

# Bulletin

## COUNTRY LIVING in Queanbeyan, Bungendore and Palerang

Locally-owned and independent – going out monthly to: Araluen, Bungendore, Braidwood, Burra, Bywong, Captains Flat, Carwoola, Cooma Road, Fernleigh, Greenleigh, Gundaroo, Hoskinstown, Jerrabomberra Shopping Centre, Majors Creek, Mongarlowe, Queanbeyan plazas, The Ridgeway, Royalla, Sutton, Tarago, Wamboin and Weetalaba

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**'70s glam rocks Q'beyan**  
More theatre and arts **p10, 11**



**Chef Stefano comes to town**

**Food and wine p13**

### George turning back into a lake

AFTER 10 years of drought, Lake George has had its fourth-highest rainfall since 1890 and is currently 1.5 metres deep – in the centre of a still partly dry lakebed. In November 2010 it reached two metres for the first time in decades. It is Australia's second-largest natural freshwater lake when full and is currently at about one-third of capacity.

Reporting on the lake, NSW water management authorities note that fish once lived in the lake and the arrival of small numbers of pelicans, swans and ducks suggests some aquatic life is re-establishing itself.



## Speaking truth to power, hello!

*International Women's Day is celebrated in March and the Bulletin can't think of many Australian women more extraordinary than Lyn White, a former police officer turned undercover investigator on behalf of millions of Australian animals. White was in Canberra in February where Di Johnstone caught up with her for an interview.*

COURAGEOUS, determined, extraordinary. Lyn White is all these – and more.

As Communications Director of Animals Australia, Lyn has been where few would dare to tread and has witnessed scenes of horror most of us can barely imagine. She has taken extraordinary risks to expose evidence we would not otherwise see about the real fate of some of the 3–4 million sheep and up to one million cattle which are annually shipped overseas for slaughter.

Australia is the world's biggest exporter of live animals in a highly controversial industry that has many members of the public, of the veterinary profession and workers in the domestic meat and livestock industry calling urgently for reform. But to date, State and federal politicians have stood by the claims of the relatively small number of graziers who benefit from this trade.

I interviewed White at a quiet Canberra restaurant in late February. It was a long way from the drama of the night before when she delivered an address at Manning Clark House about live exports, presenting carefully researched material with cool precision and controlled passion.

Confronted with images of appalling cruelty from her undercover investigations in the Middle East no-one was unmoved. Some in the audience gasped,

some quietly sobbed. Bureaucrats who administer the federal government's live exports policies were visibly shaken. And White had edited the images to remove the worst of the abuses!

For the past eight years her irrefutable visual evidence has shown millions of other Australians the brutal reality of the live export trade in 10 television broadcasts on *60 Minutes*, *7.30 Report* and elsewhere.

In 2006 strong public reaction to television footage of Australian cattle having their tendons slashed and eyes stabbed at Bassateen abattoir in Egypt (to disable them for slaughter) led the federal government to suspend the trade to Egypt.

When the trade resumed under a Memorandum of Understanding, White was there again. The gathered evidence forced the federal government to instigate an export control that bans the live sheep trade to Egypt and restricts live cattle to one internationally controlled abattoir.

### From cop to animal defender

Animal advocacy is a role White never expected to play or planned. Born in South Australia, hers was a traditional childhood in a highly musical family where she learned violin and piano.

*Continued p15*

**Cleanseeds – where Bungendore's farmers shop**



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- **Wamboin:** Shepherd's Run.

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... rate of return on the government's equity of about 24 percent a year

# Public, private: Who benefits when electricity companies change ownership?

Nothing has dominated the past three years of politics in NSW, apart from ministerial exits, as much as the attempts to privatise the electricity industry, which continue to overshadow the election campaign. **Norman Abjorensen** takes a look at the convoluted history of electricity generation in NSW and asks whether there's any evidence that the current sell-off is in the public interest.

THE STATE-owned electricity retailers evolved from the old county councils that were run by boards elected from local councillors. Reforms initiated by the Greiner Liberal government in NSW in 1989 wrested control of the boards from municipal councils, and they became State instrumentalities with appointed boards of directors within a corporate structure.

This 'corporatisation' was something of a fad in the late 1980s and 1990s and was a fore-runner for many state utilities to become fully privatised. A series of mergers took place as a deregulated national energy market developed from the mid-1990s. Locally, the former Monaro County Council was absorbed into what became Country Energy, merging with Great Southern Energy in 2001.

In the 1990s, there was a general ideological agreement between Labor and the Coalition parties that the government should vacate the power industry in favour of the private sector, and the election of Labor under Bob Carr in 1995 saw the Greiner 'reforms' continue. In 1998 Carr proposed the full privatisation of the entire electricity industry in NSW – generation, poles and wires, and retail. He met an immediate wall of resistance from both the union movement and the Labor Party, and he and his Treasurer, Michael Egan, promptly retreated. Labor then went on to campaign against the Liberals' privatisation policy at the 1999 election, which Labor won easily.

## Argument for privatisation says budget choice is electricity or roads

The issue lay dormant for most of the next decade. In 2007, Labor won its fourth successive election, with no mention in the campaign of electricity privatisation. After the election, the Premier, Morris Iemma, who had succeeded Carr in 2005, announced a review of electricity in NSW to address future needs for additional generation capacity and how that was to be funded. He specifically ruled out privatisation of generation, the poles and wires, and distribution, but made no mention of retail.

Iemma subsequently announced the Government would sell NSW's State-owned electricity retail companies and lease the State's power generation companies to private operators. This decision was voted for by cabinet and caucus and followed the recommendations of Professor Anthony Owen, who headed an inquiry into electricity supply in NSW.

Owen's report concluded that government investment on infrastructure that can be adequately provided by the private sector, such as power generation, is at the expense of investment in other infrastructure requirements (eg policing, education and transport). The report's key recommendation was "that the Government of New South Wales divests itself of all State ownership in both retail and generation".

However, neither the Owen inquiry nor a subsequent review headed by former Premier Barrie Unsworth considered the issue of whether privatisation was a good idea or not; both implicitly accepted the assumption of the Government's preference for privatising electricity and going on from there.

## Iemma loses his job, but privatisation continues

This battle was high-risk politics on Iemma's part, taking on not just the union movement and key sections of his own party, but also public opinion which continued to favour government ownership. One published poll showed 79 percent of respondents opposed to privatisation. And Iemma's own party conference had voted just a few months earlier, by 702 to 107, to oppose privatisation. He had a fight on his hands, and the fallout and dissension from that fight eventually cost him his job. He was replaced by Nathan Rees who, in turn, was to last only 15 months before he was succeeded by Kristina Keneally.

Electricity privatisation was quietly back on the agenda and in December 2010 (to the surprise of many) a partial privatisation was announced with the sale of retail assets. Under the \$5.3 billion deal, the government is selling three energy retailers, Energy Australia, Country Energy and Integral Energy, to two private companies. It is also selling the generation trading contracts to take the output of power stations owned by Eraring Energy and Delta Electricity. A second round of sales was abandoned after no bids were received. A huge public uproar flared instead. (Newspapers reported that the sales would net NSW considerably less than the billions projected since a lot of debt had to be paid off in the process.)

With an election looming, controversy attended the issue right to the end, with Keneally proroguing parliament early in an attempt to block an Upper House inquiry into the sale, while eight board members of the electricity retailers resigned in protest. The inquiry finally went ahead.

On 23 February, the Legislative Council committee handed down a report which cast doubts on key aspects of the Owen Report, on which the Government had relied so heavily, and expressed the view that the sale had not achieved value for the State and had "left the electricity industry half-reformed and the other half in limbo". It called for the contracts to be rescinded and a full judicial inquiry be established to investigate the process.

The Coalition favours privatisation, but when the Opposition Leader visited Queanbeyan in January, he explained it was not a matter of selling assets so much as ensuring competition to keep prices low.

## Evidence that consumers and State income don't benefit

Power bills are rising and will continue to do so, but will consumers be better off under a privatised industry after 2013 when price regulation will be lifted?

Experience elsewhere suggests they will not. In Victoria, the price paid for the State's electricity assets proved to be too high for the buyers to operate profitably, and one company even collapsed. In addition, reliability of supply also suffered with the frequency of blackouts increasing by 32 percent in the four years after privatisation in 1995.

*Continued p15*

As readers prepare to cast their votes in the upcoming State election on 26 March, the Bulletin asked candidates for the NSW Monaro electoral district – John Barilaro, Paul Cockram and Steve Whan – to share their thoughts with us. The question we asked of all three candidates was:

**What do you consider the priority, forward-looking issues for the Monaro electorate – with a special focus on Queanbeyan and the Palerang region and generally for the NSW State government? Please explain to our readers what you, as a State representative, plan to do to assist our region.**

Their answers are presented in alphabetical order.



## John Barilaro, The Nationals

I'M STANDING as your Nationals' candidate in this month's election because I've had enough. I've had enough of an incompetent government which is more intent on weaving and spinning its way through serious issues rather than fixing them.

I've had enough of a government that has squandered opportunities for economic growth, for local jobs and government services for more than a decade. I've had enough of a government that has botched the privatisation of the State's power industry along with countless other

projects, big and small. I've had enough of a government we can no longer trust.

Since being preselected for the Nationals in March last year I've had the opportunity to meet many people in Queanbeyan and across the Monaro and I know almost all of you share my views about this incompetent NSW Labor Government. I also know you want your next MP to have a specific, achievable plan for the region as part of a new government. You want to know why you should trust me with your vote.

My family has a long association with this region. I was raised in Queanbeyan by parents who took active roles in the community and my wife Deanna and I, along with our two daughters, are continuing that tradition. I care about our community and want to see it thrive.

## Looking forward

If elected on 26 March I will work with all levels of government and the community to:

- drive economic growth in Queanbeyan and the Monaro electorate through lower taxes and business growth
- return quality services in areas such as health, transport, education and community safety through our Regional Kick-Start package, which will see 30 percent of a new capital fund directed towards regional NSW
- continue to improve local roads in Queanbeyan and the Palerang Council area through our \$200 million black spot program
- restore accountability to government by always listening to you and giving you a say on issues that affect your lives, particularly in the delivery of local health services

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# On March 26 your vote will decide the future of New South Wales.



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## On March 26 Vote **1**



**THE NATIONALS** for Regional NSW

# John Barilaro

AUTHORISED BY E WATTS, 50 AGNES AVE, QUEANBEYAN 2620



• protect our local environment by returning planning powers to the community, not Sydney-based bureaucrats.

So, as you are casting your vote this month, please take a moment to imagine what our local government services will be like if Labor continues to run them for another four years. The prospect is frightening. The only way to change that nightmarish vision is to vote for change in Monaro and in NSW by voting for John Barilaro and The Nationals.



## Paul Cockram, The Greens

ON MARCH 26 it is quite likely that angry voters will consign the current Labor government to the sin-bin of history. The only problem is, the offering from the Coalition is vague, uncommitted and lacking any clear vision of how to address the challenges for the future.

Energy security is the greatest challenge for us all. The price on carbon pollution will make coal-fired electricity more expensive. That is its purpose – to allow renewable energy to become cost competitive.

‘Business as usual’ types will say that Australia should continue selling coal to the world at full speed and blow the consequences. But the developing world is catching up fast. Hard work brings prosperity and while we live well on the proceeds of selling our resources, our industries are atrophying and we’ve become a nation of buyers not makers. In our hurry to attract foreign ownership of nearly everything, it might be that one day, and sooner rather than later, we will no longer be able to afford to buy our own natural resources.

## We need to invest in infrastructure

It is vitally important that we use our mineral wealth for infrastructure expansion. The best legacy for future generations is a healthy natural environment and modern, sustainable infrastructure. Re-opening and electrifying rail lines would be a good start.

Private car travel will continue to become more expensive as the world oil supply situation deteriorates. Ever-higher petrol prices are inevitable. Is there an alternative vision that makes any sense? We should ask of our prospective politicians if they

see cars as the main form of transport forever. Are we going to be able to compete on the world market for petrol at prices we can afford to pay?

The Greens believe that decisions about our future should be made by communities and not by industry. Many corporations – answerable only to shareholders – are now majority-owned by other corporations so there’s not much scope for influence by ‘mums and dads’. There is a very real and ever-present danger here for all of us.

The challenges of the future are not insurmountable; there are many ways to restructure our lives to be far more satisfying and pleasant. However, in NSW, especially of late, the government has put the interests of profitable enterprises ahead of the common good. Public services and private enterprises are the backbone of our country and will always remain so but the trick is in the balance.

The Greens support, and will use our parliamentary strength to uphold always, the rights of people and communities to determine the best course for the future. So, vote 1 for Paul Cockram in Monaro and vote 1 above the line for the Greens for the Upper House.



## Steve Whan, Australian Labor Party

THE BUNGENDORE area is one of the fastest growing areas in NSW and that brings challenges. Over my two terms I’ve worked with the community to meet those challenges and I’ll continue to do so. My engagement with the community goes

back to before I was elected when I worked with the State Government to have the library and gymnasium, permanent class rooms and toilets built at Bungendore School; after I was elected I delivered funding for the Council building in Bungendore and to help provide facilities for a growing community the Skate Park, half-basketball facility and more recently facilities at Mick Sherd oval. We have seen an additional police officer stationed at Bungendore and upgrades for equipment for the RFS and SES.

Water for the region has been an issue and I helped secure funding to ensure we could monitor and manage Bungendore’s bores properly. Coping with increased commuter traffic in the area has been a challenge; I’ve secured funding for projects like the new Turallo Creek Bridge. The Kings Highway is a major commuter route for people in Bungendore – I’ve worked with Mike Kelly and the ACT to see the road widened, new overtaking lanes and safer intersections – all up more than \$70 million since 2005.

In smaller communities like Wamboin and Bywong we’ve seen community halls upgraded, RFS sheds improved and new RFS tankers and equipment.

