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Counting continues NSW Local Government elections Major ‘Battle’ for mayor in Maitland continues..

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Philip Penfold & Loretta Baker; either could be mayor at this stage



THE 2021 Local Government elections in NSW are now down to the pointy end with counting making snails progress, particularly in the Cessnock LGA.

The mayoral contest in Cessnock, Maitland & Singleton has one certainty, one near certainty & a cliff hanger. Sue Moore (IND) in Singleton is a certainty

having 38.47% of the vote, as of last Tuesday, with (ALP) Tony Jarrett (24.12%) & (Independent), Danny Thompson (23.84%), battling it out for second prize. Cessnock is a near certainty with (ALP) Jay Suvaal taking 42% with his nearest rival, (IND) Ian Olsen on 27.41% (as of last Tuesday). About a third of the votes

have been counted & preferences will determine the day. Suvaal is in a prime position but not a certainty. Minor placing's in Cessnock saw, as of last Monday, John Moores (LIB) with 18.3% & Janet Murray (GRN) 12.25%. Maitland is the cliff-hanger between incumbent Mayor (ALP) Loretta



Jay Suvaal, probably to be elected Mayor Cessnock

Baker & (IND) Philip Penfold.

As of last Tuesday there were about 220 votes in Penfolds' favour having stolen the lead on Monday evening.

The mayoral battle in Maitland is a re-run on the 2017 election with Baker edging Penfold out. Penfold said on social media on Monday afternoon it may still be difficult for him to succeed, with preferences more likely to go against him.

"Though it's nice to be in front at present," he said. It is increasingly clear that the result will not be known for at least a week or two, with neither leading candidate appearing able to secure a majority on the primary vote. Looking at the ward results in the Cessnock LGA there are 3 seats that could go either way.

It appears Ward A will have James Hawkins (ALP), Paul



Sue Moore, to be re-elected Mayor Singleton Council

Dunn (LIB) & Jessica Jurd (IND).

In Ward B you have Anthony Burke (ALP) and Ian Olsen (IND). The third seat could go to either John Moores (LIB) or Jeffrey Crebert (ALP).

In Ward C it will be Ann Sander (ALP) & Karen Jackson (LIB) but the third seat is very tight between Sophie Palmowski (ALP) & Daniel Watton (IND).

In Ward D you will have Rosa Grine (ALP) & Michael Hill (ALP). The third seat will be either Paul Paynter (IND) or Harold Slade (LIB).

Singleton is very hard to judge as it will come down to preferences which is hard to determine as most candidates are independents. The only certainty is Danny Thompson (IND), Malinda McLachlan (SFF) & Tony Jarrett (ALP).

Maitland again is hard to predict with any certainty. Maybe Sally Halliday (LIB) in Central ward, maybe Ben Whiting (ALP) & Peter Rarnham (IND) in East ward, maybe Robert Aitchison (ALP) & Michael Cooper (IND) in North ward & again maybe Mayoral candidate Ben Mitchell (LIB) in West ward (Ben has claimed a seat on his social media site).

Speaking to representatives from the Libs, ALP & IND; they all had a very similar complaint that the NSW Electoral Commission are counting very slowly & their scrutineers reporting some very questionable informal vote determinations.

Cessnock Mayoral candidate (ALP) Jay Suvaal said that the informal vote is high on the back of the state government decision not allowing 'how-to-vote' pamphlets to be handed out at the polling booths; you had to be 100 metres from the polling booth to be able to do so.

The declaration of the poll is set for the 21st December 2021, at this stage.

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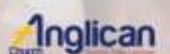
Christmas Services

Anglican Church Branxton Greta Lochinvar

Blue Christmas
19th December ~ 6pm
St John's Branxton

Christmas Eve 24th December
Family Service ~ 4pm ~ St John's Branxton
Carols ~ 10.30pm to 11.30pm ~ St John's Branxton
Midnight Mass ~ 11.30pm ~ St John's Branxton

Christmas Day 25th December
Holy Communion ~ 9am ~ Holy Trinity Lochinvar



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Trading times over Christmas & New year

BRANXTON



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

- Friday 24th Dec 7am to 6pm
Saturday 25th Dec CLOSED
Sunday 26th Dec CLOSED
Monday 27th Dec 8am to 2pm
Tuesday 28th Dec 8am to 2pm
Wednesday 29th Dec 7am-7pm
Thursday 30th Dec 7am-6pm
Friday 31st Dec 7am-6pm
Saturday 1st Jan CLOSED
Sunday 2nd Jan 7am to 7pm
Monday 3rd Jan 8am to 2pm



The Rotary Club Of Maitland invite you to join them and celebrate.....

The Tamworth Country Music Festival. Saturday 22nd January 2022

SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

The Rotary Club Of Maitland vintage rail tour will be departing Telarah Railway Station at daybreak (exact timetable to be confirmed closer to the date). Passengers will have a choice of departure points, these departure Stations will need to be confirmed when booking a ticket. The rail journey meandering northwards takes you through some spectacular and varied scenery. The Murrurundi Ranges in particular is always a favourite with travellers.

The Tamworth Country Music Festival is Australia's largest music festival and the 2022 Festival should prove to be an unforgettable day as they celebrate the 50th anniversary of Country Music in Tamworth.

The ticket cost of \$120 per person includes the following:

- Return rail travel on a privately hired vintage train.
A light breakfast served onboard, the breakfast consists of a bacon and egg roll; tea/coffee or orange juice.
Complimentary tea/coffee or orange juice on return trip.

Travellers are advised to purchase a light meal to take onboard for return trip as departure will be late afternoon. Light snacks are available for sale onboard (ie chips; sweets etc). Full Bar Facilities will operate during the train travel. NOTE - No BYO as train is now fully licensed.

To obtain further information or secure tickets, please contact Rotarian Malcolm Knight on 0402 853 765

If you wish to travel in a group, you will need to state this at time of booking.

Profits from the day will be donated to HMRI for further research into Juvenile Type 1 Diabetes & the



Anglican Op Shop Christmas closing dates

We will be closing on the afternoon of Tuesday 21st December and will re-open on Tuesday 11th January

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our wonderful Customers and Volunteers!



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REFLECTIONS

John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

Luke 3.16

In the region around the Jordan River, John the Baptist, baptised people with water. His was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin. Repentance is an acknowledgement of past wrongs and a commitment to make changes for the better. And the question that was on the lips of the people was "what should we do?" This is a question that we continue to ask, even in our own time. The answer to the age-old question is that we are to have compassion and show love and mercy on those who have less than we do. We do not need to take up the lifestyle of John the Baptist, wandering the desert, wearing clothing made of camel's hair and eating locusts, but we are called to be happy with what we have and to share with those who do not have as much. We are to be honest and maintain integrity in all our dealings with other people. We are not to use our position or power to make demands, as this diminishes others, rather than showing love and mercy. We are always to be as generous as we are able. John the Baptist reminds us that he is preparing the way for the Lord, and that even he is "not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals." John tells the people around the Jordan that the one coming "will baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire." We know that it is Jesus that John speaks of, and we know the personal cost to Jesus of our salvation.

As we continue our journey through Advent to Christmas, we look forward expectantly to the birth of Christ, the baby in the manger, child of Mary, Son of God, Emmanuel, God with us. May we remember the first Christmas, when Mary and Joseph were unable to find lodgings in Bethlehem, so that Jesus being born in a stable. May we make room for Jesus each day, to be born into our lives and grow in our hearts. May we recognise the miracle of life and do all that we can to honour and protect it. As we reach out in love to others, we prepare the way for Jesus, we show his compassion, love, and mercy, we become the hands and feet, the heart and mind of Jesus in the world today. Though we too may not be worthy to untie the thong of Jesus' sandals, the gift that we receive, when we receive Jesus into our hearts, when we allow him to be born into our lives, is that he makes us worthy. John the Baptist cautions us that we must repent, that we must be willing to make changes and to turn from the things that separate us from God. Jesus was born as one of us so that we may know God and the everlasting love that he has for us. Each day, may we remember that Jesus is the hope of the world, that he brings everlasting peace to those who trust in him, and that his love for us is eternal. May we be blessed so that we may be a blessing to others.

May the blessings of God rest gently upon you. Blessings, Reverend Nicole

Emergency Phone Numbers

Table with 3 columns: Dial 000 (Fire, Police, Ambulance), Police (various locations), Electricity (Energy, Hospitals, etc).

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STEVE'S

RANT

But what is Freedom?

There is and has been much talk of freedom since the start of the China Virus Pandemic. Both state and federal governments have demanded we surrender many of our previously assumed freedoms—freedom of movement, speech and religion and freedom to work and attend school. When the Pandemic was first declared, and nobody had a clue about it, except that it killed people, we were willing to give up those freedoms, trusting our leaders to make the right call. Fear of the virus and the unknown outcome made the general population compliant to total lockdowns for the period it would take to level or reduce the so-called curve of daily cases reported.

It was a reasonable call to allow our health systems time to adjust to the unique needs for treating the pandemic and set the goal for ending the lockdowns. A month or two would see lockdowns end, and we would have organised our efforts to combat the pandemic to the point that outcomes could be predicted and more targeted actions taken. This happened, and the children returned to school, and non-essential workers could return to work. Caseloads levelled out and reduced as contact tracing improved.

Our borders were reopened to a restricted group of ex-pat Australians and exceptional cases provided they agreed to undertake two weeks quarantine. In establishing the National Cabinet,

common goals were set, and each state provided enhanced and targeted health care and quarantine facilities. Except for Victoria, this worked well. In Victoria, the system was faulty, and the virus became firmly established in the Melbourne community. Victoria was again locked down, and the other states closed their borders to Victorian residents. It was from this time in mid-2020 that the whole national cabinet system began to break down as State Premiers and Chief Ministers hit their stride in becoming little dictators. Chief health officers were given extraordinary powers. And we saw State Premiers using the alleged health advice of these bureaucrats to make stupid statements and accusations, to egg on their prospects for the state elections in Queensland and Western Australia. Questions arose as to the viability of the Federation with the pundits predicting Western Australia going feral.

As the Federal Government provided funding for the consequences of the State Premiers stupidities, except for NSW, the State and Territories all went feral. ScoMo was accused of having lost control, and it was not until Astra Zeneca became available that the Federal Government regained relevance. The white-anting of Astra Zeneca by health bureaucrats I have covered before, but this



deplorable activity set up a situation of immense disparity in the take-up of vaccines. It all hit the fan when, perchance, the China Virus D variant arrived in NSW via Aircrew overnighting in Sydney. The need to get vaccinated became urgent, and as you would expect, ScoMo gave areas of most significant infection priority for the expensive and challenging to store Pfizer vaccine. NSW was given a more substantial share vis-a-vis population than other states because of the severe outbreak of the D variant in Western Sydney. Other states, particularly Victoria, were up in arms over this and were critical of the PM for providing vaccines where needed most.

At every turn in this sorry saga, the Premiers have placed the blame for delays, unfair distribution and funding woes on the PM rather than accept responsibility for their stupidity. Now that the pandemic is under control and life should be back to normal, state premiers are still making draconian decisions and taking every opportunity to hang on to the totalitarian authority they assumed in the name of 'keeping us safe'.

In Victoria, Chairman Dan has attempted to get his emergency powers for rule by decree entrenched in the state legislature. Fortunately, the people of Victoria are not the mugs Dan takes them for. Hence the rallies and the outcry from the legal profession and the proletariat. The last two years have seen a concerted effort by our elected state and territory governments to dismember democracy and deny us our freedoms. From where is this ideological push coming?

Is it just the demented grab for power by out-of-control individuals, or is there some sinister move from the Marxists, Leninists, Lefty Loonie, Green Push for a New World Order? It is just too cute for our so-called leaders referencing the BUILD BACK BETTER, NEW WORLD ORDER, BLAH BLAH as we come out of the Pandemic.

The fear mongering will now switch from the Pandemic to Climate Change in order to scare people. Climate Catastrophe will be the new bogeyman. COP26 in Glasgow was the best pointer to what the collective socialist movements are attempting to do—attended by the countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – a treaty that came into force in 1994. COP stands for Conference of the Parties.

The UN aim is to have a World Government. Our freedoms are to be taken from us, and we are to be made entirely dependent on the state from birth to death, led by the UN and socialist movements worldwide. So, why is Australia a member, still beholden to the UN?

Welcome to the BRAVE NEW WORLD. A dystopia where the unelected elite will rule over all proles, serfs, slaves, navvies and servants. We won't have to make any decisions; we live where we are told, work at what we are told, eat what we are given, and inhabit a virtual world for recreation. The younger generation are well on the way.

A futuristic universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through the corporate, bureaucratic,

technological, moral, or totalitarian regime, just what George Orwell warned of in 1949.

If you read his book 1984 and didn't read past THE END.- The appendix is on newspeak or political correctness. George writes old speak, or English, with newspeak, a linguistic shorthand that reduces the world of ideas to a set of simple, stark words. "The whole aim of newspeak is to narrow the range of thought." It will render dissent "literally impossible because there will be no words in which to express it." Just what the gender-benders and cancel culture movement are doing; modifying our language. Not while I am alive, and I am sure that goes for everybody who the Socialist Green Left has not brainwashed.

Stay alert and be careful who you vote for next year. Just so you know, the Greens have four fundamental principles: ecological sustainability, grassroots democracy, social justice and peace and non-violence—a utopian socialist dream. They want everyone to have a good life and to protect the environment. That is the best Motherhood Statement I ever heard, something that we can all agree on.

BUT remember this; peace is not possible unless you are better armed, better trained and more prepared to fight than your adversaries.

Equality cannot be achieved because individuals all have different abilities, ambitions and social advantages or disadvantages. The only equality is when everybody is reduced to the same level of poverty.

The Environment has to be managed, but it also must produce the products to feed, house and

clothe us. Social Justice is only achieved in a democracy that encompasses all classes, races, religions and levels of society.

Grassroots Democracy is the dictatorship of the tribe, where the least qualified and motivated are given the levers of power, and the unelected bureaucracy reigns supreme.

And lastly, to make all this work requires abundant, reliable energy.

You may not know of Spiro T. Agnew. He was a one-time Vice President of the US. Forced to resign his position over corruption. Spiro is credited with a quotation of unusual foresight and merit "A spirit of national masochism prevails, encouraged by an effete corps of impudent snobs who characterize themselves as intellectuals."

Cheers, Steve



with Mike Lowing

Had occasion to get very cranky last week. I wanted to speak with the Newcastle Divisional Engineer, Transport for NSW (used to be RMS, RTA & DMR). I went looking for a phone number on their web site but to no avail.

I appears to me, and this is not the first time, these organisations would prefer not to have direct contact.

After that I needed to hire a car from Maitland. When I rang I was greeted by a national answering service after being given 5-options. Finally spoke to the Maitland mob. They have a number on their web site, which is a Maitland phone number but it goes straight to their national answering service.

Following that I spoke to a good mate who is around my age. He was wanting to rent a residential property and in all cases was referred to an on-line site. One he said was a series of questions 15 page long which he didn't complete.

As he said why couldn't he go to the offices concerned and apply in person. He also admitted to being a little on the slow side with modern communication technology.

The 2016 census revealed that in the Cessnock LGA 30% of residents did not have a smart phone or access to a computer; not lack of money but demographics viz., the older set. Lets get some customer service back-would be nice!

Cheers, Mike



DA or BA to council at some stage will have pulled some hair given the ridiculous amount of detail required. How is it possible that council approved a project costing some \$2.5 million dollar in total being woefully under investigated about its actual realisation?

The whole exercise stems from a rather ludicrous pipe-dream that a heritage cycle way was needed between the Greta and the Branxton Memorial. First it was the Greta-Branxton Memorial cycleway, honouring the local boys from the area who signed up, then summarily it became the Hunter ANZAC Memorial Cycleway, disregarding the locals who paid the ultimate sacrifice and it was supposed to be a tourist attraction. How inappropriate to sell something designed for sombre reflection as a tourist attraction. Without any proper community consultation this project was pushed through, irrespective of the fact that the amount of constituents walking between the two townships can be

counted on the fingers of one hand per MONTH while at most 3.7 people cycle between them per week and that includes me. Anyone with a bit of common sense could see that this project would require some significant engineering work, let alone agreements with property owners. If there ever was a gross mismanagement of community funds, this comes close. As for the \$2.5 million dollar earmarked for the cycleway, it will most likely be no longer available after the umpteenth study into the most suitable route has been completed. So much more useful work could have been done with this money.

D. Wesseling, North Rothbury

Letters Continued Page 9



**The Editor, The
BGV News,
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Branxton
NSW 2335**

or

emailed to

thenews@hotkey.net.au

Be Pool Safe this summer!

With the weather warming up, Cessnock City Council has launched a campaign urging residents to *Be Pool Safe this summer*.

