



February 2018 CIRCULATION: 1,314

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 which started The Whisper as a community newsletter in 1981 and continues to own it. The newsletter comes out at the start of each month, except January. It is distributed to all letterboxes in Wamboin, Bywong and of Palerang Council residents just southeast of the Federal Highway. Contributions from all residents are encouraged, valued and the main content of the newsletter. On contentious matters the Community Association will strive to maintain a balance. The current editor is Ned Noel, 17 Reedy Creek Place, Wamboin, 2620, phone 6238-3484. Please email contributions to either whisper@wamboincommunity.asn.au or to nednoel@optusnet.com.au or mail them or drop them off. The deadline for each issue is the last Sunday night of the month before, so the deadline for the March 2018 issue is 7 pm Sunday night, February 25. Then the new issue goes to volunteer deliverers by the first Sunday of the new month and is also available at www.wamboincommunity.asn.au.

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 Evans, Acting President | 6236 9779 | president@wamboincommunity.asn.au |
| Bywong Community | Mike Wilkins, President | | president@bywongcommunity.org.au |
| Fire Brigade | Matt O'Brien, Captain | 0409 991 340 | captain@brigade.wamboincommunity.asn.au |
| Wamboin Markets | Lance and Meriel Schultz | 6238 3309 | Lmsconsulting@bigpond.com |
| Sutton School Playgroup | Emma Harriden, Convenor | 0448 478 953 | ce.harriden@bigpond.com |
| Landcare | Kathy Handel, Treasurer | 6238 3596 | khandel@bigpond.net.au |
| Community Nurse | Heather Morrison, Bungendore | 6238 1333 | |
| NSW SES | NSW Call Centre | 132 500 | For assistance in storms and floods |
| NSW SES Bungendore | After Hours Duty Officer | 6238 0222 | For non-urgnt assistance and advice |
| Justice of the Peace | Peter Greenwood, JP | 6238 3358 | |
| Justice of the Peace | Keith France, JP | 6238 3596 | |
| Justice of the Peace | Jill Sedaitis, JP | 6236 9559 | |
| Wamboin Pony Club | Stacey Burgess, Club Secretary | 0414 672 979 | wamboinpcsecretary@gmail.com |
| Geary's Gap Pony Club | Cameron Smith, contact | 0419 449 747 | |
| Wamboin Play Group | Linda Uzubalis, Convener | 0410 294 420 | Linda.uzubalis@gmail.com |
| Bywong Hall Bookings | Ann Sloan, contact | | lrrhallbywong@gmail.com |
| Wamboin Hall Bookings | Joan Mason, contact | 6238 3258 | joan.mason@internode.on.net |
| Church - Anglican | Robyn Robertson, Warden | 6152 1711 | |
| 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 Wmen of Wmb | Gail Ritchie Knight, Contact | 0416 097 500 | Whirlwind1@argonite.com.au |
| Lake George VIEW Club | Pauline Segeri, contact | 6238 1996 | |
| Wambn/Bngndr Book Group | Sally Saunders | 0419 303 229 | Sally.saunders1@bigpond.com |
| Wamboin Thurs Social Grp | Denise Hales, contact | 0400 310 685 | deniselynnehales@gmail.com |

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Alana Stenning | Pet sitting | 6238 3030 | Lydia Milos | Babysitting, petsitting | 6238 3559 |
| Fiona Skea | baby sitting | 6238 3290 | Ashleigh Caird | baby sitting | 6238 0746 |
| Jack Whitney | Pet&HomeSitting,OddJobs | 0437-460-236 | Gabrielle Simpkin | baby sitting/pet sitting | 6238-1335 |
| Jordan Brown | baby sitting | 0414-907-921 | Ethan Laver | Outdoor Jobs | 6236 9809 |
| Rebecca Purdie | pet/horse sitting | 6238 3343 | April Lloyd | babysitting services | 0434468772 |
| Laura Worden | baby/pet/house sitting | 0458788486 | Alex Lea | petsitting 6236 9657 | 0439219865 |

What ... no phone? See page 8



The Value Of Experience

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When a sale is hassle free, lack of agent experience is not a big deal. However in many transactions there are hurdles along the way...for example:

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What happens if the bank valuation falls short?

What happens when unexpected unapproved structures are found?

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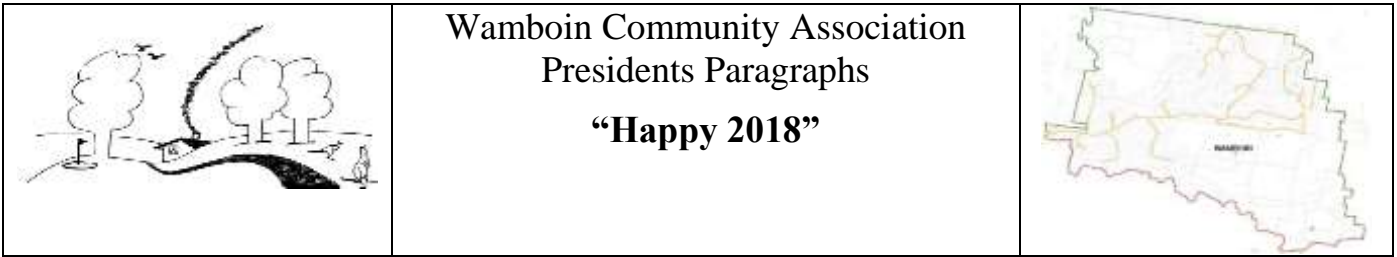
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Yes we are back for 2018. Although a bit late (we don't have a January issue) but Happy New Year. As I write there are well needed steady showers falling (it seems we missed most of the earlier heavy falls over the Australia day weekend) and a welcome 10 degree drop in temperature. The heat has certainly baked the landscape and the grasses have dried off. I also notice some trees starting to struggle with the dry conditions. I imagine February will be similar so please be vigilant for fires and have your Bushfire Survival Plan in place.

Wheels of Wamboin – Well the Christmas hype must have got the better of me. I issued the wrong date for the Wheels of Wamboin. The date is actually **Saturday 21st of April 2018**. This aligns with the Home Produce Markets. Sorry for the confusion. Tell your friends and start preparing those sleeping beauties.

E4 Zoning – We were very surprised to see the long running E4 vs R5 zoning issue revived again at the December Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council meeting. This zoning has been in place since 2014 and the debate was recently reignited in discussions with the merger of the amalgamated Local Environmental plans (LEP). If you want to view the December Council meeting go to www.webcast.qprc.nsw.gov.au and view the 13 December 2017 meeting and item 12.5. It seems this debate keeps on giving.

Wamboin Social Drop-In Group – the drop in group is now running 10 am – 12 noon every Thursday. Drop into the Wamboin Community Hall for morning tea and activities. Everyone is welcome.

New Members – Be a part of your local community and help make Wamboin great. We welcome new members to our monthly meetings. It's only one evening a month and you get to meet others in the local community.

WCA Meeting – next meeting is 7.30 pm, Tuesday 20th February at the Wamboin Community Hall.

Let's make Wamboin great! - Peter Evans - President.

Wheels of Wamboin 2018



Saturday 21st April 2018

(PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE TO ALIGN WITH HOME PRODUCE MARKETS)

9.00am to 1.00pm

(in conjunction with Home Produce Markets)

Wamboin Hall - Bingley Way

Wamboin

Start getting ready for another great day out with all this automotive.

Please email peter.evans@wamboincommunity.asn.au for further information

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Bywong Community News

www.bywongcommunity.org.au

President's Paragraphs and Committee Report



President's Paragraphs

QPRC decision to re-assess land use zones in "parts of Bywong and Wamboin"

The Bywong Community Association seeks to raise awareness of the recent QPRC decision that **"Parts of Bywong and Wamboin be assessed for consideration to R5 [Large Lot residential] and RU4 [Primary Production Small Lots] land use zones in the draft LEP [Local Environment Plan]"**.

The current land use zoning for Bywong and Wamboin is E4 Environmental Living.

This Council motion (agenda item 12.5 at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 13 December 2017) was introduced by Councillor Hicks and carried by Councillors Biscotti, Hicks, Overall, Schweikert, Taylor (all of whom lodged Special Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest forms prior to voting) and Bray. Councillors Brown, Harrison, Marshall, Noveska and Winchester voted against the motion to reassess E4 zoning.

The debate surrounding the review decision can be viewed on footage of the Council Meeting on the QPRC website, alongside various background documents.

If you are interested in understanding which "parts of Bywong and Wamboin" are to be re-assessed and how (eg is QPRC planning any public consultation?), or why E4 is to be re-assessed only in Bywong and Wamboin, not in any other part of the QPRC area, you should contact the Councillors who voted for the motion.

- Mike Wilkins, President, Bywong Community Association, 30 January 2018

Committee Report

The year has just begun, and as yet there are no major BCA developments and initiatives – though this will surely change as we get back into the swing of things.

Playground Opening and Xmas Drinks: The Playground Opening on Saturday 16 December was attended by the Federal Member, Dr. Mike Kelly, the NSW member Mr. John Barilaro, the QPRC Mayor Mr. Tim Overall and several other Councillors. There were also representatives of the various community organisations and businesses who so generously provided funding and other services to make the playground actually happen. The fellows who actually physically built the facility also attended – they are justifiably proud of their work -- as well as representatives from Roger Good's family for whom a plaque was placed on the seat in the playground.

Tim Overall presided over the opening and then the kids cut loose to play on the equipment during a "Teddy Bear's Picnic" which was generally overseen by the Fairy Godmother and even Santa and Mrs. Claus attended. It was a great success, and was then followed by the traditional BCA Xmas Drinks.

Possible Playgroup: Now that we actually have a playground some thought has gone into setting up a playgroup to regularly use the facility. So far this is just a possibility, but more definitive plans will ensue over the coming months.

2018 Car Boot Sale: This annual BCA fixture is planned for Sunday 25 March at the Les Reardon Reserve adjacent to the hall, and the BCA committee will be busy planning for this over the coming weeks.

