

COMMUNITY

ASSOCIATION

The Whisper

June 2009 CIRCULATION: 1141

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 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 June 2009 Whisper the deadline is Sunday, May 31, 2009, 7:00 pm. The Whisper always goes to deliverers by the following Saturday, which is almost always the first Saturday of the new month.

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	Nora Stewart	President	6230-3305 or www.bywongcommunity.org.au
Fire Brigade	Cliff Spong	Captain	040-999-1340 bh 6236 9220 ah
Wamboin Playgroup	Angie Matsinas	Convener	6238 0334
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
Justice of the Peace	Margaret Fletcher	JP	6238-1211
Justice of the Peace	Tony Holland	JP	6238-3907
Wamboin Scout Group	Peter Harrison	Contact Person	6238-3525
Wamboin Guides	Rosemary Riley	Contact Person	6241-6565
Wamboin Pony Club	Robyn Slater	Senior Instructor	6238-3472
Gearys Gap Pony Club	Leigh-Anne Barlow	Secretary	6238-3376
Play Group	Angie Matsinos	Convener	6238-0334
Hall Bookings	Joan Mason	Bookings	6238-3258
Church, Anglican	Robyn Robertson	Warden	6238-3202
Christian Prayer Group	Steve & Imelda Taylor	Contacts	6238-3220
KYB Bible Study Group	Amanda Axelby	Contact	6238-0871
Golf	Peter Greenwood	Golfer	6238-3358
Injured Wildlife	Wildcare	Helpline	6299-1966
WonderfulWomenOfWambn	Claire Ayling	Convener	6238-3347
Lake George Day VIEW Club	Pauline Segeri	Contact	6238-1996
Wamboin Bookgroup	Alice Scott	Secretary	6238 3178

THE YOUNG WAMBOIN ENTREPRENEURS

Ashleigh Caird, babysitting	6238 0746.
Deanne Brucic, babysitting & petsitting	6238-1884
Jess, Ellen and Nicole Smith, petsitting (experienced with horses)	6238-3115
Fiona Skea, babysitting	6238-3290
Rebecca Purdie, petsitting	6238-3343
Gabrielle Simpkin, babysitting and petsitting	6238-1335
Elena Sutcliffe, petsitting	6238-3228
Jack and Matilda Whitney, pet care	6238 3059

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



NOTICE

The Wamboin Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade
2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held on
Tuesday 9 June 2009
Wamboin Fire Station
112 Bingley Way Wamboin.

The meeting will begin at 7.30pm.

The AGM is the Brigade's most important formal event of the year.
All Brigade members are encouraged to attend.
Nominations for all Brigade positions are welcome.
Nomination forms are available from the Secretary.
Aspiring members, families, and other visitors are welcome.

The Brigade's area covers Wamboin, Bywong and Sutton Park.

Ian Coillet
Secretary
6238 3425

WAMBOIN PRODUCE MARKETS

The April markets saw a further seasonal influx of local produce. Must have been a good year for apples. All up we had a total of 22 stalls. Sales were very brisk with some stalls sold out quite early. Although David & Denise were away and unable to supply their egg and bacon rolls, Don Evans filled in with sausage sangers. Very popular! Thanks Don. We plan to continue the markets in May and June with a break for July and August.

For more information contact Joan Mason 6238 3258.

Entry: Free. Stall holders \$5. The next markets are:

SATURDAY 16th May 2009
9AM – 12 NOON.

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Wamboin Community Association President's Paragraphs

Waste Management – It is very disappointing to see that the Council is persisting in trying to introduce kerbside waste collection and close Macs Reef tip without providing a waste transfer station for Wamboin Bywong and Sutton residents, despite repeated community submissions to the contrary. At the April Council meeting, councillors passed a motion to conduct a kerbside collection trial. The trial is a total waste of precious Council funds which could be used towards a transfer station at Macs Reef. There is already a commercial service operating in the area that collects waste from the house (a superior service to the roadside collection proposed by Council) which about 20% of residents use. This would indicate that the remaining 80% of residents do not need or want kerbside collection. Kerbside waste collection will be very costly. The cost indications given by Council are based on the village costs which will not be viable in a rural area. If it is introduced, the cost will rise dramatically. Aside from the cost concerns, kerbside waste collection in this area is impractical and in many places downright dangerous. Most of the roads are narrow, steep or have poor visibility and very limited verges. Driveways are often long (up to several hundred metres) and steep. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for many residents to get their bins to the road and back. Leaving bins near the road would be an open invitation to vandalism and theft. Closing Macs Reef tip without providing a transfer station is a serious loss of amenity for the 25% of Palerang residents that live in Wamboin Bywong and Sutton, particularly since 3 transfer stations are proposed for a similar number of residents in other parts of the shire. If you are concerned about the inadequacy and inequity of the proposed waste management arrangements, you need to act now. Contact your local community association. Lobby your councillors, all of whom campaigned on a platform of community consultation!

Emergency Management Information Session –Members of the Lake George Emergency Management Committee are co-ordinating an information session at the **Wamboin Community Hall on 19th May at 7:30pm** to ensure that Wamboin residents are aware of the emergency management arrangements for the area. They are proposing to have a range of emergency service representatives attending, including from the NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW State Emergency Service, NSW Fire Brigade, Police, Ambulance and the Palerang Council local emergency representative. The session will provide information on the emergency management arrangements for a range of possible incidences (e.g. bushfires and snow storms), including those that would require the opening of an evacuation centre. It is important that all residents know what to do in an emergency and I encourage you all to attend – you never know when you might be faced with an emergency and will need to know what to do.

Wamboin Community Association –Instead of the usual May WCA meeting, there will be an Emergency Management Information Session (as detailed above). If there are issues that can't be held over until the June meeting, a short meeting will be held at the end of the information session or at another suitable time.

Wamboin Produce Markets –The next markets will be on **16th May** from 9:00am until noon. There is sure to be a great range of local produce and plenty of opportunity to catch up with friends over a cup of coffee/tea and scones/muffins.

Wamboin Community Website – At the April WCA meeting, Bruce Bowden proposed that the WCA consider setting up a Wamboin community website and offered his services to help set it up. While there have been several discussions in the past about the benefits of having a website, we hadn't managed to make it a reality. At the meeting, it was agreed that Bruce would register the domain name of wamboin.nsw.au and a working group consisting of Bruce, Steve Richards and Pete Harrison would develop a prototype for consideration at the June meeting.

New Residents – If you are new to Wamboin, or know someone who is, Lofty Mason has collated a "Meet and Greet" package. It contains useful information about Wamboin, including a map. It has details of the diverse range of community groups in the area. Please contact Lofty on 6238 3258 for a copy.

WCA Electronic Noticeboard – The noticeboard 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**. The Wamboin Whisper is now available on the electronic noticeboard.

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

Helen Montesin (montesin@tpg.com.au)

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BYWONG COMMUNITY NEWS

Compiled by Guy Cotsell

Bywong Gold Mine.