294 people drowned in Australian waterways and backyard pools between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021. Tragically, deaths among children aged 0-4 years increased by 108% compared with the previous year. Cessnock City Council's General Manager, Lotta Jackson would like to remind residents it is a requirement for all pools, including portable and inflatable pools, to be separated from the house and yard by a compliant pool barrier. "Pool barriers are there to help protect young children from accessing the pool area when unsupervised." You must have a four sided

fence around any pool or spa that can be filled with more than 30 centimetres of water. This includes inflatable and portable swimming pools. Portable or inflatable pools that have a capacity greater than 2,000 litres require Council approval. "Sadly, 20 seconds and a few centimetres of water is all it takes for a child to drown. In the end, nothing can replace the constant supervision of children by a responsible adult," added Lotta.

Here are some other important rules for pool owners:

- * once finished using a portable or inflatable pool, empty and store them
- * never prop open pool gates or remove latching devices
- * pool fencing must be a

minimum of 1.2m high (1.8m if the boundary fence is part of the pool fence)

- * ensure the fence is not climbable - horizontal rails should be greater than 90cm apart and objects from around the barrier that provide a foothold must be removed
- * ensure an up-to-date resuscitation (CPR) chart is visibly located within the pool enclosure and learn how to perform CPR
- * all swimming pools must be registered - Council may issue fines of \$220 for unregistered pools.





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You can find a festive gift within our large range of **giftware, Nativity Sets and our La Belle Ruby beauty salon gift vouchers** are always the perfect gift for the special someone who has everything!

This Christmas, Our Team is hosting a **Santa colouring competition** for the kids in our Community. There are great prizes to be won, so pop in with the kids to collect theirs!

Cosmetic promotions in store 50% off ALL Raww and Nude By Nature.

Our Salon team is preparing our Community for the upcoming joyful events that Christmas brings. Napoleon Perdis Professional Makeup \$55 and Full body Spray Tans \$25 valid until 31/12/2021. Our salon is open Monday to Saturday and closed on all public holidays. This is a friendly reminder to book your appointment before the new year!

Piggott's Pharmacy Huntlee opening hours over the Christmas Holidays:-

- 24th Dec 9am to 5.30pm
- 25th Dec CLOSED
- 26th Dec CLOSED
- 27th Dec CLOSED
- 28th Dec CLOSED
- 29th Dec 9am-5.30pm
- 30th Dec 9am-8pm
- 31st Dec 9am-5.30pm
- 1st Jan CLOSED
- 2nd Jan CLOSED
- 3rd Jan CLOSED

For further opening hours, upcoming promotions, and new arrivals we recommend you follow our Facebook page @PiggottsPharmacyHuntlee.

Our Pharmacy is very proud to be servicing our wonderful community through our second Christmas and our team would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a safe, Happy and Healthy New Year.



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Saturday 9am – 5pm, Sunday 10am – 4pm

Members say ..



SINGLETON COUNCIL General Manager Jason Linnane

Deck the halls, hang the stockings and get ready to rock around the Christmas tree – Christmas on John Street is making its long-awaited return to Singleton Town Centre on Friday 10 December and we can't wait to see everyone there. I'm not ashamed to say that this is my favourite time of the year, and after a year that brought plenty of challenges, there's no better event than our community's biggest Christmas party for everyone to come out and celebrate the simple joy of being together. All the fun kicks off at 6pm when John Street is overtaken by live entertainment including bouncing elves and clowns, Singleton Town Band, Urban Dance, Salt Dance Studios, food trucks, wine and beer stalls from Broke Fordwich and Around Hermitage Pokolbin, and more than 60 market stalls alongside Baker's Alley with kids' activities including jumping castles, balloon twisting, face painting, and a petting zoo from Sweet Valley Baby Animals. And of course, Santa Claus himself will make a visit with free professional photos at the Singleton Rotary's North Pole grotto. The event will end with a bang with a dazzling fireworks display – sponsored by Yancoal – in Rose Point Park at 9pm. Please note that in line with NSW Government requirements, proof of double vaccination is required for entry to the event. You can also take advantage of late night shopping at the event to tick off your gift list, or keep festive during all the days in December with retailers across Singleton for a sleigh-full of perfect presents for under your tree. Council has teamed up with Singleton businesses and the Singleton Business Chamber to help spread plenty of cheer for our community as well as the local economy this Christmas, and our Gift Guide is available now to showcase something for every stocking this year – without having to leave our local government area. Cheers,

Jason Linnane
General Manager



Member for Cessnock Clayton Barr MP

Raising the BARR VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING

The concept of being able to end one's life, when the end is near and the end is certain, is often called euthanasia. It also is referred to as dying with dignity and voluntary assisted dying. Last week in the NSW Parliament the first step was taken in making this process legal and available for very specific and certain patients.

All voters and residents in our area are entitled to know that I am a firm believer and supporter of the concept of euthanasia, VAD and/or DwD. I spoke in Parliament on the issue and my speech can be found online, on the NSW Parliament's website. Unfortunately, due to ill health, I was unable to actually be in Parliament to cast my vote in support, but I do not want anyone to be confused or unsure of my position.

I have received hundreds of messages from local people that support the concept of euthanasia and wanted it to become law. I also received messages from a small number of people that were absolutely against the idea. I thank all of you for having your say. Patients that are terminally ill, palliative, will only be able to access assistance to bring about their deaths earlier after multiple meetings with medical doctors and mental health specialists. The rules and conditions around this option are incredibly tight and controlled. And remember, nobody is making anybody do this – it is voluntary. Go well, all of you.

UNDER NEW LAWS COVID CAUGHT AT WORK WILL BE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

When COVID arrived on our shores early in 2020, Governments needed to do many things to make our state and country as safe as possible. One of the changes made in NSW included the presumption that an essential worker, that caught COVID, would be assumed to have caught it at work and would be covered under workers compensation.

Keep in mind that what was deemed essential work at that time included people

working in supermarkets, petrol stations, other retail outlets, medical workers, emergency services, etc. In each of these work places, it was the rule back then and continues to be the rule, that all residents in our state should be able to access these basic services. Going forward these same services will be accessible to all citizens, whether they are vaccinated or not.

The proposed change to the laws will require these essential workers to prove that they caught COVID at work, instead of the current rule which automatically assumes that they did. At the same time as the State Government is putting forward this significant change, the same Government is also planning to remove QR codes and some restrictions around face masks as well as giving greater freedoms to unvaccinated citizens. Proving where you caught COVID will be just about impossible.

Roughly 1 in every 100 people that catch COVID will die. By comparison about 1 in every 100,000 people that catch the flu will die. Catching COVID at work is a much more serious workplace "injury" than the Government is trying to suggest. And now it looks like we are on the cusp of a new strain of COVID which might be more deadly than the Delta strain. The cost of covering our essential workers under workers compensation plans, even using the State Government's own wild and ridiculous figures, is 14c in every \$100 of pay/wage/salary. This seems like a pretty small price to pay for the certainty of care for our workers who are not allowed to refuse service.

For enquiries regarding the State Government or its departments, or to put you in contact with someone who can help, please contact my office. My office can be contacted by phoning 4991-1466, by email to cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au or call into 118 Vincent Street (PO Box 242), Cessnock 2325.

"www.facebook.com/claytonbarrmp", Twitter and search @claytonbarrmp www.claytonbarr.com.au Cheers Clayton



JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Member for Hunter

The Parliament is sitting this week for the last time

this year. The energy and loudness of the building is increasing as an election looms large. Normally the Parliament would return in early February but talk of a March 2022 election has put that in doubt.

Consequently, MPs and Senators are on fast-forward, trying to make sure that what they want done in the Parliament before the election is done and dusted. That includes me. Twenty-five years and nine months after my first speech in the House of Representatives, I will make my last contribution. I don't know how many I've made but it would run into the thousands.

A valedictory speech is an opportunity to reflect on one's time in the Parliament, to formally say farewell, and to extend words of thanks to the many, including colleagues, Parliamentary staff, Party supporters, the electorate's residents, and of course, family.

I am proud of my time in the House of Representatives. It has been a great privilege working with local community, business, education, and union leaders to create a more modern and diverse economy and all the benefits that brings. It has been a privilege to help those in need of assistance. I remain your local member until election day. It's my view that the Prime Minister will call a March election in late January, but only if he feels he can win. If he feels things are not going well for him, he'll wait and set a May election. Easter makes April difficult. Either way buckle-up, you're about to be bombarded with political speak!

A Government Bill designed to implement a voter identification regime caused a big fuss in the House of representatives last week. Most readers will at first blush, believe requiring voters to produce proof of identity at the polling booth makes sense. Many have made the obvious point that you can't even get into your local club for a drink without it. Which brings me to my first point. Those who have found themselves at a venue which requires ID without their licence will know how inconvenient it can be. That in itself, is not reason to oppose the Government Bill. But you can be sure, many voters who already find going to vote an inconvenience, will be further inconvenienced. More important, there is concern voters in remote areas will be particularly disenfranchised, Indigenous Australians amongst them. This would be a shame.

None of these would be reason to oppose voter ID if there was a problem with voter fraud. But there is no such problem. The Electoral Commission reports that double voting is very rare and there is no

evidence it has influenced any election outcomes.

Our thoughts have been with those effected or threatened by flood. We've been again reminded Mother Nature is strong and sometimes cruel. We rarely make it through summer without natural disaster of some kind somewhere. So it seems a good time to again pay tribute to our emergency services personnel – both paid and volunteer. They are as generous as they are selfless, committed as they are courageous. They are our heroes, and we thank them.

Cheers, Joel



CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL General Manager Lotta Jackson

It's not too late to donate to our annual Christmas Gift and Food Appeal, with donations being accepted until this Friday 10 December. Residents are encouraged to donate new, unwrapped toys and non-perishable food items which can be dropped off at Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Libraries or Council's Administration Building on Vincent Street, Cessnock. All donations this year will be given to the Kurri Kurri Community Centre who will deliver to those doing it tough in the local community. I encourage people to give what they can as 2021 has been a challenging year for many and those in the community who were already experiencing hardship have been doing it especially tough.

It's certainly beginning to feel a lot like Christmas! Our huge program of free family-friendly Christmas events kicked off last week. From music, movies, arts and crafts to competitions, magic shows and stories, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Look out for pop-up Christmas carol performances happening across the LGA. You can find the full program of events at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/ChristmasInCessnockCity. Our Economic Development team has another fantastic prize to give away this month as part its ongoing 'Support Local' campaign. Throughout December, residents can go into the draw to win a \$500 gift card by posting their favourite activity to do in the Greater Cessnock area to Facebook or

Instagram and use the #SupportLocalCessnock.

Whether it's visiting an amazing attraction, restaurant, park, pool, playground, or sports field, they want to hear from you! Visit the Advance Cessnock City website for full terms and conditions.

We're currently seeking community input on a project to help identify and map important agricultural land, along with significant agricultural landscapes and views across the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA). The Cessnock LGA is known for its rural character and picturesque viticultural and agricultural landscapes. As our region grows, urban development and other activities have the potential to encroach on these important areas.

Council is looking to retain, protect and enhance these significant areas to preserve the identity and character of our LGA, maintain and develop regional employment and food security. As part of this, we want to hear from the community about what areas they consider to be significant, and why. Residents are encouraged to have their say via an interactive map which is available via the [Have your say](#) section of Council's website until Monday 3 January 2022.

We are also seeking community input via an online survey to inform the development of a draft Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. A key action from Council's Climate Change Policy, the strategy will provide a framework for improving environmental sustainability and action on climate change in the Cessnock LGA, and identify key actions Council will take to achieve the goals it sets out. Resident feedback and input from key stakeholders will help to capture community sentiment and allow us to identify priorities most important to the region. The survey can be found on the [Have your say](#) section of Council's website until this Friday 10 December. Following the survey, residents will have the opportunity to attend community workshops to further inform the draft strategy.

I would like to advise that Council offices and facilities will have changed operations over the holiday period. Council's Administration Building on Vincent Street, along with Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Libraries, will be closed from 12pm on Friday 24 December until 9am on Tuesday 4 January 2022. The Cessnock Waste Management Centre and Hunter Valley Visitor Information Centre will be closed on Christmas day only, and will then return to normal operating hours. The Cessnock Performing Arts Centre will be closed from 12pm on Friday 24 December until 9am on

Monday 10 January 2022.

As this will be our final column for the year, I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone in our community a safe and happy holiday season. This year has certainly been a challenging one for many and I hope the festive period is an opportunity to spend quality time with your loved ones.

Cheers, Lotta



Member for Upper Hunter Dave Layzell MP

FUTURE-FOCUSED PLAN FOR BALANCING LAND USE IN UPPER HUNTER

Security and certainty for the Upper Hunter's diverse range of industries is the cornerstone of a draft 20-year plan released by the NSW Government for the community's feedback.

The draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041 would guide land use priorities and planning decisions in the region over the next 20 years. The economic diversity of Upper Hunter has meant balancing land uses is always a priority and this Plan would give industries from equine through to energy and resources security and confidence in their future operations.

Repurposing old mining and power sites will be a major drawcard for jobs and investments, and we want to hear from the community on our strategies to explore these opportunities in Singleton and Muswellbrook.

To support the Upper Hunter's beef and dairy industries, the Plan would implement long-term strategies to capitalise on new opportunities in both domestic and Asian markets.

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes said the Plan was being renewed with a greater focus on supporting local economies and achieving a goal of net zero emissions & one of the Plan's most exciting goals is to create 15-minute communities, where people can access everything they need within a walk, bike ride or short drive.

Cheers, Dave

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News

P: 4938 1773

Pharmacist Advice *with*

Here's how to cure your festive hangover

Feeling dry-mouthed and nauseous as you wake from a booze-fuelled slumber? Here's how to cure that hangover for less than a dollar.

We've been drinking more alcohol than ever this year because of the pandemic. With possible lockdowns looming in some parts of the country in these final days before Christmas, chances are some of us are more tempted to reach for a cold drink than ever before.

But the last thing we need right now is a raging headache – so what can you do to defeat one? There is a lot speculation about what we can do to alleviate these dreadful symptoms. December and January are the booziest time of the year for Aussies, according to ABS data.

It shows alcohol consumption is up in Australia with the average person drinking 9.7 litres of pure alcohol last year.

WHAT CAUSES A HANGOVER?

The Alcohol Hangover Research Group (AHRG) says lazy scientists have been neglecting hangover research for years. It adds that this has led to a common misconception that they are caused by dehydration – which has not been backed up by any credible scientific research.

Rather, AHRG scientifically define a hangover is “a combination of mental and physical symptoms, experienced the day after a single episode of heavy drinking, starting when blood alcohol concentration approaches zero”, on its website. Basically, drinking takes all the things our body needs and replaces it with pure nastiness.

AHRG's Dr Sally Adams told *The Australian* there are, in fact, many causes, including dehydration, but also inflammation, electrolyte imbalance, sleep disturbance, alcohol metabolism and low blood sugar.

Brilliant, but how do we get rid of this dreadful feeling? Here are just some of the ways you can give your hangover a kicking. **DRINK PLENTY OF WATER**

GP Dr Zac Turner says the easiest and most effective way to beat a hangover is to drink water – and lots of it.

“Drink water, plenty of water, during the night and then plenty of water before you go to bed. You will be amazed how you feel the next day,” the news.com.au columnist



advises.

SNACK ON NUTS

Dr Zac also suggests eating a meal high in natural fats before you kick off your session, explaining natural fats slow down your gastric motility. “The longer food stays in your stomach, the slower the alcohol gets absorbed in your stomach. So load up on salmon and avocado,” he said. Snack on a couple of handfuls of nuts while you're drinking too as these contain B vitamins which rapidly get depleted when you drink. “Just be careful not to load up on salted nuts that will dehydrate you even more,” he warns.

DOSE UP ON ELECTROLYTES

Another way to beat your hangover is to get some electrolyte's into you. Dr Zac recommends sipping on a cold glass of coconut water for a major potassium boost and advises against a sugary sports drink. News.com.au's Lifestyle Editor Rebekah Scanlan prefers to add two electrolyte tablets to a glass of water before a drinking session – or as a last resort, does it before going to bed. “Aldi sell a pack of 20 for \$5.49 which is \$10 cheaper than the leading chemist brand and works out at just 27c a tablet,” she said.

“It's my go-to and really helps take the edge off that dreaded fuzzy feeling. Not bad for 54c.” It's also a hot tip shared by several social media users who rave about the affordable hangover cure. **IBUPROFEN, WASHED DOWN WITH GRAPEFRUIT JUICE**

Nutritionist Hannah Richards said drinking grapefruit juice was the best way to speed up your recovery – after taking an Ibuprofen. She said the juice limits the activity of the enzyme that breaks down drugs, giving the Ibuprofen more of a chance to get to work.

Richards said to avoid aspirin which can upset your stomach.

PICKLE JUICE

Eastern Europeans and Russians are renowned for their drinking ability so they should have a good cure too, right?

In the midst of bleak Baltic winter, vodka-swiggers swear by drinking pickle juice – which allegedly replenishes the electrolytes your body lost the night before and perks you up a bit.

KITCHEN STAPLES

If you have a well-stocked pantry and fridge you most likely have what you need to cure any hangover. You may feel like a greasy burger or fry-up but steamed asparagus helps break down the alcohol, enabling toxins to exit your system.

