart. No-one stopped to remove either it or the animal. And when I came by again 8 hours later the carcass was still there but the heart was gone.

Where are our hearts in this matter? I am North European, and although we have a lot of traffic, cars and wildlife, seeing a dead animal on the road is a rarity and they are rarely larger than a bird, rat or rabbit.

As an independent local paper, we have been able to give good space to stories like this (as well as much local good news and features). Animal issues are another arena where we tell you what is really happening. Thus we revealed earlier this year the hidden facts about the huge ‘harvest’ and ‘culling’ of our national icon, the kangaroo.

Bulletin wins journalism award

I’m delighted therefore to tell you that in late November the *Bulletin* and I were recognised with an award for outstanding journalism by the animal protection institute Voiceless for our story on the national kangaroo ‘harvest’: *Hushed up in 2006: New evidence of flawed science, wishful counting as kangas die for petfood*.



Will the kanga go the way of the koala?



There were tens of millions of koalas once too, until we confidently dealt with them. The *Bulletin*’s award-winning story on flawed science and dodgy counting in the kangaroo harvest industry documented that in 2001, 58 million kangaroos were estimated nationally. Nine years later, with no abatement of killing during the drought, the numbers had fallen to 25 million. There has been no population recovery with better conditions since. Instead, new shooting areas continue to be opened up in Qld and NSW (including our area) keeping the official statistics up. Read the kangaroo archives at districtbulletinonline.wordpress.com.

I am pretty certain that many tourists from overseas countries would be shocked by the carnage on our roads especially when driving into Canberra, our nation’s capital, where we are regularly greeted by the hideously contorted and mauled carcasses of kangaroos. Our roads are littered with carcasses of animals. We are used to the carnage and think nothing of passing up to 20 dead animals on a trip, say from Braidwood to Canberra.

We know from people who live in war zones, that they become desensitised to seeing dead and dying humans and animals. Is this what is happening to Australian drivers? Are we losing perspective of what is normal and acceptable to witness when driving down a road or the highway?

To witness dozens of dead wombats, roos, wallabies as well as birds, reptiles and turtles and **not** feel sadness and regret at their loss is **not** a normal human emotional response.

Some scientists and philosophers such as Richard Dawkins, would argue that empathy is our greatest asset as a species. To empathise means to feel someone else’s pain and loss. It also initiates, normally, a reaction of wanting to prevent further loss, wanting to help those in need. Losing empathy is losing what makes us human and prevents pro-social acts and kindness to others.

It is a real worry to me to see the apathy in drivers regarding the killing of wildlife. Today a turtle or a kangaroo, tomorrow a wombat or a straying sheep; what will it be next week?

— Heike Hahner, Braidwood

We were in distinguished company at the Sydney event with the Governor of NSW Marie Bashir and former High Court Judge. Michael Kirby addressing (with humour and conviction) the new social justice movement: animal welfare.

The grand print prize went to Anna Krien’s essay *Us And Them: On the importance of animals* which appeared in *Quarterly Essay* – another lonely example of independent media in this country.

ABC’s 7.30 Report won broadcast prizes with a story on the cruelty of Aboriginal hunting of turtles and dugongs that has led to a change in Queensland law, and with an expose of duck farms.

I look forward to our return in February and meanwhile wish you, your families and your animals a peaceful and loving holiday season. ■

About trees and fungi

Re: article *Can two centuries of ecosystem tampering be put in reverse?* November *Bulletin*, p19

A LITTLE background on the Mulligans Flat experiment might be of interest.

Most Australian trees have mycorrhizal fungi symbionts living on their roots. The tree leaks sugars into the rhizosphere. This is food for the fungi. In return the fungi acts as a root system, supplying water and nutrients to the tree.

Pre fox and cat this country was occupied by millions of small marsupials who burrowed to reach the fungal fruit bodies (truffles).

In doing so they spread spores to new trees, buried leaf litter and kept the soil permeable to rain. This system was indeed millions of years old.

Since fox and cat the marsupials are gone. Leaf litter builds up as bushfire fuel, and rain runs off the compacted earth to flood downhill.

Woodland health is in decline. Trees suffer nutrient scarcity as they lose their fungi partners.

Bringing bettongs back to a feral predator proof area will give us insight into the environmental services once provided by these busy burrowers.

We may then realise quite how important it is to the landscape to research new, better and kinder ways of controlling feral predators.

Continued next page

Singapore was a revelation that Overall loved: "the variety, the absence of red tape, the business encouragement and growth, that's how it was in Singapore".

Then Peter Abeles' TNT got hold of McIlwraith "and it was Dillingham all over again". Overall returned to Sydney as general manager of Ansett Air Freight, but his heart wasn't in it.

By 1990 he had left the private sector to become chief executive officer of the Ambulance Service of NSW at a time when operational systems and controls were first computerised. He liked it very much. "It wasn't all about the bottom line, but about service to the community."

Later at the Australian Red Cross he headed an 80-member head-office staff and was the only male. He jokes that new frontiers were again called for with an affirmative action program for men.

While Overall is quick to credit the times for his ability to go from one top administrative position to another (it's now hard to recall the profusion of jobs and opportunities in the heady '80s), there had to be a steely core and ambition as well, as evident from



the fact that he doorknocked all of Queanbeyan twice before he first ran for mayor in 2008 after one term on council.

That was after he met his wife Nichole here and they decided to stay in Queanbeyan. They looked at communities up and down the coast and found that Queanbeyan felt the most comfortable. After all, Tim had known it all his life and saw much potential for urban planning. They now live in Greenleigh with their two sons, a Labrador, and a contingent of city chooks.

Mayor is like board chair

Overall says he has no time for party politics

in local government, and sees the mayor's role as akin to a chairman of the board delivering on policies of the board (*council*) supported by high quality staff.

His independent council tickets have drawn on small business, the public service and members of cultural and sporting communities within Queanbeyan. Still, there is criticism from some community activists and from some former councillors – Labor and Green party members at the forefront.