If anyone has any ideas on this, or would like to help, please contact the BCA at - www.bywongcommunity.org.au

Next Meeting: Thursday 1 February at 7.30 at the hall. All interested people are welcome, so bring your ideas and interest with you.

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Three Core Dangers to Life

1. Radiant heat
2. Smoke, toxic gases
3. Dehydration

Three Core Life Protectors

1. Protective clothing. Pure wool blanket
2. Smoke mask. Furnish house with natural materials
3. Drink water

Three Core Vulnerable aspects of a House

1. Roof/ceiling space
2. Windows
3. Subfloor

Three Core Protections to Give a House

1. Clear roof space, insulate, plug gaps
2. Cover windows with shutters or metal flywire
3. Cover subfloor gaps with metal flywire

Three Core Home Destroyers

1. Embers, embers, embers. Not the fabled “Sweeping flames”
2. Flames – rarely, depends on your vegetation management
3. Radiant heat – if ever, from closely adjacent building

Core Home Protectors

1. Spaced plants, fire resistant plants, clear ground beneath plants
2. Ember-proofing potential entry points
3. Water – enough to douse embers for many hours

Three Core Aspects of Safe Home Defence

1. Equipment prepared and ready
2. Protective clothing –wear as soon as embers start to fall
3. Douse embers near and on house, don't attack outer flames

Three Core Aspects of Safe Evacuation

1. Trigger to go should be a bushfire weather forecast
2. Somewhere to go that is safer than your home
3. Ability to reach it by an open road and in a short time

Three Core Aspects of Safe Shelter

1. Active shelter is safest, dousing any entered embers. Passive shelterer's stay by an exit door
2. Protective clothing, smoke mask, pre wool blanket (Survival Kit)
3. Careful exit to a sheltered or already burnt area

To Each Core Point Add

Thorough knowledge of what to do, when to do it, and why

Tips as published by Joan Webster OAM in her “Essential Bushfire Safety Tip's” available from CSIRO Publishing

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Wamboin Rural Fire Brigade

NSW Rural Fire Service

Wamboin Brigade Captain

Queanbeyan Fire Control

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

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

captain@brigade.wamboincommunity.asn.au or 0409 991 340

02 61280600

What No PHONE!

by Jon Gough and Olaf Theden and the Wamboin Communications Action Group

That got your attention! And it should have. Until December 2017 there was a Telecommunications Universal Service Obligation (USO) and a Copper Continuity Obligation (CCO) placed on Telstra to provision, on request, a phone service to every household in Australia. The Federal Government paid Telstra \$297million per year for these obligations. The Productivity Commission completed a report in June 2017 looking at both the USO and CCO and determining if it was value for money and if it was still relevant in the post NBN era.

On your behalf the Wamboin Communications Action Group (WCAG) submitted a response to the initial investigation saying, in effect, the USO and CCO should continue until 2032, the original end date, and that data services, i.e. internet connectivity, should be added to it. This was to ensure all locations had adequate access to online services. There were multiple responses submitted to the Commission and whilst they differed in style and minor content they all agreed that in general the USO and CCO should continue until at least 2032. However, it would appear that this was not the answer the government, public service, or the ANAO wanted, so the responses were ignored by the Commission as they were of minor importance, after all most Australians live in the State or Federal capitals don't they?

With the acceptance of the Commission report the USO and CCO will be terminated early, with the current date being sometime in 2020, 12 years earlier than expected. It has been stated by the federal government that by then the NBN and mobile services will provide all the communications needed. If you don't have good NBN then you will have good mobile and can use Mobile Data to fill the gap. Remember that both Telstra and Optus have openly stated that their mobile networks are designed for voice not data. They allow a limited amount of data to make sure people use their phone services. If you want to do major downloads or internet interactions you are supposed to use either the NBN or 'another', non-mobile, network, i.e. ADSL or third party wireless.

What does this actually mean. Well the Telstra exchange in Wamboin is old, so old that the equipment is obsolete and parts are like hens teeth. Last year parts had to be obtained from Germany as there were none in Australia. On Tuesday 9th Jan a lightning strike in the Wamboin area fried the Amangula exchange and at least one of the Rim exchanges on Norton Road. For us it took five days to get the business line back and Telstra told us our home line was fixed, but we tried using it and just got noise. We reported that again and it was finally fixed on Thursday 18th. During that time there were at least 6 Telstra and contractor vans in the area and I saw 10 people working on the Rim and the main Exchange. They were out here for at least a week. When I talked to them they claimed both the Rim and Exchange were charred and black from being 'burnt'. They were not sure they could get it going again and said that it should be replaced.

Now the removal of the USO and CCO means that Telstra will have no obligation to maintain any 'uneconomical' exchanges. If the Amangula exchange or the associated Rim exchanges are too costly to maintain they will be cut off, hence you will lose your phone and be told to use mobile instead. With the demise of the copper line phones you will also, automatically, lose your ADSL connections. That's right, the connection that most of us are relying on will be terminated and you will be expected to sort it all out yourselves. The government will work to implement a new Universal Service Guarantee (USG) that will start sometime after 2020 if it is proven that remote properties are not being serviced adequately. Guess where that leaves you and me?

The Solution – Fibre Broadband for our area!

As presented at the community meeting held on 13 December, WCAG is pleased to announce that we have a very promising option to provide a fast, reliable and affordable fibre-to-the-premise (FTTP) network in the Wamboin, Bywong and Sutton regional areas.

For those that missed the details, the short-form summary is as follows:

We have been in discussions with SmartFarmNet (SFN), who are proposing a private fibre network for our area, with shareholders being those who sign up for a connection contract (5 year term).

After much effort and planning, the indicative pricing* for **unlimited downloads and symmetric speeds** is:

| Speed (Up/down) Mbps | Installation Cost | Monthly |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------|
| 15/15 | \$900 | \$80 |
| 25/25 | \$900 | \$110 |
| 50/50 | \$900 | \$150 |
| 100/100 | \$900 | \$180 |
| 500/500 | \$900 | \$399 |

*Pricing is based on a desktop network study of the area and properties, talks with the contractor who has visited our area and negotiations with backhaul providers. It is based on a high take-up-rate and a geographic distribution of properties that capitalises on close proximity between connected parties (no big gaps of non-connected properties in-between those that want a connection). The pricing is subject to change based on take-up rate, geographic distribution, final network configuration, and finalised construction costs etc.

The proposed Wamboin, Bywong & Sutton regional community network is a Private Network. It will be installed on private property where possible and connect members of the area to the internet.

SmartFarmNet encourages local residents to participate in planning, construction and maintenance in order to keep prices to a minimum and a local community focus on service levels. This project will be successful if there is strong community support and a collaborative approach to construction and operation.

The idea is that the residents that become members of the network at the commencement date will become shareholders in a suitably set up company. Construction will not commence until the community obtains agreement from enough residents to make the project operationally and financially viable. This will depend on a collaborative approach to planning with residents and Council.

What We Need You To Do

If this fibre idea sounds good to you (and we hope it does) – we need you to register your interest with SFN and get your neighbours involved. A fibre network of this kind requires our community to come together and participate jointly. Fibre routes will need to be planned. The more people joining up now reduces costs and provides greater flexibility in designing fibre pathways. It is likely that the costs to residents of joining the network at a later date could be significantly higher. We believe therefore that it is in everyone's interest to get connected as early as possible. This requires everyone to spread the word now, and ensure we know of your address as someone who is keen to get connected to a high speed future. To register interest please go to the WCAG website and complete our short survey, which you will find on the home page. This puts you into our email list which will keep you up to date with the latest information. – visit:

<https://sites.google.com/site/wamboincommunications>


For privacy reasons we are not passing ANY of your information to SmartFarmNet, so if you want to register your interest for a fibre connection you MUST click on the Red button, also on our home page. You will be asked for your name and address and also what speed of plan and payment method you would prefer should you decide to sign a contract when it is available.

PLEASE DON'T SIT BACK AND WAIT, DO SOMETHING FOR OUR AREAS' INTERNET FUTURE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.




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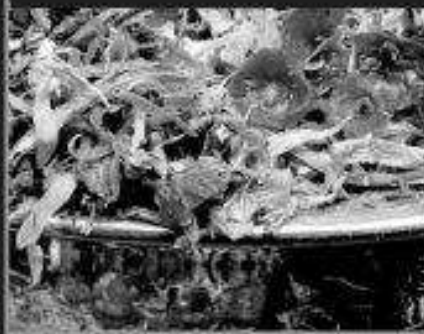
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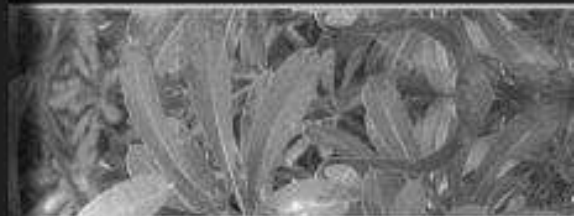
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Kowen Trail Run Continues To Grow

On Saturday, 20 January, the Wamboin Trail Runners held a second Kowen Trail Run event, the New Year's Resolution Run.

Runners and walkers were offered two challenging courses, a half marathon in the heart of Kowen Forest and a 12 km trail run in forested crown land off Bingley Way. There were also two kids events, a 1.5 km trail run in bushland at the back of the Community Hall and a junior adventure race for the 5s and under.

The event was a huge success and we received overwhelming positive feedback about the course, the event organisation and the warm community spirit – both in person and in dozens of posts and comments on our FaceBook page.

It is exciting that the Kowen Trail Run continues to grow. Numbers have increased from 264 entrants in June to an astonishing 315 entries in January. Given that the January event is held in the summer holiday period and in hot conditions, we can only assume that numbers will further increase at the next event on Sunday 17th June.

We are a not-for-profit organisation with proceeds from the event going to the Wamboin Rural Fire Brigade. So, the more entries we get, the more money we are able to donate to support the activities of the brave volunteer fire fighters who put themselves at risk to protect our lives and property.