Eggs are also a winner as they have a high level of cysteine, an amino acid which helps breakdown toxins. Bananas are also good as they are full of potassium, and ginger is a well-known cure for nausea, so try adding some to fresh juice or water. Finally, try a spoonful of honey as it is made up of fructose which helps breakdown the alcohol.

GO FOR A RUN

This would be at the bottom of most people's to-list on a chronically-hungover sweltering Aussie summer day. But apparently, if you make sure you're nicely rehydrated, a bit of light exercise sparks up your metabolism and releases endorphins. However, no scientific studies have proved this – so we're just going off speculation from crazed gym junkies here. **BREAKFAST BEERS**

Many people swear by the classic “hair-of-the-dog” technique but medics advise otherwise, saying you should give 48 hours before drinking any more alcohol to give your body time to recover.

Dr Zac said you should always drink responsibly and remember the best way to avoid a hangover is not to drink at all.

New funding available for community-led bushfire recovery and resilience projects

Cessnock Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Grant

Round 2 applications are NOW OPEN

Find out more and apply at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/BCRRF**Applications for Round 2 of Cessnock City Council's Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Grant (BCRRF) are now open.**

The funding is designed to support small scale, community-led projects that promote recovery, resilience, disaster preparedness and wellbeing support following the 2019/20 bushfires that impacted parts of the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA).

The BCRRF is open to community groups, sporting groups, schools, charities and not-for-profit organisations based in the Cessnock LGA, and groups can apply for grants of up to \$10,000.

Cessnock City General Manager,

Lotta Jackson said Council is dedicated to providing ongoing support to Cessnock's bushfire-affected residents.

“Listening to those most heavily impacted by bushfire is vital to effective recovery and resilience. While it has been almost 2 years since the bushfires, we recognise the need for continued support of community-led resilience and preparedness projects.”

Council's Community Recovery Officer, Melissa Boucher said the grants are also aimed at supporting communities to overcome the social impacts of bushfires.

“Through Round 1 of the BCRRF, Council funded 9 fantastic projects led by community groups. We'd love to see more groups apply for Round

2 so we can get behind locally driven initiatives that not only focus on physical resilience and preparedness but social and mental wellbeing.”

Applications close at 5pm on Friday 14 January 2022. Successful applicants will be announced by Monday 7 February 2022 and projects must be completed by 30 June 2022.

Visit www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/BCRRF for grant guidelines and to make an

application. Enquiries should be directed to Community Recovery Officer, Melissa Boucher on 4993 4100 or council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au.

Council's BCRRF grants are made available via funding from the joint Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Thomasina Miers' recipe for a festive guajillo and pineapple adobo roast ham

A cheering alternative Christmas ham with a spicy, sweet-sour Mexican glaze of pineapple and chilli **Guajillo and pineapple adobo roast ham**

This makes a little extra pineapple adobo, but it lasts ages and is thoroughly delicious. Prep 15 min Cook 2 hr Serves 8 1 x 2kg smoked gammon off the bone

1 white onion, peeled
8 cloves
1 cinnamon stick
A few bay leaves (optional)
500ml stout
3 tbsp olive oil
Sea salt

For the glaze
30g dried guajillo chillies (about 4-5)

½ tsp cumin seeds
5 cloves
400g pineapple flesh, roughly chopped
5 large garlic cloves, peeled
2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tbsp cider vinegar
1-2 tsp chipotles en adobo
80g demerara sugar
125ml orange juice (I prefer freshly squeezed)

Put the ham in large saucepan, cover with cold water and bring quickly to a boil. Once at simmering point, tip out the water – this process will rid the

ham of its excess salt. Stud the onion with the cloves and add to the pan with the cinnamon, bay and stout. Fill the pan once more with cold

water so that the ham is completely submerged, and bring to a boil. Simmer gently for 10 minutes for every 500g, plus an extra 15 minutes for good measure, then drain and leave to cool. Once cool, skin the joint, reserving the skin for crackling.

Meanwhile, make the pineapple glaze. Wipe the guajillo chillies with a damp cloth, cut off the stems, then tear open the chillies and shake out the seeds, which can go in the compost. Put a heavy-based skillet or frying pan over a medium heat and, when hot, toast the chillies for about 20-30 seconds a side, until fragrant and beginning to darken. Be careful not to burn them or they will taste bitter. Transfer to a bowl, cover with hot water and soak for 15 minutes.

Grind the cumin and cloves in a mortar or spice grinder. Drain the soaked chillies (discard the liquid) and put them in an upright blender



with the ground spices, pineapple, garlic, cinnamon, vinegar, chipotles en adobo and sugar. Blitz a few times, then slowly add the orange juice a few tablespoons at a time and blitzing in between, until you have a wonderfully smooth paste.

Heat the olive oil in a medium pan over a medium-high heat and, once hot, cook the sauce for a few minutes, pouring in 125ml cold water when it starts to splutter. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 20-25 minutes until nice and thick. Season with sea salt, then, if you prefer an extra-smooth glaze, strain through a fine sieve and leave to cool. An hour or so before you want to eat, heat the oven to 200C (180C fan)/390F/gas 6. With a sharp knife, score the fat of the ham in a diamond pattern, taking care not to cut through to the flesh underneath, then spread with a thick layer of the glaze. Pour 100ml water into a roasting dish that's large enough to hold the ham sitting up on a small trivet (to stop it sitting in the liquid), then roast for 10 minutes for every 500g, spreading the ham with more glaze halfway through.

Once cooked, slice the ham as thinly as you can and serve with the remaining sauce to hand around – there will be plenty.

And for later

The guajillo pineapple glaze is amazing in a cold-cut sandwich, ladled over a cheesy jacket potato, and perfect on chargrilled celeriac steaks or wedges of hispi cabbage.

WONDERFUL

Letters to the Editor

ECONOMIC INERTIA PLAGUES CESSNOCK

After 9 years as an elected councillor on Cessnock City Council with a stated desire to see economic reform happen and jobs growth take Cessnock from one of the lowest Socio-Economic status (SEIFA INDEX) in Australia to one of the best has been shown to have got us nowhere. My dreams of seeing an economic recovery for Cessnock have been dashed. In the meantime (same 9 year period) we have witnessed exponential growth at Steel River Mayfield West, Beresfield and Thornton Industrial Estates, Rutherford and Anambah Industrial Estates in Maitland, while in Cessnock we have seen only two job creating businesses open on the Weston Industrial Estate and Alfabs Engineering an established business going from strength to strength. Cessnock was one of the wealthiest coal producing areas in Australia and we are now witnessing the closure of the last remaining underground mines at Donaldson/Abel-Tasman and Yancoals Austar mine at Paxton gone, leaving the community with only one opencut mine at Buchanan still operating. On top of this we witnessed the closure of the Hydro Aluminium Smelter at Kurri Kurri in 2014 leaving an economic hole of some \$50 million in wages to the Cessnock area and hundreds unem-

ployed. Due in part to various political and industrial issues this plant closed many years before its use by date.

The 900, hectare Hunter Economic Zone was approved back in 2000 yet

due to concerted efforts by the local Greens, NIMBY's and INERTIA by council it has never got off the ground. On the upside we saw the opening of the Hunter Expressway in March 2014 and finally the start of the new town Huntlee after 8 years being held up in the courts by Greens, NIMBY's and INERTIA by council.

The Rosehill development at Millfield was finally approved and sold off, Wyndham Ridge at Greta also approved and is now sold off. We also saw the approval granted for Cliftleigh Meadows and Avery's Rise in the Heddon Greta area.

We don't lack the potential for jobs growth as our residential block sales attest but we need to get industrial land up and selling. The redevelopment of the Hydro Smelter site and Black Hill Industrial parks need to be fast tracked to create employment opportunities before anymore large scale residential land is released.

As I see it, all that the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA) is becoming at present is a satellite residential suburb of Newcastle and the wider Hunter areas. There is little in the way of serious planning approvals being undertaken for industry and jobs attraction.

Both of the Cessnock LGA business districts, Cessnock and Kurri Kurri are under stress with no large anchor tenants to

create strong retail activity and we have witnessed what a one industry town is like when disaster hits, with the tourism sector 'Wine Country' brought to its knees during the COVID epidemic.

During my two terms on council, we have seen many of the old timber bridges replaced, White Bridge Mulbring, Vermont Road Mulbring, Bow Wow Gorge Sandy Creek Road, Millgang Bridge at Ellalong, Crawfordville Bridge, Cuneens Bridge at Wollombi and Lomas Lane to name just a few. Major upgrades of Bridges Hill Park, Miller Park and currently Rotary Park in Kurri Kurri are completed or nearing completion due to funding grants.

In Kurri Kurri there were two serious flood problems solved in Heddon Street and Aberdare Street. My disappointment is that not very much new Kerb and Guttering was undertaken and Booth Street remains a problem after the 2015 Super Storm. The Heddon Greta Route 195 road bottleneck to Maitland remains as unfinished business. I would like to personally thank all those people in Ward D who had faith in me to represent your interests and concerns over the past nine years.

In closing, I would hope that in the short term the link roads from the Hunter Expressway get the upgrades they deserve and that the Hydro and Black Hill industrial sites get approved and we see job creating enterprises in the area.

I feel that the council is more interested in social and community issues and if it doesn't change its attitude to economic development, ECONOMIC INERTIA will continue to PLAGUE Cessnock into the future.

Rod Doherty, Maitland

- ADVERTORIAL -

Ms Eclectique gives local performers a stage this Christmas

The Lower Hunter is in for a treat with Ms Eclectique bringing nightmares and Noel to Weston Workers Club in *A Nightmare Before Christmas* on Saturday, 18 December.

Hosted at Weston Workers Club (1 Government Rd, Weston), the show is an irreverent romp through the silly seasons from Halloween to the end of Yuletide.

Organisers are excited to "get the show on the road" after multiple cancellations, to give local performers a stage and, in particular, to entertain those outside of Newcastle CBD.

"After a very successful Halloween show, we decided to merge the highlights from Halloween with some Christmas capers and take the show on the road for the people of the Lower Hunter to enjoy," emcee and producer Ms Eclectique said.

"So *A Nightmare Before Christmas* was born, and it's set to be bigger and better than our last show. We've got burlesque performers, aerial artists, circus, theatre, song and dance - you name it, we've got it.

"I believe in creative freedom, and give my cast a free rein to entertain. Everyone is welcome at my shows, whether you're a performer or part of the audience - both are equally important in the creation of a great show."

Ms Eclectique encourages people to support local artists and is thrilled to have an all local line-up, including the sensational Stormy Tempest who calls Abermain home.

"The last 18 months have been very difficult for performers. This will be a great night out helping the Hunter get back on its feet by supporting Weston Workers Club and your local performing artists.

"Don't hesitate - grab your friends and buy some tickets for a pre-Christmas outing you'll never forget!" Ms Eclectique said.

Doors will open at 6 pm for a 7 pm start. The audience is encouraged to wear their festive best - or aim for chills and thrills in a Halloween costume.

For more information, head to Ms Eclectique's [Facebook page](#).



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What to do if you have been involved in a motor vehicle accident?

Being in a motor vehicle accident can be very unsettling and can often cause shock to those involved. In some accidents, the passengers are fortunate to escape without injury. For others however, a motor vehicle accident can cause life changing injuries that require ongoing treatment and rehabilitation. The purpose of this article is to provide some useful tips as to things that we identify as being helpful at the time of the accident, or shortly afterwards.

Some essential things to keep in mind are: - **CHECK ON THE OTHERS AND DO NOT LEAVE THE SCENE** Make sure that the passengers and the driver of the other vehicle are not injured and needing immediate medical treatment. If they are, render assistance or call emergency services. If someone is complaining of pain, do not move them until emergency services arrive.

You should never leave the scene until you have exchanged information with any other driver involved and in the accident. If you are at fault, do not flee the scene as there will be serious criminal charges applicable to you. **CALL THE POLICE** Police will attend certain crash scenes. They must attend a scene where someone is killed or injured, a party fails to stop and exchange particulars, or a driver is allegedly under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This criterion is known as the "Major Traffic Crash" criteria.

Where crashes do not meet that criterion, Police will still attend if they are needed to direct traffic or deal with hazards, if a bus or truck needs to be towed, if there are hazards present (e.g.

leaking fluids, damages to power poles, etc) or there are other issues requiring Police attendance, such as aggressive behaviour.

If Police attend the scene, they will allocate an Event Number. You should ensure you record this number. If Police do not attend and you experience symptoms following the accident, it is important that you phone the Police Assistance Line on 131 444 within 28 days of the accident and be allocated a Police Event Number.

OBTAIN DETAILS AND TAKE PHOTOS

You should get the names, numbers, addresses, drivers licence numbers, licence plate numbers and basic insurance information from all drivers involved. If there are passengers, also obtain their names, numbers, and addresses.

Where relevant, take photographs of any damage to your vehicle as soon as possible after the accident. It can often assist in demonstrating the extent of the impact when compared to a 'before' photo of your vehicle. The photos will also assist where there is an argument as to who was at fault and can be used in Court and/or relied upon by traffic experts.

COLLECT THE DETAILS OF ANY WITNESSES

It can often be the case that following a motor vehicle accident, the question of who was at fault can be a contentious issue. If fault is likely to be an issue, it is advisable to get the details of any witnesses who may have seen the accident. You should get their name and number as they may need to be spoken to later to provide a statement. A witness can often be a neighbour or another motorist who have stopped to assist.

WITH

Gemma BUNNER BA/LLB (Hons),
Acc Spec (Personal Injury) &
Kerri SHAW B.Comm/LLB (Hons)

P: (02) 4046 1805 | F: (02) 4017 0646

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LEGAL

CALL YOUR INSURER

As soon as practicable, call your insurer and inform them of the accident. Cooperate with them and explain the facts clearly, as well as the extent of your injuries. You do not want to mislead them in any way – they could rely upon this later and withdraw your cover if they find out that you have not been truthful.

SEEK MEDICAL TREATMENT

If you have sustained any injuries or if symptoms persist following the accident, it is important to seek medical advice from a hospital and/or your General Practitioner as soon as possible. We find in many of these cases, the sooner you obtain treatment, the sooner you will recover from your injuries and lessen the potential for the injury to have long term, permanent impacts upon you.

LODGE YOUR PERSONAL INJURY CLAIM FORM WITH THE CTP INSURER

If you have sustained injuries in a motor vehicle accident you can make a claim for personal injury benefits. To make a claim for personal injury benefits, you can apply online using your Service NSW Account. You can also apply by completing an 'Application for Personal Injury Benefits' form and sending it to the CTP insurer. After you notify the insurer, you should contact them to seek approval for treatment.

GET PROPER LEGAL ADVICE

If the injury is serious and it is likely that you will have ongoing loss of income and treatment needs beyond the first six (6) months, you should seek legal advice. Most personal injury lawyers in New South Wales offer 'No Win – No Fee' agreements and an initial free consultation so that you can be properly advised on your entitlements. *Cheers, Kerri*

SQM Research's *Christopher's Housing Boom and Bust Report 2022*, released on Thursday 25/11/21, forecasts that dwelling prices across the nation will then drop in the second half of next year, most likely as a result of further intervention by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) banking regulator, which could happen as soon as December this year. "Our expectation is that the serviceability buffer rate will go from three per cent, maybe up to 3.5 per cent," said Louis Christopher, managing director of SQM Research. "And/or APRA will announce



Brisbane is tipped to be the biggest winner in Australia's real estate market in 2022. Photo: iStock/Yongyuan Dai

some specific actions specifically targeted towards investors, because at the moment it's the investor market which is largely driving prices up." The report said the biggest price shrinkages would be felt in the Sydney and Melbourne property markets, which Mr Christopher believed were the most overvalued and, historically, the most susceptible to home lending restrictions. While Australia's first and second-most populous cities will witness the greatest cooling and regression in prices, it is Brisbane that is forecast to dominate dwelling value growth in 2022. The city is tipped to increase by eight to 14 per cent.

Mr Christopher said Brisbane would also be affected by APRA intervention, but to a lesser degree. "There still will be a slowdown, but Brisbane is roaring ahead at the moment with 22 per cent growth at this point in time," he said. "So Brisbane will be impacted by APRA intervention, but not to the extent that Sydney and Melbourne houses will be.

"And the reason why we say that is for two specific factors: firstly, Brisbane house prices, while being overvalued by our measurements, are nowhere near as extremely overvalued as Sydney and Melbourne at this point; and secondly, we're expecting ongoing migration outflows from Victoria and, to a lesser extent, New South Wales, into Queensland all through next year, and that will create an increase in underlying demand."

While interstate migration away from Sydney and Melbourne could impact its real estate sectors well into next year, Mr Christopher said, it could be slightly offset by overseas migration. "While there will be negligible increases in underlying demand in Victoria and New South Wales, there will be a pick-up from an increase in net overseas migration, which typically goes to Sydney and Melbourne first," Mr Christopher said.

The return of international migration, coupled with relative affordability and supply compared to houses, would translate to more significant price growth of units and apartments in Sydney and Melbourne, he said

Interest rates are also predicted to remain unchanged until at least until the end of 2022, which is in line with the recent decision by the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) to keep the cash rate at 0.1 per cent, and a recent statement that the RBA's board "will not increase the cash rate until actual inflation is sustainably within the 2 to 3 per cent target range".