Critical issues include Queanbeyan's road-focused transport planning and routes and community engagement when it comes

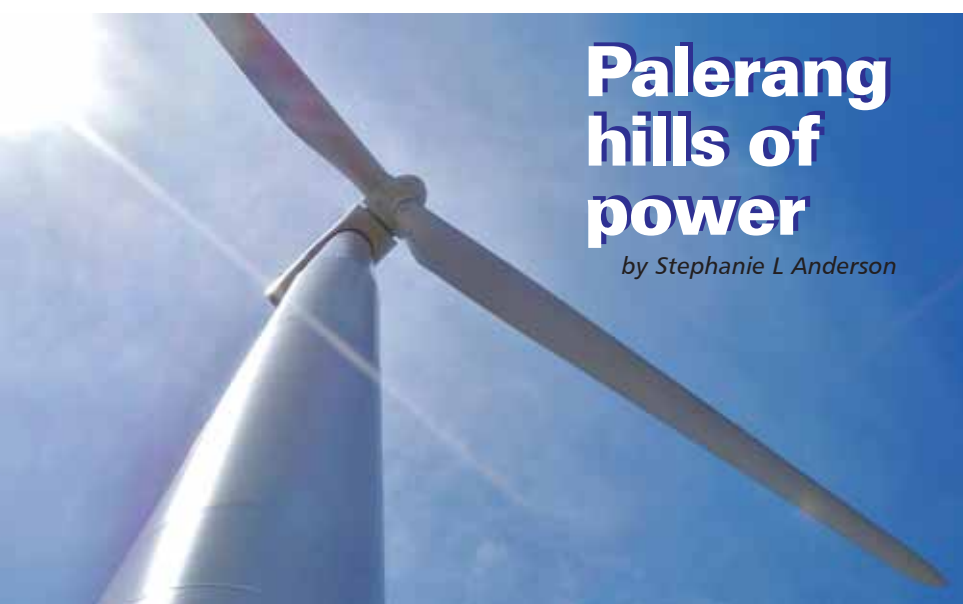
to big developments. Overall dismisses this as coming from a handful of disgruntled residents, particularly in regard to criticisms of the Ellerton Drive extension ring road. Indeed, the ballot outcome says he inspires confidence in the general electorate and that's all that counted to hand him the reins again.

Queanbeyan's biggest challenges

What are the biggest challenges for Queanbeyan in the next four years? Not surprisingly, Overall nominates growth and development so lifestyle and the country/city feel are not compromised.

He thinks the model of complete satellite towns offered by Googong and Tralee may be the answer. Efficient transport and cross-border issues with the ACT are obviously big items. (*Already 60 percent of the Queanbeyan workforce works in the ACT and those new towns are likely to increase that proportion.*)

At the Riverside Café in Queanbeyan, the owner comes over to congratulate Overall. He thinks the Mayor is doing a fine job and voters, he says, "can see progress, you're doing stuff and you make yourself accessible". ■



JUST OUTSIDE Bungendore is the Woodlawn Wind Farm. There have been many arguments against the development since it was proposed. I visited the wind farm to investigate claims that the turbines were ugly, loud and basically useless. My visit also coincided with Renewable Energy Day.

The Woodlawn Wind Farm is made up of 23 turbines, with another 67 at the nearby Capital Wind Farm, both operated by Infigen Energy.

The turbines stand 80 metres tall, with their three blades measuring 45 metres each. It all makes for one gigantic structure.

The turbines themselves are made from recyclable materials, and after their 25-year life span, every part will be either refurbished or recycled.

As I walked up to the mighty structures, I expected to hear ... well I'm not exactly sure what I expected to hear, perhaps the air thudding as the blades turned. In fact, the only sound I could hear was the pleasant sound of the wind filling my ears. As far as I could tell, the turbines made no audible sound at all.

According to Infigen, the sound made by the turbines is of a similar level and frequency to that of the ocean.

Infigen has been in business for almost 10 years and is responsible for six wind farms throughout Australia. Every year for Renewable Energy Day, they run tours of their farms for the public. One man I spoke to had been trying to get on a tour for the

last three years but couldn't get a ticket due to the popularity.

Another couple I spoke to were investigating building their own smaller turbine to power their property in an environmentally friendly and affordable way.

A young German au pair I met at the wind farm told me she came along just to admire the beautiful views.

This year, the Woodlawn Wind Farm had around 320 visitors (including three schools) on Renewable Energy Day.

Each turbine powers 1,000 homes

When thinking about exactly how useful wind turbines are at producing power, I consulted Infigen's Construction Contracts Administrator, Wendy Moloney.

"Each turbine here can power 1,000 homes ... [however], wind farms are not yet a complete alternative to more traditional power generation method."

She said that the power generated by the Woodlawn Wind Farm is fed into the grid, making the grid greener. "We are also looking into battery power so that we can become less reliant on fossil fuels."

As for claims that the wind farms are ruining the natural beauty of the Australian environment, I'll let you be the judge of that.

Personally, I like the way they look, and what they are doing for the environment makes me optimistic for Palerang's green future.

DEAR EDITOR

Cont'd from p16

Roos have fared much better than bettongs since white man arrived. They are no longer constrained by limited surface water and no longer hunted by marsupial lions or Aborigines.

Too many roos in the research enclosure would compromise the survival of the precious Bettongs.

For wonderful reading on the subject please find books by Prof Jim Trappe and Dr Andrew Claridge.

— Peter A Marshall, Reidsdale

(Ed note: let's not forget the impact of humans on both bettongs and kangaroos. Land clearing has had huge impact on all forms of native animals and plants and one daresay that 'harvesting' 'culling' and the motor car more than match Aboriginal hunting and the Marsupial Lion as predators of kangaroos.)



Speedy solar car by Stephanie L Anderson

ON Renewable Energy Day, Bungendore was treated to a visit by the world's fastest solar car and the Sunswift team who built her. On 7 January 2011 Sunswift IVy set the Guinness World Record for a solar-powered land vehicle when it travelled at a speed of 88km per hour on direct sunlight alone, no batteries!

Sunswift IVy was built by a team of students from the University of New South Wales.

Renewable energy cars don't come cheap: for materials alone a solar car like Sunswift IVy will set you back around \$350,000. That's equivalent to the cost of roughly 5,500 tanks of fuel in your average car.

Becoming the fastest solar car on Earth last year was just the beginning, though.

The forty students have their sights set on the World Solar Challenge in 2013, a 3,000km race through Australia's red centre, from Darwin to Adelaide.

According to the students involved, the world record speed is nowhere near Sunswift IVy's top speed, and they are optimistic about their chances in the big

race in 2013.

