

COMMUNITY

ASSOCIATION

The Whisper

August 2012

CIRCULATION: 1,273

Wamboin Community Assn:

www.wamboincommunity.asn.au

Bywong Community:

www.bywongcommunity.org.au

Fire Brigade:

<http://brigade.wamboincommunity.asn.au>

All proceeds from advertisements after printing costs go to the WAMBOIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION that started The Whisper as a community newsletter in 1981, and continues to own it. The newsletter is distributed to all letterboxes in Wamboin and Bywong (plus other localities in our fire brigade's area) at the start of each month, except January. Contributions from all residents are encouraged, valued and the main content of the newsletter. The Editor is Ned Noel, 17 Reedy Creek Place, Wamboin, 2620, phone 6238-3484. Please email contributions to either nednoel@optusnet.com.au or whisper@wamboincommunity.asn.au or mail them. The deadline for the next issue of The Whisper is always the last Sunday of the month, 7 pm, so for the August 2012 issue the deadline is Sunday, 29 July 2012, 7 pm. Instant Colour Press will then multiply 1 copy into more than 1200. Then the new issue goes to volunteer deliverers by the weekend.

LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES Fire/Police/Ambulance - Dial Triple Zero (000) All Hours

Bungendore Police: 6238 1244 Wamboin Fire Brigade Info Centre: 0409 991 340 Ambulance Bookings: 131233

LOCAL FACILITIES AND CONTACTS

Wamboin Community Assn	Peter Harrison, President	6238 3525	president@wamboincommunity.asn..au
Bywong Community	Darryl Bourke, President	6230 3055	
Fire Brigade	David Cochrane, Captain	0409 991 340	
Wamboin Markets	Joan Mason, contact	6238 3258	
Sutton School Playgroup	Johanna Bradley, Convenor	0406 399 713	johannabradley@dodo.com.au
Landcare	Roger Good, President	6236 9048	
Community Nurse	Heather Morrison, Bungendore	6238 1333	
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	Jill Sedaitis, JP	6236 9559	
Wamboin Scout Group	Peter Harrison, contact	6238 3525	
Wamboin Pony Club	Robyn Slater, Senior Instructor	6238 3472	
Geary's Gap Pony Club	Katarina Biondic, contact	0421 859 917	
Wamboin Play Group	Emma Auzins, Convener	6238 3974	
Wamboin Hall Bookings	Joan Mason, contact	6238 3258	
Church - Anglican	Robyn Robertson, Warden	6238 3202	
Christian Prayer Group	Steve & Imelda Taylor, contacts	6238 3220	
KYB Bible Study Group	Yvonne Barrett, contact	6230 3539	
Golf	Peter Greenwood, Golfer	6238 3358	p.greenwood2@bigpond.com
Injured Wildlife	Wildcare, Helpline	6299 1966	
Wonderful Women of Wmbn	Gail Ritchie Knight, Contact	0416 097 500	
Lake George VIEW Club	Lydia Zielinski, contact	6230 3488	
Wamboin Book Group	Alice Scott, Secretary	6238 3178	

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Alana Stenning	petsitting	6238 3030	Jess, Ellen & Nicole Smith	petsitting (incl horses)	6238 3115
Fiona Skea	babysitting	6238 3290	Ashleigh Caird	babysitting	6238 0746
Rebecca Purdie	petsitting	6238 3343	Gabrielle Simpkin	babysitting/ petsitting	6238-1335
Mara Sutcliffe	petsitting	6238 3228	Jack & Matilda Whitney	pet care, baby sitting, odd jobs	6238 3059
Jordan Brown	babysitting	0414-907-921			

BUSH FIRE AWARENESS/INFORMATION SESSION: Targeting all new residents and others in the Brigade's area who think they might benefit on Sat 15 September (11.30am-2pm). Details in the Fire Brigade's newsletter inside.

**What are the two things you generally
don't want to waste?**

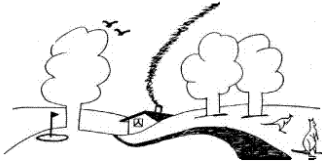
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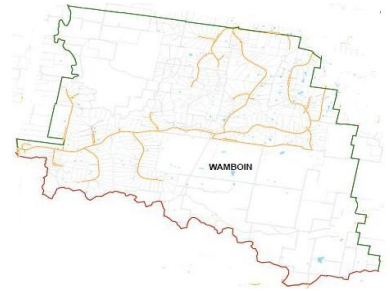
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Wamboin Community Association President's Paragraphs



Palerang Council Elections — With nominations having opened on Monday 30 July, I am only aware of one other person from the local rural residential areas who has expressed interest in serving on Council. These areas represent almost half the population of Palerang, and should have at least four representatives on Council. I'm pleased that people are happy with the job I'm doing, but it takes at least five votes on Council to make anything happen. It is vitally important that the rural residential areas of our shire are properly represented. People need only cast their minds back to the previous, or even some of the antics of the present Council to see what can happen if local people don't come forward. If you have ever considered contributing to your community in this critical role, please give me a call on 6238 3525. Your community needs you. Nominations close on Wednesday 8 August.

Meet the Candidates — The WCA will hold a Meet the Candidates evening, with candidates who have nominated for the September Council election, from 7.30 pm Wednesday 29 August 2012. This event provides an excellent opportunity to meet these candidates, hear them speak, and ask questions that will help you make an informed decision on election day. Candidate details will be provided on the WCA website soon after close of nominations on Wednesday 8 August (follow the link from "What's on in Wamboin", on the home page).

The next issue of The Whisper will be a bumper election issue, with statements from all candidates. With the election date so early in the month, there won't be much time between Whisper delivery and election day, but our volunteers will make a supreme effort to have a copy in your letterbox the weekend before election day. Candidate statements will also be made available in the Palerang Council area of the WCA website as soon as they are available.

Great Wamboin Curry Night — This is the next event on the Wamboin social calendar. Come along, on Saturday 18 August, and sample culinary creations that leave all that TV cooking show fluff in the shade. Check out the notice elsewhere in this issue, or the WCA website for full details.

The Whisper — There was much discussion about this illustrious publication at the last WCA meeting, some of the events that Lofty has recounted in his "Let's Shout About The Whisper" series, expressions of appreciation for our regular contributors and also for the generous effort made by many community members, all volunteers, to get The Whisper out to you each month. Our editor Ned has written a brief piece elsewhere in this issue, but lest Ned's modesty forbid his mentioning the fact, he has now selflessly edited our community newsletter, without missing a single issue, since July 1993. Now entering his 20th year as editor, the WCA felt it appropriate that I draw this particular contribution to the attention of all our readers, and offer the community's thanks for all his work.

Upcoming Events — Information on all upcoming events within the community ("What's on in Wamboin") is provided on the WCA website. Just go to <http://wamboincommunity.asn.au> and follow the relevant links for more details on any event of interest. If you belong to a local community group and would like your event(s) included, please email details to the WCA Webmaster at webmaster@wamboincommunity.asn.au.

