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Former Hydro Aluminium Smelter Planning Proposal on public exhibition



Residents can now have their say on the Planning Proposal for the former Hydro Aluminium Smelter at Kurri Kurri. This follows the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) issuing a new Gateway determination on 1 December 2020.

The proposal is for the former smelter site and surrounding land to be rezoned for employment and residential use. It is set to enhance transport links between Kurri Kurri and Maitland.

Director of Planning and Environment, Martin Johnson said Council is working in conjunction with Maitland City Council to progress this proposal.

"While the majority of this site is located within the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA), some of it falls into the Maitland LGA. We have worked with Maitland to ensure the community can provide feedback on both planning proposals in the same period." The Hydro Kurri Kurri Planning Proposal has an extensive history, with Council overcoming a number of challenges along the way. This has included Council working closely with a number of stakeholders including South Maitland Railways, Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and the Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD) of DPIE.

Cessnock City Mayor, Councillor Bob Pynsent encouraged residents to consider the future of the site. "We have to consider all of the existing opportunities within our LGA and look for ways to enhance what we already have. This has been a long term project and it's good to see we are finally at the important stage of seeking community feedback. The proposal allows for a mix of uses from industrial, low density residential and public recreation



Former Newcastle Mayor owner of the McCloy Group Jeff McCloy

space."

The Kurri Kurri smelter started production in 1969 but traces its history back to 1936.

Production at the site ceased in September 2012 and the smelter was formally closed in May 2014.

The smelter was a significant employer in the region and part of the local culture and identity of Kurri Kurri & Hydro aimed to create a positive legacy for the site by preparing the land for industrial, business, and residential development; and by securing the conservation of a large proportion of the land.

Since the closure, plans for the future of the site have been significantly progressed, and demolition, of the site is now almost complete. Small parcels of land have been remediated, and a significant and final large remediation project has been planned for several years. The approval for this remediation, which include construction of a large containment cell, is expected shortly.

The smelter site was sold to Stevens-McCloy JV ~ A joint venture between Stevens Group and McCloy Group was finalised after an agreement with Hydro Aluminium Kurri Kurri for the sale of the 2000 hectare site and buffer land.

Stevens Group is one of NSW's leading private property development companies, with significant experience in the development of industrial land, along with residential and commercial offerings.

McCloy Group is likewise a Hunter-based, award-winning residential land developer currently delivering more than 5000 residential homesites across 15 masterplanned communities within NSW, along with commercial office developments.

The two companies have experience working together as partners on a number of projects including Radcliffe at Wyee and Principle Living which provides premium lifestyle offerings for seniors in locations across the Hunter.

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This year the Men's Shed Christmas party had to be different, so we went to the Greta Workers Club for lunch on Friday 11th December. 42 members & partners

attended and thanks to Phil and his Staff the lunch went very well. Our Christmas raffle was drawn and with thanks to all who bought tickets the following people were

- successful.
1st Rhonda Hawkins.
2nd Lisa Hampton
3rd Rowland Fox
4th Robert Bennett

We would like to wish all our members and family's a merry Christmas and a safe and healthy 2021. If any man or lady would like to become members please contact Kevin Bell 0467314211.



Kevin Bell, Darryl & Pam Green.



Frazer & Judy Spillard at the Christmas party

REFLECTIONS

....and she wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn." [Luke 2.7]



This year has been an extraordinary one. We have needed to do things that we could not have imagined at this time last year. But through it all, we have shown our love and care for one another, by staying home and self-isolating, maintaining social distancing and "checking in" when we do go out. As the restrictions of this year ease, we will be able to spend more time with our loved ones.

At the first Christmas, Joseph and Mary were required to be registered, at the decree of Emperor Augustus. It was the first registration. Mary went with Joseph, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because Joseph was descended from the family of David. Once in Bethlehem, Mary's Son, Jesus, was born "and she wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn." [Luke 2.7]

The very first Christmas was perfect, but certainly not in the ways that we consider perfection. The first Christmas was perfect because it was the birth of Jesus ... Immanuel ... God with us. I'm not sure that Mary would have chosen a stable as the perfect place for Jesus to be born. His birth was heralded by angels and his birthplace marked by a star.

And the sign that the shepherds observed? They found Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, just as the angels had foretold. God's gifts to us are always perfect and perfectly timed. The most amazing gift we will ever receive is the gift of God's own Son, Jesus ... born as one of us, fully human and fully divine.

Love is sent to us and born as one of us in humble beginnings. Love is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Love chooses to come to us, to call us, to guide us, to save us. God's love is shown to the world by the birth of his only Son. Jesus is God's eternal word and is the hope of the world. Jesus is the greatest gift that can ever be given or received. As we celebrate Christmas this year, let us remember that it is the birth of Jesus Christ that we celebrate.

As we choose gifts for the people we love, may we remember that we give and receive gifts because God first gave us the gift of Jesus. The most wonderful gift we can give is to give our lives to following Jesus and trusting in God's promises. The most amazing gift we can receive is to receive God's love in the person of Jesus, born as an infant, in a stable some two thousand years ago and born into our lives each day.

From my family to you and yours, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the blessings of the first Christmas rest gently upon you this Christmas Season and each day of the New Year. The first Christmas was pretty simple ... it's okay if ours is too!

Every Blessing, Reverend Nicole

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Goo(d) for you: MooGoo



Spring has well and truly sprung, and you may have found that your skin is not exactly welcoming the warmer weather. We tend to associate the winter months with eczema, but seasonal pollen in spring can also be a trigger that causes eczema flare-ups.

If you are looking for skincare where the ingredients list does not contain more numbers than letters, MooGoo may well have the products you've been searching for. MooGoo was created by happy accident when founder Craig Jones reformulated a thick

white paste intended for the udders of dairy cows (Goo for the Moos) for his mother who was using it as a treatment for her psoriasis. To this day MooGoo has evolved and continued to create products that are "as edible as possible" using quality natural ingredients that are safe and effective for everybody. MooGoo is very particular about what is in their products, continuing to research new ingredient developments, as well as what is NOT in their products - steering clear from synthetic ingredients such as Parabens and Phenoxyethanol to name a

few. All this has led to products that your skin will love you for, and these are a few of our favourites: MooGoo Eczema & Psoriasis Cream A lightweight moisturising balm that is easily absorbed by the skin for the symptomatic relief of Psoriasis and Eczema - suitable for both adults and children. Their newest cream contains Elderberry for its beneficial anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties and Marshmallow another

natural anti-inflammatory. For those with sensitive skin that are more likely to react to new ingredients, they have still retained their O.G Eczema and Psoriasis cream without these extra ingredients. MooGoo Full Cream Moisturiser A rich, creamy cream to quench dry skins thirst. This full cream moisturiser contains milk protein which increases the skins elasticity by 20% as well as containing natural healthy Sweet Almond, Coconut and Olive

oil which are full of the fatty acids that the skin needs to stay healthy and hydrated. It is also naturally preserved with Hops Extract - rather than Parabens and Phenoxyethanol. MooGoo 2-in-1 Bubbly Wash Kids love bubbles, but generally bubbles tend to mean chemicals that strip the skin of their natural oils. However, this natural and gentle cleansing wash is made with a combination of coconut and glucose based cleansers and also Colloidal

Rice Bran Oil that replenish and soothe skin rather than harsh synthetic detergents that can dry and irritate skin. This can be used directly on skin or as a bubble bath. MooGoo Tail-Swat Body Spray This is not your average DEET containing insect repellent which can leave you sticky, stain your clothing and smelling horrible. Rather this gentle spray changes the scent of your skin to something those pesky bitey insects don't like (but being based on

lemongrass we happen to think it smells great). Once again it is naturally preserved with Hops extract and is marketed as edible meaning it is suitable for babies as well! **These are just a few of our favourite MooGoo ideas, please pop into Piggott's Pharmacy for a wide range of products in-store!**

Our Ingredient Philosophy

Our goal with our products is to make something that works. Not everything we make will work for every one (because we're all so different), and there is no such thing as a miracle cure *insert eye roll here*. But we do the research and our ingredient philosophy is simple: To make effective products using healthy ingredients, that we are comfortable using on ourselves and our loved ones.



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Quality, and family first
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Safe for every-body
- we choose ingredients that are safe for everyone, including newborns and during pregnancy.



Effective amounts
- we use ingredients in a concentration that is actually effective.



Ethical product testing
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STEVE'S RANT

Overreaction

It seems to me that the latest fad amongst our politicians and bureaucrats is to overreact when something controversial or shocking becomes known to the public (press). Sco-Mo's reaction to the Cartier's watch business is only the least of these phenomena. A very talented and qualified CEO of Australia Post shamed into resignation for doing what any management team should do to recognise good work amongst junior ranks; in this case the team were able to increase turnover to the tune of \$600 million a year, which trickled down to all the little local post offices throughout Australia and by doing so made these business's more viable during a period of diminishing mail and customer numbers. It was not as if these executives were awarded the extreme bonuses usually derided by shareholders when boards grant themselves millions even when the company does not meet the market expectation. Sco-Mo's indignation was palpably false, and one wonders why he felt the need. Either way, it did not end well for the Post Office or himself. Not so the idiot Premiers of all States and Territories

except NSW. They appear to be riding high at the moment. Wait for the big hangover when 'The Reckoning' must come, just as the sun comes up. You will know the quote from Abraham Lincoln: *You can fool all the people for some of the time, you can fool some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all the people all of the time.* The pity is that the people do not have the power to recall an election when it becomes evident that the election result was based on deceit and fear. Take pity on Queenslanders who now must suck up whatever their government dishes up. Still, we live in hope, and it may turn out well. Not so for our Special Forces' Troops. They received poor leadership during their deployment in Afghanistan, and they are suffering from worse leadership now. How is it that Officers can be promoted into the highest positions in the Defence Force without demonstrating any leadership skills? The comment from the Chief of Army that, "had it been known, at the time of these so-called breaches of the rules of war, the units would not have received their citation." What non-

sense. Had the troops been properly lead and briefed the alleged incidents would not have occurred. Besides which the Special Forces units carried out meritorious duties and achieved results far better than expected and probably far better than is currently recognised. This is a disgraceful reaction to the allegations by both Government, Senior Officers and the press. One can only hope our Governor-General is made of better stuff and throws the recommendations made by the Chief of the Defence Force into the bin. A classic overreaction is the mindless insistence of eviscerating this Nation in the name of climate change. It is not just the loony Greens and revisionist

and exaggeration to make their point. The party has always done that, but cartoons and critical commentary have been a tool of ideological education rather than satire, and there is no great distinction intended between fact and fiction. We are now seeing the Western style "cartoon" wedded to the party's ideological techniques, combining elements of photographic "reality" with computer graphics in what purports to be satire, but is intended to have the impact of fact.

fascist socialists who are pushing this agenda. We have recidivist members of the Liberal and National Parties jumping on the bandwagon because they think there are votes to be won. As is so often the case it is the mob majority who, lacking any original thought or imagination go like lemmings over the cliff. Just as the Chief Medical Officers in the States claim science for their draconian recommendation to the politician's and follow each other more and more in their predictions of doom, so the great rump of the people accept without question the very dubious claims of the 'doomers'. But they will awake to the deception. The Chinese Communist Party have made confected indignation and overreac-

The cartoon has always been something of a hybrid genre in modern Chinese political culture, but now, like "socialism with Chinese characteristics", it has found its own native style and purpose and those who object to this will be told they are "over-reacting". **Trevor Hay, Montmorency**
Are these really sports? With the introduction of breakdancing as an Olympic sport, the Olympics are in danger of descending further into irrelevance. With sport

tion into an art form, at the expense of our export industries. The 'black lives matter' thing, although justified at the time, has been co-opted by the riff-raff as a means of showing their superior virtue, empathy and concern for minority whacko ideas. It is a pity that they show no concern for the plight of our indigenous women and children who suffer domestic violence 60 to 90 times the rate for other racial or national groups. What can we do about this state of affairs? We can observe how, when and why, people over-react in the process of expressing righteous indignation. The individuals pump up their self-esteem to define themselves as morally superior and distance themselves from shame, nothing

like those they have accused, shamed and vilified. Look at politicians waving and pointing at those across the floor at question time. Glaring in outrage at their opponents or sneering. That is acting. What we have seen lately, the moral outrage thing is dangerous, causing real division. Try engaging your brain before your tongue. Act when you are calm and have thought things through if you are riled up and feel hot about an issue that is probably a good time to do nothing. Have a nice day. Cheers STEVE.
(Ed note. Steve served 20 years as an Australian Army Officer, IRAR, AATTV with US Special Forces.)

race, egg-and-spoon relay and tunnel ball. I wonder who can stand on one leg the longest? Everyone gets a ribbon, two or three ribbons if there are a too many left over because the cool kids simply went home early. Spectators will be the parents of participants only. Although, if it isn't your eldest child, it's quite OK to be "busy" doing something else.
Mike McGregor, Narrabri



What's Happening & other

with Mike Lowing

It would be inappropriate, prior to Christmas, for me not to mention the enormous contribution the sporting club secretaries & publicity officers of all our community organisations make to our publication. Club reports & results are critical to the dissemination of club news & individual achievements. Again, it would be remiss of me not to mention all our other contributors who diligently provide articles for our readers. To mention just a few; Lester Bootes & Mark Bercini, Annaliese Hambling & Gray Clack at Cessnock City Council, Daryl Sheppard from Branxton Golf Club, Karen Quilty from Branxton Public School, Shelley Mitchell from Kirkton Public School, David & Sue Peel from HVGC, Anne Lomas & Perri from Clayton Barrs' office, David Bullock from Joel Fitzgibbons' office, Denise McGoldrick from the Branxton Greta CWA, Judy Spillard from the VIEW Club, Briony O'Hara from Singleton Council & last, but by no means least, all our local members & mayors. To all 'thank you'. A very special mention to all our advertisers who, have again, made our publication possible this year. The Branxton Greta Vineyards News will be having a short break over the Christmas and New.

Have a great Christmas & may all you wish for in the New Year be yours.
Cheers, Mike



Why?

I would like to know who decided that bathers using the swimming pools at Branxton and Cessnock must leave the pool while the staff do their daily Covid-19 clean. Why can't the bathers be given an area near the boundary fences where they can stay while the cleaning is carried out, and have their lunch. The cost for a family to enter pools in the Cessnock Local Government area is \$14.00 now & they are asked to leave while the cleaning is done and pay another \$14.00 to get back in. This is not the pool staff's fault, do not blame the boys and girls who look after us at the pool. Write to your Council!
Val Randall, Greta

He must tread warily Scott Morrison may be right, for Australian domestic purposes, to express his immediate reaction to the Chinese cartoon ostensibly depicting an Australian soldier preparing to commit an atrocity, but he should be very careful how he proceeds from now on. The cartoon, by "wolf warrior" graphic artist Fu Yu, represents a striking development in Chinese Communist Party propaganda techniques, now aimed not just at domestic but international consumers of social media. Cartoons, including caricature, use a combination of reality

Submit a letter to the editor

The Editor, The BGV News, 12 Clift Street, Branxton NSW 2335

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A bright future for Branxton/Greta business



■ New Chamber President Michael Robinson

On Wednesday 25th November the Central Hunter Business Chamber conducted its AGM and elected a NEW Board of Directors for the next 12 months.

Special Guests for the meeting included Clayton Barr MP, State Member Electorate of Cessnock and Mr. Bob Hawes CEO, Hunter Business Chamber. The Chamber has recently emerged from a significant management change resulting in 33 new members signing on in the few weeks prior to the AGM.

The new board comprises:
President - Mr Michael Robinson, Hungerford Meat Co
Secretary - Mr Alan Beckley
Treasurer & outgoing President- Mr Mike Lowing, The Branxton Greta Vineyards News
Public Officer - Kate Walsh
 Noel Lambert -

Govt was evident in the people who attended. Councillor Rod Doherty, The Deputy Mayor, General Manager and Economic Development & Tourism Manager all expressed genuine interest in supporting the development of Branxton as a significant economic hub.

Ms Lotta Jackson, General Manager for Cessnock Council opened the meeting with a comprehensive commentary about the Town Master Plan and planned works for the main street, Miller Park, the Oval, RV Park and Cycleway, amongst others.

Economic success

for the Local business community will require a tenacious and innovative approach to business growth for community benefit.

Tony Gates, former Secretary of the Chamber,

said that the New Chamber Leadership and its members are well qualified to achieve significant outcomes with support from the new alliances with Business NSW, Hunter App and

Service NSW Business Concierge, set up by the interim board.

Tourism will also be a big contributor, Tony Gates said, with new business openings anticipated in Branxton and Greta main street over the coming months and the recent opening of The Quinn Café / Restaurant at the Commercial Hotel. The new board will meet again in January with a full meeting of members planned for February, date and time to be confirmed. Enquiries should be directed to the Chamber website www.centralhunterbusiness.com.au

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Members say ..



Sue Moore, Mayor Singleton Council

In an unforgettable year of trials and challenges, the last few weeks of 2020 have also set the course for plenty of positivity to launch into the new year, not least a \$4,571,283 Christmas present to deliver 15 projects across our local government area under the NSW Government's Resources for Regions program, and the launch of a new initiative – the Hunter 2050 Foundation – to drive a regional focus for economic diversity and development.

This year has given us plenty of time to reflect on what's really important to each of us on a personal level, but it also presented a unique opportunity to stand back and take a fresh look at the needs of our community, and particularly our economy.

Pandemic aside, scheduled shutdowns of power stations and changes to thermal coal mining across the Hunter Region will have impacts in Singleton. Having said that, it's a simple fact that the mining industry will not shut down tomorrow and indeed the NSW Government's Future of Coal Statement, unveiled earlier this year, aims to improve certainty around coal mining to continue mining operations in NSW. To my mind, the conversation is not about replacing coal in Singleton but broadening opportunities to co-exist with mining in the short - to medium-term, and to help to bolster our economy in the longer-term if and when the global demand for coal decreases.