But Mr Christopher was quick to point out that any serious increase in inflation next year could result in the RBA lifting interest rates sooner than expected. "We're very confident inflation is going to rise next year," he said. "If the headline inflation rate stays within three to five per cent, perhaps the RBA will try and hold, but if it heads towards six per cent, I think the RBA will be forced to move."

Australian property market outlook 2021 - 2022 (another view)

In the Australian property market, and generally, we are certainly living through unusual times, navigating lockdowns, business closures, and more than a little uncertainty regarding the economy.

With this in mind, it's no surprise that the one of the main concerns is how this is all going to impact the property market for the rest of 2021, and into 2022. Anyone who has bought or sold a property recently will tell you that despite the challenges described above the Australian property market appears to have been largely unaffected, with property values rising in almost every market around the country. Cities in particular have experienced exceptional growth. To date, Sydney house prices have risen over 24%, Melbourne 15% and Brisbane 20% in the last year and are predicted to maintain this double digit growth to the year end. In fact, the CoreLogic National Home Value Index reported that the annual property price growth is at its highest in 30 years. Australia's major banks

confirm this prediction of continued, if unexpected, growth, believing they are in part reflective of buyers becoming more familiar with remote viewings, and remote auctions. However, the banks are projecting a more modest rate of growth in 2022, anticipating it to settle at around 7%. Covid has additionally impacted the market in a number of new ways:

Unusually, regional values across NSW, Victoria, Queensland, and Tasmania have also lifted significantly, possibly fuelled by the ability for people to work from home and opting to move out of cities.

And due to the recent limits of movement, people are paying more attention to what's on offer close to home. Suburbs choice is becoming more important to people, who are prepared to pay a premium for those with good community and recreational facilities. Good grocery stores and cafes they can access easily, and proximity to local walks and green space, and being close to friends and family are driving decision-making.

Being in lockdown for extended periods, really makes people re-assess their home and lifestyle. When you spend most of your life inside your home, you tend to focus on what might be lacking, such as a garden, a balcony, enough rooms for people to work and homeschool, a bigger kitchen, for example. With uncertainty of our continued situation, many people are looking to upgrade their accommodation and find a property that better meets their new needs.

A more sobering perspective for the Australian property market comes from Australia's banking watchdog, APRA, whose concerns of buyers becoming unable to service their loans in the event of rising interest rates, has tightened the rules on mortgage lending. New rules affect the serviceability assessments of the lenders to ensure buyers will be able to afford repayments at a rate 3% higher than the offered rate. Additionally, the treasury is also tightening debt to income ratios.

While this is a positive move in preventing buyers from taking on too much debt beyond what they can comfortably afford, APRA advises that the move is not intended to curb price growth. Only time will tell whether what the impact of this will be in reality. What is clear, is that many home owners may be vulnerable do to a combination of over-exposure of debt and a diminishing financial buffer caused by lockdowns, layoffs, reduced hours, and furlough. Adding an increase in interest rates may be the final action that drives many into financial hardship.

It's possible that the compound effect of these events will result in more properties coming to market, that will slow growth, as depleted stock levels through the year, have been noted as a factor in driving price growth. Furthermore, the rising prices of 2021 have excluded many potential first time buyers from the market, as well as those looking to upsize, and new restrictions on lending is likely to further exacerbate the impact upon these groups. Another consideration that may well affect the Australian property market is the current construction boom. Applications for the government's Home Builder scheme was over-subscribed by a factor of 4, with 99,000 new home applications and a further 22,000 renovation applications received. This has caused an extremely high demand for trades in the industry, in turn, driving rising prices in labour. Add to this the rapid increase in the price of construction materials, delays in overseas shipments, and a shortage of materials such as timber, renovators face a minimum 15% increase in build costs compared to last year. How many of these projects will make it through to completion and how many will need to be sold remains to be seen. One thing is evident – that property value growth is rapidly out-pacing salary growth, and something has to give. A calming of property price growth in 2022 may be a very welcome eventuality. Despite ongoing attempts to forecast the peaks and troughs of the property market from a host of real estate agents, finance experts, investors, and many others, predicting the property market has always been a somewhat elusive pursuit. If we've learned anything this last year, it's this – that despite taking every potential influence into account (and we surely must all agree that the last couple of years has brought many), sometimes, you just simply cannot call it. Unexpected and unpredictable appear to be the most common words to describe the phenomenon that has been the boom on 2021. Our advice, is always that irrespective of market buoyancy, location will drive property pricing when it comes down to individual sales. The criteria of what constitutes a perceived 'good location' may change, but the concept remains solid. Secondly, we believe it's always a good time to buy property if you are investing for the long term. Any perceived over-payment due to a fleeting rise in values will dissolve over time, in the scheme of your investment. Those who decide to wait for the market to fall and invariably disappointed and often find themselves priced out of the market and wishing they had bought while they still could.



Australian housing market set to peak in early 2022 before prices fall

JAMES ROBINSON

Australia's white-hot property market is set to reach its zenith by early

2022, according to a new report.



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DINNER

Wednesday

HAPPY HOUR FROM
3PM
\$15 LUNCHESES
WING WEDNESDAY FOR
DINNER
QUIZZAME FROM 7PM

Thursday

HAPPY HOUR FROM
3PM \$15 LUNCHESES
BURGER & BEER
COMBO
POKER FROM 7PM

Friday

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\$5 SPIRITS FROM 9PM

Saturday

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FROM 9PM

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Presentation Assemblies will take place in Week 10, again in Stage cohorts. These will be recorded and shared on our Facebook page so families and the school community can share in the achievements of our students.

There are lots of things happening in the last few weeks of the year so please remember to check bags for notes and keep informed of changes and upcoming events through SkoolBag and Facebook.

Dates for the Calendar
Thursday 9th December – Stage 3 and Early Stage 1 Presentation Assemblies
Monday 13th December – Class Party Day
Thursday 16th December – Last day of Term 4



■ Kindergarten PBL



Branxton Public School

Year 6 enjoyed their end of year outing in Week 9. This year they went to Branxton Pool. They enjoyed their swim and fun times on a perfect summer's day. Not too many more days together until they are off to high school! They are now looking forward to their Year 6 Dinner in Week 10. The P&C Christmas Raffle was drawn last week, with many great prizes won by our school community. Thanks to everyone who purchased tickets. Funds raised will go towards new filtered water bubblers for our students. The amazing murals donated by the P&C have now been installed and add a splash of colour to our wonderful school.

PBL Assemblies were held in Week 9, with many students earning the coveted Power Pup Badge. Congratulations to all students. Water fun activities will take place in Stage cohorts as our PBL rewards for this term.



New Mural

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

Pair charged with more than 30 drug and firearm offences



Police have charged a man and woman with more than 30 drug and firearm offences following investigations into the ongoing drug supply in the Port Stephens and Hunter areas.

Strike Force Callard was established by Port Stephens Hunter Police District detectives to investigate the ongoing supply of prohibited drugs in the area.

Following investigations, on Thursday 25 November 2021 detectives arrested a 42-year-old East Maitland woman and a 48-year-old Campbelltown man on Devonshire Street, East Maitland.

Police searched two vehicles at the location where they located 300g of methylamphetamine and over \$55,000 in cash.

Further inquiries led police to execute a search warrant at a unit on Thompson Street, East Maitland, where police located further items including:

- more than \$12,000 in cash,
- a money counting machine,
- an electronic stun device,
- three replica firearms,
- illicit drugs including LSD and methylamphetamine, and
- two vehicles – a Holden Commodore and Jaguar XF.

All items have been seized for forensic examination.

The pair was taken to Maitland Police Station, where the woman was charged with 33 offences including supply prohibited drug (24 counts),

supply prohibited drugs on an ongoing basis, possess prohibited drug (two counts), knowingly deal with proceeds of crime (two counts), possess unauthorised prohibited firearm (three counts), and possess prohibited weapon without permit. The woman was refused bail and appeared at Maitland Local Court today, where she was formally refused bail, to re-appear at Maitland Local Court on Tuesday 21 December 2021.

The man was charged with supply prohibited drug, knowingly deal with proceeds of crime, and possess prohibited drug.

He was refused bail and appeared at Maitland Local Court on Friday 26 November 2021, where he was formally refused bail and will re-appear at the same court on Wednesday 19 January 2022.



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PROTECT YOUR BICYCLE

Whether you ride for work, sport or leisure, the loss of your bicycle can be very inconvenient and expensive. By following some simple tips, you can better protect your bicycle from being damaged or stolen.

THINGS YOU CAN DO:

- Always engrave or mark your bicycle frame with a UV pen, micro-dot or other permanent means (near the serial number) with your driver's licence number or unique identifier.
- Always record the serial number, brand and model of your bicycle and accessories and take a photo.
- Never leave your bicycle unattended and unsecured.
- Always use a good quality bike lock when parking your bicycle away from home.
- Always lock the wheels and frame to a secure object.
- Always park your bicycle in a well lit and populated area.
- Always secure your bicycle in a locked shed or inside your house when at home.

A MESSAGE FROM NSW POLICE FORCE

Triple Zero (000)
For emergencies at the following locations:
NSW, ACT, NT, QLD, VIC, WA

Police Assistance Line (131 444)
For non-emergencies

Crime Stoppers (1800 333 000)
To provide active information. It can be confidential.



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Huntlee Academy has moved



Most local residents will know that the Huntlee Academy is an active organisation working within our local community. They will see their employees doing parks & garden maintenance work, their vehicles on the move & that they have an 'return & earn' facility at their depot. They have just recently moved their depot to 1705 Wine Country Drive (just behind the North Rothbury Riot Memorial in North Rothbury) and have almost completed the move.



Even with this high visibility most of the community are unaware of the ethos of the organisation.

Huntlee Academy is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2014 to provide work, skills and higher level career opportunities for local disadvantaged people including Indigenous Australians, youth, long term unemployed, mature age workers and people with a disability. Interestingly, the Academy operates within a unique model in that it receives no direct government funding yet provides comprehensive training to all employees to ensure a steady progression of disadvantaged people are provided the tools to reach their full potential before moving out into other employment opportunities.

They equip their employees with new skills and key employment attributes & there training includes:

- % Competencies the basic skills to commence work at the academy
- % Mandatory courses, ie. safety and preliminary courses aimed at work preparedness
- % Skill sets including shorter courses
- % Certificate courses National Accreditation
- % Licenses and tickets to operate trucks, forklifts, bobcats, cars etc.
- % Personal choice courses
- % Employment skills including resume writing basic computer, interview skills.

"Huntlee Academy is committed to providing skills and training to all its employees. Our traineeships and/or fixed term 2-3 years engagements enable employees to graduate to a higher paid and more skillful long-term career outside the Academy. The Academy has committed up to 20% of all profits towards a training budget which is used to pay for a partner registered training organization (RTO) to provide training in certificate and licensed courses, academic assistance, and a dedicated jobseeker agency while still working at the Academy," said Huntlee Academy General Manager Noel Kirby.

Currently the Academy has 34 employees with 26 trainees & are looking to increase that number to around the 40 mark in the near future.

EXTRA DINE & DISCOVER VOUCHERS

Two more \$25 Dine & Discover NSW vouchers are now available to eligible residents and are valid until 30 June 2022. Check your Service NSW app with the additional vouchers appearing automatically in the Service NSW app, via SMS or email for existing digital customers. If you don't have access to the digital vouchers opt-in by calling Service NSW on 137788 and collect the paper vouchers from your nominated service centre. Dine & Discover is part of the NSW Government's economic recovery package, and so far, more than 15,000 businesses and 4.8 million customers have registered for the program.



GET KIDS ACTIVE

Parents are being urged to take advantage of the Active Kids program with \$86 million worth of vouchers still to be redeemed this year. Every school-enrolled child in NSW is eligible for two \$100 Active Kids vouchers per year towards the cost of sport and active recreation fees with around 430,000 children yet to use their 2021 vouchers. Download a voucher or get more details at www.service.nsw.gov.au



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from the Lions Den....

Upcoming Events in the Branxton Lions Calendar:

Bunnings Community meeting - Thursday 9th December between 6 and 8pm at Singleton Bunnings – you can participate in the Branxton Lions Christmas Raffle

Lions Christmas party – Seasons Festivities for Lions Club Members.

BUNNINGS BBQ – Saturday January 22nd – Singleton Bunnings – get your Lions snags!

Lions District Convention + Remembrance service – Saturday 12th February - Wyong Rugby Leagues Club.

There are also several planned events early in the New Year, including:

Membership BBQ – informal social event finding out about what Lions Clubs do

Be Connected - coaching seminars for Branxton / Greta citizens over the age of 50,

Cessnock City Council Seniors Festival – 25 March to 3 April

Lions Garden Project – Lions Australia 75th Anniversary garden

Lions Golf Day – TBA – watch this space!

Lions Awareness and Clean Up Australia Day – Sunday 6th March 2022.

Branxton Lions will be holding an event to commemorate Lions Awareness Day and Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday 6th March starting at Lions Park Branxton (opposite Miller Park).

GLASGOW COP26 – Environmental Issues
Your guide to what was achieved in the Glasgow COP26 meeting:

The COP26 summit on climate change in

November this year focused the world's attention on the urgent need to tackle climate change. It was the first large-scale multinational gathering since the start of the pandemic, drawing global leaders and more than 20,000 delegates from nearly 200 countries.

The two-week event also saw a massive mobilisation from the business and finance sectors, as well as thousands of citizens and activists, many who took to the streets in protest. But what, if anything, was achieved?

There was, for the first time, an explicit call to phase down (but not phase out) coal and fossil fuel subsidies.

There was critical progress and some positive clarity on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which was originally crafted to provide the foundation for a credible and global carbon market to help deliver on emissions commitments.

It was hoped that a pathway to the critical target of a 1.5 degree warming trajectory might be achieved, but commitments from the conference would put us on, at best, a 1.8 degree pathway. Some say this is optimistic and that it will be much higher.

It was also hoped that wealthy countries would deliver on the \$100 billion annual contributions committed to at the COP15 summit in 2009, which would help developing countries address climate change mitigation and provide resources for adaptation. Unfortunately, the developed nations admitted they would not meet this goal until 2023.

One major outcome was the magnitude and number of sectoral pledges, covering areas as diverse as forestry and transport, in which there was significant movement towards net zero emissions. Over 100 world leaders (including Australia's) agreed to end deforestation affecting



Across Australia over 1.3 million people have diabetes and 283 people are diagnosed every day. Diabetes has been named one of the Lions' 5 key focus areas and the organisation is encouraging those in their community to stay active particularly through the COVID-19 health pandemic. Lions Lap the Map event was held on World Diabetes Day 14 November.



CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY IS SUN 6TH MARCH 2022!

Why not start planning your event now? QUIET ACTIVISM

some 85% of the Earth's forests by 2030. Climate finance and adaptation funding was also a focus, with around US\$130 trillion in assets mobilised by financial institutions to drive investment in clean and green developments. Australia is co-leading the Net Zero Industries

Mission, a pledge to reduce emissions for heavy industries like steel, cement and chemicals. This mission naturally aligns Australia with its key energy and resources industries, which are searching for ways to decarbonise operations while keeping in step with the Morrison government's

reluctance to take a firm stance on coal and preferred focus on technology to achieve net zero. **Branxton Lions Club Membership**
Branxton Lions need YOUR help – we need more members to ensure we can provide optimum service to the communities

of Branxton, Greta, North Rothbury and Huntlee. Our Lions Membership Chair, Brian Thomas is searching for members of those communities for new members – if you are interested in serving the community, working in a great team and, above all having FUN, please give Brian a call on: 0417-282 440.

Name	Date of Appointment	Position
Michael Robinson	25 November 2020	President
Mike Lowing	25 November 2020	Treasurer
Kate Walsh	25 November 2020	Public Officer
Tony Gates	25 November 2020	Community
Len O'Malley	24 November 2021	Secretary
Helen Lowing	24 November 2021	Membership Manager

to local business owners. **Cllr Bob Pynsent, Mayor of Cessnock City Council** mentioned the greatest change in the local area, the Expressway. It was said: 'Unless Branxton changes it will die' and it has changed and shown many local developments such as Huntlee, and Greta. He said he was conscious of grant funding which is right across the LGA – not just in Cessnock City itself. He spoke about the need for more and bigger businesses in the area 'living and working in

the Cessnock LGA area'. Bob said he had loved being Mayor and interacting with the broader community. He has been on Cessnock City Council for 22 years. The meeting thanked Bob for his outstanding service. **President's Report:** The President of the Central Hunter Business Chamber, Michael Robinson (Hungerford Meat Co) gave his report recording the difficult trading year due to the COVID pandemic. Michael gave an up-beat assessment for 2022 listing the achievements of

the Chamber over the last year and looking forward to productive partnerships in the future. **Treasurer's Report:** Mike Lowing the Treasurer gave an accurate summary of the Chamber's financial position which showed a healthy bank balance and several projects underway. **Management Board:** The new Chamber Management Board for 2022 is printed above.



