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# The News

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## “Your paper of choice”

THURSDAY 23  
DECEMBER 2021

Keep your business in town and you keep your town in business!!!!

# ‘PERFECT’ no more....

By Mike Lowing



**David John Axsentieff**

5<sup>th</sup> January, 1948 – 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2021  
Aged 73 years

Beloved husband of Robyn (dec'd). Much loved partner of Maggie. Loving father to Dale (dec'd), Kim, Joanne and Charmaine. Caring father-in-law to Peter and Cameron. A devoted and loved grandfather to their families. A dear brother, brother-in-law and uncle. A friend to all who knew him.

Family and friends of Dave were warmly invited to attend a celebration of his life in St. Brigid's Catholic Church, Branxton on Friday, 17.12.2021 at 2pm.

LAST Friday week the local community bid farewell to one of its finest sons, Dave Axsentieff (Dave, Axle, Axe, Perfect).

Dave passed away unexpectedly at the Newcastle Private Hospital after a very short illness on the 5<sup>th</sup> December.

As expected St Brigid's Catholic Church was full to capacity. A soldier, miner, publican, multi sports coach, businessman, philanthropist but more importantly, as described in his eulogy, a great mentor to many, many people in our community. The eulogy, prepared and delivered by life-long friend, Mark Bercini, went for 10 foolscap pages and at the end Mark did apologise for cutting it short.

*“Well that's it from me David, I'm sorry I had to narrow it down to 10 pages. It doesn't get much more perfect than where you're going today mate, and I'm sure you'll slot in just perfectly up there. May you R.I.P”, the eulogy read.*

I let Mark continue .....  
‘Dave was a massive supporter of local Rugby League. From the early days of the Branxton Bears, and then the Greta/Branxton Diggers in the early 90's, then the Branxton Bears again after the Diggers folded, and then in recent times the Greta/Branxton Colts. He was Reserve Grade manager under coach and good mate Johnny Hunter when the Colts made it a Reserve and First Grade premiership double in the first ever Group 21 Grand Final played at Greta Oval in 2009. The Colts went back-to-back in reserve grade in 2010, then won it again in 2013, then again tasted success in 2014

when first grade won their second premiership. Dave was involved in some way over these years be it team manager, private sponsor or committee member and the only place he would eat a steak sandwich in the Group 21 competition was Scone; according to Dave every other ground's steak sandwiches were no good. He then had a stint as Colts President in 2015, and I suppose I can say it now that he poured a lot of money into that club over the years that only a couple of people knew about, and without wanting any recognition for it.’

‘Dave was always forthcoming with sponsorship of local sport, whether it be the Diggers, Bears, Colts, Greta/Branxton United Cricket Club, the Greta/Branxton Soccer Club and other sporting bodies, sponsorship money was never an issue. Dave obviously liked the ‘blue & white’ of Canterbury-Bankstown, and rumour has it he may have had something to do with the Colts footy club and Greta/Branxton United Cricket Club being the colours they are today.’

‘Dave loved Branxton. He always worked closely with our local council, and whenever anything needed upgrading or fixing in town he was promptly onto council in his affirmative nature to get things done.’

‘He took a liking to anyone who was involved in the community in any way. Blokes like Luke Thomas, Doug Waters, Pete Wilton, Slug Millard etc were all like sons to him that he never got to raise.’

He had a particular soft spot for Mick Preston, a fellow

Bulldogs supporter. Mick tells me just how much Dave used to help him out, get him back on the straight and narrow when needed, and was always offering great advice. One Sunday morning around at the house Dave had the “talkback with Macca” show playing on ABC radio while the boys worked. When Dave went inside to grab something Mick would change the station over to some music. When Dave returned he said “Mick you wanna listen to Macca, he's got some real good advice for ya, better than that Acca Dacca sh#t !” “Talking Sport” with Graeme Hughes on 2HD was also another favourite of Dave's ..... Julie & Ken Enright were great friends of Dave and, included in the eulogy, they said that Dave had a work ethic second to none, and passed this hard working, “have a go” legacy onto his children, staff & friends. “He expected much from those around him but no more than what he expected from himself. Naturally competitive, particularly with himself always looking to do better. Largely self taught & a natural businessman”.

When a friend of mine saw Dave a few weeks before he passed away she asked the question ... ‘how are you Dave?’ and awaited his usual reply, ‘perfect’.

She was taken aback when his *not* normal answer came ... ‘more than perfect’.

You certainly got that correct Dave!

May you Rest in Peace and your legacy remain.

Vale Dave.

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**Christmas Services**  
Anglican Church Branxton Greta Lochinvar

**Christmas Eve 24<sup>th</sup> 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 25<sup>th</sup> December**  
Holy Communion ~ 9am ~ Holy Trinity Lochinvar

Anglican



10 Dalwood Road, East Branxton, NSW 2335

**Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from  
Good Practice (GP) Surgery**

**Please find our holiday opening hours:**

29/12/2021 & 28/12/2021-Closed  
 29/12/2021- 10:00 am -5:30 pm  
 30/12/2021- 8:00 am -5:30 pm  
 31/12/2021- 10:00 am – 5:30 pm  
 3/1/2022- Closed

**Our normal business hours will commence back  
from 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (Tuesday)**

**Appointments can be booked by calling us on 4938 3366**

**In case of an emergency, please call 000 or for an after-hours service, please call GP Access on 1300 130 147**

Thank you

**Good Practice (GP) Surgery Team**



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

**The Tamworth Country Music Festival.  
Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> December  
and will re-open on  
Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January**

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



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## REFLECTIONS



This year has been another extraordinary one as we have responded in love and care for one another as we have stayed home and self-isolated, maintained social distancing, "checked in" when we have gone out and by being vaccinated. Many of the restrictions we have lived with have now been eased, allowing us to spend time with our families and friends. It is not the first time that we have needed to do things in a new way.

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

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

Love, hope, peace, and joy are sent to us and born as one of us in humble beginnings. Love, hope, peace, and joy are wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Love, hope, peace, and joy choose to come to us, to call us, to guide us, to

save us. God's love, hope, peace, and joy are shown to the world by the birth of his only Son. Jesus is God's eternal word and is the love, hope, peace, and joy of the world. Jesus is the greatest gift that can ever be given or received. As we celebrate Christmas this year, let us remember that it is the birth of Jesus Christ that we celebrate.

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

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

Every Blessing, Reverend Nicole

## Emergency Phone Numbers

### Dial 000

FOR FIRE, POLICE AND  
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It's a free call. Just tell the operator  
what you need-fire, police or ambu-  
lance. Then wait to be connected.

When reporting an emergency by  
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address you are calling from may be  
given to the emergency service so  
they can respond quickly. If you  
don't want the telephone number or  
address details passed on, you must  
call the emergency service direct.  
**ALL CALLS TO 000 ARE VOICE  
RECORDED**

**For non-life  
threatening  
calls.....  
Police Assistance Line (PAL)....  
131 444**

### Police

Branxton..... 4938 1244  
Lochinvar... 4930 7209  
Ambulance... 131 233  
NSW Fire Brigade  
Branxton.... 4938 3396

### Rural Fire Brigades

Belford..... 6574 7149  
Broke..... 6579 1491  
Greta..... 4015 0000  
Bishops Bdg  
Rothbury.... 4991 1733  
Nth R'bury... 4015 0000  
Rothbury.... 4015 0000  
Pokolbin..... 4015 0000  
Rothbury.... 4991 1733  
Scotts  
Flat..... 6575 1200  
Central  
(Cessnock)... 4015 0000

### Electricity

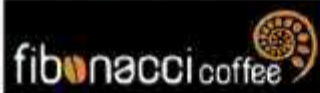
Energy  
Australia..... 131 388  
Hospitals  
Maitland... 4939 2000  
Cessnock.. 4991 0555  
Singleton.. 6572 2799  
SES .....132 500  
Crime Stoppers  
1800 333 000  
Poisons Info ..... 131 126  
Hunter Water  
1300 657 000  
Ausgrid ..... 131 388  
Gas Emergencies . 131 909  
Lifeline .....131 114  
Mental Health Line  
1800 011 511  
Domestic Violence Support  
4990 9609  
Centrelink Self Service  
136 240  
Medicare ..... 132 011  
Native Animal Rescue  
0418 628 483

# Merry CHRISTMAS

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20/12/2021	8:30AM	5:00PM
21/12/2021	8:30AM	5:00PM
22/12/2021	8:30AM	5:00PM
23/12/2021	8:30AM	5:00PM
24/12/2021	8:30AM	5:00PM
25/12/2021	<b>CLOSED</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
26/12/2021	10:00AM	4:00PM
27/12/2021	10:00AM	4:00PM
28/12/2021	10:00AM	4:00PM
29/12/2021	8:30AM	5:00PM
30/12/2021	8:30AM	5:00PM
31/12/2021	8:30AM	5:00PM
01/01/2022	10:00AM	4:00PM
02/01/2022	8:30AM	5:00PM
03/01/2022	10:00AM	4:00PM