That's why Singleton, along with other Hunter councils as part of the Hunter Joint Organisation, is working to establish the Hunter 2050 Foundation to help us get on the front foot in preparedness for whatever changes – and the impacts that result – come our way. The Hunter 2050 Foundation will ramp up new industries and businesses to create new opportunities for our region, supporting our communities to thrive when traditional industries are waning. That is the very definition of resilience, and a solution we can put into place now to address the issues of the future – not just for the

Hunter, but the whole country. But we need a \$15 million investment to establish this Foundation, and to get it working for our local industries and businesses. With the backing of all Hunter councils, one of the biggest priorities for 2021 will be advocating for the support we need to make it a reality.

We've already seen in Singleton what we can achieve when we all work together, particularly with industries and other levels of government.

As a case in point, Council's \$2 million Community Support Package is now in the rebuild phase, offering assistance to everyone in our community adversely financially affected by bushfire and COVID-19 through programs run in partnership with BHP and the Singleton Business Chamber. We also continue to build on our Community Economic Development Fund to have resources at the ready for what other challenges might come our way in the future.

We can't forget either that we recorded a significant tick on our Advocacy Agenda, with changes to the administration of the NSW Government's Resources for Regions program to tie the amount available for each region to the value of mining royalties.

With the announcement of 15 successful projects, it's a positive way to mark the end of 2020 and launch into 2021 with plenty of optimism. It has been an unusual year, and I'm proud of the way our community banded together – despite social distancing – and supported each other through one of the biggest challenges the world has ever faced.

I wish you and your family a safe and happy Christmas and look forward to what we'll achieve in 2021.

Cheers Sue



Member for Cessnock Clayton Barr MP

Raising the BARR IT HAS BEEN A YEAR TO REMEMBER

As I sit to write my last column for the year, I reflect on the past 12 months. It really has been quite a year.

This time last year our communities were on fire. Our villages of Laguna,

Wollombi, Congewai, Broke, North Rothbury and Pokolbin were all in the line of fire fronts that were burning on fronts bigger than the entire state of Tasmania. Other communities had smaller outbreaks. The ground was so dry that grass would snap under foot.

As we recovered from the fires in the early months of 2020, when some wonderful rain extinguished the flames, a virus known as COVID arrived on the doorstep of every country in the world. COVID rules and regulations occupied the rest of the year.

Long to be remembered will be the great toilet paper saga – people literally fighting each other in supermarket aisles. Cans of baked beans were as rare as a regent honeyeater and trying to find a supply of hand sanitizer, priced similar to gold bullion, was an act of self-harm.

But there have been some terrific things to come out of this year. Most importantly, our collective ability to rise to the occasion and take all necessary steps to keep ourselves and our family and friends safe. Champion effort of the year goes to all of us. And quite frankly, I just didn't know if we, as Aussies, would cope with being told what to do, when to do it and how to do it. But we did cope. Better than cope, we excelled.

The year also taught us plenty about how to properly wash our hands and how to be much more mindful of where we might be picking up, or giving off, germs. This will stand us in good stead in future years by helping to keep down the spread of illness and disease.

Kindness of the human spirit saw neighbours checking in on each other. Individuals were collecting groceries on behalf of those most at risk. Hundreds of local businesses held on to staff when the books and budget were suggesting otherwise.

And of course, our frontline workers kept turning up to the frontline. It was a truly incredible effort.

Take a well-earned rest if you can in the coming weeks. Recharge the batteries as best you can. And let's all look forward to a 2021 that might, just might, be a little bit easier than 2020.

WILL THE SUMMER BRING A MIKE BAIRD REPEAT?

Four years ago, Mike Baird had a tough year. It was 2016 and he had taken the drastic step of trying to shutdown greyhound racing. There were a few other bumps and knocks along the way, but it was almost singularly the greyhound

issue that had the likes of Alan Jones and Ray Hadley turn on the Premier.

Over that summer, Mike went surfing, spent time with the family and realised that he was finished with politics. In early January the then Premier Mike Baird announced he would be leaving politics ASAP.

Gladys Berejiklian has not had a good end to the 2020 year. There are plenty of signs that she is not the woman that we all thought she was. Yes, she was smart enough during the bushfires, floods and COVID crisis to stand aside while the experts, the scientists, led the way. Good on her for that.

But in recent months we have learnt that Ms Berejiklian's personal judgement, on matters professional and private, has not been terrific. It feels as though we have peaked behind the curtain and not liked what we saw. Gladys Berejiklian might well offer us a repeat of Mike Baird, come January 2021.

Cheers Clayton



JOEL FITZGIBBON MP
Member for Hunter

'Don't Judge the Many by the Acts of a Few'

As we flew into Afghanistan's Oruzgan Province, the pilot had the C-130 hugging the mountain range to avoid surface-to-air missiles.

Another in the cockpit had his trigger-finger on a red button, ready to deploy missile-distracting flares if necessary. It's late 2007 and I'm experiencing my first visit to the failed state.

Later I was travelling along a busy road to the Presidential Palace in Kabul, and I was surprised to observe the senior and hardened military officer next to me looking a little concerned, nervous even. I knew him well and was surprised. I asked of his well-being. His response was a stern one: "there is only one road in and out Minister and they'd know we are coming". That explained the 4WDs speeding up our flanks, carrying explosive counter measures.

Afghanistan is a dangerous place, arguably the most dangerous in the world. But on each of my visits I felt safe because I was protected by our best, soldiers of the Special Air Service and 2nd Commando Regiments. Our elite Special Forces soldiers are relatively few. But they are also many, hundreds of them deployed to Afghanistan over the long period of the war. The relatively small number of troopers under investigation as a result of the Brereton inquiry tells us that

the report should not be taken as a reflection on all who served as part of the Special Operations Task Group. Further, we need to be mindful of what governments exposed our diggers to in Afghanistan, how much we expected of them, and how much we pushed them.

When the inquiry into their actions runs its course, we should have a separate inquiry into the decisions of those who deployed them, politicians and senior ADF leaders alike.

Of course, no mistake made in Canberra excuses or justifies the terrible things we've read about in the Brereton report. By necessity, any soldier involved in unlawful conduct will pay a high price for their actions if the allegations are proven. But how did it come to this? Those who pass the ultra-challenging "selection" course to become a special forces soldier must overcome extraordinary physical and mental tests. In effect, the Army melts them down and re-builds them into young men capable of the teamwork, mutual trust, and the mental toughness needed to deploy lethal force when necessary. In effect, they make "warriors" of them.

But as impressive and professional the Army's training and preparation processes are, and no matter how tough and skilled our frontline soldiers are, there is a limit to their mental resilience. In Afghanistan we tested that limit. As the conflict dragged-on we took them away from their families again and again for longer periods of time as our resources became more and more stretched.

They were sent to hell to fight an enemy that respects none of the rules we do. Not the laws of armed conflict, not domestic law. Unlike our boys, enemy combatants were not constrained by any rules of engagement. By far the greatest perpetrators of war crimes against the innocent were the Taliban, and they go unpunished.

The enemy wore no uniform, making it hard to be sure who was a threat and who was not. Who to trust, and who not to trust. Having risked their lives to capture them, our men in uniform too often spotted those they had recently captured roaming the streets of Oruzgan Province thanks to NATO's "catch and release" policy. After putting their lives on the line for their country for years, our battle-fatigued soldiers started to question whether mission success was possible, despite achieving everything asked of them. The mission objectives kept changing, strategy seemed vague, and the global community was questioning the merits of NATO's intervention.

Shades of Vietnam. Too often, medevac helicopters couldn't be found for our wounded and close air support was often unavailable. When our

patrol commanders were asked to go "beyond the wire" with members of the Afghan National Army in equal number, room in the Blackhawk for our partners was created by leaving the medic at home.

All of this may explain why a small number wrongly thought it justified to take matters into their own hands.

We should remember all of these things in the coming weeks and months as the next phases of this controversy play out. We need to investigate, prosecute and punish anyone found guilty of war crimes but we must maintain our respect and admiration for the many who wear, or have worn, the uniform of the Australian Defence Force. We must continue to honour them, respect them, and thank them. Lest we Forget.

Cheers, Joel (Joel was the Minister for Defence 2007-2009)



Clr Bob Pynsent, Mayor Cessnock City Council

Merry Christmas to every resident in the Cessnock Local Government Area. It has been a difficult year and our community certainly deserves precious time spent with family and friends enjoying each other's company over the festive period. On behalf of Council we wish every family all the best for 2021 and hope it is a prosperous year for all.

Thank you to all who have donated to Council's annual Christmas Gift and Food Appeal. All donations will be given to Barkuma Neighbourhood Centre who will deliver them to those facing difficulties this Christmas.

Council recently welcomed the announcement by the NSW Government that we have secured more than \$1.3 million to fund four exciting community projects under the Resources for Regions Program Round Seven. This funding will support Stage 2 of the Cessnock Pool Splash Pad, the beautification of Rotary Park, Kurri Kurri, a Disadvantaged Youth Driver Program to run over two years and additional funding the establishment of a Cultural Hub.

The last Council meeting of 2020 reminded us that we have a big year ahead for this community. Council is

delivering its largest Capital Works Program to date as Council has enjoyed enormous success in attracting grant funding. There are some fantastic projects set to be delivered including the Branxton Greta Shared pathway and Anvil Creek Bridge, Greta.

On Friday 27 November it was a pleasure to attend the Laguna Village Green for a special evening hosted by Council. Nearly 400 local community attended 'Community Recovery on the Green' which was a free event and organised to support bushfire impacted communities to reconnect, relax and thank local Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers following last year's bush fire season. It truly was a great opportunity to relax and reconnect.

As the weather heats up it is a reminder that we must be vigilant this bush fire season.

Residents are encouraged to find out what they can do to prepare by visiting

<https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/getready>.

It is always wonderful to be able to deliver important community projects that make a difference to community groups and organisations. Construction of a new brick storage facility for the Lions Club of Branxton on the site of Branxton Community Hall will commence shortly. The new purpose built facility will provide the Branxton Lions Club with a more modern storage space featuring amenities to help undertake activities associated with their community volunteer work. The works follow the Lions Club of Branxton's successful application to the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund for \$88,900 and a partnership with Council to oversee construction.

On Monday 7 December it was very special to officially recognise the renaming of Col Brown Rotary Park, Kurri Kurri. As a member of Kurri Kurri Rotary Club for over 42 years Col's contribution in building a stronger community is significant. In the renaming of the park the legacy of Col will live on.

A reminder that the FREE Family Fun Days have returned to our local pools, the first is this Sunday. Residents wanting to secure a spot at Cessnock or Branxton Pools are encouraged to book. No bookings are required for Kurri Kurri Aquatic and Fitness Centre.

Cheers, Bob

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Relaxation techniques



Relaxation techniques can reduce the physical and emotional effects of stress and tension. They are simple to learn and help the body and mind cope with stress. If used regularly, relaxation techniques can help you to feel more relaxed and improve your sense of wellbeing.

Some symptoms of stress and tension

- Mental**
- Problems with thinking and focus
 - Poor judgment
 - Worrying about little things
 - Problems sleeping and/or bad dreams
 - Negative thoughts
 - Difficulty making decisions
 - Poor memory
- Emotional**
- Feeling tense, angry, worried, upset
 - Crying
 - Lack of interest
 - Depression
- Behavioural**
- Problems with relationships
 - Unsociable
 - Increased use of nicotine, alcohol or caffeine
 - Poor time management
 - Low productivity
- Physical**
- Fast heart beat, palpitations
 - Chest pains
 - Tense muscles, aches and pains
 - Jaw or fist clenching
 - Trembling
 - Dizziness
 - Numbness or tingling
 - Fatigue
 - A feeling of choking or a lump in throat
 - Headache
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Constipation or diarrhoea
 - Flushing of the face or chest
 - Fast, shallow breathing
 - Sweating
 - Lowered resistance to infection
- Constant, extreme stress can lead to anxiety disorders, depression or other serious medical conditions.
- Techniques to relax**
- There are many ways to release tension and relax such as sport, exercise and listening to music. Relaxation techniques are simply tools for relaxing the mind and body. Different techniques suit different people and situations.
- Relaxation techniques can reduce:
- levels of stress hormones
 - heart rate and blood pressure
 - muscle tension
 - sweating.

Aim to set aside a regular time each day for relaxation techniques. Find a quiet, safe place to sit or lie comfortably. Some relaxation techniques

Controlled breathing

- Close your eyes and concentrate on your breathing. Take a slow deep breath in through your nose for three seconds, then breathe out through your mouth for three seconds. Think the word 'relax' as you breathe out.
- Clear your mind and think only about slow, deep breathing. Imagine the tension flowing out of your body each time you breathe out.

Muscle relaxation

- Close your eyes and focus on your body. Start at your feet and focus on different muscles at a time.
- Tense the muscle as you breathe in, and then relax it as you breathe out. Imagine all the tension flowing out of your body.
- Move up your body, relaxing different muscles in turn.
- Allow 15–20 seconds between each muscle group.
- Keep your mind focused on the muscle group you are working on.
- Allow 15–20 minutes to practice muscle relaxation.

Visualisation

- Close your eyes and imagine a safe, soothing, peaceful scene (e.g. a beach or quiet place in the bush).
- See yourself there, relaxed, peaceful and happy.

Mindfulness and realistic thinking

Mindfulness is a form of self-awareness. It involves learning to be in control of your thoughts and focusing on the 'here and now', rather than the past or future. Train yourself to be aware of your thoughts, place a label on them (e.g. sad thought, angry thought) and allow them to float away.

Physical exercise

Physical exercise releases muscle tension and increases the levels of 'feel good' chemicals in our bodies. Any type of regular physical exercise is helpful.

Note: If you don't normally exercise, are more than 40 years of age or are overweight, consult a doctor for a medical checkup before starting an exercise program.

Self care

Ways to prevent a build up of stress and tension include:

- use relaxation techniques as often as you can and especially in situations that cause you stress
- have a healthy diet. Eat a variety of vegetables, fruit, wholegrain foods, nuts and seeds every day. Limit foods high in fat, sugar or salt
- drink enough water every day to satisfy your thirst and to keep your urine 'light-coloured' (unless a doctor advises not to)
- exercise at a moderate level for at least 30 minutes on all or most days of the week
- taking a warm shower or bath can be calming and relax muscles
- talk about problems and worries with a friend or family member. They may help you see things in a different way
- accept that sometimes problems or situations are outside your control
- learn to forgive yourself and others for mistakes
- learn to recognise what's worth worrying about and what's not
- learn to say 'no' to tasks that put you under too much pressure
- balance work and play. Make time for hobbies. These will relax your mind and are a good escape from worries
- manage your time. Make a 'to do' list. Put your daily tasks in order of importance and allow enough time to get things done. Finish your day feeling like you have achieved something
- reduce (or stop) smoking and alcohol – these can make stressful situations seem worse
- reduce your intake of caffeine (coffee, tea, chocolate, cola and energy drinks). Caffeine is a stimulant and may make it harder to relax
- reward yourself with little things that you enjoy (e.g. fresh flowers, a massage, a hot bath)
- remember to laugh and smile! Laughter makes our muscles go limp and releases tension and pressure.

When things get too much, try to keep a sense of humour.



Trading times over Christmas & New year

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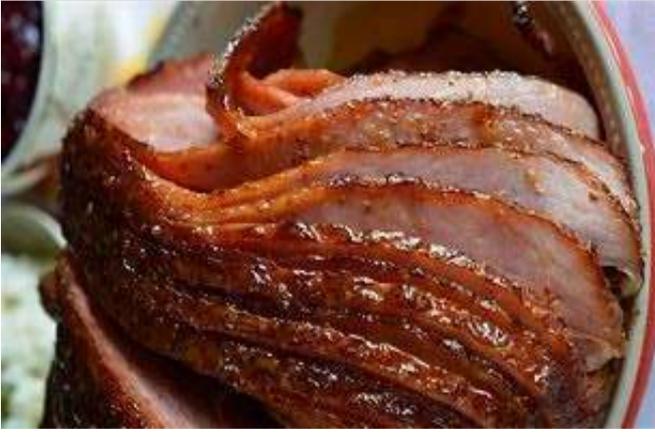
Lyn, John and all the Branxton IGA Staff would like to wish all their customers a very Happy and Safe Christmas and New Year. Thank you all for your support throughout the year.

Christmas Trading Hours

- Wednesday 23rd December - 7am till 7pm
- Thursday 24th XMAS EVE - 7am till 6pm
- Friday 25th XMAS DAY - CLOSED
- Saturday 26th BOXING DAY - CLOSED
- Sunday 27th December - 7am till 6pm
- Monday 28th December - 8am till 2pm
- Tuesday 29th December - 7am till 7pm
- Wednesday 30th December - 7am till 7pm
- Thursday 31st December - 7am till 6pm
- Friday 1st NEW YEAR'S DAY - CLOSED
- Saturday 2nd January - 7am till 7pm
- Sunday 3rd January - 7am till 7pm



A perfect Christmas ham



A staple at Christmas dinners across the country, perfecting a well-cooked ham is essential for the holiday season. Pork experts, Australian Pork Limited have a number of Christmas themed recipes that are sure to be a crowd pleaser. A recipe that includes beer, brown sugar and mustard sounds like the perfect mix to us! Check out the recipe below:

Ingredients

- 1 x 8-10kg ham leg, rind removed
- Cloves, for studding (about 50)
- A selection of mustards, to serve

Beer, brown sugar & mustard glaze

- 375ml bottle dark ale
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons (tbsp) Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon (tbsp) golden syrup

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Meanwhile, using a sharp knife, score the ham fat (not the flesh) in a honeycomb pattern at 2cm inter-

- vals. Wrap the hock in foil (this prevents it from burning).
2. Place ham on a greased rack in a large baking pan lined with foil (see tip in 'General Information' tab).
3. To make the glaze, combine all ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to the boil, stirring, over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes or until reduced by a half.
4. Brush the ham fat a few times to evenly coat with the glaze. Roast, brushing with remaining glaze occasionally, for 1 hour or until ham is golden and caramelised. Set aside to cool for 30 minutes.
5. Slice and serve warm or cold with a selection of mustards.

Tips

For ease use a large disposable foil roasting dish. If the glaze thickens on standing, warm the glaze over low heat so it spreads easily over the ham.



