

The Whisper

February 2007 CIRCULATION: 1073

All proceeds from advertisements after printing costs go to the WAMBOIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, which started the Whisper in 1981 and continues to own it. This Newsletter is distributed to all RMBs in Wamboin, Bywong, Clare, and Yalana at the beginning of each month, except January. Editor is Ned Noel, 17 Reedy Creek Place, Wamboin, 2620, phone 6238-3484. Contributions which readers may wish to make will be appreciated, and should be submitted to by email to nednoel@optusnet.com.au or dropped into his mailbox at 17 Reedy Creek Place. The deadline for the next issue is always the last Sunday of the month, 7 pm, so for the March 2007 Whisper the deadline is Sunday, February 25, 2007, 7:00 pm.

LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES Fire/Police/Ambulance - Dial 000 All Hours

Queanbeyan Police 6298-0599 Wamboin Fire Brigade Info Centre 6238-3396 Ambulance Bookings 131233

WAMBOIN FACILITIES AND CONTACTS

Wamboin Community Assn	Helen Montesin	President	6238-3208
Bywong Community Assn	Judith Miller	President	6236-9321.
Fire Brigade	Cliff Spong	Captain	040-999-1340 bh 6236 9220 ah
Wamboin Playgroup	Leanne Quick	Convener	6238 3435
Sutton School Playgroup	Laura Taylor	Convener	62369662
Landcare	Roger Good	President	6236-9048
Community Nurse	Heather Morrison	Bungendore	6238-1333
Breastfeeding Assoc.	Belinda Dennis	Community Educator	6236 9979
Emergency Services	NSW Call Centre	Staff	132-500
Emergency Services Admin	Colin Brown	Controller	6238-1067
Justice of the Peace	Peter Greenwood	JP	6238-3358
Justice of the Peace	Keith France	JP	6238-3596
Wamboin Scout Group	Peter Harrison	Contact Person	6238-3525
Wamboin Guides	Rosemary Riley	Contact Person	6241-6565
Wamboin Pony Club	Maureen Purdie	Contact Person	6238-3343
Gearys Gap Pony Club	Leigh-Anne Barlow	Secretary	6238-3376
Play Group	Leanne Quick	Convenor	6238-3435
Hall Bookings	Joan Mason	Bookings	6238-3258
Church, Anglican	Robyn Robertson	Warden	6238-3202
Christian Prayer Group	Steve & Imelda Taylor	Contacts	6238-3220
Golf	Peter Greenwood	Golfer	6238-3358
Injured Wildlife	Wildcare	Helpline	6299-1966
Claire Ayling	WWOW Group	Convener	6238-3347

THE YOUNG WAMBOIN ENTREPRENEURS

Ashleigh Caird, babysitting	6238 0746.
Deanne Brucic, babysitting & Petsitting	6238-1884
Ellen Smith, petsitting (experienced with horses)	6238-3115
Fiona Skea, babysitting	6238-3290
Rebecca Purdie, petsitting	6238-3343
Frank Deveson, bicycle maintenance	6238-3294
John Brennan, babysitting and petsitting.....	6238 3472
Elena Sutcliffe, petsitting and babysitting	6238-3228
Gabrielle Simpkin & Nicolette Neveu-Abramczuk, petsitting	6238-3600

Macs Reef Tip Hours 7:30 am to 5:00 pm Fri-Sat-Sun-Mon (to 7 pm Sat - Sun in daylight saving time) closed Tue-Wed-Thurs

WAMBOIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION President's Paragraphs

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you had an enjoyable festive season and that 2007 is everything you want it to be. I am writing this before I jet off to the Land of the Long White Cloud – and hopefully not too much rain. However, I hope Wamboin gets some desperately needed rain while we are away – I have asked my contacts in NZ to send some over here!

Land Valuations – The Valuer Generals Department will be issuing new land valuations for Palerang Shire in the next few weeks. You may have already received yours. The land valuations will have a direct impact on your rates – the higher the valuation the higher your rates. Next year's rates will be calculated using the new 2006 valuations (2003 valuations were previously used). It is possible to check your valuation on the Internet (at <https://lpi-online.lpi.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/lpis/menu.pl>) and the sales report of properties that were used to calculate the valuation (at <https://lpi-online.lpi.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/lpis/menu.pl>).

A few of us have checked our 2006 valuations on the Internet and there seem to be some anomalies in the new valuations. In particular, all the valuations have gone up from the 2003 values which is contrary to the falling property market. The increase does not seem to be uniform across the whole area (as it was in previous years), with valuations in some areas going up a lot more than those in others. Some of the valuations are way above the price of vacant land sold in Wamboin/Bywong in 2005-6 (information off www.allhomes.com.au) and similar properties in the sales report used to generate the valuations.

Landholders have 60 days in which to object if they believe their valuation is too high. The WCA is currently collating information on valuations and sales from all over Wamboin and Bywong so that we have an overall picture of what has happened with the valuations. This will help us to advise residents on how to object to their valuation. If you need help to lodge an objection or you would like to add your information to our database (all information will be treated confidentially and details of individual valuations will not be released to anybody other than the committee collating the information), please contact me on 6238 3208 or John van der Straaten on 6238 3590.

Wamboin Produce Markets – I trust that the January markets will go well and the scones won't be too badly missed – hopefully there will be muffins and other treats to go with the coffee. The February markets will be on **17th February** from 9:00am till noon.

Wamboin Community Association meeting – The first meeting for 2007 will be on **20th February**. We are trying to get Ian Peters from Telstra to come and speak at the meeting to give us an update on what is happening with regard to mobile phone coverage and broadband in Wamboin. It is 2 years since he promised us better services and while broadband is now available in some areas, there has been no improvement to mobile phone coverage. We will also be discussing property valuations at the meeting.