The Community is concerned at the proposed sale and possible subdivision of the site of the old Bywong Gold Mine, particularly as the site is one of the few historic landmarks which bears the name of our community. The Community has written to the Lands Department requesting information.

Improvement to Hall.

The Hall Committee has provided to Council initial proposals for additional toilets at Bywong Hall sought by the Community. Funds for this project have been approved.

Bus Shelters.

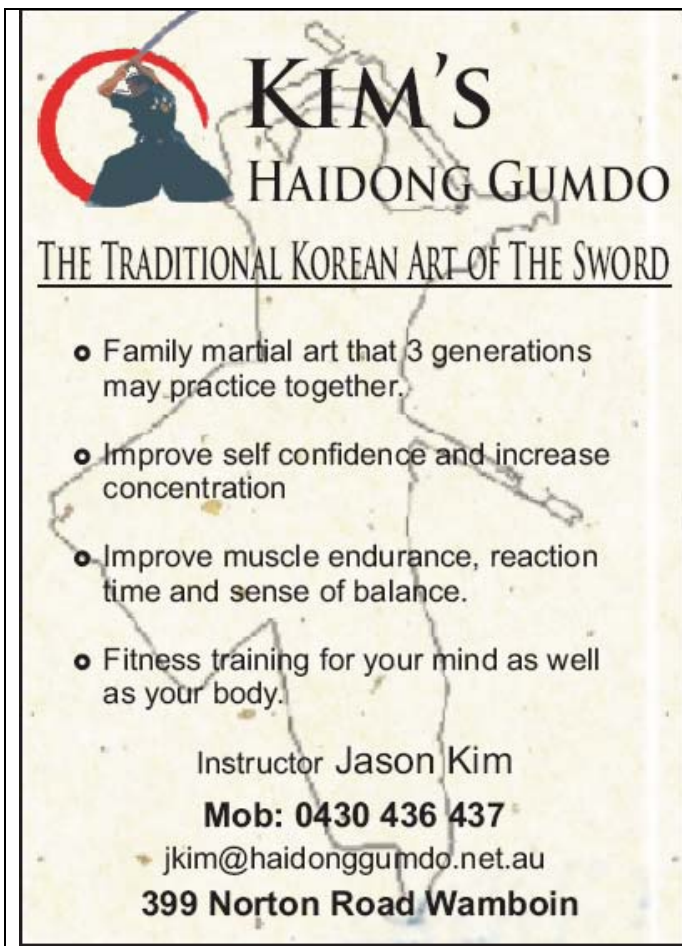
The Community has asked Council for details of the approval of funds allocated from the Commonwealth community development grant for a bus shelter to be erected on a school bus route.

Locality Signs.

Bywong residents have long felt the absence of and need for signage identifying the locality to tourists and other travellers. The Mayor has now confirmed, in reply to a question at a public meeting, that money earmarked from the Commonwealth grant will in fact be used for this purpose, and that signs will appear to mark the boundaries of the various localities in Palerang, as well as the towns. The Community has also written to Council seeking formal confirmation of this advice.

Support for Residents' Proposals.

The Community agreed to examine requests from residents of Forest Road to support approaches to Council for sealing the road, from a local resident seeking action regarding a greenway between Millyn Road and Donnelly Lane and from Bungendore Pre-school seeking support for their application for a climate change grant.



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Kangaroos

by Susan Granger, Hogan Drive

I write in response to the letter by Mike Barnes of Denley Drive published in the Wamboin Whisper in April 2009. My husband and I own 35 acres at Wamboin at the end of Hogan Drive. Our property adjoins Mike's and I would like to clarify a few things with regard to kangaroos and the revival of native grasses in our area.

Several years before the Barnes and other people moved into the Denley Estate, the area was just one big paddock of around 400 acres which was 95% cleared of bush and over farmed with merino sheep. We came to the area back then which was just over 11 years ago. It was practically a dust bowl as 80 years of sheep farming and clearing had really taken its toll. The native grasses that Mike is so concerned about were practically nonexistent and erosion was a significant feature of the land. At that time, a mob of over 300 kangaroos gathered together every couple of months in the valleys and on the flats in this area. It was a wonderful spectacle, one of which I was fortunate to bear witness of. Normally, these kangaroos would be scattered throughout the region in smaller family mobs of 20 or 30, but for some reason, every now and then, they would all come together. The kangaroos lived relatively peacefully back then and were in no way, shape or form "starving" which is amazing, considering there was hardly any grass for them to eat as there were so many sheep competing for the same food source.

Since then, I have monitored the numbers of kangaroos and their condition with interest, as after all, their existence here was one of the main reasons why we and many others purchased property in this area in the first place. With the increase of development in this area, kangaroo numbers have decreased immensely. Road kill, legal culls on farms, fences and savage dogs have all taken their toll. As Mike confirmed in his letter, the numbers of kangaroos gathering in our area is now around 100. I count about 84 at the most when the kangaroos all gather. This is a serious decline from 300 just over 10 years ago. It also must be said that when there are 90 kangaroos on Mike's place, there are no kangaroos on our place or our neighbours. These larger gatherings are not "regular", but generally on a monthly or bimonthly basis. It is when the kangaroos come together like this, from different family mobs (these days consisting of only 2 to 12 kangaroos) that people panic and assume that their numbers are out of control. In reality, we need to understand what is happening and simply that all the smaller mobs are coming together. I can recommend an informative documentary called "Kangaroos; Faces in the Mob" for people who would like to know more about our Eastern Grey kangaroo and their social habits. Further research and understanding is required before we make dangerous decisions such as bringing in commercial roo shooters. Most importantly, accurate numbers of kangaroos needs to be ascertained. Currently numbers are determined by inaccurate aerial surveys.

I totally disagree with the idea that rural residential landholders be given the legal right to shoot kangaroos in this area. Gun licences should only be given to those who use the gun to shoot vermin like foxes, wild dogs, cats, pigs and to put sick animals down. This brings me to the point of so called "starving kangaroos". Not once in my 11 years at Wamboin have I seen a starving kangaroo. Not even when there were over 300 kangaroos on and around our property whilst at the same time competing with a couple of hundred head of sheep, were the kangaroos starving. It is an assumption that is incorrect and used as an excuse to cull the kangaroos. The kangaroos that exist in this area are in good health. Furthermore, the native grasses that once existed here (before sheep farming) have come back amazingly well since the sheep have gone, so I do not understand how kangaroos can be blamed for lack of native grasses. Native grasses and kangaroos have coexisted for thousands of years – yet another excuse to cull the kangaroos. It is also noted here that on a recent visit to our property and neighbouring properties, the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority representative reported a significant return of native grasses to this area.