With this price tag, a speedy solar car is not for us yet. However, the technology is evolving so quickly that an effective, affordable solar car for the masses might not be too far off.

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Biggest cuts to education in a generation

Community forum hears stark facts

EDUCATION is a fiery topic, and when cuts are announced it only gets hotter – like the recent announcement by the NSW Government to slash \$1.7 billion from the education budget.

With that in mind, the Queanbeyan Teachers Association hosted a Public Education Community Forum in mid November. The line-up of speakers included Maurie Mulheron, President of the NSW Teachers Federation; Dr Mike Kelly, Federal Member for Eden-Monaro; Sharon Baxter-Judge, parent from Bungendore Public School and former P&C president; and Trevor Cobbold, economist and National Convenor of Save Our Schools.

Mr Mulheron presented some stark facts about NSW policy and cuts that will effect the education system, saying the public school system will be the worst effected.

“\$1.7 billion is being cut from the education budget in NSW, of which \$1.6 billion is public education,” Mr Mulheron said. “The private school system has been given a surface scratch. This is not a campaign about all the schools, those schools have only had a freeze, but we’ve had sackings, people sacked from our system.”

Mr Mulheron says that one of the worst parts of the changes so far has been watching the decimation of funding to TAFE colleges.

“Our TAFE colleges, only in the last fortnight, have suffered 800 job losses, all teaching positions,” Mr Mulheron said.

Many of those losses were at Ultimo, the TAFE college in Sydney, where many courses have been deleted altogether as a result of the funding cuts. The optical dispensing class, in particular, was the only course of its type in NSW.

Dr Kelly has been passionate about the role of TAFE in NSW education, and says that the state government is being shortsighted: “We believe the key to this nation’s survival, the key to stability, and the key to being able to compete in this very compet-



From far left: Trevor Cobbold, Sharon Baxter-Judge, Mike Kelly, Maurie Mulheron.

itive region is to have the best education and skills.”

Bungendore parent Sharon Baxter-Judge decided to do some research of her own, after becoming suspicious about

federal and state governments insisting that it is the future of education, while much research does not back this up.

Trevor Cobbold has looked at different studies of school autonomy around the

“TAFE colleges have suffered 800 job losses (in November), all teaching positions.”

some of the claims. She presented the forum with facts and figures on enrolments and funding arrangements for regional primary and secondary schools (including Queanbeyan and ACT) which reflect the pressures of an increasing population while numbers of schools and other resources have stayed static and are now to be cut. “I am totally horrified that any government could cut \$1.7 billion from education, our biggest asset,” she said.

Research does not back claimed advantages of school autonomy

The topic of school autonomy – which is the backbone of the NSW Government’s *Local Schools, Local Decisions* policy – has been a hotly contested one, with both

world; from charter schools (independent schools that receive public money) in the USA, to Free Schools (privately operated publicly-funded schools) in Sweden and academies (publicly-funded schools with greater autonomy than other state schools) in England.

He said that the move toward school autonomy is being driven by the short-term agenda to cut costs and a misplaced faith in school autonomy delivering a long-term extension of the education market.

“The focus on school autonomy ignores the most pressing fundamental challenge facing Australian and NSW education in particular – this is to reduce the massive gap in school outcomes between rich and poor.”

“The wave of evidence from the most sophisticated studies of charter schools is that there is no difference in results between them and traditional public schools,” Mr Cobbold said. “Indeed, some studies show that charter schools do worse ... The results for disadvantaged students in academy schools in England were no better than those of disadvantaged students in non-academy schools, and initially, those schools were established in low-income areas for the reason of improving results for disadvantaged students.”

“The cuts to the education budget can only make this situation worse,” he said. He expressed what many in the room were feeling: “I think we should all be dumbfounded and outraged.”

Premier ignores combined voices of NSW education system

Local voices are not alone on this issue. The NSW Education Alliance includes educational groups from both state and private schools, representing parents, teachers and principals. At a meeting with Premier Barry O’Farrell and Education Minister Adrian Piccoli in late November, 12 Alliance representatives came away “astounded that the Premier would continue trying to justify the biggest cuts to education in a generation when faced by the combined opposition of virtually every person involved in the NSW education system”.

— Report by Karen Lovatt with Sonja Chandler and Sharon Baxter-Judge

How are the cuts justified?

TREASURER Mike Baird’s first budget was revealed to have been littered with accounting and data entry errors that meant his deficit of \$337 million should in fact be a surplus of \$680 million.

In a scathing assessment of how the government misplaced \$1 billion, Auditor-General Peter Achterstraat said “NSW is a billion-dollar business, it is not a school tuckshop,” “A \$1 million error is unfortunate, a \$10 million error is undesirable but a \$100 million error is totally unacceptable.” ... Opposition Leader John Robertson said the auditor’s findings showed that the \$4.8 billion in cuts from education and health were “unjustified”.

— excerpted from The Australian 1 November 2012

Climate change: the elephant on the table

SOME politicians are still trying to deny the fact that human actions are changing the Earth’s climate. They are like the archetypal Fool who refuses to believe the cliff is there and so blithely strolls off the edge of it.

Saner politicians endlessly argue about the best way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They are not going to save us either. Their scientific advisers told them 50 years ago that they needed to start phasing out fossil fuels. They did not listen and now many scientists believe it is already too late.

Meanwhile, few people seem to have noticed the classic ‘elephant on the table’ in this discussion, the fact that ending the burning of fossil fuels will address only a quarter of the climate change problem.

Although it is widely acknowledged

that up to a half of the additional greenhouse emissions for which humans are

responsible are from livestock, no-one seems to want to admit that the only way of eliminating those emissions is to phase out livestock.

Need to restore and revegetate

Secondly, it is no use just phasing out all our extra emissions, including those from livestock. The other half of the solution is to restore the capacity of the Earth’s own greenhouse to absorb emissions. The only way we can do that is by revegetating the half of the world’s land surface that is currently being used to graze or grow crops for livestock.

Most scientists now believe that, before plants evolved, the Earth’s atmosphere was substantially carbon dioxide (which is toxic to all animal life and also creates a ‘blanket’ which traps heat in the atmosphere). Through

photosynthesis, plants changed the atmosphere to about 20 percent oxygen.