WCA Electronic Noticeboard – Residents are continuing to subscribe to the noticeboard. It is a great way to keep up with issues of community interest and I encourage everybody to subscribe. To subscribe, simply send an email message (doesn't need any subject or content) to Wamboin_Noticeboard-subscribe@yahoo.com.au.

Calendar of events – If you have any events that you would like included in February's Whisper, please contact John van der Straaten (ph: 6238 3590).

-- Helen Montesin (helen.montesin@canberra.edu.au)

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Bywong Community News

Challenging the Rural Lands Protection Board: Recently elected RLPB Director Colin Brammall will talk to the 19 February general meeting of the Bywong Community on his experiences so far as a member of the Board. Members will remember that Colin was elected following the Board's decision to extend Board rating levies to include smaller holdings/hobby farms in the Shire. He is now in a position to discuss what the rates are spent on and what small landholders get in return for them. He will also talk and answer questions on Board procedures and fees, the undemocratic voting system, what to do if you receive a threatening letter and letters of complaint. The meeting is at 7.30 in the Community Hall in Birriwa Road (off Macs Reef Road). All residents of Bywong and other parts of the Shire are welcome to attend.

Clean Up Australia: Bywong has a high reputation for its efforts in the annual Clean Up Australia campaign. This year the clean-up will take place on 4 March. The Community urges residents to set aside two or three hours to help on that day, especially in these dry times when lack of growth seems to reveal increased amounts of rubbish on the road verges. A flyer will provide more information and contacts.

Car Boot Sale: The day for the annual Car Boot Sale has been fixed as Sunday, 25 March. Flyers in your mailbox will give details before the event. Earlier information can be obtained from Morag (6230 3523). With more than 100 stalls and a large roll-up of buyers and locals out for a stroll, this has become a major regional event. Fees for sellers will remain minimal, and buyers enter free. – Morag Cotsell

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WAMBOIN MARKET

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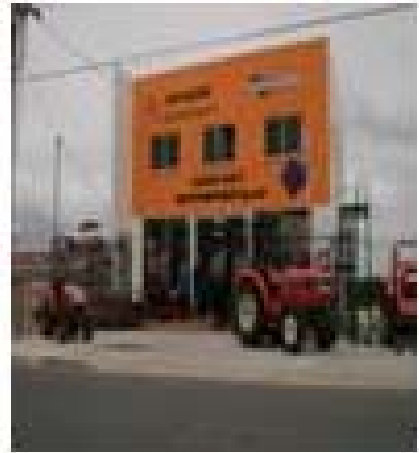
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Notes from St Andrews

Christmas was celebrated in fine style at St Andrews Church - we held the second nativity pageant which drew a wonderful crowd. The cast was enhanced with Angus the alpaca, Lulu and Godfrey the donkeys and Lena the sheep. Some local children joined the cast which meant the stable even housed a pink piglet. Make sure the event is on your calendars for next year on Christmas Eve. After the nativity, the congregation moved inside the church to celebrate the season with Holy Communion. It was especially pleasing to see so many faces and the carolling could be heard from afar.

This month our services are on Feb 4th at 9am (Matins) and February 18th at 9am (Holy Communion). This service will be followed by the AGM.

Any questions may be answered by the Rectors Warden, Robyn Robertson who can be contacted on 62383202.

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Eco nappies, Cherub Rub Natural Skincare and Billy Goat soaps are available at Wildrose Organics in Bungendore Heritage Square.

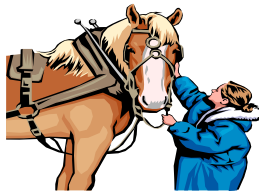
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WCA Electronic Noticeboard – Residents are continuing to subscribe to the noticeboard. It is a great way to keep up with issues of community interest and I encourage everybody to subscribe. To subscribe, simply send an email message (doesn't need any subject or content) to Wamboin_Noticeboard-subscribe@yahoo.com.au .
TREE GUARDS - rolled wire (20). Various circumferences but all approx. one metre high. Excellent for protecting newly planted trees/bushes from kangaroos and rabbits. \$20 the lot. TOMATO STAKES - pre-loved. For vegie patch or bracing tree guards. Good for couple more seasons. (90) x 120cm ie 4ft. \$45 the lot.(35) x 180cm ie 6ft. \$28 the lot.
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CHOOKS WANTED – Any age & roosters. Phone Frank on 6297-3523 to arrange collection.
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SWARM BEES - Beekeeper happy to offer prompt service to the local community to collect and remove swarm bees that may arrive uninvited over the next few months. A small fee charged depending on distance I have to travel. Please call John 62383791.
Large Holiday house situated in Tuross, 180 degree Ocean views, opposite shops, 2 minute walk to beach, large block for parking, available now. Discounts apply for Wamboin/Bywong residents. Please phone Cherrie 0418 621 462 for further information.
ADVERTISING RATES: Local classified advertisements are free, as are announcements from community organisations and clubs. Business advertisements attract a small fee (see below) which is donated to the Wamboin Community Association. Please make your cheque out to this association, but post it to the editor. Contact editor on 6238-3484 for information. Advertising rates: Full Page - \$100 Half Pg - \$50 1/3 Pg \$35 1/4 Pg - \$30 1/5 Pg - \$25 1/6 Pg - \$20 1/8 Pg - \$15
FOR HIRE from the Wamboin Community Association: GAS BBQ - Party Size, Portable, \$30 (includes gas) together with \$30 cleaning bond, both payable on collection. Cleaning bond will be refunded if BBQ is returned clean. Enquiries - Joan Mason 62 383 258.
Trestles and chairs are available for hire by local residents. Hire rates are: Trestle \$10ea and chairs \$1.50 ea. Price does not include delivery or pick-up charges. Available from the Wamboin Community Hall, 112 Bingley Way. Must be returned in clean servicable condition. All damages are responsibility of the hirer. Equipment must be tied securely on trailer etc. when taken (otherwise they don't go.) Time of pick-up and returned MUST be adhered too (I don't live at the Hall!) -Joan Mason, 62383258.
FOR HIRE: WAMBOIN COMMUNITY HALL. Bookings arranged by Joan Mason 62383258. Local Hire \$65 per use - Bond \$200. Outside Hire \$125 per use - Bond \$250. Teenage/18 year old birthdays/parties (must be supervised by parents) \$160 - Bond \$1000.
The Whisper is a community newspaper for Wamboin and Bywong. If you live in the area and have something to say about living here that is informative, thoughtful or entertaining, think about writing it up for the next issue. For more information contact the editor on 6238-3484 or email nednoel@optusnet.com.au. And thanks if you have already done so.