## Hospital update

In any growing community we need to have access to good health facilities – I delivered the new \$52 million Queanbeyan hospital and soon we will have a new \$1.6 million dialysis facility. We are now in the final stages of negotiating an agreement with the ACT that will deliver more elective surgery at Queanbeyan hospital, bringing down waiting lists and providing more revenue for other services. This is an important regional health facility – my Nationals predecessors in this seat talked a lot about it but did nothing about actually delivering.

Our region will continue to have growth pressure, whether it is people looking for the rural residential lifestyle or more blocks in Bungendore. Getting the balance right is never easy but I’ll work with the community to ensure that we get a sustainable outcome, I’ll monitor constantly things like the demand for emergency services particularly ambulance services and work with education on future growth of the school and options for secondary education.

I’ve delivered for the Bungendore region in a way my predecessors did not – for 15 years the Nationals represented Monaro, seven years of that in government, they failed to deliver anything other than complaints – I’ll deliver in future because I know how to deliver for Bungendore.

## Wondering about how preferences work in the NSW election?

NSW has an optional preference system that may be worth checking out as a voter if you want to register a second preference and have it count in the Lower House. Two sources of information on this and other questions are the website [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info) or the helpdesk 1300 135 736.

## DAILY DILEMMA

# NSW ELECTION SHOCK

# COALITION REFUSES CARBON ACTION

Authorised by Maggie Hickey 64 Budawang Road Mongarlowe NSW 2622

Carbon emissions are the problem. The price on carbon is only a means to an end.

The amount of fossil fuel (especially coal) being burnt every day must be reduced year by year. Emissions targets without this commitment are just more hot air.

The Labor government never admitted this truth, neither does the NSW Coalition.

They just won’t face facts.

The Greens want more resources directed to renewable energy to make our electricity supply cleaner, and less expensive for the future.

Vote 1 The Greens





# Gardener's alert: major plant fair at Bellevale, Yass



GARDENER'S HEAVEN – a wonderful opportunity for passionate gardeners to find that perfect plant, meet and talk with specialist growers, garden artists and garden designers.

Australia's Open Garden Scheme is bringing together an exciting group of growers of interesting and garden-worthy plants. These

plants are suitable for all conditions and yet not commonly found in our local nurseries. With everything from bulbs to trees, natives to exotics, plus some inspiring garden art, tools and guest speakers – it's an enticing destination for garden-lovers.

The fair will be held at Bellevale, a property of great historic significance. Established in the early 1800s, Bellevale was named after Hamilton Hume's sister Isabella, the first mistress of the property. The original homestead was built in the late 1800's and later extended several times to house a large family.

After six generations, the property is under new custodianship, with the gardens and homestead undergoing recent rejuvenation. For the period of the Plant Fair the ballroom at Bellevale will play host to a botanical art exhibition.

The lawns and rose gardens on the hilltop site command stunning views of undulating pastoral country and provide the perfect setting for an outdoor displays.

A wide variety of garden sculptures will sit beautifully within the landscape and range from articles of a more traditional nature to those made from recycled farm machinery.

The program for the plant fair also incorpo-

rates talks and demonstrations throughout the day from landscape designers such as Michael Bligh, chainsaw sculptor Adam Humphreys and Australian plant specialists, such as Attila Kapitany and Ben Walcott.

Tea, coffee, snacks and lunches will be available all day provided by the Yass Red Cross and Rotary groups with proceeds going directly to these groups as well as to the Yass District Education Foundation.

*Opening as part of Australia's Open Garden Scheme, a not for profit organisation promoting the knowledge and pleasure of gardens and gardening. Each year the Scheme opens the finest and most exciting private gardens across Australia to the garden-loving public. Since 1987 over \$1,100,000 has been given to projects across Australia. Our garden owners also raise funds for charities and more than \$4,700,000 has been given to worthwhile causes.*

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# Calling all Mudchooks players, fans

THE MEMBERS of the Bungendore Rugby Football Club have commenced their activities for the 2011 season with the election of a new club committee and the appointment of Ben Stevenson as the new coach of the Mudchooks (Stevenson is also making his mark with the new Estate Realty).

Stevenson's rugby credentials are top notch having recently returned from playing and coaching rugby in Scotland for four years (in addition to building a business venture). He and his family are now back and enjoying life in Bungendore.

"It's great to be back and seeing such enthusiasm from the players and club committee at the Bungendore Mudchooks. I am looking forward to the season ahead and especially the local supporters getting behind our premiers from 2010," he said.

The Mudchooks have set a high standard after playing in five grand finals and being undefeated last season, and Stevenson believes the team has an obligation to retain this standard as reigning premiers in 2011.

He will be working with the players to maintain the high playing standard, but says the social side of the Mudchooks is also vital, "most of all I want the players to enjoy playing rugby with the Mudchooks with the mates they run alongside on the field".

## Training times

A pre-season schedule of trial games is being confirmed and training is now being held each Tuesday and Thursday night at Mick Sherd Oval commencing at 6.30pm. Club President Garry Cook said that, with the retirement of some long standing players, the club is looking for new players to bolster the team numbers.

Cook emphasised that the club is not only well known for its high standards of play, but also for its welcoming, family friendly culture. He said "new players are most welcome to come and join, learn some skills, play some great rugby and make some new friends for life".

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artist's impression

**Bungendore**

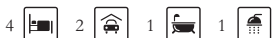
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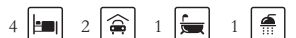
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Open Sat 12:00–12:45  
Sun 10:00–10:45  
6 Day Circuit

**\$575,000**

### Family Entertainer

Separate living areas flow from the kitchen overlooking fantastic outdoor entertaining area. Ducted gas heating and split system air conditioners provide comfort all year round. The large nth facing backyard has established native plants, vegie patch, classic arbour, cubby, courtyard areas, also irrigation from two water tanks. 4 dbl bedrooms; master bed has ensuite, walk in robe. DLUG. Contact Ben Stevenson 0467 046 637



**Bungendore**

4 Shanahan Street

**\$589,000**

### Stylish and Elegant

4 large bedrooms have built-ins, master complete with ensuite and WIR. The family bathroom is well appointed including great size bath. The high quality kitchen overlooks the informal family/dining room and fully landscaped backyard. Entertaining is a pleasure either under cover outside or formal lounge/dinning. Many features like ducted air, water feature, Nth facing back yard, double garage and more. Inspect now. Contact Ben Stevenson 0467 046 637



artist's impression

**Tura Beach**

Choose from 3 fantastic homes  
17 Elizabeth Parade

**from \$399,000**

### Lifestyle Change

- Ocean views from all sites
- One property is getting the floors sanded
- One near completion
- Contemporary and modern layout
- Three new homes

Contact Ben Stevenson 0467 046 637





# Rural Property Guide

SALES | AUCTIONS | PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



Luke Jamieson  
Property Manager



Christopher Dixon  
Sales Agent



John Sneddon  
Sales Agent

### Reap the Rewards



#### BUNGENDORE 459 BUNGENDORE ROAD

3-bedroom + study home with impressive infrastructure set on 40 ac with views to Bungendore & Lake George. Featuring a new kitchen, spacious living room, solar hot water, s/c heating & large outdoor entertaining area. 2 dams, a bore with commercial irrigation license, netted orchards with about 400 chestnut & 300 hazelnut trees plus various fruit trees and a number of sheds. Currently operating as "Nuts About Bungendore" a popular pick your own orchard business. **Expressions of Interest by 4:30pm, 7th April 2011 New Listing**

6262 5122 | John Sneddon 0403 139 701

### Oasis in the Bush



#### WAMBOIN 81 CANNING CLOSE

Spacious 4-bedroom + ensuite dbl-brick home set amongst magnificent gardens on a private and peaceful 20 ac bush block in "Old Wamboin". Features include; Blackwood timber kitchen with stainless steel appliances, slate flooring, Cheminee Phillippe fire, ducted gas heating, glass walled atrium and a large game's room. Creek, productive bore, vegie gardens, dbl-garage and dual road frontage. Pony club next door. Minutes to airport and CBD. First time offered for sale. **Expressions of Interest by 4:30pm, 7th April 2011 New Listing**

6262 5122 | John Sneddon 0403 139 701

### English Cottage Charm



#### COLLECTOR 135 BREADALBANE ROAD

This charming 3 bedroom, ensuite residence radiates endless appeal and is reminiscent of cottages you would expect to find in the English countryside. Its cottage charm is deceiving with floating timber floors, a country kitchen with stainless steel appliances, contemporary bathroom and ensuite areas both with in-slab heating and two instantaneous gas hot water services. Multiple living areas consist of separate lounge and family room areas plus a loft playroom area for the kids and a sheltered central courtyard area which is the perfect spot to entertain with friends. With approximately 4.27 acres at your disposal, there's more than enough space to spread out. **Offers Over \$580,000 New Listing**

6262 5122 | Chris Dixon 0414 819 377

### "KANDALLAH"



#### SUTTON 49 VICTORIA STREET

Upon arrival you are greeted by an expansive 3 bedroom plus study residence set amongst established gardens and with sublime valley views northwards. Substantial extensions and renovations in 2003 has resulted in a wonderfully spacious home, the focus of which is the expansive light-filled living areas, the modernised kitchen, bathroom, ensuite and the particularly large main bedroom suite with walk-in robe and an enviable rural vista. Year-round comfort is assured with ducted gas heating and for extra atmosphere, an open fire in the formal lounge area. Additional highlights include an extra big double lock up garage (auto), workshop and hay shed, and two high quality licensed bores **\$1,200,000 New Listing**

6262 5122 | Chris Dixon 0414 819 377



#### GOOGONG 277 FERNLEIGH DRIVE

Stunning architect designed 5-bedroom + ens dbl brick home on 5.3ha (13ac) block with creek frontage and sweeping rural views. The home features high vaulted ceilings, ducted evap cooling & gas heating. 3 dams, 2 paddocks + netted vegies & orchard. 30 mins to Canberra's CBD **Expressions of Interest by 4:30pm, 10th March 2011**

John Sneddon 0403 139 701

Under Offer



#### SUTTON 8 NORTH STREET

This 4 bed ensuite home boasts renovated interiors, two spacious living areas, a huge kitchen with granite b'tops, d'gas heat, evap cooling & front & rear decks. A big 2 bay shed, sgl garage, estab gardens & 20,000 gallon water tank round off an impressive package. 15min drive to the inner city. **Under Offer**

Chris Dixon 0414 819 377

**RURAL PROPERTIES REQUIRED...**  
to meet strong demand from buyers and tenants.  
Call us today on 6262 5122.

For Sale

For Lease

Carwoola  
By Negotiation  
198 Widgiewa Rd  
Architect designed passive solar 3-bed home on a private 20ac block. **John Sneddon 0403 139 701**

Hall Region  
\$1,600,000  
1246 Barton Hwy  
5-bedroom Home on a 27ac block. Pool, extensive shedding, dam & bore. **John Sneddon 0403 139 701**

Bywong  
By Negotiation  
107 Summer Hill Rd  
Self-cont flat on 40ac grazing land with 5 paddocks, 2 dams, bore, stables & sheds. **John Sneddon 0403 139 701**

Yass  
\$480 per week  
27 Petit Street  
Updated three bedroom home, new open plan Kitchen, laundry & hardwood floors. Separate lounge/family room, Double garage, carport and storage. Big block **Luke Jamieson 6262 5122**

Sutton  
\$330 per week  
13/1246 Federal Hwy  
This fully furnished three bedroom home is situated 15 Mins from the CBD at the Eagle Hawke Holiday Resort. **Luke Jamieson 6262 5122**

Inner North & Rural (02) 6262 5122





# Birds of Carwoola 2

Last year **Martin Butterfield** did an informal survey of the wonderful birdlife that the rural residents of our region enjoy. Since it has been such a different year, we thought an update would reinforce a lot of informal impressions that the change from drought to flood has only encouraged the local bird life to go even more wild!

FOLLOWING the wonderful rains of the past 12 months there have been reports of bird diversity decreasing as those forced east by the drought return home. In contrast, the Carwoola area is still full of birds, with 146 species recorded in 2010. Over the last four years, I and several other observers have recorded a total of 161 species in the Carwoola area.

In 2010 we recorded 42 species every month of the year. It is convenient to group these common birds according to categories: waterbirds (four species); birds of prey (two species); Parrots and Cockatoos (six species); Kingfishers and other non-songbirds (three species); Honeyeaters (six species); Flycatchers and similar species (five species); Thornbills, Finches and similar species (seven species); other smaller birds (two species); and other larger birds (seven species).

Over the four years of recording we have also recorded 64 species as breeding – defined rather broadly – in the area (40 breeding species were observed in 2009). Although some nests are found, such as the Grey Fantail chicks (*below*), many of the breeding observa-



Photo: Kim MacKenzie

tions in the area are of dependent young (for most species, this is when the adults are seen feeding the young birds). The pair of East-ern Spinebill chicks (*above*) would definitely require their parents to provide their food at this age.



Photos: Martin Butterfield

Again a pair of Tawny Frogmouths (*above*) raised two chicks in a nest visible from my study. When the chicks leave the nest they travel around with their parents for a few months 'learning to be Frogmouths'. Some-

times this provides great photo opportunities! A Grey Shrike-thrush again raised two chicks in an opportunistic site in a garage in Radcliffe Estate and White-browed Scrub-wrens utilised a coil of rope hung in a shed on Hoskinstown Plain.



The deluge of 2010 caused many species of waterbirds to head for the (no-longer-dry) inland swamps and lakes. Pacific Black Ducks and Australian Wood Ducks continued to be common, and many small dams are still occupied by Australasian Grebes (*above*), often breeding. As the floods retreat, the waterbirds will come back to the dams, emphasising their importance as refuges of last resort for some birds as well as the stock they were installed to serve.

Parrots and Cockatoos are common (and colourful) in the area. The two Rosella species and four species of Cockatoos were recorded every month in 2010. Two species of naturally occurring pigeons are frequently seen in the

The Canberra Ornithologists Group website (<http://canberrabirds.org.au/index.htm>) includes a very comprehensive range of photographs and recordings of the calls of many of the species found in the area. A website launched last year by the Atlas of Living Australia (<http://www.ala.org.au/>) provides very useful features including an ability to obtain a list of species recorded within 5km of your address.



area, including the very colourful Common Bronzewing, (*seen above*).