WCA Electronic Noticeboard — The WCA electronic noticeboard is a convenient way to keep up with community activities. Subscribe by visiting the WCA website at <http://wamboincommunity.asn.au/noticeboard>

The Whisper On-Line — Remember that copies of The Whisper are available on-line at <http://wamboincommunity.asn.au/whisper> on the first Sunday of the month.

- Pete Harrison (president@wamboincommunity.asn.au)

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Wanted Properties for Sale



Jan has been receiving solid enquiry from prospective purchasers for all types of property. She has many disappointed buyers that missed out on the recent properties she has sold who are cashed up and ready to buy. Please do not hesitate to call for a FREE APPRAISAL anytime!

Jan was bought up on the land & appreciates the amount of time, expense & care that goes into any farming operation – no matter how big or small the property is.

Dams, bores, animal shelters, sheds, fences, tanks, pumps etc are all important attributes that can't be overlooked in any inspection and must be pointed out to any potential buyer.

Because of her background in farming she understands your efforts & will not miss important infrastructure that is commonly overlooked by people with less farming knowledge.

This is all factored into a FREE appraisal of your property & differentiates the price between yours and a neighbour's property.

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Jan Ladmore Ph: **0407 890 527** 7 Days

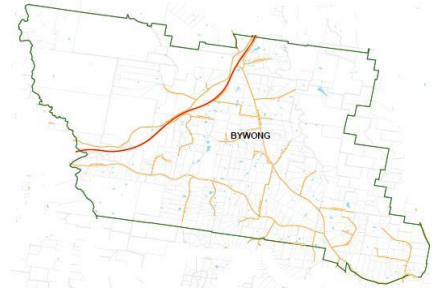
E-mail: **jan.ladmore@bigpond.com**

Horizon has a very good brochure that is a guide called 'Steps to Buying Your Home' in NSW & ACT. This offers advice for both the Seller & Buyer. If you would like a copy sent to you contact Jan Ladmore

Bywong Community News

www.bywongcommunity.org.au

Darryl Bourke, President
This News Put Together by the
Bywong Committee



Trivia Triumph. The Community again records its delight at the success of yet another Bywong Trivia Challenge. This year's event was notable for the close competition and high scores of the competing teams. The result was in doubt until the last moment, when team Nambawan pipped past winners XXY on a music round which included both questions and singing. Several other teams, including from Bywong and more distant corners of Palerang, finished within a point or two of the winners. The evening was cast in a new format. Our own quiz guru Jean-Pierre Favre used a giant screen mounted in front of the full house to project his questions, liberally interspersed with quirky humour and (largely misleading) clues. The array of soups, complemented by Peter Zimmerman's fresh baked rolls, was tasty as ever.

Make it free! A new constitution to be proposed at this month's AGM proposes free membership of the association for anyone living in Bywong. Be there and vote for it! The meeting is on Monday night 20th August at 7.30 pm at the Bywong Community Hall in Birriwa Road. And while you're there voting for free membership, please consider lending a helping hand. We shall be looking for new committee members – and lots of them so that individuals won't have to do too much. If you're prepared to put your hand up for an executive position, all the better! As an added inducement, we can offer our very own defibrillator – recently generously donated by the Fire Brigade, and now available at the Hall.

C'mon Bywong! We still haven't heard of anyone from Bywong putting up their hand for Council. Please think about it – we would like to think that people from our own area are helping make the decisions which affect us all. Even if you don't want to serve on Council, there are plenty of ways you can help make our presence felt. Ask a Committee member!

Tips for locals: We recently had cause to complain to Council's officer in charge of the Macs Reef tip about a truck dumping waste from a well-known local landmark. The truck only dumped part of its waste – the rest, mainly newspapers, was liberally strewn down Macs Reef Road from a tailgate illegally left open. We hope his employer will read this and at least Council knows. Nor are we ourselves blameless – there seems to be an increasing number of locals delivering rubbish in uncovered trailers, and losing quantities along the way. Macs Reef Road itself is looking like the tip. So smarten up comrades, and keep our region beautiful. Don't forget your Community fought to keep the tip for you.

Community Chalkboards: Just a reminder that our community notice boards are there for all locals to use – but please don't leave your messages up too long or write them in other than duster-removable chalk (we will be asking you to scrub them off). And please don't use them for political or campaign slogans on matters which have not been endorsed by the Community.

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ANNUAL BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS NIGHT -- BONFIRE FUEL WANTED

The 2012 Wamboin Bonfire and Fireworks Night is planned for Saturday the 22nd of September. Now is a great time to kill two birds with the one stone. You can start to fireproof your property by clearing unwanted stumps, logs, prunings and brush. At the same time you can help make the Bonfire night a memorable occasion by delivering suitable fuel to the bonfire site at the Bingley Way Community Centre. This night is a major, and sometimes the only, fund raising activity by our community groups who provide food, drinks etc. Your load of fuel is required now. Lofty Mason.

THE GREAT WAMBOIN CURRY NIGHT

It's on again. The Great Wamboin Curry Night. Saturday the 18th of August is the date to remember. There is a gold coin donation per person to offset the hire of the Hall. From 7pm all diners bring along their prepared dish. The dishes are displayed with descriptive labels and are then on offer to all curry munchers from 7.30. A prize will go to the dish selected by a secret (no bribes) judge. Tables, chairs and a warm Hall are provided. BYO drinks, plates & cutlery. For more information contact Dave Hubbard on 6238-2308



Country Bumpkins Early Learning Centre Has Officially Opened!

Country Bumpkins Early Learning Centre is a new 30 place privately owned family business located at 18 Victoria Street, Sutton.

The Centre is open from 7.30am till 6.00pm weekdays, and caters for children 3 to 5 years.


We offer a preschool program that covers the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) where children can develop their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, aesthetic skills to become competent and confident individuals. We have a qualified Early Childhood Teacher.

Our Centre will offer a safe, secure environment where the children's happiness is paramount. Country Bumpkins provides morning tea & afternoon tea of fresh fruit & a late snack, with families providing their own child's lunchbox & drink bottles.

We have a large outdoor playground that the children will love exploring with a huge sandpit, grass areas & 2 cubby houses. We will later be adding a vegetable garden & some chooks as centre pets.

We have a team of qualified & trained educators, who will provide a preschool program that covers developmental & educational experiences for each child & will assist all children in preparing for the transition onto big school.