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Case Studies from the NSW Public Trustee

At Shaw & Bunner Legal, we regularly discuss the importance of an up to date and valid Will. As lawyers acting in the area, we have witnessed first hand the difficulties that arise when a person passes away “intestate” (without a Will). The NSW Public Trustee shares some unique examples of cases where the will makers wishes were not carried out and highlights the importance of having a valid estate plan in place.

- A man died without a Will. It could not be established that his birth was ever registered and therefore next of kin could not be established. His estate worth \$180,000 passed to the Government.
- A woman drafted her own Will and she used a number of terms such as “balance”, “remainder” and “residue”. The whole Will was confused and conflicting. Action was taken in court to rectify the terms of the Will and the cost was \$13,000, and took 2 years to complete. The value of the estate was \$78,000.
- A woman decided to write her own Will. The only relative with whom she had contact was a niece. However, after writing her own Will, she asked the niece’s husband to sign the Will as her witness. On her death she left an estate worth \$400,000, but unfortunately the niece was not able to inherit the estate due to the fact her husband had signed the Will as a witness. The Will fell into intestacy as a spouse of a beneficiary should not be a witness. The estate was distributed to entitled next of kin.
- A woman decided to write her own Will and one of the terms was “I want my house sold and the money from the sale placed into my investments”. On her death, it was noticed the woman had 2 investments, one which passed to her husband and the other which passed to her infant son. The issue was who was entitled to the proceeds of the sale of the house?
- A woman drafted her own Will and she used a number of terms such as “balance”, “remainder” and “residue”. The whole Will was confused and conflicting. Action was taken in court to rectify the terms of the Will and the cost was \$13,000, and took 2 years to complete. The value of the estate was \$78,000.
- An eighteen year old man had been living with his girlfriend for only 6 months when he died without a Will. The court decided that his girlfriend was his legal de facto spouse, and she received his entire, substantial estate. The man’s parent’s received nothing.
- When Tim Smith and his wife divorced there was a Court approved settlement. His ex-wife, Shirley, left the family home to begin a new relationship. Tim made a Will leaving everything to his children who resided with him. Can you imagine their surprise when Shirley successfully challenged the Will.
- Jim had looked after his

uncle Wayne for many years and had been assured that he was included in the Will. When Wayne died Jim, searched the house for a Will but to no avail. He checked all the local solicitors, banks and anyone else who might have dealings with his uncle. There was no evidence of a Will anywhere or anything to suggest Wayne ever made a Will. Under the Laws of Intestacy, Jim shared his uncle’s estate with several other nieces and nephews who barely knew their uncle and never attended to any of his needs.

- 21 year old girl with no Will was killed in a motor vehicle accident during the course of her employment. There was \$200,000 accident cover. The estate passed to mother and father equally on intestacy but the father had deserted family weeks before she was born. He had had no contact since but was entitled to \$100,000.
- A ‘family’ consisting of 3 step children fought for 3 years over the division of old ‘antique’ furniture which was valued at \$6,000. Legal costs incurred by the children amounted to \$55,000.
- Husband filled in a ‘do-it-yourself’ Will form – intending to leave the whole estate to his wife. He inserted his wife’s name in the section of the form appointing her the executrix but forgot to insert her name in the section for nominating a beneficiary – in effect, he left the whole estate to nobody.

impacted by the bushfires. **A new beginning** David Nolan, director of Webster Nolan Real Estate who specialises in farm sales, believes rural communities have a common sense ‘life goes on’ attitude when it comes to bushfires and they understand it is just part of living in Australia. But even he was taken aback by the intensity of last summer’s blazes. “I have been through all the fire areas, I am fourth generation from the land, and I have seen things that just astounded me how they burnt,” said Mr Nolan, a REINSW member. “Some people are selling because they may not want to experience fires again – but they also may have sold anyway. “But I don’t think the fires have scared everybody away or that the fires are stopping people from buying properties.” At a time when these communities are recovering,

Council will welcome Peter Mickleson as Director of Planning and Environment

Peter Mickleson will join the team at Cessnock City Council after securing the position of Director, Planning and Environment.

Mr Mickleson is currently the Director of Planning and Development at the City of Nedlands, Perth, Western Australia and has a long history of working in local government, stretching over three decades.

Council’s General Manager Lotta Jackson is pleased Mr Mickleson will be working for the Cessnock community.

“Peter brings over 26 years of experience in director positions. We look forward to his skills and experience in stakeholder relationships, community engagement, strategic planning, human resources, risk management and economic development.”

Ms Jackson recognised and thanked Acting Director Martin Johnson for his leadership.

“Well done to Martin, it has been fantastic to have you as part of the executive team, offering your expertise and support.”

Mr Mickleson is looking forward to the role, getting to know staff and the community.

“I enjoy working in regional areas where there is a closer connection between community and its local leadership. It provides Council with more opportunities to gauge service delivery through direct feedback. I’m eager to hear from residents about their aspirations and lifestyle ambitions. I have always had a view that councils are in the lifestyle business.”

Mr Mickleson will commence in the position in January 2021.



the COVID-19 pandemic has also bought a wave of new buyers, keen to leave Sydney and work remotely.

“People’s minds are off fires – they are now looking after themselves and want to find space out of the city – it is extraordinary how many people are moving,” Mr Nolan said. “We take people through towns and out to these farms which means driving through affected areas for 20 minutes or so and you can’t hide it – it is pretty real - it is in your face.

“People’s attitude is ‘what is burnt now may not burn again for a fair while’.”

Regional demand

At Batemans Bay, one of the hardest hit areas, property prices have been steadily rising this year. It is also becoming increasingly hard to find a vacant rental in the seaside town.

Jenni Whittaker, director of The Professionals and REINSW member, has

sold a number of properties in recent weeks where the buyer did not physically inspect the home. This included one purchaser in lock-down in Melbourne. “There has been a real fear of missing out,” Ms Whittaker said.

“After the fires the prices went up because a lot of people who had lost their homes chose not to rebuild which created a lot of competition in the local market. “It went up again after COVID because there has been an influx of people wanting to move to the area.”

One property that was destroyed in the bushfire had been on the market at the time for \$769,000. It was relisted as vacant land with a price guide of \$499,000 but recently sold for \$530,000.

Ms Whittaker says it has been wonderful seeing the community rally together to help those who lost their homes and possessions in the bushfires.

“The bushfires have not caused people to move

away, they have chosen to stay - there is a sense of togetherness – we understand what we have all been through,” she said.

Pulling together

One silver lining has been the willingness of the community to help one another following the disaster including from within the property sector. The Beyond the Bricks campaign raised a total \$1.5m for fire-affected communities and is the first time all the major real estate brands came together for the one cause.

“Real estate is considered very cut-throat but for all of us to unite for bushfire relief has been incredible,” said Todd Alexander, National Marketing manager for Ray White, where the initiative was launched last summer. “We wanted to raise as much as possible to assist those communities in need.”

The campaign, which was divided into three phases – relief, rebuild and restore – has now closed. The funds have been donated to four

charities – the Salvation Army, World Wide Fund for Nature, the Australian Red Cross and St Vincent de Paul Society.

Prepared for future

Edith Byrne, a member of the REINSW’s Property Management Committee, believes one of the positives to come out of the tragedy is better awareness. This includes packing a bushfire kit box with special mementoes and personal documents, such as passports, that can be quickly picked up when being evacuated.

“I think it has taken this to make people really aware,” said Ms Byrne, licensee of No Bull Real Estate in West

Wallsend. “People think ‘I’m ready’ but it is not until it actually happens or the fire is close - like it was for us - that people realise they weren’t prepared so, it is one of the main positives from last summer.”

While landlords typically have maintenance plans for their properties, they are now ensuring they too are bushfire ready - including having gutters cleared and homes washed down. “We have just started to see the greenery growing back in the fire damaged areas and it is beautiful,” Ms Byrne said.

“The bushfires bought the community here closer together – it was wonderful seeing people help each other and be empathetic of those who had suffered a loss of some form.”

Donations to the bushfire appeal can be made at the following:
World Wide Fund for Nature
<https://donate.wwf.org.au/donate/bushfire-recovery-new#gs.j405bk>



Influx of buyers to regional areas helping communities regenerate following catastrophic bushfires

By Katrina Creer
After bushfires ripped through 5.3 million hectares across NSW last summer, it was hard to believe anyone would want to rebuild in the devastated areas – let alone move there. But, just like the first shoots of growth now starting to appear in blackened bushland, these communities are also

regenerating. What couldn’t have been imagined in the weeks following the fires - which destroyed more than 2,000 homes - was that a bigger threat was on the horizon. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many to rethink their future bringing a surge of new buyers to regional areas – even those severely



Branxton Public School

Mr Tattis and Mrs Kavanagh accompanied 22 excited girls to Raymond Terrace in Week 6 to compete in the Rebecca Young Cup. The two teams both played four games in hot, humid conditions and performed sensationally. The white team were undefeated on the day. This was quite an achievement considering that none of the girls had played rugby league before. The maroon team lost three and drew one, but were very competitive and improved dramatically as the day unfolded. Congratulations to all the girls for giving their personal best and behaving perfectly all day.

We have had some excited young visitors to school over the last couple of weeks. Our Kindergarten students for 2021 enjoyed a couple of COVID safe orientation sessions with Mrs Nimmo and Mrs Quilty. They were able to see what the Kinder rooms look like and meet some new friends in the process. Thank you to parents and carers for helping to make these visits successful. We are all looking forward to seeing everyone in their school uniforms next year!

Our annual Presentation Day was held on Tuesday 8th December. This year we travelled to Rutherford Technology High School for the event. Unfortunately, parents were unable to attend but it was filmed so parents could share in the success of our students. Our School Leaders, AECG Leaders and Sport House Leaders were all announced at the assembly and badges were pinned by parents in a more intimate, COVID-safe assembly at school. Congratulations to our outgoing 2020 leaders on a fantastic job and to our 2021 leaders for being elected to be important role models in our school.

Year 6 enjoyed a chilly but enjoyable Surf Fun Day after their successful and equally fun Year 6 Dinner. Lots of lasts for Year 6 students, but great adventures ahead for them all. We wish them all the best of luck for high school.

COVID restrictions will continue in schools for the foreseeable future and important updates are shared by Mrs Blakemore as they come to us. Please continue to check SkoolBag regularly to stay informed.

We wish our students, staff and community a safe and happy Christmas break. We look forward to seeing everyone back for a fresh new year on Friday 29th January (Years 1-6) or Monday 1st February (Kindergarten).



Girls Rugby League team



At Branxton Public School students, staff and community are Respectful, Responsible and achieve their Personal Best.

Australian Government

THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

This year hasn't been easy. And recovery will take time. But this is Australia. We will come back.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS A PLAN FOR OUR ECONOMY.

LOWER TAXES. MORE JOBS.

The Economic Recovery Plan will put more money in the pockets of everyday Australians by lowering taxes. Money that can be spent, with local businesses in our communities that can help to create jobs.

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We're supporting businesses to hire more staff with the temporary JobMaker Hiring Credit. Encouraging more training to give people the skills they need. And thousands of jobs will open up in infrastructure, as new projects get underway.

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AUTHORISED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, CANBERRA.

22 projects funded for our local area through Resources for Regions ~ \$6,968,000

Michael Johnsen MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Resources and Member for Upper Hunter, last week announced that the Cessnock, Singleton & Maitland councils will soon benefit from 22 new projects that will deliver local infrastructure improvements, thanks to the NSW Government's \$50 million Resources for Regions round seven.

Mr Johnsen announced \$6,968,000 for 22 projects across our three local government areas.

"This funding is great news for our local councils and organisations in the local area, and the wider Hunter region, and it will go far to support local infrastructure projects from health, water, roads, education and tourism," Mr Johnsen said.

"I know from our local councils and communities that the funding from Resources for Regions program is greatly appreciated.

"This important program, which was created by the Nationals in Government,

is an example of what is available to all communities in local government areas outside the Sydney metropolitan area that are related to mining.

"These important local projects are just some of the examples being funded by Resources for Regions round seven, taking the total number of projects supported by the program across regional NSW to 149 since 2012. Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro said the revised Resources for Regions program will generate job opportunities, stimulate economic growth, deliver lifestyle improvements and boost wellbeing in mining towns.

"Mining communities and organisations told us how Resources for Regions could be improved and I took action.

Now the revised program is funding a broader range of projects and delivering guaranteed and fairer shares of funding," Mr Barilaro said.

The locally funded projects are:-

Singleton	Singleton Rugby Club Grandstand - STAGE 2	\$500,000
Singleton	Singleton Showground New Multi Purpose Performance Shed	\$250,000
Singleton	Singleton Neighbourhood Centre	\$150,000
Singleton	Defence Family and Veteran Employment Pathways Program	\$150,000
Singleton	Singleton Golf Club	\$285,000
Singleton	Wonnarua Healing Centre	\$299,000
Singleton	Singleton Worker Pathways Program	\$300,000
Singleton	Guide to Navigating Mental Health Services	\$150,000
Singleton	Hamiltons Crossing Road Causeway	\$600,000
Singleton	People and Place – Singleton's Identity Program	\$300,000
Singleton	Building Better Businesses	\$250,000
Singleton	Sports Fields Flood Light Improvements	\$477,283
Singleton	Howe Park Surface Renovations	\$250,000
Singleton	Broke Village Shared Footpath	\$560,000
Singleton	Community Hub Business Case	\$50,000
Cessnock	Cessnock Pool Splashpad Stage 2	\$420,300
Cessnock	Kurri Kurri CBD Park Beautification Project	\$482,198
Cessnock	Cessnock Disadvantaged Youth Driver Training Program	\$100,000
Cessnock	Cessnock City Cultural Hub	\$309,700
Maitland	Morpeth to Walka Water Works Shared Pathwa	\$886,213
Maitland	Community Program - Environmental Spaces	\$300,000
Maitland	Maitland Gael Development Plan	\$50,000

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4937 4811



If you require assistance please call

0414 757 826

NOTICE

Christmas Mass times & Covid-19 Compliance

Catholic Parishes of Branxton-Greta and Singleton

With the changes that 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic have brought to the Catholic Parishes of Branxton-Greta and Singleton, Christmas Mass will need to look a little different this year if current restrictions remain in place. *Anyone wishing to attend Mass will need to register for ONE nominated Mass time by 12pm on Wednesday 23 December 2020. Registration can be made by phoning the Parish Office on 5507 4048 or emailing singleton.branxton@mn.catholic.org.au providing the names of all those attending and a contact number.*

Registration sheets will be available at Mass each week. *St Brigid's Church Branxton will have Vigil Mass at 6pm ONLY (8pm Mass has been cancelled) on Thursday 24 December. St Catherine's Church Greta will have Mass at 8am on Christmas Day. St Patrick's Church Singleton will have Vigil Mass at 6pm, 8pm Midnight Mass at 12am and Mass on Christmas Day at 10am. Mass in Singleton will be live-streamed and those who don't fit in the church will be able to stand in the church yard and watch online or listen via the speakers. Communion will be offered from the doors for those outside. Restrictions for religious services will be loosened as of Monday 7 December, from 1 person per 4m2 to 1 person per 2m2 doubling those allowed in the church. The table below shows how many spaces are left indoors at each Mass for Christmas. Singleton 6pm – 2 Singleton 8pm – 132 Singleton Midnight – 116 Singleton 10am – 129 Branxton 6pm – 68 Greta 8am – 58*

JOEL FITZGIBBON MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HUNTER

CONNECT WITH ME ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

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WISHING YOU A
MERRY
CHRISTMAS
AND
A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

My office at 3 Edward Street Cessnock will be closed from Monday December 24 and will re-open Monday January 14.

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Very solid older Federation Family home on 948sm fully fenced block with DA approval for 2 'Free Standing' units

Features

Air conditioning, Internal Laundry, Cable or Satellite, Broad-band internet access, Secure Parking, Shed, 3 bedrooms & Fully fenced 948sqm block

ASKING \$389,000 NEG

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Cute 2 bedroom home on large fenced block Original 'Miners Cottage'

Features include:- Builtins in both bedrooms Sep. loungeroom, Air con., eat-in kitchen, slow combustion fire, great block, great shedding, carport and your own chook run

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NTH. ROTHBURY



With optional potential home sites, the property has plenty of opportunity for a weekender country escape or unique rural lifestyle existence. Under a 2-hour drive from Sydney, approx. 70 min drive from the M1 interchange Wahroonga...

Things You Will Love About This Escape Acreage...

- Approx. 14.65 hectare (36.2 acre) rural holding with dwelling entitlement
- Stunning views from elevated sites
- Potential building sites
- Unique lifestyle acreage
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**SENIOR LIVING
"Branxton Gardens"**

**Unit 18 Branxton Gardens
"Senior Living"**

This heritage designed 2 bedroom strata unit has an ensuite to the main bedroom, a lock-up garage & your own private courtyard. It also feature security gating. The unit is next to Branxton Medical Centre, is a 2 minute walk to the main shopping & amenities area, is just short drive to the famous Hunter Valley Wineries, resorts & golf courses.

ASKING \$320,000

Building Blocks

**NORTH ROTHBURY
Vacant building block ~ 809m²**

Vacant Building Block
Fantastic visage

ASKING \$130,000 ono

BELFORD

**Vacant Building Block
2559m²**

Vacant Land with building approved
Lot 1 DP 1205549
Well over half an acre of good level block.

ASKING \$160,000 ONO

NORTH ROTHBURY

Vacant building block

A 809 square metre lot which is relatively flat; an easy build-on.
Wonderful views from the back to the north overlooking Huntlee & the mountains to the north.

ASKING \$135,000





From the Lions' Den Lions Community Hub



■ Lions Club of Branxton President, Brian Thomas, presenting the Lions' cheque to Elsie's Retreat palliative care representatives, Lions Margaret Pearce and Glenda Hofland



■ Lions Ken Meany, Brian Thomas and Kevin Driscoll at Bunnings

Work commenced on construction of the Branxton Lions Community Hub commenced earlier than scheduled on Friday 27th November 2020 with the excavation and forming up of the concrete floor slab. The concrete was poured on Wednesday morning, 2nd December 2020. The concrete pumper was on site before seven o'clock and the concrete arrived soon after. A flurry of activity soon followed as the concrete pour commenced. The activity continued until about 1:00 pm when the job was completed. Branxton Lions Club Secretary, Alan Beckley expressed his pleasure to finally see tangible activity on a project which has been many years in the making. He said, "this project opens up a new era for Branxton Lions. It will allow Lions to increase its activities in support of the local communities."