INDIVIDUAL RETAILER HOURS MAY DIFFER

## coles TRADING HOURS

20/12/2021	6:00AM	11:00PM
21/12/2021	6:00AM	11:00PM
22/12/2021	6:00AM	11:00PM
23/12/2021	6:00AM	11:00PM
24/12/2021	5:00AM	11:00PM
25/12/2021	<b>CLOSED</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
26/12/2021	7:00AM	9:00PM
27/12/2021	7:00AM	9:00PM
28/12/2021	7:00AM	9:00PM
29/12/2021	6:00AM	10:00PM
30/12/2021	6:00AM	10:00PM
31/12/2021	6:00AM	10:00PM
01/01/2022	7:00AM	9:00PM
02/01/2022	7:00AM	9:00PM
03/01/2022	7:00AM	9:00PM

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# STEVE'S

# RANT

It is deeply disappointing that our erstwhile conservative government has capitulated to the climate catastrophists senseless demand to lower the nations carbon dioxide emission. Even more disturbing that the excuse given is that the international financial system is threatening to withhold funding from countries and enterprises which do not embrace the Climates Cults ridiculous claims of an imminent tipping point to global catastrophic heating. The end of life as we know it.

The UN, the European Unions and the group of dopes, NZ, Canada, and the UK threaten our nation with sanctions on our trade if positive actions are not demonstrated. They expect us to destroy our economy, our way of life and our standing as a first-world nation able to provide aid to our neighbours. This is being demanded of us if we follow the stupidity of the zero-emissions target. A policy that has now been declared and accepted by both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party.

Where can we go from here?

Next year's election is critical to our future wellbeing and prosperity. The idiot press is constantly beating up the elections as critical. Well, this time, they will be correct. We cannot afford to vote on party lines and accept the mediocrity of party preselected

drones.

It is now incumbent on all voters to question the ideology and motivation of the candidates. You will be given a list of candidates contesting in your electorate, and hopefully these people will make their druthers (*ed. one's preference in a matter*) known.

Do not necessarily vote in the way your grandparents traditionally did. Times were very different then. They all voted Labor, barracked for Footscray, and drove Fords Prefects.

Avoid putting your trust in ideologues given to fanciful ideas or theories: anyone who espouses a particular ideology, particularly a political one. Any candidate who makes statements such as:-

"The Science Is IN-The Seas Are Rising – The Great Barrier Reef Is Dying – The Future of Our Children and Grand Children Is DOOMED – Coal Mining Must End- Burning Fossil Fuels Must End- Nuclear Power Is Unacceptable" should ring alarm bells. Candidates hung up on gender, extinction rebellion, cultural plagiarism, and peripheral matters (abortion/ euthanasia) unrelated to the economy, national security, energy security, education standards, or threats to our freedom do not deserve your vote.



There are good politicians on both sides of parliament. If your current member is running for re-election, judge their performance as it affects you. If not, look at the incoming candidates' policy, manifesto, and affiliations. Their opinion on climate change and China; do they agree with the sentiment expressed by the delegates to COP23 or consider it a futile gesture? Are they appeasers of China or judge that China poses a threat to democracy, our way of life, and the individual's freedom?

Another important consideration is whether they know the difference between the People of China and the Chinese Communist Party? Chinese people are becoming the largest block of educated and literate humanity with the potential to push the bounds of science and technology for the benefit of all. But this potential is being hindered by the Communist Party, just as the USSR was retarded by Communist ideology,

which prevented individual choice and free enterprise and kept their people dependant on the State.

Does the person you wish to vote for believe the State is responsible for your every need, or do they agree that individuals are accountable for the decisions they make, for their own welfare and the behaviour of their children?

What is their attitude to the security and supply of water and hence the building of dams and pipelines? Seek out instead, a Hardnose. A pragmatist. A realist. A Doer.

It boils down to choosing the candidate that best represents your values and aspirations for the future. This also applies to your state senate candidates. And now, to be politically incorrect (by offending anyone who doesn't 'do' Christmas), may I wish you a Happy Christmas and hope for a New Year of hope and happiness. CHEERS STEVE.



with Mike Lowing

It would be inappropriate, prior to Christmas, for me not to mention the enormous contribution the sporting club secretaries & publicity officers of all our community organisations make to our publication.

Club reports & results are critical to the dissemination of club news & individual achievements. Again, it would be remiss of me not to mention all our other contributors who diligently provide articles for our readers. To mention just a few; Lester Bootes & Mark Bercini, Scarlett Leotta, Media and Communication Officer at Cessnock City Council, Daryl Sheppard from Branxton Golf

Club, Karen Quilty from Branxton Public School, David & Sue Peel from HVGC, Anne Lomas & Perri from Clayton Barrs' office, Howson, Tallen from Joel Fitzgibbons' office, Denise McGoldrick from the Branxton Greta CWA, Judy Spillard from the VIEW Club, Briony O'Hara from Singleton Council & last, but by no means least, all our local members & mayors.

To all 'thank you'. A very special mention to all our advertisers who, have again, made our publication possible this year.

Our publication normally has 25 issues a year but this year we have managed only 14; disappointing to say the least but Covid-19 'lockdowns' pretty much put an end to all normal activities; sport, school and everything considered 'normal' to our community.

As I write this I see that our infection rate in NSW is on the up again since last week when the state was opened everything up to all citizens which included the non-vaxed.

Mr Hazzard, the Health Minister, has said that modelling from the University of NSW shows the state "could" have 25,000 new COVID-19 cases per day by "the end of January".

I would urge our community to please *still* play safe; *still* wear masks, *still* social distance & minimize your time inside public venues. Become an al fresco aficionado!

**The Branxton Greta Vineyards News will be having a short break over the Christmas and New Year.**

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

literally by Government, not to wash dirty socks in the sink where one might wash vegetables. But where is the harm? How excessively respectable is that? If soaking dirty socks or bloodied smalls is required, one can use a stainless-steel bucket, then, being water-wise, tip the water on the garden. A laundry tub is unnecessary. Fifty years ago, when children used cloth nappies, they were useful. In 2021 it is a personal choice. The Australian Building Code Board should busy itself with other matters, instead of playing "nanny". Please get these people out of our lives. Vomit or faeces are only something someone has already eaten. We deal with it. Many householders choose not to have tubs. To instruct anyone on personal hygiene is impudent, intrusive, out of order, and a step too far. So, let us not kid ourselves. This rule is BS, and perhaps there should be an inquiry into all matters where all Governments have put their collective noses and stupid rules into people private lives, over stepping their rightful place. To use a tub or not should not preclude compliance certificate being issued. We have had freedom of choice and the Australian citizens are NOT nongs. They know when and why those freedoms are curtailed and by whom.  
**Maureen Lind, North Rothbury**



## "Grossly incompetent"

I refer to the letter to the editor of Branxton Greta Vineyards News dated 9 December 2021 by Mr. Wesseling of North Rothbury and also the article on the top right-hand column of page 20 of the same edition. I believe Mr. Wesseling's letter deserves a thorough explanation from the general manager of Cessnock City Council as to how council has allowed this project to deteriorate to its current deplorable state. The piffle free explanation must firstly explain how the project got to its current state, and then clearly articulate a fully funded plan, endorsed by the general manager, to achieve the original aims of this government sponsored project. I agree the rectifications described on page 20 of the

NSW, by asking Cessnock City Council for an explanation for this obvious mismanagement of tax payer's money.

It then goes without saying, if federal money was allocated to this project, Mr. Joel Fitzgibbon must ask Cessnock City Council for a similar explanation on behalf of the Australian tax payer.

Whichever way you look at this, Mr. Wesseling's use of the words "woefully inadequate" and "grossly incompetent" appear to be well chosen to describe the performance of Cessnock City Council to date in this matter.

I also invite the newly elected mayor and councillors of the Cessnock City Council to record their comments on what has

previously been acknowledged as a beneficial community project designed to both acknowledge the contribution made by the men of Branxton and Greta during the Great War, while at the same time facilitating a safe walk/cycle interconnector, away from the highway, between the communities of Greta and Branxton.

(Editors note. I emailed Cessnock City Council with the following questions

1. Has the RMS given an answer on the provision of traffic lights to facilitate the change to southern side of NEH?
2. Redhouse Creek; has the RMS given the OK to take

the lane for the pathway? It is still state road (?)