We still have some vacant positions & would love to hear from anyone that has a preschool aged child. Please feel free to contact our director Belle on 62303280 or email. countrybumpkins@countrybumpkinsnsw.com.au




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Rainfall and Temperatures in Wamboin - 37 year statistics from the Robertsons

2012 rainfall to 29/7 ... 549.25mm
 Average August rainfall ... 55.6mm
 Wettest August ... 170mm in 1984
 Hottest Aug day ... 20C on 31/8/82
 Coldest Aug night ... -5C on 18/8/2010

(2011 to 31/7 ... 349.25mm)
 (Aug. 2011 ... 57mm)
 Wettest Aug day ... 35mm on 7/8/85
 Coldest Aug day ... 5C X 6 times

How The Whisper Gets Written, Printed, Delivered and Paid For Each Month

Every issue also depends on many of you who take the trouble to write articles or announcements for the Whisper's pages. It wouldn't be very good if any two or three or four people were the only ones contributing something, so thanks to each of you who spent time making this issue, or any other issue, more interesting for the rest of us to read.

The 50 or so people below each spend time every month to make sure that Wamboin and Bywong homes own and receive a free community newspaper written by residents. 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 or help out. If you already have too many tasks in your month, every now and then give your volunteer paperwoman/man/boy/girl a thank you.

Instant Colour press does a great job of printing the Whisper each month at a very reasonable price - around \$1000 a month for over 1250 efficiently and professionally produced 24 or 28 page copies.

This is possible only because many of you pay to advertise in the Whisper. Your money enables the printing costs to be met.

Thanks to each of you. - Ned Noel, volunteer editor

168: CO-ORDINATED HELEN MONTESIN: ph 6238 3208

Fay Kelly Norton Rd West Area from Cmpbl Pl 20
 Helen Montesin Fernloff Rd 33
 Julie Veal Poppet Rd (for all on road) 32

284: CO-ORDINATED BY TRISH RICE: ph 6238 3791

Joan Mason Bingley Way 48
 Sue Ward Norton Rd (Bingley to Weeroona) 32
 Trish Rice Majors Cl 18
 Ned Noel Pal Cncl (14), Advertisers/ Misc (45) 59
 Kathy Handel Yalana West 19

230: CO-ORDINATED BY KERRIE FISHER: ph 6238 3489

Lesley Page Valley View Ln 4
 Colleen Foster B'dore Rd to Nrtn Rd 22
 Cassie Fisher Clare Ln 12
 Dominica Lorima North end Clare Valley 42

249: CO-ORDINATED BY JOHN VAN DER STRAATEN: ph 6238 3590

Sheryl Barnes Denley Dr (Sth End 1/2 way2 Kestral) 15
 Don Malcolmson Macs Reef Rd (Denley to Gum Flat) 7
 Connie & Hans Bachor Dnly Dr to Macs Rf Rd incl Bchm Gr 28
 Nora Stewart Rovere Ln 7
 Carol & Clive Boughton Macs Reef Rd (Bankers to Fed Hwy) 33
 Beth Hope Gum Flat Ln 6
 Kevin Beier DenleyDr (Kestral2 1/2 way 2StHnd) 19

140: CO-ORDINATED BY IAN COILLET ph 6238 3425

Michael & Jose Deane FdHwSvcRd/Bidges/Hickey/O'Gold 63
 Robert&Marzena Luton Sutton Park Estate 48

202: CO-ORDINATED BY KEVIN ANDERSON ph 6236 9333

Phil & Pam Dawes Donnelly Rd & Donnelly Ln 25
 Kevin Anderson B'dore Rd (Macs Reef to Summerhill) 35
 Kerrie Gougeon B'dore Rd (Fed Hwy to Summerhill) 25
 Sue Aunella Brooks Rd 21

Bill Owen Cooper Rd 26
 Stuart Whitten Canning Cl 17
 Alan Rope Sutton Rd 40

Margaret Heleimin Merino Vale Dr 17
 Anne Gardner Weeroona Dr (Norton to Majors) 31
 David Anderson Weeroona Dr (Majors to Denley) 36
 Penny Evans Norton Rd (Campbell to Bingley) 24

Deb Gordon Yalana East 42
 Rob Gorham South end Clare Valley 38
 Lyle Montesin The Forest Rd area incl Joe Rcks 60
 Bungendore Foodworks Bungendore 10

Brian Higginson Denley Dr (Birchmans to Kestral inc) 12
 Rhett Cox Macs Reef Rd (Newington to Bankers) 7
 Morag & Guy Cotsell Macs Reef Rd b'n Nwgt& Harriott 30
 Sandra Favre Macs Reef Rd b'n Nwngtn& Harriott 20
 Joan Milnor Birriwa Rd plus Macs Rf Rd to Harriott 30
 Tony Bond Hogan Dr/Orana Dr/Yuranga Dr 35

Jenny Bryce Wattle Flat Rd 11
 Penny & Russell Ball Macs Reef (Denley Dr to Bungdre Rd) 18

David Featherston Summerhill and Creekborough Rds 25
 Diana & Keith Gascoine Snowgum Rd 26
 Chris Fowler Shinglehouse & Millyn Rds 20
 Richard Holding Wyoming & Doust Rds 25

TOTAL 1,273

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St Andrews and St Peters Church Notices

Despite the cold and frosty mornings in Sutton and Wamboin over the past month, few members of the congregation have been deterred from attending services on a Sunday morning. Perhaps the warmth inside both churches, the good company and the morning teas have helped overcome the desire to turn over in bed and go back to sleep until spring!

St Andrews is soon to be the recipient of three pre loved wooden bench seats thanks to the generosity of the WCA. These benches will be placed in the garden. The church grounds are a pleasant place for quiet reflection, especially near the memorial wall which was built by our local stone mason, Dave Argæt.

The Reverend Vicki Cullen held two sessions at her home in Wamboin where Christmas boxes for underprivileged children in Vietnam were filled with goodies and prepared for mailing. Unfortunately some people were unable to help out because of commitments during the school holidays.

Kids Club has resumed on a Friday night at St Andrews from 5.30 to 7pm, after the holidays. We were happy to welcome new little faces. Participation by parents is always appreciated by the regular team of helpers. The children enjoy activities, songs and stories, as well as dinner.

The Baptism last month at St Andrews was a lively and joyous occasion. The church was filled with children and their families and friends.

After the evening fifth Sunday of the month service at St Andrews, the congregation stayed for a brief meeting to fine tune the document which will see St Andrews and St Peters become one church. As usual, there was spirited discussion and plenty of input from the congregation.

A reminder that services are held at 9am on the first and third Sunday of each month at St Andrews, Wamboin, and the second and fourth Sunday of each month at St Peters, Sutton. All are warmly welcomed.

Contacts: Robyn Robertson (Warden of St Andrews) tel: 62383202
Peter Cartwright (Warden of St Peters) tel: 62380202



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Medal Presentation

by Jenny Riley, Media Officer, New South Wales State Emergency Service, Bungendore Unit

Together with invited guests, hosted by Colin Malone, State Emergency Service Regional controller, the Bungendore SES unit recently conducted a medal presentation event, recognising long serving members. Colin provided an interesting talk accompanying the medal presentation outlining the history and significance of the honours. On average a SES volunteer serves for 3 years so it was quite an honour to recognise the following members:

Fernando Van der Linden and Graham Finch -15 years long service medal & National Medal

Jennifer Riley, Helen Righton and Graham Finch – 10 years long service medal

Jan Smith, Colin Brown, Dianah Brown, Claire Mitchell and Will Mitchell – 5 years service pin

Although unable to attend Mayor Reynolds conveyed his congratulations to recipients and thanked the Bungendore SES unit for their wonderful contribution to the community.