Since then, the oxygen released by plants and the greenhouse gases released from the lungs, gills and bowels of living animals, from the decay of dead things, from fire and from the earth itself (eg volcanoes) have maintained a perfect balance in which the vegetation can feed, while the animals can breathe.

Twice as much forest ten thousand years ago

Now, however, we are burning the fossilised remains of the plant and animal life that covered this planet 60 or more million years ago. The carbon from this burning is being added to the greenhouse emissions from all the life, and other sources of emissions, on the planet today.

Around ten thousand years ago, the Earth’s vegetation might have managed to devour all this extra “food”, because there was twice as much forest back then. But that is not the case now. Humans have cleared more than 50 percent of the world’s forests, mainly to feed livestock.

As well as being one of the main



PHOTO: RE-FOREST.NET

Catchup on spring flowers

In November we ran a feature by Jo Walker on Spring flowers but failed to accompany it with the proper related photos. So we are running some identifying spring flowers now, related to Jo's November article. Many readers may recognise some of these flowers around the block.



Ranunculus lappaceus
Australian Buttercup



Leptospermum multicaule
Silver Tea Tree



Pultenaea microphylla
Spreading Bush-pea



Prostanthera rotundifolia
Round-leaved Mintbush



Stypandra glauca
Graceful Blue-lily



Comesperma volubile >
Blue Love Creeper



Leucochrysum albicans (yellow form)
Sunray

The Weedpatch

Diary of a dedicated non-poisoning weeder – Rose-Marie Johnson

Weeds: where to start?

WHO HAS enough time to tackle all their weeds? Computer modelling has shown that when there are insufficient resources to hit the whole outbreak of disease, pest animals or weeds, going for the worst area will always fail. The best strategy is containment from the perimeter.

This corresponds with my effective strategy of using thorough methods to take out the scattered weeds, preventing new patches; working from the sparser edges of infestations inwards; and using quick though less thorough methods to reduce seeding in the densest areas at least enough to make some headway from year to year.

It's hardest to make any difference where the infestation is densest, and that's also where the seed bank is greatest, so the infestation will be most persistent anyway.

At first the densest areas of our **Barley Grass** went to seed, but much of the obvious drifts of seed could be scraped up with trowel and dustpan and now we only have a few plants here and there. It's worth suppressing because the penetrating seed is injurious to pets and livestock, resulting in expensive vet bills.

Lower priority weeds should only be done if there are few enough to significantly suppress them without taking much time away from higher priority weeds. For example, we have too many toxic **Catsear** and **Flatweeds** to impact significantly, so my efforts are better spent on weeds that *can* effectively be brought under control.

Also, we have too much **Chilean Needle Grass**, so it's just as well the specified control measure for this noxious weed only prevents sale, distribution and propagation and doesn't require suppression.

Critical time for Serrated Tussock

Of the noxious weeds requiring suppression, **Serrated Tussock** is now critical and easily distinguished by the purplish haze of seed heads, which should be taken away.

African Lovegrass is becoming more obvious as it flowers. **St John's Wort** is flowering and easy to distinguish from the darker native. **Horehound** is best done before it ripens, as the burrs then become a nuisance. **Paterson's Curse** is past the optimal stage for slashing (when 75 percent have green seed), and already has ripe black seed.

With a small enough infestation, effectiveness can be improved by using hedge clippers and bagging seedy tops before slashing. Dense infestations can be raked into piles after slashing to reduce seed viability by composting. This year there seem to be many small Paterson's Curse plants flowering close to the ground, so hitting low with a brush cutter would be more effective than slashing with a tractor.

Whew!

Other weeds worth suppressing include poisonous **Senecios** (especially the noxious **Fireweed**), **Capeweed**, **Scarlet Pimpernel**, **Nightshade**, **Mallows**, **Dandelions** and **Wireweed**; nasty or nuisance seeded **Storksbills**, **Dock**, **Sheep's Burr** and **Narrow-leaf Clover**; and invasive **Thistles**, **Skeleton Weed**, **Wild Sage**, **Fleabane**, **Goatsbeard**, **Salsify**, **Hawksbeards**, **Shepherd's Purse**, **Mustard Weed**, **Yorkshire Fog Grass**, **Cress**, **Willowherb**, **Fat Hen**, **Catchfly**, **Chickweed** and **Creeping Speedwell**.

Hope you're taking care to be sun-safe and snake-safe whilst working outdoors.



Across the radar screen (Anon.)

Good old days

SOMEONE asked the other day, "What was your favourite 'fast food' when you were growing up?"

"We didn't have fast food when I was growing up," I informed him. "Except for fish and chip shops and we ate it all so unhygienically from newspaper wrappers."

"All the other food was slow."
"C'mon, seriously... where did you eat?"
"It was a place called *home*," I explained.
"Mum cooked every day and when Dad got home from work, we sat down together at the dining room table, and if I didn't like what she put on my plate, I was allowed to sit there until I did like it."

By this time, the lad was laughing so hard I was afraid he was going to suffer serious internal damage, so I didn't tell him the part about how I had to have permission to leave the table.

But here are some other things I would have told him about my childhood if I'd figured his system could have handled it: Some parents NEVER owned their own house, never wore jeans, never set foot on a golf course, never travelled out of the country and credit cards had not been invented.

My parents never drove me to school. I had my mother's bicycle that weighed probably 50 pounds, and only had one speed, (slow).

We didn't have a television in our house until the Queen's Coronation. It was, of course, black and white, and the station went off the air at 10pm, after playing the national anthem and epilogue; it came back on the air at about 4pm and there was usually locally produced news and everything was live ... or film.

I never had a telephone in my room. The only phone was on a party line. Before you could dial, you had to listen and make sure some people you didn't know weren't already using the line. Pizzas were not delivered to our home... but milk was, and the bread. All newspapers were delivered by paper-boys – many of us delivered newspaper's, seven-days-a-week, and had to get up at 6AM every morning.

Film stars kissed with their mouths shut. At least, they did in the films. There were no movie ratings because all movies were responsibly produced for everyone to enjoy viewing, without profanity or violence (except cowboy films) or almost anything offensive. If you grew up in a generation before there was fast food, you may want to share some of these memories with your children or grandchildren. Just don't blame me if they bust a gut laughing. Growing up isn't what it used to be, is it?

might yet buy us a little more time to save ourselves.

In the end, however, it is still up to us to save ourselves.