3. When do you expect work to recommence and completion date. It was originally March 2022.

3. Is the funding sufficient to complete the pathway with changes?

4. The original plan to run on the northern side-why wasn't it cost audited originally? Acquisitions, utilities et al?

The Cessnock City Council answer was .... Officers are continuing their work on the project design and are collaborating with Transport for NSW on matters such as the traffic lights and the final alignment of the pathway. An assessment of costs will be undertaken once the

final alignment is determined and Council is working towards commencing (sic) construction early 2022.)  
**Name & address provided. Greta.**

What nonsense? If people are sick of Government in their lives, please explain this; to have one's house comply with the Australian Building Code, people have to put up with this complete rubbish.

Have a gander:-  
<https://www.abcb.gov.au/resources/videos/i-dont-want-laundry-tub-can-i-use-sink-instead>.

As a mother of three and a grandmother of six, one does not need to be told,



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

or

**emailed to**  
[thenews@hotkey.net.au](mailto:thenews@hotkey.net.au)

**YOUR friendly team**

**THE News**

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**Deadlines**

"The Branxton Greta Vineyards News" appeals to all advertisers to adhere to the Friday 2PM biweekly deadline which includes all editorial items as well. If you know you will be late please let our office know so that we can save space for you. This newspaper does not accept reports, advertisements or other instructions over the phone. We do accept items by Email.

PHONE: (02) 4938 1773 or after hours (02) 4938 3451  
MOB: 0412 566 041 0414 757 826  
Email: [thenews@hotkey.net.au](mailto:thenews@hotkey.net.au)  
Office: 12 Clift Street, Branxton, NSW 2335

## NSW approves Morrison government's \$600m Kurri Kurri gas-fired power plant *by Lisa Cox*

**The NSW government has approved the construction of a \$600m gas-fired power station backed by the Morrison government in the state's Hunter region.**

Snowy Hydro's application to build the 660-megawatt power station in Kurri Kurri was approved by Rob Stokes in one of his final decisions as the state's planning minister before Anthony Roberts takes over the portfolio.

The Morrison government announced in May it would spend up to \$600m on the project after warning it would step in if the private sector did not commit to building 1,000MW to replace the Liddell coal-fired generator in 2023.

The NSW government declared the project critical state significant infrastructure and fast-tracked its environmental assessment.

The government confirmed on Monday night it had approved the project after the NSW planning department earlier emailed stakeholders – apparently in error – to notify them of the approval. A spokesperson for the NSW department of planning, industry and environment said the plant was approved “following rigorous assessment and consideration of community feedback”.

The power station will be built on part of the site of the former Kurri Kurri aluminium smelter, which ceased operations in 2012 and has since been demolished.

According to the environmental impact statement lodged with the NSW government, the plant is expected to run at just 2% of its full capacity across the year, filling gaps at times of peak demand.

“This project will improve energy reliability and security in the national energy market as it brings on renewable energy from wind and solar farms, and transitions away from coal-fired power generation over the next 10-15 years,” the department's spokesperson said.

“The project will provide on-demand energy when the grid needs it and will only operate on average 2% over a year.”

The project is subject to environmental conditions.

The department's spokesperson said Snowy Hydro was required to prepare a net zero power generation plan to support the transition toward net zero emissions.

“This may include using hydrogen gas, which would be subject to further planning assessment,” they said.

The federal energy minister, Angus Taylor, said the approval was an “important next step” for the project which aimed “to keep prices low and the lights on while creating jobs in the Hunter region”.

“The Morrison government will continue to take the necessary steps to safeguard the delivery of affordable and reliable power and ensure Australian households and businesses get a fair deal on energy,” Taylor said on Monday.

The project still requires environmental approval under commonwealth laws from the federal environment minister Sussan Ley.

Nic Clyde, a spokesperson for the Lock the Gate Alliance, said the project was a waste of public funds and a white elephant that Australia did not need.

“It's disappointing that as the world shifts towards renewable energy

and zero carbon technology, the Perrottet and Morrison governments are spending more than half a billion in public money propping up this polluting gas plant, and many more millions on the fossil fuel industry as a whole,” he said.

The Gas Free Hunter Alliance said the approval showed “total disregard to the hundreds of locals who oppose the development”. “It is particularly disturbing that this project has received the green light from the NSW state government after it has made commitments to net zero emissions by 2050,” alliance representative Fiona Lee said.

Earlier this year, the federal Labor opposition called for the Morrison government to release its business case for spending taxpayer funds on the project.

The chair of the Energy Security Board has said the project makes little commercial sense and an analysis by Victoria University's energy policy centre found the project had no prospect of generating enough revenue to justify its cost.

Snowy Hydro declined to comment.

**(Ed Note ~ as stated Notice of decision Section 2.22 and clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979**

“The Project would deliver economic benefits to the Hunter Region and NSW as a whole by generating \$610 million of capital investment, creating up to 250 construction jobs at the peak of construction and up to 10 operational jobs for the life of the Project... and further (inter alia) “the project would strengthen energy security in NSW, as it would contribute to closing the previously forecast reliability gap in 2023-2024 following the retirement of Liddell Power Station & mitigate reliability risks associated with the potential early exit of coal-fired power stations ahead of planned closure timeframes”)



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**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:-**

24<sup>th</sup> Dec 9am to 5.30pm

25<sup>th</sup> Dec CLOSED

26<sup>th</sup> Dec CLOSED

27<sup>th</sup> Dec CLOSED

28<sup>th</sup> Dec CLOSED

29<sup>th</sup> Dec 9am-5.30pm

30<sup>th</sup> Dec 9am-8pm

31<sup>st</sup> Dec 9am-5.30pm

1<sup>st</sup> Jan CLOSED

2<sup>nd</sup> Jan CLOSED

3<sup>rd</sup> Jan CLOSED

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

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# Members say ..



SINGLETON COUNCIL General Manager Jason Linnane

The end of a year and the imminent arrival of a new one is always a pertinent time for reflection and setting a course for new goals and aspirations. But this year is particularly significant as we look back on the challenges that came with another COVID-19 lockdown, and as we look forward to the next term of Council with renewed focus and energy.

We are fortunate that the next group of elected representatives launches from a high baseline of sound financial management, a strategic direction that includes the resources to support and drive economic transformation and runs already on the board in ensuring sustainability is at the forefront of our decision-making.

But what stands us in particularly good stead is what you, our residents and businesses told us you wanted for the Singleton local government area for the next 10 years. Community engagement is pivotal to the review of the Singleton Community Strategic Plan and I was pleased to receive feedback from more than 2000 people through surveys, Facebook comments, submissions and workshops that will help to chart our direction to 2032. One of the first jobs for our new Council in 2022 is now to consider and reflect on what you told us, and to turn those priorities into actions under our four-year Delivery Plan and one-year Operational Plans. Then we'll ask for your feedback on the draft Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032, so you can let us know that what we heard is reflected in our plan and that we're using our resources in the best way to create the community we're all proud to be part of. Some of the biggest themes to come out of the feedback was that people love the friendliness, warmth and slower pace that comes with our rural lifestyle, while at the same time embracing the economic opportunities that come from fast internet, advances in health and wellbeing including greater connectivity through footpaths and cycleways, and the livability that stems from access to events, telecommunications, arts and culture, sport and leisure activities. I call it

city conveniences with a rural heartbeat. Based on the significant achievements of the previous term of Council, the productive relationships between Council and other levels of government and strong involvement from everyone in our community, I think we can all be excited about what's in store for the next term of Council and 2022 in particular. It's a privilege to be the General Manager of Singleton Council, and to help deliver on the vision you have set for our local government area. I wish you and your families a Safe and Merry Festive Season and look forward to the achievements we'll be celebrating in 2022.