Thank you to all attendees, especially our guests from neighbouring units, the community and RFS. Well done to our awarded members, wear your honours with pride.

To view more photos from the night and seek information on joining our award winning unit please visit [facebook.com/NSWSESBungendore](https://www.facebook.com/NSWSESBungendore)

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Bush Baroque “Rest a while”

On July 1st I was treated to an afternoon of enchanting music in a tranquil bush setting in Bywong. I’d seen reference to Bush Baroque in the Whisper for several years but had never, for various reasons, been able to attend any of the concerts. However, I had pictured what it could be like....an afternoon in a somewhat fusty, dimly lit, chintzy lounge room with hardly a view, a few recorders and a singer worthy of the Vicar of Dibley’s choir. How wrong can you be! What I found, instead, was a true gem.

I had enjoyed my introduction to the recorder at primary school, but my dalliance with “Baroque music” was cruelly shattered when, returning to school on my bike one lunch time with my wooden recorder dangling in a string bag, it got caught in the spokes and snapped in two. But my father, like many fathers of that era, was resourceful. There was no need for a new recorder if he could weld the broken pieces together with a good sized dollop of Tarzans Grip. Grip it did, but my precious recorder was never the same again. It didn’t look the same, it didn’t smell the same, but more importantly it didn’t sound the same. Unfortunately, my protestations fell on tone deaf ears. I was stuck with the blighted instrument. But my fascination with the true, husky tones of the recorder, and the quaint, captivating nature of mediaeval music never left me.

We arrived at the Milners’ home after a short meander through the bush to find an interesting purpose built music room which, from my seat, looked out on to a Fred Williams landscape of pared down gum trees. The soprano, Emma Griffiths was outstanding. David Yardley was an excellent counter tenor. And there were viols, a harpsichord and recorders, played by musicians who were obviously enjoying themselves. The atmosphere was intimate and fun and a glimpse of an era long gone. Much Baroque and Mediaeval music was written for a single occasion, a one off event, and so much of it has been lost or remains buried in old libraries in Europe. But since the 1960s, with the growth of the early music movement, a lot more has become available and we were indeed fortunate to hear some of it that afternoon.

I came away from that concert feeling buoyed by the music, in awe of the talents of others and quietly pleased that all proceeds went to Hartley LifeCare. I’ll certainly be there for the next concert. - Jill Gregory

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The Wamboin Firefighter

The Wamboin Firefighter newsletter is produced by the Wamboin Rural Fire Brigade for the benefit of residents and property owners in the brigade's area i.e. the localities of Wamboin, Bywong, and Sutton (south of the Federal Highway).

TO REPORT FIRES OR SMOKE SIGHTINGS



DECLARATION OF THE BUSH FIRE DANGER PERIOD IS LESS THAN TWO MONTHS AWAY.

Although the bush fire danger period is just two months away, it's not too late to begin preparing your property and home for the increasing threat of bush and grass fires. Coming into winter you will undoubtedly have observed that the fuel load, i.e. high and thick grass, is still around. These grass fuels have cured with the onset of winter, the generally dry conditions and effect of frosts. They are pretty much bone dry.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) Seasonal Outlook issued on 18 July 2012 indicates the Pacific is currently near the threshold for El Nino conditions and the climate models forecast the Pacific to either exceed El Nino thresholds during late winter or spring 2012 or remain at borderline levels. No models suggest a return to La Nina. During El Niño events, large parts of eastern Australia are typically drier than normal during winter and spring. However, El Niño does not guarantee widespread dry or drought conditions. For the period August to October the BOM's rainfall and temperature outlook is for drier conditions for large parts of southeastern Australia and, temperature-wise, a warmer late winter to mid-spring is likely. At this point, with the advent of warmer weather not too far away, all things point to a potentially difficult (bush and grass) fire danger period ahead.

PREPARATIONS WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO UNDERTAKE NOW



You must make important decisions before the fire season starts.

Your Bush Fire Survival Plan is one of the best ways to help improve the safety of you and your family before the impact of or during a bush fire. If you haven't already done so, please prepare or review your Bush Fire Survival Plan. The NSW RFS offers a useful guide and template for a Bush Fire Survival Plan. It can be viewed and downloaded by visiting <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/> and click on 'For the Community'.

Preparation is not just about cleaning up around the house and having a plan. It is also about making sure you consider your physical, mental and emotional preparedness. A bush fire can be a terrifying situation. It is important to prepare yourself and your family for bush fires. If you have any doubts about your ability to cope, you should plan to Leave Early.

Regardless of your decision to Leave Early or Stay and Defend, you still need to prepare your property against the threat of a bush fire. A well prepared home is more likely to survive a bush fire. Even if your plan is the Leave Early, the more you prepare your home, the more likely it will be to survive a bush fire or ember attack.

In relation to your property, some of the things that you should consider include:

- Inspect your property and buildings identifying any defect or improvements that you need to make before the fire season. For example:
 - Check the condition of your roof and wall cladding and replace or seal any damaged sections that could allow embers to encroach into the roof cavity or inner walls.
 - Enclose open areas under your decks and floors.
 - Install fine steel wire mesh screens on all windows, doors, vents and weep holes.
- Create a safety zone around your house and other buildings so that embers will have less chance to start a fire when they hit the ground. For example:
 - Remove excess ground fuels and combustible material (long dry grass, dead leaves and branches) for a distance of at least 20 metres around all buildings.
 - Create and maintain a two metre gap between your house and tree branches.
 - Clean leaves, twigs, bark and other debris from roof and gutters (and revisit on a regular e.g. monthly/ fortnightly/ possibly even weekly basis).
 - Trim low lying branches 2 metres from the ground.

- If wood is piled against or near the house or other building, move it away.
- Check and service all fire-fighting equipment.

You may find it useful to make a detailed list of the tasks to be carried out and tick them off as they are completed. Items such as those mentioned above should form part of your Bush Fire Survival Plan.

UPCOMING EVENT

In the lead up to the fire danger period the Brigade is running an awareness information session and workshop for all residents who wish to attend – see details below. If you haven't come along to a previous session or think you would benefit from a refresher, you owe it to yourself, your family and other people in your community to come to this event.

COMMUNITY NOTICE

BUSH FIRE AWARENESS/ PREPARATION INFORMATION SESSION

Saturday 15th September

11:30am to 2pm

(Registration from 11.00am)

Wamboin Fire Station - 112 Bingley Way Wamboin

AIM: To help you get prepared for a bushfire

What we will cover:

- Where 'we' live, what it means, fire history, what you can expect.
- **Bush Fire Survival Plan**
- **Property preparedness**
- **Personal preparedness**
- **Staying informed**

Practical tips and tools – hands on



The session will be similar to those the brigade has run in prior seasons and include a not previously shown DVD that offers a guide to preparing for and surviving the bushfire season.