Last year we donated \$5,000 to the Fire Brigade, and as a result they were able to purchase thermal imaging equipment that will be able to detect fires blazing below ground level. These fires, which cannot be detected by the naked eye, are often responsible for the re-ignition of fires thought to have been extinguished. While we are still in the process of doing our sums, we expect that proceeds from the January event will match or even better the June amount.

The Wamboin Trail Runners would like to thank the Wamboin Rural Fire Brigade, Wamboin Home Produce Market stall holders and committee, Wamboin Community Association and all our volunteers for their support and assistance over the past two events.

Our next event will be held on Sunday 17th June and look forward to seeing you there for a walk/run whatever your level of fitness.

For more information please visit our Website Kowen-Trail-Run.com or find us on FaceBook.

-- Wamboin Trail Runners, Pam Muston 0408 234 126 or Peter Komidar 0407 760 083



Wamboin Trail Runners Jessica Robson, Pam Muston and Peter Komidar (far right) with winners of the women's 12 km trail run Ella Cuthbert (first), Alexandra Orme (second) and Olivia Stutchbury (third). Photo: Carolyn Young.

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please phone Brian 6258 -1792*



| Classifieds |
|--|
| Wildcare training. This Orientation course teaches how to rescue, handle, transport and hold common native animals safely. An essential course for new recruits. At the Senior Citizens Centre, 30 Rossi Rd, Yass, on Sat 17 Feb 18 between 9.30-4.00. Contact Sandra 0458843232 or Sherri 0408161752 or email_membersrep@wildcare.com.au for details and register. |
| Animals tended - big and small. I will tend to your pets, horses, plants, livestock, mail, and any other jobs you need to increase your peace of mind while you are on holidays or when you just need a hand. Mature, responsible, reliable service. No roaming pets. Call Carolyn, 0414 738 365. |
| Wamboin Social Club. A meeting place - every Thursday, 10.00 & 12.00 at the Wamboin community hall. Pop in for a coffee & chat or linger longer and join in a game of ping-pong, card games, scrabble etc. All are welcome – young and old, bring a friend. Contact Denise 0400 310 685 for information. |
| Civil Celebrant - Lorraine Bird highly experienced, living locally. Available for weddings, civil partnerships, civil unions, renewal of vows, namings and commitment ceremonies. Please contact me to arrange an obligation free meeting. Phone 62303321, 0401267851 or www.lorrainebird.com.au |
| Mums and Dads learn BABY MASSAGE. Great benefits for baby. Contact Judy Shellard (Certified Infant Massage Instructor by IMIS (baby massage.net.au)) 62 383 050. judyshellard@gmx.com , 0417-130-052. |
| Guitar/vocal/musicianship tuition. 33 years full time experience. Classes run Monday to Saturday after school into evening. All ages welcome. Phone Adam Conroy on 6238 3677. |
| 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 |
| Civil Marriage Celebrant. Dorothy Skea. Mobile No: 0403 215 336 (easier to get a hold of me on my mobile). Ph: 6238 3290. E-mail: dorothyskea@outlook.com |
| Convert those precious memories from VHS or VHSC and now 8mm tapes to DVD, Records and Cassette Tapes to CD, right here in Wamboin and surrounds. Act now before they are lost forever. Fast turnaround. Only \$14 per DVD and from \$14 per Record or Cassette. Please contact Tony on 0412-507- 594 |
| FOR HIRE: BYWONG COMMUNITY HALL. Suitable for smaller functions and seminars, groups etc. Check availability and booking information on www.bywongcommunity.org.au . or email Ann Sloan at lrrhallbywong@gmail.com . |
| FOR HIRE:- from Wamboin Community Hall - 112 Bingley Way, Wamboin, - Trestles and chairs. All damages are the responsibility of the Hirer. Must be securely tied during transportation - or they don't go! |
| FOR HIRE :- from Wamboin Community Hall - Gas BBQ'S x 2. Hire cost and cleaning Bond applies. Enquiries - Joan Mason 62 383 258 |
| FOR HIRE: - WAMBOIN COMMUNITY HALL. Bookings arranged by Joan Mason, 62 383 258. Please note: Hall is not available for teenage, 18 or 21st birthday functions. |

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Nature Notes January 2018

Jo Walker

It only takes a few days of temperatures in the high thirties, along with a period of not much rain, to turn the countryside to brown dryness. But only at ground level. The trees and shrubs have put on a lot of new growth this year and the hills are adorned with all shades of green – from the greyish-green of the Silver Wattles (*Acacia dealbata*) through the many different colours of new eucalypt foliage to the velvety green of Black Wattles (*Acacia mearnsii*) and the bright new growth on the Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*). And, contrasting with all of that greenery are the white trunks and branches of Brittle Gums (*Eucalyptus mannifera*) and *E. rossii* (Scribbly Gums) both of which shed most of their bark this year.

The Yellow Box trees (*E. melliodora*) are flowering heavily this year, carrying loads of honey-scented flowers. The Cauliflower Bushes (*Cassinia longifolia*) are still flowering, but some are beginning to seed. *Cassinia quinquefaria* is a later flowering shrub bearing masses of yellowish-green tiny buds at the moment. Not much else is flowering at present except for the Australian Blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa*). Several of these large shrubs growing along Sutton Road are carrying clusters of white flowers.

The Kookaburras here have raised a young one this year and the family are flying from tree to tree calling noisily to each other. And Satin Bowerbirds were probably nesting amongst the shrubbery down near the road, as I heard their strange whirring and buzzing noises most days as I walked down to pick up the newspaper. Amongst the migratory birds, there were quite a few Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes here this summer, but not as many Red Wattle-birds as previously. Although, when the planted *Eucalyptus leucoxydon* was full of red flowers, the Wattle-birds were feeding there and squabbling with their competitors the Noisy Friarbirds. I hadn't seen the Wedge-tailed Eagles for a while, but they glided across the sky here for a while two weeks ago chased by an angry Magpie.

While I was walking with some friends in the reserve at the top of Poppet Hill at the back of my place, we found a large caterpillar of the White-stemmed Gum Moth (*Chelopteryx collesi*) crawling to the base of a tree to pupate. This is one of the largest caterpillars in South-eastern Australia and can grow to 140 mm. This one had certainly reached its maximum length!

Usually at this time of the year it's hard to pass between two bushes without being snared by a spider web, but there seem to be very few spiders around this summer. There are some large holes in the ground constructed by Wolf Spiders (*Lycosa* sp.), but the only spiders spinning webs seem to be the yellow, black and white Spiny Spiders (*Gasteracantha* sp.), so named for the thorny protuberances on their bodies. None of the webs seem to have many, if any, insects in them. In fact, there seems to be very few flying insects around this summer – and I've only donated blood to one March Fly so far.

The apparent lack of insects may be affecting the presence of lizards too. I haven't seen any Jacky Lizards here this summer and there seem to be fewer Cunningham's Skinks around. The only plentiful lizards are the little Grass Skinks. While on the subject of lizards, we saw a large Shingleback Lizard out in the Kowen Reserve (between Queanbeyan and Bungendore) beside an almost entirely eaten mushroom. It had obviously been eaten by the Shingleback as the lizard still had a piece of the fungus in its mouth. Their diet is usually listed as flowers, berries, insects and carrion, but this one seemed to have extended its range of gourmet dining.

The Kangaroos are not appreciating the hot weather. There are usually several of them taking advantage of the shade and cool pavers to lie on on the south side of the house.

Wamboin Home Produce and Craft Market -- Saturday 17 February 2018

Contact: Lance and Meriel Schultz 02 62383309 imsconsulting@bigpond.com.

The January Market was super-hot and even hotter for the more than 300 runners that chose to run a half marathon or a twelve km run/walk. They DRIPPED (and thankfully drank all of my lemonade!).

The organisers had spent hours and hours preparing and maintaining trails in the crown land up behind Bingley Way and on into the forest. This is so much to our community benefit and will allow us to walk or to ride our horses on safe and very beautiful trails. We do congratulate those who made such an enormous effort to prepare the trails. Our daughter walked the 12 km walk and was entranced by the hundreds of butterflies in the crown land - under the canopy of eucalypts and down the gullies that once ran a lot of water.

The Wamboin market has provided organisational and catering support for the first two running events. One is held in the winter (June) and the other in January. Running an event for more than 300 people takes a lot of organisation, cooking and catering support and many willing volunteers. Special thanks to Joan for organising the team who bought and cooked the burgers and sausages in a sizzling hot fireshed; to the Rural Fire Service for marshalling, cooking etc especially as many of their team were out at the Nerriga fire; and to Lou for arriving at crack of dawn to provide coffee.

The Wamboin Trail Runners now plan to run the next two sets of races on a Sunday rather than a Saturday as it makes it easier for the growing number of interstate runners to attend, *so they are now looking for other local groups who may want to raise their profile in the Wamboin area and who are willing to help with the catering etc.*

The market convenors will still continue to strongly support this local community event and will check out if any market stallholders may still wish to contribute or volunteer their services.

So on to the next market! This time we have *Contentious Character* coming along to provide a wine tasting. Come along and check out their great local wines and then move on up the road to make your purchases and have a delicious and restful lunch in the vineyards!

Future fixtures include:

- **WHEELS OF WAMBOIN - April market**
- **Car Boot HORSEGEAR SALE - May market (just in time to get that extra rug for your horse.....)**

More on these in the next Whisper editions.

SEE YOU AT THE FEBRUARY MARKETS!


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|--|---|--|

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St Peters, Sutton and St Andrews, Wamboin -- Church Notices

In keeping with the new year, St Peters has taken on a new, fresh look, and there is more to come. The old ceiling has been replaced and the interior repainted. This beautiful old building with so much local history on its wall plaques and stained glass windows, is sparkling. Members of the congregation were very busy on the weekend cleaning and putting the pews and furniture back in place. Next item on the agenda is the new front portico. Work will commence very soon.