Possibly reflecting the relatively warm winter and good rainfall (foreshadowing an early start to a promising breeding season) the Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Pallid Cuckoo (*below left*) began to be seen and heard from July onwards.



One of the obvious outcomes of the good season has been a huge amount of flowering grass. As this goes to seed it is likely that the Finches which feed on grass seeds, such as the Red-browed Finch (*above right*) will have a bumper season in 2011.

## SEASON FOR ART COMPETITIONS, PRIZES

### Queanbeyan photo competition

QUEANBEYAN CITY Council is running a photographic competition featuring the use of local recreational spaces for fun, exercise and gatherings.

The *QParks Photographic Competition* is free and open to all residents and visitors to Queanbeyan. **Entries must be in by 29 April 2011.**

Photographs must have been taken after 1 January 2010 within the Queanbeyan Local Government Area. Photographs must feature people using parks, sports grounds, the river, playgrounds, dog off-lead areas or any other public recreational space in or around Queanbeyan. Prizes will be awarded in two categories – Junior (up to 12 years) and Open.

Permission of all people that can be identified in a photo must be provided before it can be considered for judging. For more information and entry forms, contact the Community Development Section on 6285 6553 or email [geraldine.manser@gcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:geraldine.manser@gcc.nsw.gov.au).

### Rich art prize for Countryscapes landscape

REGIONAL ARTISTS capturing the changing mood, colours and energy of their local landscapes are invited to enter *Countryscapes 2011* – the \$35,000 NSW Country Energy Art Prize for Landscape Painting

"South-east local, Wendy Teakel of Murrumbateman, near Yass, won *Countryscapes 2010* for her submission, *Black Soil Country*, which was selected from 41 finalists' works. It would be wonderful to see another local take out this year's competition," said Phil Greene, regional general manager South Eastern for Country Energy, (which just changed its name to Essential Energy).



The art prize is open to anyone who lives within the energy company's network area and artists are encouraged to enter all artistic styles, mediums and contexts – ranging from the figurative to abstract, charcoal to traditional oil paint. The winning artist can keep or sell their work and still receive the significant monetary prize.

**Entries close on Friday 29 July 2011** with the winner announced on Thursday 24 November followed by an exhibition of the finalists' artworks at the Bathurst Regional Art Gallery from 25 November 2011 to 15 January 2012. To find out more or view last year's artworks visit [www.countryenergy.com.au/content/art-prize](http://www.countryenergy.com.au/content/art-prize).

### Call for student art, win great prizes

ActewAGL CALLS for students to get creative and win great prizes with its *Creative Spark* art competition.

Primary school students have the chance to win one of three adventure tours of the National Zoo and Aquarium for four people by entering the ActewAGL art competition.

To enter children need to paint or draw a picture or make a collage related to energy, water and/or sustainability.

Continued p11

## A PLACE FOR THE BIRDS by Jo Walker

*Birds are welcome visitors in most gardens and there are a range of plants that can be used to entice even more into your area.*

### Plantings that offer nectar, seeds and other food

Nectar-bearing plants will attract honeyeaters and some of the parrots. Plant a few correas and grevilleas and Eastern Spinebills, White-eared Honeyeaters, Red Wattlebirds and any other passing honeyeater will take advantage of the invitation. Crimson Rosellas are attracted to nectar too – although they tend to pull off the whole flower and nibble at the sweet base, leaving a carpet of flowers on the ground!

Many of the eucalypts have flowers containing nectar. Depending on whether you live in town or on an acreage, a few large *Eucalyptus melliodora* (Yellow Box) or *E. macrorhyncha* (Red Stringybark) or smaller trees such as *E. leucoxylon* (Yellow Gum) or *E. bancroftii* (Orange Gum) could be tried.

Last year, when the stringybarks flowered abundantly, a flock of Rainbow Lorikeets spent several weeks locally feasting on the nectar. Gang-gangs also make use of the stringybarks, feeding on the often copious amounts of semi-ripe seed capsules.



Photo: Jo Walker

Planting out native grasses or allowing them to regenerate provides seed for Red-browed Finches and similar small birds.

Some of the grassland daisies and forbs provide food for parrots. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos feed on tuber and daisy stems and roots during winter and Crimson Rosellas relish the tiny seed of daisies such as the small but abundant New Holland Daisy (*Vittadinia muelleri*).

### Attracting prey for birds

Eucalypts, wattles and other trees and shrubs often host large numbers of tiny insects and other arthropods. White-throated Treecreepers find their diet of insects and spiders in and under the bark of trees and tiny Spotted Pardalotes busily feed on scale insects and other small morsels.

Insect-attracting plants such as tea-trees, kunzeas and melaleucas are useful too for birds, like the Grey Fantail, who enjoy a six-legged feast.

In a sward of grass, there are usually some underground grubs for the Magpies and small grass- or root-eating insects are taken by Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Speckled Warblers amongst others.

### A suitable habitat helps birds find a home in your garden

Providing nesting sites is an advantage in bringing birds to the garden. Prickly plants – *Hakea sericea* is a good one – make safe nesting places for small birds. One of these bushes planted at my place was home to four Red-browed Finch nests one year.

A range of shrub sizes makes for a greater variety of birds, as some prefer a high nest site and others will nest nearer the ground. And don't be zealously tidy – birds like plenty of twigs and dead leaves for nest construction.

If you have the space, a corridor of trees and shrubs of an assortment of sizes and densities is ideal for birdlife, especially if some low-growing, thicket-forming shrubs – an ideal habitat for Superb Blue Wrens and White-browed Scrub-wrens – are included.

The aim of providing a habitat for a variety of birds adds another enjoyable dimension to gardening and growing plants.

**A useful book: Birdscaping Your Garden by George Martin Adams.**



# Monaro Matters

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE • ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY • PEACE & NONVIOLENCE • GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY



Solar panels are becoming cheaper, more efficient and a great way to reduce power bills.

## Renewable energy is the way of the future

Energy security is the biggest challenge facing us today. Unfortunately the result of the election on March 26 may prove to be a step back rather than forward on the path to a sustainable future.

Barry O'Farrell has said he's going to follow Tony Abbott down the dead-end path of continuing obstruction to having a price on carbon. Having a Federal Opposition leader in denial is bad enough, but Mr O'Farrell may well be the next premier of New South Wales.

With only weeks to go to the election, the leaders of the major parties must explain how they intend to reduce the amount of coal burned in NSW to make electricity.

The only reason, of course, for an emissions trading scheme is to reduce the amount of coal burned. How hard is it to tell the coal industry that we must reduce our reliance on coal each and every year from now on?

Far too hard for any Labor or Coalition politicians it seems.

The Greens understand that

denial is not an option. The weight of evidence to support action on climate change is world-wide and overwhelming.

The scare campaign by the Liberals and Nationals is going into overdrive. As The Greens NSW MP, John Kaye pointed out recently: "Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell said that household power bills will go up by \$500.

"But the future of household power bills will be in the hands of the next government.

"NSW needs a state government that is focussed on directly investing in renewable energy and working with households to cut energy wastage.

"The complete absence of a Coalition energy policy is an alarming sign for the future of household budgets.

"Mr O'Farrell needs to learn the simple lesson that, while a carbon tax will push up the price of electricity, bringing down household consumption will protect bills.

"NSW could be the big winner from a carbon tax. Cutting emissions, keeping down household power bills and generating tens of thousands of

jobs can only be achieved by a government that accepts climate science and works to make the transition away from coal.

"The Coalition's 60 page policy document made only one reference to climate change and that was a footnote.

"For Barry O'Farrell climate change is nothing more than a footnote," Dr Kaye observed.

This is the danger for New South Wales following the March 26 election. We need a parliament that is committed to action on carbon emissions and has the political will to implement change.

Labor couldn't do it and that's part of the reason for their impending demise. It is only The Greens who have consistently argued for climate action and for government to actively guide our energy sector towards a long-term future.

We have a great opportunity with energy reform to create thousands of jobs with a great many of them in regional and rural NSW.

A strong vote for The Greens will make it clear to the captains of the fossil fuel industry and their political allies that the time for change has come.

We need real change, for a change — and a vote for The Greens in both Houses is the best way to bring it about.

Paul Cockram, March 2011

## Greens and Labor agree to put a price on carbon

The Australian Greens last week joined the Gillard government in announcing an agreed pathway towards a carbon price that should commence on July 1, 2012, beginning the transformation of our economy from polluting fossil fuels to clean energy.

The agreement is a major step towards implementation of The Greens' proposal for a fixed carbon price starting as soon as possible, rising each year, with no international offsets allowed. The fixed price could be replaced in time with a well-designed emissions trading scheme.

"This agreement is The Greens in action, delivering certainty to the Australian economy, community, investors and the environment after productive negotiations with the government," said Australian Greens Leader, Senator Bob Brown.

"We proposed a fixed price on carbon in January last year as a way of breaking the deadlock the parliament had reached on climate action.

"The Multi-Party Climate Change Committee that was established at the instigation of The Greens to support the Gillard government is paying dividends for all Australians."

Australian Greens Deputy Leader, Senator Christine Milne, said, "This agreement to set a fixed, rising price on carbon with no international offsets means that, as of July next year, the transformation of our economy towards a zero emissions future can begin.

"This will be good for the community who face out-of-control energy price rises, it will stimulate the economy, create jobs and, of course, help protect the climate which sustains us all.

"The Greens' agreement with the government sets out elements of a transition to emissions trading down the track once the parliament can agree on emission reduction targets.

"But it is important to note that, in the absence of agreement, the fixed price would continue and keep rising into the future, giving industry certainty that, from now on, change is inevitable.

"The carbon price would cover the energy sector, transport, industrial emissions and waste. There is agreement to support change in the land-use and forestry sectors but details are still under consideration.

"The agreement sets out points for compensation, including helping the community meet rising costs of living, but the details are still to be determined.

"This is a big step forward for climate action in Australia. For the first time, everybody in Australia will have a clear signal that the old, polluting ways will have to change and a new, exciting era is set to begin."

# FLAT-EARTH HOUR

## 8.30 pm Saturday March 26

The time the carbon pollution deniers expect to take government in New South Wales

Don't hand them total control

Vote **1** The Greens in the Upper House  
Paul Cockram in Monaro





# Community gardens bring locals together to learn through sharing

As more and more people become concerned about climate change, food miles and chemical sprays, community gardens are springing up around the country.



Robert Walters checks his bean and corn crops at the Bungendore garden.

As well as the three community gardens in Palerang, and another in neighbouring Queanbeyan, there are gardens happening or proposed in other parts of Monaro including Cooma, Bombala and Delegate – and all this despite the existence of often large residential blocks with plenty of space for growing food.

On January 11, 2011, agriculture commentator Julian Cribb wrote “World food prices are now at their highest in recorded history. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation’s global food price index surpassed its previous record in December 2010.”

Cribb advised that we should be investing in the development of food systems, including urban ones, which are cushioned against climate shocks.

Some keen gardeners and environmentalists are putting their energy into establishing community gardens because they believe our food security is being threatened by extreme weather events such as

drought, severe storms, floods, cyclones and damaging winds, not to mention locust plagues and the usual gamut of pest and disease outbreaks.

With food production becoming increasingly centralised, not only is our food supply made vulnerable to extreme weather events as we have so recently observed, but it means food has to travel huge distances from farm to supermarket shelf. Transport requires fossil fuels, nutritional value is often compromised, and there is little connection between farmers and their customers. Farmers and consumers are often the losers in this food distribution system.

Community Gardening is also about hands-on teaching of valuable skills needed for growing local, fresh, healthy food so that our communities are less vulnerable to increasing prices and decreasing availability. And it’s a great way for gardeners to get together to swap seeds, cuttings, excess plants and produce, like a gardening club.

## Dargues Reef gold mine leaves many questions unanswered

Communities in Palerang and on the coast have a number of unanswered questions about the proposed Dargues Reef mine. Their concern is shared by two State Government departments involved in the approvals process.

There has been no testing downstream – all the test bores except one on the actual site are uphill. The company didn’t know that there are major basalt intrusions nearby, or about the Major’s Creek fault less than 50 metres away. There has been no study of any consequence downstream, just an insistence that there won’t be any impact. The rainfall figures used are inconsistent, and there is no reference to or provision for the deluges to which the site is subject, or the possible impacts of climate change.

It’s worth looking at the report from the NSW Office of Water,

and Cortona’s response on the NSW Department of Planning website; Cortona refuses to carry out the testing before the development is approved. Before this development can be considered safe it needs:

- all of the testing required by the NSW Office of Water and due assessment of the results, with any modification of plans to be agreed before development is allowed to commence;
- an assessment of the geology, water systems and species downstream from the mine, before the development is approved; to date, the only surveys have been of the site itself.

Government departments like the NSW Office of Water and Department of Environment, and the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority

say that Cortona’s claims need to be substantiated with further and more rigorous assessment and a lot more detail provided. Questions posed to Cortona by concerned members of the community elicit the automated response that the answers will be on the website.

The community has a right to know what chemicals will be used, and in what quantities – not just be given an assurance that they will be ‘safe’. We need to know – and the Office of Water wants to know too – what provision has been made for spillage, if any. We need test bores downstream from the mine to try to ascertain what effect the minimum of four km of tunnels will have on the groundwater.

The Federal Government sent Cortona a compliance letter to ask why it hadn’t responded to the federally-listed endangered species issues. As a result, the proposal now has to be assessed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

As far as current NSW legislation goes however, thanks to Part 3A planning laws et al, Government Ministers are not required to make a decision based on their department’s recommendations. Whatever decision is made may well be political, which is why Cortona has conducted such a massive PR campaign. We need answers, and data, not PR spin.



Cate Faehrmann and Jack Munday address farmers and other concerned community members outside the NSW parliament.