In addition, there will be static and working displays of a range of portable pump, hose and nozzle setups and opportunities for you to view, start and operate a selection of fire fighting portable pump, hose and nozzle setups.

BRIGADE ACTIVITY

Callouts:

The Brigade was responded to two incidents since our last newsletter each involving a motor vehicle accident. The first callout occurred on Friday 6 July when the Brigade pagers were activated at 5.48am in response to an accident on the Federal Highway near Lake George. Eight crewmembers were despatched in 3 brigade vehicles and a further 5 members retained on standby at the station. The second callout was on Sunday 22 July shortly after 6pm when the brigade was called to a single vehicle accident on Denley Drive Wamboin.

Training:

On Saturday 14 July the Brigade hosted a joint simulated fire fighting exercise at the Wamboin Community Complex with Stoney Creek, Bungendore and Rivers ACT Rural Fire Brigades. The exercise involved draughting and the movement of water from the dam through the numerous tankers to supply water to firefighters fighting a 'fire' high on the hill behind the Community Hall and other locations around the Complex.

Sunday 22 July was a maintenance morning at the Fire Station with members working assiduously to sort the vehicles, check and test fire fighting equipment, update ration packs and other supplies, and undertake a general clean-up in and around the station, fuel store and pumphouse as the brigade readies itself for the coming bush fire season.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Wamboin Brigade Website

The site will help you to monitor local conditions and Brigade announcements. The **Community Information** section has useful information including links to other websites that provide guidance regarding bush and grass fire preparations. You'll also find the brigade's history, interesting photos and other fascinating material on the Brigade's site at <http://brigade.wamboincommunity.asn.au>

As always, if at any time you have a query on a fire-related issue including preparing yourself, your family and your property for a bush, grass or house fire, please contact the Brigade on 0409 991 340.

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Mining Leases in the Area

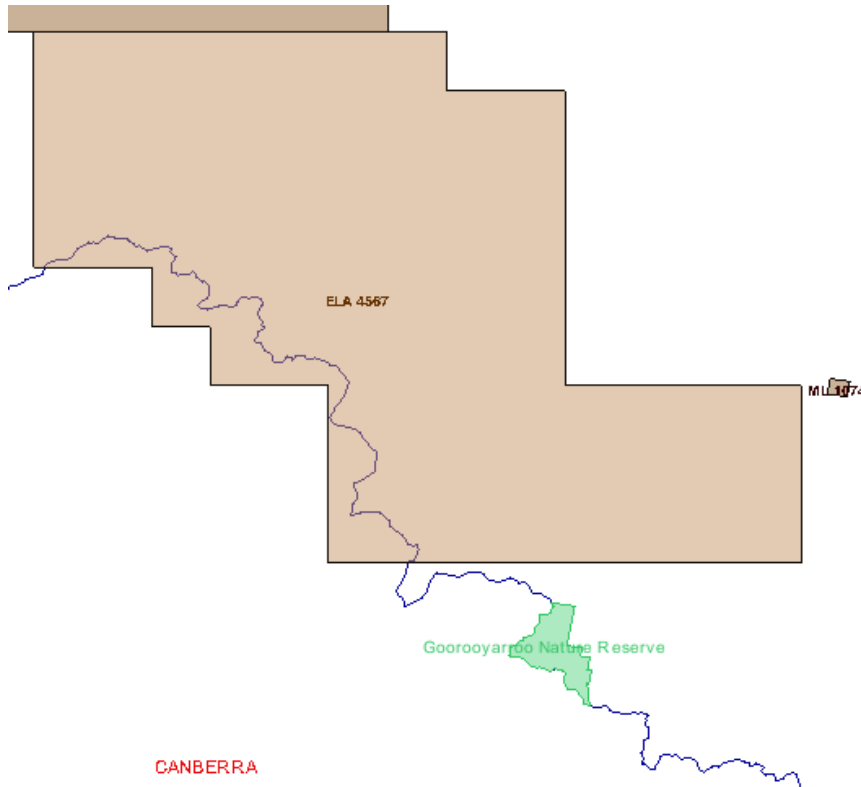
by Chris Fowler, Millyn Road, Bywong

Recent articles in both the District Bulletin and Bungendore Mirror refer to a report in the Canberra Times about mining exploration leases [EL] to the north of the ACT.

The map showing EL 4567, mentioned in the Mirror, is shown on this link <http://www.minerals.nsw.gov.au/tasmap/jsp/Viewer.jsp?cmd=login>.

Whisper readers might be interested in following the link.

The link might lead to an 'invalid authentication' screen. Click 'OK', then 'I agree', and 'next' to get to the main page. Detail is available by clicking at the point of interest [ie just above 'Canberra'], and selecting 'layers' [eg mining tenure, topographic features, admin. boundaries] as required. It is possible to get to close detail by repeatedly 'drilling down', if you'll excuse the pun!



This is not intended to be an explanation or reason for any activity, just drawing your attention to more of what is publicly available. If you have trouble getting the above NSW government minerals website to appear (it will allow you to drill down to a map like the one shown at left), email me at chrisft@fwi.net.au

<p>SILVER WATTLE QUAKER CENTRE 1063 Lake Road, Lake George www.silverwattle.org.au</p>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">Awesome August</h1> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 0;">the market @ bungendore</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 0;">Sunday August 19th 9am - 3pm at the War Memorial Hall</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 0;">All your favourite stalls Come along for a browse Enjoy a variety of refreshments</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Part-time Administrator</p> <p>Regular, flexible hours, up to 15 hours per week \$25 per hour (up to \$750 per fortnight) Would suit a parent of school-age children Experience in office management required eg. reception, hospitality administration, small business work includes email, Word processing, MYOB, Excel</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>jewellery</p> <p>giftware</p> <p>tea & coffee</p> <p>local art & craft</p> <p>garden products</p> <p>toys & models</p> <p>cakes & pastries</p> <p>soaps & lotions</p> <p>picture frames</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;">  <p>honey</p> <p>preserves</p> <p>hand knits</p> <p>candles</p> <p>cookies</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>glass art</p> <p>homewares</p> <p>greeting cards</p> <p>beads & findings</p> <p>pottery & ceramics</p> <p>local grown plants</p> <p>prints & paintings</p> <p>fruit & vegetables</p> <p>clothing & footwear</p> </div> </div>
<p style="text-align: center;">Part-time Housekeeper or Cleaner</p> <p>Regular, flexible hours, 4-6 hours per week \$25 per hour, (\$200-250 per fortnight) Clean, tidy and maintain guest rooms, dining and Conference rooms and social areas using SW cleaning equipment or your own For further information, please contact the Director on 6238 0588, mobile 0422138991 or email to: director@silverwattle.org.au Interest in the work of SWQC preferred People of any faith or denomination are welcome to apply</p>	

Nature Notes July 2012

Jo Walker

Lots of white frosts graced the mornings this month. Several times the dam still had ice on it until lunchtime, and, on one particularly cold day, there was ice between the tussocks on a south-facing hill all day.