In conclusion, I too grew up in the country and have experienced life out west on large stations. When I first moved to Harden NSW – around 35 years ago, there were small mobs of kangaroos around the district. Now you would be hard pressed to find one kangaroo within a 10 kilometre radius. I have four first cousins who made a good living out of roo shooting in the Hay and Cobar districts during the 1980's and 1990's. One of my cousins still does it part time. The numbers of suitable kangaroos out west have declined and there is now the question of whether or not this industry is viable. With kangaroo meat in demand, especially for human consumption, there is immense pressure to identify large numbers of kangaroos for culling purposes. Could Wamboin be the next target? I hope not, considering our numbers are already starting to decline compared to what they were 10 years ago. However, there will always be the people that come up with excuses for culling these magnificent animals; such as overpopulation, their impact on native grasses and one of the most absurd ones, starvation. Then there are the issues of safety and duty of care in a rural residential setting where houses are sometimes only 50 metres apart. Finally, whose wildlife is it anyway?

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Wamboin 15 Years Ago - from the Whisper May 1994 (Circulation 380)

... from the Yarrolumla Council Notes: "Mac's Reef Tip: Council is reviewing the operation of all landfill tips in the Shire and is considering a waste disposal strategy for the future. One aspect recently considered was the necessity to reduce tip hours. It is proposed that later in the year Mac's Reef Tip will be open for only 5 days a week. - by Peter Greenwood, Councillor

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How The Whisper Gets From the Printer To Your Mailbox

The 40 people below each spend time each month to make sure that Wamboin and Bywong residents own and receive a free community newspaper. If your deliverer has been on the job for a long time and you have a bit of time you could spare, think about offering to take over the job. If you already have too many tasks in your month, every now and then give your volunteer paperwoman/man/boy/girl a thank you.

158 CO-ORDINATED BY HELEN MONTESIN:			
Dean Evans	Nrtm Area frm Campbl West	18	
Helen Montesin	Fernloff Rd	33	Bill Owen
Hank Berlee	11 Poppet Rd (for all on road)	34	Stuart Whitten
284 CO-ORDINATED BY SUE GANE:			
Joan Mason	Bingley Way	45	Alan Rope
Sue Ward	Norton, Bngly to Weeroona	32	Margaret Heleimin
Sue Gane	Majors Close	20	Anne Gardner
Ned Noel	13 PalarancCncl+47Advertisers	60	David Anderson
Kathy Handel	Yalana West	19	Penny Evans
228 CO-ORDINATED BY KERRIE FISHER:			
TBA	Valley View Lane	4	Deb Gordon
Coleen Foster	Joe Rocks to Norton	20	Rob Gorham
Cassie Fisher	Clare Lane	12	Lyle Montesin
Axelby Family	North End - Clare Valley	42	Bungendore Shop
256 CO-ORDINATED BY JOHN VAN DER STRAATEN:			
Sheryl Barnes	Denley/Kestral to End	20	Brian Higginson
Don Malcomson	Macs R -- Denley to Gum Flat	7	Rhett Cox
Ann Platts	Denley MacReef to Birchman's	26	Morag&Guy Cotsell
Nora Stewart	Rovere Lane	7	Sandra Favre
Robert&Marzena Luton	Sutton/Goolabri Area	40	Phil&Pam Dawes
Beth Hope	Gum Flat Lane	6	Joan Milnor
Ian&Esther Rudd	MacsReef (Bankers-FedHiway)	26	
215 CO-ORDINATED BY LAURA SNOWDON			
Trevor Kirk	Macs R - Denley to Bung Rd	20	Snowdon Family
Kevin Anderson	BungRd - McRf to Smmhl	33	Diana+Keith Gascoine
Kerrie Gougeon	BungRd - FedHy to Smmh l	25	Thelma Martin
Sue Aunella	Brooks Rd	17	Richard Holding
TOTAL FOR WHISPER 1141			David Featherston



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10 Years On, Kerbside Garbage Collection Still Being Pushed

by Terry Bransdon

Palerang Council's decision to spend \$30,000 on a trial to determine whether or not we residents in Wamboin/Bywong want an impractical kerbside garbage collection service in our area should be challenged at the May Council meeting. As the *Whisper* is being printed, I am awaiting a response from colleague councillors on support for a rescission motion to stop the farcical trial. What's the point of it when a decision (next April) to go ahead or not to go ahead will be made before the trial ends on June 30, 2010?



The Council voted five to four at our April meeting to proceed with a trial, rejecting the outcomes of a workshop with your community representatives just weeks before. At that workshop, they made presentations seeking a small transfer station at the Macs Reef Road Tip. Most councillors attending the workshop, said they supported the communities' views, but the majority disappeared when it came to supporting my resolution to axe the trial and save the ratepayers' money. Ten years ago, kerbside garbage collection was one of the main issues that had me elected to Yarrawluma Council. I topped the vote across the shire and subsequently torpedoed a secret \$1.38 million plan to introduce kerbside collection for our rural residential properties and charge tip fees.

Now it's back to the future, this time going against the Waste Resource Recovery Strategy consultant's report that: "unless the respondent lives in a

town, then kerbside collection is not strongly supported."

The reasons suggested to me in 1999 (when I held a series of resident focus groups) was that the planned introduction of kerbside collection was secret, that the logistics of the shire made such a service highly uneconomical and that for residents it meant hauling wheely bins up and down long driveways to roadsides. Alternatives like leaving the bins at front gates, created the risk of dogs, cats and foxes getting into the rubbish and leaving a terrible mess at the entrance to our properties.

As a Wamboin resident commented recently, the staff suggestions now in 2009 are impractical, inefficient and expensive. The local commercial garbage service operator also told me that Council's plan to collect garbage from Wamboin, Bywong and Sutton in just one day is optimistic. It is likely to require greater resources than that. Locals also will have to take anything that doesn't fit in their wheely bins to Bungendore transfer station, an average round trip in excess of 30 kilometres.

I believe the proposed eight-month trial has been put forward to slow a decision on providing the small transfer station at the Macs Reef Road landfill site. Before that decision is made and any results of the trial are available, the tip will be closed, resulting in rejection of this transfer station as a *fait accompli* and we'll all be carting our waste down to Bungendore. But perhaps the most serious imposition will be cost, with us paying more to dispose of our waste than anyone else in Palerang shire.

According to the staff report to Council, the proposed starting cost for kerbside collection will be more than the current commercial cost for collection from our front doors. Kerbside collection will only be on sealed roads with those on unsealed roads like The Forest Road and Summer Hill Road (both only partly sealed and how do they handle that), Joe Rocks Road and The Mountain Road having to drive to Bungendore and transfer station fees for each visit.

But perhaps the most serious financial issue is that the charge for the kerbside collection is not capped. So if it takes three days to collect the rubbish from the quarter of the shire residents who live in this area, the cost will escalate dramatically. Charges at any time will be able to be increased with no response to community anguish, and no recourse such as has happened in implementing this trial, other than when it comes to electing councillors in 2012.

Pictured, as originally shown on the front page of the *Bungendore Bulletin* in August 1999 is Terry Bransdon making a frosty morning trial trudge to his front gate.