Jason Linnane  
General Manager



JOEL FITZGIBBON MP  
Member for Hunter

Awareness is growing in our local communities that our coal fired power stations cannot, and will not, operate forever. Every machine has a limited physical life and old plants struggle to compete economically with modern technologies. Liddell power station is turning 50 years old and her time is up. It's sad but it's a reality. Bayswater is younger and is being upgraded, she'll soldier on we hope for another 15 years or so. It is highly unlikely any investor will build a new coal-fired electricity generator, it's too expensive and they struggle to compete with renewable technologies. This is not the case in parts of Asia where high levels of economic growth are driving high levels of electricity consumption and where renewable forms of energy aren't as great as they are here in Australia. This is good news for us because those countries will need our efficient thermal coal for decades to come. Along with steel production, this will keep our local coal mining industry strong for decades to come. Of course, most of the coal we produce goes to export markets. So, the climate change debate in Australia has been too centred on electricity generation. The transition from coal-fired generation in Australia is a natural one, it will happen regardless of

government policy. The policy debate needs to change focus, first on how we make sure that as the coal generators withdraw, we maintain energy supply reliability and keep electricity prices down. That includes accepting gas generation remains in the mix because we are a long way off having the ability to run our electricity system on renewable technologies alone. Second, we need to look beyond electricity generation to the other sectors which emit large amounts of greenhouse gases: transport, industry, and agriculture. Most businesses are already working hard to reduce their emissions and have been doing so for decades. In part because more efficient vehicles, plant and production methods lift productivity and financial returns. Government policy can accelerate these processes in a way which helps, rather than punishing emitters. Finally, we need to focus more on the opportunities to take carbon out of the atmosphere rather than concentrating only on the initiatives designed to reduce emissions. That means embracing technologies like carbon capture and storage and the opportunities in our carbon absorbing forestry industry. Locally, as the end for our coal-fired generators has emerged on the horizon, we've been busy attracting new forms of electricity generation to ensure the Hunter remains the powerhouse of NSW. Happily, in the investment pipeline we have pumped-hydro, gas, wind, solar, battery storage and hydrogen projects in the making. We're ahead of the game. As this is my last column for the year, I thank the Branxton Greta Vineyards News for the opportunity to contribute to the paper this year, it provides a great opportunity for me to share my thoughts and experiences with the community, and to provide important information. I wish all readers a Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2022. Stay safe.



Member for Cessnock  
Clayton Barr MP

**Raising the BARR  
GOODBYE 2021 – HELLO  
2022**

Life is far too precious to be willing our time away. Ask most people as they come closer to the end of life and they will probably be wishing that they had more time, or that they had done more with the time that they had.

But I have to say that I am looking forward to the end of 2021. It's just been a really tough year in many ways and I am really looking forward to a Christmas-New Year "reset". Not everyone will agree, but I am sure that many will. For those of you that have had a good year in 2021 I say congratulations to you and well done. I hope that things in 2022 continue to go well for you all. And for those that had a 2021 a bit more like mine, fingers crossed we can all get back into the good books of the cosmic karma of life and have a terrific 2022 too.

**VACCINATION WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR ALL FREEDOMS**  
15 December, 2021, has been billed as a day for "freedom" for all – both the vaccinated and unvaccinated. There are plenty of people thinking that on that day, on that date, things will go back to "normal" for all.

I don't think that it's that simple. Not even close! Beyond 15 December my office and plenty of other places of business and work will continue to insist on vaccinations, masks, QR code check-ins, etc. If people can't follow these basic rules of entry, then entry will be refused. You see the employer still has a responsibility to their employee to offer a safe work environment. And when we are dealing with an illness that has killed millions of people across the globe, a safe work environment would want to absolutely minimise that risk.

So I am predicting plenty of places with signs that essentially say (or mean) "no jab – no entry". Working through this is going to require enormous patience and goodwill amongst us all, as a community. There are going to be unvaccinated people that want their full freedoms, only to realise that their freedom is limited by the rules of each separate business and venue. There are going to be plenty of vaccinated people that are tired of all the check-ins, proofs, masks etc. Everything post 15 December is going to require the very best of each of us, just at a time when we are probably all pretty exhausted from giving our best for the past 18 months. Go well everyone and go with as much compassion and understanding as you can muster. *Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and happy holidays. 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 cessenock@parliament.nsw.gov.au or call into 118 Vincent Street (PO Box 242), Cessenock 2325. You can also follow me on my Facebook page "www.facebook.com/claytonbarrmp", go to Twitter and search @claytonbarrmp or check out my website at www.claytonbarr.com.au Cheers Clayton*



Member for Upper Hunter  
Dave Layzell MP

## State Matters NEW ENERGY COURSE

TAFE's Newcastle campus will participate in provide training to meet the growing demand for workers in the NSW renewable energy sector. From next year, TAFE NSW is offering a Diploma of Renewable Energy Engineering along with a number of new micro-credentials to help students pave their career in renewable energy. The new diploma was developed in close collaboration with industry and will be aligned to high-demand jobs including in solar, energy storage systems and wind technology. The new courses will be offered at TAFE's Ultimo and Newcastle campuses via a blend of virtual classroom learning and face-to-face practical workshops. **PUBLIC TEACHER INCENTIVES PROGRAM EXPANDS**  
An update on the public teacher incentives I mentioned in an October edition of State Matters following the Review of Rural and Remote Incentives in NSW Public Schools  
The Deputy Premier Paul Toole and Minister for Education Sarah Mitchell have announced \$8 million of the initial \$15 million incentives package will be used to extend the existing program to include temporary teachers and double the bonuses for teachers taking up a job in regional NSW. Temporary teacher incentives include an additional salary of up to \$30,000, as well travel, living and housing incentives. Teacher recruitment funding doubles from \$10,000 to \$20,000, giving eligible teachers an additional \$20,000 on top of their teaching salaries to teach in the regions. The NSW Government has

funded a \$125 million Teacher Supply Strategy which can be viewed at; <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/teacher-supply-strategy>  
Cheers, Dave



Jay Suvaal Mayor of Cessnock

It's an honour to be writing my first column as Mayor of Cessnock. I want to thank everyone for the support and encouragement they have given me. I'm excited to begin working with all our newly elected Councillors to ensure we achieve positive outcomes for our community.

As Mayor, I'm looking forward to being able to work with everyone across our community and all the fantastic groups and clubs across the LGA. Our community is great, but with everyone working together we can make it an even better place to live, work and raise a family. So, if you have anything you would like to discuss with me please reach out.

We have many challenges ahead of us but I am committed to listening to local residents to make sure we have the community infrastructure needed as our region grows. I will also be working to ensure our LGA is seen as an attractive area to set up business so we can create more local jobs.

Some of my key priorities will be to address local issues in the Branxton, Greta and North Rothbury communities. I will be working to repair Camp Road Greta and finalise the Branxton Greta Memorial Cycleway project. I will also continue to advocate for Hunter Water to connect the sewer to North Rothbury.

Council will also need to consider the impacts of the current IPART rate peg for Council rates. With the rate peg set for only a 0.7% increase for the next year, this will create long term financial sustainability issues. Compounded over 10 years this equates to a \$6m loss of income. If this stays the same it means Council will likely have less money to spend in the community on local roads, parks, pools, libraries and other services and facilities.

Finally, from my family to yours, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year. Cheers,  
**Jay Suvaal**  
Mayor of Cessnock

## Mayoral race; FINAL RESULT FOR Maitland, Cessenock & Singleton

\* Next edition ~ full list of elected Councillors for Maitland, Cessenock & Singleton



IND Sue Moore, re-elected Mayor Singleton Council



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ALP Jay Suvaal, newly elected Mayor of Cessnock

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Pharmacist Advice *with*



## How to Treat Severe Sunburn



If water and electrolytes aren't enough to provide proper hydration, you may need to

receive a dehydration treatment IV from the emergency room.  
**5. Apply aloe vera**  
 Aloe vera is a well known option for sunburn treatment. It contains anti-inflammatory ingredients that help reduce inflammation and can provide some pain relief. Regular use of aloe vera provides an extra layer of hydration and prevents the skin from peeling.

**6. Take over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers as needed**

When the discomfort from your sunburn becomes too much, you can take an OTC tablet or apply hydrocortisone cream topically. OTC pain relievers will help reduce some of the pain and itching and may help reduce the inflammation that causes sunburn swelling.

*Be sure to consult with your doctor first to prevent any interactions with current medications.*

**7. Avoid sun exposure**

If your skin is already burnt, the last thing you want to do is exacerbate the issue and put yourself more at risk for skin cancer. Stay out of the sun when possible and avoid tanning beds. If you do need to be outdoors, apply sunscreen, stay in the shade, and keep your skin covered with protective clothing.

**Second Degree Sunburn Treatment**

There are two main types of burns: first degree sunburns and second degree sunburns. Second degree sunburns typically cover larger areas of the body and take much longer to heal than first degree sunburns. When it comes to severe, second degree sunburns, home remedies may not be as effective. Seek medical

treatment as soon as possible. These sunburns can lead to sun poisoning resulting in symptoms such as blistering, infection, nausea, vomiting, fever, and dehydration. If you have any of these symptoms, it's time to visit your local ER for treatment.

**How long does a severe sunburn last?**

The healing time for a really bad sunburn depends on its severity. If it's a first degree sunburn and you have no symptoms aside from pink or reddish skin, it should heal within three days. A moderate sunburn likely will heal in about five days and may result in peeling skin. If you are suffering from a severe sunburn, you may be burnt for a week or more and should seek medical treatment.