But spring is getting close. The prickly *Acacia genistifolia* has been in flower for some time now, and the first yellow flowers are just appearing on Silver Wattles (*Acacia dealbata*). A few days ago, a Magpie flew over with its beak full of twigs for a nest. And there was a brown blowfly in the kitchen yesterday!

One of the Wedge-tailed Eagles made an appearance earlier in the month. The Sulphur-crested Cockatoos had been perched in two trees near the house screeching raucously for over half an hour, their way of warning of something dangerous in the vicinity. I thought they may have seen a fox, as I'd come across two, not far away, a few days before. But then I saw another flock of cockatoos mobbing an Eagle just to the north of here.

There are a few Yellow-faced Honeyeaters feeding on the Grevillea flowers, along with the Eastern Spinebills and White-eared Honeyeaters. Yellow-faced Honeyeaters are mostly migratory birds, moving to warmer regions for the winter months, but a few evidently tough it out in our area.

A flock of about thirty White-winged Choughs flew across my place from a neighbouring property a few weeks ago in three separate groups. When I first came to Wamboin, a family of Choughs were regular visitors before another, rather aggressive flock came in. There was a period of skirmishing before both groups took off elsewhere, and I've had only irregular visits since then.

Have any of you noticed the White-faced Heron at the southern end of Sutton Road? These birds are usually seen near dams, but this one has been feeding on the grass verge almost every time I've been into town over the last month – obviously there must be some tasty grubs in the soil.

Did I say spring was almost here? As I was writing this, we had a short, sharp shower of tiny hail – enough to get the kangaroos racing for the shelter of the bushes. Still, it's getting closer.

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please phone Brian 6258 1792

Let's Shout About the Whisper
Looking back at the history of The Whisper
by Lofty Mason
(My thanks to Pete Harrison who researched and collated the mastheads)

The mastheads of the very first Whispers, from July '81, were quite understated...

"WAMBOIN WHISPER"

Then in February '83 came ...

THE
WAMBOIN WHISPER

In June '84 with a great new Commodore 64 computer we were able to produce the following masthead which was used until Nov 88

THE
WAMBOIN
WHISPER

From this time 'The Whisper' became a monthly newsletter. The original version of the current banner first appeared in December '88. This was drawn after a thirst quenching study of a Moondah Brook wine label enhanced by a Wamboin rural scene plus the recently formed golf course ...

WAMBOIN
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
The Whisper

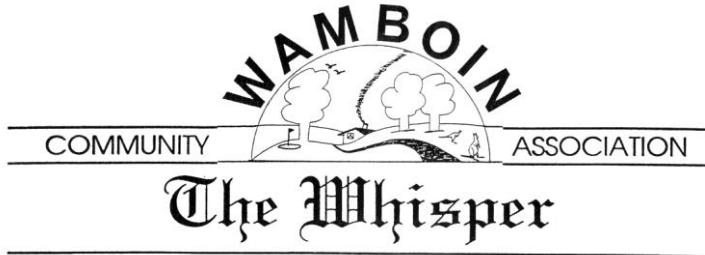
and, with the exception of the 'nuclear explosion' version that appeared just once, in September 1990 ...

The Whisper
Wamboin
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

... has remained largely unchanged since. In August '94, the fonts were changed slightly, with "WAMBOIN" no longer in bold, and "The Whisper" in a slightly different font variant with, most notably, an upright "W", (note the worn graphic) ...



Due to the deterioration of the graphic caused by copying, the original drawings were located and used in April '95 to produce the following masthead



Today's banner is the tidied up, 'digitally remastered' version that first appeared on the cover of the December 1988 Whisper.



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Councillor's Corner

Lot Size Averaging — There has been a flurry of activity in the lead up to the September elections. Unfortunately, this has not been related to election activities as such, but rather the hasty revision of provisions governing subdivision in the current rural 1(a) zone before the end of the term of the present Council, which just happens to be dominated by individuals with large rural land holdings.

The issue of lot size averaging has been a sticking point for most councillors with rural property interests. The former state Labor government had advised that it would not allow the use of lot size averaging in new Local Environmental Plans (LEPs), but the current Council majority had refused to remove the averaging provisions from the draft PLEP. In the wake of the state government elections, there was more intense lobbying from rural Councils with the result that the new Minister for Planning and Infrastructure relented and advised that he would consider proposals for lot size averaging.

So what's all the fuss about? Fundamentally, it's about the controls that apply to rural subdivision. Planning legislation (our LEP) specifies a minimum sized parcel of land on which a dwelling can be constructed. The size of this parcel of land varies, depending on its location. In rural areas, the lot must be large enough to sustain agricultural activities—that's currently 80 ha in the former Yarrowlumla area and 40 ha in the former Talleganda area. In residential areas, the size varies depending on the character of the location—larger lots in rural residential areas, and smaller lots in villages. These lot size restrictions are in place to avoid inappropriate development, excessive profiteering at the expense of the intended land use in, or the amenity of an area.

Without averaging provisions, a rural property in the former Yarrowlumla could not be subdivided to create a lot smaller than 80 ha (200 acres) with a dwelling entitlement. A smaller lot could be created, but it could not be built on, limiting its use to agricultural or recreational activities, and thus limiting its value. The averaging provision allows the creation of lots as small as 8 ha (20 acres) in rural areas, with dwelling entitlements, provided the average size of all lots in a subdivision is still 80 ha. The result is that there must be at least one larger lot in the subdivision that can thereafter never be subdivided, thus being preserved for agricultural activities. The number of dwelling entitlements in a holding remains the same, but the idea is that these can be 'attached' to more attractive (smaller, and hence cheaper, although not necessarily proportionally so) parcels of land.

To limit the fragmentation of productive land, and to avoid the creation of unplanned rural residential settlements, the averaging provisions also currently limit the number of small lots (i.e. lots less than 80 ha) that can be created within any holding to five.

Averaging is, nonetheless, used extensively (with smaller lot size limitations) in planned rural residential subdivisions, where the intent is to provide a specific density of residential development with a range of lot sizes. The principle of lot size averaging is thus generally sound, provided it is used in the right place and the associated controls are not abused.

Averaging provisions are not currently applicable in the former Talleganda area of Palerang, where the minimum lot size is already half that of the former Yarrowlumla area.

The motion brought before the July 26 meeting of Council sought to:

1. Extend averaging into the former Talleganda area of Palerang, without increasing the minimum lot size;
2. Eliminate any restrictions imposed by previous subdivision covenants by resetting the holding date;
3. Remove any restriction on the number of small lots that could be created in a subdivision.