Bishop Stuart, the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, will be at St Andrews, Wamboin, for his farewell service on Sunday, 11th February, at 9am. This will be a Confirmation service. Later Bishop Stuart will be at St Peters, Sutton, for a Blessing, at 11am, and then the congregation will retire to the Sutton Bakery for morning tea. Tables have been reserved for you!

With the end of the NSW school holidays, Kids Club will be in action again at St Andrews, Poppet Road, on Friday, 9th February, from 4.30 until 6pm. There are songs, stories, and craft activities, as well as a substantial afternoon tea. The sessions are for all children from preschoolers to high schoolers, and parents are always welcome to stay and participate. A realistic contribution to help defray costs of food, craft, Christmas and Easter gifts, and other materials is appreciated. The children from Kids Club make a donation, each Christmas, to a charity supporting children in need.

St Benedicts, Queanbeyan, benefits from our donations of food items as well as hours provided by several members of the congregation preparing meals at St Benedicts. Don't throw away those precious postage stamps that come into your letter box. There is a collection box at St Andrews for all used stamps. Money raised from the stamps are given to charities.

Services are held at St Andrews on the first and third Sunday of each month, and at St Peters on the second and fourth Sunday. All services start at 9am and are followed by a scrumptious morning tea and a chance to catch up with others in our community. New faces are always welcome.

If you are new to the area or have any queries at all, please feel free to contact any of the people listed below.

Pastor: Ven Dr Royce Thompson 0416265600, Lay Ministers: Dr David McCarthy 0409383620 and Len Goodman AO 0409442345 Wardens: Robyn Robertson 61521711 Gai Donald 0438400364 Alan Rope 0429434944

Could You Donate to Help the Red Nose Campaign (formally SidsnKids)?

'On Friday March 9, 2018 I am heading off on a charity bike ride from Canberra to Queensland to raise money for Red Nose (formally SidsnKids), 'Ellen's Ride 2018', I will be riding solo through NSW country towns such as Crookwell, Cowra, Wellington, Gunnedah & Tenterfield to name a few.

I am aiming to raise \$5000 for this ride, I did this ride also last year and raised \$8500, I cover over 160k's some days with a few short recovery days in the middle. This will be the 6th time I have done this ride to Qld (2nd time for Red Nose), riding on some really nice quiet roads.

For those that are interested I am doing this ride solo on my Pinarello Dogma race bike, where I have a seatpost bag attached, where I carry clothes to change into of an evening and spare bike clothes. I also carry a few spare tubes and a tyre.

I stay in motels along the way, where I generally arrive pretty tired from the days efforts, and then have to clean my bike clothes I have worn that day, and also shop for some food for the next days ride, then find somewhere to eat, I good pub meal of steak, veges and chips goes down well, and hopefully followed by a sound nights sleep.

This ride is in memory of our daughter, Ellen, who was born still in January 2010. If you would like to help me raise money for this wonderful charity and sponsor me please just type the following link into your Internet browser and follow instructions'

<https://everydayhero.com.au/event/ellensride2018>

To follow my ride you can also go to my Facebook page where I will be doing nightly updates

- Kind Regards, Tony O'Connor, Weeroona Drive



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Help Clean Up Wamboin -- Sunday The 4th Of March

On the annual 'clean up day' the Community Association is organising the clean up of our roadways of Wamboin. We need volunteers to spend some time on the Sunday morning picking up rubbish along our roadways. Earlier days volunteers accepted!

To give the best coverage we need to allocate sections of roadways to the different groups and/or individuals. The Hall will be maned from 9am until midday and you are invited to drop in to register and to pick up bags etc. Or you can register by email or phone to Lofty Mason. Phone: 62383258 or Email: Lofty.Mason@internode.on.net. Water, juice, nibblies and sunscreen will be provided and supplies refreshed when the collecting vehicles pick up bags etc. You will need strong footwear and sun protection headwear. Other clothing optional but recommended

Helping Heat-Stressed Wildlife

It's been hot for wildlife too. This article (published last year), gives useful reminders as to how we can help heat-stressed wildlife. Native animals are well adapted to high temperatures, but they can still get distressed on very hot days. Affected by the heat, wildlife can display unusual behaviour. Possums might be lethargic and found on the ground during the day, rather than sleeping up in the trees. Birds may be seen with open beaks, panting, or with their wings spread wide in an attempt to cool down. Young animals, susceptible to overheating, can be found orphaned.

Providing water and extra shade for wildlife that visit your property is one way to help. Fill birdbaths and have water bowls at ground level in secluded areas, that can't be knocked over – with sticks laid for smaller creatures to climb in and out. Keep water sources away from the house, as they can attract snakes.

Reptiles do better in the heat than other animals, but dehydration is a risk. Leave shallow bowls of water for them to find. Also, they will seek shelter from the heat, so you might find lizards or snakes under the veranda, in your shed, under the rhubarb! Please be tolerant and leave them be – let them stay until it cools down and they'll leave of their own accord. Be ready to help turtles seen wandering overland in the heat of the day, as they can get caught out and die if they don't find water. It is normal for them to explore on land but not in extreme heat, so pop them back into a nearby dam.

Wombats are nocturnal, however they can be seen during the day too. But if they appear lethargic and unresponsive, possibly with closed eyes, contact Wildcare for advice. Shallow burrows can heat up and wombats might seek shelter under houses and in sheds. They invariably move on at night; but seek advice from Wildcare if they linger. Wombats with mange might be seen out during the day; if seen, please call Wildcare.

Possums and gliders found at the base of a tree or in any unusual situation on hot days are likely to be dehydrated. Take note of their location and call Wildcare. Treatment includes holding in a cool place, providing water and frozen treats (e.g. fruit and native flowers, young shoots). One way to help an animal in trouble is to spray the area with a fine mist and again leave water available. The heat can also affect echidnas and bats, and any that require care should be kept cool with plenty of water available. Do not handle bats – call Wildcare.

A bird suffering from heat stress will not fly away when approached. This indicates it is in trouble and needs our help. Dripping water onto its beak may encourage the bird to drink, but best to place it in a cool place and call Wildcare. Never force water down a bird's throat.

Kangaroos can often be seen licking their arms. This causes an evaporative cooling effect. If kangaroos frequent your property and there is no dam, put out additional bowls/buckets of water. Keep dogs under control and do not allow them to chase roos (or any wildlife for that matter), as this will cause immense stress leading to myopathy, which is a death sentence. If you find a kangaroo in your yard, and it does not appear injured, just leave it alone and it will move on in the cool of the evening. *Photo: Keep the water topped up.*

Call Wildcare on 62991966 for advice. Put the number in your telephone for future reference.

- Merran Laver & Phil Machin



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Wheels Of Wamboin 2018 Significant Automotive Anniversaries To Celebrate This Year

In preparation for the 2018 wheels of Wamboin (note change of date to **Saturday 21st April 2018**) it's probably worth looking at what 2018 signifies in the automotive world.

70 years ago, the first Porsche sports car was born, creating a brand synonymous with timeless design and automotive performance at the very highest level. The first vehicle to bear the Porsche name was registered on June 8, 1948: It was the 356 "No.1" Roadster. The Type 356 turned the sports car dream of Ferry Porsche into a reality and was the forerunner to the 911. Unfortunately the 356 is probably best known for the car that James Dean crashed and died in.

At the other end of the performance scale but just as iconic is the 60th Anniversary edition of the pint sized Fiat 500. Morgan has announced it will build a limited run, special edition its enduring and handmade Plus 8 sports car in celebration of the car's 50th anniversary. Being handmade in today's modern world is truly special and they boast no two cars are exactly the same.

The American Camaro muscle car racks up 50 years on the eve of reintroduction to the Australian marketplace via Holden HSV dealerships. Amazingly the movie Bullitt (best movie car chase ever) racks up 50 years with the late great Paul Newman at the wheel. Ford have also released a 50th anniversary Mustang to celebrate the movie.

The amazing and timeless Jaguar XK 120 graces to 70 years while Land Rover also celebrates the marque's 70th anniversary in 2018 with a limited run of the iconic Defender with a stonking great V8. Matchbox turns 65 and celebrates its Sapphire Anniversary with 46 new car and truck models to be released in 2018. Who has a Matchbox car collection for the Wheels of Wamboin? In 1903, four young men in Milwaukee put a motor in a bicycle frame and now Harley Davidson also chalks up 115 years.

In all 2018 will be a great year to get down to the Wheels of Wamboin and see the sleeping beauties on display. See you there. – Peter Evans



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Wamboin's Hidden Hydrological History

Towards the end of last year, my wife and I spent considerable time in the Council Reserve off Bingley Way, scouting old trails for the Kowen Trail Run event. On one of these excursions, I noticed an old track with heavy vehicle tyre ruts. I knew it was old because there were some pretty large trees that had grown in between those tyre ruts. Following the ruts for a few metres, we then discovered a very straight trail – clearly not a kangaroo track. We followed this trail in turn and discovered a star picket with a number placed on the top. More numbered star pickets revealed themselves as we continued along the trail. The trail ended at the top of a stream, so we decided to follow the stream line. After just 30 metres or so, we found blocks of concrete in the ground with orange electrical conduit rising vertically from them. Further down the stream we found a large block of concrete set into the streambed and nearby was a metal weir structure about 1.5 metres high and six metres wide, spanning the stream. On a concrete footing to the weir was the inscription “CSIRO 30/6/1975 Yass 8”.

Clearly, CSIRO was undertaking some form of scientific research in the forest all those years ago – when what is now Wamboin was the back blocks of the Bingley sheep station.

After a couple of phone calls and an email exchange I can report, thanks to Joel Green, CSIRO Records Collection Officer, that the site was run by the Hydrology Group of CSIRO'S Division of Land Use Research as an experimental area for the study of water quality and surface and sub-surface hydrology. A one square mile (250 ha) parcel of land was leased by CSIRO from the local land owner. The lease expired on 31 December 1985.

The site was first used in early 1974, with the control weir and the installation of underground instrument cabling etc. completed in 1976. (You can still see some of the cabling strung up a tree beside the saddle trail that runs from the Bingley Way entrance to Kowen Forest).