## It’s not such a gas

Greens MP and mining spokesperson Cate Faehrmann says the confirmed coal seam gas leaks from two drilling wells near Casino demonstrates the urgent need for a moratorium.

“Recently released Coalition and Labor policies will fail to protect water supplies, farmlands and communities from the gas rush that is happening in NSW right now,” said Cate Faehrmann.

“What is needed is an immediate halt to all projects, not vague commitments for review over the coming years.

“The gas companies are spreading misinformation about the safety of their wells, and the government appears to be taking its advice directly from the industry.

“Coal seam gas wells cannot be turned off. Once a well is drilled and ‘fracked’, the gas will continue to flow to the surface through cracks in the earth and the water table until the source is exhausted.

**Leaks cannot be fixed, wells cannot be safely capped**

“There is more and more information coming from contaminated sites in the US, Queensland and now NSW, to suggest that all gas wells leak to some degree,” said Cate.

Cate Faehrmann recently visited the site of the leak; you can watch a video of it at [www.cate-faehrmann.org](http://www.cate-faehrmann.org)



## Good health

Many of us have to travel some distance to see a G.P., let alone a medical specialist. We can wait many weeks, sometimes months, for elective surgery.

When we do get into hospital, the nursing staff can be rushed off their feet and unable to provide the sort of care that they and their patients would like.

The Greens believe that greater investment in the state’s public health system is essential in order to reduce stress on the workforce, improve patient care, reduce waiting times for surgery and decrease the rate of hospital-contracted infections.

That’s why The Greens support the NSW Nurses’ Association

claims for legislated ratios that average at one nurse per four patients, rather than the current situation which can see one nurse caring for up to eight patients at a time.

The Greens believe increased funding for preventative strategies will save lives and money. Until we think health rather than sickness, we will be forced to continue to put more and more money into costly medical interventions. In 2008 the cost of obesity in NSW alone was \$19 billion, according to NSW Health.

As one measure, The Greens advocate banning junk food advertising and widening the labelling of quick-serve foods to include salt and saturated fat contents as well as energy.

The Greens want more equitable health services for rural and regional NSW and universal access to dental and mental health care. We support the Oral Health Alliance which has called on the NSW Government to bring per capita funding for public dental services into line with Queensland.

Successive NSW governments have failed to invest adequately in primary health care. The Greens is the only party that puts such a strong emphasis on preventative health care.





# New developments must plan for public transport

There is no excuse for repeating the mistakes of the past in the new residential areas planned for Monaro when they are still on the drawing board.

**T**he transport future will be different because of climate change, peak oil and population growth. Sydney and Canberra are suffering from a lack of planning for population growth in areas inadequately serviced by public transport."

Paul Cockram delivered this key message at a public meeting in Jerrabomberra a couple of weeks ago.

All communities need affordable, efficient and integrated public transport to ease the increasing congestion on our roads and to assist in cutting greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality.

The Greens in Monaro are backing their support for public transport, with an eye-catching message on one of the Deanes' commuter buses, operating between Queanbeyan and the Canberra CBD. We continue to press both the ACT and NSW governments for action to improve cross-border public transport services.

With the curtailment of train services and closure of the line from Cooma to Canberra, peo-

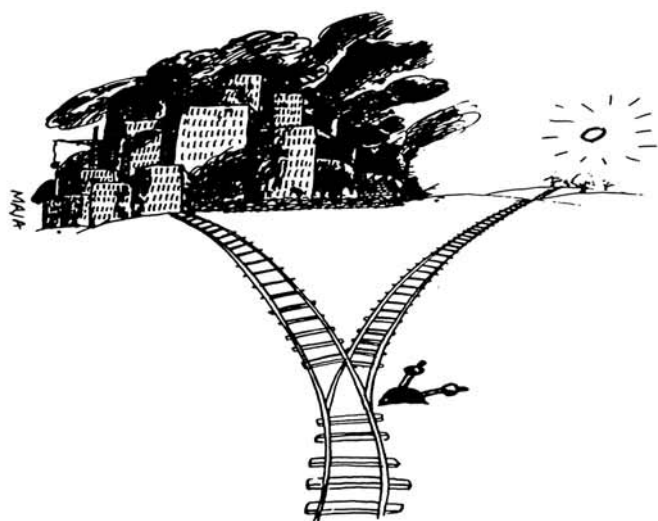
ple living in the Snowy River region have little option but to use their cars. Paul Cockram and The Greens are campaigning to have that line reopened.

"By strife or by scarcity, petrol prices are on the rise. Electricity is the transport energy for the future — electric trains and trams don't need batteries and as such are very efficient," said Paul.

More frequent train services from Bungendore to Canberra would assist people working in the city who do not wish to drive every day.

The Greens understand that people will only use public transport if it is efficient, available and affordable. The Greens are working to improve affordability, extend concession fares and establish integrated ticketing.

"Whilst we need to ensure that our roads are kept in good repair and are safe, it makes no sense to spend more and more on new motorways whilst failing to invest in modern public transport that people will want to use," Paul concluded.



While the Monaro electorate no longer takes in any coastal areas, there are plenty of our residents who enjoy fishing.

**M**any of us love to see our favourite fish and seafood on our plates and barbecues. If we don't protect the critical areas that marine life relies on to breed and feed, then this will all be at risk. Establishing smaller 'marine reserves' within marine parks, which are 'no take' zones, protects the areas that fish go to feed and breed.

The Greens support marine parks because we believe they offer many short and long-term

benefits to fishers, fishing supply businesses, local residents, holidaymakers, tourism operators, and conservationists. The Batemans Marine Park is a great example of this.

## Why are fish stocks so low?

In 2008, 18% of stocks in NSW were over-fished or experiencing over-fishing, and the status of 42% of stocks was uncertain.

There are many reasons that fish stocks are in decline and our marine life is vulnerable and threatened.

- land-based pollution spills and run-off
- destruction of estuaries and mangroves, which are important fish nursery grounds
- damage to habitat from trawling or drilling
- over-fishing

The stresses on fish stocks are likely to increase long-term if we don't take some action to preserve them. Fishing technologies to locate and harvest fish are improving, and marine parks have ensured that fish populations continue to grow and gravitate towards our beautiful coast.

## We need fish to fish

If we don't start taking better care of our marine environment now, we'll rob our grandchildren of the joys of throwing a line out — and catching something!

The Greens' marine environment policy takes a responsible, long-term approach. It is aimed at ensuring that every species of fish has a safe place to breed and grow to decent size and numbers, so we can have plentiful fish stocks for future generations to enjoy fishing and eating. To see The Greens NSW policy, go to:

[www.nsw.greens.org.au/marine-environment](http://www.nsw.greens.org.au/marine-environment)

The Greens don't want to stop you fishing.

Ultimately we all want the same thing ... plenty of fish in the sea.

## Woodchipping 'waste' is not a renewable source of energy

Keeping our remaining native forests intact is one of the easiest and most obvious ways to mitigate against climate change.

**T**he Greens have long been campaigning for an end to the woodchipping of native forests, an activity which has destroyed much of the old-growth in the region and resulted in a massive reduction of sawlogs available for milling, not to mention impacts on water quality and availability, and on local industries like oyster-farming and tourism.

The latest threat to the forests is the plan to burn them for so-called renewable energy. David Shoebridge, Greens MLC and lead Upper House candidate

has called on NSW Labor and the Coalition to place a halt on the development application for the Eden chipmill wood-fired power station until a full carbon analysis has been conducted.

"The application for the power station has been conducted in a secretive way which gives The Greens no confidence that the community and environmental interests have been properly considered," David said.

"However, one thing we do know is that it failed to fully

and accurately assess climate impacts of burning native forest wood.

"It is just not good enough to hide behind the word 'waste', because we all know that without a million tonnes of woodchipping there would be no 'waste' for the fuel.

"The Labor Government has refused to release public submissions on the power station and could still approve it in the dying days of its period in office.

"If this were to happen the public would have no idea whether matters raised during the submission process have been properly dealt with.

"The application is being considered under the undemocratic Part 3A of the Planning Act, which gives the Minister for Planning extraordinary powers to approve development projects.

"It is no secret that The Greens have opposed the categorisation of burning native forest

wood as renewable power. We also have concerns about whether the plant proposed would have sufficient safeguards against toxic emissions which may reach the town of Eden.

"This proposed power station, if it goes ahead, will be Australia's first wood-fired power station since the 19th century. It is important that the process is above reproach. The Coalition has said that it will abolish Part 3A planning approvals but it has committed to continue to process this application under the faulty law.

"The Greens are calling for a full carbon analysis of the project to be part of any approval process.

"The election provides an excellent opportunity to scrap the current process and start again with a transparent and adequate assessment process if the chipmill still wants to go ahead with the project," concluded David.





# Paul Cockram, The Greens candidate for Monaro

Paul lives and works in Mongarlowe, near Braidwood, with his partner Alison, and their two teenage boys. He started his working life as a printer and typesetter in Sydney. He and his family lived in the Northern Territory in the 1980s, where he started a community magazine the Barkly News Pictorial. It was during this time he started making documentary films for various local organisations.

Since moving back to NSW, he has continued working as a video maker and desktop publisher. He continued his interest in writing about community affairs with a regular column in the *Braidwood Times* under the banner Time & Energy.

Paul was elected to Palerang council in 2008. He is also a volunteer firefighter with the Mongarlowe RFS. Together with farmers and land managers from the region, he helped to establish the Natural Sequence Association, set up to publicise the work of land rehydration advocate Peter Andrews.

In 2009 he arranged for twenty-five homes in the Braidwood region to benefit from a bulk buy of solar panels for feed-to-grid power from the roof. All



these families are now enjoying lower, or in some cases zero, power bills.

He was moved to stand as a candidate for Monaro because he has become exasperated with the lack of commitment from our major political parties on energy reform. He believes in gradual and positive change but can see that this comes with the need to get moving as soon as possible.

Paul Cockram is standing as a Greens candidate because he believes that the Greens have the best policies to: improve public health, education and transport services; move toward cleaner energy production which will in turn create long-term employment opportunities; and properly value our environment on which we all depend for food production, clean, adequate water supplies and biodiversity.

He remains optimistic about the future because it's never too late to learn from the past.

## Putting public education first

Over the last decade, John Kaye and other Greens MPs have worked hard to make public education a national priority. They have supported teachers' salary claims, opposed private school funding rorts and the private school for profit rip-off, worked for more ESL teachers and resources for children with special needs, and made equity funding a priority. They campaigned for more funding for TAFE and fairer treatment of part-time casual teachers.

Australia's economic future depends on a strong, well funded public TAFE system. We must reverse the deterioration in working conditions of TAFE teachers and students and the growth in poor quality private providers.

Public education and its values spent a decade under direct attack from the Howard government. The NSW Labor government has failed to protect them and has itself not provided adequate funding, while the Federal Labor government has continued with the funding system that reinforces the advantages of the rich.

Locally, John responded to community concerns and worked to accelerate the removal of gas flue heaters from our schools.

**We need Greens in Parliament to give a voice for increased support for public education.**

1

VOTE

Paul COCKRAM

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## The Greens offer real change, for a change in NSW.

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- **Investing in stronger public services and infrastructure** – borrow to invest in stronger public health, transport, energy and water services and infrastructure in NSW.
- **A clean economy and green jobs** – fast-track investment in renewable energy, not new coal, to tackle climate change, transform the NSW economy and create new jobs.
- **Building public transport** – prioritise public transport investments instead of toll roads, restore regional rail services and shift more freight onto roads.
- **Planning for people and environment** – make neighbourhoods more sustainable and liveable, and give locals a say. Repeal Part 3A planning laws and put the needs of communities before big developers and corporate donors.
- **Cleaning up the culture of NSW politics** – ban corporate donations and the culture of secrecy and deliver more open government. Create governments that serve people's interests, not vested interests.

See more details about The Greens five point plan at: <http://nsw.greens.org.au/greens-plan>

## The Greens Upper House candidates



**David Shoebridge** is the No.1 Upper House candidate for The Greens in the 2011 NSW State Election. He joined the NSW parliament in September 2010, is a Greens Councillor on Woollahra Council, and was formerly a barrister working in industrial relations law. He lives in Sydney with his partner and two daughters and enjoys bushwalking.

David's key campaigns since becoming a Greens MP have been:

**Environmental protection and local planning and development issues.** David is campaigning to repeal Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act that gives the planning minister powers to bypass councils and approve a range of developments, ignoring community opinion and reducing environmental and planning standards.

**A Bill of Rights for NSW.** Australia is one of the few advanced democracies that does not enshrine its citizens' rights to essential freedoms in a core bill of rights. Without this, we give far freer rein to governments to legislate away our rights.

**Housing affordability.** Afford-

ability, particularly in Sydney, has declined, with people under a great deal of pressure and spending more on accommodation. Everyone should have access to stable, secure and affordable housing.

**A fairer justice system.** David is working for a more humane justice system that focuses on addressing the causes of crime. Research shows regressive bail laws, more gaols and longer sentences are not the way to make our society safer.

David is serving his second term as a councillor on Woollahra Municipal Council since first being elected in 2004. In that time he has worked on numerous committees including finance, planning and community services. He was Deputy Mayor in 2005.

Read more on David's work in Parliament at: [davidshoebridge.org.au/](http://davidshoebridge.org.au/)



**Jan Barham** is the No.2 Upper House candidate on The Greens NSW Legislative Council ticket. She is in her second term as the popularly elected Greens Mayor of Byron Shire.

Jan has 20 years of regional experience as a grassroots cam-

paigner, working with locals to protect and preserve special places in her region from overdevelopment.

She was elected Vice President General of the NSW Local Government Association Executive and has been a member of many state boards and committees, including Ministerial Advisory Council on Women, the Natural Resources Advisory Sub-Committee on Coasts and Natural Environment and the Northern Rivers Tourism Board.

Jan proudly lives in Bundjalung Aboriginal country and has worked closely with the Arakwal People since 1994. This has resulted in the first Indigenous Land Use Agreement in NSW and the establishment of the joint Aboriginal/National Parks and Wildlife Service management of the Arakwal National Park.