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ROTARY MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FORUM, FOCUSSED ON DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY



The Rotary Club of Bungendore is holding a community mental health and wellbeing forum focussing on depression and anxiety on Wednesday 6 May from 6.30pm for 7.00pm to 9.00pm at the Bungendore Multi-Purpose Hall, Gibraltar Street, Bungendore. The aim of the forum is to help overcome misconceptions and myths surrounding mental illness, in particular depression and anxiety, to raise awareness of avenues of help and support for people affected by depression and anxiety, including carers, family, colleagues and friends, and to look at things that can be done in the local community to assist those affected by depression and anxiety.

Depression will affect one in five Australians during their lifetime. The continuing drought and recent tough economic times have increased the pressures for people to maintain their mental health and wellbeing. "It's time we got over the fears of these illnesses, recognised them and sought treatment and encouraged others to seek treatment", Anne Elder, President of Bungendore Rotary, said.

This is an opportunity for the community to hear from someone who suffers severe depression, a carer and also two experts, Dr Marjorie Cross who leads the Bungendore Medical Centre and Julia Reynolds who is a clinical psychologist and who manages the e-mental health program at the Australian National University Centre for Mental Health Research. The forum Master of Ceremonies will be Mr Noel Trevaskis who is a Director of Australian Rotary Health.

There will also be a number of health professionals and representatives of other support organisations present including Greater Southern Area Health Service, the Queanbeyan Post Natal Depression Advisory Group, a dietician, carers and mental health first aid providers, as well as the Palerang Council. A range of information materials will be provided. The forum will include an open forum where questions can be asked and suggestions can be made about things that can be done in the community to assist people affected by depression and anxiety.

The community forum is **FREE**, light supper will be provided and no bookings are necessary. For information ph 4849 4461 or 0422 772 056, email laura.fulton@bigpond.com.



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Kangaroos Respond

by Phillip Machin, Weeroona Drive

It was good that Mike Barnes wrote to the Wamboin Whisper last month and put an alternate view about kangaroos. Mike related his experiences in Queensland and how the roo population there expanded as farmers took over their habitat and developed the land. This led to an increase in numbers that then had to be killed off. But this is not the situation in Wamboin and Bywong.

As pointed out in the April edition of the *Bulletin*, in 2008 the Department of Environment and Climate Change authorised for 965 kangaroos to be killed off in our area and of these 900 animals were killed for commercial purposes. Wamboin and Bywong simply don't have the problem that Mike described in Queensland and killing off such a large number of animals here simply decimates the population so that a few people can make a dollar!

Mike also commented on the need to consider culling animals before they starve. A similar argument was used in the ACT recently to encourage Defence to kill off animals at the Majura Training Area. But when Defence looked for the 5,000 animals that had starved to death, they discovered it to be a myth. Defence couldn't find any starving kangaroos. Wamboin & Bywong have been in drought conditions for several years. And as a rescuer and shooter for Wildcare over that time I have yet to see a starving Eastern Grey kangaroo. No doubt Eastern Greys can starve under the right conditions, but they seem to tolerate drought quite well.

The real issue for us is – does the community of Wamboin and Bywong want to see so many kangaroos killed off as has occurred in recent months? Kangaroos don't know where property boundaries start or finish and it seems wrong to me that a few property owners (17) can unilaterally arrange for otherwise healthy wildlife to be decimated. Neither I nor Wildcare feel Wamboin and Bywong are over-run by kangaroos and there is no need to kill them off.

Through the activities of Wildcare I know there are very many people in Wamboin and Bywong who want to support and protect the wildlife. This is one of the reasons people give for living here. Perhaps we all need to find ways to be more tolerant of kangaroos (and other animals) and not demonise them.

At least Mike and I agree on one thing – firearm safety is still a work in progress in rural-residential areas.



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Kerbside Collection

by Jenni Colville, Cooper Road

I am greatly concerned to learn that despite strong community representation against it, the Palerang Council intends to continue down the path of trialling kerbside domestic waste collection in the rural areas of Wamboin, Sutton and Bywong with the intention of replacing the Macs Reef Road tip with a transfer station in Bungendore. And it is a \$30,000 trial with no evaluation strategy that ends after decisions on the waste plan will be made! This decision shows that the Palerang Council's outdated advice on 'How to Get Involved' in the Palerang Resource Recovery Strategy on their website is now, and always was, a farce.

The Wamboin Community Association has on many occasions argued that the proposed approach is impractical, expensive and unnecessary. All we need is a transfer station at Macs Reef tip. We already have an efficient commercial waste collection service - cheaper than any council run service will be - that collects domestic waste from the house for those in need. My driveway is over half a kilometre long. I am not going to drag a wheelie bin down there once a fortnight and pay more for the privilege. If I leave the wheelie bin at the kerb, which councillor will offer to clean up the mess when the foxes and other critters get into it?

People in my area are committed rural residents. Many recycle most waste, and most other rubbish is waste that won't fit into wheelie bins. Kerbside waste collection is impractical, and if there is no transfer station in Wamboin, we will have to drive three times the distance to dispose of most of our rubbish.

Thanks for nothing Palerang Council. Have we really elected a council consisting of a majority of councillors who either don't listen to, or lack the courage to stand up for, what the community really wants? Surely not.



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Wamboin Muse

Jill Gregory

I thought my backyard was looking somewhat forlorn, desperate for a decent drink, but a trip south of the border made me realise that we are much better off than some. I saw countless stressed and dying trees beside the road, and hard, bare paddocks stretching to the horizon. Then as we wound through more heavily timbered country we were suddenly confronted by brick red forests, burnt to a crisp, that abruptly changed once again to a lifeless, blackened landscape. The change in the air at Easter had almost wiped away my memories of summer....but it has left deep scars on many and their environments.

This has been a month of changes; clear, still days with nights cold enough for a fire, long before the Anzac day marker, steady, welcome rain and then a dust storm that swept across the countryside filling the sky with an eerie pink light. I would normally have welcomed half an inch of topsoil being dumped on my block, but not at the expense of the embattled Riverina. The coating of dust and grit was about as good as the Council's latest effort to improve our road, except they glue the grit with a tar that is spread as thinly as glaze icing over a cracked and overcooked packet cake. Even the puff balls at the road's edge pushed their way through with ease. And every ripple and dent and imperfection in the tarmac has been preserved for posterity!

As we made our way home through the spectacular mountains and valleys to the east of the Hume, it was wonderful to see how a few more days of rain can green the countryside, and how a burst of cold weather can paint the autumn trees. The colours and contrasts became more subdued as we neared our part of the world, but it still looked better than we had left it.

I wouldn't live anywhere else....but it doesn't hurt to have a comparison sometimes.

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WAMBOIN WASTE MANAGEMENT – TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS

by John Van Der Straaten

In the April Whisper, I concluded my article on waste management with the comment that at Council's Waste Management Workshop, Council staff and Councillors were made aware that a Council kerbside collection service was unacceptable to most residents of Bywong, Sutton and Wamboin and that an Option 3 style transfer station was the most practical option for the area.