Elsie's Retreat Donation
As a result of a recent visit to Branxton Lions by Lion Glenda Hofland to brief the club members on the current activities of the Lions Club International Foundation, the Lions Club of Branxton made a donation to Elsie's Retreat

Palliative Care Unit on the Central Coast of NSW. **Bunnings BBQ – Singleton**
The Lions rolled out of bed early on Saturday 28th November to conduct Bunnings Singleton's Sausage Sizzle on the day. With 39 degree weather it was hard work for all concerned, however a few happy Lions were still to be found. **Christmas**
The Lions Club of Branxton is running down for the holiday season and would like to wish all readers of the Branxton Greta Vineyard News a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We, the members of Branxton Lions hope that 2021 will be a better year than 2020 with the bushfires, drought and Covid-19 problems behind us. We, the members, are certainly looking forward to 2021 and working very positively with our local community to support Lions major causes of hunger, vision, diabetes, environment and childhood cancer. Community support for these activities, in return, brings specialist support to those which require it in our community.



■ Excavating the foundations



■ Foundations formed and ready for concrete



■ The start of the pour



■ Concrete pumper at work



■ Finished floor slab

Club secretary, Lion Alan Beckley added "the Branxton residents should also keep their eyes peeled in 2021 for the results of a couple of Lions community initiatives that will come to fruition during the year. Firstly, the famous Lions two cemeteries and no hospital signs and also other activities at Lions' Park." More about these as information comes to hand. **2021 Activities**
Have a safe and enjoyable break with family and friends over Christmas and the New Year and Lions

will be back with you to fight childhood cancer on the 15th February for International Childhood Cancer day. Saturday 6th March is Lions Awareness Day and preparations for that day shall commence early in the new year. Details will be in the Branxton Greta Vineyard News early in February. *From Lions, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Enjoy the Festive Season but STAY SAFE. We want to see you next year.*

SHOP LOCAL
Come for a visit to Greta Museum and pick up a few gifts for Christmas.

Beautiful 'yester year' style safe wooden toys, great for stocking fillers.

Several history books well worth a read over the holiday break.

Call into GRETA MUSEUM
Wednesday or Saturday, 11am - 3pm.
96 High Street, Greta, in the former Greta

Australian Government
Department of Defence

WARNING NOTICE
DEFENCE FIELD FIRING RANGES

Residents of areas adjacent to Singleton Training Area are warned it is a Defence Army Live Firing Range. Singleton Training Area is described generally as the area bounded to the south by Pokolbin State Forest, to the east by commercial vineyards and to the west by a combination of rural developments and open cut coal mines. The northern boundary is defined by the Golden Highway which separates the range area from the Singleton Military Area.

Firing practices using live ammunition are conducted continuously on this training area. Low power laser range finders are also used.

Death or serious injury may result from being struck by a projectile. Eye damage may occur when viewing laser beams from within the training area boundary.

Unexploded ammunition is extremely DANGEROUS and should NOT be handled, but should be reported immediately to the nearest Police Station or Army unit. No reward will be paid for the reporting of ammunition which may be located on the training area.

Persons found trespassing on Defence Training Areas will be prosecuted.

Enquiries regarding the Singleton Training Area should be directed to:

The Range Control Officer
Directorate of Operations and Training Area Management
Range Control Centre
Range Road
Singleton Training Area
Singleton NSW 2331

Greta Workers Sports & Rec Club Ltd

2 West Street Greta Ph 4938 7325

Raffle

FRIDAY

Tickets on sale 6.30pm
drawn 7.30pm

SUNDAY

Tickets on sale 11am drawn
12 noon

CLOSED XMAS DAY

No Raffles

Sunday 27th December

Friday 1st January

Sunday 3rd January

RESUME Fri 8th January



Members Badge Draw

Every Wednesday & Sunday

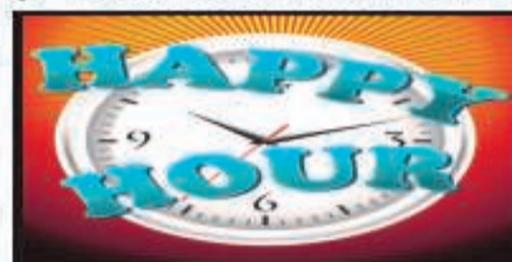
\$1900 Wed 16/12

\$1900 Sun 20/12

Jackpots \$100 EACH DRAW

Thursdays

\$4.00 Schooners



4pm to 6pm

Meat & Seafood
RAFFLE



Wednesday 23rd

December



Tickets on sale 5pm, Drawn 6pm

8pm

Live Music is Back!!!

New Year's Eve



TK VIBEZ DUO





2800 words on Ready Player Two

By Amanda Hudgins

It's not a technically well written book; but it doesn't have to be. Plenty of books that are simply serviceable are also successful, and by any yardstick, *Ready Player One* struck all of the marks of commercial acclaim — a NYT bestseller, a Spielberg movie adaptation, a sequel with a “monster” book deal. It's a nerd-flavored beach read (a subgenre of fiction that is often used derogatorily towards women's lit but that can be classified as “light, fluffy, or compulsively readable novels that are perfect to take on vacation”). I've now listened to the Wil Wheaton voiced audio book 1.5 times.

That is not to say that it's free of criticism. It's a novel written with low technical competence, as though someone heard the writer's adage “show don't tell” and wildly misunderstood it. There is nothing that could be explained in one sentence that Ernest Cline does not feel like expanding on for a paragraph. It's prose that isn't exactly purple, but at least takes on a slight lavender hue, flavored with nostalgia and references instead of the standard flowery adjectives. The characters are one dimensional and fairly static, their world views are frequently reinforced rather than challenged, and every character seems to have a tragic backstory, not because that leads them any direct narrative power but probably because the sources that Cline is pulling from (comics, popular movies, etc) almost always give the heroes a tragic backstory. It's derivative.

Again, for the most part this is fine. As said by someone in my mentions when I was live-tweeting my second read-through, it's the equivalent of a “cheesy 2000s action sci fi flick.”

There were less technical criticisms with the first book, targeted at some of the themes and their usages, and these are exceedingly relevant for *Ready Player Two*. There are three primary criticisms that popped up over and over again when people talked about the first book. *Ready Player One* is hyper-focused on a specific form of 80's nostalgia: an Ameri-centric, white, male point of view. This is because the view of that decade that we are getting is from the perspective of one man's nostalgia (James Halliday), the man who dies and begins

the contest that is the focal point of the first and second book. That the self-same nostalgia is that of the author is probably no surprise. This focus is limiting, because it

makes it seem like the entire decade is just that (John Hughes movies, classic arcades, and D&D) but it's understandable when tied to a single character. The second major criticism of the first book is that it has fairly token minority representation, and does not do a great job at representing the members of the ensemble who are not white — one (Aech) is revealed to be a black lesbian woman who was cosplaying as a white man until late in act 3, the other people of color are a pair of Japanese brothers (Shoto and Daito) who seem to spend most of their time talking about honor and bowing. Lastly there was Halliday himself and one of his major characteristics, aside from his love of a long forgotten decade, was an obsession with the dead wife of his best friend. It's a deeply creepy subplot that informs a lot of his character, and it's not clear in the first book that Wade Watts (or Ernest Cline by the same token) is aware of how creepy that actually is.

The weirdest thing about *Ready Player Two* is that it seems to decide to confront these three major criticisms head on; but in probably the least effective way you could imagine. You can kind of see the shape of Ernest Cline's efforts here, but he does not know how to color that shape in.

Cline takes a solid stab at adding more diversity to his cast of characters in the form of L0hengrin/Skylar. She's another gunter (the in-universe term for someone who is obsessed with eighties trivia and the scavenger hunts left behind by Halliday) and she's transgender. Wade admits to having a “mild crush” on her, before finding out that she's transgender which is where he pats himself on the back for still finding her attractive.

“Her school records included a scan of her birth certificate, which revealed another surprise. She'd been DMAB —designated male at birth. Discovering this minor detail didn't send me spiraling into a sexual-identity crisis, the way it probably would have when I was younger.” While this is perhaps a step forward for Cline (*Ready Player One* included such gems as “Are you a woman. And by that I mean are you a human female who has never had a sex change operation?”) it is basically the same concept, slightly reworded. The idea is that Skylar is not female because she is trans.

Wade follows this by talking about how he reached this new level of empathy and understanding through the use of the ONI—a new version of the OASIS virtual reality headset that allows the user to hook up their brain directly to the virtual world. Users utilizing the ONI headset can also “playback” the memories of other users, giving them the

sensory feel of those experiences.

“Thanks to years of surfing the ONI-net, I now knew what it felt like to be all kinds of different people, having all different kinds of sex. I'd experienced sex with women while being another woman, and sex with men as both a woman and a man. I'd done playback as several different flavors of straight and gay and nonbinary sex, just out of pure curiosity, and I'd come away with the same realization that most ONI users came away with: Passion is passion and love was love, regardless of who the participants involved were, or what sort of body they were assigned at birth.”

Wade gets to have his moment of saying “love is love” because he used a fancy VR headset to experience sex in another body and this has given him empathy. This is two-fold a bizarre sentiment because for one, there are currently VR experiences that allow you to “walk a mile” in the shoes of a trans man. But it's also equally nonsensical because lusting after someone does not make you empathize with them. Literally talk to any trans woman who has been the target of a “chaser” and you'll understand that.

Without getting into the fact that Wade severely violates Skylar's privacy to get this information about her gender, this information is both irrelevant to Skylar's character and honestly, L0hengrin/Skylar is a character that exists basically just so that Wade can have this “woke” moment of *still finding her attractive after finding out her gender identity*. Her gender identity never comes up again. Her character appears only two more times in the book, despite the excessive time spent on talking about her and sexuality, and while she does ultimately deliver the MacGuffin sword in the final battle, her adventure and journey happens off screen and her part could have been replaced with an item that simply fetched the sword.

Every time Cline talks about sex in this series, it's always some flavor of terrible; the first time Wade has sex he says “Then we spent the rest of the week sneaking off to make the beast with two backs at every opportunity. Like Depeche Mode we just couldn't get enough.” The passages where he tries to go out of heteronormativity are somehow much worse. He continues to refer to something called “nonbinary sex,” and as a nonbinary person I legitimately have no idea what he's referring to. It is vaguely comical that it seems like he's somehow pandering to a group of people he did not actually talk to. Did these books have a sensitivity read at all, especially when talking about the subjects that Cline doesn't seem to know anything about but decides to write confidently about anyway? It's no wonder that these passages seem to be the ones most heavily targeted by the DMCA take-down notices that have been going around.

This doesn't even get into what happens with Aech and Shoto, the remaining POC characters from the High

Five of *Ready Player One*. They are the only two characters who decide to take their avatar names as their real world names, which in a vacuum would perhaps not be so odd, but in the context of the rest of the book seems like an odd choice. Shoto is given a bit more of a presence than he had in the first book but he has switched out his samurai armor for ninja garb, and he's married young to help deal with Japan's underpopulation problem. That's basically his entire character. Similarly Aech, the story's only Black character, is first seen in script going to visit Senegal “because her ancestors had come from there” a fact that is never mentioned again or hinted at before, Her main function comes from her knowing about Prince. Aech is the only character who seems to know anything about Prince, in a room full of people who could have literally died over not knowing their eighties trivia; Shoto is even quoted as thinking the chorus to “Little Red Corvette” is, inexplicably, “living correct.”

This gets into the issue of the narrow focus of the white, American, male culture of the eighties, and presenting it as the One True Canon. Cline's attempt to seemingly fix this in *Ready Player Two* is to have the focus of the novels' hunt be Kira — the dead wife of James Halliday's best friend, and his obsession — rather than Halliday himself. Kira is white, female and British, but the differences in their tastes are incredibly narrow. Kira's stated interests are *The Princess Bride*, *The Dark Crystal*, *Sailor Moon*, *Doctor Who*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, Hayao Miyazaki, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Dungeons & Dragons. The plot of the second book follows trying to unlock the Seven Shard's of the Siren's Soul, where, roughly, there will be a Shard hidden on a different planet that is relevant to Kira's interests and life. Of those stated interests, the only ones that come into play are Tolkien and D&D.

Narratively, Cline chooses to have a world that can be effectively only “solved” with the help of a remaining member of the High Five; Samantha/Art@mis for the John Hughes world, Shoto for a world themed around the classic arcade title *Ninja Princess*, and Aech for the Prince world. In a vacuum, having the POC characters be experts in the media tied to their race could be coincidental, but it doesn't seem as such in this context.

The themes for most of the worlds are still overwhelmingly white, and for some reason, Cline decided to lampshade this, by having Aech continually point it out. During the John Hughes quest, Aech says “Look at this lily-white hellscape. Is there a single person of color in this entire town?”(it's a John Hughes movie-verse, there's probably at least one offensive Asian stereotype in town) and later during the Tolkien quest, “Let me guess, they're all white, right? White Elves.

White Men. And White Dwarves. I bet everyone we encounter on this Tolkien planet is going to be white, right? Except, of course, for the bad guys?” The black-skinned Orcs.” The response from Samantha/Art@mis to the John Hughes complaint is to say that there's a lack of diversity in the “whole of 80's cinema” and Wade loses his temper and says “We don't have time for literary criticism right now, Aech, valid though it may be!” But Cline ultimately chose to feature these creators, these worlds. He then, bafflingly, chose to point out that they were incredibly white and lacked diversity. It's a level of meta commentary that in the hands of a better writer might have meant something, but in Cline's hands just feels bizarre. It seems to be him saying “well what can you do” but he's the author. He can do quite a bit. (Cline similarly decides to go meta on his own brand with one of the bad guys of the book exclaiming, “Don't you kids ever get tired of picking through the wreckage of a past generation's nostalgia? ...The entire OASIS is like one giant graveyard, haunted by the undead pop-culture icons of a bygone era.”) The themes are also still heavily tied to American pop culture, which is fine, except that Cline went out of his way to establish the character as British. He doesn't create any of her interests to tie her to British culture at all (arguably Tolkien, but with Tolkien being so foundational to D&D it's inclusion feels almost accidental). Cline starts the story with a list of references that promise to be something different from the first book (*Sailor Moon!* Miyazaki! *Doctor Who!*) and then doesn't deviate far from the first book. Perhaps, like Halliday, Cline does not understand Kira or her interests.

Cline decides to recast James Halliday, the pseudo-mentor pseudo-aspirational character in the first book, as a villain.

But Halliday was always a creep; it just didn't seem like the writer or the main character realized that before, so making him an antagonist for *Ready Player Two* is not really an inspired choice. Fleshing out that Halliday was even more of a creep than previously imagined doesn't really feel like an act of self-awareness, but just makes the whole endeavor far more uncomfortable than it needs to be.

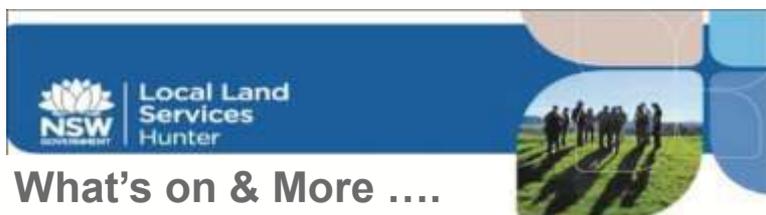
Halliday comes across as a deeply obsessive incel (before even getting into the evil AI version of him) and every time the characters collect a shard, they see another one of Kira's deeply personal memories and they quickly realize that the goal of assembling them is to assemble an AI version of the woman herself. To get knee deep into spoiler territory, the big finale involves finding out that Halliday, still deeply obsessed with the woman his best friend married, invited Kira to the OASIS offices to show off a piece of Accessibility hardware to help paraplegics. Then he actually *scanned her brain without her consent or knowledge in order to make an AI copy that he could convince to love him*. But after her death, he resurrects this identical copy of Kira's consciousness and by *forcibly looking through her memories* discovers empathy and decides to present this AI consciousness to her husband as a gift he can someday unlock. Kira (or Leucosia as her AI version is referred to) finds this existence — where a man who was obsessed with her made a “bootleg” AI copy of her without her permission — to be a gift. No person on Earth can ever die again, as long as they have bought into the capitalist world of the OASIS, because their consciousnesses can be effectively stored as computer information. This is ultimately the legacy that Cline writes for his creep nerd: “we are witnessing the dawn

of the posthuman era. The Singularity by way of simulacra and simulation. One final gift to human civilization from the troubled-but-brilliant mind of James Donovan Halliday.” By being a super big creep, he actually saved the world. As with the *Ready Player One*, *Ready Player Two* is not prepared to reckon with actual consequences to the actions of its main characters or their inspirations, so it doesn't. Halliday is a “sociopathic” incel, but he was also a genius who saved the world. Wade invades Skylar's privacy, but while she finds out that he was watching a chat with her friends — she never uncovers the full extent of it, so this behavior is never fully investigated, interrogated or even brought up again. Wade builds a eco-fascist billionaire nuclear powered spaceship so he can escape the problems of Earth with a dozen of his closest friends in comfort while the rest of the population dies (a plan that would not save humanity anyway due to genetic biodiversity) but that's OK because the spaceship comes in handy for sending the AI out into space to start new life. Even Samantha/Art@mis, who starts the book being so violently opposed to the new OASIS tech of this story, comes around in the end. It's not even that the characters start the book where they began, if anything, they seem to regress further back in terms of development. There is nothing new to be found here, nothing to be earned or learned.

In nine more years, we may get a *Ready Player Three* and it will perhaps try to fix the failings of the previous books. One can only hope that Cline grows as a writer in a decade more than his characters grow in the course of 400 pages.