We need to stop talking about 'reductions' in greenhouse gas emissions and start talking about total phase-outs. Even more importantly, we need to start restoring to forest every centimetre of the Earth's surface that has been stripped to graze livestock.

For this to happen, our governments must create financial incentives for consumers to move to an entirely plant-based diet, and for industry to mass produce vegan meat substitutes.

We have had decades to explore our options and now we know exactly what we have to do. All that remains is to do it.

Ed note: readers can go to www.globalagriculture.org/report-topics/meat.html for more on the topic of meat production and greenhouse gases.

mechanisms for keeping our atmosphere breathable and our climate tolerable, forests are also important for retaining surface water and for stabilising soil. Even more importantly, forests are the Earth's most diverse terrestrial ecosystems. Diversity of species gives an ecosystem its depth and stamina, its resilience to loss and change.

The absence of so much land vegetation is not only multiplying the speed of the climate disaster, it is also threatening the biosphere from every other direction.

So the question is: is an environmental apocalypse inescapable?

What the data show

The truth is we simple don't know. What the data tell us is grim indeed. Of this I can personally assure you, having, for many years, compiled and analysed data across all issues for State of the Environment Reporting on behalf of the Australian Government. But there is also much we do not know. Natural processes



... which again showcased amazing quality and variety of work from regional quiltmakers. The Bulletin will catch up with master craftsperson Jenny Bowker in the new year. Jenny exhibited her portrait quilts at the exhibition to much acclaim and talked about her life of travel and quilting in her keynote address. Sounds like a winning combination!

Christmas recipes



Caesar Salad

4 servings

- For this famous recipe from California, leave **1 clove garlic**, peeled and sliced in **½ cup of olive oil**; none other for 24hrs.
- Saute 1 cup cubed **French bread** in 2 tablespoons of the garlic oil, above.
- Break up **1 large Cos lettuce** into 6cm length. Wash and dry well, then place in a salad bowl.
- Sprinkle over it: **1½ teaspoons salt**; **¼ teaspoon dry mustard**; a generous grating of **black pepper**.
- [Optional: 5 fillets of **anchovy**, either sliced finely or mashed to a paste. A few drops of **Worcestershire sauce**.]
- Add 3 tablespoons **wine vinegar** and the remaining 6 tablespoons garlic oil.
- Cook **1 egg** gently in simmering water for 1 to 1½ minutes; or use raw.
- Drop the egg from the shell onto the ingredients in the bowl.
- Squeeze the juice of **1 lemon** over the egg.
- Add the croutons and 2 to 3 tablespoons of **Parmesan cheese**.
- Toss the salad well. Serve immediately.

— Joy of Cooking



Maple & Tarragon Sweet Potatoes

Serves 8

Maple syrup and tarragon, a sweet herb, are wonderful enhancements for the flavour of sweet potatoes.

Ingredients:

- 2 kilos sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced 5mm thick
- ½ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup margarine, melted
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons dried tarragon

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 175°C.
- Arrange the sweet potato slices in overlapping rows in an oiled shallow casserole dish.
- In a small bowl, combine the syrup, margarine, juice, cinnamon, and salt. Pour evenly over the potatoes, and sprinkle the tarragon over the top.
- Cover with lid or foil and bake, covered, for 25 to 30 minutes, or until readily pierced with a fork but still firm. Bake another 20 to 25 minutes, uncovered, or until glazed and golden around the edges.

Beyond the Ice for You

by Abby Poore (About Abby's story, p5)

THE SURROUNDING landscape lit up in a brilliant pale blue as I flopped to the feeding grounds for a quick snack. The air is cool against my fur, but I feel no chill. My breath comes out in clouds that hover around my head, before disappearing. Mornings such as these make my heart stop.

After a quick snack of fish, I wriggle onto a large chunk of ice directly in line with the sun. I'll bask in its presence for awhile, and then make my way back to Caspar, that annoying, ever-hungry pup of mine. His father doesn't do anything, just sits on his blubbery flippers and watches that hole in the ice. So I have to feed Caspar, watch him, and perform all the other tasks of being a mother.

After an hour or so, he's awake.

Great.

As soon as I wriggled over, he started wailing for food. Typical!

"Ok, keep your whiskers on!" I exclaim.

"I won't, if you don't give me food RIGHT NOW!" he rants, then flops back onto the ice, exhausted by his effort. With a sigh, I begin my journey to the sea...

Right now, I am just waiting for those little feathery bundles to hop along into the water and make a nice breakfast. Come on, stop dawdling! *Finally!* Now, I strike!

As I dive into the icy water, all those little suckers swim for their lives! As if they'll get far! I swoop in, making them all scatter everywhere. Too easy!

There's one lagging behind, so I glide after it. It panics, evades, then...yes! The feather ball is hanging in my jaws, blood trickling uselessly. Too slow! I clamber out of the water, to home.

Caspar grabs the carcass. I snatch it back. He just looks at me with those large, dark eyes, then starts to wail. "Oh, *shut up!*" I growl, ripping off a flipper for him. He starts munching away. No thanks. Typical!

By the time Caspar had finished, he was still hungry. "You're not getting anymore! It's all I caught!" I say, exhausted.

"Well, maybe you should catch some more!" he retorts, sinking his needle-sharp teeth into my flipper.

"Back off!" I thunder, towering over him.

His eyes, those vast black pools of darkness, fill with hurt.

"Maybe I will," he says quietly, wriggling off into the distance.

"Fine!" I shout, wriggling off as well.

I feel really bad after yelling at Caspar, and I've decided to go looking for him. It's been hours since I last saw him. Off to the sea.

Caspar, in his own rage, did not see them approaching. Only when he heard their voices, did he realise it was too late.

"Ugh, it's so damn *cold*."

"Get over it, Bob. We're here for a reason."

Humans!

He turned to escape, but they spotted him.

"Hey, Jim, look, a leopard seal pup!"

"Too right!" exclaimed the one called Jim, bringing forth a crate which had been hidden behind his back. "Come here my little —." Jim screamed as Caspar bit his finger. Bob cuffed him on the side of the head, knocking him unconscious, before stuffing the pup into the crate.

"CASPAR!" I screamed to the open landscape. No reply. The ice covering the sea had been too thick, so I'd had to go on flipper. The ice here is too rugged, I'll never find him!