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WAMBOIN GOLF CLUB – DEC and JAN COMPETITION RESULTS

by Peter Greenwood

The annual Christmas competition was once again hosted by Ted and Judith Evans and we thank them for the trophies and eats. Ball winners were Tony Fisher x3, Nev Schroder x2, Bob Mettam, John Anderson, Steve Miners, Jack Whitney and Gary Slattery. Junior winner was Jack Whitney. 9 hole comp won by Deb Gordon. B Grade won by Bob Mettam from John Anderson in second place. A Grade won by Nifty Nev Schroder with Steve Miners in second.

The New Year comp in January was again hosted by Dave and Jane Hubbard from Wiyagiba Trading and we thank them for their long time support for Wamboin Golf. Ball winners were Ted Evans, Tony Fisher x2, Ken Gordon x2, Peter Greenwood x2, Paul Griffin and Charles Guscott. Visitor's prize won by Barry Kilmister. 9 hole comp won by Lofty Mason with Joan Mason in second on count back from Ted Evans. B Grade won by Paul Griffin with Bob Mettam in second place. A Grade won by Charles Guscott from Tim Barter in second place.

Wamboin golf is played on the first Sunday of every month on our own private 18 hole golf course. Registration is at 12.30 at the Wamboin Hall in Bingley Way. Golf enquiries to Peter Greenwood 6238 3358.

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Canberra Equine Hospital is located on the corner of the Federal and Barton H'way, Lyneham.

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YOUR HELP IS REQUIRED

Sunday, 4th of March

9am till noon



On Sunday the 4th of March the Wamboin Community Association will be organising the local 'Clean up Day'. We plan to clean up roadside rubbish in the Wamboin area. We can't do this without your assistance. For insurance reasons, volunteers should go to the Bingley Way Hall at 9 to register and be allocated an area. Where possible you will be given an area in your neighbourhood. It is planned for the Fire Brigade to have operational control of the effort. The Brigade will hand out drinks and nibbles and assist with the pickup of rubbish bags. Enq: Lofty Mason: 62383258.



**THE BRIGADE IS RECRUITING.
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WE NEED IT NOW!!**

Wamboin's Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade
needs new volunteers (and it's not just fireys).

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THE STABLE DOOR

by Ian Collet

2007 is the Year of the Pig

Well Huey we're all hankerin for the wet stuff – so let it rip to excess (but gently – at first).

In our rainstarved region, it's not surprising more and more of us no longer have *antlophobia* (fear of floods or flooding). The bride and I have been ensconced in this neck of the woods coming on 13 years. In that time, I can recall two occasions when serious looking clouds gathered and, against normal odds, didn't encircle the area only to slide away. In fact Huey fairly let it rip – good solid rain for days on end.

Living on a hill has its merits for after 3 or 4 days and the driving rain beginning to saturate and flood the countryside, very quickly perhaps a dozen or so houses became seriously isolated, cut off by the rising waters; some, fully encircled with moats. The beginnings of the Yass river quickly became a raging torrent of water mud and froth. Well, it's a long time now since we've experienced this kind of happening. And, I don't think that's the kind of response we want from Huey straight off given the fragile, parched terrain we are witnessing increasingly day by day. Nevertheless, unless you suffer from aquaphobia, the overwhelming vote would surely be – let it rip Huey but gently at first.

Just to prove it still can rain in the region – a colleague whose parents have a farm property out toward Captains Flat recently received 42 mls overnight – enough to fill their two dams which just days prior, being bone dry, had been re-bulldozed. So, those very dark, threatening clouds which I watched slid south along the escarpment and, lo and behold, dropped their lot near the Flat. Some people are just plain tinny.

On an entirely different matter – I need somebody to solve a mystery I have, please.

According to the Grandiloquent Dictionary (for big, arty-farty, fluffy words a collector of teddy bears is (apparently) an *arctophilist*. Apropos of nothing, can somebody please explain to me why anyone would want to give up their favourite and treasured teddys (yep, I still have mine) and hammer or tie it to a tree? There's a colony in Denley Drive close to where it intersects with Weeroona Drive. Another (much bigger) colony extends for a kilometre or so along the Kings Hwy between Queanbeyan and Bungendore. I've asked lots of people over the last couple of years including known *arctophilists* but to date neither they nor I are any the wiser. What's it all mean? Can somebody help out? PLEASE EXPLAIN!!

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Land Exemption from Assets Test for Age Pension and Carer Payment

Prepared by Chris Fowler, Millyn Road

Editor's Note: Chris Fowler suggested the press release at the centre of this article might be of interest to Whisper readers. Because the Whisper gets dozens of press releases, I am reluctant as an amateur editor using Community Association money to pay for printing to try picking which ones to reproduce unless someone in the area is willing to explain why the release is of interest and willing to put some local or personal context around it. Chris was generous enough to offer her time to wrap the press release detailed below with her analysis.

"As of 1 January 2007, there has been an increase in the land size of home property that can be exempt from the assets test for Age Pensioners and Carer Payment recipients over age pension age. Previously, a pensioner's principal home and adjacent land of up to two hectares was exempt from the assets test. The value of any additional land in excess of this allowable area was counted as an asset for social security purposes. Under the new rules, all land on the same title as the pensioner's home will be exempt from the Assets Test, provided the land is immediately adjacent to the home and used for private purposes."