The wording of the original motion was also such that it would have removed existing subdivision covenants on all rural residential areas of the shire, opening these areas up to further subdivision of any lot larger than 12 ha. This could have had a devastating impact on the amenity of the rural residential areas of Palerang.

In the event, after several hours of debate the impact of the motion was restricted to just the rural areas of the shire, and the limit on the number of small lots that can be created was preserved. Averaging was, however, extended to the former Talleganda area of the shire without any consideration or adjustment of the lower minimum lot size, and the holding date for all rural areas was adjusted to the date of Palerang's proclamation, conveniently removing covenants placed on earlier rural subdivisions.

The new Council will have the opportunity to review this decision after the September 8 election.

The Palerang Blog—New entries in my councillor website Blog (<http://peteharrison.id.au/blog>) since my last update:

More on Earthwork

Lot Size Averaging

Council's General Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month, commencing at 5.00 pm. Members of the public are welcome. The meeting location varies—check Council's website (<http://palerang.nsw.gov.au>) for details. Meeting Business Papers are also available on Council's website on the Friday preceding the meeting.

- Cr Pete Harrison, Ph. 6238 3525, Email: Pete.Harrison@palerang.nsw.gov.au, Website: www.peteharrison.id.au



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News from WWOW The Wonderful Women of Wamboin by Gail Ritchie Knight

WWOW continue to meet informally once a week over tea and coffee enjoying each other's company and meeting new friends. Some of us bring along a craft activity eg knitting, cross stitch or beading.

Over the last couple of months we enjoyed a variety of speakers.

Arlene Taylor, a local girl now living in Adelaide spoke to us about service dogs. Many of us are familiar with guide dogs for the visually impaired. But we soon learned that there are also hearing dogs, mobility assistance dogs and medical alert dogs for various conditions eg hypoglycaemic alert dogs. Service dogs are invaluable in enabling people to gain independence, confidence and better health management while providing support and safety. Arlene stressed that service dog organisations are integral to a better community. However they do not receive government funding and rely totally on donations.

In June two of our members, Alice Scott and Robin Asman talked of their volunteer work at Radio 1RPH, Radio for the Print Handicapped www.radiolrph.org.au. The community radio station turns print into sound making information available to listeners who cannot manage print. 1RPH programs feature readings from newspapers, magazines and books. Listeners can hear information on a variety of subjects including music, gardening, current affairs, health, science, computing and travel. Both Robin and Alice are a great example of the diversity of interests and talent we have in our group. We look forward to more talks from our local community.

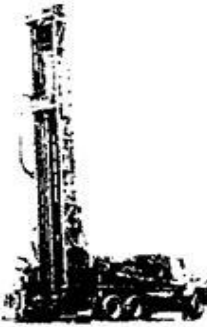
All women are welcome at WWOW — Mondays, 10 AM to 12 NOON at St Andrew's Anglican Church on the corner of Poppet Road and Norton Road in Wamboin. Members come not only from Wamboin but also Bungendore, Bywong, Gundaroo and Sutton, as well as a few from Canberra and Queanbeyan. For more information contact me on 0416 097 500 or by email at whirlwind@argonite.com.au.

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What's Skippy's DSE & why care?

[DSE = Dry Sheep Equivalent]

Over the last few months there have been a number of articles and letters in the Whisper about kangaroos and their impact on the land. But what is missing is a factual comparison of kangaroos versus sheep, cattle and horses in terms of who is eating all the green stuff. It doesn't seem right to kill off kangaroos just because we 'think' they are the culprits in eating all the grass.

Maria Taylor pointed out in last month's Whisper there are many myths surrounding kangaroos. It is all too easy to demonise them and simply wipe them out. Some people see hundreds when there are only perhaps 30 or 40. Most family mobs seem to average around 25-30, but sometimes two or more mobs come together and form a larger group. If we allow ourselves to look at the facts, then we might tolerate kangaroos much more.

As far as grazing pressure goes, kangaroos consume just one third that of sheep with a Dry Sheep Equivalent (DSE) of 0.3. Cattle on the other hand can have a DSE of around 12 – Jersey milking cows are up to 22 or more. So compared to cattle, and in general terms, kangaroos eat less than one thirtieth of a cow. Horses have a DSE of about 10. Alpacas about 0.9. DSE varies and there are many factors such as animal age, different breeds, growth rate, lactating, pregnant, and so on. Grazing pressure also depends on the nutritional value of the land and growing conditions.

Bottom line is that Wamboin & Bywong farmers and smallholders who raise stock animals might be a little more tolerant of kangaroos with the knowledge that a mob of thirty kangaroos equates to a single horse and less than a whole heifer.

Another aspect is that kangaroos are not contained and typically range over a very large area. Stock animals are contained and hence paddocks can get eaten down to ground level and beyond. Kangaroos are soft-footed and do not impact the ground in the same way as hooved animals. Kangaroos do not graze down to ground and root level, thereby encouraging growth and not destroying the pasture. Some scientists suggest mixed grazing with kangaroos can be beneficial and actually increase farm output.

Convinced? If not, then please think about the true impact of your local mob of kangaroos. Work on fact and not fiction. See a mob of kangaroos as the equivalent of one two-legged heifer drifting between your land and that of your neighbours - because this is what they probably equate to!

- Philip Machin, 6238 3717



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THE STABLE DOOR

by Ian Collet

An occasional piece

Continuing the *Gondwana* theme from June.....while taking a walk along Weeroona Drive on one of those sublime sunny and still winter days, out of the corner of my eyes, there it was, larger than life, **a wild boar** from yesteryear. See what I mean? I hope.



And, while speaking of yesteryear – elsewhere around the bituminised tributaries of Wamboin, I spotted this beaut relic outside a local identity's place. Must be a story behind the vehicle's history and future?



And, speaking of local identities, seems none of us is getting any younger.



Wamboin 15 years ago - from the Whisper, August 1997 Circulation: 600

by Robyn Robertson

From Councillor Peter Greenwood's report from Yarrowlumla Shire Council: "Don't change your stationery yet! As from 18th August your telephone number will change, with the area code 02 then a 6 in front of your existing number. But, as advised previously through the Whisper, your address will also be changing. This is **not** being initiated by Council, however the work in determining your new street number is being carried out by Council on behalf of the NSW Government which is introducing the scheme throughout rural NSW. It will be most useful for finding your home, particularly for emergency vehicles. Your new street number will reflect the distance of your front gate from the start of the street. (1 digit for every 10 metres from the start of the street, even numbers on the right, odd on the left). Most of the work is now completed and full details will be posted to you over the next month. So don't change your stationery until you have both your new telephone number and your new street number."

PS from RR. This is the fourth address for "old" Wamboin residents, who haven't had to move house once! The first address was a box number, Sutton Road, via Queanbeyan. Then we moved our letter boxes to a cluster at the end of each road, with a number and the street name, then we moved our letter boxes to our gates with the familiar 1,3,5 or 2,4,6 etc numbers. Let's hope the fourth will be our final address.