There was also a building on-site that was originally used as part of a private experimental venture in the hydroponic production of vegetables, then later used to house recording instruments associated with the CSIRO project. The foundations of that building still exist; on private property, adjacent to the Council Reserve. (I discovered them while exploring what I thought was part of the Council Reserve when I first moved to Wamboin 18 years ago).

Interestingly, the site is still providing surface and sub-surface hydrological information of sorts. As it's constructed of metal, there is relatively pristine metal above the then water line and rusty metal below; evidence that the weir held considerable water back in the day. Alas, even after the heavy falls in early December 2017, the weir is now capable of holding just a little puddle – so far have groundwater levels fallen with the installation of residential bores in the region.

Also, you will find a number of black plastic pots scattered about the area. My guess is that once CSIRO abandoned the site, an enterprising person decided to use the water then stored in the weir to grow a more legally sketchy kind of cash crop! But that, of course, is only supposition.

If you wish to visit the site, walk up the dirt road off Bingley Way (opposite 241 Bingley Way). Where the dirt road takes a 90-degree left turn, you will see a track on the right heading up the hill. Follow the track until it joins the Saddle Trail and head right towards Kowen Forest for 100 metres where you will find a well-marked trail on your left. 100 metres down that trail you will find the weir. Following the trail further along you will spot the other items I mentioned.

Happy trails! -- Peter Komidar, Wamboin



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WAMBOIN WEATHER: (rainfall and temperature records) 43 years from Cooper Road by Christine Rieber

January Rainfall Stats

January rainfall to the 28th 26.75mm
2018 total rainfall to 28/1..... 26.75mm

Average January rainfall..... 61.0mm
2017 January rainfall..... 12.75mm
2017 total rainfall to 28/1..... 12.75mm

February Rainfall Stats

2017 February rainfall..... 26.75mm
Wettest February..... 170.75mm in 2010
Wettest day..... 49.5mm on 14/2/10
Driest February 1mm in 1986

Average February rainfall..... 57.9mm
Average no. rain days in February.... 7.3
Highest no. rain days..... 18 in 1976
Lowest no. rain days..... 1 in 1995

February Temperature Stats

Hottest February day... 37°C (7 times) on
2/2/77, 2 & 10/2/83, 3/2/87,
6/2/91, 8/2/09 & 12/2/17
Average day temperature..... 25.9°C
Warmest February 1983
(Av. max day temp. 29.5°C & night 16.9°C)
Feb 17.... Av. max 25.8°C & Av. min 12°C

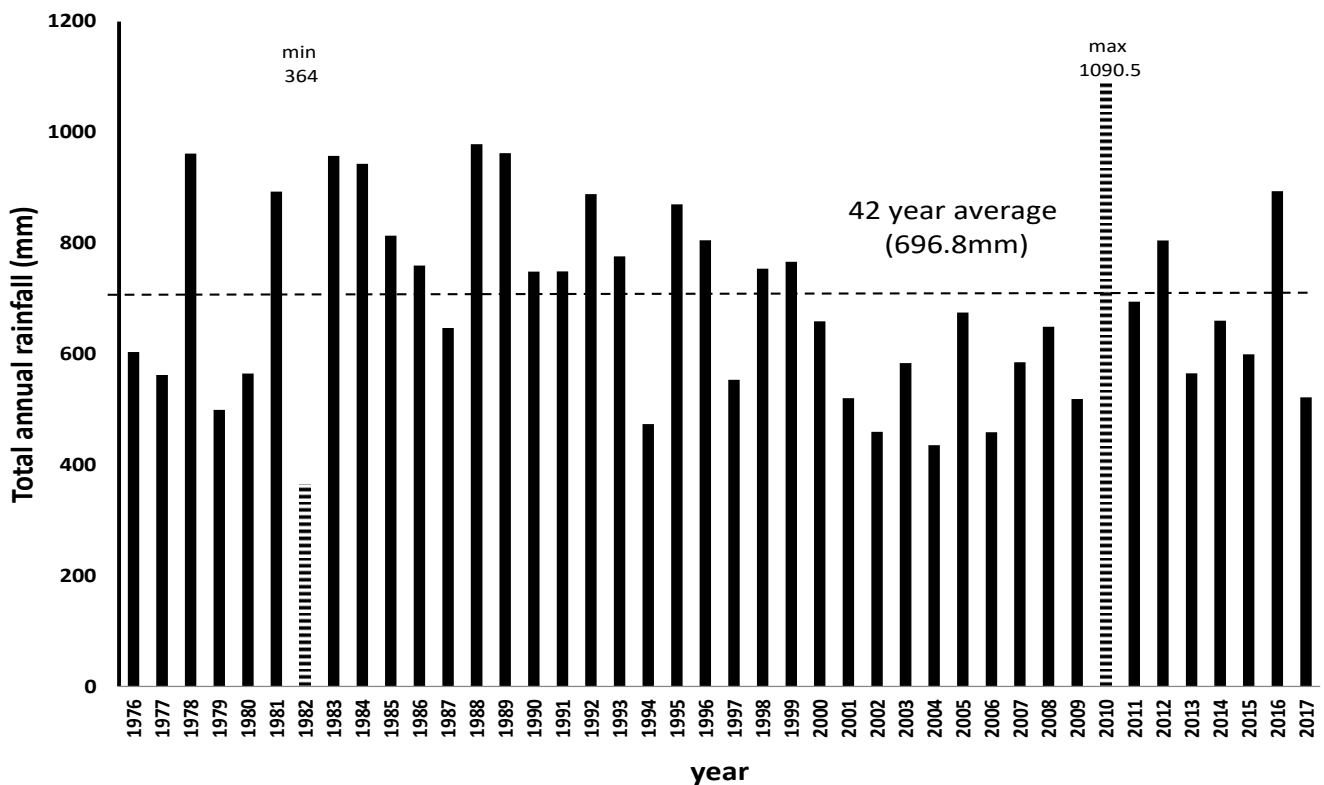
Av. Feb. temp.. 19.9°C (day+night comb.)
Coldest February day.... 12°C on 10/2/96
Hottest February night.... 23°C on 2/2/83
Coldest Feb. night..... 5°C (2 times) on
17/2/98, & 22/2/17
Average night temperature..... 13.8°C
Coldest February 2012
(Av.min day temp. 21.0°C & night 11.4°C)

December Rainfall Stats

December 2017 rainfall..... 97.25mm
2017 total rainfall..... 521.75mm

Average December rainfall..... 63.7mm
2016 December rainfall..... 57.75mm
2016 total rainfall..... 893.75mm

The graph below shows the yearly annual rainfall and 42-year average for Wamboin.



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Event News

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Pop Inn Wine Bar at Bowen Park, Kingston Saturday 20th January, 12-2PM

The Pop Inn and Contentious Character welcome beginners to come and learn more about wine. We'll do a structured tasting with some simple pairings, and a chat about your interests and the territory you'd like to explore.

Kowen Trail New Years Resolution Run Brunch or lunch discount, Saturday 20th January – discount for the runners after the race – must look sporty & exhausted.

Valentines Day Sunset Dinner Wednesday 14th February

Take a table on the lawn or deck overlooking the vineyard with candles to watch the sun set and enjoy a romantic three course dinner (with choices) - \$120 per couple, with an option to purchase a boy or girl wine hamper with flowers for your lover, presented at the table. Imagine oysters with our sparkling sorbet, baked figs with sticky balsamic. Bookings Info@contentiouscharacter.com.au

Chinese New Year at Canberra Casino Friday 16th February

We'll be joining the casino for Chinese New year and matching our new range to a very contemporary and celebratory Chinese menu. Book through Casino website, the event runs from 12th to 18th February.

Wamboin Community Markets Saturday 17th February

Saturday 17th February 8am - 12pm, Come and breathe some fresh Wamboin air and share a drop of the local terroir with us as you wander all the 'home made' stalls, and sample the local cuisine while buying yourself some home grown fresh fruit and vegetables.

Vintage Flight Groups – Every last Saturday of the month 11am

Book in for some fun with our winemaker, to learn about two varieties across five vintages, and enjoy the paired plate of local morsels accompanying the talk.

Gift Vouchers available for your loved ones; ask us or go to our website.

Australia Day Closed

A Snapshot of Thoughts from “Paudebaire” – 23 Years in 10 Lines?

Life Is My Wonderful Storybook.

Some months back now - maybe late winter 2017, Ned Noel asked me to offer an alternate view on “life in the Shire” as content for our resilient Wamboin Whisper. Being both, a 23-year resident of Weeroona Drive and a modestly talented technical author, I now feel competent to air some of the pages of my storybook.

1. My life is my farm, “Paudebaire”; perched on the rolling hills of Weeroona Drive.

Established by the previous owner about 1984, the property became my home in October 1994 and was gifted the name “Paudebaire” – a name formed by taking the first three letters of my name and, the first three of my “very-former” partner’s name and adding “AIRE” – “Simples” as that cherubic meerkat is want to tell us. That name was given to every home we lived in during our several decades of joint ADF service – one special sign of stability in the 18 different houses we moved to and filled with life, prior to Weeroona Drive. The name now honours the 34 acres of native trees, grassland and original grassland, I am fortunate to be the custodian for.

2. My life is the sum of “lessons learnt”.

So many people tell you that they have plans mapped for 5 and 10 years, or took up the career that they chose from childhood, or married their childhood crush 15 years later.

Well that is my diametric opposite! I have kept my eyes and ears open and learnt every day about new stuff – then reappraised my directions for tomorrow based upon my new knowledge. From the valuable family life lessons from my father Charlie, my mother Amy and my sister Elizabeth, to the wonderful science of Physics from Peter Sawley and PJ Waite, to the military arts from Lofty Wendt and Col Brewer and finally the heart lessons from my selfless lady – I know that nothing is impossible; just put your mind and heart to it - plan and act with courage. And a more recent rule # 50 – Never be too proud to admit you are wrong AND fix the mess ASAP.