However, to the surprise of the three Community Associations the report to Council by Council's Director, Infrastructure & Planning, Bill Ellison, downplayed the transfer station option and proposed a trial kerbside collection service to 240 residents which, if agreeable to the participants surveyed, would be extended to all residents. Representatives from the Community Associations spoke against the recommendations at the Council Meeting on 2 April and made a strong case for a start to planning for a transfer station at the Macs Reef site early in the new financial year. Councillor Bransdon endeavoured to confirm this course of action with a motion and spoke very eloquently and logically but was defeated. In turn, the recommendations by Council staff won 5-to-4 and our communities will now have imposed on us a trial kerbside collection service and an undertaking to commence a series of studies which could lead to a waste transfer station or similar facility.

This saga has been fascinating in the way that Council staff has all along favoured a major transfer station at Bungendore for all residents of Wamboin and Bywong and, if necessary as a fallback position, a kerbside collection service. There have been three surveys which have sought residents' views and, in each survey, residents have expressed a preference for a transfer station at the Macs Reef tip site. The most recent survey, the 2006 Pryor Knowledge consultancy report to Council, clearly stated that "respondents did not have a strongly held support for kerbside services" and that "a centralised Transfer Station was more positively supported". So, we now will have imposed on the Wamboin and Bywong ratepayers a waste management system for which a significant number of residents have expressly stated that they do not want. Also note in Council's waste management strategy the fine print for the kerbside collection service, eg. Council will not collect on dirt roads and will determine the location of group bins on specified roads. Council has stated that local residents will be entirely responsible for funding this collection service which will cost a minimum of \$250 extra a year, with increases annually, to more than double the current waste charges for residents. Interestingly, there is already a privately operated waste collection service which collects from the house sites of approximately 20% of residents. Is Council's proposal necessary and what will be the fate of this business?

In the recent Council elections there were many statements by candidates, including all current Councillors, about community consultation and being conduits for community views. On the matter of the Macs Reef tip site the majority of the Councillors were very much aware of the opposition of the Bywong and Wamboin communities to a kerbside collection service and have publicly stated their support for the implementation of a transfer station at the Macs Reef site. It was therefore very disappointing for the three Community Associations, representing over 25% of the Palerang population, to present a logical and carefully costed proposal to Council and to have these Councillors deliberately obfuscate figures and evade the main issues as they attempted to rationalise their way out of what they knew to be what the communities wanted and what was recognised, for many reasons, to be the best option in the long term.

Where do we go from here? The Bywong Community Association has considered yet another survey of residents and the Wamboin Community Association is considering the merits of a petition. Are these herding cats exercises, particularly when Council staff appear to be set on imposing a kerbside collection service and appear to have bluffed new Councillors to not think outside the square. If you are at all concerned over the developments over the Macs Reef transfer station you might wish to contact executive members of the Bywong, Sutton or Wamboin Community Associations. As a final point, I would like to thank Councillors Bransdon, Marjason, Goonan and Moore for their active support. - John van der Straaten 6238 3590 or jnpvds@bigpond.net.au

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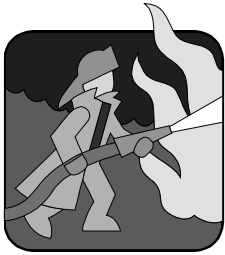
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The Wamboin Firefighter

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by Cliff Spong with help from many members of the Brigade

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From the Captain's Desk



The fire danger period has now ended. Although a fire permit will not be required until the next fire danger period, if you need to burn off any vegetation in the open there are still a few things you need to keep in mind. Please notify your neighbours and the brigade Captain at least 24 hours before you intend lighting up. This can help in a number of ways. Firstly, it can avoid problems if your neighbours have stock, especially horses. We have had to respond to burn offs where one neighbour has become irate, for example, because their horses almost broke through fences trying to escape the smoke. On other occasions neighbours had planned barbecues and outside parties which were seriously disrupted by palls of smoke from damp vegetation being burnt next door and the prevailing winds were not taken into account. Second, it can avoid embarrassing visits from big red fire trucks with red and blue flashing lights when your brigade has responded to a triple zero call from a concerned neighbour or even a motorist travelling past nearby. Fire brigades are obliged to respond to triple zero calls but if we know beforehand where the burnoff is unnecessary actions can be avoided. Before you consider burning off also consider what you would need to do if you need to put the fire out. If you cannot put the fire out and the wind changed direction or increased in intensity you are likely to be liable for any consequences, especially if the fire escapes your property. Wear adequate personal protective clothing when you are tending the fire. You cannot tend a fire properly if you cannot get close enough to deal with it. Make sure someone is in attendance while the fire remains active. There have been cases where people have irresponsibly lit a pile of rubbish on their properties and then left the area!

Driving around our community in the evening at this time of year, now that the weather has taken on a slightly cooler edge, it is sometimes difficult to avoid the aromatic aroma of many domestic wood fires. If you haven't done so already it would be well worth the effort to clean out the flue and make sure the smoke can escape. You never know what could have taken up residence in there. It is important to make sure that any creosote that has formed on the insides of flues and chimneys is cleaned off regularly. As material burns in the fire many different compounds are formed which leave the fire in the smoke. Some of these compounds can condense on the inside of the flue or chimney forming deposits which over time can build up making it difficult for the smoke to escape. Creosote can also form and, unless cleaned out, can heat up and ignite causing a chimney fire. These fires are sometimes difficult to detect in the house but your neighbours may see an interesting spectacle coming out of your flue or chimney.



It is pleasing to report that, apart from visiting residents who have not obtained a fire permit to light any fires, callouts have been minimal. Even with the recent storms and high winds few accidents have been reported in the area.

I would like to congratulate Dave Cochrane, Darrol Dykes, Brad Arrowsmith, Peter Cullerne and Darrell Tipton who recently passed their re-accreditation for intermediate tree felling. I expect that our reader may be asking, "What is an intermediate tree?" The distinction relates to the difficulty a tree presents on a fireground if it needs to be brought down. Trees classified higher than intermediate require tree fellers with higher skills.

There are other activities members of your fire brigade take part in which can be an enjoyable social experience. Each year for the past many years, your brigade has helped Steve and Ruth Lambert bring in crops of grapes. This helps the brigade raise money as well as helping out one of our local businesses. Bringing in several tonnes of grapes, while not the complete harvest, is a great opportunity for brigade members and their families to enjoy the day and Ruth and Steve's great hospitality.

Recently almost 20 members of your brigade joined many other members from other brigades in our Zone on a visit to the Queanbeyan base of the NSW Fire Brigade. During the entertaining and informative evening our paid colleagues took us on a tour of their base, explained hazardous materials procedures, demonstrated the many and various pieces of equipment in



their fire rescue appliances and topped the visit off with a demonstration of how they remove people from cars after an accident. This last demonstration started off with showing how car windows can be safely removed and progressed to showing how doors could be cut away. When the offer was made for the volunteers to try their hands at the various ways of "dismantling" a car many of the volunteers were more than happy to have a go.