Suddenly, a Skua landed, thudding onto the ice. "Scraark! Humans being on ice!"

"Thanks." I replied, then tried to eat it. Screeching its fury at me, it took off into the sky. Despair hit me like a blizzard. Caspar had been captured!

Caspar awoke to a room filled with warm air. Wincing at the pain of the blow to his head, he butted it against the crate's door. Locked. Suddenly, light bulbs lit up in his head.

Butting his head against the crate again, it moved slowly across the desk. Caspar squealed as the crate toppled over, racing towards the floor. It was made of cheap plastic, so it broke on impact. Freedom!

"Caspar..." I tried, but my throat was raw. Despair washed over me again as I realized the truth. I almost missed a figure stumbling through the snow. Caspar! Sickly and tired, he careened into my flippers. He gave a soft moan, as the twinkle in his eyes extinguished. Muzzle opened in a silent moan, he died, the pain proving too much.

As I lowered his limp body into the water, my only thought was: Beyond the Ice for You. ■



Nicole Walker-Jones of Queanbeyan shot this winning image, 'Canberra Balloon Festival', for ActewAGL's 2013 Postcards From Your Town community calendar.

QUEANBEYAN COUNCIL PAYS POLLUTION FINE TO LANDCARE PROJECT

FIVE YEARS after the event, Queanbeyan City Council was convicted in the Land and Environment Court in September for polluting the Queanbeyan River in November 2007 and ordered to pay a total of \$424,189 in penalties and costs.

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) brought legal proceedings after approximately one million litres of untreated sewage was released from the council's Morisset Street facility.

Sewage entered the Queanbeyan and Molonglo Rivers causing significant contamination and downstream in the ACT, it led to the closure of the Molonglo Reach water-ski area and Lake Burley Griffin for several days.

In her judgement, Justice Rachel Pepper ordered the council to pay \$80,000 to the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority to fund the *Numeralla East Landscape Project*.

The council was also ordered to pay the prosecutor's costs of \$343,000, the EPA's investigative costs and expenses of \$1,189, and to publish the fact of its conviction in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Canberra Times* and the *Queanbeyan Age*.

The *Numeralla East Landscape Project*, funded by the NSW Government through the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority, is a three-year conservation project to improve fish habitat and water quality in the catchment.

EPA Chief Environmental Regulator Mark Gifford said today's outcome was positive, but avoiding such environmental pollution would have been far preferable.

The agency urges the public to report all pollution to the EPA Environment Line on 131 555.

Extenuating circumstances

Queanbeyan City Council's General Manager, Gary Chapman, said the council had pleaded guilty, explaining the circumstances.

"The sewage spill on 5 November 2007 was caused by the old Morisset St pumping station malfunctioning. The telemetry system (when in alarm mode) failed to send a text message to on-call staff due to Telstra altering its SMS protocols without advising Council.

"Following the 2007 incident, council built a \$9 million state-of-the-art sewage pumping station which was opened in 2009. The old station was decommissioned.

"The penalty imposed by the EPA will not have an impact on Queanbeyan's ratepayers as council has \$23 million in its sewer fund where the penalty will be paid from."

— from EPA and Queanbeyan Council press releases

Early summer stargazing

DECEMBER and January see the return of summer's bright stars and the warm temperatures with which to venture outside. This season's bagful of bright stars is no coincidence for the Earth faces the outer edge of our Milky Way Galaxy, and hence the nearby stars of our own Spiral Arm.

The stars in December and January

Rising in the east is white Sirius, the brightest star in the whole sky, with blue-white Canopus (*the second brightest*) higher up. The constellation of Orion has returned, with its unmistakable line of three bright stars towards the north-east (the so-called Orion's Belt). Further overhead is blue-white Achenar, with white Fomalhaut towards the west. The map with this article (9pm on 1 January) will help to identify them.

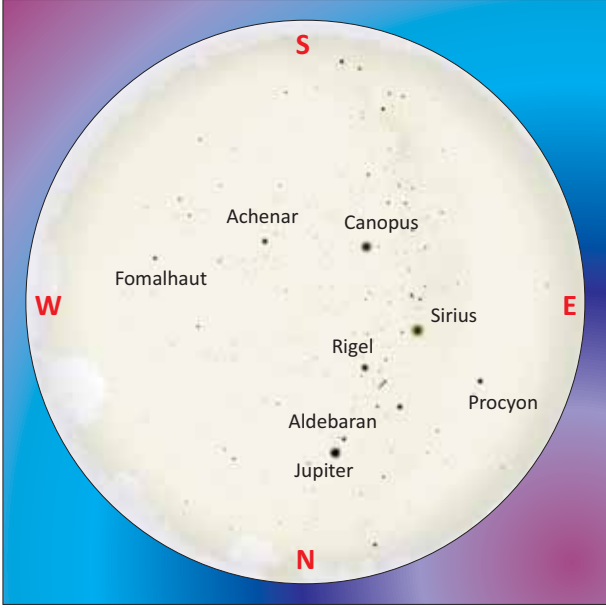
Lower in the north is the bright beacon of the planet Jupiter, with the star Aldebaran nearby. Can you see a colour difference between yellowish Jupiter and reddish Aldebaran? Can you also see that Aldebaran twinkles whereas Jupiter does not?

Aldebaran is the brightest star in the constellation Taurus, so called by the ancients after the Arabic for 'eye of the Bull'. Aldebaran is a Red Giant star, relatively nearby at 65 light years, or 614,900,000,000 km. It is 44 times the diameter of our Sun, and shines with the light output of 425 Suns.

Interestingly, Aldebaran is an example of what the Sun itself will evolve into in

— Star Search — with Dr David Weldrake

another 4 billion years or so. Have a scan around Aldebaran with a pair of binoculars; you will see two star clusters, the Hyades and Pleiades, clusters of newly born stars which will be further described next month.



The planets in December and January

The planet Jupiter is December and January's highlight, being at its brightest and best for the year. Jupiter is the bright, yellowish 'star' towards the north-east after sunset, and lies in the constellation Taurus. The largest planet in the Solar System, Jupiter is more than ten times the Earth's diameter, and has such a huge bulk that more than a thousand Earths could be fit inside it.

Being a huge ball of hydrogen and helium gas, Jupiter has no solid surface. If we could drop down below the cloud layers of this 'Gas Giant' the pressure and temperature would gradually build up, with the gas turning liquid and eventually metallic.