3. My life is my natural environment, filled to the brim with a bounty of flora and fauna – sustainable, improving – though still threatened.

An insight into the more than 50 different varieties of fauna that currently reside around the gardens and paddocks of “Paudebaire”. Courtesy of observations and professional knowledge of a local NSW Parks and Wildlife senior officer - Gary Saunders.

- Masked Lapwing Plovers pair breeding with two chicks hatched, Galah, Sulphur crested cockatoo, Magpie, Magpie-lark, Raven, Starling, Sparrow, Blackbird, Wood duck, Black duck, White-faced heron, Little wattlebird, Red wattlebird, Noisy friarbird, Eastern spinebill, Wedge Tailed Eagle, Willy wagtail, Topknot crested pigeon, Kookaburra, Eastern rosella, Crimson rosella, Red-rumped grass parrot, Superb fairy-wren, Striated thornbill, Yellow-rumped thornbill, Sacred Ibis and 25 more on my Facebook page from 27 May last year.

Now, who is feeling rewarded for sustaining a healthy farm environment?

4. My life sport is Equines.

My passion for horses has followed me from the SA Police, to competing in Dressage nationally, as a member and President of the Australian Army Equestrian Association, to authoring the ADF Uniform standards for Mounted Dress and Light Horse reenactors, to Director of Paudebaire Equine Services, to member of the Australian Continental Equestrian Group. My horses are cared for, trained and owned with an indescribable humility; every morning I wake and hear a horse neigh from outside my bedroom window – I know how privileged I am to have them in my life. As my “significant other” gets reminded, sometimes far too often - Particular horses have been in my life in excess of 30 years, elegant brunette partners way, way less – so guess which relationship I struggle with. Yes - my lady certainly knows the skills I need to improve are not those of riding or equine management.

The 2018 challenge is teaching my 2-year-old Oldenburg Colt to carry a saddle and rider.

5. My life is growing my farm in a sustainable way.

Though small, my farm is productive, sustainable with the exception of “off farm” fodder and is constantly growing – enriching each aspect of the farm. My orchard feeds so many animals and me, my extensive tree plantings now provide shade, security and food for wildlife, my dams water every drinker and are homes to turtles, ducks, fish and yabbies, my pastures feed my horses, wildlife and a growing feral/pest group of animals. As a child, I was told a farm planning gem by Adelaide’s Germanic farmers “ Select and define your pasture – improve it as you can. The rest you fill with trees, water catchment or leave it as God made it – BUT it all must work in harmony so that you can gift it to the next custodian.”

We have much yet to do! The very myopic view that land is for wildlife, is not practical, sustainable or logical without effective sustainability controls that all landholders must follow. I just did a headcount of a mob of kangaroos in my neighbour’s paddock – 150 animals feeding in a 10-acre paddock is not environmentally sustainable or responsible. And now we have feral deer present along Weeroona Drive – another situation that is unsustainable and will cost human and native animal lives.

6. My life is the one I love; without condition or reservation.

The greatest gift I have ever received in my life, is the one of knowing who it is that I love – clearly, truly, deeply and without doubt.

Some days in my life, I wonder why I keep being distracted by her courage, her beauty, her wisdom & wit, her elegance, her legs, her eyes that shine like diamonds, her long legs (Have I mentioned her legs before?); and other days I don’t. Since 15 February 2011, she has held the keys to my soul. A word she uses is “besotted” – and I can tell you that there has been many a time I have been walking back to the stables on a dark winter’s night, carrying feed armfuls of buckets, after feeding my horses night, daydreaming about her and WALKED INTO A GODDAMN TREE in my garden.

One favourite image we share is walking together up the hill to my stable, both sharing the carrying of a bucket. One less-than-favourite image I carry, is feeling her pain when her “heart-horse” passed away.

We both deal with fires, sickness, drought, snow, family challenges, timetabling, professional careers – everything with alacrity and a bold confidence that scares the hell out of me still. My body armour might stop military combat weapons – BUT she sees right through me and knows more stuff about me than any woman alive. Always and forever yours.....

7. My life is my profession – rewarding and challenging and eminently doable from our regional shire.

My second career after leaving the ADF has been built upon the fortunate scientific, logical, legal, technical and experiential knowledge of several military and civilian tertiary colleges. I decided that as beauty and poise were not my strengths, I should use the skills of analysis, planning, communication and technology. As a Principal Consultant for a global company, I have been fortunate to deal with social, indigenous, health, housing, aviation, treasury, mining, customs, defence and education portfolios – enjoying the challenge that each new day brings to assist the public and private sector serve their clients. I have ventured into mental health consulting and teaching recently to inspire my soul.

My skillset and experiences are valued and trusted; and sometimes ignored – I lose no sleep over putting my suit on and commuting around the country for work – I do make the “work/life/love” balance my objective, sometimes.!

8. My life is appreciating and respecting the glorious detail in others around me – found when I take the time to look, without judging.

Did you notice how her eyes light up when she talks to you across the coffee table? Did you notice the 14 Topknot Pigeons sitting on the frosty farm gate this morning? Did you notice the mix of desolation and rebirth now evident in the faces of those who had land burnt by last year’s bush fire? Did you notice the abundance of frogs chirping around my spa? Did you notice the fox cubs playing in the paddock last night, eating grasshoppers? Did you notice how our pasture is holding up so well despite the dry spell? Did you notice her eye sparkle? Did you notice that the Betoota Pub is going to reopen in the town with no people? Did you notice how perfect the fresh berries from Bungendore Fine Foods tasted in my home-made ice-cream?

And there are many unpleasant observations; but they can be left for another audience.

9. My life is a true smiling partnership with my farm.

I took a break from my farm for 3 years, to open a franchise gym outlet in Iron Knob Square, Fyshwick. While I burnt my soul on that new business opportunity, my farm sustained my heart and my smile even though I often betrayed the same piece of land.

All I will say now, is that I listened to my heartbeat slowing, saw the fresh smiles that my farm brought to my horse buddies and so I returned to the relationship. Maybe it was my way of covering up how much I missed the **one** I love. We all have the right to act a little goofy every so often. I have an amazing triad of farm/profession/love – there is nothing I will not do to make her smile and my farm keeps me smiling, fresh and willing to deliver on my promise to her every day.

10. So, what is my life NOT about?

My musing observation of social media, the press and local conversations is fed by one of my worst habits – an *eidetic* memory.

As a local community filled with diverse people, we are drawn to many issues that motivate and impassion us, both as individuals and small teams. We “Dream, Aspire and Achieve” (This mantra is tattooed on my right leg) every day and smile as we get up on the next day to start the hard work again.

Over the recent years, as part of the collective group sharing our energy in Wamboin, some have taken to making much of their entitlement and doubts, grandstanding on the little things, not following up emotive words with honest action and just generally complaining about stuff, without explaining their concern and bringing us ALL along with the issue.

This frustrates the crap out of me every day! So please turn around this trend of throwing your hands up and stop thinking no one listens or cares about your issue! It may just be that you need to spend some time telling the story again? Your negative communication may make you feel better however, it drains life for the rest of the community who wish to engage widely and positively. As one wise ex-politician said, “Some people just love a crisis”

We have a wonderful team of Wamboin families that can change the world if we all push in the same direction. We are doctors, budding architects looking for work, lawyers, finance brokers, coffee makers, vets, scientists, farmers, teachers, one is a Rugby tragic, Foodies, Mums, Dads, kids and every possible unmentionable permutation of life and love. There is nothing we cannot achieve if you bring us all along.

What could we achieve from the synergy of community, if thoughtful, positive motivation led more of our community discussion? - Paul Patti, Weerona Drive

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| <p>CARWOOLA PEST CONTROL Providing general pest control services, Pest & termite inspections/treatments And pre-purchase inspections. We are located in Carwoola and service the ACT and Palerang region. We are licensed, experienced and ready to rid you of your unwanted pests.</p> |  | <p>For further information Contact Pete on 0458053444 Website: www.carwoolapestcontrol.com.au Email: info@carwoolapestcontrol.com.au Licence No's NSW: 5077997 ACT: EA1066</p> |
|---|---|---|

Wamboin Golf – December 2017

This report comes to you from Mahogany Ark, afloat on Lake George after the Great Deluge over the weekend of 2/3 December. I've been collecting two of every species. So far I've got two shingle backs, two bluetongues, two browns, two tigers and two red-bellied blacks. I'm having trouble in determining the sex of the snakes. Apparently the sexes differ in the number of ventral scales. That's the number of scales from the vent (rectum to you) and the tail. But the snake has to cooperate in the counting process. And talking about cooperation – what about our brave and helpful local member, Seve Bolero, the grand poobah of the NSW Country Party, publicly calling on our Malcolm to resign, eh? And done with the courage and courtesy typical of the true statesman - before he actually shirt-fronted Malcom. Not to mention the seasoned politician's finely-tuned sense of occasion - just when James Joyce, man of letters and federal leader of the National Country Party, was trying to clamber back into trough. Keep it up, Seve. History beckons. But the subject is golf, specifically the R & A Wamboin GC's Christmas competition which drew a curtain across the club's programme of events for 2017. Once the floodwaters had subsided we donned Arthur Wellesley's famous boots, kept calm and carried on. The day was sponsored by the Harrisons and Greenwoods whose generous contribution of refreshments and prizes is gratefully acknowledged.

As we dried off back on high ground, we learned that Scrooge McDougal, manager of the local branch of the Indigo Bank, is understandably excited about the banking industry royal commission. He hopes the four big outfits get the shellacking they deserve. Your correspondent has an alternative perspective. The inquiry should concentrate on what those plonkers at APRA, ACCC and ASIC were doing while the banks were dry cleaning our money and generally ripping everyone off. Meanwhile, there's to be another (ho hum) royal wedding. The red-headed chap with the beard is getting hitched to Miss Marple, the elderly private detective.