Read more about Jan at: [nsw.greens.org.au/people/717](http://nsw.greens.org.au/people/717)



**Jeremy Buckingham** is the No.3 Upper House candidate on The Greens NSW Legislative Council ticket. He serves as a Greens Councillor on Orange City Council in western NSW and is The Greens

NSW rural and regional spokesperson.

In 2004 Jeremy became the first Green elected to a NSW council west of the Great Dividing Range. In 2008 he was elected for a second term on Orange City Council. On Council Jeremy has successfully advocated for the funding and construction of Australia's first potable stormwater harvesting scheme. This groundbreaking scheme has won design and engineering awards nationally and internationally and saw his

community through the worst drought in the region's history.

Jeremy and his family have made Orange in the central west their home for the last 15 years. They love the lifestyle, clean air, local food, great parks and warm community. Jeremy has worked and travelled throughout the Western NSW as a stonemason and has tertiary qualifications in land management and ecological agriculture.

Read more about Jeremy at: [nsw.greens.org.au/people/428](http://nsw.greens.org.au/people/428)



**Author Jackie French with Paul Cockram at her magical garden paradise downstream from the Dargues Reef gold mine. The Greens are supporting Jackie's petition to the State government which calls (in part) for a full economic cost benefit analysis to be done on any impacts of spillage or toxicity from tailings on the orchard, market garden, tourism and other major industries immediately downstream ... See the full petition at:**

[www.jackiefrench.com/petition\\_darguesreef.html](http://www.jackiefrench.com/petition_darguesreef.html)



# If you have to burn, use a lot of caution

Doug Palmer counsels the inner pyro in all of us

SHORT OF the Sun unexpectedly becoming a red giant and boiling the Earth, I can't see the fire season extending beyond the end of March this year. So, come the end of March, I would expect people will be planning to put on their slip-ons, collect their matches and remove some of the incredible growth that has sprung up.

I would like to urge some caution. The growth throughout Palerang is quite unlike anything that has happened over the past few years. There are a few nasty surprises lurking.

The mass of grass in the average paddock is now very dense and generates a lot of heat. Because there is a lot of fuel, it is quite difficult to knock down; a recent fire had RFS units using several tanks of water on a relatively small fire just to get it under control. Firefighters have also seen the heat from dead phalaris grass stalks cause the green grass underneath to catch alight as the sugars in the grass burn.

## So please act with caution and plan ahead:

- Go small – rather than light up a huge area, plan on doing a number of smaller, more controllable burns over several days.
- Make sure that you have enough firefighting equipment to control what you do burn. With the amount of fuel that is lying about, a single slip-on may not be enough; consider teaming up with your neighbours.
- You are going to need more water than you thought possible. You will almost certainly have to re-fill. Make sure that you know where to get more water from and where you can fill your firefighting equipment from a dam or tank.



- Make sure that you have a containment line around what you plan to burn. Make it deeper than you normally would since there's enough fuel to send embers quite a distance. Clear the area of fuel; just mowing the day before means that you still have quite a lot of fuel in your 'containment line'.
- Plan your burn carefully, with due attention to the lie of the land. A fire moving slowly downhill is less exciting than something roaring uphill but also less embarrassing in the case of accidents.
- Inform Lake George Zone fire control of your plans on 6297 1840.

## Before you light a fire:

- Know the weather forecast for the day. In particular, be aware of any possible wind changes. The Bureau of Meteorology issues forecasts at [www.bom.gov.au/nsw/forecasts/index.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/forecasts/index.shtml) and has a neat map of wind forecasts at [www.bom.gov.au/jsp/watl/wind/index.jsp](http://www.bom.gov.au/jsp/watl/wind/index.jsp).
- Inform your neighbours. Be as specific as you can be with dates and times. Even on a calm day, you're going to generate an impressive column of smoke.
- Do a test burn of a small, contained patch and see whether you can control it.

## If you burn your neighbour's property, you are liable

And remember, if things do get out of hand, you're liable for any damage to your neighbours' properties. Keep in mind that the RFS may not be able to pull a rabbit out of a hat on the day – amongst other things, we may be attending to other peoples' uncontrolled burns – so your best solution to any problem is not to have one in the first place.

# Karen Viggers – story of love in isolated climes

by Nichole Smith



Photo: Nancy Morrison

KAREN VIGGERS is a busy woman. Married with two children, she works part-time in a veterinary practice in Canberra, provides support for biologists studying native animals, has been a volunteer for groups such as Wildcare Queanbeyan and is the successful author of two novels.

Her well-received first work of fiction, *The Stranding*, was published in 2008 and now her second, *The Lightkeeper's Wife*, will be launched in Canberra this month.

"It's a story of love and passion, the challenges of marriage, loss and recovery, and what a woman will do to keep her family together," Viggers says of her latest creation.

The vet turned writer has a strong affinity with all things natural, enhanced by a childhood spent in the Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Valley. While writing was a passion from an early age, a similarly strong love of animals led her to study Veterinary Science at Melbourne University and five years of work in mixed animal practice.

"I do love animals and I enjoy talking to people too, which is something you do a lot of as a veterinarian. What I like about the job is the ongoing relationships you develop with people and their pets."

## BOOKS, AUTHORS and BOOK REVIEWS



## From scientific reports to personal fiction: but nature not far away

On moving to Canberra with her husband, an ecologist at the Healesville Sanctuary, almost 19 years ago, Viggers completed a PhD in wildlife health, producing a number of scientific reports before turning her hand to writing fiction.

"I can't remember a time when I wasn't writing. The real trigger for writing novels was coming up to age 40 and realising that I had always wanted to write real books, and if I didn't start soon, I'd be 80 and still talking about it."

A committed ecologist, nature is one of the central themes of Viggers work.

"Place" and landscapes are very important to me. I find my spiritual centre in beautiful wild places: the sea, the mountains, in Antarctica. In my writing, I try to bring people to these places, to share with them my passion for nature, and hopefully to encourage them to spend a bit more of their leisure time outdoors feeling the wind, watching the skies and listening to the birds. I think in our busy lives, we forget how to connect with nature, and therefore how to keep in touch with our real 'selves'."

## Comprehending the personal sacrifices that mothers often make

Landscape is almost a character in itself in *The Lightkeeper's Wife*, set as it is in Antarctica and Bruny Island off Tasmania. Essentially the book is a journey through the lives of a mother and son, both trying to come to terms with the events and secrets of their past and the ramifications of leading a life of virtual isolation in a place of such wild beauty.

"I wanted to explore the dark side of isolation and solitude, and the way it affects people's lives, relationships and psyche. It also helped me to comprehend the personal sacrifices that mothers often make to secure the integrity of the family."

Continued p10

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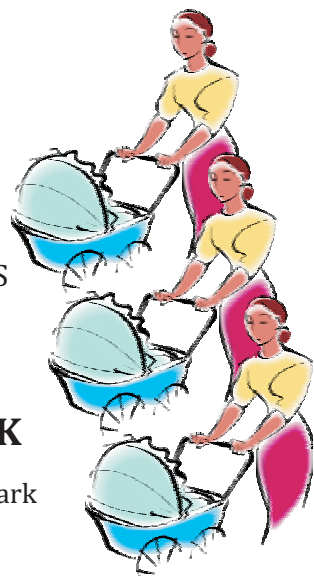
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Viggers says she enjoyed writing the book very much but admits the process is a continuous learning experience. "I wish I could say that the second book was easier, but it wasn't. In fact, it was probably harder. I think *The Lightkeeper's Wife* is a more ambitious book than *The Strand-*

ing, and it touches on many facets of life which we all have to face."

Currently working on her third novel, Viggers is tight-lipped about its content, but is pleased to reveal that its setting is a local one. "My next book is set in and around Canberra, but I'm keeping it close to my chest at the moment. I'm four drafts in, but there is much work to do."

## Book Club choice by Sarah Newsome

# EAST MEETS WEST AS NEVER BEFORE



## Salmon Fishing in the Yemen

by Paul Torday

Phoenix Fiction  
(imprint of Orion Books)

RRP \$22.99

### WHEN SCIENTIST

Fred Jones is asked to advise a wealthy Arab sheikh on a proposal to introduce Scottish salmon fishing into the deserts of the Middle East, he points out a number of challenges, starting with the obvious: "Fish need water."

However absurd the proposal, it gains momentum as it answers the problems of a range of characters from the needy, the greedy, and the visionary.

There's Fred's talentless yet ambitious boss, anxious to curry favor with his superiors. There's Peter Maxwell, the chief spin doctor for the British Prime Minister, who sees it as a great cultural exchange and a photo opportunity in the Middle East that doesn't involve bombs, blood or bodies. And there's the sheikh himself, who bankrolls the project hoping it will promote peace in his homeland.

Together, Fred and the sheikh, and his posh assistant Harriet, set out to make the dream a reality.

Along the way, Torday lampoons everything from Islamic fundamentalists to the

British class system in a hilarious satire on the tensions between the consumer societies of the west and the faith-based communities in the Middle East. The book succeeds as a satire because it is charming and quirky and neatly sidesteps becoming sour with self-righteousness.

But underneath the laughs lies a serious question – a question of faith. The secular west has 'moved on' from religion and now spends Sundays in the supermarket. This is contrasted with the simple faith in the Yemen, where the biblical landscape makes it easy to believe in miracles.

It provokes readers to consider how they regard faith: since the west has largely ceased to believe in anything, we have forgotten how to have faith, and have come to regard the faith held by others with increasing distrust. And these days, that kind of 'distrust' comes armed with AK-47s.

The book also presents the tensions between idealists and realists and the scientists. Without visionaries such as the prophet-like sheikh, the great breakthroughs in science might never happen. And this is neatly juxtaposed with the grubby realism of scoring political points through media manipulation.

*Salmon Fishing in the Yemen* will appeal to fishermen, and those of us who don't fish but enjoy a feel-good comedy. The film version stars Emily Blunt, Ewan McGregor and Kristen Scott Thomas and is now in production.

## Theresa's winning musical ways

IT HAS been a long time coming, but after many nominations, Karabar High School finally tasted success at the 2011 Canberra Area Theatre (CAT) awards, with Theresa Buetre winning 'Best Actress in a Featured Role in a School or Youth Musical'.

Theresa played Ruth in Karabar's revival of the Gilbert and Sullivan classic, a production which also received four other nominations – including 'Best School or Youth Musical'.

"It was a perfect way to finish off high school," Theresa said. "It's a really, really fun role to play." This was Theresa's second CAT nomination, after she was nominated in the Patricia Kelson encouragement award category (2010) for her role in *Gods of War* as a jazz singer.

"I got to sing a variety of Gershwin songs in a small jazz band, accompanying myself on the piano. That was when jazz and voice started to become a big passion for me. It was also a big confidence boost."

Theresa's exceptional talent is not dissimilar to that of Alicia Keys, or Aretha Franklin. She now has ambitions to continue to be involved in music in some way, even if it's "just for fun".

"I had a pretty early interest in music – I absolutely loved Gloria Estefan and Michael Jackson... but it wasn't until around years 9 and



10 that I really started singing. I did elective music at Karabar because I could play the flute, but started singing a lot more. I also started playing piano around this time. Receiving the award this year is very flattering – it made me so thankful for the Karabar High performing arts people and students, and for everyone who has encouraged me and told me to keep singing and performing."

"After that show I know that music has to be a part of my life... I'm currently doing voice training – no matter what I'm still going to keep on making music and singing and finding shows to be a part of."

Anyone who knows Theresa, or has seen her perform knows that that will definitely be something to look forward to.

— Miles Thompson

## DROP IN AND BRING OUT THE ARTIST



THE ART classes at The Artists Shed in Queanbeyan have resumed for 2011.

The best thing about classes at 'the Shed' is that a person can try a class and not be locked into a term – finding all that time can be extremely difficult these days.

The art classes cover painting (using oils, watercolour and/or acrylics), pastels, foundation drawing, printmaking, mixed media, and ceramics. The professional artists and very experienced tutors include Margaret Hadfield, David Hatton, Hillary Mackay, Colleen Michelle Connors, Jenny Robbins, Claire Primrose, Alicia Kane and Dennis Mortimer.

The classes cater for everyone from beginners to the experienced and have been devised to accommodate entry at any time. There is so much diversity on offer that some students do more than one class a week.

The lessons are a chance to escape from a busy life to a creative world in an exciting amazing place of art which is The Artists Shed. Run by artists, the Shed offers quality art supplies at 10% below RRP, picture framing by Ric Bennett as well as very high standard artworks by tutors and studio artists. Here is a unique space to share art and knowledge.

The Artists Shed is a major creative centre of our region, and is also the main sponsor in the art sections of the Bungendore, Queanbeyan and Canberra shows as well as many other community art events.

— Margaret Hadfield

London's *Daily Telegraph* announced "Ray Cooney is a national treasure", and the *Sunday Times* was moved to declare "Farce lovers are in for two and a half hours of inspired, demented bliss."

What would you do if you found £2 million of someone else's ill gotten gains in used bank notes and thought the owner had no way of tracing you?

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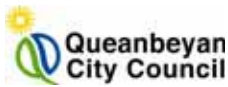
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# '70s glam rock at 'The Q' this month



**ASHES TO ZIGGY** – The Australian David Bowie Tribute Show is one of Australia's most authentic look-alike and sound-alike tribute bands. Based right here in the Capital Region, the band realistically recreates the look and sound of David Bowie through a two-hour theatrical rock concert that takes audiences on a musical journey from 1972 through to 1994, including all of Bowie's hits.

Paul Lyons, who began his musical career in Albury/Wodonga before moving to Canberra, channels David Bowie. He was 'discovered' by two musicians, Steve Collings and Reg Thornhill, who were looking for a singer who could head up their concept band. They needed

a person who could not just look like Bowie but actually sound like him as well.

"I think people are just getting a little bit fed up with tribute acts that don't look or sound much like the original," said Lyons, as he took a break from the second-last rehearsal before the show's launch in Queanbeyan on 25 March.