We would continue to fall until we are utterly crushed by the pressure. Deep in the centre of Jupiter is a core of metallic hydrogen, about the size of Earth and under immense pressure. This pressure is, however, not sufficient for the hydrogen to start a fusion reaction. If it were, then Jupiter would shine as a star in its own right.

Through a telescope we can see the top layers of Jupiter's clouds. These appear as two distinct bands straddling its equator, with many smaller cloud features often visible (for example the 'Great Red Spot', a 300-year-old hurricane three times the diameter of the Earth). Jupiter's 'day' lasts for just over 10 hours, compared to the Earth's 24. This fast rotation causes it to be squashed at the poles, clearly seen through a telescope, and the cloud features noticeably move if we look at it over the time of an hour or so.

We can also see Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto, the four largest moons of Jupiter. Can you make them out in a pair of binoculars? These moons look like stars, and they move around Jupiter from night to night, sometimes passing in front of the planet and casting a shadow onto the cloud tops beyond. Ganymede is the largest moon in the Solar System, and is bigger than the planet Mercury.

The other planets are either too close to the Sun to be seen, or lie in the early morning sky. For early risers, Saturn and Venus can be seen before sunrise low in the east.

Our Moon in December and January

The Moon is new on 14 December and 12 January, and full on 29 December and 28 January. Have a look through binoculars on 21 December or 20 January to see the lunar mountains and craters. ■



PHOTO: TEEJAYBEE WWW.FLICKR.COM

Watch for Superb Parrots on the road

SUMMER is the time when locals and motorists travelling through the Young, Boorowa and Cowra areas are asked to keep an eye out and slow down for the threatened Superb Parrot along regional roads.

This spectacular bright green parrot is attracted to spilled grain along roads and the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) receives reports of birds killed by vehicles each year.

When a Superb Parrot or any other bird lands to feed on spilled grain, they quickly become weighed down with the food and have difficulty flying away when vehicles are coming.

OEH Threatened Species Coordinator Damon Oliver said efforts by grain growers and carriers to cover their loads have helped to reduce road kills in recent years.

“The responsibility is a shared one and we encourage motorists to slow down and sound the horn when parrots are in sight, because this brief inconvenience for drivers will help protect threatened birds. [Good advice for any birds or mammals on the road.]

“Another key to helping Superb Parrots is to protect large old trees which are essential breeding habitat for the species during spring and summer.

“Old and established trees are becoming very scarce across the landscape and I commend land managers who preserve them in paddocks, along roads, in towns and in patches of bush.

“We also need to think to the future by planting trees now as it takes around 150 years for trees to starting developing hollows for Superb Parrots and other animals,” Dr Oliver said.

— News release

Get your 2013 WOMBAT CALENDAR



The Native Animal Rescue Group 2013 wombat calendar is now on sale! Better than ever. And still only \$10.

Money raised helps the rescue and rehabilitation of injured and orphaned wildlife. Buy one for friends, neighbours, relatives and yourself. Help to sell them too. Contact: Phil Machin on 6238 3717.

Bulletin December 2012

PopUp! Monaro Arts Space



PopUp! – Queanbeyan’s first ‘Empty Spaces’ project opened this month, directly opposite Riverside Plaza at 138 Monaro Street.

The project is being coordinated by Queanbeyan textile artist and music promoter Ros Hales. The owners of the empty building approached Ros for help in bringing life to the space. The advantages are multiple for both landlords

of empty spaces and artists and craftspeople.

The streetscape gains colourful, creative enterprises; the building owners receive an income and the people leasing the spaces have the use of a prime CBD shop-front for low rentals. Tenants lease their space on short term 30 day lease arrangements.

Canberra artist and former journalist Neil Lade is taking advantage of the large, light exhibition space and will officially open his

first Queanbeyan exhibition of paintings in December. Local artists Ric Bennett and Jenny Sheppard, and Canberra painter and musician, Aria Stone have supported the project and also have works in PopUp!

Ros Hales, says there are several more spaces in the building just waiting for tenants.

For more information contact Ros Hales, 0438 768 754, roshales@grapevine.com.au



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!

In the courtyard at 253 Crawford Street adjacent to Council Chambers



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.

During DECEMBER

Exhibition

Bungendore Fine Art, Ellendon St, Bungendore. Catherine Lidden, Helen Hewitt and Lesley Wallington, three quite diverse artists, have put together a collection of stunning work. Phone 6238 1640 or see www.bungendorefineart.com.au.

Until Wednesday 19

Exhibition – Beneath the Southern Sky

The Q, Crawford St, Queanbeyan. A travelling exhibition of 30 textile works exploring the title theme in a striking 100 x 40cm banner format. From exotic flowers to a sombre silhouette of an ANZAC soldier, the fusion of sky, land, sea and ice in Antarctica, to a Kiwi contemplating the cosmos of the Milky Way – each work tells a story in stitch and cloth. For more information see www.beneathsouthernsky.com.

Until Thursday January 24

Exhibition – Double Vision

Bungendore Wood Works Gallery. Works by Robert Purves AM and Richard Moorecroft. An exploration of pattern and structure in the natural environment. For more information see www.bwoodworks.com.au.

Friday 14

Wamboin Community Christmas Carols

Wamboin Community Hall, Bingley Way, Wamboin, 7pm. With Giving Tree, sausage sizzle, and a visit by the jolly gentleman himself. All welcome and proceeds to the Salvation Army.

Saturday 15

Captains Flat Carols by Candlelight

Wilkins Park, Captains Flat, 7pm.

Dirty Dicks Cabaret

Queanbeyan Bowling Club, Campbell St. For enquiries and tickets phone 6297 1286.

Marulan Christmas Family Fun Day

Marulan Soccer Fields, from 3pm. Rides, food, stalls and entertainment plus fireworks at 9pm.

Saturday 15 and Sunday 16

Eden Dance Academy 2012 Concert

The Q, Crawford St, Queanbeyan. The students will present two cast items featuring students who study tap and hip hop presenting a visual spectacle and auditory sensation. For more information see www.theq.net.au or phone 6285 6676.

Sunday 16

2nd Annual Wamboin Mailbox Decorating Event

Decorate your mailbox for Christmas! Any mailbox in the local area can win. Open to residents of east Sutton south of the Federal Highway. For more information

— GIG GUIDE: December —

First Friday of the month:

Music and Poetry

Royal Hotel, Bungendore, 7.30pm.