The New York Times Best Sellers (20 DECEMBER 2020)

- 1. READY PLAYER TWO by Ernest Cline**
RANKED 1 LAST WEEK ~ 2 WEEKS ON THE LIST
In a sequel to “Ready Player One,” Wade Watts discovers a technological advancement and goes on a new quest.
- 2. A TIME FOR MERCY by John Grisham**
RANKED 6 LAST WEEK ~ 8 WEEKS ON THE LIST
The third book in the Jake Brigance series. A 16-year-old is accused of killing a deputy in Clanton, Miss., in 1990.
- 3. DEADLY CROSS by James Patterson**
RANKED 2 LAST WEEK ~ 2 WEEKS ON THE LIST
The 28th book in the Alex Cross series. An investigation of a double homicide sends Alex Cross to Alabama.
- 4. THE RETURN by Nicholas Sparks**
RANKED 4 LAST WEEK ~ 10 WEEKS ON THE LIST
A doctor serving in the Navy in Afghanistan goes back to North Carolina where two women change his life.
- 5. DAYLIGHT by David Baldacci**
RANKED 5 LAST WEEK ~ 3 WEEKS ON THE LIST
The F.B.I. agent Atlee Pine's search for her twin sister overlaps with a military investigator's hunt for someone involved in a global conspiracy.
- 6. AMERICAN DIRT by Jeanine Cummins**
36 WEEKS ON THE LIST
A bookseller flees Mexico for the United States with her son while pursued by the head of a drug cartel.
- 7. THE VANISHING HALF by Brit Bennett**
RANKED 11 LAST WEEK ~ 27 WEEKS ON THE LIST
The lives of twin sisters who run away from a Southern Black community at age 16 diverge as one returns and the other takes on a different racial identity but their fates intertwine.
- 8. THE LAW OF INNOCENCE by Michael Connelly**
RANKED 7 LAST WEEK ~ 4 WEEKS ON THE LIST
The sixth book in the Mickey Haller series. Haller defends himself when police find the body of a former client in his car's trunk.
- 9. THE SENTINEL by Lee Child and Andrew Child**
RANKED 10 LAST WEEK ~ 6 WEEKS ON THE LIST
Jack Reacher intervenes on an ambush in Tennessee and uncovers a conspiracy.
- 10. THE AWAKENING by Nora Roberts**
2 WEEKS ON THE LIST
The first book in the Dragon Heart Legacy series. Breen Kelly travels through a portal in Ireland to a land of faeries and mermaids.



What's on & More

BUMPER BREEDING SUCCESS IN UPPER HUNTER RAISES HOPE

Supported by Hunter LLS through the Australian Government's Bushfire Emergency Pest and Habitat Protection funding, emergency initiatives have been activated to help reduce threats to the Regent Honeyeater in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area that was almost 80% burnt in recent unprecedented bushfires. The valleys on the edge of the World Heritage Area (WHA) contain some of the most important breeding and feeding habitats for the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater. The DPIE Saving Our Species staff and the Regent Honeyeater National Recovery Team convened to determine the potential devastating impacts for Regent Honeyeater earlier this year post the fires. Key threats identified included loss of potential breeding habitats to fire, impacts in unburnt refuges on breeding from competitor species such as Noisy Miners and subsequent loss or minimal flowering of primary feed trees from a combination of drought and fire impacts. Hunter Local Land Services supported BirdLife Australia and the Australian National University to conduct urgent Noisy Miner culling in one partially burnt valley in the Upper Hunter.

"Noisy Miners, while a native species, are aggressive and territorial and are listed as a key threatening process for the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater," said Lyndel Wilson, NRM Team Leader Hunter LLS. "They can exclude Regent Honeyeaters from breeding sites such as the remaining unburnt and partially burnt open valleys adjoining the World Heritage Area. "There is anecdotal evidence that burnt areas are also 'opened up' post-fire, thus making the habitat more suitable to miners." Post-fire control of the Noisy Miner commenced during winter to reduce competition in an attempt to boost the honeyeater's population numbers. This initiative was combined with a bold release of 20 captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters in the Lower Hunter, to also increase national Regent Honeyeater numbers post-fire in "likely" suitable breeding areas with available food source such as Eucalypt blossom. "This control program conducted over 1800 hectares of known breeding habitat has reduced the local Noisy Miner population by more than 80%," said Lyndel. "This is a great result, and subsequently two pairs of Regent Honeyeaters with a

total of five healthy chicks have been observed in the treatment area." The adults of one pair were actively feeding chicks with insects, and nectar exclusively from local flowering Needle-leaf Mistletoe, growing on mature River She-oaks. Mistletoe is an extremely important food source for a range of woodland birds, but also creates suitable structures to build nests in too. "This is the result we were hoping for." Lyndel. "We are working with experts in our region, in NSW and nationally through the Recovery Team and Local Land Services to ensure the right actions happen when and where they are needed to support this species and its habitats. "Having several breeding pairs in one valley, post bushfires and with key threats reduced, is the ultimate outcome for these bushfire response efforts." Future actions based on post captive release monitoring results, and Noisy Miner control success are currently being investigated through Hunter LLS, with BirdLife Australia and the recovery team, with the ongoing support from the Australian Government.

LANDHOLDERS REMINDED STOCK PERMITS ARE REQUIRED WHEN USING TRAVELLING STOCK RESERVES OR PUBLIC ROADS

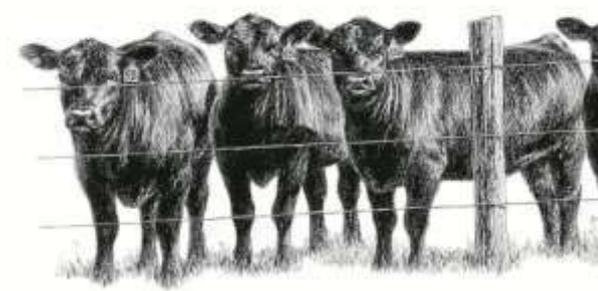


walking long distances from one destination to another. Stock permits to graze on a public road are issued for short periods for specific sections of public road, in times of drought or for hazard reduction. These permits are normally issued to the adjoining landholder, as there are no watering facilities and stock must be returned to the property at night. Stock permits to graze on a TSR are for an enclosed TSR, for use over an extended period. Routine stock movement permits are issued to regularly walk stock between properties for the purpose of routine animal husbandry and grazing management. Stock must only be out during daylight hours.

Local Land Services is reminding landholders of their legal obligation to have a permit for stock on Travelling Stock Reserves (TSR) and public roads. Under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*, there are four types of stock permits, that authorise a person to:

- Walk stock on a public road or TSR
- Graze stock on a public road
- Graze stock on a controlled TSR
- Routinely move stock. Walking stock permits are for travelling stock

Note that stock transported by vehicle need a Transported Stock Statement. Local Land Services Executive Director, Regional Operations Rob Kelly warned landholders there are serious consequences for not having an appropriate permit. "If you are moving stock, it is really important that you have a permit," Mr Kelly said. Permits are important for planning and biosecurity, and if you don't have one, you can be fined. There is also the risk of liability in the event of an accident. "To apply for a permit to have stock on a TSR or public road, just contact your local Biosecurity Officer on 1300 795 299."



Detailed Cattle report for Gunnedah

Last reported 8th December 2020

Yearlings were well supplied in a slightly reduced penning. There was a fair supply of grown cattle. The quality of the offering was mostly good. The condition was fair to good with a few more leaner young cattle presented. There were limited supplies of light weight cattle available. Most regular buyers were in attendance, however there was restricted export processor competition, with restocker and feedlot activity also down. Following the week of extreme heat, restocker demand was weaker. This resulted in the light weight young cattle selling to cheaper trends of 10c to 20c/kg. Medium and heavy weight yearling steers to feed sold on a firm trend with an odd dearer sale, breed related. Similar trends were seen in the yearling heifers to feed. Heavy weight feeders showing an improvement in quality. There was weaker competition for trade yearlings with both steers and heifers selling to cheaper trends for the most part. The exception being those few to local butcher orders. Reduced competition from export processors saw well finished grown steers sell to a much cheaper trend with the older steers most affected. There were cheaper trends through the cow market, heavy weights down by 8c to 10c/kg, with medium weights showing greater falls, quality a factor.

Detailed Cattle report for HRLX Singleton

Last reported 9th December 2020

Consignments increased for the second last sale for 2020, with the quality on average remaining fair to good, however there were pens of plain cattle spread throughout the sale. The majority were younger cattle purchased by the lot feeder and restocker orders, whilst good percentages of the high yielding and prime conditioned younger cattle suitable for the butchers were also penned. The heavier drafts suitable for the exporters were scarce in the pens, as the lighter older steers in store condition were well supplied. The market trend overall was dearer, however the cows trended at cheaper prices. The vealer steers to the restockers gained 8c, with the medium and heavy weights making from 420c to 535c/kg. The same weight heifer portion also to the restockers improved by similar values and sold from 440c to 488c/kg. Yearling steers to the restocker and lot feeder orders improved 11c, with the lighter end making from 410c to 476c, while the heavier medium and heavy weights sold from 380c to 458c/kg. The yearling heifers also to feed and returning to the paddock lifted 8c to 10c, with the light and medium weights making from 348c to 468c/kg. The prime conditioned and high yielding younger cattle to the butchers gained 12c, with the better end reaching a top of 484c/kg. The heavy weight grown steers and bullocks sold from 280c to 312c, while the unfinished lighter weights to the restockers and lot feeders trended 12c dearer and sold from 284c to 422c/kg. The heavy weight better covered cows lost 10c and sold from 200c to 258c/kg. The best heavy weight bull reached 240c/kg.

Detailed Cattle report for Scone

Last reported 8th December 2020

Numbers lifted marginally, as extra plainer younger cattle were penned this week. The bulk were younger cattle, with the majority purchased by the lot feeder and restocker orders, while good percentages were suitable for the local butcher orders. The export cattle were limited in supply. The younger cattle trended dearer, while the cows to the processors again sold to a cheaper trend. The vealer steers remained firm, with only breed contributing to any price variations, with those sold to the restocker orders ranging from 390c to 538c/kg. The vealer heifers also to the restockers and backgrounders gained 13c and made from 452c to 496c/kg. The yearling steers to feed and the restockers improved 5c to 8c, as the medium weights received from 388c to 445c/kg. Yearling heifers also trended dearer and improved 12c, with the restockers and feeder orders paying from 400c to 464c/kg. The prime conditioned and high yielding younger cattle to the butchers lifted 8c, with the best reaching 470c/kg. The export cattle were mainly cows and these decreased in price by 8c/kg. Resockers paid 264c for the medium weights, while the better covered heavy weights to the processors ranged from 230c to 248c/kg. The heavy weight bulls lost 5c and made from 220c to 250c/kg.

Detailed Cattle report for TRLX Tamworth

Last reported 7th December 2020

There was another small reduction in numbers. Once again young cattle made up the bulk of the offering with grown cattle limited in supply. Quality was mixed. There were some good lines of well bred yearlings available. There was reduced feedlot and processor activity, while there were some restockers operating. Trends varied through the young cattle with the well bred and better quality lines of steers selling on a firm to dearer trend. The smaller lots and secondary cattle sold to cheaper trends with buyers prepared to pay premiums for well bred steers. The variation in quality was a factor in price change. Those trends continued into the yearling heifers to restock and feed. There was little change in the market for well finished trade yearlings, odd sale to local butchers a little dearer. Well finished heavy weight grown steers experienced little but age and quality related price change despite restricted competition. This was also the case for well bred grown heifers, where 6 tooth heifers were discounted. The cow market was generally firm with some quality related price change.

Racing Review & News

Country gun making up for lost time

By Mitch Cohen



Reece Jones has endured a rocky start to life in the saddle but the Scone apprentice is making up for lost time.

The 24-year-old is the NSW leading country apprentice this season and sits level top on statewide wins among young riders

spent the bulk of the last two years on the sideline through injury. In April last year he fell awkwardly at trackwork when his saddle slipped and tore his ACL, MCL and LCL in his knee, forcing a 12-month lay-off. "It was frustrating there is no doubt about it as I was starting to pick up some provincial rides at the time," Jones said. "It was a momentum killer but I was determined to get back." Jones, who is indentured to Rod Northam, returned to race riding at the back end of last season and has continued to regain momentum as the year wears on, albeit with the odd hiccup. The worst of those came last month when a hard fall at Quirindi left Jones concussed on track and he was transported to hospital. "It wasn't great, I got sandwiched which is where you don't want to be and

got cannonballed into the ground," Jones said. "It happened quite quickly but it could have been worse." Jones spent nine days on the sidelines before being passed fit to ride and was quick to pick up where he left off, piloting five winners in eight days to start December. It propelled him 13 wins clear in the country premiership and level with Sherry on 34 victories for statewide wins. "I have got a few goals and one is to win that country premiership and at least finish with 50 winners for the season," Jones said. "I want to lose my country claim, and I only need another five wins for that, and just be more consistent."

• Photo above: Reece Jones is indentured to Scone trainer Rod Northam (pictured)



10 Things to Look For When Buying a 2nd Hand Device...

It's Xmas time again which means our wallets are going to take a battering so here are some tips you can use to negotiate a better deal when buying a 2nd hand Phone or Tablet.

What they say: It's great/as new condition with barely a mark on it. Everything works as good as the day I bought it, and only selling due to upgrade... first to see will buy!

What it should say: It's in average condition and only been dropped a few times. The screen is only 7 months old. I had it replaced after one of the drops and it has several scratches on it but none of them affect the way the phone operates. The back glass is cracked but I've been told you can get it replaced for under \$50.... just don't let any water near it. The home button sometimes doesn't work but that's OK because you can use the 'on-screen' home button. The battery lasts at least half the day before you need to recharge it. Great phone and Sold in "as is" condition. At Macdroid's we see these "bargains" come in for repair every day of the week. So, here's what to check for:

1. **The Home button** – Make sure it's not cracked (look closely) and test it. If it's one that has a fingerprint

sensor, test to see if it picks up a fingerprint. If the fingerprint function doesn't work, it can't be fixed.

2. **The screen** – check for any hair line cracks, unusual lines and odd discolouration. If it's a Samsung and has a small crack, you will eventually need to replace the screen as they ALWAYS fail completely once cracked.

3. **Facial recognition** – Mainly iPhones. If the facial recognition stops working, it's not only going to be expensive but there are only a few places in Australia that can fix it. Macdroids is one of those places.

4. **The charging socket** – These normally take a hammering so take a torch and a magnifying glass to look into the socket for obvious signs of damage. Then plug it in and see if it charges.

5. **The battery** – In iPhones, go into settings > battery > battery health. If it's under 80% it's going to need replacing soon.

6. **Does it make a phone call?** – This one is easy. Just stick YOUR sim into it and make a phone call. Take a sim pin with you so you can pop out / in as required.

7. **Is the sound ok?** - On iPhones, make a phone call and check the speaker button. It should NOT be

greyed out. If it's greyed out, the audio processor may be faulty and it's expensive to repair.

8. **iCloud Locked** – On any Apple device, (phones & ipads) if it has someone else's Apple ID in the settings, STAY AWAY. If the original owner can't remember the password to sign out, it may not be their phone and there is NO WAY to remove it. This means you won't be able to use it, even if you reset the phone.

9. **Google locked** – On Android devices (phones & tablets) like Samsung, Pixel, Nokia etc. It's similar to an iCloud lock. You won't be able to use the phone even if it's been reset. This type of lock can be removed by specialists like Macdroids but there is a fee involved so if you're going to buy that locked device, negotiate hard.

10. **Intermittent Problems** – Many devices are sold because they have a random problem occurring that's been annoying the crap out of the owner. Normally due to being dropped (but didn't crack the screen) so, they sell it and make it someone else's problem ... yours! Choose carefully because today's BARGAIN may very well turn into tomorrow's NIGHTMARE!

The War with Grandpa' Review: Harmless Fun



grieving, we do know how depressed he is by the way he stares pensively out the window as he listens to old records or refuses to engage with either Jennifer and his friends at the film's beginning. And while Ed occasionally veers into the aggressive, adversarial character De Niro played in the *Meet the Parents* films, the character's ultimate softness

feels like the antithesis of that persona. Whether he's gamely playing along with whatever Jennifer wants him to do or confessing to Sally how much he regrets causing a two-year rift between them, De Niro makes the most of every emotional beat Ed gets. Unfortunately, not everyone in the cast is as deft. While Thurman is almost embarrassingly big throughout because her character exists almost exclusively as comic relief, it's the younger cast most hurt by the emphasis on comedy. While De Niro's rapport with Gagnon is enough to sell their connection, by not giving a deeper reason for Peter's antagonism toward his grandfather other than simply not wanting to lose his room, the character just seems like a brat. How badly have Sally and Arthur parented this kid that he not only doesn't for a second consider his grandfather's feelings even after Ed tries to keep the war from happening in the first place, but doesn't bat an eye at destroying the mementos of Ed's life's work? Admittedly, the kids watching won't see Peter's sociopathy for what it is and, really, most parents probably won't either because *The War with Grandpa* is ultimately so benign. It's a kids' movie and that's totally fine. It's got fun slapstick set pieces and an almost absurdly good cast who looks like they're having an absolute blast in every scene. Sure, it's not going to blow anyone's mind, but it's fun family entertainment and, really, in 2020, isn't it enough to just have some meaningless fun?