"We have done everything we can to make the show sound realistic, and we have spent a lot of time replicating the original outfits worn by Bowie and the band... and yes that does include platform boots, wigs and tight pants," said Lyons. "We really think that audiences should be given a quality show for their money and they should not just enjoy the show for

"We have spent a lot of time replicating the original outfits worn by Bowie and the band" ... (from L to R) Steve Collings, Paul Lyons, and Reg Thornhill.

the fun that it is but also for the memories the songs can bring back."

In addition to Lyons, Collings and Thornhill, the show includes quality musicians on keyboards and bass guitar. Technical support is provided by some of Australia's top lighting and sound technicians.

"We have really spent a lot of time getting this show right before going public," said founding member Steve Collings. "We have employed vocal coaches, choreographers, professional management and quality support musicians just to make sure this thing works well."

The name *Ashes to Ziggy* is taken from the two Bowie songs *Ashes to Ashes* and *Ziggy Stardust* and indicates the A-Z nature of including all the hit songs in the one show.

## Top country rock artist opens show

"We have also managed to secure Australia's most internationally successful female country rock artist to open the show for us. Nicki Gillis will be doing the first live performance of her long-awaited new album, *Woman of Substance* and we are very proud to have someone of her calibre with us for this show."

*Ashes to Ziggy* – The Australian David Bowie Tribute Show is playing at 'The Q' on 25 March 2011. Tickets are \$25 and \$18 (concession). The show starts at 8pm. For more info [www.aussiebowie.com](http://www.aussiebowie.com).

— Tracy Dann

## SEASON FOR ART COMPS

Cont'd from p8

Once it's finished they need to take a picture of their artwork and get a parent or guardian to submit the photo using a simple online form, which is available on the ActewAGL education website. **Entries must be in by Wednesday 23 March 2011.**

There are three age categories – kindergarten to year two, years three to four and years five to six. The five most creative entries in each category will be shortlisted and placed on the ActewAGL education website for public voting by Thursday 31 March 2011. The artwork with the most votes received by 5pm, Friday 15 April 2011 from each category will win.

For competition details and terms and conditions, or to find out more about the education website, visit the ActewAGL education website: [actewagl.com.au/education](http://actewagl.com.au/education).

## National competition for Indigenous artists

ENTRIES ARE being called for from Indigenous artists for the national 28th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award. **Entries close on 18 March 2011.**



Five categories with \$4,000 prizes are on offer. Entry forms are available at [www.nt.gov.au/natsiaa](http://www.nt.gov.au/natsiaa) or by contacting the Award Coordinator at MAGNT on 08 8999 8203 or email [natsiaa@nt.gov.au](mailto:natsiaa@nt.gov.au).

# AFTER HOURS – LIGHTS! SCRIPT! ACTION! LAUGHS!

by Miles Thompson

THREE NIGHTS a week rehearsal at the Queanbeyan Community Centre after a full day on the job sounds like a tall order. But the cast of *Funny Money* is seriously getting into the groove of this Ray Cooney comedy a month before opening night at 'The Q' on 6 April.

The eight local actors selected after a thorough audition process might be technically termed 'amateur' but that doesn't really explain what they do. In fact, what they do is no different than the task facing 'professionals' who get paid by the hour, only these actors are paid in experience rather than Australian dollars.

Local director, Stephen Pike, once elaborated on "the trials and tribulations of putting on an amateur production" and they are numerous. Not only do the members of the production have the stress of costumes, props, acting, lighting, sound and the other essential components of any professional production, but they also have to fit in work commitments, family commitments, and everything between that and making sure the dog gets to go for a walk.

As with most shows, *Funny Money*, rehearsals are three nights a week for all involved,

roughly lasting for about eight weeks before the production goes before an audience. However, these rehearsals will often take place after a full day's work for the actors and, if they're lucky, a takeaway sandwich for dinner on the way to the theatre. Does the actor's day job detract from the work he puts in the theatre? No, because it is for him, a true 'labour of love'. He's not doing it for the pay, the autographs or the high end costumes. He's doing it for a pure love of theatre. And it shows!

Director Rob DeFries was very aware during the audition phase that "I had to employ people who have jobs". When combined with other unforeseen setbacks within the production, such as people having to pull out for various reasons, every one of the rehearsals becomes critical.

DeFries elaborated on some of the effort for a director, saying "the role a director plays as a decision maker is critical... often it's down to them as a judge". He also said that in a farce like *Funny Money* it's really important to try different things and let everyone know when something works and when something doesn't.

## Hilarious farce of holding onto money


This Queanbeyan City Council funded production is the story of Henry Perkins, an office worker who accidentally stumbles across a rather large sum of money, and decides to keep it... like any normal person. The ensuing two and a half hours of hilarity is the story of Henry talking himself out of, and into, impossible situations.

Last year's most popular play from Queanbeyan City Council, *Caravan*, was also an amateur production full of local actors from Queanbeyan and surrounding areas including Canberra. It was absolutely delightful and a great night out. The audience loved it.

Reflecting on the standard of auditions, DeFries, who appeared in *Caravan* last year, commented on the high quantity of performers in Queanbeyan and the surrounding areas. "Community theatre is so important", he said. "It's great to be recognised in a local production... and it [acting] is wonderful fun. We really want to circulate interest amongst the audience and remind them how much fun it is."

The amount of fun the cast and crew seem to be having is a direct reflection of how hard they are working, and how much they love the theatre. The results are coming together... as will the audience between 6–16 April. Don't come because it is a good amateur production – come because it's a great night's entertainment!

## Annie's Collectables

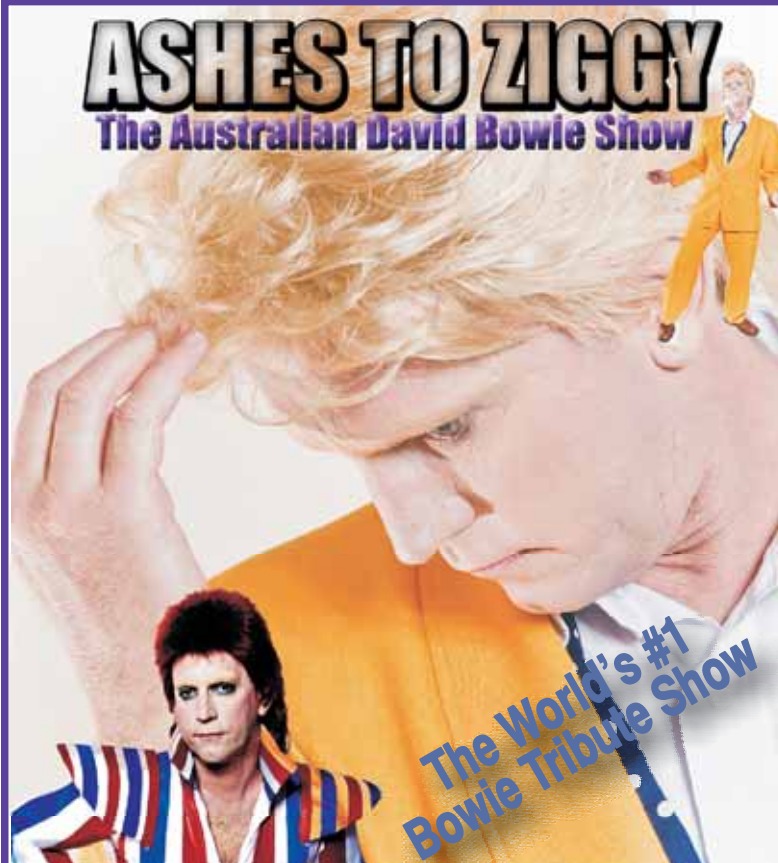


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# Foiling the canine Houdini by Heike Hahner

THE CANINE Houdini is recognisable by his athletic, though sometimes a bit overweight, build. He or she is frequently a happy, active, social and engaging dog. Breed or gender seem to be of lesser importance, although canine Houdinis are rarely found among loyal and territorial breeds such as German Shepherds or Rottweilers.

Once dogs have learned to escape they become quite hard to contain, because they see every new barrier as a new and exciting challenge. Additionally, the gains to getting out are enormous for your dog – raiding neighbourhood bins and compost heaps, attention from passers-by, as much exercise as she likes, meeting fellow escapees, etc. As far as your dog is concerned, there are huge incentives to leave home, again and again and again...

## Why escape if life is good at home?

Well apparently, life is often not as good for your dog as you might think. Dogs don't care about the large, nicely clipped lawn, the expensive bed and toys, the top quality pet food.

Dogs are hunters and scavengers. As hunters dogs travel in groups to find suitable prey and being a scavenger means being an opportunist – eat just about anything, sleep anywhere it feels safe. Opportunists also travel to find company and sex.

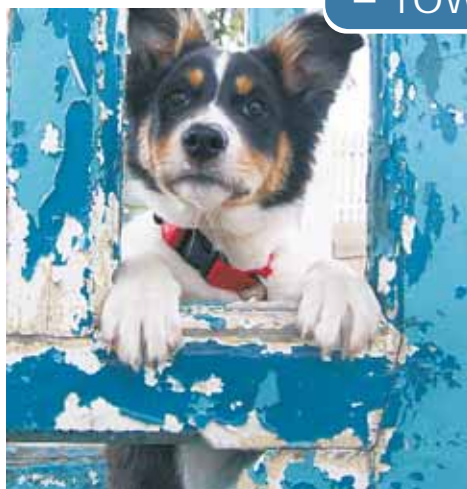
While few dogs have opportunities to live like this anymore, many of them still need the exercise, mental stimulation and company that they gain by escaping from a backyard.

## So what can be done?

Escaping is a common problem and can be solved if the owner is determined to keep the dog in. There is not one solution; different things need to be tried to see what stops your dog.

### Here are some suggestions:

- Build a run that has a wire ceiling and only remove the dog under supervision.
- Run an electric wire along the top of the fence.
- Hang large flower baskets side by side from the fence.
- Hang large lengths of plastic pipe horizontally from the fence so that dog can't get a grip on the top of the fence.



- Attach wire mesh to the top of the fence angling it inwards towards the garden. This method is used in wildlife parks to stop koalas and possums escaping.
- Electronic containment systems are very effective, according to some people, but expensive.

For dogs that go under or through the fence, the only way to keep them safe maybe by building a run or keeping them in a safe location such as the laundry or the garage when you are not home.

It is crucial to understand that dog escapees have a high need for exercise, company and stimulation. It is advisable that your dog's day include both active and passive times. Training, sports, social outings, etc. will also help to provide for your dog's needs. Tired and mentally stimulated dogs generally do not escape from home.

Most dogs are social and suffer emotionally if they are left alone for long periods of time. Maybe a neighbour or friend can drop by during the day to check on your dog or take her for a walk. There are also numerous pet-minders who advertise their services these days.

Getting another dog for company for your dog is only advisable if you have solved the escaping problem. Otherwise you may find that you now have two dogs escaping!

The only way to stop dog escape artists in the long term is to make sure they never get out under their own steam – and that you provide a varied and interesting lifestyle for your dog.

For specific questions – contact Heike on [hhahner@bigpond.com](mailto:hhahner@bigpond.com) or phone: 4842 7143



Toadfish Chutney: (L to R) Joe Mann, Dom Dahl, Marianne Mann, John Daniel (JD), and Ollie Grandjean.

## SHOWCASE OF LOCAL BANDS

# TOADFISH CHUTNEY: BEYOND THE JAMS

Danny Velnaar interviews Joe Mann and Marianne Mann

LIKE ALL of Palerang's talented local bands, Toadfish Chutney's musicians have day jobs and play for the love of the music and performing. Joe (rhythm guitar and vocals) and Marianne (lead vocal) live in Bywong and run ComStat Printing and Design. Dom Dahl (Bass) lives in Canberra, and is a technician; John Daniel (drums) lives at Carlton Estate, and is an earthmoving contractor; and Ollie Grandjean (lead guitar and vocals) lives in Canberra, and is a pilot.

The band got together when Joe met Ollie at a Canberra Music Workshop jam; Dom is a friend of Marianne's; and John met them all at a private party that I invited them to. The rest is history. The name was created before the band came together, on a drive between Port Stephens and Bywong. The Mann family were throwing together random band names as a way of entertainment on the M7.

Toadfish Chutney immediately raised eyebrows and the seed was planted. The name is a reminder for the band not to take itself too seriously, plus it's kinda cool.

Toadfish Chutney formed in late 2008. The band came together easily and even though the first jams were 'interesting' a great chemistry between band members formed almost instantly. Being a 'Toadie' is special and a responsibility not to be taken lightly!

## Do you write your own stuff?

Although the current set list is made up predominantly of covers (with a Toadfish makeover) originals are a very important part of the band's medium to long-term vision. There are currently

two originals regularly played at live gigs, but rest assured there are plenty more in the pipeline.

## Mean demographic of band

Demographic... sigh! Suffice to say we cater to Fugu lovers of any age, as long as they like to rock.

## Influences

That's a great question. Musical influences vary from member to member but the magical thing is that they overlap in a very cool way. If I were to name a few standouts for each of us they would be:

**Marianne:** Metallica, Creed, The Divinyls

**Joe:** Billy Idol, The Cult, Good Australian Rock

**Ollie:** The Emmanuel brothers, good 'acoustic' guitar, Billy Thorpe

**Dom:** Nickelback, Matchbox 20, Metallica

**John (JD):** Anything from the golden rock and roll era. Loves his Bombora.

## Gigs played

Firstly, a huge thanks to Jo and Dave for giving us our first gig at the Wamboin Community Hall. The Toadfish have played gigs at the Lake George Hotel, Bungendore, The Bungendore Show, Collector, The Harvest Festival and the Electric Breeze concert. It was great to make the final of the Battle of the Backyard bands in 2010.

## Favourite band

Toadfish Chutney, of course, because they have the best fans!

The next local gig will be at the Lake George Hotel alongside FeralBlu, Eagle Medicine, and Old Bones and Blisters on Friday 15 April.