"To qualify for this exemption, a person must: be of age pension age (65 for men and currently 63 for women) and receive Age Pension or Carer Payment have a long-term (20 year) attachment to the land, and be making effective use of productive land to generate an income, given their capacity to do so Where a customer does not qualify for the increased exemption under these new rules, the existing two-hectare rule still applies."

"This month Centrelink is sending letters to pensioners currently with excess land counted as an asset. We will seek more information about their property so we can work out whether they are eligible for this exemption. If customers provide this information to Centrelink prior to 1 March 2007 (or 30 June 2007 if there are special circumstances), the exemption will be backdated to 1 January 2007. For more information on Centrelink income and assets tests visit www.centrelink.gov.au or call 13 2300."

The above is a straight copy of a press release circulated by Centrelink. A small number of readers may be affected by the changes, and I urge them to contact the department if they do not receive the notification. Good Luck! In the meantime. I have received some explanatory notes in response to two questions I posed after reading the press release. There may be many others that are equally pertinent.

Q. What is meant by 'a long term [20 year] attachment to the land' ? This means that the property must have been the customer's principal home for the last 20 years or more (apart from temporary absences of less than 12 months). A person's principal home is an exempt asset and can be defined as the residence in which the customer spends the most amount of their time. There is no requirement that the customer be the actual owner during the whole of this period. For instance, they may have recently inherited a property that had been their principal home.

Q. What is meant by 'effective use' and 'productive land', or the whole phrase 'effective use of productive land' ? This indicates whether the customer is making effective use of productive land to generate income, taking into consideration their capacity. Effective land use can be satisfied in a number of ways: (a) the land is being worked to its potential by the pensioner; (b) a close family member is working the land to its potential; (c) they are leasing the land or not working the land if it has limited potential to generate income e.g. bush blocks and rural residential blocks. For example, if the customer owns an orchard, and has the capacity to produce and sell fruit, then they would be expected to do so.

Factors that can be taken into account when determining effective land use include: (a) location; (b) customer's health and family situation including caring responsibilities; (c) current and potential use of the land; (c) legal and environment issues; (d) whether titles have been amalgamated to gain an advantage.

Readers can form their own opinions as to the implications. It would appear on first reading that the 20 year attachment is designed to eliminate as many potential claimants as possible. Also, the definition of effective land could be argued in many ways and almost certainly will be, if there is the possibility of eliminating the claimant. It appears obvious that working the land 'to its potential' does not necessarily mean 'at a profit'! Questions as to the view of the Tax Department on this issue were, of course, referred to the Tax Department. When I first heard that the legislation had been changed to improve the asset curtilage, I was relieved that the burden had been lifted on what was always something rather silly and petty. On reflection it appears that I was wrong. - Chris Fowler, 79 Millynn Road, Bywong.

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The Wamboin Firefighter

A newsletter from YOUR volunteer rural fire brigade compiled by Cliff Spong with help from many members of the Brigade (Wamboin Brigade's website is www.wamboin-fireshed.com)

THE FIRE SEASON HAS NOW STARTED.

NO FIRE PERMITS WILL BE ISSUED FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS FIRE SEASON.

THIS MEANS NO BURNING OFF IN THE OPEN WILL BE ALLOWED THIS FIRE SEASON

RING 000 TO REPORT FIRES OR SMOKE SIGHTINGS.

From the Captain's Desk



Before I get into all the news about the activities your brigade has been involved in over the past two months, let me, on behalf of everyone in the brigade, wish all our readers a happy and wet new year for 2007. Some long range weather forecasters are giving reasonable betting odds for good rain to start falling in the week of February 23. Some others are saying it could be later in February or early March, but with the El Nino effect on the wane, things can only improve.

Several members of the Brigade, along with some of our colleagues in the Sutton Brigade were able to see in the New Year at a little get together at Sutton Park attended by some speedy residents after some civic minded person decided to let some fireworks off at the entrance to the area. The fireworks started a number of small grass fires, which were mostly extinguished by the residents by the time several fire brigade crews and tankers arrived to make sure everything was blacked out.

There were two social events during December that deserve special mention. The first is our Christmas party early in the month when many people came along for an enjoyable evening. A special visitor did make a surprise visit and arrived in a big red fire truck instead of his sleigh. Many children of all ages enjoyed his visit. The picture shows the big fella with some of our special guests. I have to thank Wendy Downs and all her helpers for making the evening a great success. The catering was first class.

The other social event was at the Eagle Hawk Hotel where Mark Everson, on behalf of the Social Club, presented the Wamboin and Sutton Brigades, and the local SES, with extremely generous cheques to help our work. The money donated to our brigade will be used to purchase a new chain saw and chainsaw equipment for our new tanker, Wamboin 1 Alpha. The picture below shows the Wamboin Captain and Rod Simpson, the Captain of the Sutton Brigade, with Mark Everson just after the cheques were presented. The support we have received from the Eagle Hawk Hotel Social Club has been nothing short of fantastic and we would like to thank all the patrons and Mark for their generosity.



In a nutshell, your brigade has been busy, quite busy, during December and January. I could go into some length telling you about each incident and event but with space limitations I will have to be brief.

We have had people and equipment involved with the fires in Victoria, the fires at Tumut, many local fires, several false alarms requiring the deployment of many people and trucks because of the poor fire conditions, several training courses on and above the ground, community education activities at the Market Day, brigade training sessions and several meetings.

I have taken a liberty and included a list of incidents and events over the past two months. You will no doubt agree that it is an impressive list but perhaps more significantly, impressive because of the efforts of all the volunteers in your brigade to be there.