Thursday 13

Getaway Car, 7–11pm, Hotel Queanbeyan.

Friday 14

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

AI Green Trio, pop/rock, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Kangaroos Club.

Wayne Ryder Trio, country, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Tigers Club.

Thursday 20

Sax in the City, 7–11pm, Hotel Queanbeyan.

Friday 21

Hit & Run, rock/pop, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Kangaroos Club.

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

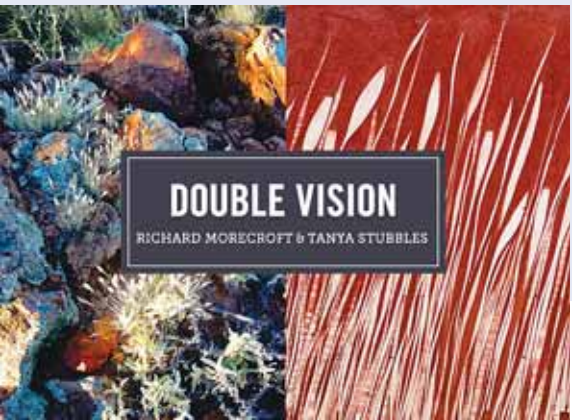
Friday 28

Hit & Run, rock/pop, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Bowling Club.

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

Monday 31

DJ & Karaoke, 8pm–12am, Queanbeyan Tigers Club.



Dive into December

the market @ bungendore

Sunday December 16th 9am–3pm
at the War Memorial Hall

Looking for Xmas presents?
All your favourite stalls
with gifts galore!

jewellery		glass art
giftware		homewares
tea & coffee		greeting cards
local art & craft		beads & findings
garden products		pottery & ceramics
toys & models		local grown plants
cakes & pastries		prints & paintings
soaps & lotions		fruit & vegetables
picture frames		clothing & footwear

contact Gail on 0416 097 500 or whirlwind@argonite.com.au.

Charity Bowls Day

Queanbeyan Bowling Club, Campbell St. For enquiries and tickets phone 6297 1286.

Monday 17

Palerang Council Local Environment Plan Briefing

Wamboin Community Hall, Bingley Way, Wamboin, 6pm. The LEP is the primary piece of planning legislation governing development within the Palerang Local Government Area. This briefing will cover the draft of the new plan. Residents are encouraged to attend and submit their comments (*see full list of community briefings p5*).

Tuesday 18

Wamboin Community Assoc December General Meeting

Wamboin Community Hall, Bingley Way, Wamboin, 7.30pm. All welcome. Christmas cake and cheer.

Thursday 20

The Sydney Hotshots live in Braidwood

Royal Mail Hotel, Braidwood, 8:30pm. The Sydney Hotshots show is Australia's most popular male revue and always makes for great entertainment! Show only \$25, dinner and show \$50. For more information phone 4842 2488.

Sunday 23

Carols in the Park

Queanbeyan Park, from 5.30pm.

Monday 24

Captains Flat Fire Brigade Santa Run

Captains Flat Village, 6pm.

– Plan ahead for January –

During JANUARY

Exhibition – Arlene Williams

Bungendore Fine Art, Ellendon St, Bungendore. For more information, ph 6238 1640 or see www.bungendorefineart.com.au.

Sunday 6

Wamboin New Year Golf Competition

Wamboin Community Hall, Bingley Way, Wamboin. First competition of 2013. Tee off from 2.30pm. All welcome.

Monday 7 to Friday 11

Summer Art Experience 2013

Queanbeyan Art Society. Ten different five-day workshops. For more information see www.qarts.com.au.

From January 16

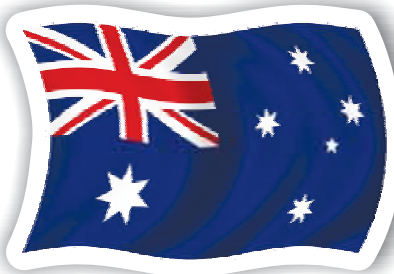
The Q Subscription Season 2013 – Celebrate Good Times

With Queanbeyan celebrating its 175th Anniversary and the Centenary of Canberra happening across the border, The Q is presenting a season of drama, comedy, musical theatre, dance and music. Book your subscription package now. For more information see www.theq.net.au or phone 6285 6676 and the shows are showcased on p7.

Wednesday 16 to Sunday 27

Oh, What a Night!

The Q, Crawford St, Queanbeyan. A musical tribute to Frank Valli and the Four Seasons featuring all the original hits and more. Between the recognisable tunes you will be treated with informative and often hilarious banter between the high-spirited cast. For more information see www.theq.net.au or ph 6285 6676.



Saturday 26

Australia Day in the Park

Queanbeyan Park. Entertainment, BBQ, Awards and Citizenship Awards and Fireworks.

Australia Day Braidwood

Ryrie Park, Braidwood, from 11.30–1.30pm. Palerang Australia Day awards. For more information phone 4842 2225.

Australia Day Bungendore

Bungendore Oval. Celebrations and fun family activities, Palerang Australia Day awards.

Australia Day Captains Flat

Celebrations and fun family activities, Palerang Australia Day awards.

Australia Day Carwoola

Stoney Creek Community Hall, Gathering Place (off Douglas Close) Carwoola, 9.30am–12.30pm. Flag raising ceremony, bush poets, enjoy morning tea with friends and neighbours.

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27

Taralga Rodeo Plus

Taralga Showground. The annual rodeo and festivities of Australia Day. Stalls, rides, amusements and more. For more information phone 4840 2074.

Sunday 27

Bungendore Show

Bungendore Showground. The pavilion will house a diverse range of exhibits, from flowers to photography, handicrafts and needlework, preserves, home brews and vegetable and farm produce. Adults \$15, children under 15 free. For more information see www.bungendreshow.com.au.

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 (except April)

The Captains Flat Country Markets

Community Hall, Foxlow St, Captains Flat, 10–2pm. Handmade items, craft, jams, pickles, gourmet doggy treats, preloved goods, cakes, biscuits, plants and much more! Stalls \$12. Call either 0438 600 447 or 0407 661 834 or email markets@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/August)

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. Art, craft and local produce.

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:

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