On paper, *The War with Grandpa* seems like a wild dream born of months of COVID-induced home isolation. Adapted from the book of the same name by Robert Kimmel Smith, it lists Guy Fieri (of Flavor-town) as an executive producer and stars Robert De Niro as the titular grandpa, Ed, who is coaxed by his daughter Sally (Uma Thurman) to move in with her family. However, Ed's arrival forces his grandson Peter (Oakes Fegley) to move into the attic, so, Peter declares war on Ed in hopes of getting his room back and an escalating prank war ensues. It's a perfect set up for a series of silly but slight kids' movie shenanigans and that's exactly what director Tim Hill delivers—for better or worse. Like the *Home Alone* films before it, the biggest draw of *The War with Grandpa* is the slapstick comedy. It starts pretty much immediately, as Ed's difficulty in navigating a self-checkout machine quickly escalates into an army of seniors attacking a grocery store employee. De Niro isn't afraid to look ridiculous and neither is the rest of the cast. Whether it's Thurman doing a spit take with hot sauce-filled coffee or Sally's husband Arthur (Rob Riggle) reacting to a half-naked Ed dangling from a gutter, editors Craig Herring and Peter S. Elliot rarely let the audience breathe between gags and jokes mostly work even if they often veer into low-brow cheapness. That said, not every set piece feels like it's talking down to the audience. The climactic sequence, which takes place at an unseasonal Christmas-themed birthday party for Ed's granddaughter Jennifer (Poppy Gagnon), is a series of Rube Goldberg-esque escalations that's genuinely clever in its complexity. Fun as many of the film's

set pieces are, though, perhaps the biggest reason *The War with Grandpa* gets any laughs at all is because of how good the cast is. Every few minutes, a big name like Christopher Walken and Cheech Marin as Ed's friends or Jane Seymour as Ed's potential love interest appears, and each actor is just as committed to the film's silly tone as the last. That silliness reaches its apex in a dodgeball battle between Ed and the aforementioned trio and Peter and his three friends at a trampoline park. It's, of course, ridiculous to pretend a bunch of seniors would have a chance against a group of spry tweens, but Hill's film is so heightened throughout, it's pure, silly kids' movie fun to watch Marin get beamed in the head or Seymour's stunt double do a flip. Yeah, it's totally unrealistic, but kids are going to be laughing too hard to care and only the most uptight parents would take this seriously enough to roll their eyes. Still, light and carefree as the film's tone may be, by favoring comedy over emotional beats, *The War with Grandpa* leaves promising territory unexplored. While side plots like the origins of Jennifer's year-round Christmas obsession or Arthur's unhappiness with his job are brought up repeatedly, they're never really addressed. It's possible the filmmakers leave that ground untouched in hopes of a sequel (Smith's book is a 2-book series after all), but that excuse doesn't hold when it comes to the way writers Tom J. Astle and Matt Ember's script refuses to dig into the emotional stakes driving the film. When we first meet Ed, he's not just an old curmudgeon, he's a retiree grieving the loss of his wife. Though we don't know how long he's been

grieving, we do know how depressed he is by the way he stares pensively out the window as he listens to old records or refuses to engage with either Jennifer and his friends at the film's beginning. And while Ed occasionally veers into the aggressive, adversarial character De Niro played in the *Meet the Parents* films, the character's ultimate softness feels like the antithesis of that persona. Whether he's gamely playing along with whatever Jennifer wants him to do or confessing to Sally how much he regrets causing a two-year rift between them, De Niro makes the most of every emotional beat Ed gets. Unfortunately, not everyone in the cast is as deft. While Thurman is almost embarrassingly big throughout because her character exists almost exclusively as comic relief, it's the younger cast most hurt by the emphasis on comedy. While De Niro's rapport with Gagnon is enough to sell their connection, by not giving a deeper reason for Peter's antagonism toward his grandfather other than simply not wanting to lose his room, the character just seems like a brat. How badly have Sally and Arthur parented this kid that he not only doesn't for a second consider his grandfather's feelings even after Ed tries to keep the war from happening in the first place, but doesn't bat an eye at destroying the mementos of Ed's life's work? Admittedly, the kids watching won't see Peter's sociopathy for what it is and, really, most parents probably won't either because *The War with Grandpa* is ultimately so benign. It's a kids' movie and that's totally fine. It's got fun slapstick set pieces and an almost absurdly good cast who looks like they're having an absolute blast in every scene. Sure, it's not going to blow anyone's mind, but it's fun family entertainment and, really, in 2020, isn't it enough to just have some meaningless fun?



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Col Brown Rotary Park officially renamed!

It was a special morning in Kurri Kurri yesterday with representatives from Cessnock City Council, family members of Col Brown and members of Kurri Kurri Rotary Club gathered together to recognise a valued community member, sorely missed by those that knew him.

The park located in the heart of Kurri Kurri will now be known as Col Brown Rotary Park. Council applied for the official name change to recognise the significant contribution of local resident Col Brown, who passed away in 2016. Cessnock City Mayor, Councillor Bob Pynsent said it was an honour to officially rename the park in honour of a wonderful man who did so much for so many. "As a member of Kurri Kurri Rotary Club for over 42 years, Col's contribution in building a stronger community is significant. His personal commitment to helping others was outstanding, whether it be sorting the power problems for the Nostalgia Festival or being the face for Relay for Life."

"Col was an inspiration to others and his memory lives on with the renaming of this park."

Mayor Pynsent was joined by Evelyn Brown, the wife of the late Mr Brown, to unveil the plaque that has been installed to acknowledge the renaming of the open space.



You can fact-check *The Crown*, sure, but good luck finding the truth on the royals

By Julia Baird (first published in SMH)



Palaces, prime ministers, misery, duty, adultery and adoration. Who can tell the story of the royal family? The royals can't, at least not directly. They are too private, although they have long been preoccupied with propaganda and publicity, arguably ever since the widowed Queen Victoria posed in gloomy tableaux with white busts of Albert, and wrote best selling tales of roaming the Scottish Highlands.

Those who are officially allowed to tell royal stories are usually members of, or close to, the British elite; selected biographers who are likely to be discreet, content to leave awkward details out if pressed to do so and respectful of the royals' desires for partial privacy. Some are outright sycophantic. And by partial, of course, I mean the shrouding of faults and embarrassments – such as sympathy for Hitler's Third Reich, the shocking affairs of the likes of Princess Louise, Victoria's deep love for John Brown – and the amplifying of any virtues. This means some of the worthier, polite accounts of royal history – such as William Shawcross's officially commissioned biography *The Queen Mother* – can be eye-glazing and frustratingly lacking in human insight or gritty detail. Which brings me to *The Crown*, which is the very opposite – it's gripping, compelling and phenomenally successful and seems to, as a consequence, have knotted the knickers of a host of establishment figures.

Britain's Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden, thinks a health warning should be added to the show, because he worries viewers "may mistake fiction for fact".

Actor Josh O'Connor, who plays Prince Charles, described his remarks as outrageous:

"We were slightly let down by our Culture Secretary, whose job it is to encourage culture ... My personal view is that audiences understand. You have to show them the respect and understand that they're intelligent enough to see it for what it is, which is pure fiction." Scriptwriter Peter Morgan's stated approach is that sometimes accuracy may be forsaken, but never the truth. So what are the fictions in *The Crown*? They range from the way the Queen was dressed for the Trooping the Colour to the frequency of the phone calls between Charles and Camilla at the time of his marriage to Diana, the content of the conversation between intruder Michael Fagan and the Queen when he broke into Buckingham Palace, the nature of Thatcher's first visit to Balmoral (she regarded it as "purgatory"), and who knew about the Queen's "missing" cousins, two sisters with severe learning difficulties who were cordoned off in mental health institutions for decades.

Almost all fictions or inaccuracies are irritating to anyone who writes biography or loves history – there is enough juicy, dramatic, wrenching material to use without fabricating more. But storytellers need to fill the gaps. I appreciate what Morgan is essentially trying to do – capture the essence of the truth without knowing precisely what occurred, with incomplete evidence. Telling these stories means making decisions about what matters – Diana's pain, the Queen's steel, Charles' misery and weakness, Margaret's wildness and search for love, the suffocating remoteness of the court, the peccadillos of prime ministers, the way outsiders are made to feel by the stiff protocols of "the Firm". The problem is, we are never told the full truth in

the first place. The Royal Family is one of the greatest controllers and censors of biography in modern history. Everyone who gains access to the treasured, precious documents held by the Royal Archives, controlled by the Royal Household, must sign a contract saying they will not publish without first showing them how they use the material found in research. It took me three years to gain access. An Australian historian could not pass muster – even though I had a PhD in history, and a contract to write a biography with a significant publishing house, I was repeatedly refused access on the grounds that I had not written royal history before, nor a biography (as context: a friend who worked at *The Women's Weekly* and had done none of these things was let in easily). After then governor-general Quentin Bryce intervened, I was somehow allowed to squeeze in. But the publication of my book was significantly delayed when the chief archivist wrote to me directing me to remove all sections of my book that referenced material I had found outside of the archives, in Scotland, that provided new insights into Queen Victoria's relationship with Highland servant John Brown.

I was also asked to remove references to Queen Victoria having had post-natal depression, apparently out of concern about outdated stigma regarding mental health. I refused on all fronts, but was tied up with lawyers on three continents for months. I quickly discovered I was not alone, and this attempt at control was a modus operandi.

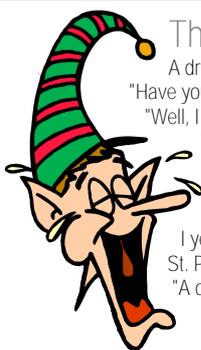
Along with the fact that entire boxes and collections are closed, kept secret – and that the archives don't even contain an index, so searching them is like pinning the tail on a donkey; you just hope you are asking for the right files with the right words as you spin, blindfolded.

Spin is precisely the problem. The royals have spent centuries asking us to prop up their fictions: that they never cheated or raged or supported fascist regimes or associated with paedophiles or turned blind eyes to famines or massacres carried out in the name of E This debate is not about respect, though respect must be had for history, nor about attempts to tear down reputations: it is about obstacles still being placed in the path of those who wish to write scholarly, careful and honest accounts of the past. I laughed when I read the account of historian Alex von Tunzelmann who said after she conducted research at the Royal Archives, she had to "fight to be allowed to publish even the tiny amount of tangential detail they allowed me to see". Since then, she said, she has left the British royal family alone and "focused on the history of more open and accountable organisations, such as the CIA".

Julia Baird
Julia Baird is a journalist and author. She hosts *The Drum* on ABC TV. Her latest book is *Phosphorescence: on awe, wonder and things that sustain you when the world goes dark*. She is also the author of *Victoria: the Queen – an intimate biography of a woman who ruled an empire*.



The Royal Family is one of the greatest controllers and censors of biography in modern history.



The Drover at the Pearly Gates

A drover from a huge cattle station in the outback appeared before St. Peter at the Pearly Gates.

"Have you ever done anything of particular merit?" St. Peter asked.

"Well, I can think of one thing," the drover offered.

"Once, on a trip to the back blocks of Broken Hill out in New South Wales, I came across a gang of bikers who were threatening a young sheila. I told them to leave her alone, but they wouldn't listen.

So I approached the largest and most heavily tattooed biker and smacked him in his face, kicked his bike over, ripped out his nose ring, and threw it on the ground.

I yelled, "Now, back off!! Or I'll kick the sh#t out of the lot of ya!"

St. Peter was impressed, "When did this happen?"

"A couple of minutes ago."



You can e-mail, fax or simply drop your ©WD or ©NSWD into our office:- 12 Cliff Street, Braxton or
Fax: 4938 3301 or
E-mail: thenews@hotkey.net.au
All contributions welcome

Big shout out to Braxton Greta Swimming Club committee for enabling competition for members given current rules and regulations governing sports. Terrific to see swimmers enjoying their sport. Thank you to the always cheerful and helpful pool staff also. 11 year old Annabelle Hughes competed over the weekend achieving Coast ad Valley Swimming Champion for 100m freestyle, representing herself and the club in fine style. Good news stories!

North Rothbury Tidy Town are running a mega Christmas Raffle and, as a member, helped sell the raffle tickets at Coles Huntlee last weekend (it's on again this weekend). I want to thank all those lovely souls who purchased tickets and, more importantly, had a chat at the same time. It was so nice to meet so many lovely 'new comers' to our wonderful community particularly from 'Huntlee' who make up the majority of our 'new comers'. We also have some new members coming to our first meeting in the new year. Also, a reminder to the 'new comers' in Huntlee; Huntlee is technically in North Rothbury so all residents you are cordially invited to attend and join our NRTT. We will make you very welcome!

FREE Classifieds
Cost:- for one-off domestic advertising The News will not charge you. Otherwise it is \$2/line

Computer Tuition: From basics to highly skilled & learn all about ebay. P: 0429 381 908 repairs. Comtronics P: 4991 1128
Drum lessons: Young Musician studying Bachelor of Music will conduct lessons (drum) your home or mine. (\$25.00 at mine \$30 for away for 1/2 hour). Beginners welcome. call Josh on 0458 611 362
For Rent: Braxton RSL Hall, air conditioned. Short or long term. P: 0429 438 460
For Sale: 2 ton chainblock \$100, Hardwood Timber beam 4800 x 290 x 75, \$50. 2470 x 140 x 100, \$20, Humes prime coat solid exterior door, 2040 x 820 x 35, New \$120, sell \$50, Painted solid door 1985 x 920 x 40, \$20, trailer axle with Holden hubs and stub axles, \$20, 4 White roll down security shutters 1800, 1860, 1760, 1650 wide with 2000 drop, Free Ph.0437312905
For Sale: 2002 Rover 75 in need of a good home. Restoration project. Full leather interior, GPS, fully optioned. Needs new headliner, bonnet respray. Good tyres. Unregistered. P: 0414 757 826
For Sale: Practically new medium sized Mobility Scooter . Only 3yrs old and driven 3 times, as owner didn't have the confidence to use it. Brand new batteries just installed as it has been unused, or a long time. Always kept inside. Comes with canopy and shopping bag. 2200 ONO (value \$4500) Inspection by arrangement. Please call Cherie on 0458721077
For Sale: Collectable rabbit traps from \$10 P: 0421 102 711
For Sale: Alpacas Ph 0400697148
For Sale: Free range eggs. \$4/doz Greta 0412 976 809
FREE TO A GOOD HOME - 34 halogen ceiling light fixtures, transformers and globes. Can be taken in a smaller amount or as a whole. Please contact Roger 0414 963 678
Riding Lessons: agjstment, horses trained. 0407 453 494
Share Accommodation: East Braxton \$180 + share utilities cost P: 0407 383 026
Seamstress: Sewing & mending P; Brune 0413 351 057

Wanted: all kinds of Honda mini bikes qa50 z50a z50j1 z50jz ct70 st70 & atc70. Contact Drew 0435814841
Wanted: Clean Fill Required North Braxton area. No builders rubble or materials P: 0413161296 Fred
Work Wanted: Need a house cleaner \$25/hr P: 0488 588 333
Work Wanted: Need an extra hand? I do all maintenance, labouring, construction, asbestos & have working with children licence. P (Pat) 0414 278 292
Work Wanted: Lawns mowed, rubbish removal & slashing. Also 'Bobcat' work, trenching & post hole boring & general maintenance & handyman work. Phone Steve on 4938 3601
Work Wanted: HORSE CLIPPING - PERFORMANCE READY. Hunter Valley & Central Coast. Phone Caron 0416 128 701
Work Wanted: Lawns properties, mowing, trimming, removals, maintenance. Paul 0478103814 or 49987567
Work Wanted: Sick of cleaning, cooking dinner, washing. Call me! Taking bookings now. Professional and reliable service. Sue 0497257081
Work Wanted: Rural Fencing (TW & A Hollingshed) P: 4998 1583 or Trevor on 0429 320 787 for quotes.
Work Wanted: experienced baby silter looking for work. Very reliable P: 0458 606 804
Work Wanted: Lawn & Garden Maintenance, P: 4938 3153
Work Wanted: Piano teacher available to give lessons P: Phil Aughey on 0447 381 989

Dates for your diary The "For your Diary" section of The News is a FREE community service.

Dates for your diary
EVERY WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY MORNINGS — The Braxton Greta Mens Shed meet in the mornings: come and have a cuppa at the Shed. 49 Braxton Street, Greta (in the grounds of the old St Mary's primary school) For more information contact Richard Wesseling 0417422560 Leagues Club. For information: Phone Anna 49904093



"Dates for your Diary" is free community service which has been included in the News for over 20-years. Please send your event notices and dates to thenews@hotkey.net.au or call me on 0414 757 826. The Editor

Dates for your diary

Upcoming Concerts
SAT 26 MAR 2021 — Rod Stewart Live @ Roche Estate
SAT 10 APL 2021 — "Hunter Valley Gin & Jazz festival" @ Hope Estate
SAT 11 DEC 2021 — Iconic Scottish band SIMPLE MINDS will be performing at a day on the green Bimbadinj winery.

Cessnock Community Performing Arts Centre
WHAT'S ON?
GO TO
www.cessnockperformingartscentre.com.au

CPAC Studio Sounds presents Terence Koo Trio CPAC Studio Sounds Featuring Newcastle Jazz Virtuosos: Terence Koo (piano), Andrew Wallace (double bass) and Rob Coxen (drums).
FRI 6 NOV 2020

The Gruffalo's Child
21 January 2021
'The Gruffalo's Child' Adapted from the award-winning picture book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. Published by Macmillan Children's Books.

CASH
5 March 2021
'Johnny Cash THE CONCERT' Back to San Quentin Featuring the great moments of Johnny Cash's seminal *At San Quentin* album.



CWA NEWS

Branxton/Greta CWA members held their meeting on Tuesday, 10th November, 2020, this time in their rooms at the old St Brigids School, Branxton. Social distancing was maintained and members were asked to provide their own morning tea. Items on the Agenda were appointing a new President.

After much encouragement, Terri Collins, has accepted the position and we welcome her and thank her for taking on the responsibility and know Terri will be a wonderful President, as was our previous President, Leanne Bendeich, who we give sincere thanks for her commitment. Other Positions – Kerrie Bendeich (Vice President) Noeleen Bendeich (Patron, Treasurer, Cultural Officer) Roslyn Shearer (Assistant



Secretary, Cookery Officer) Marie Shearer – (Secretary) Leanne Bendeich (Handicraft Officer) Pauline Hunt (Agricultural/ Environment Officer) Denise McGoldrick (International Officer, Publicity Officer) Two Delegates (depending on availability) will attend the Hunter River Group Council Meeting on 25th November, 2020 so will hopefully have more news for our next article.

Due to the Land Cookery Day being cancelled it has been decided to have a Branch “In-house” Cookery Day and results will be advised after the Group Cookery Day next year (if it goes ahead). In the meantime, we hope everyone is taking care of themselves and making sure they are doing the right thing when out and about, so that when we are able to have functions again we can see you all again. Take care. Our next meeting is our Christmas meeting which

will be on the 8th December, 2020. As always, we would happily welcome anyone interested in assisting to raise money to help others in need, or assist in any other ways, and also making new friends. Should anyone be interested in joining Branxton/Greta CWA, or like any information, or attending any of our functions, please contact our Secretary, Marie Shearer on 0402015850 or Denise McGoldrick on 0422896415 or Secretary branxtongre-tacwa@hotmail.com Denise McGoldrick Publicity Officer.