I would like to invite all residents of the Wamboin, Bywong and Sutton Park communities to join us at our annual general meeting on the 9th of June at the Wamboin Community Hall and Fire Shed starting at 7:30pm. Refreshments will be served after the meeting.

Finally, if you need any advice about fire protection around your property please call the brigade Captain on 0409 991 340.

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Nature Notes – April 2009

Jo Walker

It was good to get the rain over the last weekend in April -- although it would have been even better without the gale-force winds. We'd had enough rain a few weeks before to give the country just a tinge of green, but this last lot of moisture should be enough to give the winter grasses a really good start.

Some plants are getting a bit ahead of their usual flowering season: *Styphelia triflora*, the tall heath-plant with sharp leaves and long, tubular cream flowers, has been flowering for some time now. Its usual flowering period is during winter and spring, and it is one of the local food-plants for honeyeaters during the colder months. The local form of *Correa reflexa* has just begun to bear its greenish or pink and cream bell-shaped flowers. This is also a favourite food source for the honeyeaters – if they can get there before the Crimson Rosellas who sometimes leave a carpet of flowers under the bushes. At the moment the Rosellas' attention is elsewhere while they feed on the green seed-capsules of the Burgan bushes (*Kunzea ericoides*).

A few weeks ago, I saw a Magpie behaving in a rather hawk-like manner. It landed with a piece of carrion, still furred, in its beak and began to tear at it while pinning it firmly to the ground with its claws. Another local resident reported seeing one similarly engaged on her place. Magpies do occasionally feed on carrion, although they may be feasting on maggots or other carnivorous insects rather than the carcass. Their preferred food is ground-dwelling insects, spiders and the occasional lizard, but, due to many years of below average rainfall, succulent beetle larvae are in short supply. A recent study done in 2006-7 by some University of Canberra ecologists found a decline in ground beetle numbers as a result of drought in the region. It's certainly an uncommon event to dig up any large grubs when gardening.

When I walked down to pick up the newspaper this morning, I disturbed a White-faced Heron that was feeding at the edge of the dam. It decided to leave, and flapped off up the road to find a quieter piece of water followed by several aggressive Noisy Miners definitely living up to their name. I've noticed them harassing herons before while completely ignoring ducks and cormorants. Maybe those big, flapping heron wings give the appearance of a predator to those noisy birds. The Noisy Miners are certainly keen-sighted and watchful for any danger and will give loud warning calls if they see a cat or fox – or even a snake.

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WALLABATS MEET UP

Phillip Machin, Wildcare

The *Wildcare* Wallabats got together on Sunday to learn more about our local wildlife. Wallabats are young members

of *Wildcare* and you have to be less than 18 years old to become a member. Blake and Lesley had a smorgasbord of animals to show off to the Wallabats including lizards, snakes, green tree frogs and wombats of different ages. The frogs now in permanent care came all the way from Queensland as stowaways and turned up at the local supermarket with nowhere to go. There was also the chance to see several wildlife enclosures that are used to rehabilitate animals ready for final release back into the wild. (In the photo are Ezra, Michaela, Ryan, Erin, Sam, Jessie, Jacob and Nathan.)

Wallabats are not allowed to be responsible for caring for *Wildcare* animals in care, but if mum or dad is involved then they can help out and do most of the work at home. Sue, the *Wildcare* Wallabats coordinator said "It's a good way for children and young adults to learn about our wildlife and to get hands on experience with raising injured and orphaned animals. We get



together a few times a year and its always great fun".

If you are interested in joining the *Wildcare* Wallabats just get in touch and call 6299 1966 or visit their website wildcare.com.au and see what's happening.

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Kangaroos

by Mike Skiveras, Weeroona Drive

I have with vested interest followed the articles regarding Kangaroo's in and around our wonderful little paradise called Wamboin and would like to add a bit more to this discussion. In the last edition of the Wamboin Whisper, Mike Barnes finally put some sensible reasoning behind the issue of managing roo numbers. The humble kangaroo is viewed as a part of our national emblem, a resource as well as a pest. In this pitiful politically correct climate, any attempt to prevent culling on the grounds that the roo's will become extinct is laughable. It is estimated that in the times of best rain/feed (2000-2001) roo populations were in excess of 50 million, and as of 2007 (bad rain/feed) this number had dropped to about 25 million. If that is deemed to be close to extinction.....

As a resource, kangaroo's are used for their meat (pet food, table meat) as well as in the tourist trade (skins, shoe's, wallets etc). Typically, kangaroo meat contains less than 2% fat, about 40% of which is polyunsaturated (Sinclair 1988)*. Nutritional benefits of kangaroo meat for people advised to follow cholesterol-lowering diets were discussed by O'Dea (1988)** who conducted research which showed that both Aboriginal Australians and Australians of European origin had 19-24% lower plasma cholesterol levels following 2 weeks on a diet containing 500g/day of kangaroo meat. Actual cholesterol intake remained the same throughout the test- diet periods as in the control periods before and after, and the reduction was attributed to the high proportion of polyunsaturated lipids in kangaroo meat. Additionally, the kangaroo diet led to a rise in the plasma levels of the polyunsaturated fatty acid arachidonic acid, which is high in the meat, and which has a positive effect on blood flow.

It is often claimed that kangaroo meat is a particular risk for toxoplasmosis and salmonellosis. Certainly, like other meat, kangaroo can become infected with *Salmonella*, but it is not more prone than other meats, and the usual hygiene standards and practices are required. As far as *Toxoplasma* is concerned, if kangaroo meat, or other red meat is contaminated with cat faeces, it can transmit toxoplasmosis. Hygienic handling prevents this occurring. Because the preferred way to eat kangaroo meat is rare rather than well cooked, contaminated meat would be less likely to be neutralised. However, although there has been a fuss raised from time-to-time, there is no known case of toxoplasmosis being transmitted by eating kangaroo.

Kangaroo leather is recognised as a very valuable commodity. It has a particularly high strength to weight ratio and is very fine and pliable. It is particularly good for sports and other shoes, belts, gloves, leather clothing and footballs, and its strong place in the world leather industry is well deserved.

As a pest, as Mike mentioned, kangaroos are in direct competition with domestic livestock for food and water. I wonder, if we don't get a decent increase in rain which will provide food and water for livestock and crops, will the general public accept a significant increase in food costs so that the humble roo can go about it's business instead of reducing their numbers to sustain other important industries?

The argument is often mooted that kangaroo harvesting selects the largest animals and will therefore affect the genetic fitness of the species. The scientific data strongly refutes this argument. Four separate reports have recently provided considerable evidence to show these claims are mere unfounded supposition.

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1) An examination of the question submitted to the NSW National parks and Wildlife Service in 2001 concluded:
" Currently, there is no evidence of real or potential genetic 'deterioration' due to harvesting, nor any reason to suspect it.