The captain welcomed our guests Charlie and Helen Montesin of no fixed abode. Ted Evans told us of a new use for pancakes. Pete Harrison got the googly ball for wanting to play on after his drive from tee 16 landed on fairway 17. (Come on, you can work it out.) John Whitney got the dummy spit (again) for suggesting complications to the 9 hole comp. LD and NTP ball winners were Paul Griffin 2, John Whitney 2, Vicki Still, Alex Gordon, Ken Gordon, Tim Barter and Glen Crafter. Paul Griffin was also awarded his prize for taking out the 2017 Eclectic, as reported last month. The junior comp was won by Alex Gordon. The 9 hole comp was won by Ken Gordon 35/30 with Joan Mason runner-up on 47/36 after eliminating a sponsor. The 18 hole comp went to Tim Barter 68/58 (a new course record after breaking his own record set in last month's Open!) from Paul Griffin 82/62 and Glen Crafter 91/66 (a handicap which may not stand).

Join us at the hall on the first Sunday of the month for the traditional 12.30pm kick off. And wear a smile. It might be another terrific year. But check the archaic meaning of terrific while having a moderately merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year. - Larry King, golfer

Bird Of The Month



By Luke Downey

For February, I have chosen the Noisy Friarbird, a large, bald honeyeater, who has been very vocal lately.

Noisy Friarbird (*Philemon corniculatus*)

Size: 31-35cm

Status: Common breeding summer migrant

The Noisy Friarbird is a very conspicuous bird. They always make sure they are noticed by making a very loud "aruk-eehe" call. Another interesting feature is the absence of feathers on this bird's head. Their head is black and completely bald and

they have a little knob on their beak. They are not very colourful with the whole body being a dull greyish-brown. I often see them feeding in bottlebrushes and other flowering trees. Their nest is a unique structure with the nest hanging under the branch and being supported by a thin strip of bark over the top of the branch. (Photo sourced from Google images.)

Wamboin Golf – January 2018

Sunday, 7 January. A bloody hot day. I think it got to 39 or 40 at the airport. But up here in God's Own it was a couple of degrees cooler - for what that was worth. The clever clogs played early in the morning but even then they had a glimpse of how Dante saw his jolly old *Inferno*. The day was to be sponsored by Wyagiba Trading but that walking pathology museum, Dave Hubbard, who had a challenging 2017, had an even rockier start to the New Year. Ever the golfer, he had the presence of mind to call the captain from his hospital bed as they prepared him for the theatre (and I'm not talking about the Capitol in Manuka) to register an apology. We wish him the best including a snappy recovery. Into the breach stepped Joan Mason and Peter Greenwood whom we thank for the last minute eats and prizes. In keeping with the club's traditional response to extremes of temperature, play was restricted to a nine hole Stableford event limited to three clubs. Uttering prayers to Ra we stumbled out into the hangi pit of the day.

Back at the 19th the talk turned to the latest efforts of that "stable genius", Donald Trumpet. Some thought it was a misprint: he meant stable *genesis*, referring to his happy upbringing. Others thought he meant *table* genius, meaning he could clear a table of cheese burgers in 60 seconds. But most agreed he meant what he said: he was a genius compared to the other horses in the stable. Which adds up when you consider his uncanny similarity to the back end of a horse including the tail. Having sorted that out, the captain welcomed our guests, local pasta makers Al and Margaret Dentay and Scott and Lila Mason all the way from FNQ. The googly ball went to Vicki Still for rescuing Wodger the wonder dog from the clutches (literally) of a large kangaroo while suffering significant personal injuries. The dummy spit was awarded to Scott Mason who complained bitterly about having to get up at 6.30am to play golf. Apparently they leap out of bed at the crack of noon in FNQ. NTP and LD ball winners were Tim Barter 2, Larry King 2 and Paul Griffin 2. The junior comp resulted in a tie between Lila Mason and Phoebe Beckett. Winner of the senior nine hole comp was Pete Harrison with 23 Stableford points from Paul Griffin in second place on 17 and Lofty Mason 3rd on 15. Well played, all!

Demonstrating the sporting nature of this corner of Greater Queanbeyan, there is to be a mixed sports day on Sunday 14 January starting at 12.30pm. The program includes boules, badminton, swimming and kangaroo wrangling. On Australia Day (look it up, do I have to do everything for you?) there will be a nine hole comp on various Wamboin estates commencing at 4pm. No wonder we're so fit and healthy! See you at the Hall the first Sunday of any month you choose at 12.15pm for the customary 12.30pm shotgun start.

-- Larry King, stable golfer

Wamboin Pony Club January 2018

Welcome to 2018 and can you believe January has past by already. The last weekend was Bungendore Show and a great way to start the year for Wamboin Pony Club and 11 of our riders. They competed in various Pony Club classes at the show and some also in the jumping events. It was great to see everyone out and keen to get into another year of competitions, training and companionship which being part of your local Pony Club allows. For those of you in the area who aren't aware Wamboin Pony Club has been operating in the area for over 30 years. Run by volunteer parents under the banner of Pony Club Australia we are part of Zone 16. This local region consists of over a dozen different clubs. Throughout the year we have monthly (sometimes 2) club rally days that enable riders along with our experienced instructors to practice and learn the many different aspects of equestrian activity and competition. Most clubs will hold events and competitions as the year progresses and one highlight is the Zone camp held in Bungendore in April involving over 200 riders.

So if you are new to the area or just wondering how you can get your child or young adult some more riding experience come along and see what Pony Club is all about. We would love to have some new members at Wamboin Pony Club which is for horse riders aged from

5 – 25. We have a group of dedicated and experienced instructors and lots of volunteer parents. Our Pony Club grounds at the end of Canning Close has fenced arena's and clubhouse facilities that we have built up over the years to create a safe riding environment. You just need access to your own horse and can even come along and try for a day to see what goes on. Rally days are a great social day out and Wamboin Pony club usually meet twice a month on Sunday's at our grounds from 9am gear check to 1pm. Our first rally day for the year is **Sunday 11th February**. If you would like more information about Wamboin Pony Club and our upcoming rally days email our Secretary Stacey at wamboinpcsecretary@gmail.com check our website www.wamboinponyclub.org.au and find us on Facebook.

We hope we will see you soon. - Steve Quick

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E: sztrural@yahoo.com.au

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Please call to arrange a free quote and to discuss the best solution for your needs.

Sutton Landcare 13 February Meeting 7:30 Pm Sutton Primary School

Landcare aspects of proposed Springdale Solar Farm (on Tallagandra Lane): The Sutton Landcare Group (SLG) has been invited by Renew Estate to consider Landcare aspects of the proposed Springdale Solar farm. SLG invited Renew Estate to present on these Landcare aspects at the 1st SLG 2018 meeting to be followed by a discussion.

The presentation by Renew Estate will focus on the information required for the Environmental Impact Assessment such as biodiversity, flooding and hydrology, aboriginal heritage and other environmental issues.

Most relevant to SLG is the plan for planting native trees and shrubs as a screening corridor and SLG has been invited to propose relevant species. The list of currently-planned species can be discussed at the Landcare meeting.

Note: SLG does not endorse or oppose what private landowners do. This meeting is, therefore, not a community consultation - its focus is on the Landcare aspects of this proposed development. More information on the proposed Solar farm can be found at: <https://www.springdalesolarfarm.com.au>.

As you can see the Sutton Landcare Group focuses on learning about our environment and sharing information. We meet every second month, on the second Tuesday at the Sutton School and each meeting is followed by supper where we talk and have an opportunity to ask our speakers some more questions.

The meetings are open to anyone. Each talk is announced in the local press, and direct to everyone on our email list. To join our emailing list, please write to Sutton.landcare@gmail.com. If you are interested in becoming member of SLG send us an email (same as above).

I hope to see you at our meetings. - Arnold Dekker, President, Sutton Landcare Group.

Letter

Jon Gough, Olaf Theden and the team in the Wamboin Communications Action Group (WCAG) have donated time for many months to try to find a way to bring fast optical fibre delivered internet to the homes in Wamboin, Bywong and areas southeast of Sutton. WCAG's website is <https://sites.google.com/site/wamboincommunications/>

At the meetings, including the latest WCAG helpers meeting on January 18 at the Bywong Hall, the 25 or so of us attending were again impressed by the WCAG's presentation of their goal and by their proposed solution. It will use an internationally respected deliverer of community driven internet solutions as part of a company called Smart Farm Net. Its web page is <http://www.smartfarmnet.com/> and on facebook it's <https://www.facebook.com/smartfarmnet/>. They have secured a tentative agreement with Telstra to connect into Telstra's fibre optic cables that reach to the Amungula exchange. The proposed tentative pricing (depending on take-up rate, geographic distribution, final network configuration, and finalised construction costs etc.) works out to around a \$900 one off installation cost for the optical fibre cable installation and \$80 per month for 15 mbps upload/download over a 5 year period. Prices go up to \$180 per month for 100 mbps upload/download.

At the moment about 600 of the 1200 properties in the Whisper area have emailed in expressions of interest with WCAG. About half of these have indicated willingness to pay the \$900 installation fee and the \$90 per month, but so far no real commitment is asked for. The project cost over 5 years, including laying all the cable and buying access through Telstra's fibre optical cables from Amungula to Canberra, will be several million dollars. WCAG is optimistic about the project going ahead, but say a minimum of 300 properties, especially if most are contiguous, is necessary. They believe that the first set of contiguous properties can be using the live high speed connections within 12 months of startup.

On the WCAG map of the 1200 blocks in the area, about half are coloured to show expression of interest, and of these about 300 are coloured to show they have taken Small Farm Net's survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Wamboin201712> and indicated willingness to pay. Opting in at this stage is obligation free and withdrawable. If you are one of the 900 or so households who have not yet indicated your interest through the survey, please think about looking at the WCAG website and about filling out the above mentioned SmartFarmNet survey. You might be helping yourself and the rest of us get much better internet access. You might be increasing by a few percentage points, your block's property value over other rural residential properties with slow internet access.