Branxton & Vineyards Real Estate

We would like to wish all a Happy, Holy Christmas & a wonderful New Year.

Our office will be closed Friday 18th December 2020 & will re-open on Monday 11th January 2021

For all emergencies or enquiries please call

0412 566 041 or 0414 727 826

Christmas Services
Anglican Church Branxton Greta Lochinvar

Blue Christmas
22nd December – 5pm
St John's Branxton

Christmas Eve 24th December
Family Service ~ 4pm ~ St John's Branxton
Midnight Mass ~ 11.30pm ~ St John's Branxton

Christmas Day 25th December
Holy Communion – 9am – Holy Trinity Lochinvar
Holy Communion ~ 10am – St John's Branxton

Registration is encourage due to maximum capacity for services. Please call Reverend Nicole on 0481 269 892

Anglican Church

Cessnock Day Night Pharmacy

Open 7 days
8am - 8pm
4990 3485

202 Wollombi Road, Cessnock
(opposite ALDI)

MERRY CHRISTMAS

From the Councillors and staff of Singleton Council

For Council's holiday operating hours, visit [W singleton.nsw.gov.au](http://www.singleton.nsw.gov.au)

SINGLETON COUNCIL

Merry Christmas

and a

HAPPY New Year

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to one and all! Rest up, eat heartily and enjoy the company of the ones that you love.

The Cessnock Electorate Office will close at 5pm on Friday 18 December, 2020 and will re-open at 9am on Monday 11 January, 2021.

Here's where to find us should you need help in 2021: phone 4991-1466, email cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au or call into 118 Vincent Street (PO Box 242), Cessnock 2325.

You also follow me on my Facebook page "www.facebook.com/claytonbarrmp" or check out my website at www.claytonbarr.com.au

CLAYTON BARR MP Member for Cessnock
Authorised by Clayton Barr, MP ~ funded by using parliamentary entitlements

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS

Singleton shovels at the ready to deliver \$4,571,283 in projects under Resources for Regions program

Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore said she was ecstatic with last weeks announcement by the NSW Government that a total of \$4,571,283 is coming to the community from the revamped Resources for Region program.

Member for Upper Hunter Michael Johnsen MP delivered the news, paving the way for a host of community projects and programs including \$500,000 for a new grandstand for Singleton Rugby Club, \$560,000 to deliver the Broke Village Shared Footpath, \$299,000 for the Wonnarua Healing Centre and \$600,000 for upgrades to Hamiltons Crossing Road Causeway.

“Many of these projects are driven by community organisations that would otherwise take years of fundraising before they could happen, and now we’re going to see work underway sooner rather than later,” Cr Moore said.

“Council has worked long and hard on advocating for reforms to the Resources for Regions program and it’s wonderful to see that the people of Singleton are finally reaping the rewards.

“I pay tribute to the Deputy Premier John Barilaro and the Member for Upper Hunter Michael MP for listening to our community, to committing to a review of the program and now for delivering on their promises.”

Cr Moore said reforms to the Resources for Regions program were a high priority on Singleton Council’s Advocacy Agenda to secure a better return on the mining royalties that Singleton delivered to the State Government each year. She said it was particularly important that the reforms included provision of funding for community programs as well as infrastructure.

“Under the first round of this new wave of the Resources for Regions funding, the people of Singleton are going to see plenty of building projects spring up across the LGA, but also benefit from a host of programs targeting employment growth, mental health services, arts and culture, and small business development. That goes a long way to supporting the wellbeing needs of the people of Singleton, creating a community that is proud of where they live and optimistic about the future.

“It’s amazing to me that we’ll now see these 15 projects come to fruition, and it’s all thanks to the NSW Government delivering on its commitments under the Resources for Regions program,” she said.

“I warmly invite the Deputy Premier John Barilaro to come back to Singleton when these projects are complete, so he can see personally the benefits he has delivered to our community.”



Sue Moore, Mayor Singleton Council

\$1.3 million secured under Resources for Region Fund Round Seven

Cessnock City Council welcomed the announcement by the NSW Government that Council will receive more than \$1.3 million to fund four exciting community projects.

The funding is from the NSW Government’s \$50 million Resources for Regions Program Round Seven. Council was allocated the following:

- Cessnock Pool Splash Pad Stage 2 - \$420,300
- Beatification of Rotary Park, Kurri Kurri - \$482,198
- Cessnock Disadvantaged Youth Driver Training Program - \$100,000
- Cessnock City Cultural Hub - \$309,700

Cessnock City Mayor, Councillor Bob Pynsent is looking forward to these projects getting underway.

“This funding is critical to enable projects like the Cessnock Pool Splash Pad to continue into Stage 2 and to support larger projects like the upgrade of the Kurri Kurri CBD and the redesign of the Cessnock Performing Arts Centre.”

The funding for Cessnock Splash Pad Stage 2 will provide for the establishment of more shade, seating, safety features, landscaping and other improvements to complement the new splash. This project will kick off following the 2020/21 pool season.

The Beautification of Rotary Park, Kurri Kurri is part of the implementation of Stage 3 of the adopted Kurri Kurri Masterplan. The upgrade will include new park furniture, signage, lighting, and improved amenity through additional landscaping. This work is set to commence in the first half of 2021.

The establishment of the Cessnock City Cultural Hub is still at concept phase with Council set to progress plans next year. This grant will be used to fund the modifications to the first floor to create a makers and exhibition space, secure art storeroom and construction of a ramp and other modifications to ensure better access to the cultural hub.

The Cessnock Disadvantaged Youth Driver Training Program will see Council, the Hunter Region Employment Facilitator and Youth Express partner to deliver professional driver training and mentoring for the most disadvantaged local youth where the lack of a driver’s licence is the barrier to employment. Council plans to start this two year program in the first half of 2021.

Free Family Fun Days return!

Cessnock City Council is pleased to announce the Sunday Family Fun Days will go ahead at the Cessnock, Branxton pools and the Kurri Kurri Aquatic and Fitness Centre. Starting from Sunday 20 December, 2020 residents will gain FREE entry. The Fun Days are on Sunday’s over the Christmas school holiday period and run until Sunday 21 February 2021.

Cessnock City Mayor, Councillor Bob Pynsent said despite some challenges posed by COVID-19 Council will be able to put on these free days at the pool with a little bit of help from the community.

“It’s great we are able to offer the Family Fun Days and allow community members a great day out, cooling down at our fantastic local facilities. We are asking that all residents cooperate with the various procedures in place to ensure the safety of everyone.”

The Family Fun Days at Cessnock and Branxton pools will be divided into two sessions, morning and afternoon:

- Session 1 10am – 12.45pm & Session 2 1.15pm – 4pm

Residents wanting to secure a spot can make a booking. To book by call Cessnock or Branxton pools between Wednesday and Friday 9am to 5pm in the week leading up to the Family Fun Day of your choice.

Bookings will be taken for up to 50% capacity of Cessnock and Branxton pool. This will allow for some walk-ins on the day. Customers must turn up within 30 minutes of their session start time or risk losing their booking. Once at the pool residents must check-in using the 1Breadcrumb app to ensure compliance with the Public Health Order. Council staff will be there to greet patrons and ensure they are checked-in before entering the facility. Those planning to attend Kurri Kurri Aquatic and Fitness Centre don’t have to book ahead, with only one session running between 10am to 4pm. Patrons will be required to check-in on arrival.

Pool users are reminded to follow the direction of pool staff

Parking Enforcement Policy on public exhibition

Cessnock City Council’s Parking Enforcement Policy is now on public exhibition. The policy aims to manage public safety, traffic flow, and provide equitable access to available parking spaces.

The current policy has been reviewed, with a number of changes being proposed, including:

- Removal of “the three (3) metre rule”
- Updates to align with Council’s Compliance and Enforcement Policy
- Additional plain English examples of offences related to school zones, footway parking and general parking offences
- Increased emphasis on education campaigns
- Other minor typographical and formatting changes

“The three (3) metre rule” is unique to the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA), and permits vehicles to park on the nature strip (where there is no kerb and gutter) as long as a three metre unobstructed space exists between the parked car and the front property boundary.

Council has recognised that the current rule has resulted in some confusion for the community. Recent legal advice obtained by Council advised “the three (3) metre rule” should be removed from Council’s policy to ensure compliance with the *Road Rules 2014*.

Council’s General Manager, Lotta Jackson said the primary objective of the Policy is about keeping the community safe.

“Council is responsible for enforcing parking legislation across the Cessnock LGA on behalf of the NSW Government. The changes proposed are aimed at making the policy more consistent and to provide clarity for local drivers.”

Once the policy is adopted Council will undertake a parking education campaign to ensure residents are aware of the changes. A grace period will also apply for the enforcement of the new policy.

Map launched for cyclists hitting the Hunter!

Cessnock City Council’s Economic Development in partnership with the local cycling community have launched ‘Cycle Hunter Valley’. The new brochure has everything a cyclist visiting the Cessnock Local Government Area needs! Cycle Hunter Valley shows suggested routes with information on starting points, length of ride, grading and surface type.

Cessnock City Mayor, Councillor Bob Pynsent congratulated everyone involved on the collaborative approach in developing the map and brochure contents.

“To compliment this fantastic resource, Bike Service Points have been created for cyclists that may need assistance during their ride. Additional features include toilet locations, parking options and scenic lookouts points where cyclist can take a snap during a ride.”

“This document is just one example of our staff and community identifying opportunities during COVID-19. Cycling is a safe activity, where all participants can social distance but still get out and about enjoying our beautiful region. There’s a growing interest in this activity for visitors and now we can make their trip that much more enjoyable with this helpful resource.”

The maps will be available at the Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre and bicycle shops throughout the Hunter valley. It will also shortly be made available online.



RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES TO LEASE

There is a strong demand for residential rental accommodation in the local area & our office needs more properties to sate the current demand. If you are contemplating renting your property please contact either Helen or Mike on 4938 3300

BRANXTON & VINEYARDS
REAL ESTATE
P: 4938 3300





HANDY TIPS The essential guide to Australian native plants

by Rebecca Lowrey Boyd
Native plants have never been more popular and they can be easily incorporated into any style of garden, but if you want to create an all-Australian native landscape, then an organic, naturalistic design works best.

“Think crushed granite pathways, timber sleepers for edging beds and rustic recycled containers,” says gardening expert and horticulturalist Roger Fox. “Avoid formality and instead use curved and fluid lines for the layout.”

You can use a variety of grasses, desert plants, shrubs, ground cover, succulents, herbs, food plants, fruit and berries to create a diverse Australian native garden. If you don't need a lawn, consider filling deep garden beds with dense plantings of native shrubs and grasses, traversed by winding paths.

“The result will be a very drought-tolerant and wildlife-friendly garden,” says Roger. Australian native plant selection

You'll find Australian plants to suit every layer of your garden.

“For flower beds and edging, think of Australian native flowers such as Swan River daisies and kangaroo-paws with their fabulous velvety flowers,” says Roger. “For hedges, check out the many varieties of lilly pilly, westringia and callistemon. For shrubberies, look for new forms of the old favourites, like grevilleas, banksias, wax flowers and mint bushes. For striking architectural plants, you can't go past Gyneria lilies and grass trees, with their amazing blackened trunks. And for fabulous low-maintenance tub plants, dwarf acacias like ‘Limelight’ and ‘Green Mist’ are winners.”

There are many stunning Australian native plants to choose from, here is a top 30 list of some of the most popular.

1. Australian daisy (Brachyscome)
2. Banksia (Banksias)
3. Bird's nest fern (Asplenium australasicum)
4. Bottlebrush (Callistemon)
5. Flame pea (Chorizema)
6. Cycad (Macrozamia)
7. Elkhorn and staghorn fern (Platycerium)
8. Gum tree (Eucalyptus and Corymbia)
9. Everlasting daisies (Xerochrysum bracteatum)
10. Fan flowers (Scaevola aemula)
11. Fan palm (Licuala ramsayi)
12. Finger lime (Citrus australasica)
13. Grass tree (Xanthorrhoea australis)
14. Grevillea
15. Hakea
16. Happy wanderer (Hardenbergia violacea)
17. Illawarra flame tree (Brachychiton acerifolius)
18. Kangaroo paw (Anigozanthos)
19. Kangaroo grass (Themeda australis)
20. Lilly pilly (Syzygium smithii)
21. Mat-rush (Lomandra)
22. NSW Christmas Bush (Ceratopetalum gummiferum)



Perfect as ground cover, the Swan River daisy (Brachyscome iberidifolia) is one of the most popular Australian native flowers, with delicate mauve, white and blue flowers. Highly adaptable, they grow just about anywhere but prefer well-drained soil in either full sun or half-sun. Some plants are more drought tolerant and frost tolerant than others.

Banksia (Banksias)



Flowering in shades of greenish white, yellow, orange and red, the banksia spans ground covers, low-growing shrubs and low-branching trees. Attracting bees and birds to the garden, banksias need full sun and well-drained, sandy soils. Water

regularly after planting but once established they are low maintenance and can withstand dry conditions. Use a controlled release fertiliser formulated for natives.

Bird's nest fern (Asplenium australasicum)



With a leathery rosette of foliage, the bird's nest fern is easy to grow and can be used to create a rainforest effect in the garden.

According to Australian Plants Online, each frond may grow between 1 to 2 metres on mature plants. Bird's nest ferns prefer a full sun or partly-shaded position. They're also ideal for growing indoors in a container.

Bottlebrush (Callistemon)



A low-maintenance plant, the distinctive vivid red flowers bloom in spring and summer, proving irresistible to bees and birds. A fast growing shrub, bottlebrush prefer well-draining soil and a full sun position.

Flame pea (Chorizema)



These evergreen shrubs produce masses of spectacular orange/and or red pea-flowers throughout spring. They grow in light, well-drained soil with full sun or partial shade. They don't tolerate frequent wet conditions, but benefit from a good soaking in summer.

Cycad (Macrozamia)



With dark green palm-like leaves which grow up to one to two metres, these slow-growing plants are ideal for rockeries. They are best grown in well-drained sandy soil. Larger cycads are happiest in full sun.



Heatstroke in Cats and Dogs

Causes, symptoms, prevention & treatment

As temperatures soar, a common issue that all caring pet owners should be aware of is heatstroke (also known as heat stress).

With the heat of the summer months, the number of cats and dogs visiting the vet due to this condition rises.

Unfortunately many pet owners do not even realise that their cats and dogs can overheat when the weather is hot, and may only seek treatment at the eleventh hour.

While heat stress is more common in warmer months, it can occur at any time throughout the year even when the weather is mild.

Cats and dogs cannot respond to heat in the same way that us humans do. We have sweat glands all over our bodies that help us regulate our temperature, but dogs and cats only have a few in their feet and around their noses. Many animals rely on panting and external cooling to lose heat. Their long thick hair coats can also predispose them to heat stroke.

Because they're not able to cool themselves down as easily as us, we have to be extra careful to provide them with a cool, well-ventilated and shaded environment with access to clean fresh drinking water. Pets are very susceptible to heat stroke – and it can happen a lot faster than you may think.

What is heatstroke? Heatstroke is a state of hyperthermia (elevated core body temperature above the normal range) resulting in heat injury to tissues. Heatstroke occurs when heat generation exceeds the body's ability to lose heat. What are the main predisposing factors for Heatstroke?

A warm/hot, humid environment with inadequate ventilation (e.g. due to weather conditions or animals being left in an unventilated room or car)

Inadequate shade



Inadequate drinking water
Excessive exercise
HEATSTROKE IS A VERY SERIOUS, LIFE THREATENING CONDITION: IT CAN CAUSE DAMAGE TO YOUR PET'S INTERNAL ORGANS, SOMETIMES TO THE POINT WHERE THEY STOP FUNCTIONING AND CAN BE RAPIDLY FATAL – IT REQUIRES URGENT TREATMENT

Preventing heatstroke
What are the main predisposing factors for Heatstroke?
Help your best friend keep their cool and enjoy Summer with a bit of knowledge and a backup plan. As long as you take into consideration the following rules, both you and your pet can enjoy the Summer safely:

Have a cool, well-ventilated space for your pet. Good ventilation is critical because many animals lose heat by panting (evaporative cooling) which relies on good air flow. Outdoor pets should also always have access to shade.

All pets should have access to plenty of fresh clean drinking water at all times.
Never leave your pet in a car as temperatures rise extremely quickly even on mild temperature days and can kill pets rapidly.

Avoid exercising animals in hot weather.
Avoid hot sand, concrete, asphalt areas or any other areas where heat is reflected and there is no access to shade.
Be aware of the symptoms and look out for the signs in your pet. These

include:

- Panting which increases as heatstroke progresses
- Droping, salivating
- Agitation, restlessness
- Very red or pale gums
- Bright red tongue
- Increased heart rate
- Breathing distress
- Vomiting Diarrhea (possibly with blood)
- Signs of mental confusion, delirium
- Dizziness, staggering
- Lethargy, weakness
- Muscle tremors
- Seizures
- Collapsing and lying down
- Little to no urine production
- Coma

If you suspect your pet has heatstroke or they are showing signs of heatstroke: Know how to do Emergency First Aid at home if you suspect your pet has heatstroke. Initial emergency treatment at home should aim to normalise body temperature.

Remove your pet from the hot environment immediately.
Apply or spray tepid/cool water onto the animal's fur and skin. Then apply a fan/fanning to maximise heat loss.
Wetting down the area around your pet can also help.

Don't use ice-cold water or ice as this may worsen the problem.
Then take your pet to the nearest Veterinarian immediately.
Heatstroke is an emergency – always see a vet. Even if your pet looks like they may be recovering or you just suspect they might have heatstroke they should still always be

checked by a vet.

How do vets help pets with heatstroke?

Vets are trained to assess the severity of the heatstroke and then provide emergency medical treatment as required.