*Indeed, indications are that kangaroo numbers would have to be reduced to extremely low levels for genetic impacts to become important and by then other impacts, such as demographic disruption, would be overridingly important" (Olsen and Braysher 2001)****

2) A extensive report into factors affecting genetic makeup in kangaroos by the University of Queensland concluded that: *"The effects of the commercial harvest are therefore unlikely to produce genetic changes in the population. First, the heritability of the characters in question is low. Second, the selection differential is low because differences in fitness between younger and older adult males is small, older males do not appear to monopolise matings, only a small proportion of older males are selected against (so most animals are in the selected group), and only a small proportion of the population is harvested."* (Hale 2001)****

The culling of roos appears to be the best method to control numbers. The ideas of catching and either sterilising them or relocating them are not economically viable. Who will bear the cost of this sterilisation? Has it been proven to be effective? We already pay enough taxes to local and federal governments - do we want to pay even more? The relocation of roos is just a smokescreen that moves the problem from one area to another. Would you like the extra few thousand roos that were at Majura Range/Belconnen defence sites moved onto your property? I didn't think so.

On the subject of shooting, I fully agree that it has the potential to be dangerous if left up to the yahoos to conduct the cull. A professional shooter must undergo training delivered by government accredited agencies and approved by the Australian TAFE (Tertiary and Further Education) agency in the appropriate State. This training covers the regulatory controls and compliance requirements, the animal welfare controls and the hygiene controls each harvester must adhere to. They must then pass assessment in their knowledge and practices relating to these controls by two separate Government Departments. This will include assessment of their competency with their firearm. Then and only then will they be able to obtain the required licenses from the two Authorities concerned. Shooting on small parcels of land should be carefully managed and all adjoining properties should be advised on when the cull is to take place as well as identifying where people and stock could be located.

Don't get me wrong, I also enjoy the sight of a roo or two on my little piece of paradise, but detest having up to 40-60 that eat all the grass in sight turning our paddocks into dust bowls necessitating us to buy extra feed for our horse. We also worry when the we do have decent rain, what little topsoil we have is washed away. Then there is the issue of both our cars now sporting accident damage from roos jumping out in front of us and our fences that have been broken by mobs of roo's hurtling through our paddocks (witnessed).

A well planned and managed program to cull excessive roo numbers will give us the best of both worlds.

* **Sinclair, A. J.** (1988). Nutritional properties of kangaroo meat. *Australian Zoologist* **24**, 146-8.

** **O'Dea, K.** (1988). Kangaroo meat - polyunsaturated and low in fat: ideal for cholesterol-lowering diets. *Australian Zoologist* **24**, 140-3.

*** **Olsen, P. and Braysher, M** (2001) Situation Analysis Report: Current state of scientific knowledge on kangaroos in the environment, including ecological and environmental impact and effect of culling. A report for NSW NPWS

**** **Hale, P.** (2001) Kangaroo genetics, Impacts of Harvesting. Conservation Biology Program, The Ecology Centre, University of Queensland, Brisbane



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News from Sutton School

by Gay McNeill

Thanks to all members of the Sutton community who supported our recent Country Fair. After overnight rain the weather cleared and the crowds came to enjoy a great range of stalls, activities, displays and food. The BBQ sold more than 1000 egg and bacon rolls and sausages and steak sandwiches! One comment from a long time Sutton local was "I have been here a long time and never seen this many cars in the village ever!" We raised a fantastic \$10,500 which will be used to fund resources and programs for the school. Thanks also to the dedicated, enthusiastic organisers from the P&C and to the many parents who helped out.

During the week before Easter primary students had a three day excursion to the Sport and Recreation Camp at Berry. Our children received many compliments about their positive behaviour and willingness to have a go at challenging activities including archery, canoeing, rock climbing, high ropes and the giant swing. During Term 1 primary students have also been involved in public speaking and have presented speeches to their class. Some students are now preparing for the Rostrum public speaking competition. Our school finals will be held during assembly on Friday 8th May.

Mrs Priest has been busy rehearsing with the school choir for their appearance in the Queanbeyan Choral Festival. This will be held at the Q Performing Arts Centre on Monday 4th May. With shows at 1.00pm, 5.00pm and 7.00pm the choir will perform two songs alone then join in the massed choir items. We wish them a successful day.

For next term, a highlight is always our Enrichment Program when all students spend eight afternoons engaged in activities which are different to their regular lessons. This year older students can choose from sports, scrap-booking, wooden creations, mask-making, dinner party, tennis or performing arts. Over the eight weeks Kinder and Year 1 students will rotate through activities in pottery, puppet-making, cooking, juggling, craft, scarf-making and art. We appreciate all the parent support which allows this program to succeed.

Dates for your diary are Grandparents Day on Friday 29th May and our annual Trivia Night on Saturday 29th August.



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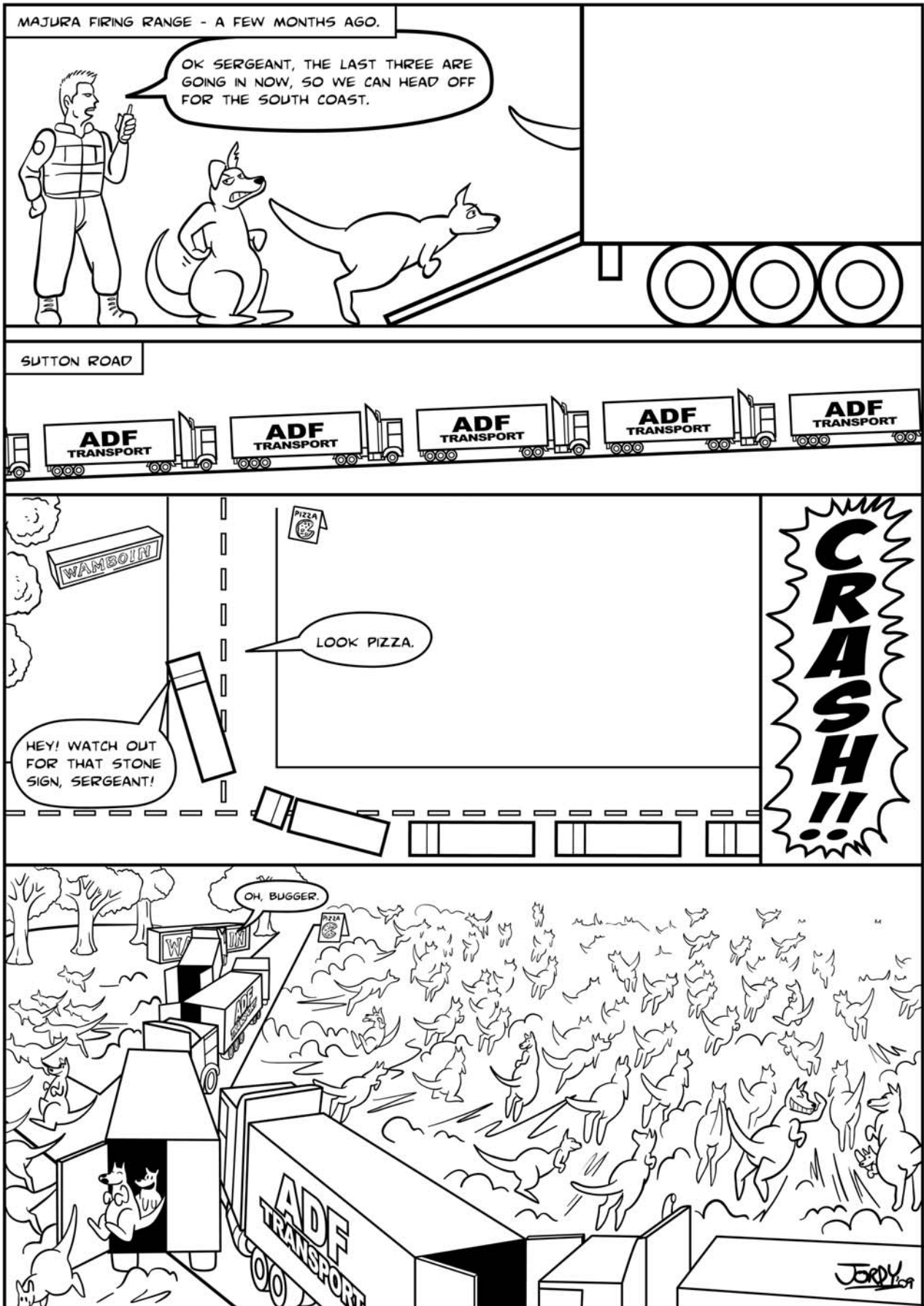
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The Real Cause for the Increase in Kangaroos This Past Summer