- 5 December 2006 Grass fire in Summerhill Road
- 5 December 2006 Brigade Christmas Party
- 7 December 2006 Motor Vehicle Accident
- 9 December 2006 Brigade Training
- December 2006 Crews sent to the Tumut fire
- 21 December 2006 Eagle Hawk Hotel Social Club presentation
- 24 December 2006 Grass fire in Kowen Forrest
- 26 December 2006 Grass fire in Grove Road
- 31 December 2006 Grass fire at Sutton Park
- January 2007 Crews and Category 1 Bravo tanker sent to the fires in Victoria
- 11 January 2007 Grass fire next to Lake George
- 11 January 2007 Grass fire in Kowen Forrest
- 13 January 2007 Brigade Training
- 13 January 2007 Helicopter familiarisation course in the ACT
- 14 January 2007 Helicopter familiarisation course in the ACT
- 15 January 2007 Smoke sighting near Bywong Gold Village (false alarm)
- 20 January 2007 Wamboin Market Day
- 21 January 2007 Grass fire reported on the Federal Highway (false alarm)
- 21 January 2007 Smoke sighting in Norton Road (false alarm)
- 22 January 2007 Brigade Executive meeting
- 28 January 2007 Brigade Training
- 28 January 2007 Grass fire in Bidges Road

I would like to conclude by thanking one of our newer residents in our brigade area, Christine Farrell, the owner and Chief Pilot for Aquila Helicopters, operating out of Canberra Airport. Christine very graciously offered to take me on a short flight over some of our brigade area a few weeks ago. It gave me a fantastic view of much of the brigade area and a better perspective of much of the issues we face as an emergency service organisation. It was also great fun but I am not sure if I can really admit that!

THE CAPTAIN'S LIST		Businesses supporting the Wamboin Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade	
A'Hern Fitness at the Airport	Coolah Holdings Pty Ltd	Quick-Eze Towing	
AAA Water Carriers	Cross Country Construction	Ratz Mobile Welding	
Anytime Backhoe Hire	Eureka Plants Pty Ltd	So Good Sausages Pty Ltd	
B & B Tree Surgery	Horizon Real Estate	Sotech Pty Ltd	
Bingley Contractors (Water Carriers)	FH Office Services	Shepherds Hut Wines	
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Capital Stainless Steel	Lambert Vineyards	Trevor Barker & Associates	
Clare Valley Tree Services	LMS Consulting	Trevor Duncan Homes	
Coates Hire, Fyshwick	Manuka Childcare Centre	Wagonga Coffee	
Congari Bookkeeping & Business Services	Marloc Engineering	Westpac Banking Corporation	
	Overdene Excavations Pty Ltd	YLess4U	

GEARY'S GAP/WAMBOIN LANDCARE - FEBRUARY 2007 EVENTS

Propagation sessions continue to be held on the first Saturday of each month from 9.00am-11.00am at Geoff Butler's place at 38 Birchmans Grove, Wamboin. The next session is on 3 February. New participants are very welcome. Email Geoff at gbu22182@bigpond.net.au or phone him on 6236 9158.

Meeting, Monday 12 February, 7.30pm: *Wildlife and Woodlands by Dr Rebecca Montague-Drake.* Rebecca will discuss the role of native vegetation and the effect it has on wildlife. She will begin by discussing 'What is a woodland?' before turning to examine some of the animals that live there. She will discuss the findings of a major study that examines the value of native vegetation plantings and woodland remnants as wildlife habitat in production landscapes. Rebecca will summarise how the findings of this study can be applied by interested landholders so as to achieve favourable conservation and environmental outcomes. Rebecca is a Senior Research Officer from the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the ANU. The meeting will be held at Bywong Community Hall – Birriwa Rd (Off Macs Reef Rd).

Kathy Cook, Secretary, Ph: 6236 9153, Email: kj.cook@bigpond.net.au

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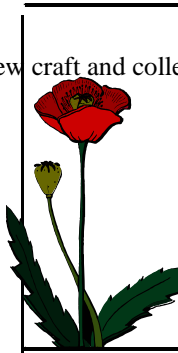
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A Pet Not Just For Christmas

By Diane Royal

I am sure most of us are familiar with the slogan above and associate it with the Christmas puppy, kitten or pony, but I am concerned to try to widen that viewpoint.

Whilst many people see the charm of the alpaca and seek to have one as a pet out here in the rural residential areas, there are responsibilities and for some people, aspects of husbandry which might mean the alpaca is not for you.

In the first instance the alpaca is very much a herd animal, they would fret if on their own. Two make company. Singly they do not necessarily immediately find horses, donkeys or goats compatible. A kick from a horse or donkey can kill as can a "playful" butt from a goat with horns can cause severe damage. They would need to be separated at feeding time.



I am assuming you might want to buy young males as generally speaking these are much cheaper than breeding females. Whilst they are young the owner may have halter trained them, if they haven't you might like to try this for yourself. A catching pen where the animals are regularly fed gives you a good chance to bond with your animals and gradually gently introduce them to the process.

Often animals offered for sale are referred to as wethers, this may not mean they are already castrated, just that they are wether quality, i.e. not suitable for breeding stock. They should be wethered when about eighteen months of age. If this procedure is done too early, before the testosterone kicks in, the growth plates may not close off properly the animal may become leggy and suffer later from luxating patella. Your vet or shearer will be able to advise you on the castration procedure. At the same time you should get the fighting teeth removed.

In times of drought hardship, they need extra feed, and costs of hay and alpaca pellets or muesli are spiralling. In the good seasons do not expect them to clear paddocks of Phalaris or woody weeds they much prefer the short sweet grasses. They will eat the leaves of trees and some shrubs so these may need protection. You should also make sure that they do not have access to Oleander, Rhododendron, Azalea or other poisonous plants. Fresh water of course always needed.