They will check your pet's body temperature and vital signs and then instigate emergency treatment which may include:

- Putting your pet on a drip (intravenous fluids)
- Cooling treatments e.g. cooling enemas
- Supplemental oxygen
- Medication as required
- Blood tests to check organ function
- Ongoing monitoring and treatment as required
- What are other predisposing factors for heatstroke?

All animals are susceptible to heatstroke so owners need to make sure that they take active steps to prevent it. However, some other reported predisposing factors can include:

- Obesity
- Brachycephalic anatomy (flat-faced breeds) such as Pugs, English bulldogs, French bulldogs, Persian and Himalayan cats, among others
- Breathing difficulties/respiratory disease – laryngeal paralysis, collapsing trachea
- Heart problems/ Cardiovascular disease
- Neurological disease
- Age extremes (young or old)
- Thick/long hair coat – e.g. long haired breeds
- Excessive exercise
- Dehydration

SPORTS RESULTS

RESULTS GOLF

Branxton Veteran Golfers Results 3-12-20 Stableford

Div 1 Winner G Noble 31 pts (SOD) R/u G Jones 30 pts 3rd M Ryan 29 pts
Div 2 Winner G Geason 30 pts (c/b) R/u B Smith 30 pts 3rd S Condran 29 pts
Ladies Div Winner N Busch 27 pts R/u R Friis 24 pts 3rd M Hunt 21 pts
NTP Ladies - R McCarthy Gents - T Seamer Members draw - Not won
A heavily overcast, warm day presented comfortable conditions for players participating in to-day's event. Indications are that the new format is showing signs of improved flow and reducing the playing time. Congratulations to Greg Noble on winning his division and achieving the "Score of the Day", and a well done to all other winners and place getters.

LN Bootes, Hon Sec Branxton Golf Club Saturday, 5 December 2020 STROKE MONTHLY MEDAL - STROKE

Field: 56
Winners A Chris Zawirski 64
Grades A Lee Heuston 69
Grades A Paul Bush 70
Grades A Greg Noble 71
Grades B Robert Hale 67
Grades B David Hodges 69
Grades B Geoff Geason 69
Grades C Garry Cuthbert 65
Grades C Andrew Keogh 68
Grades C Gary Walsh 72
Balls 17 Distributed down to score: 74
NTP
A GRADE S ECCLES
B GRADE J BURGESS
C GRADE A KEOGH
Saturday's Monthly Medal proved to be quite a challenge for most of the field with only 7 players breaking their handicap on the day on a day where a nett 74 was good enough to win a ball. Chris Zawirski had a great round to win the overall monthly medal with an outstanding 64 nett—a round made even more special considering the game was played with full length tees and some tough pin placements. Lee Heuston showed his class once again to win A Grade with his nett 69 (a par round). The 17th hole typified his ability to overcome any obstacle—apparently his ball was plugged at the top edge of the 17th green—it took him 3 goes to even place his ball as it kept rolling down the hill—he then proceeded to putt it across the edge and into the hole for a birdie—way to go! Paul Bush



Eastern Espresso Team

continued his recent stellar form to finish runner up with his nett 70 with Greg Noble returning to form to finish third with his 71. Bobby Hale returned to the winner's list to win B Grade with an excellent 67 nett, with Dave Hodges and Geoff Geason filling the minor placings with their 69 nett scores. Garry Cuthbert had the day's second-best nett score of 65 to easily win C Grade, with Andrew Keogh continuing his recent good form to finish second with his 68, whilst Gary Walsh continues his comeback finishing third with his 72. The Nearest the Pins went to Steve Eccles, John Burgess and Andrew Keogh. Steve's shot to the last finished within a metre—a great shot especially considering the pin was at the back of the green. Mick Martin enjoyed the 7th sinking a long bomb—always a memorable putt on this tricky green.

Branxton Golf Results Saturday, 12th December Peter Matthews Memorial 2BBB

Winners: Kerrie Fry and Zach Hayes 54 pts
Runners Up: Andrew Keogh and Peter Mackenzie 47 pts c/b
Third: Robert Miller and Gary Walsh 47 pts
4th: Trent McGee and G. Geason 47 pts
5th: R. Alley and David Matt 46 pts
6th: Dave Kinch and Nick Wheeler 46 pts
7th: Dave Hollis and Darren Mathers 46 pts
8th: Rod Moylan and G. Tearle 45 pts
9th: Steve Eccles and Marcus Ryter 45 pts
10th: Chris Zawirski and Ted Zawirski 44 pts c/b
NTPins:
A Grade: Rod Wilton
B Grade: G. Geason
C Grade: Lennie Porter
Ladies: P. Muller
All players who didn't win a prize won a ball. Saturday's Peter Matthews Memorial 2BBB competition was strongly supported with over 80 players enjoying the game on a fine, cool day. Many players knew Peter well recalling many memories of Peter especially on game day such as his morning coffee before each game, his love of a cigar and the many golfing trips he organized over the last few years. We sincerely thank the sponsors, River Realty, for donating \$500 for this annual event. The convincing winners of the day were Kerrie Fry and this year's B Grade Club Champion, 15 years old Zach Hayes who recorded an amazing score of 54 pts. Both played beautifully, especially Kerrie who showed glimpses of the talent her brother Mark and nephew Corey possess. Zach didn't need to complete many holes as his partner

regularly scored so well. The rest of the field was very tightly bunched with Andrew Keogh and Peter McKenzie finishing runners up with their 47 pts, just ahead of Gary Walsh and Robert Miller. Prizes went down to 10th place where 44 pts was needed. All other players won a ball. Next week's event is another 2BBB event with a Volunteers thank you dinner and drinks event being held on Sunday, 20th December at 6.30.

**Hunter Valley Golf Club
Sunday 6th December**
Bass Masri from Bardwell Valley GC has won the Weekly Challenge with a massive 45 points from Kane Robertson 41 & Hieu Le 3rd with 40 points. Ball winners were: Steve Piggot 37, Dylan Palmer 37, Anthony Wilkinson v37, Jai Kumar 36, Mick Barrett v36, Matt Delforce 36, Chris Stebbing v35, Nick Dunn 35, Josie Richardson v34, Karen Smith v33, John Parish 33, Marjo Kummeling 33, Karl Brown v32, Mark Harry 32 & Tony Krishna 32 c/b

Tuesday 8th December
Paul Smith produced one of his best to win the Tuesday Stableford with 42 points from Shortland Waters visitor Jake Middleton 40 and Paul Campbell 3rd with 39. Ball winners were: Peter Wilton v38, Craig Middleton v38, Michael Ridgeway v36, Steve Wright v36, Mick Martin v35, David Michael Menzies v35, Jason Cowburn 34, David Peel 34, Robert Logue 34, Wayne Barber 34, Ken Scott-McKenzie 34, Simon Nicholson 33, Dennis Donn 33, Bruce Matthews 33, Peter Franks 33, Geoff Sweetman 33, John Stewart 33, Ian Newell 33, Rod Wilton v32, Col Bradley 32, Caleb Porter v32, Tim Bedford 32, John Bennett v32, Jason Capararo 31, Dave Fury 31, Damien Porter 31, Jason Bear 31, Ken Harris 31, Wayne Burgess 30, Steven McNab v30, Matt Delforce 30, Stephen Bear v30 Darrell Porter 29, Peter Perkins 29, Phil Darcy 29 & Wade Frith v29 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins went to Dennis Donn (3rd) Robert Wilton (4th) Robert Logue (8th & 17th) & Wayne Barber (10th)

Wednesday 9th December
The first of the Ladies Summer Stablford events has been won by Jill Slatter with 35 points on count back to Brenda Mannix with Melita Watson 3rd with 34. Ball winners were: Dale Hamilton 33, Isabel Skeates 33, Mary Fortey 30 & Jeanette Irwin 29 c/b. The Ladies will continue with the Summer Stableford events.

Thursday 10th December
The Vets Stabrose event has been won by Dave Archibald & Norm Barry with 55 points from Greg Harder & Peter McIntyre 54 on count back from Muz & Steve Piggot also on count back.

Ball winners were: S Rawlings & J Pascoe 54, E Powell & R Williams 53, A Bender & Jock 53, T Bell & R Hannah 53, J Kolbas & M Radny 52, K Wright & W Burgess 52, M Barrow & P York 52, D Donn & G Burke 51, D Gellwiler & G Morris 51, G Proszkowiec & M Bartzak 51, J Tancred & J Fagg 51, K Blackett & A McKenzie 51, Grub & Troll 51, Curly & Wazza 51, G & J Irwin 50, S Peel & P Snaddon 50, R Findley & Spot 50, A Neale & J Grayson 50, B Chambers & D Bradley 50, Bindii & B Freeman 50, R Wilson & B Matthews 50, S Ling & P Perkins 50, J van Den Berg & K Dick 49, R Newton & I Newell 49, G Smith & T Bowie 49, J Hogg & T Caban 49, D Harley & Boss 49, R Carft & L Meyn 49, D & J Schofield 49, K Bartlett & Ruff 48, J Stewart, R Talbot & P Smith 48, L Clack & J Ramsden 48, G Amlöh & D Blackburn 48, G Donaldson & J McLoughney 48, Fluff & N Peterson 48, D Peel & K Smith 47, P Threadgold & C Tancred 47, W Cowan & P Ireland 47, W Drayton & P Bullock 47, D Porter & K Coleman 47, C Taggart & K Gibson 46, C Somerville & K Gilbert 46, Gunner & G Arnold 46, G Marsden & D wand 45, R Boyd & J Harrison 45, D Prestomn & W Berry 45, G Clarke & P Payne 44, J Carmody & W Barber 43, R Logue & K Harris 42 & D Fury & G Sweetman. Nearest-the-Pins went to J Grayson (3rd) B Freeman (4th) L Meyn (8th) K Dick (10th) & Pam Snaddon (17th). Next week the Vets will play a 4BBB Stableford

Saturday 12th December
A coolish day was laid on for the Saturday Medley Stableford much to the delight of those contesting. A Grade went to Ashley Baverstock from the Waratah GC with 38 points on count back to Adrian Kent, B Grade to Graham Morris with 'the round of the day' 40 points from Wayne Drayton 37 and C Grade to Paul Neuss with 39 from Bill Mitchell 38.

Ball winners were: Danny Schofield 37, Matt Merlo 37, David Delaney 37, Nathan Sweeney 36, David Peel 36, Alex Hannah 36, Richard Craft 36, Alan Provenzano 36, Nick Dunn 36, Brian Connolly 35, Troy Wallis 35, Peree Watson 35, Hieu Le 35, Paul Bullock 35, Evan Powell 34, Doug Wand 34, Simon Nicholson 34, Keith Stirrat 34, Paul McCudden 34, Stephen Zok 34, John Parish 34, Peter Puerta 34, Dean Freebairn 33, Bruce Chambers 33, Matt Delforce 33, Tracy Morison 33, Steve Piggot 33, Col Somerville 33, Melita Watson 33, Anthony Girling v33, Max Hindmarsh 33, Peter Huckfelt 32,

Damien Porter 32, Gary Arnold 32, Greg Harder 32 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins went to

Paul Bullock (3rd) Adrian Kent (4th) Mick Gilbert (8th) Jeremy Holden (10th)

& Mike Carter (17th). Next weeks event will be a Blue Tee Challenge.



Fishing Club Final Showdown

The final fishing weekend for 2020 has come to a close and some impressive weigh-ins saw some big scores logged. Scotty Beckett fished offshore near Broughton island and off the beach at Hawks Nest and came out on top for the weekend with 199.5 points (Salmon, Tailor, Flathead, Snapper, Teraglin). Steve Nevin finished the year with a horse full of riding with 135.9 points (Snapper, Flathead, and a Big Blue Groper), and Andrew Jacobs also scored over 100 with Flathead and Snapper.

Thanks to all the members for their efforts throughout 2020 and the generous sponsors for their backing: Bottlo Greta, Harvest Bistro Greta, Sea Shanty Rutherford, GoCon Rural, and McDougall Concreting. (pictured Scott Beckett and Steve Nevin)

Fishing Club Seal Rocks Results

Beach launching was the key to success in the November Seal Rocks trip away. Micah Platt fished off his jet ski and won the weekend with 4 nice Snapper and 95.4 points (Biggest was over 5kg pictured below). Troy Field who launched his boat came in second with 91.5 points (Flathead and Squire). Tracey Miller fished well for the ladies with 54.2 points (Trevally,

Bream, Salmon). It was also good to see some of the other categories populated: Catch and Release: Robert Barnes 52cm Salmon, Kye Barnes Speared a 0.36kg Bream, and Tom Field speared a 0.58kg blackfish. Another good fish to report was young Dominic Platt's 2.69kg Salmon off the beach. Steve Nevin was quoted as saying one of the highlights for the fishing club in 2020 was the Saturday afternoon on Lighthouse Beach as the sun was setting seeing about 20 members all park up and fish in a big row it shows the club unity is going strong. Some important upcoming dates are:

Friday (midnight) 22nd January to Tuesday 26th January 2021-FIRST 2021 OPEN FISHING WEEKEND Thanks to all the members for their efforts throughout the years and the generous sponsors for their backing: Bottlo Greta, Harvest Bistro Greta, Sea Shanty Rutherford, GoCon Rural, and McDougall Concreting.

Week 7

Week 7 of district cricket saw Greta/Branxton first grade jump into fourth place on the Coalfields Cup ladder after their hard-fought victory over Mulbring. Third Grade are still searching for their first win, Fourth Grade Blue picked up a much needed win, with Fourth Grade White going down. First Grade got one back on arch-rivals Mulbring by 2 wickets at Miller 1. On a beautifully prepared Chris Charnock wicket that was made a contest in every aspect of bat and ball, Mulbring batted first, and even though Greta/Branxton grassed 9 catches they managed to restrict the Marlins to a modest 154. Brent Watson (2-25 off 6) continued his recent good form with the four-piece, Pat Andrews (1-13 off 5), Andrew Bercini (1-16 off 5), Cliff Newling (1-38 off 9) all snared a wicket each, with Mark Bercini (5-34 off 8.5) picking up his first 5-fa since Halley's Comet last went past the earth's vicinity. Third grade were defeated by 76 runs by Bellbird at Carmichael 2. Bellbird made 130 batting first, with brothers Aaron (5-17 off 6) and Brett (3-35 off 10) Stephenson bowling tidy spells. Greta/Branxton were dismissed for just 54 in reply, with Will Young making 33. Fourth Grade Blue were too good for Supporters by 7 wickets at Miller 2. Supporters were all out for 66 batting first, with Riley McKewen (3-12 off 5), Doug Engel (3-21 off 8) and Daniel McCann (2-23 off 7) doing the majority of the damage. The Blues wasted no time reeling in the small target, passing it in the sixth over after losing 3 wickets. Engel completed a fine all-round game with 22, with McCann (16no) and Ben Shaw (15no) completing the formality. Fourth Grade White went down by 6 wickets at the hands of Chelmsford Hotel at Drain Oval. Greta/Branxton were all out for 68 batting first, with Mitch Fallon leading the way with 24. James Allerton was next best with an unbeaten 13. Chelmsford lost 3 wickets in reply, with Fallon (3-22 off 8) grabbing all three wickets.

Points Tables 2020-21

Coalfields Cup Valley 33, Bellbird 30, PCH 24, Greta/Branxton 24, Wine Country, Glendon 21, Piranhas 18, Mulbring 15, Creeks 15, JPC 9. **First Grade** Bellbird 22, Wine Country 18, Greta/Branxton 17, Mulbring 14, Piranhas 11. **Second Grade** Chelmsford Hotel 33, Wine Country 29, Bellbird 28, Greta/Branxton 21, Piranhas 19. **Third Grade** Wine Country White 40, Piranhas 33, Bellbird 32, Wine Country Blue 31, Mulbring 29, Greta/Branxton 25.

Fourth Grade Chelmsford Hotel 43, Bellbird Maroon 36, Bellbird White 32, Cessnock Hotel 32, Greta/Branxton Blue 31, Wine Country 25, Piranhas 21, Supporters 20, Greta/Branxton White 17.

Club Championship Bellbird 322.00, Wine Country 301.00, Greta/Branxton 249.20, Piranhas 204.40.

FROM BACK PAGE

Dixie Duggan Day Raises Over \$10,000 for Charity



Players from all teams



Southers Stars Team



Central Strikers Premiers



Greta Giants Team

BRANXTON GRETA VINEYARDS

The News **SPORT**

Dixie Duggan Day Raises Over \$10,000 for Charity

By Mark Bercini

Greta/Branxton United Cricket Club's annual Ron "Dixie" Duggan day was played at Miller Park on Sunday 29th November.

In the 19th year since it began back in 2002, the traditional Greta vs Branxton format was replaced with a four-team conference format, with the Central Strikers captained by Greg Andrews, Southern Stars led by Joey Butler, Eastern Espressos skippered by Josh Dagg, and Greta Giants fronted by Connor Thomson all representing the areas of our thriving metropolis. The main purpose of the day other than bringing the club together, was to raise awareness for men's mental health, suicide prevention,

making it easy to access help, and to ensure that the help offered is practical, professional and appropriate. The charities that were donated to on the day were Mates in Mining, Black Dog Institute, Beyond Blue and Lifeline, with over \$10,000 raised for these organisations. The Ten Over Comp round robin format saw the Strikers and Giants win two of their preliminary games each to advance to the decider.

In sweltering conditions where the mercury pushed 40 degrees, the Giants batted first and posted 3-76. Skipper Thomson led the way with 24no, with Darren Holz (20), Brett Bridge (18) and Dan McCann (14) all

contributing. The Strikers breezed to victory in reply to claim the shield with 9 balls to spare, with brothers Pat (38no) and Reuben (37no) Andrews passing the target without losing a wicket. Many thanks go to those that made donations, in particular Bloomfield Group and Rix's Creek lodge who made significant contributions, and those who bought tickets in our hundred club draws. To our umpires and life members Peter MacKenzie and Peter Bridge for officiating in the tough conditions, and to all club members including our healthy crop of talented juniors for participating to make the day so successful.



■ Greta/Branxton United Cricket Club's Life Member Peter Bridge presents the winning shield to Strikers Captain Greg Andrews, with club president Sean Wright (left) and tournament organiser Josh Dagg (right). More photos of the day inside back page.

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