Details fleshed out below by Canberra freelance illustrator Jordan Chic



A Load of Rubbish!

by Pete Harrison, Vice President, Wamboin Community Association

You may already have read that Palerang Council has resolved to hold a kerbside waste collection 'trial' in Bywong/Sutton East/Wamboin, to ostensibly ascertain the viability of such a service. After much pressure from local community associations, Council has also agreed to consider providing a 'small' transfer station at the Macs Reef Road tip site when the tip is closed, but council staff are fundamentally opposed to this idea.

You should be aware of the implications of this decision, which has been made against the recommendation of all of the Community Associations representing the areas affected.

- There will be no reduction in our General Waste Charge (GWC) following the closure of the Macs Reef Road tip, **and you will have to pay to use the Bungendore Waste Transfer Station.** Council forecasts further indicate that **the GWC will increase from the current \$215 to over \$400 in the next 2-3 years** (Palerang Council Waste Management Strategy, 2005-2025, Figure 6-1);
- **Your GWC payments will cover the cost of replacing every other landfill site in Palerang with a waste transfer station.** In spite of the fact that it serves 25% of the population of Palerang, the Macs Reef Road tip is the only current landfill site in Palerang where Council has no plan to provide a waste transfer station;
- If the trial is deemed successful (by Council), all Bywong/Sutton East/Wamboin **residents will pay an additional \$260** (minimum, in the first year) **for a kerbside collection service**, whether they use it or not, **and this fee can be increased at any time** to cover all 'reasonable costs' associated with the delivery of this 'service';
- If you thought the rate hikes imposed by the last Council were insulting, consider this. In the term of the current Council, **the planned changes threaten to increase our waste charges from the current \$215 to well over \$650 per annum**, with a reduction in amenity (no local tip or transfer station access);
- **This is a kerbside collection service, for domestic waste and recyclables only.** Residents will be responsible for placing their bins on the kerbside each fortnight for collection, and retrieving them thereafter.

Those of us who have opposed Council's waste management plans, since they were first released five years ago, are now being labelled as a pack of whingers, not representative of our communities and to be ignored in the name of progress. **If this issue is of concern to you, we need your support.**

The Wamboin Community Association would like to encourage all residents to email Palerang Councillors (councillors@palerang.nsw.gov.au), to object in the most vigorous terms, to this impost. Even residents who currently engage O'Sullivan's Rural Waste services should realise that, if the council takes over waste collection services, everyone will pay what Council demands, for the service Council chooses to provide. There will be no choice, and no collection 'from the door' or even from your gate.



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NEW CLASSIFIEDS
I am trying to start some evening classes to be held at Queanbeyan High School. There are a variety of subjects on offer, with the one mostly likely to be able to start in May being Computing for Beginners. I have had phone calls from a few Wamboin residents who would be pleased to be able to do some classes in Queanbeyan instead of having to travel to Canberra. If you are interested, please phone me on 62971510 or email me at qbnlll@ozemail.com.au. - Lyn Lyon, Queanbeyan
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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 . The Whisper is available for downloading on the noticeboard, and also from www.bywongcommunity.org and at www.thewhisper.freehosting.net
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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
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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 to (I don't live at the Hall!) -Joan Mason, 62383258.
FOR HIRE: WAMBOIN COMMUNITY HALL. Bookings arranged by Joan Mason 6238 3258. Local Residents \$75, Bond \$250. Non-Resident \$130, Bond \$300. The Hall in not available for teenage or 21st. functions.
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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.

Health & Hospitals

by Lofty Mason

I had the chance to bed test the new Queanbeyan Hospital in early April.

Note: There is no need to book and my visit was completely unplanned!

On the Tuesday I woke up with what I would describe as acute indigestion. Joan was away but I am not blaming Cassie's cooking. This indigestion persisted all day and by about 9pm it changed to an ache in the centre of my chest (sort of pressure behind my sternum), with radiating pains that gradually worsened. Was this a heart attack? Obviously it was time to change my place of abode. My daughter drove me to the hospital. One minute I was reporting in and 30 seconds later I was in a bed, on oxygen and connected to the computer in Casualty.

My increasing painful chest pain, almost too painful to breathe, was diagnosed as viral pneumonia and slight pleurisy. With so many injections that I am sure I leaked, by morning I was on the improve and Wednesday afternoon I was transferred to Intensive Care. After patches, injections and tablets, various tests showed my lungs cleared over the next few days.

Intensive care is a very nice ward, if you like that sort of thing. There were 3 other patients who were all worse off than me. One guy was so noisily vocal at night he was removed to allow others to sleep. He was so quiet I am suspicious that he was placed in the noise proof Birthing Suite? Nurses and staff were great. How they ever put up with all the demands, whinging and abuse I'll never know. And that is just from the visitors!

Turned out I had developed a heart irregularity. From my point of view at least it was consistently irregular? Does that mean I am not wasting heartbeats when not required?

By Monday I was transferred to a private ward. Sort of missed the drama of the intensive care ward. Then on Wednesday they considered I was a malingerer and sent me home. At this stage they are trying to sort out my irregular beat with various drugs.

Moral of this story: The Doctors tell me don't waste time if you have a chest pain. You may not get classic secondary heart problem symptoms. I was also advised to call an ambulance rather than present myself at the hospital. But then again, surely it won't happen to me again? Will it? Put another way, I won't be going there for the food.

I am left with the thought: Nobody likes getting older but the alternative doesn't seem very attractive either.

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