**How to Prevent Bad Sunburns**

Using a broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen can protect your skin from severe sunburn and help to prevent skin cancer. When it comes to sunscreen, is higher SPF better? The short answer — not necessarily. For the best protection, use a sunscreen with an SPF 15 – 50. Reapplying every two hours will ensure optimal protection.

**When to Go to The Emergency Room For Sunburns**

Depending on how severe your sunburn is, you may need to know when to go to ER for a burn. Keep an eye out for a sunburn accompanied by any of the following symptoms:

- Sunburn swelling or blistering
- Fever
- Dizzy
- Nausea and vomiting
- Headache & Muscle cramps

**Severe sunburn? Don't wait! Head to a Complete Care emergency room.**

Knowing how to treat a severe sunburn at home doesn't always mean you'll be able to avoid sun poisoning; head to hospital emergency.



# Branxton

view

voice interests and education of women



**Our last meeting for 2021 was held on 9<sup>th</sup> December at Greta Workers Club. A wonderful attendance especially enhanced by the presence of our National VIEW President, Anne-Louise O. Connor.**

Ann-Louise spoke about the 1,500 Learning For Life students whom VIEW Clubs support through the Smith Family. This program supports disadvantaged Australian school-children.

Our Branxton VIEW Club sponsors and supports seven of these children. All our fund raising functions and activities kindly supported by the community help us to do this. Many thanks to all those who attend and we were able to send financial Christmas gifts to those children. Ann-Louise spoke about her visit to Government House. The Governors' wife, Mrs Hurley is the patron of VIEW Clubs and said "The Smith Family thanks our VIEW clubs for their continuous support stating that "they appreciate " hand up not hand out".

Ann-Louise also acknowledged her supportive husband "a good husband and a good cook". Just what we all love !

In conclusion she wished Branxton VIEW club members a warm and friendly wish for a wonderful 2022. Our president, Bethany Oldfield, was then presented with her 20 year membership badge. Congratulations

Bethany from all of us !! Many thanks to Greta Workers Club for allowing us to hold our meetings and functions there. Also to Mike Lowing at the Greta Branxton News for publishing our reports. Special thanks to Branxton Laundry for looking after our tablecloths. Our audience were kept laughing when the Branxton Belles entertained with a hilarious skit

featuring "ladies of the night". Well done !

Special thanks too, to Taylor and Thomas Real Estate Branxton who kindly print our monthly program sheets.

I found this amongst my notes. "Christmas is forever, not for just one day, for loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box on the shelf, the good you do for others is good you do yourself. Peace on earth, goodwill to men, kind thoughts and words of cheer" Remember too the Christ child grew up to be a man-to hide Him in a cradle, is not our good Lords' plan. So keep the Christmas spirit, share it with others far and near, from week to week and month to month, throughout the entire year!

*Peace and love to everyone  
Judy Spillard*

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### House of the Month

Congratulations to Sarah POLLEY & Darcy BRAMWELL of 1A Reid Street, North Rothbury NSW 2335



### Tips for the perfect Christmas turkey



**Don't stress about cooking your Christmas bird, here are all the secrets you need to make a succulent roast.**

**.When to defrost:**  
 If your turkey is frozen, thaw it in the fridge, not on the kitchen bench. As a guide, a large turkey (5-6kg) can take 3-4 days to thaw.

**How to cook everything at the same time:**  
 Cooking a large turkey can often mean there's no room left in the oven for the vegetables. To make it easier, cook the vegetables first, and then cook the turkey. While the turkey is resting, return the vegetables to the oven to reheat.

**How to stuff a turkey:**  
 For best results, loosely fill the turkey cavity with the stuffing, as the stuffing expands during cooking. So the stuffing stays inside and the turkey keeps its shape, you need to tie the legs together – this is called "trussing".

**How to keep the bird from drying out:**  
 To keep the turkey moist and stop it from drying out during the long cooking time, you need to brush or "baste" it with butter.

**How to know if it's cooked:**  
 To test if the turkey is cooked, use a skewer to pierce the thickest part of the thigh – if the juices run clear, it's ready.

**What to do with the leftovers:**  
 To store leftover turkey, let it cool, then remove the meat from the carcass. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 week. Save the bones and use them to make stock. Place in a sealable plastic bag. Label, date and freeze for up to 1 month



### Cheat's stuffing

We know there is always a lot to do in the lead up to Christmas. Save yourself some time in the kitchen by simply adding some extra delicious flavour to store-bought stuffing..

- 8 Ingredients**
- \* 10g unsalted butter
  - \* 20ml (1 tbsp) olive oil
  - \* 1 onion, chopped
  - \* 150ml Massel chicken style liquid stock
  - \* 200g packet bought sage and onion stuffing
  - \* 2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley
  - \* 2 tsp chopped fresh thyme
  - \* 2 tsp chopped fresh rosemary



**Method**  
**Step 1**  
 Heat **butter** and **oil** in a frying pan over medium heat. Add the **onion** and cook, stirring, until just softened but not brown. Add the **chicken stock** and bring to the boil. Remove from heat. Combine **stuffing mix and onion** mixture in a bowl. Add fresh **herbs** and stir to combine. Season and spread into a shallow, greased, lamington pan.  
**Step 2**  
 Cover with foil and cook for 20 minutes.  
**Step 3**  
 Remove foil and cook for a further 10 minutes.  
**Step 4**  
 Serve alongside the turkey



# New NSW State Electoral boundaries

## Branxton & East Branxton to Upper Hunter electorate

The NSW Electoral Commission announced in late August 2021 that there will be changes to the electoral boundaries. The changes will come into effect for the coming NSW State election in 2023. Until then all state electorates remain the same. The new boundaries will include removing the localities of Broke, Howes Valley, Milbrodale, Mount Thorley and surrounds, and the hamlets of Branxton & East Branxton, north of the railway line, from the Cessnock electorate and into the Upper Hunter electorate. The State Member for Cessnock, Clayton Barr MP, said that he will continue to be your local NSW State parliamentary representative up until the next NSW election.



## MY SAY

**Firstly, I would like to say that I am no expert on the topic of Kurri Kurri having come from a Coastal dweller's lifestyle, growing up at Stockton the holiday resort for hundreds of Coalfields people over many decades.**

As kids we wondered why all the people came from those funny named places such as Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Neath (they said it had a beach) or Minmi (they said it had a breakwater). Us kids living on the coast were always amazed at the role up of these people from the Coalfields every Christmas in what we saw as some sort of ritualistic event.

Some years ago, I spoke to a well-respected person from Kurri Kurri who said that he had purchased a van at Stockton Caravan Park. It dawned on me that even now the beach is a favourite destination for the people of the Cessnock district.

In my early years I lived at another Coastal town, Dudley a coal mining village. It was in 1971, fifty (50) years ago that my life changed forever. I had just joined the NSW ambulance service and was posted to the city of Maitland. The daily trip from Dudley to Maitland on some of the worst roads was too much so I looked for a new home. And so it was that my family moved to Kurri Kurri in October 1971 instigating what was to become a major change in my life.

Since that move, the Cessnock and Kurri Kurri district has become my life and the forward thinking people I associated with on a daily basis inspired me to continue on my path of improving this community's lifestyle. I have only been here fifty (50) years and I guess am now accepted as a local. David Dunlop was one of the first white settlers who established a property at Cessnock in around 1821. One of Dunlop's better traits was his respect for the Aboriginal communities that lived around the Wollombi Valley.

It is interesting to note that the Mulbring Valley and Cessnock's early history was steeped in agriculture. For example, there were established wheat crops and vineyards as early as one hundred and sixty (160) years ago. Timber was a major industry in the Mulbring Valley and Wollombi logging many types of timber but especially Cedar. It wasn't until the discovery of coal in the late 1800's at East Greta Junction only ten (10) kilometres from Kurri Kurri that this district became known as the 'Coalfields' of the Lower Hunter. The term 'Coalfields' is entrenched in people's minds throughout the Cessnock and surrounding districts and has become a natural term for those describing the area even today. After the discovery of coal in the late 1800's at East Greta Junction, Coal Towns sprang up quickly as transient miners fought for better living standards. Heddon Greta, part of Cessnock was one of the earliest Coal Towns with a Pub, the oldest Pub in the district.

Kurri Kurri in fact never had a coalmine but was built after coal mine employees protested about their extremely poor living standards. The town was surveyed in 1901 and proclaimed in October 1902. In 2002 the town of Kurri Kurri hosted its Centenary. An interesting argument about the origin of Kurri Kurri's naming amongst local historians still rages today. The most accepted and probably accurate one is that Kurri Kurri is the name given by the local Wonnarua people meaning The Very First (or) "first time once upon a time". It is understood that Kurri Kurri was so named because it was the first planned Crown Town in NSW.