If you opt in, even at a low level, you bring this project a little closer in from the never never without any financial risk. Its chances of success go up a little more for every property willing to play along, at least until time to pay any money. All you can lose is your time. I don't know if there will be enough properties actually willing to pay to even start the project, or if, after it starts, it will complete. It seems to me worth consideration, and every session I attend seems to me to show promise. - Ned Noel, Reedy Creek Place, Wamboin



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Contact Mitch on 0429 116 338

How the Whisper Gets Delivered Each Month

For a good number of years Michael “Emu” and his wife Jose have ensured that 70 mailboxes on the Federal Highway Service Road, Bidges Road, Hickey Road and Old Golabri Rd received the Wamboin Whisper. They are hoping someone else can take over this function, or part of it, to allow the Whisper to reach this part of Bywong. I think them both very much for supporting and delivering so many Whispers for so many months and years.

The 50 or so people below each donate 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. - Ned Noel, volunteer editor.

167: CO-ORDINATED BY ALICE SCOTT: ph 6238 3178 email alicehscott@bigpond.com.au

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----|------------------------|------------|----|
| Fay Kelly | Norton Rd West Area from Cmpbl Pl | 20 | Christine Rieber | Cooper Rd | 23 |
| Cheryl and David Steele | Fernloff Rd | 35 | Jill & Richard Gregory | Canning Cl | 17 |
| Julie Veal | Poppet Rd (for all on road) | 32 | Alan Rope | Sutton Rd | 40 |

180: CO-ORDINATED BY KATHY HANDEL: ph 6238 3596 khandel@bigpond.net.au

| | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|----|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----|
| Joan Mason | Bingley Way | 44 | Margaret Hekeimin | Merino Vale Dr | 19 |
| Sue Ward | Norton Rd (Bingley to Weeroona) | 32 | Anne Gardner | Weeroona Dr (Norton to Majors) | 31 |
| Kathy Handel | Norton (Weeroona to Hilltop+Wirndra) | 23 | Phil Leeson&Coleen Fogarty | Norton Rd (Campbell to Bingley) | 32 |

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

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|----|---------------|----------------------------------|----|
| Lesley Page | Valley View Ln | 4 | Deb Gordon | Yalana East | 45 |
| Colleen Foster | B'dore Rd to Nrtn Rd | 23 | Rob Henry | South end Clare Valley | 41 |
| Cassie Fisher | Clare Ln | 12 | Lyle Montesin | The Forest Rd area incl Joe Rcks | 65 |
| Dominica Lorima | North end Clare Valley | 42 | | | |

262: CO-ORDINATED BY JOHN VAN DER STRAATEN: ph 6238 3590 jnpvds@bigpond.net.au

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|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----|------------------------|---|----|
| Sheryl Barnes | Denley Dr (Sth End 1/2 way2 Kestral) | 15 | Rhonda&Neville Parnell | Denley Dr (Birchmans to 1/2 way to end) | 26 |
| Don Malcolmson | Macs Reef Rd (Denley to Gum Flat) | 7 | Rhett Cox | Macs Reef Rd (Newington to Bankers) | 7 |
| Connie & Hans Bachor | Dnly Dr to Macs Rf Rd incl Bchm Gr | 35 | Daryl Bourke | Macs Reef Rd b'n Nwngtn& Harriott | 30 |
| Nora Stewart | Rovere Ln | 7 | Sandra Favre | Macs Reef Rd b'n Nwngtn& Harriott | 20 |
| Carol & Clive Boughton | Macs Reef Rd (Bankers to Fed Hwy) | 33 | Joan Milner | Birriwa Rd plus Macs Rf Rd to Harriott | 31 |
| Beth Hope | Gum Flat Ln | 6 | Tony Bond | HoganDr/OranaDr/Yuranga Dr | 44 |
| Misc | | 1 | | | |

161: CO-ORDINATED BY IAN COILLET ph 6238 3425 lodestar@ozemail.com.au

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|----|----------------------|-------------------------------------|----|
| Michael & Jose Deane | FdHwSvcRd/Bidges/Hickey/O'Gold | 70 | Louise Baldwin | Wattle Flat Rd | 11 |
| Glen Dorahy | Sutton Park Estate | 53 | Penny & Russell Ball | Macs Reef (Denley Dr to Bungdre Rd) | 20 |
| Ian Coillet | Grove Road | 7 | | | |

133: CO-ORDINATED BY DAVID FEATHERSTONE ph 6236 97223 bushranger_au@hotmail.com

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|----|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----|
| Chris Fowler | Millyn Rd | 20 | David Featherston | Summerhill to B'dore Rd to CreekB Rd | 26 |
| Sue Aunella | Brooks Rd | 21 | Ken Steinman | Wyoming & Doust Rds | 34 |
| Kerrie Gougeon | B'dore Rd (CreekB to Fed Hwy) | 32 | | | |

178: CO-ORDINATED BY NED NOEL ph 6238 3484 email nednoel@optusnet.com.au

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|------------------------|--------------------------------|----|------------------------|-------------------------------------|----|
| Diana Griffin | Majors Close | 18 | Judy Smith | Weeroona (254 – 400) | 18 |
| Advertisers & Misc | (Out of area mailouts) | 30 | Susie and Brad Edwards | Weeroona (417-512) | 18 |
| Attila & Cherry Hrgsi. | Snowgum Road | 27 | Murray Goodridge | B'dore Rd (Macs Reef to Summerhill) | 38 |
| Not Covered by anyone | Donnelly Rd & Donnelly Ln (29) | 29 | | | |

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From the Corner

Owner Builder Permits — I had occasion recently to apply for an Owner-Builder Permit. I've done building work myself before, but hadn't previous required a Permit. This was due in part to the work being undertaken, but also recent (2015) changes in home building laws.

Owner-builder work (requiring a Permit) is work (including supervision and coordination) involved in the construction of, or alterations, repairs or additions to, a dwelling:

- where the market value (labour and materials) exceeds \$10,000, and
- where development consent is required.

Other overarching conditions apply, but in general an Owner-Builder Permit is designed to allow people, who have the skill or capacity, to build their own house or supervise construction by coordinating appropriate sub-contractors. While an Owner-Builder Permit is not a builder's licence, as an owner-builder you are responsible for the building work, as a fully licensed builder would be.

Under the Permit, you become ultimately responsible for managing and coordinating the completion of the building work. You must still engage licensed contractors to complete any specialist work related to the construction unless you are licensed to do so yourself.

If you don't want this responsibility, be wary of a builder who suggests you obtain an Owner-Builder Permit while they do all the building work for you. This may be a ploy where the builder is shirking responsibility, is unlicensed, or is unable to get necessary insurance. As an owner-builder you are guaranteeing the work that is undertaken and the next immediate owner of the property is entitled to the benefit of the [statutory warranties](#) set out in the Home Building Act 1989.

There's one more little hitch that I discovered—all Owner Builder Permits are not created equal... If the value of your building work exceeds \$20,000 (labour and material), you must first complete an owner-builder training course. This is not an insignificant task and, while the course can be completed through a number of distance education providers, it takes around 90 hours to complete.

The course material covers work health and safety requirements (a substantial component of the material), project management, including estimating and costing, and reading and interpreting plans. Some institutions offer credit for 'prior experience', but I ultimately found it quicker to complete the coursework and assessment than to fill out all the paperwork required to gain credit for the prior experience.

This is just an overview of the requirements here. If you're interested, refer to the NSW Fair Trading website (fairtrading.nsw.gov.au) for more information.

The QPR Blog—New or related entries in my Blog (<http://peteharrison.id.au/blog>) include:

Owner Building (Jan 2018)

Development Applications (Aug 2015)

Exempt & Complying Development (Apr 2015)

Building Approvals (Dec 2013)

-- Cr Pete Harrison, Ph. 6238 3640, Mob. 0427 711 028, Email: contact@peteharrison.id.au

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Wamboin Muse

Jill Gregory

Christmas is well and truly wrapped up, and New Year's Eve but a distant blur with dim memories of fireworks, somewhere. I know I said, "Happy New Year," to many faces, many times, but to me the real new year doesn't start until after Australia Day. Australia Day is the watershed, the divide between the dreamtime of summer holidays and the inevitable return to the strictures of modern life; work, school, routines and schedules, the unnatural rhythms of life foisted upon us by society.

It's a day on which I like to reflect, accept our history, celebrate all that is good in our society and look to the future, ever mindful of our impact on the planet we share with so many. I think of those dark, bewildered eyes amid the trees witnessing that new world spectacle unfolding in Sydney Cove so many years ago. And I think of the human cargo that was dumped on that shore, rejects from another world, a fractured society, whose hearts had been ripped asunder, whose bodies worn down by the long voyage and who had been left with little hope and fewer prospects in an alien place; another remarkable tale of survival in a history we can't change.

However, I don't think the birds that I was listening to as the day warmed were troubled by such thoughts. They were celebrating just another Australian day, carolling, twittering and screeching, out of harmony with each other but in harmony with the natural rhythms of the bush. Throughout the hot weather the eucalypts have been mindlessly discarding their outer layers, dropping leaves at whim and leaving a trail of destruction for us to pick up. But our rewards are glimpses of their ghostly white trunks mirrored in the moonlight.

Our contrived, once green lawn is now brown, crisp and threadbare, the tomato bushes are protesting against the heat and kangaroos, en masse, have claimed land rights on our access road. But when the sun sinks below the tree line and the heat goes out of the day, the evenings are long, mild and exquisite. It's a time for a quiet drink on the verandah, idle chat and a spot of bunny watching, if this be your bent. Frankly, I'd like to dig up and throttle the chap who imported rabbits from "Home" in his pursuit of sporting pleasures. Never could he have envisaged the destruction he would unleash on the environment. On the other hand, I could hug whoever had the foresight to introduce agapanthus to our parched summer landscape when even the bush is fading; such happy, hardy bright spots of enduring colour.

And on that cheerful note, may I wish you a happy new year as you surrender the natural rhythms of holiday time and return, refreshed and renewed to face the challenges and rewards of the real world. We have so much to be grateful for in this wide brown land we share.....and so much to celebrate.

I wouldn't live anywhere else.

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