Central Hunter BUSINESS CHAMBER

Central Hunter Business Chamber AGM 2021

The Central Hunter Business Chamber AGM 2021 was held on 24th November 2021, at Branxton RSL Hall, Branxton. There was a good turnout of Chamber members and guests; those present were:

Cllr Bob Pynsent, Mayor of Cessnock City Council
Ms Lotta Jackson, General Manager of Cessnock City Council
Mr. Allan Davies, President of the Cessnock Business Chamber
Councillors: Anne Sander,

John Fagg & Rod Doherty. Carol Doherty & Karen Jackson.

Tony Chadwick, Cessnock City Council.

The Keynote Speaker was Ms. Lotta Jackson who said she had been in post at Cessnock City Council for two years as the General Manager. Lotta explained that the Cessnock City Council website is full of business information and listed all the facilities they manage. Lotta then talked about several documents that have been produced by the Council: The

LGA Local strategic plan will assist with the growth for the area; the Urban Growth Management Plan which deals with the infrastructure; the Environmental Development Plan also contains a suite of documents; the Jobs Strategy contains a great deal of information and there are 3,000 businesses (over 50% small businesses) in Cessnock LGA. On the Investment Prospectus, Lotta showed some of the information which can be used to champion and promote the Economic Growth Agenda – which is particularly of interest

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John Grisham on Judges, Innocence and the Judgments He Ignores *by Adam Liptak*

The best-selling author, whose new book, “The Judge’s List,” is about a murderous member of the bench, talks about the Supreme Court, wrongful convictions and what it means to be “review-proof.” John Grisham is an unapologetic master of the industrial-strength page turner. His latest, “The Judge’s List,” out now, is a sleek suspense novel about the hunt for a serial killer who is also a sitting judge. Speaking by phone last month from Aspen, Colo., where he had just given a talk, Grisham acknowledged that his main goal is to entertain an enormous audience that is counting on him to deliver a legal thriller every year in time for the holidays. “I’ve always been honest,” he said. “This is not literary fiction. This is popular fiction, and hopefully it’s a high quality of popular fiction. That’s what I aspire to write. I’d much rather sell books than get good reviews.” But Grisham’s interests are more varied than that comment would suggest. A former criminal defense and personal injury lawyer, he is a student of the shortcomings of the American justice

system. Grisham has, for instance, worked hard to draw attention to wrongful convictions, saying he had been inspired by the work of Jim Dwyer, a reporter and columnist for The New York Times who died last year. Grisham, 66, also had sharp things to say about electing judges and prosecutors, a practice that is commonplace in many states and all but unknown in the rest of the world. We talked about the Supreme Court, which I cover. Grisham traced a line from Bush v. Gore, the 2000 decision that handed the presidency to George W. Bush, to the efforts of Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, to ensure the appointments of President Donald J. Trump’s three nominees. The Supreme Court, Grisham said, “is a very political court.” What follow are excerpts from our conversation. They have been edited and condensed. **The genre people associate with you is “legal thriller.” Is that what the new book is?** I don’t know where that term came from. I’ve used it myself a thousand times because it seems to fit. To

me, it’s old-fashioned suspense. The legal thriller thing just sticks because someone said it 30 years ago when “The Firm” came out. Scott Turow in 1987 published “Presumed Innocent” and kind of rewrote the whole book of blueprints for great legal suspense. That was such a brilliant book. It really inspired me to finish my first novel, but I don’t recall people describing Scott’s first book as a legal thriller. It’s a great courtroom suspense novel. So I don’t know where the term came from. I guess it fits. It’s certainly sold a zillion books for me. **This is not the first of your books to feature a corrupt, disgraced or criminal judge. Does that suggest something about your general view of the American judiciary?** I have a lot of respect for judges, but I don’t like the way we choose them. Fifteen years ago, I read your series on the Ohio State Supreme Court judges. At the same time, I was researching a book that became “The Appeal,” about the buying of Supreme Court judges in Mississippi. More than 30 states elect Supreme Court judges, which is just absolute stupidity. And I was watching the lunacy of West Virginia, where they were buying judges right and left. I get very frustrated with the innocence cases that I work on through the Innocence Project, because there’s so many wrongful convictions that should be prevented by judges who are awake in the courtroom. So often — we see it thousands of times — judges are just not on the ball, and they allow stuff into testimony that has no business going in, and it’s very damaging. **I can’t help asking you about this in light of my**

day job: Do you have thoughts about the current Supreme Court? It’s very distressing. I think the Supreme Court lost so much credibility in 2000 when five Republicans on the court saw a chance to elect a president, and that’s what they did. And at that point, it became a very political court, and that has not changed over the years, certainly not in the past four years. The way McConnell was able to hijack the Supreme Court was just hard-core raw politics. And it’s probably not going to change for many, many years. It’s now the Trump court. **You mentioned your work with the Innocence Project. Say a little more about what that experience has taught you about the American criminal justice system.** It was not something I ever thought I’d get involved in. I practiced criminal law for 10 years, and we had a really good system in my little rural neck of the woods in Mississippi. I knew the cops, I knew the prosecutors, I knew the judges, and it was a very efficient system. Everybody played fair. I had a lot of clients who went to prison. They deserved it. I never had a client who I thought was wrongfully convicted. It just never occurred to me that these things were happening until — do you know Jim Dwyer? **Jim was a giant.** He wrote this obituary in December of 2004. I love the New York Times obituaries. And it was a weekday obituary. The lead story was a guy my age, my race, my background, my religion, my neck of the woods — he was from Oklahoma, I’m from Arkansas — small town, rural. And he was a second-round draft pick of the Oakland A’s in 1973, a year I thought I might get drafted. My name was never called. This guy got drafted high but, anyway, didn’t make it. And he went back to his hometown in Oklahoma and was convicted of capital murder and sent to death row by the same town that always idolized him as a sports hero. He served 11 years, came within five days of being executed. So I’m reading his obituary. He had just died after being exonerated by DNA. The story just slapped me in the face. Before long, I was in Oklahoma, in a small town. This is my only nonfiction book. It was published in 2006, and it really took me into the world of wrongful convictions, something I’ve never really thought about. **Once I got into researching “The Innocent Man,” I just realized how many innocent people are actually in prison, and there are thousands of them, tens of thousands of them. Barry Scheck asked me to join the board of the Innocence Project, and I did. We litigate coast to coast getting our innocent clients out of prison through DNA testing. And we have 375 DNA exonerations, and some of those were on death row.** The work is addictive because you get caught up with these clients. You’ve

come to know that they’re innocent and yet they’ve spent 20 or 30 years in prison for somebody else’s crime, and so the injustice is really something that still nags at me. It’s a never-ending battle that I hope I’ll be doing for the rest of my life. **It’s great to see someone, after achieving your level of success, leverage it to do important, valuable work like that.** I’ll tell you something, Adam. Every wrongful conviction case should be a book, because these are fantastic stories from a storytelling point of view because of the incredible suffering, the injustice, the wasted lives, the wasted time, the wasted money, the wasted everything that goes into a single wrongful conviction, while the real rapist, the real murderer goes free. **Do you think your legal training helped or hurt your prose style?** It was crucial, because I would never have written anything without the legal background. To survive law school, you’ve got to be able to handle the language and not be fearful of the language or the act of writing, and a lot of people are. But by the time you finish law school, you’ve written so much. And then your first years as a lawyer, you realize how much you have to write. You can probably read the first 10 pages of a book about a courtroom drama and tell if the writer is a lawyer or not. There’s some things just come naturally. You just know the terminology, the phraseology, the legal theories, the courtroom procedures. As a lawyer, you just know that kind of stuff, and I get frustrated when I read legal thrillers or legal courtroom dramas written by people who are not lawyers, because you can always tell the lack of authenticity. **One false move just destroys it.** Yeah, one bad term, one word out of place, and you think: Wait a minute, this is not the way it is. So, yeah, the legal training is crucial. And also, I don’t think I would have become a writer had I not been a lawyer. I never dreamed of being a writer. It was not something I ever studied. I never took a course in creative writing. **What’s the rhythm of your year like? Did I read that you devote part of the year to writing one book and the rest to different activities?** For years, it was one book a year. Beginning in 1991 with “The Firm,” there’s been at least one book a year since then. For years it was just the one big legal thriller that would come out in spring, because nobody else came out in spring, and bookstores love it. And then, I was busy raising kids, coaching Little League Baseball, you know, living the good life. Once my kids were gone, I had more time. After about a dozen legal thrillers, I started asking myself, can you write something else? Can you write a book with no lawyers in it? And so I started doing that. I’ve written a kids’ series and sports books. So my schedule now is to, in January, start the legal



John Grisham at a Senate hearing in 2011. On his work with the Innocence Project, he said, “It’s a never-ending battle that I hope I’ll be doing for the rest of my life.” Credit...Chris Maddaloni/CQ-Roll Call, via Associated Press

thriller. Jan. 1. I make myself start Jan. 1. I give myself six months to finish it, by July 1. And then we spend six weeks going through all the editing and rewrites and all the drudgery. Lord, I hate it, but you’ve got to do it. And then it goes to press, with a publication date in late October to catch the Christmas market, because that’s when every publisher wants the big books now to come out. And invariably by Labor Day I’m bored again, and I’m looking for something else to write and so I’ll write a kids’ book or I’ll write a sports book. I still write each morning from 7 a.m. to about noon, five days a week, and still treasure those early hours in the day, with strong coffee and a big blank screen to look at, just to be able to create stories and entertain people. I still feel very fortunate to be able to do that and have no plans to slow down anytime soon. **Your books are so enormously popular. But there’s sometimes a disconnect between that and the occasional mixed review you get. I don’t**

even know if you read your reviews, but I wonder if you think that the first thing influences the second, that it’s possible to be too popular to be taken seriously? I made peace with that 30 years ago. I made peace with the literary critics a long, long time ago. They were pretty harsh with the first two or three books. You can’t let that dictate what you write. Tom Clancy told me a long time ago, before he died, he said, “I’ve finally reached the point where I’m review-proof.” It’s a very good place to be. When you’re review-proof, the critics ignore your work and they just leave you alone. And it doesn’t matter because you have your audience. Your goal in writing is to write a book every time out that’s really going to satisfy your audience and deliver and entertain, and that’s all I want to do. *Adam Liptak covers the Supreme Court and writes Sidebar, a column on legal developments. A graduate of Yale Law School, he practiced law for 14 years before joining The Times in 2002.*

The New York Times Best Sellers

Combined Print & E-Book Fiction (21 November 2021)

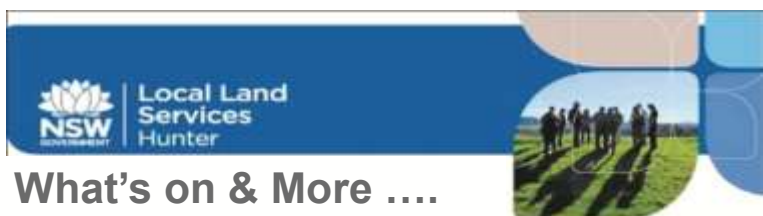
- 1. GAME ON** by Janet Evanovich
NEW THIS WEEK
The 28th book in the Stephanie Plum series. Diesel and Stephanie track the international computer hacker Oswald Wednesday.
- 2. THE JUDGE'S LIST** by John Grisham
3 WEEKS ON THE LIST
Ranked 2 last week
The second book in the Whistler series. Investigator Lacy Stoltz goes after a serial killer and closes in on a sitting judge.
- 3. THE STRANGER IN THE LIFEBOAT** by Mitch Albom
NEW THIS WEEK
After a ship explodes, nine people struggling to survive pull a man who claims to be the Lord out of the sea.
- 4. BETTER OFF DEAD** by Lee Child and Andrew Child
2 WEEKS ON THE LIST
The 26th book in the Jack Reacher series. Reacher helps an F.B.I. agent look for her missing brother and takes on a foe named Dendoncker.
- 5. THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY** by Amor Towles
5 WEEKS ON THE LIST
Two friends who escaped from a juvenile work farm take Emmett Watson on an unexpected journey to New York City in 1954.
- 6. DUNE** by Frank Herbert
3 WEEKS ON THE LIST
he 1965 science fiction novel that is the basis of several adaptations, including the recent film directed by Denis Villeneuve.
- 7. THE WISH** by Nicholas Sparks
6 WEEKS ON THE LIST
Maggie Dawes, a renowned travel photographer, struggles with a medical diagnosis over Christmas.
- 8. IT ENDS WITH US** by Colleen Hoover
21 WEEKS ON THE LIST
A battered wife raised in a violent home attempts to halt the cycle of abuse.
- 9. APPLES NEVER FALL** by Liane Moriarty
8 WEEKS ON THE LIST
The Delaney siblings suspect their father of causing the disappearance of their mother.
- 10. THE SEVEN HUSBANDS OF EVELYN HUGO** by Taylor Jenkins Reid
19 WEEKS ON THE LIST
A movie icon recounts stories of her loves and career to a struggling magazine writer.

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What's on & More

MANAGING EROSION BEFORE AND AFTER FLOODS

Following severe flooding across large parts of NSW, Local Land Services is urging landholders to be on the lookout for riverbank erosion.

Local Land Services Natural Resource Management Spokesperson Louise Orr said erosion damage on riverbanks, floodplains and gullies can be significant after large flooding events. "Erosion damage is often accelerated after severe flooding, particularly if there is limited vegetation in place to bind the soil together," Ms Orr said. "Now that flood waters have receded, repairing and the ongoing management of riparian zones is crucial to the long-term recovery

process. "Landholders can reduce erosion on their properties by keeping stock away from the bank edge and out of the riparian zone, which could be done with fencing. "Planting a mixture of native vegetation to maintain and widen the riparian zone is also helpful as pasture grass alone does very little to protect riverbank soil from flood events. "It's also important that weeds are effectively managed as they can outcompete the native vegetation in these riparian zones, which leaves the banks susceptible to erosion."

Local Land Services has produced the 'Managing

erosion before and after floods' guide that provides landholders with more practical tips and helpful information on erosion control.

"These measures will not only help damaged riverbanks, floodplains and gullies recover, but will also ensure they are better protected against future flooding events," Ms Orr said.

"Local Land Services is here to offer advice for landholders to help manage erosion, so do not hesitate to reach out for assistance."

For more information on best practice erosion control, and other ongoing flood recovery contact your closest Local Land Services office or call 1300 795 299.

December to February rainfall is likely to be above median for northern and eastern Queensland, eastern and central NSW, western Victoria, and eastern Tasmania (chance of exceeding median is greater than 60%). Chances are highest for eastern Queensland, where chances of above median summer rainfall are 70-75% in patches. The rest of Australia has roughly equal chances of above or below median rainfall (chance of exceeding the median is close to 50%).

December rainfall is similar to the summer rainfall pattern, and is likely to be above median for eastern parts of Queensland and NSW, as well as scattered parts of

south-west WA, Victoria and eastern Tasmania. Conversely, large parts of northern and central WA and small patches of the central NT, and western Tasmania are likely to have below median rainfall. The rest of Australia has roughly equal chances of above or below median rainfall.

Racing Review & News

Thommo retires: "I'm 63, I'm not getting any younger and I'm sick of travelling."

By Ray Thomas

The man who has ridden more winners than any other jockey in Australian racing history has decided to hang up his saddle at the age of 63.

Champion jockey Robert Thompson said decades of wasting to keep his weight down and hours spent on the road travelling to race meetings had finally taken its toll.

Thompson's announcement comes just days after another Hall of Fame jockey, Glen Boss, also retired from race riding. An iconic figure in the sport, Thompson contacted The Daily Telegraph on Monday to confirm he was retiring.

"I've definitely finished," Thompson said.

"I'm 63, I'm not getting any younger and I'm sick of the travelling and the wasting

"I've done it for 49 years and I've had my 'fun in the sun'. I've decided that's enough for me, it's time."

Thompson is the most successful jockey in Australian racing history, riding an incredible 4447 winners. "It's only a number,"

Thompson said of his Australian riding record.

"But it might give the younger jockeys something to chase."

Thompson estimates he has ridden in nearly 30,000 races during his lengthy career which began in 1973 when as a 14-year-old apprentice, he rode his first winner on It's Regal at Wyong at just his eighth ride.

His last winner was Contributing Factor at Port Macquarie in April and although he didn't know it at the time, his final race ride was also at Port Macquarie back in July when he finished at the rear of the field on Grand Acheeva.

"I've been thinking about it for a while," Thompson said of retirement.

"After my last ride I was trying desperately to get to Queensland to ride in September (Cairns Amateurs Racing Carnival) but Covid beat me. "Because I haven't ridden since July, people were asking me what I was doing and I kept telling everyone I've been in isolation!

"But I know it's time to retire and I'm happy to let people know that my career as a jockey is over."

Thompson, who regarded Newcastle champion Romantic Dream as the best horse he rode during his career, is widely respected in the racing industry not only for his superior horsemanship but also his humility and integrity which earned him Hall of Fame status in 2015.

The same year, he was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his services and contribution to the racing industry.

Racing NSW chief executive Peter V'landys said Thompson's riding record will stand the test of time.

"I think Robert Thompson is the definition of a champion," V'landys said.