Other husbandry skills you will need to learn is trimming their toenails and vaccination. The alpaca have soft padded two toed feet, they are gentle on the environment not causing erosion like animals with hard hooves. However, it is necessary to rim back their toenails level with the soft pad or as they grow longer, they curl over and make it uncomfortable for the animal to walk. The vaccination procedure of Five in One vaccine will help immunity against Pulpy Kidney, Blackleg, Malignant Oedema, Black Disease and Tetanus. No vaccine is listed for alpaca but sheep vaccines are general accepted. This vaccine is given twice a year under the skin.

The alpaca teeth are on the bottom jaw and bite onto a hard upper pad, the teeth occasionally need to be trimmed to keep the two in line.

The other big factor is shearing. There is no disguising that alpaca owners with small numbers of animals will find the exercise expensive. The shearer needs to cover his time and fuel costs to reach you. The larger herds are more economical for him. But it is an **Annual** job.



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To locate a shearer got to the Southern Region Website under the Link Fleece Information – Shearers in Southern NSW <http://www.alpaca-s.com/fleece.php#2> this will give you access to several shearers in the Southern NSW region. They will always be busy between early spring and Christmas as owners wish to make their animals comfortable before the hot weather really strikes. When your fleece is off, don't leave it in the shed to spoil, make use of it. Spin it, or contact Fleece Liaison collector also on the above link. Who will help you make arrangements for it. Please do not let your animals suffer as these four year old entire males have, (see below), somewhere near here - never shorn, not castrated, about two feet of barbed wire caught in one fleece.

Alpacas are wonderful pets but please go into all the tasks associated with them. If any of the above details seem too hard think twice before succumbing to the seduction of the beautiful soft fleece and large beguiling eyes. They are intelligent and may be trained and mostly are trouble free.

Diane Royal
January 2007.



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Wamboin Muse

Jill Gregory

There are two colours that are good for my soul, blue and green. I have been soaking up the beauty of these in recent weeks. Sparkling stretches of water reflecting a clear, wide blue sky bordered by a thin line of white sand running into mottled green beneath spreading eucalypts. I was like a child let loose in a lolly shop. I couldn't get enough of it. Then, in a short, dark night, I was carried across the slumbering continent and spat out the other end into the bright, bleak landscape of home. Dusty bare paddocks, crinkled brown leaves, strips of bark hanging lifelessly from tree trunks, and at the road's edge, kangaroos looking like grotesque statues, undignified in death. It was good to be home but even Pollyanna had a few reservations this time.

Feeling quietly patriotic on Australia Day, however, I thought of Dorothea McKellar's poem about our love for a sunburnt country. I couldn't muster much enthusiasm, though, for the sunburnt image as I looked at the forlorn view from my window. Somehow her disdain for "ordered woods and gardens" seemed like something I'd rather have running through my veins at the moment. And as for "drought and flooding rains", the former has been grossly overdone, and the latter remains but a distant memory. Once the creek roared, boiling and frothing, and the dam spilled over the top. Once, I recall, you needed gum boots to wade along the creek flats, and the ground was too wet to plant vegies for months. Once there were water holes with yabbies and frogs. Now the lone frog calls to its mate from the plastic fish pond, and the kangaroos ignore us as they feed on the remnants of violets and rose bushes. At least their sad brown eyes seem to be saying "thank you" for providing a few green stalks in a desert.

But just when it all seems too much, I spy from my kitchen window, a galah, two magpies, a rosella and a wattle bird all drinking from the same bird bath. On a nearby branch a third magpie is singing a most unmagpie like song and the old black chook announces noisily the arrival of yet another big brown egg. It's not all gloom.

I wouldn't live anywhere else....I **do** love our sunburnt country, but enough's enough. Bring on the "flooding rains".

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WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR WAMBOIN & BYWONG

by John Van Der Straaten

Currently, Wamboin and Bywong residents are responsible for the waste management of their own properties. They either take their rubbish to the Macs Reef or Bungendore tips themselves or use the collection service provided by O'Sullivan's. The two tips are nearing the end of their lives and Palerang Council is working on a plan to provide for the long term management of waste Palerang-wide. The plan is the result of community consultation within the constraints of available suitable land and Council's budget.

For our area of Palerang, Council intends to establish a number of recycling stations at convenient locations in Wamboin and Bywong and a transfer station at Bungendore. The transfer station is scheduled to open on 1 July 2008 and the Macs Reef tip will be closed shortly after. The intention is that the recycling stations will cater for recyclable materials only which will be "co-mingled" to the Hume Recovery Centre. The transfer station will have facilities for recyclable and non-recyclable materials. A special site, yet to be determined, will be arranged for dumping motor vehicles, some building materials (concrete, asbestos,) medical waste, animal carcasses, tyres, white goods, steel, heavy metals, etc.

You might have noticed that Council already has installed 18 re-cycling bins at the Wamboin Community Hall. They are conveniently located near the entrance to the reserve in an all-weather drive-through position with instructions on what goes into the bins. For example, no longer do you have to separate your glass according to colour. **All** paper and cardboard, **all** rigid plastic containers, including separated lids, **all** cartons, **all** steel and aluminium cans, trays and foil can also go into the bins. Materials which must **not** be put in the bins comprise garden waste, hoses and pots, kitchen food and scraps, plastic bags and wrap, polystyrene foam, clothing and linen, paints and oils, crockery and drinking glasses, disposable nappies, syringes and medical waste, etc. The latter materials must be taken to the Bungendore transfer station.

The Macs Reef tip attendant has organised sections of the diminishing area for the dumping of soil, building materials, garden waste, household appliances, motor vehicles, tyres and general domestic waste. He also has made provision for recyclable materials near his office for oil, glass bottles, bundled paper and cardboard, steel and aluminium cans and assorted plastics. Nearby is a small "revolve" area for unwanted but operational household goods which might be a "treasure" or of use to other community members. The library is worth a look! There is no provision for animal carcasses (only at Bungendore tip), medical waste, chemicals or asbestos. Council arranges, and advertises, a Chemical Clean-up Day annually. The burning of waste is regulated by Council and is permitted under the Schedule if the burning comprises vegetation or as part of hazard reduction burn. Should you be uncertain about any material you wish to dump or require additional information you should ring Palerang Council on 1300 735 025.