Anyhow, back to our history. As the mines moved further west towns known as Weston, Abermain, Neath, Aberdare, Bellbird, Pelton, Paxton and Pelaw Main sprang up as the great Edgeworth David Coalseam unfolded. It is said that the Coalseam was the richest in the world. Coal became a major part of Kurri Kurri's heritage from the early 1900's until the end of last century. In fact, there is now only one open cut mine currently operating in the district.

While the miners tilled the soil underground an energetic group of agriculturalists worked the rich soils of the Pokolbin area to grow grapes for the purpose of wine production. Early pioneers of the once fledgling but now prominent industry included Busby, Tyrell, Drayton, Tulloch and Lindeman. But this was fifty (50) years before the discovery of coal that the wine industry began. Many of the early pioneer's names are entrenched throughout the industry and carried on by family wine businesses today. These businesses have outgrown "King Coal" and are now flourishing and providing new job opportunities for the Cessnock district particularly in the areas of hospitality and tourism.

Now, let's look at the perceptions and legacies of those bygone days of coal. The perceptions of our community sticks to this day of small unpainted timber cottages built by miners who when pushed, moved on leaving poor European heritage. The mine owners and managers were the lords of the district but when the mine was worked out, they simply packed up and moved on leaving behind a scarred landscape for future generations to repair. This is known as our "European Heritage". I call it an eyesore, which retards our image. Today, the Kurri Kurri district is reinventing itself with murals depicting its history and trying to set a new, more vibrant future for its' citizens.

Our pioneers were exceptional in conquering the great north road and the development from Morpeth into Pokolbin for the wine, timber and grain industry. Today tourism, clean industry, viticulture and retailing are the prime employers. But we still have a long way to go to win over this country's' perception of the Hunter Coalfields as did Newcastle as a steel city. As future leaders of the Cessnock district we are charged with the responsibility of changing these perceptions and focusing on new job creating enterprises. History, by nature is evolutionary and progressive.

**We need to look forward to the future and respect our past, not to just continue to live in it.**

Rod Doherty, Retired Councillor  
Cessnock City Council

## Slow down, kids around!

Cessnock City Council is proud to partner with the Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation to launch the *Holiday Time: Slow Down, Kids Around* road safety campaign.

This important campaign has launched just in time for the summer school holidays, when little ones on our roads are most at risk. Look out for colourful signage carrying pedestrian road safety messages, which will be installed at key locations across the Cessnock Local Government Area.

This campaign reminds drivers to slow down and be vigilant during the holiday period. It also encourages adults to hold the hands of any children under their supervision.

The Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation was started by Michelle and David McLaughlin, following the death of their four-year-old son Tom in a pedestrian road accident on the Central Coast in 2014.

The campaign is now operating in over 25 local government areas across four states and will continue to expand to other coastal and holiday destinations in the future.

Cessnock City Council's Road Safety Officer, Alison Shelton, said this is a wonderful initiative to be part of and hopes the community and visitors to our region take notice of the signs and slow down these school holidays. No parent should have to go through what Michelle and David McLaughlin have with the loss of their son Tom," Alison Shelton said. "I admire and commend their passion for promoting child road safety initiatives and education to ensure a tragedy like this doesn't happen again."

For more information about the Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation, visit

[www.littlebluedinosaur.org](http://www.littlebluedinosaur.org).



■ Photo Above: Bellbird Public School students Beau Shaddon and Lincoln Harris.

Australian Government

OFFICIAL MEDICAL ADVICE

# Don't risk it.

## Always follow the health advice.

Hygiene

Distancing

Get tested

Isolate

It's up to all of us to keep each other safe. You must continue to practise good hygiene, physical distancing, and if you're even slightly unwell, get tested and stay at home. Don't risk it.

**The sooner we all do it, the sooner we'll get through it.**

Have the App  
Visit [australia.gov.au](http://australia.gov.au)



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## Things to Remember Over the Holiday Period



Much like the rest of 2021, the Christmas period is likely to be an unusual one. Now that we are able to get back to “semi-normal” events such as holidaying and visiting family and friends, don’t forget that, with the silly season, *comes a few extra reminders to ensure the safety of yourself and others.*

**Stop, Revive, Survive**  
Driver Reviver sites operate across NSW at peak holiday periods. They offer a safe place to stop for a biscuit and a cup of Bushells tea or coffee. These sites are clearly signposted and are supported by Bushells Tea and the Centre for Road Safety. The Driver Reviver program is run by volunteer community groups including the Volunteer Rescue Association, State Emergency Services and Lions Club International. The Roads and Maritime Services website has an online map of Driver Reviver sites across NSW. Drivers and motorcyclists should use

rest area stops when driving during non-peak periods.

**Mobile speed cameras**  
The NSW government have announced that it will be reintroducing warning signs at mobile speed cameras. All mobile speed camera vehicles will be marked in a policy to make them more visible to motorists. Government data reveals that the mobile speed cameras in NSW have slapped drivers with more fines in the past year than in the five years prior to removing the signs. For now, these vehicles are not marked but whether they are marked or not, for the safety of yourself and other you must be vigilant when driving and ensure that you are sticking to the correct speed limit.

**RBTs and Drug Testing**  
In NSW, on-the-spot fines can be issued for a first offence if the BAC reading is below 0.079, however for subsequent offences, the driver will have to attend court. In NSW there are five levels of drink

driving. Each range has a different maximum penalty and maximum and minimum licence suspension periods. In New South Wales, it is illegal to drive with the presence of illicit drugs in your system. Any driver, rider or supervising licence holder on a road or road related area can be directed to take one or more oral fluid tests. It is also an offence of drive in New South Wales with the presence of cocaine or morphine in blood or urine. Drivers are not randomly tested for these drugs using the roadside drug tests described above. The testing must take place at a police station or hospital within 2 hours of the person driving, or the result is not valid and cannot be used in court as evidence. Again, for the safety of yourself and other you must be vigilant when driving and ensure that you do not drive if you are under the influence.

**Shaw & Bunner Legal wish you a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.**

*Cheers, Kerri*

home buyers now make up 35.0% of owner occupier dwelling commitments.

"The number of first home buyers decreased over the September quarter in all states and territories. South Australia had the largest decrease of 21.6% and the Australian Capital Territory had the smallest decrease of 0.7%.

"Over the past 12 months, the number of first home buyers increased in New South Wales Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory but declined in Queensland, South Australia Tasmania and the Northern Territory/ he said.

Mr Kelly said those hardest hits by the rising market were first home buyers which shows the need for successful government programs like the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme and the First Home Super Saver Program to be supported and expanded.

"As we attempt to start adjusting to the new COVID normal, buyer and investor interest shows little signs of being satiated.

"This competition means the average loan size to first home buyers has increased to \$459 256. This was an increase of 2.0% over the quarter and an increase of 14.0% over the past twelve months.1'

Mr Kelly said the total number of owner-occupied dwelling loans decreased to 10718751 a drop of 7.2% over the September quarter, but an increase of 19.7% over the past 12 months. The total number of loans for owner occupied dwellings decreased over the quarter in all states and territories.

The report found that over the September quarter1 the average loan size increased to \$570A12 which is a rise of 4.0% over the quarter and an increase of 17.4% over the past 12 months.

"While nationally the average loan size increased for first home buyers by 14.0% over the year these increases impacted differently throughout the nation with Tasmania rising by 21.3% while the Northern Territory rose by 5.8%.

"The average loan size increased in all states and territories with Tasmania having the highest rise of 5.8%. The average loan size increased in all states and territories over the past 12 months1 with New South Wales recording the highest annual increase 21.4%,1' the report found.

Mr Kelly added that it was pleasing that rental affordability had largely remained stable in the September quarter of 2021.

"Nationally there was a marginal increase of 0.2 percentage points over the quarter and an increase of 0.4 percentage points over the past 12 months.

"Over the quarter, rental affordability improved in Victoria and Tasmania, remained stable in the Australian Capital Territory, but declined in all other states and territories. "The least affordable state or territory in which to rent a property was Tasmania, where the proportion of income required to meet median rent was 29.7%. This was 6.8 percentage points higher than the national average.

"Victoria became the most affordable, where the proportion of income required to meet median rent was 19.7%," he said. Mr Kelly said the complexity of housing affordability requires bipartisan support, commitment and leadership from both State and Federal Governments to ensure the right balance of regulation, supply and policy levers.

The REIA Housing Affordability Report – the past 20 years, showed that housing affordability peaked around 20 years ago with the proportion of family income devoted to meeting the average loan repayment at 27.2%.