"Not only is he a champion jockey but he is the nicest person I have had the pleasure of meeting.

"If anyone deserved success it was Robert. He's a true legend of our sport."

Apart from riding in Hong Kong for two years in the early 1990s, Thompson resisted many offers from



Detailed Cattle report for Gunnedah

Last reported 16th November 2021

Overall numbers increased significantly with accessibility for trucks improving after a few days of drying weather. The quality of the offering was generally good, regardless of breed variation. The majority of the offering were well finished and carried plenty of weight. There was a limited supply of light weight young cattle to suit restockers. Yearlings were presented in large numbers. There was a good supply of heavy weight steers and a small percentage of cows. The full field of regular buyers were operating. The limited supply of vealers attracted strong restocker competition. Medium and heavy weight yearling steers to restock and feed sold to dearer trends, with the quality of the offering contributing to price change. The heavy weight feeders attracted the strongest competition, while the medium weights experienced little change. Those dearer trends carried into the heifer yearlings to restock and feed, some significantly dearer sales. The well finished medium and heavy weight yearlings to the trade also sold to a much dearer trend. Heavy grown steers over 500kg and including the milk tooth lines saw those to feed substantially dearer. The well finished lines purchased by processors also showed strong improvement. The well finished grown heifers to process were also dearer. It was a very strong cow market with competition between processor keen. The market trend was dearer throughout. Heavy weight bulls improved in quality and were much dearer. It should be noted that this report compares to a very small sale from last week. *Market Reporter, James Armitage.*

Detailed Cattle report for HRLX Singleton

Last reported 17th November 2021

Consignments increased and the quality was mixed with the majority entering the younger categories. The bulk were more suited for the restocker buyers, with ample numbers in prime condition and suitable for the local butchers and processors. There were greater numbers of yearlings compared to the vealers and approximately 30 cows were penned. Competition was solid throughout with trends firm to dearer. The over 200kg vealer steers returning to the paddock gained 2c and made from 626c to 826c, with the lighter weights reaching a record price for the selling complex at 908c/kg. The same weight heifer portion sold to strong competition, with the restockers paying from 640c to 698c and up to 866c/kg for the light weights. The yearling steers trended dearer, with the medium and heavy weights to the lot feeders and restocker buyers ranging from 490c to 666c while the lighter weights reached 734c/kg. The yearling heifers were sought after by the restockers and made from 494c to 674c, depending on breed and weight. The prime conditioned and high yielding younger cattle to the butchers and processors carried extra weight this week and sold well, with the best up around the 584c/kg range. The older steers with 2 teeth sold well to the lot feeders and reached 580c, with those to the processors ranging from 370c to 400c/kg. The cows trended 9c dearer, with the better finished heavy weights making from 355c to 388c/kg. Cows rearing calves received from \$2,950 to \$3,100/unit. *Market Reporter, Neil Geddes.*

Detailed Cattle report for Scone

Report date 7/12/21

Consignments more than doubled, with the extra numbers contributing to a few extra plainer cattle penned this week. The majority were younger cattle suitable for the restocker and feeder buyers, with ample numbers in prime condition and suitable for the local butchers also in the penning. The export cattle were limited in supply, and the usual buyers competed in a generally firm market. The over 200kg vealer steers returning to the paddock trended dearer and ranged from 618c to 850c, as the light weights topped at 866c/kg. The same weight heifers also to the restockers continued the dearer trend and sold from 596c to 720c/kg. The medium weight yearling steers to the restocker and feeder buyers remained firm at 430c to 632c/kg. The light weights to the restockers reached 750c/kg. Yearling heifers sold to strong competition, with the medium weights to the lot feeders ranging from 500c to 594c, with the lighter end to the restockers topping at 676c/kg. The high yielding younger cattle in prime condition continue to sell well, with the best B muscle yearling heifers reaching 590c/kg. The majority of the grown steers sold to the restockers and lot feeders, with the lighter weights ranging from 468c to 576c/kg. The best heavier weights to the processors reached 450c/kg. The better covered heavy weight cows trended cheaper and made from 340c to 395c/kg. Cows with calves received from \$2850 to \$4000/unit. *Market Reporter, Neil Geddes*

Detailed Cattle report for TRLX Tamworth

Last reported 15th November 2021

There was a small increase in numbers with yearlings well supplied. The quality of the offering was mostly good. There was a large percentage of the yearlings showing some Bos Indicus content. The condition of the offering was fair to good. There was reduced processor competition, while the regular feedlot operators operated on suitable lines. Restocker demand was high for light weight young cattle, resulting in dearer trends. Both the steers and heifers posted strong gains. Medium weight yearlings to restock and feed sold to cheaper trends with breed a factor in some price change. An odd pen of heifers to a restocker were dearer. Heavy weight yearling feeder steers saw a firm to slightly cheaper market trend as feedlot operators continue to chase weight. There was an odd dearer sale in the heifer portion. Trends varied in the heavy weight trade yearlings with the steers selling to a dearer trend, while the heifers were cheaper for the most part. Heavy grown steers to process sold to a dearer trend with the younger milk and 2 tooth lines posting strong gains. There was little change in the cow market, however the quality was not quite as good. Once again weight was a requirement regardless of condition.

Market reporter, James Armitage



Iconic Australian jockey Robert Thompson has called it a day after 4447 winners. Picture: Sue Graham

some of the greatest trainers in Australian racing to move to Sydney or interstate to ride permanently.

"I enjoyed riding in Hong Kong as stable jockey for Neville Begg. He is a wonderful man, an absolute pleasure to work for and it was a great experience. But I missed home, I missed Cessnock. I was born in Cessnock, I'm still here and I don't want to leave," Thompson said.

Thompson, who has a property on the outskirts of Cessnock where he has 80-head of cattle, has no plans to become a racehorse trainer.

"If I had retired 20 years ago I might have done so but it's too hard with all the travel that you have to do these days," Thompson said. "I've done all that with my riding. "My wife, Jenny and I have three lovely grandchildren and we want to spend more

time with them. "When the chance comes, we would also love to travel around Australia. I rode in a lot of places, meetings where I flew in and flew out in a day or so which meant I didn't get to spend a lot of time there. "There are a lot of great friends we have made over the years and I'd like to go back to those places where I rode and visit them again."

Thompson's storied career is full of highlights but his most memorable day in the saddle best sums up the champion jockey. "There were so many highlights but honestly working alongside my father (Arthur Thompson, trainer) all my life was number one for me," he said. We had a great day at

Cessnock there one year (1987) when we won five races together including the Cup with Gay Scene. "Being able to work with my father every day for so many years was pretty special," he said.

ROBERT THOMPSON
Age: 63
First race ride: Newcastle in April, 1973
First winner: It's Regal, Wyong in April, 1973
Total rides: Estimated to be more than 30,000
Estimated distance ridden in races: 48,000km
Estimated kilometres travelled by car to race meetings: 9.2 million
Career wins: 4447 – Australian record
Best wins: 7 Group 1 wins
Best horse: Romantic Dream
Awards: Australian Racing Hall of Fame 2015
Member of the Order of Australia (AM) 2015
Newcastle and Hunter Hall of Fame 2018



Is My Job at Risk?



This month, Apple released its new "Right to Repair" program which allows Apple device owners to attempt repairs on their faulty devices. Yep...how handy are you with a .3mm Torx screwdriver?

They even supply the tools, the training videos and the warning that if you damage anything else while you're inside, it's not their problem. I love it. OK, so put your hand up if you're going to give that a try...hello ... anyone ... yoohoo! The good news is that we'll be here to help you if it goes wrong. It might cost you double what it was going to but it's only money, right. Plus, you'll get our famous Lifetime Guarantee Against Defects. Why has Apple done this? Well, over many years, the general public and repairers have complained that most Electronics Manufacturers won't provide information on how to repair their devices, or their clients'

devices and that you need to go to an Authorised Manufacturer Repair Centre to have it fixed. You've probably done this with your TV or Video Recorder etc. In some places, this is a restriction of trade and not permitted by law. As far as I know, Apple is the first company to introduce this "anyone can have a crack" system and they've done it to appease ALL of the critics around the world. Now, they'll have nothing to complain about. These Apple guys are smart! Here's a picture of one of our workstations, nice eh? We have 3 of these. I'm confident that we are the best equipped Mobile Device workshop in NSW. Just the microscope was \$,3000...and I need it! OK, back to the repairs. Look, if it was easy, do you think we would have over \$100,000 worth of equipment to fix your devices? Nuh, we'd go to Bunnings and buy a

bunch of screwdrivers and wing it. If you want to give it a go, like I said, we'll be here to pick up the pieces. So the answer to the question, "Is my job at risk?"...Nuh. I'll be OK for a loooooong time! Another thing that happened this week is that we were appointed by Apple as an Independent Apple Repair Centre. This means that we know have access to more genuine Apple parts, technical information, specialised software and tools to sort out your devices. At this stage we don't do "Under Warranty Repairs", just everything out of warranty. You'll still have to go to Apple for under warranty repairs. We are the ONLY Apple repair centre north of Charlestown. *Have a great Xmas folks, Cheers, Frank*

MOVIE REVIEW

The Unforgivable

Released from prison after serving a sentence for a violent crime, Ruth Slater (Sandra Bullock) re-enters a society that refuses to forgive her past. Facing severe judgment from the place she once called home, her only hope for redemption is finding the estranged younger sister she was forced to leave behind.
Rating: M (Language and Violence)
Genre: Drama
Original Language: English
Director: Nora Fingscheidt
Producer: Sandra Bullock, Veronica Ferres, Graham King
Writer: Peter Craig, Hillary Seitz, Courtenay Miles
Release Date (Theatres): Nov 24, 2021 Limited
Release Date (Streaming): Dec 10, 2021
Runtime: 1h 52m
Distributor: Netflix
Sound Mix: Dolby Digital

The Unforgivable: Sandra Bullock's slow-burning Netflix thriller worth the effort



As my beloved wife so succinctly put it, Sandra Bullock's latest character is "no Miss Congeniality". When we first meet Ruth Slater, she's emerging from prison, having served 20 years for murder. As parole officer Vince (Rob Morgan) talks her through the 10 "commandments" to prevent her coming back, her irritation and world-weariness is clear, especially when he reminds her that there's also a "no contact order" she must adhere to. Begrudgingly accepting her less-than-salubrious shared Seattle accommodation, Ruth deflects Vince's offer to put in a good word for her at the seafood packing plant, assuring him that she already has a carpentry job. However, when she shows up for work, the foreman denies all knowledge of any such employment deal. "Was it a phone call, or a visitor, between when I had the job and when I didn't?" she spits. "Am I convict anywhere I go?" she later opines to

Vince, as she reluctantly accepts his help. "No, you're a cop killer everywhere you go and the sooner you accept that – the better," he snaps back. MORE FROM JAMES CROFT • FILM AND TV REVIEWER Based on Sally Wainwright's three-part, Yorkshire-set, Suranne Jones-starring, 2009 award-winning, Bafta-nominated British crime drama *Unforgiven*, little-known German director Nora Fingscheidt's English-language feature debut is a slow-burning character study with a terrific payoff. Like Steve McQueen's 2018 *Widows* adaptation, this benefits from a strong sense of space and place and a terrific cast that also includes Vincent D'Onofrio, Viola Davis, The Nightingale's Aisling Franciosi and Jon Bernthal. However, the real revelation here is Bullock. Once America's "sweetheart", thanks to string of action movies and rom-coms in the

mid-1990s, she has done a magnificent job of reinventing herself as a serious, dramatic actor in recent times, whether facing fantastical perils in the likes of *Gravity* and *Bird Box*, or more down-to-earth crises, as is the case here. As she struggles to move on with her life, Ruth is also seeking closure and peace with the event that changed her life, while others see her return as an opportunity to seek vengeance. Told in a spare, sparse, intimate style, with clues expertly drip-fed to the audience, we're never quite sure of Ruth's motives or state of mind, something which draws you in and ensures you're invested in the ultimate outcome. *The Unforgivable* is a story where everything initially seems black-and-white, but divides gradually start to blur, as we learn and spend more time with the characters. Clever framing and intercutting between the past and present assists this narrative greatly, but it's Bullock who makes you care – even if she's not exactly playing Miss Congeniality.



For Sales, Service & Advice...

Macbooks	Desktop PCs	Laptops	iPads Tablets Phones
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cracked Screens ● Water Damage ● Refurbishment ● Recycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Battery Replacement ● Software Issues ● Network Unlocks ● Screen Issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Passcode Removal ● Fan Problems ● Internal Cleaning ● Motherboard Repairs 	

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‘They thought Covid only kills white people’: myths and fear hinder jabs in DRC

Lisa Murray in Kinshasa

The Guardian

EDITORS' CHOICE



THE NEWS | No.541 | THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER 2021 | 20
 You can e-mail, fax or simply drop your ©WD or ©NSWD into our office:- 12 Clift Street, Branxton or
 Fax: 4938 3301 or
 E-mail: thenews@hotkey.net.au
 All contributions welcome



Marie-Jeanne Ngalula receives oxygen on a Covid ward at Kinshasa's Mama Yemo hospital. Photograph: Lisa Murray

Mutant strain may emerge amid vaccine hesitancy, experts say, as even medics reject jabs in DR Congo
 Dr Christian Mayala and Dr Rodin Nzembuni Nduku sit together on a bench outside the Covid ward at Kinshasa's Mama Yemo hospital. They are discussing the health of their father, Noel Kalouda, who contracted coronavirus weeks before, and is now lying in a hospital bed, breathing through an oxygen mask. Despite the brothers' medical knowledge, and vaccines being available to them in the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), all three men had chosen not to get vaccinated because of fears over potential side-effects of the only jab available, the AstraZeneca vaccine.

“On social media, there was a story about a guy who died 20 hours after getting vaccinated. Things like this make me scared to get the vaccine,” said Nduku. Just over 86,000 doses have been administered – enough to vaccinate under 0.1% of the country's population of 90 million.

Already facing shortages and huge logistical challenges in getting vaccines out to people in far-flung areas, experts worry that distrust of pharmaceutical products will further undermine the global fight against Covid.

While anger grows over the failures of rich countries to supply enough vaccines to poorer ones, vaccine hesitancy of citizens has been overlooked, epidemiologists warn.

Prof Pascal Lutumba, of the University of Kinshasa's department of infectious diseases, said: “If people in Congo remain unvaccinated, the South African variant could meet with the Delta variant and the virus could mutate into a variant that is resistant to some vaccines.

“If a Congo variant arrives in a country like the UK, which has high vaccination rates, it could put them back into the same position they were at the beginning of the pandemic. They'd have to get vaccinated again with a new vaccine,” Lutumba said.

“We would be back to square one,” said Dr William Schaffner, a professor at Vanderbilt University medical centre in Nashville, US. The Delta variant represents up to 79% of infections sequenced in DRC, according to figures released by the World Health Organization last month.

The country had officially recorded 50,529 cases and 1,045 Covid-related deaths by 4 August, according to the Johns Hopkins University tracker, but the virus has torn through the DRC's elite. In May the vice-president of the Congolese national assembly said the pandemic had killed as many as 32 MPs – about 5% of the total.

Setting the tone for vaccine scepticism, the DRC's president, Félix Tshisekedi, admitted last month he had not yet had the vaccine.

“We were ready to launch the vaccination campaign. The day before, I saw this [misleading] information on television first and then in social networks,” Tshisekedi told journalists.

The DRC has only received AstraZeneca vaccines so far, but according to Dr Jean-Jacques Muyembe-Tamfum, the country's head of Covid response, new vaccines are expected to arrive this month, which should include different brands – which both Muyembe-Tamfum and the president have said they will take.

Nduku said: “The president said that he doesn't trust AstraZeneca, so that makes me doubt it ... I would die of anxiety if I took this vaccine, because of how the president described it. I would be worried that I was going to die.”

On 2 March DRC received 1.7m doses from Covax, the global vaccine-sharing scheme, but delayed the rollout until April after several European countries suspended use of the AstraZeneca vaccine in response to reports of side-effects involving rare blood clots. About 75% of the shots were relocated to other African countries to be used before they expired.

Since then the rollout has been sluggish. Delivering vaccines across a vast, forested country divided by large rivers and with poor infrastructure is a challenge in itself.

The DRC is almost the size of western Europe yet has under 2,000 miles (3,000km) of paved roads, less than 1% of the total in the UK. Willingness to have a Covid vaccine in the DRC was reported to be the lowest in 15 countries surveyed by the African Union between August and December last year, with 38% of people surveyed in the DRC unwilling to be vaccinated compared with just 4% in Ethiopia.

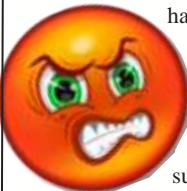
More than 70% of healthcare workers in the country said they would not take the vaccine, according to a study published by Vaccines journal in February. The failure over healthcare messaging historically has had catastrophic consequences here. An Ebola outbreak in the eastern DRC in 2018 killed more than 2,200 people as international aid agencies and health authorities failed to communicate effectively with people and communities, to properly train health workers and to explain consent in local languages, according to the World Bank.