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<b>Monday to Thursday</b>	Happy Hour 5pm to 6pm
<b>Monday &amp; Tuesday</b>	Schooner Draw – Drawn @ 6pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	Pool Comp 7pm Cash prizes
<b>Thursday</b>	Key Ring Cash ( <i>jackpots if not won</i> )
<b>Friday</b>	Meat raffles drawn @ 7.30pm Jag the Joker drawn @ 7.30pm ( <i>jackpots if not won</i> ) Live Entertainment* from 7.30pm to late
<b>Saturday</b>	Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat NPL Poker Tournaments from 4pm Cash prizes

\*(Refer to Gig Guide for line up)

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# Stefano comes to Benedict House in Queanbeyan

THE VERY popular Stefano de Pieri from ABC series *Gondola on the Murray* will drive from Mildura with three suckling pigs to roast at Benedict House. He will demonstrate, speak and cook over three days, 9–11 April.

“My family and I have actively chosen the country as the site for our economic and

cultural activities. It isn’t an easy choice, but we believe that the country is the place where Australia can express itself best, where difficulties can turn to possibilities and opportunities,” says Stefano.

His award-winning restaurant in the underground chambers of Mildura’s Grand Hotel has become one of Australia’s great gastronomic pilgrimages. Stefano’s epony-

“His food is approachable and packed with flavour, plus he radiates enthusiasm, warmth and generosity of spirit rarely seen...”

– Gourmet Traveller

## Dinner and cooking school schedule

Saturday 9 April, Sunday 10 April, Monday 11 April

Roasted Suckling Pig – a gourmet event at Benedict House

Savour the delectable combination of rustic Australian and Italian cuisines in a 3-course feast prepared specially by gourmet chefs Stefano di Pieri and Kate Shelton. Wine included.

7pm, \$135 per person  
Benedict House, 39 Isabella Street, Queanbeyan  
Bookings: 6284 2868

Sunday 10 April

Traditional Rustic Cuisine with Stefano de Pieri at Benedict House

Enhance your gastronomic skills with an exclusive cooking class with celebrity chef Stefano de Pieri and become a master in traditional cooking methods and making pasta. Includes 3-course lunch and wine.

12 noon–2pm. \$135 per person  
Benedict House, 39 Isabella St, Queanbeyan  
Bookings: 6284 2868

Visit Bungendore’s new Italian Restaurant Chianti with Italian Chef Angelo and Head Chef Rick Campbell

cafe wood works



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Bookings preferred  
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mous restaurant was awarded three chef’s hats in *The Age Good Food Guide 2004–2005* for the sixth consecutive year, one of only two restaurants to receive three hats in Victoria.

It was also awarded Country Restaurant of the Year and Best Italian for the state of Victoria. It is considered one of the top 20 restaurants in Australia by *Gourmet Traveller* and it has also been a recipient of a *Gourmet Traveller* Jaguar Award for Excellence. In 2002–03 it was awarded Restaurant of the Year by *The Age Good Food Guide*.

– Kate Shelton



with ‘Annie’ Joyce Nordsvan

*Oriental collectables have always been a favourite. The intricate decorations and workmanship are beautiful. It’s hard to choose from beautiful Japanese Satsuma, Chinese snuff bottles, carved coral, Chinese celadon ducks, or carved statues, but select I must so here are two special examples.*

## Carving in the long winter nights

**Kokeshi** are Japanese dolls, originally from northern Japan. They are handmade from wood, have a simple trunk and an enlarged head with a few thin, painted lines to define the face. The body has a floral design painted in red, black, and sometimes yellow, and covered with a layer of wax. One characteristic of kokeshi dolls is their lack of arms or legs. The bottom is marked with the signature of the artist.



Alan Booth (*Looking for the Lost: Journeys Through a Vanishing Japan*. New York: Kodansha International, 1996) suggests that kokeshi may be fetish substitutes for unwanted babies killed after birth, and the characters can be understood as 子消し, or “extinguish the child”. While infanticide was commonly practiced in Japan until the 20th century, there is little if any evidence to support the theory that kokeshi have anything to do with the practice, with the earliest references in literature dating only from 1965.

The most common school of thought is that the dolls originated in the Tohoku region of Japan during the Bunka-Bunsei eras (1804–1829 AD). Some suggest that the dolls were created by lathe craftsmen who lived a gypsy life in the region’s thickly forested mountains and sold them to the visitors who came to the hot springs there. Kokeshi were probably made during the long nights of the snow-bound winters from Dogwood, Chestnut, Cherry or Keyaki.

Other investigations into the dolls’ origins have pointed to the possibility that they were made by peasant farmers from spare pieces of wood and were given as tokens of love and friendship to family and friends. *Continued p14*

## Bulletin Restaurant Guide

### Bungendore

<b>The Carrington</b> <i>Modern Australian</i> 21 Malbon St, Bungendore	6238 1044
<b>Heritage on the Square</b> <i>Pizza and Country Australian</i> 25 Malbon St, Bungendore	6238 1404
<b>Lake George Hotel</b> <i>Bistro Country Australian</i> 20 Gibraltar St, Bungendore	6238 1260
<b>Lark Hill Winery &amp; Vineyard Cafe</b> <i>Focus on Biodynamic Produce</i> Bungendore Rd, Bungendore	6238 0266
<b>Le Tres Bon</b> <i>Traditional French Cuisine</i> 40 Malbon St, Bungendore	6238 0662
<b>Cafe Woodworks</b> <i>Gourmet Country</i> 18 Malbon St, Bungendore	6238 1688
<b>Bardy’s Cafe</b> <i>Gourmet Pizza</i> 31 Ellenden St, Bungendore	6238 0700
<b>Royal Hotel Chinese</b> <i>Chinese</i> 34 Gibraltar St, Bungendore	6238 1219
<b>Logan’s Cafe</b> <i>Homestyle and Woodfired Pizzas</i> 2/12 Gibraltar St, Bungendore	6238 0585
<b>Cafe Lerida</b> <i>Gourmet Bistro</i> Federal Hwy, Lake George	6295 6640
<b>Shepherds Run at Wamboin</b> <i>Modern &amp; Traditional</i> 344 Norton Rd, Wamboin	6238 3842
<b>Lambert Vineyard Cafe</b> <i>Modern Australian</i> 810 Norton Rd, Wamboin	6238 3866

### Queanbeyan

<b>Benedict House</b> <i>Fresh food made on premises using local produce</i> 39 Isabella St, Queanbeyan	6284 2868
<b>Canton Chinese Restaurant</b> <i>Chinese</i> 232 Crawford St, Queanbeyan	6297 5246
<b>Central Cafe</b> <i>Wide range, hearty servings</i> 113 Monaro St, Queanbeyan	6297 1335
<b>Colonial Restaurant</b> <i>A la carte</i> 56 Macquid St, Queanbeyan (Golden Age Motor Inn)	6297 1122
<b>Lime Leaves Thai</b> <i>Thai</i> Morrisset & Lowe St, Queanbeyan	6299 2000
<b>New Cathay Chinese Restaurant</b> <i>Chinese</i> 9 Monaro St, Queanbeyan	6297 2092

The *Bulletin Restaurant Guide* is a new and regular feature. If we have missed your restaurant or cafe within our distribution area please drop us a line at [media@districtbulletin.com.au](mailto:media@districtbulletin.com.au).

<b>Peppers @ the Roos</b> (Kangaroos Club) <i>Modern Australian</i> Cnr Stuart St & Richard Ave, Queanbeyan	6299 5127
<b>Punjabi Hut</b> <i>Indian</i> 226 Crawford St, Queanbeyan	6297 2717
<b>Rendezvous</b> <i>Homestyle</i> 17 Monaro St, Queanbeyan	6297 9830
<b>Michael’s at Walsh’s</b> <i>Modern Australian</i> 40 Monaro St, Queanbeyan	6297 1001
<b>Diamond Chinese</b> <i>Chinese</i> Karabar Mall, Karabar	6299 1288

### Braidwood

<b>The Albion</b> <i>Modern Australian</i> Unit 3, 119 Wallace St, Braidwood	4842 1422
<b>Zac’s Table Restaurant</b> <i>Modern Australian with Thai &amp; Turkish-Cypriot influences</i> 140 Kings Hwy, Braidwood (Mona Country Manor House)	0404 026 616
<b>Braidwood Eureka Woodfired Pizzeria</b> <i>Italian &amp; Pizza</i> Wallace St, Braidwood	4842 1019
<b>The Royal Mail Hotel</b> <i>Bistro</i> 145 Wallace St, Braidwood	4842 2488
<b>L’Auberge</b> <i>French: Thursday–Sunday</i> 202 Wallace St, Braidwood (the old Torpys site) <a href="http://www.auberbebraidwood.com.au">www.auberbebraidwood.com.au</a>	4842 2491
<b>The Kitchen</b> <i>A la carte dining</i> 180 Wallace St, Braidwood (Braidwood Hotel)	4842 2529
<b>Jade Teahouse</b> Braidwood Serviceman’s Club	4842 2065

### Captains Flat

<b>The Outsider</b> <i>Homestyle</i> 86 Foxlow St, Captains Flat	6236 6160
<b>Captains Flat Hotel</b> <i>Classic Dining</i> Foxlow St, Captains Flat	6236 6201

### Gundaroo

<b>Grazing</b> <i>Modern Australian</i> Cork St, Gundaroo	6236 8777
<b>Cork St Cafe</b> <i>Pizza</i> Cork St, Gundaroo	6236 8217
<b>Crowes Restaurant</b> <i>International with a modern Australian twist</i> 23 Cork St, Gundaroo (Gundaroo Colonial Inn)	6236 8060

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## Art and activism – the two fires of Judith Wright

BRAIDWOOD HOLDS its Two Fires Festival on 1–3 April. Visitors are promised a great program that includes presentations of well-known poets, writers, visual artists, musicians and Indigenous performers and activists.



Merrie Hamilton, the coordinator of the Indigenous events at the Two Fires Festival said that this festival of Activism through the Arts, held every two years, celebrates the legacy of poet Judith Wright.

Wright was part of the Braidwood community for the last two decades of her life and was an early and tireless advocate for Aboriginal rights and the natural environment. The Two Fires, Art and Activism, are the two passions for which she used her considerable clout as a high profile Australian poet.

A long weekend of poetry and performance, environmental discussion, art exhibitions and Indigenous cultural sharing is planned. The Indigenous program consists of five workshops. “Some of these are musical and are aimed at our young people eg hip hop writer and performer Warren Foster from Wallaga Lake will work with teenagers,” said Hamilton.

The Saturday night concert features Indigenous musicians Johnny Huckle and The Stiff Gins, complemented by Kavisha Mazzella. To find out more go to [www.twofiresfestival.com.au](http://www.twofiresfestival.com.au); or email [enquiries@twofiresfestival.com.au](mailto:enquiries@twofiresfestival.com.au).

## St Patrick's Day reminds us...

IRISH SET dancing and old-style Irish tap classes – Wednesdays 8–10pm at the Anglican Church Hall, Butmaroo Street Bungendore.

\$10. If you like Irish music and like to dance, this is for you. Please contact us first if you would like to come by email at [nora@SetDancing.com.au](mailto:nora@SetDancing.com.au) or call 6233 03305. Visit the website at [www.SetDancing.com.au](http://www.SetDancing.com.au).

## Horse property planning – Braidwood area

REBECCA HALL from the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority has organised the Myers (Jane and Stuart) and the Property Management Planning guru Alison Elvin to bring their brand of horse happiness to Braidwood equine enthusiasts for a series of seminars and workshops. Thursday 7 April – evening seminar: 6–9pm, at Garanvale Woolshed, Little River Rd Braidwood. Saturday 9 April workshop: 9am–4pm at *Roscommon*, Little Bombay. The cost is \$20/head, and numbers are limited so call Southern Rivers CMA in Braidwood to book and for more details 4842 2594. For more about their work visit the websites of Jane & Stuart Myers [www.equiculture.com.au/](http://www.equiculture.com.au/) and Alison Elvin [www.qualityruralsolutions.com.au/QRSPeople.html](http://www.qualityruralsolutions.com.au/QRSPeople.html).

## Identify your paddock plants

THE SUSTAINABLE Grazing Program (Department of Industry and Investment NSW) will be hosting two free (with morning tea) Paddock Plants Field Days in the region in the next month: Monday 21 March, in the Braidwood region; and Saturday 16 April, in the Goulburn/Tarago region. The field day will help you:

- learn to identify and recognise common paddock plants
- understand what plants tell you about your paddock or landscape
- identify and recognise weeds as well as useful plants.

Register your interest in attending by contacting Industry and Investment NSW (Primary Industries). Email: [goulburn.office@industry.nsw.gov.au](mailto:goulburn.office@industry.nsw.gov.au). Phone: 4828 6600.

## New home-based childcare option, carers wanted

A NEW option for childcare is opening up in Palerang and surrounding districts. Country Children's Early Learning Family Day Care promises to provide more choice and flexibility for families seeking quality childcare in regional and remote areas.



Julia Morphet with her children Trixie and Tobie.

The professional, regulated home-based childcare service offers care from birth to 12 years. The service is licensed by the NSW Department of Community Services and participates in the National Quality Assurance process. Families can access government child care subsidies such as the Child Care Benefit and the 50% Rebate.

Julia Morphet started the service to promote employment and quality childcare options to country areas that are not be serviced by other schemes. She says the new service is looking to recruit new carers in the Palerang area.

Morphett has been recruiting and supporting both experienced and new childcare providers working from home in Yass and elsewhere, and is now offering the same service in the Palerang district.

She says carers who register with the scheme benefit from ongoing support, training and guidance and registered carers are able to enjoy the

rewards of providing a quality childcare service whilst operating their own viable business. To find out more contact Julia Morphet on 6236 8305.

## Country Energy turns Essential

LOCAL JOBS will not be lost and customers should barely notice – that's the pledge from Country Energy as it hives off the front office operation, and re-badges itself as Essential Energy this month. A spokesperson said all employees will continue to work out of the Country Energy offices in Queanbeyan.