### The future of office space

By HELEN HULL  
**What does the future hold for commercial office space? And what will life be like in the CBD when the COVID-19 pandemic is finally under control? Commercial property leaders give their views on what's next for the office market.**

Despite the uncertainty that has come with the COVID-19 pandemic and the seeming never-ending cycle of lockdowns, Kymbal Dunne said that he is certain about one thing and that is that the commercial office market is not dead. "Our cities won't die, but they will certainly go through quieter periods," Mr Dunne, Partner and Joint National Head of Private Office at Knight Frank, said.

"Fundamentally, we all want to work somewhere that's vibrant. While Zoom calls have improved relationships with people overseas, for local teams it just isn't the same as seeing people across the desk or in a meeting room at the office. You simply can't replicate that."

According to Mr Dunne, tenants have not really had the opportunity to cancel their leases and, because their leases haven't expired, there's not a lot they can do.

"There just isn't freedom for many tenants to do things differently, because they have an existing obligation," Mr Dunne said. "Some CEO's are loath to bring everyone into the office – but, at the same time, they don't want to let go of any space."

"We are moving back to a situation where everyone has their own desk, rather than trend of hot desking. Offices will still be open plan, but different people aren't sitting at different desks, so germs can be contained." – Helen Storey, CBRE

**Rise of hybrid model**  
Helen Storey, Pacific Operations Manager for Property Management at CBRE, believes workplace flexibility and the office environment have become a key focus for workers.

"A hybrid workplace model is now the reality," she said. "This is the result of people's desire to be in the office two or three days a week – not 100 per cent at home and not 100 per cent in the office.

"This means that office tenants still want the same amount of space, but they're utilising it differently.

"We're moving back to a situation where everyone has their own desk, rather than the trend of hot desking. Offices will still be open plan, but different people aren't sitting at different desks, so germs can be contained."

Ms Storey noted that the split of time between the office and remote work is coming up in conversation more often during the early stages of the recruitment phase of employment.

"In the current market, employees are making the rules and businesses are promoting their flexibility," she said. "Being an employer of choice is so important to businesses now."

**Centre of power**  
Even though areas outside the CBD have been less affected by lockdowns, Mr Dunne believes the future of the office market does not lie in the suburbs or with regional hubs.

"The suburbs have been attractive in terms of continuing work," he said. "However, in the corporate world, the further you are from the centre of power, the lesser chance you have of progressing. The reality is that the power base is where you can be seen, and this is where you can be promoted and ultimately advance through an organisation.

"If you're in a remote location, unless you are exceptional, you don't stand out. In a regional hub, you can be sitting beside someone with totally different expertise and you end up with silos. It's not productive; it reduces collaboration and you don't have access to where the power base is."

Ms Storey added that she isn't seeing businesses migrate away from a single headquarters.

"Our clients are keeping their headquarters and having off-shoots in other locations," she said. "Consolidation is more of a cost saving exercise." According to Ms Storey, suburban areas have become a hub for smaller businesses that need an

office. "They're not big enough to be in the CBD and key suburban locations, like Sydney Olympic Park, are becoming popular for that sort of small business."

"Coworking has taken the world by storm, as it enables smaller businesses to have premium office space. We recommend it to clients when we see that they are only using a boardroom once a fortnight and only need office space two or three times a week"

– Kymbal Dunne, Knight Frank

Coworking model here to stay  
Mr Dunne said there's been strong interest over the last few years in the coworking model, which has been driving the take-up of empty office space.

"Coworking has taken the world by storm, as it enables smaller businesses to have premium office space," he said. "We recommend it to clients when we see that they are only using a boardroom once a fortnight and only need office space two or three times a week.

"Coworking is attractive, because they can save thousands – or even millions – on a strata office. Businesses are so used to investing in property and they tend to buy office space because that's the norm. The downside with coworking is that you don't own the space and you don't have exclusive access."

Mr Dunne said the coworking model is having to vary due to lockdowns and restrictions, and will continue to evolve before the most viable option is realised.

"A management model where the coworking operator and the owner form a joint venture will be a reasonable outcome during uncertain times," he said. "The operator brings the knowledge and operating ability, and the landlord provides the premises.

"Occupation of space is affected by the current lockdown and another lockdown could easily occur, therefore occupancy commitment is hard to negotiate. While this uncertainty remains, a shared risk model will become more viable."

New hygiene features  
Landlords are taking advantage of current market conditions and many are renovating, with new features being added to the checklist of 'must haves', according to Mr Dunne. "As a result of COVID-19, we'll see the automation of doors, taps and driers across retail, as well as A and B Grade office space, because hygiene is a priority," Mr Dunne said. "The ability not to touch anything will become in vogue.

"We've seen the success of environmental sustainability requirements and it's possible that the Government could take it seriously enough to implement a new rating system to include hygiene."



## First home buyers hit hardest by worsening affordability

Housing affordability declined over the September quarter of 2021, with the proportion of income required to meet

loan repayments increasing to 36.2% nationally, the latest Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA) Housing Affordability

Report has found. REIA President, Adrian Kelly said housing affordability shows a worsening situation, particularly for first home buyers.

"While housing affordability declined across many states over the September quarter it has improved in Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. "The Northern Territory remained stable and is still the most affordable state or territory to meet home loan repayments.

"The number of first home buyers decreased to 37,782, a fall of 12.6% during the quarter and just a 1.0% more over the past 12 months. First



# HUNTLEE

◆ TAVERN ◆

MONDAY - WEDNESDAY  
7AM - 12AM  
THURSDAY - SATURDAY  
7AM - 1AM  
SUNDAY  
8AM - 12AM

## Monday

HAPPY HOUR FROM  
3PM  
\$15 LUNCHESES  
FREE GARLIC BREAD  
WITH ANY MAIN MEAL  
PURCHASED FOR  
DINNER

## Tuesday

HAPPY HOUR FROM  
3PM  
\$15 LUNCHESES  
TOPPER TUESDAY FOR  
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

R&B FRIDAYS WITH  
\$5 SPIRITS FROM 9PM

## Saturday

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT  
FROM 9PM

## Sunday

COCKTAIL  
AFTERNOONS  
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT  
EARLY AFTERNOON  
POKER FROM 5PM

## Everyday

OUR BAR TRADES FROM  
OPEN TO CLOSE  
OUR BISTRO IS OPEN FOR  
BREAKFAST,  
LUNCH AND DINNER, 7  
DAYS A WEEK  
OUR MEMBERS CAN ORDER  
MEAL DEALS VIA OUR APP.



# WHATS ON



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Some water fun!!!

wonderful photography and videoing throughout this year. Stay safe and Merry Christmas.

**Dates for the Calendar**

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February – First day for students Years 1 to 6  
Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February – First day for Kindergarten students

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



**Branxton Public School**

Congratulations to our Year 6 students who have now completed their primary school years and are off to high school. We wish them every success in this exciting new phase in their lives. Term 4 and the 2021 school year ended on a high note with plenty of celebrations. Year 6 celebrated their time at BPS with their Year 6 Dinner, Farewell Assembly and traditional 'clap out' on their last day of school. All stages acknowledged achievements over the year with Presentation Assemblies which can be viewed on our Facebook. Party day and water fun activities have been enjoyed by all students in the last week of school and ensured that school ended in a positive way after a challenging year.

We farewelled some teaching staff and wish Mr Kelly, Mr Tattis, Miss Ridge and Miss Meyers happy times at their new schools. We look forward to welcoming new staff and students in 2022.

As we move into the new year keep informed of school news through SkoolBag and Facebook.

Thank you to the students, staff and school community for making our school such an amazing place to learn. Special thanks to Mrs Goodyer for her



**Driver blows more than six times the legal limit**

Saturday, 18 December 2021  
12:13:01 PM

A man has been charged after allegedly blowing more than six times the legal limit after a crash in the Hunter overnight. Just after 11pm (Friday 17 December 2021), emergency services were called to the intersection of Anderson Drive and Western Avenue, Tarro, and found a silver Toyota 4WD had crashed into

three parked vehicles. Officers attached to Port Stephens-Hunter Police District attended and located the driver of the 4WD, a 48-year-old man. He was subjected to a roadside breath test, allegedly returning a positive result. The driver was arrested and taken to Maitland Police Station where he underwent a secondary breath analysis, which allegedly returned a

positive reading of 0.317. His driver's licence was immediately suspended and confiscated, and he was issued a Court Attendance Notice for drive with high-range prescribed concentration of alcohol. The Tomago man was given conditional bail to appear before Maitland Local Court on Wednesday 2 February 2022.