Healthcare workers who spoke to the Guardian in Kinshasa said these mistakes had been repeated with Covid as the government has failed to adequately explain the severity of the virus, allowing disinformation to spread. “People were getting all sorts of messages from the churches – for example, that Covid was created to finish off Africans. The small churches were spreading many messages that Covid was not real,” said Dr Cris Kacita Osako, an epidemiologist who worked on the government's Covid response last year.

Meanwhile, as they hope for their father's recovery, Nduku and his brother are torn. “People didn't believe it,” said a doctor at the hospital, Jean-Paul Nsimba. “They resisted, they doubted its existence. They thought it was a disease that killed white people.”

“The South African variant could meet the Delta variant and mutate” Prof Pascal Lutumba

Delivering vaccines across a vast, forested country divided by large rivers and with poor infrastructure is a challenge in itself.



I have just read the Branxton Greta Vineyard News about the planned change to the proposed shared pathway between Greta and Branxton. What a joke to even suggest to change the route of this cycleway/pathway that includes a level crossing on a corner and a set of traffic lights and to reclaim a lane of the road next to Redhouse Creek; our kids deserve better. I believe that this will be more dangerous to have kids on pushbikes interacting with vehicles. This is a short sighted money saving measure & not to mention about vehicle frustrations by having another set of traffic lights. The proposed south side route will have kids going past the service station, midway, with them again interacting with vehicles. In Greta the kids will be forced to travel pass the service station and Maca's. Trucks also regularly use these service stations. I know as these townships grow traffic will get more intense. Another let down by all levels of government, a second rate job for the sake of money. There has been no consultation with the community and it takes the local paper to let us know. It was held up as a great addition and memorial for the two townships now it looks like a half baked mess.

To the NSW Government for using the pandemic to compromise the democratic right of voters to make educated and informed decisions at last weekends Local Government elections. They had introduced a number of provisions that were only meant to be used in the event of further COVID outbreaks in specific wards, suburbs and local government areas. One of those provisions included setting a 100 metre barrier between candidates and volunteers handing out how to vote leaflets. It was clear the NSW Government was motivated by political gain rather than the safety of communities. The Premier opened the gates to thousands of people for a horse race yet when it comes to local government elections, they says it's in the best interests of communities to tighten the reins. If it's safe to go to a night club, surely it's safe enough to stand outside a polling place.



Classified's

Classified's

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: Branxton 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: 3xwheel motorized scooter. 2 new batteries; excellent condition P: 0417 413 316

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

Riding Lessons: agjstment, horses trained. 0407 453 494

Share Accommodation: East Branxton \$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 Branxton 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

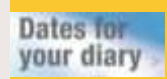
Work Wanted: Sick of cleaning, cooking dinner, washing. Call me! Taking bookings now. Professional and reliable service. Sue 0497257081

Work Wanted: Rural Fencing (TW & A Hollingshed) P: 4998 1583 or Trevor on 0429 320 787 for quotes.

Work Wanted: experienced baby sitter 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



The “For your Diary” section of The News is a FREE community service.

EVERY WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY MORNINGS — The Branxton Greta Mens Shed meet in the mornings: come and have a cuppa at the Shed. 49 Branxton 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
 THUR 9 DEC – Branxton Public School – Stage 3 and Early Stage 1 Presentation Assemblies
 MON 13 DEC – Branxton Public School – Class Party Day
 THUR 16 DEC – Branxton Public School Last day of Term 4
 SAT 18 DEC — The Lower Hunter is in for a treat with Ms Eclectique bringing nightmares and Noel to Weston Workers Club in A Nightmare Before Christmas.
 SAT 22 JAN 2022—Maitland Rotary train trip to Tamworth Country Music Festival.\$120/ticket which includes # Return rail travel on a privately hired vintage train # A light breakfast served onboard & complimentary tea/coffee or orange juice on return trip. To secure a seat call Rotarian Malcolm Knight on 0402 853 765.
 Be quick to not miss out

Upcoming Concerts
 SAT 11 DEC 2021 — Iconic Scottish band SIMPLE MINDS will be performing at a day on the green Bimbadin winery.
 SAT 26 MAR 2022 — Rod Stewart Live @ Roche Estate

“Dates for your Diary” is free community service which has been included in the News for over 23-years.

Please send your event notices and dates to thenews@hotkey.net.au or call me on 0414 757 826. The Editor



ALICE IN WONDERLAND JR

Next date: Friday, 21 January 2022 | 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM

- Presented by Hunter Drama - Join Alice, one of literature's most beloved heroines, in her madcap adventures. Featuring updated songs from Disney's thrilling animated motion picture, Disney's Alice in Wonderland JR. is a fast-paced take on the classic tale.

The ever-curious Alice's journey begins innocently enough as she chases the White Rabbit. Her adventures become increasingly more strange as she races the Dodo Bird, gets tied up with Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, raps with a bubble-blowing Caterpillar and beats the Queen of Hearts at her own game!

A show for the young and the young at heart!

Christmas comes early with free Santa photos for the Singleton community

Santa has his list, has checked it twice and is heading to Christmas on John Street this Friday 10 December for free photos in the magical Santa's Grotto.

Bringing a little extra festive magic to this year's event, Singleton Council is teaming up with Singleton Rotary Club and Clear Light Photography to capture the spirit of the season – literally – with a free Santa photo for our youngest residents right through to the young at heart. Jason Linnane, Council's General Manager said after a year that has brought plenty of challenges, there was no better occasion for the

entire community to celebrate the simple joy of being together - and what better way to remember it than with a free photo with the jolly man himself?

"The Rotary Club of Singleton has been bringing joy to our community at Christmas time for over 70 years and we are very proud to once again be partnering with them to bring Santa's Grotto to life," he said.

"Still with the magic you know and love, the Santa experience this year will reflect requirements with physical distancing in place, hand sanitiser available, and Rotary's elves on standby to support with cleaning."

In keeping with tradition, Singleton firefighters will chauffeur Santa to the event in their 1960s Bedford vintage truck, supported by a string of police on horseback. There'll also be entertainment by Singleton Town Band and local dance groups as well as food trucks, wine and beer stalls from Broke Fordwich and Around Hermitage Pokolbin, late night shopping and more than 60 market stalls alongside Maker's Alley with kids' activities including jumping castles, balloon twisting, face painting, and a petting zoo.

And to cap off festivities, an epic fireworks display – supported by Yancoal – will go off with a bang at 9pm.

"Christmas on John Street goes to the heart of community with people coming together to enjoy entertainment for all ages, delicious food and beverages from local vendors as well as offerings on John Street, and of course Santa Claus and fireworks," Mr Linnane said.

"But best of all is the sense of the spirit of the season, especially after another tough year. The event gets bigger and better every year and after a two-year hiatus due to bushfires then COVID, I can't wait to see as many people as possible on John Street from 6pm on Friday evening."

Christmas on John Street is a COVID-safe event. As per NSW Government guidelines, people must be double vaccinated to attend and double vaccination status must be shown to event officials prior to entry.

For more information, visit <https://www.singleton.nsw.gov.au/844/Christmas-on-John-Street>



Over \$1.6 million secured for exciting community projects

Cessnock City Council welcomed the announcement that it was successful in securing \$1,612,389 under the NSW Government's Resources for Regions Program to fund five key community projects.

Council was allocated the following funding:

- \$314,688 for the Millfield Skatepark Extension
- \$847,701 for Phase 2 of Rotary Park Kurri Kurri Concept Plan, Accessibility and Amenities Upgrades
- \$250,000 for the upgrade of Carmichael Park BMX Track
- \$105,000 for a business case for Booth Park Netball Facility
- \$95,000 for a business case for Weston Bears Park

Cessnock City Council's General Manager, Lotta Jackson, is looking forward to seeing these projects get underway.

"This funding is critical to enable these projects to take place and I'd like to commend our staff who do such a great job in putting the applications together."

The Millfield Skatepark extension will include the construction of a transitional/street style skatepark which will provide a unique rider experience with skate obstacles and features that can be used a variety of ways.

Phase 2 of the Rotary Park project will include the upgrade of the existing public toilet facilities, the local bus stop area, heritage rotunda area, along with the installation of new pedestrian footpaths. This project will complete Stage 3 of the adopted Kurri Kurri Commercial Centre Masterplan.

The upgrade of the Carmichael Park BMX Track in Bellbird will include track upgrades catering for beginner, intermediate and advanced riders. It will also incorporate supporting park infrastructure including a shade structure, bins, seating, pathways and other ideas highlighted in the recent concept plan consultation.

The development of a business case for the Booth Park Netball Facility in Kurri Kurri will consider a new netball facility containing 8-12 floodlit netball courts, an amenities building, carparking, landscaping, spectator seating and fencing. The development of a business case for Weston Bears Park will consider additional sporting facilities including new sporting fields, an amenities building and supporting infrastructure. These projects will be made possible thanks to \$1,612,389 from the NSW Government's Resources for Regions program Round 8.

■ Photo above: Pro BMX rider, Brodie Ritter at Millfield Skatepark which is due to get an extension.



Win a \$500 gift card as part of Cessnock City's 'Support Local' campaign

Cessnock City Council's Economic Development team have another fantastic prize to give away this December as part of their ongoing 'Support Local' social media campaign.

Throughout December, residents can go in the draw to win a \$500 gift card by posting in 25 words or less what their favourite activity is to do in the Greater Cessnock area.

Whether it's visiting an amazing attraction, restaurant, park, pool, playground, or sports field, Council wants to hear from you.

Residents can enter as many times as they like on Facebook and Instagram between 1 - 31 December 2021, with the randomly selected winner to be notified on 4 January 2022.

To ensure the team can see your entry, make sure you set your profile and post to public and use the campaign hashtag #SupportLocalCessnock.

The 'Support Local' campaign is all about encouraging residents to support local business. With 10 competitions planned via social media over several months, a total of \$5,000 in prizes will be given away, including gift cards, restaurant and accommodation vouchers, hampers and more.

Cessnock City's General Manager, Lotta Jackson said the 'Support Local' campaign is designed to keep our local economy strong through the promotion of local business and tourism.

"Spending season is upon us and it's important we encourage our community to support local, buy local and visit local, especially following the hit we've taken as a result of COVID-19.

"We're looking forward to hearing from people throughout December and finding out what their favourite activities and destinations are in the Greater Cessnock area," she added.

For terms and conditions, visit the [Advance Greater Cessnock website](#) and be sure to follow the [Advance Cessnock City Facebook page](#) to stay up-to-date with the 'Support Local' campaign.

Local business owners can access the ['Support Local' campaign toolkit](#) via the Advance Greater Cessnock website to help promote their services and facilities.




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



"Branxton Gardens" Senior Living, Branxton
Recent sales

SOLD UNIT 2
SOLD UNIT 10
SOLD UNIT 12
SOLD UNIT 18



December Summer Gardening Tips



December is here which marks the start of Summer in Australia. What this month in the garden looks like really depends on how well you have prepared for summer.

If you have mulched your garden, fertilised it, taken the steps recommended throughout Spring then Summer shouldn't really be too bad. However, if your soil is bare, you haven't given it a dose of wetta soil or fertiliser then you still have a bit of work to do! During summer you need to make sure that your plants are well watered. As it has been said again, and again, and again, mulch helps to hold moisture so if your garden is well mulched then you can, most likely, get away with watering once every day or three.

Vegetable gardens need a little more frequent watering. I'm watering mine once a day and twice if the temperature hits 35+. I personally like to water early in the morning (before 9am), especially for garden beds that don't have the morning sun however watering at night is more than fine.

Some of your plants may wilt a bit more in summer than they do other months. If you have garden beds that either cop full sun or the afternoon sun, perhaps consider adding some shade in the form of shade sails or shade cloth.

During summer it is very important that you look after your grass. I know water restrictions can be tough. It is imperative that you have applied wetta soil to your grass OR have aerated it with a fork.

It is also important that when you mow during summer, you raise the blades a little higher than normal. Longer grass helps protect the root system, keeping it cooler, which helps it to survive and stay as green as possible. During summer it is a good idea to give your plants at the very least a monthly feed with a good fertiliser. All purpose fertilisers are fine but if there is a specialist fertiliser, like rose or native fertiliser, use that.

It wouldn't hurt to be fortnightly or even weekly, as long as the fertiliser you choose doesn't say otherwise. Keep an eye on your flowering plants. Summer is a regular flowering season for many plants.

Once they have finished flowering, give them a light trim either early in the morning or very late in the afternoon or evening. Afternoon or evening is preferred because this gives your plants a night to get used to their new shape.

If you have prepared your garden well, it should handle summer and provide you with a great backdrop for all the summer BBQ's you are going to host. Just keep an eye on everything when watering/walking through the garden.

If you notice plants struggling, either increase watering, add mulch where it isn't sufficient, or add some form of shade. Established plants should cope quite well, but younger plants might need a little extra tender loving care.



Top 10 Most Common Health Problems For Dogs

Unfortunately, health related problems in our pets are a part of life, affecting the young, the elderly, and every age in-between. While most owners try their best to keep their pets healthy and happy, certain conditions can occur that are simply beyond their control. Although it's something we'd all rather avoid thinking about, it's important to educate ourselves about which conditions, illnesses or diseases are most likely to affect our pets.

There are many illnesses and conditions that can affect dogs and it's surprising to learn just how common some of these can be. The fact is, after pet food, veterinary services account for the second largest category of on-going expenditure by pet owners, according to the 2019 Pet Survey Report. In this survey of 806 Australian dog owners, over 84% reported that they had taken their dog to the vet in the prior 12 months, and most of them visited the vet multiple times, averaging 2.1 annual visits per dog. After check-ups and vaccinations, the third most common reason for vet visits was illness or injury. We've put together a list of some of the most common health problems that we hear about every day at Bow Wow Meow—some are not so serious while others will need more advanced care. In all cases, please don't rely on Dr Google for a diagnosis or treatment plan! To ensure the most favourable outcome for your precious pooch, it's always best to consult your vet as soon as possible. Your vet will provide a plan for management and treatment that is optimised for your dog, taking into account individual factors such as its breed, size, age and general health.

1. Cataracts

This is a big health issue, especially for older dogs, as it can really affect the way they see. A cataract is an opacity or cloudiness of the lens that prevents light from reaching the retina, leading to vision impairment. Cataracts can develop in one or both eyes and they may progress slowly or rapidly, leading to vision impairment and even blindness. Signs of a cataract include a whitish, blue or grey area in the centre of the eye as well as behavioural changes relating to decreased vision. Because dogs can use their keen senses of hearing and smell to compensate for loss of vision, it can be difficult for a pet owner to detect cataracts at an early stage. It's not only old age that will bring about these growths on the eye. Cataracts may develop after the eye has been through a trauma or can be caused by disease. Cataracts in dogs may even be present when the dog is first born, or may develop in the first few weeks of a puppy's life.

2. Arthritis

Arthritis, a general term for abnormal changes in a joint, is very a common condition in older dogs. In fact, 1 in 5 Australian dogs suffer from arthritis at some point during their lives. It is a major cause of



chronic pain in older dogs and can result in permanent joint damage. The most commonly affected joints in dogs are the hips, knees, shoulders and elbows. You'll notice that your dog is slower to get onto their feet (especially in the morning or in cooler weather) and will be far less active than they used to be. It's often very hard to tell if your dog is suffering from arthritis. Even though it's very painful, your dog may be able to hide its pain and discomfort, especially in the early stages. Exercise, weight control and anti-arthritis drugs can all lead to helping your dog overcome the pain of arthritis.

3. Ear Infections

Ear infections are very common in dogs, especially in long-eared breeds and those that spend a lot of time outside. Often, dirt, dust or some other alien object like a grass seed can become lodged inside your dog's ear, causing it to become irritated and, eventually, infected. You'll know if your dog has an ear infection if they're frequently pawing at their ears and shaking their heads. Infected ears may be red or crusty and may produce a discharge or odour.

Ear drops with antibiotics will usually be prescribed by your vet in order to fight off the infection. Another good habit to get into is cleaning your dogs' ears regularly

4. Kennel Cough

Kennel cough is very common amongst dogs that have been in crowded conditions such as at the animal shelter, vet or in pet accommodation. Unfortunately, it's a highly contagious illness that spreads easily between animals via droplets in the air or contact with a contaminated surface (water, food bowl or contact with another dog). Fortunately, although kennel cough can sound bad, it's equivalent to the common cold for us and is not usually serious or life-threatening. The best way to look after your pet with kennel cough is to give them rest and plenty of good food and water. You may be given antibiotics by your vet to knock it over if your

Tips For Your Dogs



dog's case is particularly severe.

5. Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea – frequent liquid or loose bowel movements – is very common in dogs, largely because it can be brought about by a number of causes, some of them serious, and

others no more than a change in diet or a sensitive stomach. In more severe cases, dehydration may develop and this could lead to more serious health concerns, including weakness, exercise intolerance and even collapse and

seizures.

In most cases, diarrhoea will subside with time, a good diet and plenty of rest. However, chronic diarrhoea may be a symptom of an underlying illness such as inflammatory bowel disease, kidney or liver disease, infections or even cancer. If the condition persists for a week or more, it's time to visit your vet for a check up.