Similarly, the phone numbers grew from the original 6 digit number beginning with the Wamboin prefix 383, and area code 062. Then a 2 was added before the individual number, and then the 6, with the area code 02. It's all progress!

Sutton Road Upgrade

Roads ACT has been involved in the Sutton Road Upgrade project. As a result of the recent rains and predicted continued wet and cold weather forecast over the next few weeks, the contractor has requested that works be suspended until 27 August 2012 when the weather conditions should become more favourable for construction.

Speed limits will be reduced to 70 km/h during this period of suspension. Motorists are advised to exercise extreme caution when passing through this worksite especially at night time.

- Brook Milne, Senior Project Officer, Shared Services Procurement, Treasury, ACT Government

NEW CLASSIFIEDS

A grey cat with white paws and a little bit of white on its face has moved into our shed. It has a purple collar with a bell so it must belong to somebody. If it is yours, please phone Tom or Sally Clouston on 62383360 (H), 62804499 (w) or 0428 633 985 (M).

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The spring/summer migrant birds of Wamboin

By David McDonald, david[at]dnmcdonald.id.au, phone 6238 3706

The diversity and abundance of wild native birds, and the relatively low abundance of exotic species, are among the great things about living in Wamboin. The extent of birdlife reflects, to a large extent, the diversity of habitats here—farm dams, creeks, native forest, pine forests, native grassland, fruit trees, home gardens, etc.

Many of our native bird species are resident—we can see them in pretty well any month. Others, however, are spring or summer migrants. Most of the migrant species leave here as the weather cools, moving to the NSW coast or far to the north. It is believed that some migrate to the west of the Great Dividing Range, down to the milder climate low altitude country in SW NSW.

In quite a number of species part of the population is resident while part migrates. This explains the marked reduction in numbers here in winter of, for example, Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes.

Other species are passage migrants meaning that, at particular times of the year, we might see them moving through Wamboin, heading from their distant over-wintering spots to their spring/summer habitats. Rose Robins and Brush Cuckoos are examples: birds seen here are probably travelling west to the high, wet forests of the Tidbinbilla and Brindabella Ranges.

The distances that Wamboin's birds travel to find more benign climes in which to winter vary markedly between species. For example, Brush Cuckoos and Rainbow Bee-eaters migrate to northern Australia, Melanesia and Indonesia. White-winged Trillers go to inland and north-west Australia.

The stand-out migrant, of course, is the Latham's Snipe. It did not get its other common name, Japanese Snipe, for nothing! It breeds only in Japan (during our winter) and migrates south through PNG to Wamboin, to avoid the cold Japanese winter, usually arriving here in the second half of August.

In the table I have given an indication of when we can expect to see the migrants arriving here. Some individuals arrive ahead of the main migrating population, and in some species the occasional individual over-winters here despite most of the population leaving.

As I mentioned in the *Whisper* last year, the first call of the Pallid Cuckoo is, to many of us, a sign that Spring has arrived. If people would like to let me know the date of their first observations of migrant species this year, I would be happy to collate the reports and summarise them in these pages after Christmas. Perhaps better still, what about sharing your observations with everyone via the Wamboin Community Association Electronic Noticeboard? If you are not already subscribed, you can do so by following the simple instructions at

<http://wamboincommunity.asn.au/facilities/index.php?op=noticeboard> .

David Cook has established a fine photo gallery of many of Wamboin's birds at

<http://www.davidcook.com.au/wamboin.htm> .

The usual month of arrival of bird species that migrate to the Canberra region and that are, or might be, seen in Wamboin

<i>Species</i>	<i>Arrives</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Latham's Snipe	August	
Pallid Cuckoo	August	
Brush Cuckoo	October	
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	August	Some in the area now
Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo	August	
Shining Bronze-cuckoo	August	
White-throated Needletail	December	
Sacred Kingfisher	October	
Rainbow Bee-eater	October	
Dollarbird	October	
Fairy Martin	September	
White-winged Triller	September	
Rose Robin	August	Some in Canberra now
Rufous Whistler	September	
Leaden Flycatcher	October	
Australian Reed-Warbler	August	
Rufous Songlark	September	
Brown Songlark	October	
Western Gerygone	September	
White-throated Gerygone	September	
Noisy Friarbird	September	
Mistletoebird	September	
Olive-backed Oriole	September	
White-browed Woodswallow	October	
Dusky Woodswallow	August	

Wamboin Muse

Jill Gregory

Winter is a deceptively subdued time in the garden. While little appears to be happening above ground, below the surface things are stirring. Neglected daffodil bulbs are sending up shoots through the damp soil, there are a few creamy jonquils in flower, I notice hellebore flowers among their scrappy leaves that should have been removed in autumn, diosma bushes are now sprinkled with tiny pink dots, and I cut my first japonica blooms to put inside this morning, rosettes of pink on awkward stems ...an instant ikebana arrangement! The little wrens are darting and twittering. The boys have donned their courting blue finery, eager to impress, while the girls hang on to their drab attire, obviously confident that they'll be pursued for their personality and not their looks. And on the verandah rails' stage a lone magpie rewards me with a dramatic arpeggio against a backdrop of wattles poised ready to explode in a mass of yellow.

It's been a time of collecting firewood and kindling by the creek at the end of those still, grey days, with finger tips frozen and hands smarting from the jarring and cold of breaking sticks across your knee. In the gathering dusk I heard a far off currawong cry, a long mournful note rising above the chatter of countless frogs. Some of the frosts have been beautiful. We drove through a black and white landscape on an early morning trip to Bungendore railway station. It looked for the world like an old Box Brownie snapshot.

Collecting firewood, however, has given us a chance to start "tidying up". It's not all dead wood and leaf litter. A fair amount of the rubbish lying around has come from old projects; odd shaped bits of corrugated iron, old posts from a long dismantled pergola still with lumps of concrete attached, might- be- useful -one -day timber beams, old doors and discarded pieces of trellis. This rubbish, piled haphazardly, nearly went to the dump, but school holidays intervened. What a stroke of luck! Our junk pile was transformed into a wonderful cubby house, snug and waterproof as the rain pattered down on the iron roof and the billy boiled on the camp fire. Three kids and a dog had a wonderful time. We often talk about children spending too much time inside these days, relying on manufactured entertainment, but neat or pocket handkerchief sized backyards offer little scope for creativity. Of course the kids in this case returned to school, the cubby house is now forgotten and a night of strong winds saw the story of the Three Little Pigs, minus the wolf, unfold. The area looks more derelict than ever before and we'll have to start the clean up all over again, but the creative stimulus and pleasure derived from a pile of junk will be worth it.

I love my daffodils and hellebores and posturing blue wrens, but perhaps more than that, I love the unstructured space that permits me to "grow" junk, unashamedly.....I wouldn't live anywhere else!



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