This article has been prepared at the request of the Wamboin Community Association as some people have been misusing the bins located at the Hall. The bins on the concrete slab at the Hall itself are dedicated to waste/rubbish generated at the Hall and the Fire Station. The dumping of private rubbish in these bins constitutes illegal dumping. The **recycling bins** for general community use are located near the road and are sign posted. So, please remember what comprises recyclable material and drop off only this material at the Community Hall recycling facility – and take domestic waste, which you cannot compost, to one or other of the tips. Council is looking to establish additional recycling stations in Wamboin and Bywong and is looking for appropriate sites which could hold sufficient bins and has a suitable pull-off area. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

- John van der Straaten, WCA Secretary

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WINERY , CELLAR DOOR , CAFÉ

Rainfall and Temperatures in Wamboin: 32 year statistics from the Robertsons

Rainfall Dec 06 13mm (av 56.5mm)	Total rainfall 2006 455.5mm (av 697.7mm)
Jan 07 to 22/1/07 8.0mm (Jan 06 124mm)	Av Feb rainfall 51.2mm
Wettest Feb 153.0mm (2002)	Driest Feb 1.0mm (1986)
Wettest Feb day 48.0mm (10/2/87 and 5/2/01)	Hottest Feb day 37 degrees C on 5 occasions
Coldest Feb day 12 degrees C (10/2/96 and 4/2/05)	Coldest Feb night 5 degrees C (17/2/98)

The Wobbles have a new name; WWOW - The Wonderful Women of Wamboin

Our group is going from strength to strength and we began 2007 with a name change. With all of the walking we decided the Wobbles were no longer, and after great discussions we came up with the WWOW group.

The Wonderful Women of Wamboin meet each Monday at 10am at St Andrews Church. We have grown and continue to grow and the list now numbers almost 40 people.

Our purpose is to provide Wamboin with a ladies community group who meet to enjoy friendship, support and challenges. This year we are embarking on a patchwork quilting project and the challenge is for each of the group to learn this craft and end up with an individual quilt. Of course, there are those amongst us who do not want to participate in this, and each month there will be other interesting things on offer - we have guest speakers planned and there is always plenty of 'talk'. This month we are off on a coach trip to Sydney to visit the Stitches and Craft Show, which will be sure to provide plenty of ideas.

The sub group to WWOW is the walking group which meets on Monday at 9am for a short walk to the end of Poppet Road and back, and then again on Friday at 8am for a more challenging walk which generally goes for about 2 hours.

The group welcomes any new members - just come along on Mondays to St Andrews Church (the group is not church based - it is a community group which meets in the church) - you should be able to hear us before you get there! If you have any queries feel free to contact Claire Ayling on 62383347 or Moira Power on 62383028

Grasshopper Prediction Wrong

**by Ned Noel, based on Advice from Phil McGrath,
Ranger, Braidwood Rural Lands Protection Board**

In the June 2006 Whisper I wrote an article that started off with: "Almost certainly there will be even more grasshoppers on your land next summer. Each one that visited with you this past summer will have by now reached the end of its life with all its ups and downs. However, before this end the grasshoppers have worked together to produce billions of eggs...."

At least in Wamboin this prediction does not seem to have come true. Phil McGrath, Ranger for the Braidwood Rural Lands Protection Board, helped me with the article. I had also used information on a NSW Agriculture video to understand the Grasshopper life cycle which he loaned to me.

In late January, 2007, I asked Phil what might have caused the prediction to fail. He believes it was the very dry spring months. For the eggs to hatch a reasonable amount of moisture is needed in the ground. Then, for the hatchlings to grow, a reasonable amount of green feed is needed. He said there were some areas where the numbers seemed to be at least as high as last year, and mentioned the area around Oallen Ford on the Shoalhaven. He said this might be because more rainstorms hit that area.

He also said that wingless grasshoppers, the insects we had so plentifully last year, have only one hatching per year and that the eggs do not survive more than a year. Hence we will likely see even fewer next year than we are seeing this year.

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Nature Notes – January 2007

Jo Walker

The few very patchy showers this month have done nothing to relieve the countryside in Wamboin. In fact, things look much bleaker than they did last month. There are several eucalypts on my place, mostly Broad-leaved Peppermints (*Eucalyptus dives*), dying back, most of the Silver Wattles (*Acacia dealbata*) have died or are looking very poorly, and, unless we get some of that mythical rain the weather forecasts keep telling us about, within the next week or two quite a few understorey shrubs will be past the point of recovery. Not a good start to the year.

The birds still seem to be finding something to eat though. They are amazingly adept at seeking out food. I was watching a Grey Shrike Thrush searching the bark of an almost dead Silver Wattle the other day, and, within the space of a few minutes, it had managed to find several fair-sized grubs. The magpies, currawongs, red wattle birds, and the parrots (crimson rosellas, galahs and sulphur-crested cockatoos) have all reared young, although the young magpies seem to be having a hard

time and one of them is extremely small for its age. The Koel was calling its loud 'coo-wit' through December and early January, but seems to have moved on now.

The pair of White Ibis mentioned in the November Nature Notes (they visited the dead stringybark tree at the back of my house and examined the twigs for a while) finally nested further along Poppet Road at Denise Hales' place and are rearing two nestlings. White Ibis usually frequent wetter areas than Wamboin – swamps, wet pastures and lake edges. They also usually nest in colonies, so it's interesting to find this pair nesting here on their own. They are doing the rounds of the dams in the area and obviously finding sufficient water insects, frogs and yabbies.