6. Fleas and ticks

Fleas are a common parasite that nearly every dog will get during a lifetime. Fleas jump from one host to the other, and your dog will usually pick them up by coming into close contact with an infested animal. Dogs with fleas can suffer from severe itching all over their body, even if they've only got one flea. Scratching, pawing and licking of the bites to try to relieve the itching can lead to inflammation, infection and even hair loss. Fortunately, fleas can be eradicated quite easily with the right medication and you can find a number of products for sale at your local pet store to protect your dog from future infestations.

Ticks, however, are far more serious. The paralysis tick, which is common on the east coast of Australia between the months of August and February, can cause serious health problems for your dog, including poisoning of the blood and even death. Dogs are much more likely to pick up a Paralysis Tick if they are outdoor animals, interact with wildlife or have access to bushy or grassy areas – these sneaky parasites wait in the vegetation until your pet passes through it. Tick control is essential to protect your pet from Paralysis Ticks.

7. Heartworm

Heartworms are long, parasitic worms that live and grow to great lengths in an animal's heart and lungs. Heartworm infestations will develop over a number of years before your dog will show any serious symptoms, by which time the condition is often life-threatening.

In the past, heartworms were a very common parasite affecting dogs,

however modern medications now prevent most cases from occurring in Australia. Many vets suggest blood tests as well as faecal tests once a year to keep an eye out for any nasty conditions that could be present. The worms can still be found all over Australia and can kill if left untreated. Consult your vet for more information on the most suitable preventative measures for your dog.

8. Broken Bones

A bone fracture or break is caused by abnormal stress on the bone, usually from a traumatic event like being struck by a car or falling from a height. Unfortunately, fractures are common in dogs.

Your dog will try to remain brave and will avoid showing you that they are in pain so keep an eye out for things like limping, lumps or bones protruding from the skin and whimpering or whining when touched.

Some fractures are relatively straightforward to treat, while others are extremely complex. Treatment includes surgery in order to realign the bones, immobilising the limb to allow the bone to heal, easing pain and preventing further damage.

Bone fractures take four to six weeks to heal, during which time the animal's activity may be restricted and physical therapy may be required to assist with rehabilitation.

9. Obesity

Another common condition amongst Australian dogs and one that often isn't taken seriously enough is obesity. Overseas studies have indicated that as many as 50% of dogs are currently overweight. Obesity is one of the greatest causes of serious long-term illness in dogs. If your dog is obese then they risk developing all sorts of related conditions such as heart disease, kidney disease, arthritis and many more.

The good news is that you can reduce your dog's weight. It's believed that 95% of obesity cases can be corrected by controlling the dog's diet and exercise regime. Speak with your vet if you think your dog may be overweight.

10. Cancer

Unfortunately, just like us, dogs will often develop cancers as they get older. Dogs can suffer from most of the same types of cancers we do, such as lymphoma, melanoma, breast cancer and even prostate cancer to name a few.

Skin cancer is common in dogs, so be sure to look out for any unusual lumps or spots on your dog's skin, ears and eyes. Mast cell tumours are the most common type of dog skin cancers, accounting for around eleven percent of skin cancer in dogs. This is because dogs have many mast cells in their skin. These tumours often appear small and insignificant, and many are benign, but they can be very serious and even life threatening.

Treating cancer can take the form of surgery, chemotherapy or radiation treatment. Like all cancers, catching it early is the most important thing,



BRANXTON GOLF CLUB

Wet Weather has Forced Rescheduling of Rounds 3 and 4 of Men's Club Championships Rescheduled Men's Club Championships: Rounds 3 and 4 – Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 January 2022

Rounds 3 and 4 of the Junior, Club Veteran's (separate to Thursday Vets) and Mug of Mugs Championships will be played in conjunction with the rescheduled men's championships.

HUNTER VALLEY GOLF CLUB

Sunday 21st November The Weekly Challenge has been won by Debbie Donn with 39 points from Matt Merlo 38 with Luke Meyers 3rd with 36 on countback

Tuesday 23rd November

The American Stableford event has been won by Ray Anthony-Saunders with 60 pointd from Lewis Howells 58 and Jayden Casinelli in 3rd with 57 points. Ball winners were: Ryan Wilson 56, Andrew Edwards 56, Graeme Flynn 55, Pam Snaddon 55, John Carmody 55, Burgo 54, Greg Snaddon 54, Andrew Causey 54, Ty Cowley 54, Rex talbot 54, Shane Piggott 53, Bruce Matthews 53, GB Harris 53, Jash Knott 52, Brendan Taylor 52, Jordan Gageler 53, Nick Brooke 52, Jeb Hardy 52, Jacko 52, Debbie Donn 52, Paul Smith 51 & Col Bradley 51 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins went to Andrew Edwards (3rd) Ryan Wilson (4th) John Carmody (8th) GB Harris (10th) & Joe Laughlin (17th)

Wednesday 24th November

The Ladies American Stableford event has been won by Sue Williams with 57 points from Jill Slatter 56 & Sharon Blackett 3rd with 53 points. Ball winners were: Dinki Di 52, Ruth Scott 52, Isabel Skeates 52, Jenny Chambers 52, Joy Provenzano 51 & Jill Ramsden 51 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Jill Slatter (3rd) Isabel Skeates (8th) Melita Watson (10th) & Jenny Chambers (17th).

Thursday 25th November

With the wet weather holding off a good field contested the Vets Medley American Stableford with Division 1 to James Schofield with 58 points from Mick Gilbert 55 , Division 2 to John Carmody with 56 from Wayne Burgess 55 c/b & Division 3 to Tony Lorrman with 56 from Silver Petersen 55 on countback. Ball winners are: Isabel Skeates 55, PP Threadgold 55, Don Bradley 54, Michael O'Brien 54Curly 54, Darrell Preston 54, Honest Gunner 54, Rod Williams 53, Bomber 53, Geoff Sweetman 53, Greg Burke

53, Ron Fidelity 53, Mark Barrow 52, John McLoughney 52, Trevor Collins 52, Col Somerville 51, Di Oakes 51, John Grayson 51, Dean Morison 51 & Fluff 51 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Fluff (3rd) Eric Smith (4th) James Schofield (8th) Wazza (10th) & Isabel Skeates (17th).

Saturday 27th November

The heavy rain resulted in a cart ban for today's event which left only a hardy few to walk their round in the final American Stableford round of the week with Darren Mathers doing best with 57 points, outstanding is the conditions, Alex Riley took runner up with 52 on countback to Nathan Bendeich. Next week will be round 1 of 3 in the Men's and Weekend Ladies 2021 Championships with A Grade playing Stroke, B,C & Ladies will all play Stableford

Sunday 28th November

Stephen Zok has won the Weekly Challenge on countback after he and Jordan Burton returned 42 points each.

Tuesday 30th November

On a day of solid scoring Phil Darcy claimed top spot with 43 points from Chris Taggart with 42 on countback to John Martin in 3rd place. Ball winners are Rick Turchini 40, John Stewart 39, Lindsay Meyn 38, Debbie Donn 37, Wayne Stedman 37, Jack Rachel 36, Stephen Donn 36, Paul Monaghan 36, Ty Cowley 35, Pam Snaddon 35, Arthur Cuttriss 34, Wayne Burgess 34, Bindii 34, Dave Hollis 34, Ryan Wilson 34, Tom Vaughan 33, Steve Piggott 33, Rex talbot 33, Tom Bell 33, Col Bradley 33, Paul Neuss 32, Lewis howells 32, Wayne Barber 32, GB Harris 32, david Peel 31, Bruce Matthews 30, Darren Russell 30 & Greg Ireland 30 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to

Kenneth Harris (3rd) Wayne Barber (4th) Kevin Dick (8th) & Stephen Donn (17th)

Wednesday 1st December

The Ladies 2021 Championship round 1 has seen Jenny Chambers holding the lead over the field and in A Grade, Pam Snaddon the B Grade leader & Jeanette Irwin leading the way in C Grade.

Handicap leaders are once again Jenny (A) Pam (B) with Sharon Blackett leading C Grade. The Daily Comp played in conjunction has seen Jenny Chambers winning the day on countback to Pam Snaddon, both returned 76 nett with Mary Fortey 3rd with 78 nett. Ball winners are: Isabel Skeates 79, Leesa Robinson 79, Sharon Blackett 80, Jill Slatter 80. Dinki Di Oakes 83, Jill Ramsden 84 and Di Atton 84 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Maureen Donaldson (3rd) Leesa Robinson (4th) & Jenny Chambers (8th & 17th).

Thursday 2nd December

The Vets Stabrose event has been won by the team of Kevin Dick & Terry Webb with 56 points from Chris Taggart & Kevin Gibson with 55 on countback to Gunner & Tony Lorrman in 3rd place. Nearest-the pins went to Tom Bell (3rd) Ron Findley (4th) David Peel (8th) James Hogg (10th) & Curly (17th) Next weeks event will be a Medley Stableford. Many thanks to all who attended and made the day a success. Special mention to the 'boys' who handled the raffle pre & post game.

Saturday 4th December

The Club salute the Greens Staff who under enormous weather pressure have provided an excellent surface for the Championship field to begin the 2021 Club Championship. A Grade

has seen Adam Jackson turn in a 'blinder' of 66 to clearly lead from Wayne Barber 73 . Angello Wood & Phousang Sihapanya tied 3rd with 75, Jacko is also the runaway handicap leader with 59 net from Wayne 69 & Stephen Zok 3rd with 70. B Grade Scratch is led by Nic Bates with 27 from John Grayson 24 with Graham Morris, Graeme Smith & Jeff Morton tied on 23, B Grade handicap is led by Jeff Morton with 39 from Nic Bates, Graham Morris \$ Doug Wand tied with 38, C Grade Scratch is led by Scott Jones with 18 points from Darren Mathers & John Martin tied with 17, C Grade Handicap is also led by Scott with 37 from Terry Webb & Tony Butler tied with 36. The Weekend Ladies has Tracy Morison leading Sharon Jones narrowly in Scratch & Handicap.

The Daily Stableford played in conjunction with the Championship results are: A Grade to Adam Jackson 48 points from Tom Bell 38 on countback, B Grade Jeff Morton 39 from Nic Bates 38 c/b and C Grade to Scott Jones with 37 and Terry Webb 36 c/b. Ball winners are: Doug Wand 38, Graham Morris 38, Wayne Barber 38, Stephen Zok 38, John Grayson 37, Mike Carter 37, Gary Marsden 37, Nicholas Hain 37, Lee Houston 37, Graeme Smith 36, Alan Provenzano 36, Tony Butler 36, Garry Clarke 35, John Martin 35, Bruce Chambers 35, Paul McCudden 35, Darren Mathers 35, Nick Looby 35, Glenn Williams 35, Ben Bradley 35, Danny Schofield 35, Jason Mould 35, Darrell Porter 35, Jeremy Holden 34, Col Somerville 34, Eddie Barrett 34, Wade Attewell 34, Patrick Wand 34, Richard Craft 34, Phousang

Sihapanya 34, Lachlan Grounds 34, Dean Freebairn 34, Rocks Ling 34, Vincent Silveira 33, Mick Goldman 33, David Agnew 33, Don Bradley 33, Luke Johnston 33, Gruller 33, Curtis Dwyer 33, Fluff 33, Mick Gilbert 33, Dean Morison 33 & Dave Hollis 33 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins The Sweeney (3rd) Russ Lightfoot (4th) Ben Bradley (8th) Eddie Barrett (10th) &Fluff (17th).

Next weeks event will be Round 2 of the 2021 Championship.

BRANXTON GOLF CLUB

SATURDAY 4TH DEC 2021

MENS FOURSOMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

Field: 50
SCRATCH WINNERS – MARK MOYLAN / PETER WILTON 74 C/B

SCRATCH RUNNERS UP – VICTOR MATT / ROD WILTON 74

NETT WINNERS – GRAHAM BULL / BRANDAN CONNOR 63 ½ NETT

NETT RUNNERS UP – CHRIS ZAWIRSKI / TED ZAWIRSKI 65 NETT

NETT 3RD PLACE – GREGORY TEARLE / CHARLES JUBB 66 ½ NETT

NETT 4TH PLACE – MICHAEL GARLING / RICHARD CROOKS 69 NETT C/B

NETT 5TH PLACE – STEPHEN ROSS / RICHARD

TURNBULL 69 NETT
NTP 2/11 R HALE 583CM
NTP 4 J HAYWOOD 351CM
NTP 9/18 K RADUNZ 214CM
NTP 13 G TEARLE 193CM
BALLS DOWN TO 78.5 NETT
The 2021 Foursomes Championships were held on Saturday with

50 “brave souls” competing in this tough event where teams of two play alternate shots—it is often noted that team mates apologise on the first tee to save the many apologies throughout the round. The winners, Peter Wilton and Mark Moylan didn't need to say sorry too many times as they won the event with an impressive 74 off the stick. They only won on a countback from Rod Wilton and Victor Matt who had the same score, so they can feel a little aggrieved as their score is usually good enough to win—well played both teams. The nett winners were Graham Bull and Brandan Connor with 63.5, just ahead of Chris and Ted Zawirski on 65. Greg Tearle and Charles Jubb's 66.5 score was good enough for third with Mick Carling teaming up with Club President, Richard Crooks to finish 4th with their 69 nett score. Club Captain, Steve Ross and playing partner Richard Turnbull were 5th on the same score. 78.5 was needed to win a ball. The shot of the day belonged to Greg Tearle on the difficult 13th, finishing less than 2 metres from the hole. Next week's event is the Monthly Medal where every stroke counts.

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Branxton Bears appoint Ron Burgess as 2002 Club Coach



Above: 2002 Branxton Bears Club Coach for 2002, Ron Burgess

WHEN Ron Burgess was invited to take the position of Branxton Bears Rugby League Coach for the coming season he didn't immediately jump at the chance. Work commitments in the coal mining industry meant that he was required to do shift work & shift work doesn't stop for football training.

Through a complex set of maneuvers he has managed to put in place a regime whereby he can be at all training sessions. "If I hadn't been able to do that then I felt that I would be letting the club down with someone covering for me", Ron said.

I guess you could say that Rons' life has revolved around Rugby League having played the game at the highest level in the Hunter Valley & player/coached at a comparative young age. Ron was born and raised off a

family property at Coolah in north west NSW. After showing a great deal of football skills he moved to Lakes United from Coolah in 1970 & played with them for 7 years. In that time he played in two Grand Finals & in one year was voted Newcastle Player of the Year. "I won a new car, a Ford Escort. A Ford dealership was the major sponsor", Ron said.

In 1977/78 Ron was Captain Coach of Singleton Greyhounds where he reached the Grand Final in 1977 & the finals in 1978. In 1981 he returned to Lakes where he played his final year. Ron knows Branxton well as he coached here in 1983.

Ron would like to see as many team aspirants at training on Tuesdays & Thursday as possible to reach a reasonable standard of fitness as soon as possible. "Once match fit the games great!", Ron said.

All the best for the season.

BRANXTON GRETA VINEYARDS

The **News** SPORT

Miller Park Bowling Club 'up' & soon to be running again

The McNamara Hotel Group, owned by Dale McNamara of Lower Belford, has commenced the installation of a state-of-the-art synthetic green to compliment the, soon to be opened, Miller Park Hotel/Tavern.

Mr. McNamara committed to the installation of the new synthetic green when the bowling club made their decision to re-form. President Glen Cliff, of the reformed club, thanked the McNamara Hotel Group for providing the venue & means for the club to reform & for the new green currently being installed. "The new green is synthetic and only the third of its type to be installed in

Australia," said Mr. Cliff. Background work for the re-establishment of Miller Park Bowling Club had been underway since early this year.

Restarting the bowling club had been a process involving re-affiliation with Bowls NSW and incorporation as an association. Even before a steering committee was formed Glen Cliff and Peter Fuller were working in the background to begin this process.

A steering committee was formed in September consisting of President Glen Cliff, Vice-President Chris Charnock, Secretary Faye Fuller, Vice-Secretary Sandra Curnow and

Treasurer Sue Charnock. With the help of Craig Donaldson (Regional Bowls Manager of Hunter and Central Coast), they are now registered as Miller Park Bowling Club Inc., affiliated with Bowls NSW and have new members registered.

An AGM will be held shortly to establish a full committee. With official formalities complete, they are busy obtaining all necessary equipment required with Singleton RSL Club kindly donating sets of bowls so people without bowling equipment can have a roll. "Also, Craig Donaldson has procured rink and jack markers from Guildford and

Merrylands Bowling Clubs which are being revamped for our future use," said Mr. Cliff.

Mats and Jacks have been purchased by the committee so that we will be ready to play when the green is complete.

The club welcomes anyone who would like to play bowls as they will be playing Pennants and Championships in 2022 or, for the more non-competitive, they will be playing organized social bowls.

A 'Welcoming Fun Bowls Day' with a BBQ is being organized for the official opening of the green & they hope to see lots of new faces.



Work is well & truly in the last stages for the opening of Miller Park Tavern which is expected to open its doors prior to Christmas



Hopefully the new bowling green will be available for use when the Tavern is officially opened.

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