The NSW-government-owned electricity supplier has been split into retail ie an administrative and billing operation that was sold to Origin Energy late last year, and the part that connects and maintains the poles and wires, renamed Essential Energy and still belonging to the people of NSW.

It's all part of the \$5.3billion (minus debt) sale of some electricity assets by the incumbent NSW government that has caused considerable public debate in the past few months. A majority of taxpayers have told pollsters they are against the sale of a profitable asset.

Meanwhile Essential Energy says service phone numbers for faults and emergencies remain the same and there is a new phone number for general enquiries: 13 23 91.

## Queanbeyan family day care moves house

THE QUEANBEYAN Family Day Care Coordination Unit has relocated from McKeahnie Street to 181 Cooma Street, near the Karabar shops. “The Family Day Care scheme is now housed at the former South Queanbeyan Child Care Centre in Cooma St and is open for business,” Family Day Care coordinator Narelle Pumphrey said.

Queanbeyan Family Day Care is operated by Queanbeyan City Council (with State licensing and federal funding) and currently has 38 carers who care for small groups of children in a home-based environment.

## – COUNCIL NEWS –

### — New indoor sports centre gets famous name and an operator —

AT ITS February meeting, Queanbeyan Council appointed Berg Management Services (BMS) as the operator for the new Queanbeyan Indoor Sports Centre. Council also agreed to name the centre the Heather McKay Indoor Sports Centre. BMS was one of three organisations to enter an expression of interest and currently operates the National Indoor Cricket Centre in Lyneham.

Council unanimously agreed to name the centre the Heather McKay Indoor Sports Centre in honour of Queanbeyan's champion squash player. “Heather McKay is one of Queanbeyan's greatest ever sportspersons and she deserves to be honoured in such a way,” said Mayor Tim Overall, adding that McKay would be asked to attend the official opening which will happen soon.

The indoor sports complex has two multi-purpose indoor sports courts, spectator viewing areas and a kiosk with outdoor seating. The foyer is the new home of the Queanbeyan Sporting Hall of Fame which currently resides in the Queanbeyan Conference Centre. The Indoor Sports Centre was funded by the Federal Government's Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program and is located at Taylor Park off Yass Road.

### ———— City Link Plaza development report delayed —————

IN LAST month's *Bulletin* we reported that a development application on a proposal for a super retailer, rumoured to be K Mart, to be located at City Link Plaza would come before Queanbeyan Council at its March planning meeting. That report subsequently was delayed and may emerge in time for the April meeting of the Council's Planning and Development Review Committee which is open to the public. Stay tuned.

### – Solar farm and wind farm benefit to local community questioned –

PALERANG COUNCIL is concerned about the level of ‘community benefit’ fast-track infrastructure projects can be required to return to the community. At Council's February meeting a submission to the NSW government was discussed.

This outlined concerns that development has impacts on the local community and Palerang coffers, such as additional truck wear and tear on roads and worker use of community facilities, and should be offset with contributions from the developer.

General Manager Peter Bascomb said that the track record on response to local concerns has been “incredibly worrying” so far, because of its potential to set precedents for all developments.

Solar thermal is likely to be back on track with federal support after community and Parliamentary Greens criticism of a plan to slash support in favour of diverting funds to flood relief. Council's submission to the NSW Department of Planning late last year, that roads near the proposed Bungendore solar farm be upgraded for safety reasons by the developer, was knocked back based on parent company Infigen's response.

A proposal that the solar farm contribute \$40,000 per year to ‘community benefits’ such as upgrading the local swimming pool and other recreational amenity was also denied in favour of a company offer to provide \$100,000 on a one-off basis.

Bascomb said the proposal for a yearly sum rather than a large one-off contribution had a precedent with a Land and Environment Court decision and would benefit both the developer and the Council.

## Fish disappear from almost forgotten cyclone

FISHERMEN IN northern Queensland affected by Cyclone Yasi are facing economic catastrophe (without a government bailout) as they find the fish have disappeared from Barrier Reef waters. A report on the phenomenon says fish can be gone, to deeper waters, for as long as two years.

Meanwhile, we hear from Townsville that for a while this past month, 300 trucks

per hour were removing tree debris from streets. The debris is being mulched for eventual return to the soil in people's gardens. Our Queensland correspondent also noted in regard to the cyclone's effects “It wiped out the fish, prawns, bananas, sugarcane, coral reefs, fledging birdlife – yet the butterflies are thriving.” The small townships just north of Townsville are currently experiencing their third flood inundation since October last year with severe weather warnings being issued by the Bureau of Meteorology.

## QUEANBEYAN RACING QUEEN *Cont'd from p3*

If the horse wins at Rosehill, Karuta Queen would be only the third in her class to complete the Millions/Slipper double after previous winners Phelan Ready in 2009 and Dance Hero did the same in 2004.

In the meantime, Layt has said she will have a run in at the premier event on the Canberra race card, the Black Opal Stakes at Canberra on 13 March.

There is the suggestion that the dominant win at the Magic Millions pointed more to a field that was ‘otherwise ordinary’, but according to all reports from her trainer and her jockey, teenage apprentice Tommy Berry, the Queen from Queanbeyan has yet to show what she can really do.

## ANTIQUE CHAT *Cont'd from p13*

### Button-like toggles

**Netsuke** production was most popular during the Edo period in Japan, around 1615–1868 and are miniature sculptures that were invented in 17th-century Japan to serve a practical function (the two Japanese characters ‘ne’ + ‘tsuke’ mean ‘root’ and ‘to attach’).

Traditional Japanese garments had no pockets; however, men who wore them needed a place to store their personal belongings, such as pipes, tobacco, money, seals, or medicines. Their solution was to place such objects in containers hung by cords from the robes' sashes.

The containers may have been pouches or small woven baskets, but the most popular were beautifully crafted boxes which were held shut by sliding beads on cords. Whatever the form of the container, the fastener that secured the cord at the top of the sash was a carved, button-like toggle – a netsuke.

Netsuke have been made from a variety of unusual materials including Hornbill ivory; black coral; petrified wood; walnut shells; tagua nut from the ivory palm; bamboo; agate; ivory; walrus tusk; whale bone; and teeth – a variety of teeth are used for netsuke, including: whale's, boar's, bear's and even tiger's.

*'Til next time, take care,  
Annie (Annie's Collectables)*



## SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Cont'd from p1

Deciding she was not cut out for a musical career, at 17 she joined the police force. Over 20 years she worked across a spectrum of policing, from patrolling to criminal investigation. It remains a source of frustration to White that police are not more involved in investigations of animal cruelty.

In 1997 a photograph showing a caged bear having its bile extracted changed White's life. Leaving the police force she joined the Animals Asia Foundation, but soon realised that Australia had equally urgent problems and moved to Animals Australia. And within two months of this came the *Cormo Express* incident that further changed her life.

This was a ship sailing aimlessly around the Middle East looking for a port to unload a cargo

## PUBLIC, PRIVATE ELECTRICITY

Cont'd from p4

In South Australia, between 1994 and 2002, residential rates increased by 40 percent, with the State's regulator calculating that 20 percent of the total was due to privatisation. In comparison with NSW, the cost of electricity has soared. In 1994 after privatisation, for example, electricity cost 10 percent more in South Australia, but by 2008 the gap had increased to 30 percent, despite real average electricity tariffs in Australia having declined slightly over the past 15 years.

In the corporatised New Zealand industry the wholesale price of electricity declined 17 percent in real terms between 1987 and 1997, but the retail price increased by 20 percent.

There is another factor in the equation, identified by accounting Professor Bob Walker and his wife, the economist Dr Betty Con Walker – that is the 'retention value' of the assets, which the government refuses to disclose. Such a value, argue the Walkers, would have to include the present value of cash flows potentially accruing to the public sector from the continued operation of six generators and distributors. These agencies have been reporting pre-tax profits of about \$1.4 billion a year.

"Pre-tax profits are relevant here because the notional taxes paid by State-owned corporations go to the State government, not the Commonwealth. That translates to a rate of return on the government's equity of about 24 percent a year – and that is on the basis of conservative public sector accounting methods," they write.

That's not a bad return on investment in any language – an efficient industry that returns a public dividend. Why part with it?

Dr Norman Abjorensen teaches Public Policy at the Crawford School of Economics and Government, ANU. He is a long-time Queanbeyan resident and political journalist.

of around 57,000 sheep that had been rejected by Saudi Arabia. Some 6,000 animals died. White recalls that the Australian Government sent the Chief Veterinary Officer to assess the sheep. When he claimed they were in better condition than a shipment recently arrived in Kuwait, White realised it was time to collect hard evidence about an industry that had avoided public scrutiny for 25 years.

## Getting the evidence on camera

In Kuwait in 2003 on her first investigation, she and her UK-based co-investigator bypassed port security "by finding an unlocked gate at the rear of the port". They got wharfside of a massive livestock vessel and "it was incredibly distressing to see injured, sick and blind sheep struggling to come down the gangplank".

White has visited over 50 'abattoirs' in the region, and nearly all slaughterhouses in Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Jordan and Egypt. Initially, she and her fellow investigator filmed openly "by portraying ourselves as Australian tourists".

Now they have to take greater care. At Bassateen abattoir, where they presented as leather traders, "our presence as Westerners was seen as threatening, and we would not have been able to document evidence had we not been using a covert camera".

Police work proved ideal training for White's investigations by equipping her to go into unknown, risky situations and to talk to all kinds of people. Always important is "knowing where the exit is" and a plan for when things go wrong.

Sometimes there are surprises, even a bit of humour – like the time she and a fellow investigator were plotting to enter a slaughterhouse in the dark and used a bush as secure cover. They literally fell over two people doing a drug deal, who promptly fled in fright.

Getting into abattoirs was often easy. At times "a smile and a handshake" helped get her through the door. Being Australian helped too, but she is horrified that locals have welcomed her presence as a sign that Australians approve of the slaughter practices she documented. Australians are culpable for what happens there, says White, because we know better – partly thanks to her work.

## Festival of Sacrifice – the end for a million Aussie sheep annually

Footage that appeared last year on the *7.30 Report* about Kuwait's Festival of Sacrifice generated a huge viewer response. Around one million sheep are annually sent to Kuwait for this.

White reported that "Australian sheep are purchased, bound with wire and shoved into car boots" and "others dragged terrified on their stomachs towards filthy slaughter areas" on the roadside waiting amongst the dead and dying to have their throats cut by amateur locals.

## ARE SHEEP STUPID?

Sheep are not as mindless and unconscious as many people assume.

New research out of the UK, suggests that sheep may be as intelligent in making learning decisions as monkeys and other mammals including humans.

The neuroscience research from the University of Cambridge suggests that sheep have advanced learning capability, can map out their surroundings and may be able to plan ahead.

"She's been very effective in raising awareness," said the RSPCA's chief scientist Bidda Jones. Jones calls her "relentless" and applauds her nerve to be in the Middle East gathering evidence and bearing witness. But, she adds, "imagine sitting through hours of horrific footage and then you get five minutes to get it across to politicians."



Despite White's overwhelming evidence, reportedly negotiations are underway by the federal government to allow live exports to Iran and Iraq.

## Jordanian princess on side

There have some notable wins. After documenting a particularly cruel slaughterhouse in Amman, and sending the footage to the royal family, White was immediately contacted by the King's sister HRH Princess Alia al Hussein who shut the facility down in 24 hours.

White has been working with the princess since, to change attitudes to slaughter in Jordan. They have become good friends, she says.

She is quick to emphasise too that the cruelty she has witnessed in the Middle East does not accord with Muslim teaching and she notes that in the west we also sacrifice millions of animals for religious celebrations like Christmas and Easter, but here it is out of sight. Factory farming conditions of pigs and chickens is another passionate concern.

## Economics don't add up

Politicians and the live export industry talk about jobs and rural income but White counters with testimony from the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, which claims that thousands of jobs have been lost as a result of the trade.

As for industry's 'cultural' argument, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils states

Muslim countries "readily accept frozen and chilled lamb and mutton from Australian when it is Halal certified".

White notes that in 2010, Australia's chilled/frozen sheepmeat exports to the Middle East were worth \$110 million more than live sheep, and there was the equivalent of 3.8 million sheep exported as chilled/frozen meat, 800,000 more than exported live.

## A very personal commitment

As someone who "lives and breathes" her work, White survives by channelling her feelings into determination and "positive initiatives". Her strong spiritual beliefs and a commitment to service help her deal with stress and to maintain self-control in the midst of terrible suffering. Sometimes it is a relief when an animal dies, its suffering ended. For White it is in a better place.

This very private woman, whose sanctuary is on the Victorian Mornington Peninsula, where she lives with her two beloved dogs, says engaging in public speaking or with the media has taken her "way out of her comfort zone". But she does it for the animals that cannot speak for themselves.

*The dairy steer in Kuwait: Sick at heart, White made a quiet promise that his suffering would not be in vain.*

One incident continues to haunt her – an Australian dairy steer about to be slaughtered by amateurs in a carpentry shop in Kuwait as part of the Festival of Sacrifice. It sensed White and her colleague were not going to hurt it and it got loose and walked to them.

Sick at heart that she couldn't save him, White made a quiet promise that his suffering would not be in vain. As she talked, it was evident that this steer's prolonged agony before dying still shakes her and that she won't rest until that promise is fulfilled.

White remains optimistic that exposure will bring a 'tipping point' that will see live exports banned. For Australian animals, and for Lyn White who bravely takes great risks on behalf of these animals, that ban can't come soon enough.

Di Johnstone reviews books. She is also a former Australian diplomat. For more information about live exports see [www.animalsaustralia.org](http://www.animalsaustralia.org).



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– Plan ahead for April –

## – GIG GUIDE: LIVE MUSIC –

253 Crawford St (in the library courtyard).

**Obsessions**, 8pm, Calwell Tavern.



**PETER BLACKSHAW**  
MARKETING QUALITY PROPERTY

# Rural Property Guide

**MARCH – see p7**