Another interesting visitor, unfortunately found crushed and dead on Poppet Road, was a Rosenberg's Monitor (*Varanus rosenbergi*). I'd heard of one of these goannas being seen a few years ago at Bywong, and friends of mine who used to live at Greenleigh near Queanbeyan have a lovely photograph of a very large one watching them through their dining-room window, but this was the first one I've seen in Wamboin. Has anyone else caught sight of one? They can grow to over a metre long, and feed on insects, reptiles, small mammals and birds. They lay their paper-shelled eggs in termite mounds, usually about a dozen of them.

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Wamboin 15 years ago, from the Whisper, February 1992, Ed: Judy Frazer-Jans, circulation 265 From the editor:
(prepared by Robyn Robertson)

“This weather has been amazing, as is the countryside as a consequence. I’ve just been on a quick trip to the west coast of USA, and the results of the long drought there are awful. For example, California’s Mt Shasta dam, which is the main source of water for the state is at 25% capacity. This will soon worsen because the snow season has been poor this winter.....Then to fly in over Sydney and travel to Wamboin through countryside which is unseasonably green and picturesque makes you shake your head. At present California should be green and we should be yellow or brown. Is this a sign of things to come.....massive changes in weather patterns for both hemispheres? It would be great if we were to receive such rainfall each summer.”

(note: that summer’s rainfall was 75.5mm in Dec 1991 and 142.5mm in Jan 1992 and then 80mm in Feb.)

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6258 1792

WAMBOIN PONY CLUB

The first rally day for Wamboin Pony Club will be held on Sunday the 11th February at the daylight saving starting time of 9.00am. If you have not already joined up you will need to be at the clubhouse by 8.30 am to fill out all the paper work. New members are always welcome as Wamboin Pony Club looks forward to yet another fun, successful year. If you have any queries about the rally day or you would like to join us, you can ring Robyn Slater(Secretary) on 62383472 or Marion Whalan(President) on 62383225. We look forward to seeing all continuing members and new members on the 11th February at the pony club grounds in Canning Close. -- Robyn Slater

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155 CO-ORDINATED BY HELEN MONTESIN:		Ph 6238 3208	
Dean Evans	Nrtn Area frm Campbl West	18	Bill Owen Cooper Rd. 28
Helen Montesin	Fernloff Rd	33	Cathy Abell Canning Close 17
Hank Berlee	11 Poppet Rd (for all on road)	34	Alan Rope Sutton Road 25
278 CO-ORDINATED BY SUE GANE:		Ph 6238 3463	
Joan Mason	Bingley Way	45	Margaret Heleimin Merino Vale Drive 17
Sue Ward	Norton, Bngly to Weeroona	32	Anne Gardner Weeroona, Norton to Majors 31
Sue Gane	Majors Close	20	David Anderson Weeroona, Majors to Denley 35
Ned Noel	13 YrCn 41Advtrs	55	Penny Evans Norton, Cmpbell to Bngly 25
Kathy Handel	Yalana West	19	
227 CO-ORDINATED BY KERRIE FISHER:		Ph 6238 3489	
Colleen Foster	Joe Rocks to Norton	20	
Deb Gordon	Yalana East	41	Rob Gorham South End - Clare Valley 38
Cassie Fisher	Clare Lane	11	Pauline Segeri North End - Clare Valley 42
Lyle Monetesin	Forrest Road area	60	Bungendore Shop Bungendore 10
199 CO-ORDINATED BY JOHN VAN DER STRAATEN:		Ph 6238 3590	
Sheryl Barnes	Quinn's Estate / Denley	20	Brian Higgison Deley/Kestral area 12
Don Malcomson	Macs R -- Denley to Gum Flat	24	Rhett Cox Macs Reef /Nwngtn to FdHwy 12
Ann Platts	Denley MacReef to Birchman's	26	Morag Cotsell MReef /Newington/Harriot (A) 30
Warrick Cathro	Macs Reef -GumFlat to Harriott	18	Sandra Favre MReef /Newington/Harriot (B) 20
Joan Milner	Birriwa Road	12	Esther/Ian Rudd MReef/Bankers/FedHwy 25
214 CO-ORDINATED BY LAURA SNOWDON Ph 6236 9609			
Trevor Kirk	Macs R - Denley to Bung Rd	20	Snowdon Family Hogan Drive 30
Len Parrish	Summerhill Rd Area	32	Diana+Keith Gascoine Snow Gum Road 22
Sue Gorham	Schofields/Brooks/Millyn	25	Thelma Martin Shinglehouse Rd area 20
Sue Aunella	Brooks	25	Judith Miller Wyoming and Doust Rds 40
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GEARY'S GAP/WAMBOIN LANDCARE - FEBRUARY 2007 EVENTS

Landcare events are now starting for 2007. Please note the following for February:

Propagation sessions continue to be held on the first Saturday of each month from 9.00am-11.00am at Geoff Butler's place at 38 Birchmans Grove, Wamboin. The next session is on 3 February. New participants are very welcome. Email Geoff at gbu22182@bigpond.net.au or phone him on 6236 9158.

Meeting, Monday 12 February, 7.30pm: *Wildlife and Woodlands* by Dr Rebecca Montague-Drake. Rebecca will discuss the role of native vegetation and the effect it has on wildlife. She will begin by discussing 'What is a woodland?' before turning to examine some of the animals that live there. She will discuss the findings of a major study that examines the value of native vegetation plantings and woodland remnants as wildlife habitat in production landscapes. Rebecca will summarise how the findings of this study can be applied by interested landholders so as to achieve favourable conservation and environmental outcomes. Rebecca is a Senior Research Officer from the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies at the ANU. The meeting will be held at Bywong Community Hall – Birriwa Rd (Off Macs Reef Rd).

Kathy Cook, Secretary, Ph: 6236 9153, Email: kj.cook@bigpond.net.au

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