**FORGOTTEN VETERAN – Found**

**John Henry Stokes (Military Number 3673) according to records from NAA, was born in Richmond NSW in 1887 and died in 1939 in Branxton and rested in an unmarked grave at Branxton Catholic Cemetery, till 12th Dec 2021, when a cross was placed on his gravesite.**

Research has shown that John Henry enlisted in August 1915 with his age listed as 29years and 1 month, and his occupation was a farmer & his next - of- kin was Miss Persia Thomas (friend) of East Branxton. His was 5ft 9inches and weighed 130lbs, with a dark complexion, blue eyes, brown hair and had distinctive mark which was a scar on left leg. Roman Catholic religion was recorded.

John Henry's unit was 18th Battalion, 8th Reinforcement which embarked from Sydney, New South Wales, on board HMAT A60 Aeneas on 20 December 1915. On 4<sup>th</sup> Aug 1916, he was wounded in action in France and spent many months in hospital, and then re-joined his unit in March 1917, but for the next 15 months, John Henry spent time in hospitals with varied illnesses, Admitted to hospital 23.12.1917 (diarrhoea), 5.2.1918 (diphtheria), 24.2.1918 (scabies), 7.3.1918 (not stated), 24.3.1918 (trench fever, slight). Private John Henry Stokes returned to Australia on 1<sup>st</sup> Aug 1918 aboard the ship HMAT 'Essex' and was discharged on 27<sup>th</sup> Aug 1918 for being medically unfit (myalgia). He received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Mr. Stokes's name has been inscribed on the Branxton Memorial Rotunda. We next hear of John Henry in 1930's census where it is recorded that he lived in East Branxton NSW and worked as a labourer. This same information is stated in 1932 census, 1934 census and finally 1936 census. This is the last that we hear of John Henry until his death on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July 1939 and the informant was Mrs Nita Hilda Thomas. His cause of death was sudden heart failure, myocarditis and chronic bronchitis. He was buried on Sunday morning at 10am after mass, at Branxton Catholic Cemetery with witnesses E. Richardson and Benjamin Cotton and Father John F Kelly as the priest. His death certificate stated that he was unmarried and his age was 69yrs, which means that when he enlisted in 1915 his recorded age was incorrect. Instead of being 29years he was actually 44yrs old.



Helen Scott, Joe Royston, Cath Harvey and Hunter (Joe's grandson), at Branxton's Catholic Cemetery. (Many thanks to Gary Mitchell of Woodrising, in organising the cross for John Henry Stokes)

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# Lochinvar Hotel

114 New England Hwy Lochinvar 2321

Come and enjoy a great country pub with a friendly atmosphere & great customer service. We offer great food, Hunter Valley Wines, Live Entertainment, Foxtel, Tab & Keno Large beer garden, comfortable accommodation with a great country atmosphere and Ice-cold beer pouring from 26 taps including a Great Selection of Craft Beer and your favourites Toohey's New, Old, Great Northern & more....



Courtesy Bus operates on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday Nights from 4.30pm, servicing from Rutherford, Branxton, Bishops Bridge, Lambs Valley and anywhere in between.

Bistro offers great food, with a range of delicious lunches starting at \$10 available 7 days

**\*\* Live Entertainment \*\*** Saturday 11 December with **Mike Vee** playing 6-9pm & Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December with **Dean Kyrwood** playing 3-6pm

Become a Lochinvar Hotel member for just \$5 and receive Discounts on:

Tap Beer, House Wine by the Glass, Post Mix and Main Meals

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<p><b>MONDAY NIGHTS</b></p> <p><b>CHICKEN SCHNITZELS</b></p>  <p><b>\$10.50</b></p> <p><small>Includes Schnitzel, Chips or Baked Potato, Seasoning served as standard</small></p>	<p><b>TUESDAY NIGHTS</b></p>  <p><b>\$18.90</b></p> <p><b>BURGER &amp; BEER</b></p> <p><small>Includes 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger, 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger, 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger, 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger, 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger, 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger</small></p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY NIGHTS</b></p> <p><b>CRUMBED STEAK</b></p>  <p><b>\$10.50</b></p> <p><small>Includes Crumbed Steak, Chips, 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger, 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger, 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger, 1/2 Chicken or Beef Burger</small></p>	<p><b>THURSDAY NIGHTS</b></p> <p><b>OYSTERS</b></p> <p>Your choice of          • Natural          • Kilpatrick          • Mornay</p> <p><b>6 for \$15.50</b></p>	<p><b>SUNDAYS AT THE LOCHINVAR HOTEL</b></p>  <p><b>ROAST OF THE DAY</b></p> <p><b>\$14.50</b></p> <p>Large Roast served with Vegetables and Dinner Roll</p>
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## North Rothbury Rural Fire Service annual Christmas Lolly Run a hit again

The North Rothbury Rural Fire Service have again delighted the younger generation in North Rothbury with their annual Christmas Lolly run. Saturday the 11 December saw Santa and his helpers, with the help of their fire truck, walk the streets of the village ensuring no one missed out. **Thank you Woolworths** for supplying the essential ingredients!



### JOEL FITZGIBBON MP FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HUNTER

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WISHING YOU A  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS**  
AND  
A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

Our office will close from Thursday, 23 December and will reopen Monday, 10 January.



### CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS 2021/22

Cessnock Council offices and facilities will be closed between Christmas and the New Year. The following arrangements will apply over the holiday period.

**Cessnock City Council Administration Building, Vincent Street, Cessnock:** Closed from 12pm Friday 24 December 2021 until 9am Tuesday 4 January 2022.

**Libraries at Cessnock and Kurri Kurri:** Closed from 12pm Friday 24 December 2021 until 9am Tuesday 4 January 2022.

**Swimming Pools at Cessnock and Branxton** Cessnock and Branxton Pools will close at 12pm on Christmas Eve and reopen at 7am on Boxing Day. The pools will also close at 12pm on New Year's Eve and reopen at 7am on New Year's Day. Public holiday hours are 7am to 5.30pm. Non public holiday hours are 6am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 5.30pm Saturday to Sunday. Operating hours are subject to weather conditions.

**Kurri Kurri Aquatic Centre:**

- Christmas Eve open 7am-12pm
- **Closed on Christmas Day**
- Boxing Day open 10am to 4pm
- New Year's Eve open 7am-12pm
- New Year's Day open 10am to 4pm

**Cessnock Waste Management Centre:** Closed Christmas Day only, open as normal thereafter.

**Household Waste, Recycling & Green Waste Collections:** These services will be as normal during the Christmas/New Year period.

**Ranger Services:** Rangers will be unavailable during all public holidays during the Christmas/New Year Period. In an Emergency please call the Police.

**Cessnock Performing Arts Centre:** Closed from 12pm Friday 24 December 2021 until 9am Monday 10 January 2022. Bookings will still be available online.

**Hunter Valley Visitors Centre:** Closed Christmas Day only. Normal operating hours will then apply from 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday and 9am to 4pm on Sundays.

*Cessnock City Council wishes all in our community a safe and happy Holiday Season.*



# from the Lions Den....



Lion Bob Rhodes (middle) helping out at the Branxton fund-raising event



Santa Claus helping Branxton Lions Treasurer Cathy Murray with the Lions Christmas Raffle

ney failure. A spokesperson from the John Hunter Hospital pointed out that the main issue for families who were helped was the cost of travel to the hospital and that they often have to stay overnight with the accompanying expenses. **Bunnings Community Evening 9<sup>th</sup> December** Several hundred people attended the Bunnings (Singleton) family evening at Bunnings Warehouse, Singleton on the evening of December 9<sup>th</sup>. Santa Claus was there to see the young people and he helped Branxton Lions with their Christmas raffle draw. There was a

the Christmas mood. **Branxton Lions Christmas Party** The Lions Club of Branxton had their annual get together party at the house of members Ken

A Christmas message to all our readers! Lions Club of Branxton Rod Taylor (Stanhope Man) and all the members of Branxton Lions Club wish all members of the Branxton, Greta, Huntlee, North Rothbury, and Lower Belford communities a very happy Christmas and a highly prosperous New Year. Please look after yourselves, your families, and your neighbours.



and Agnes Meany at Lower Belford. Unfortunately, on the day, several Lions members were marooned, as their houses were inundated with



Introducing Deborah Hutton as Lion's first Ambassador! Lions Australia have appointed Deborah Hutton as their first ever ambassador to advocate for their skin cancer screening and detection programs. The media personality praised Lions after sharing a moving account of her own skin cancer battle at the 2021 Lions Convention in Canberra, singling out their mobile screening vans in Western and South Australia. One of our District Governor, Glenys Francis', goals is to obtain a similar screening van for New South Wales.



The fun and games at the Bunnings Singleton Community Event



Lions Club of Branxton members enjoy their Christmas party but recognised absent friends

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.

## Branxton & Vineyards Real Estate

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



Our office will be closed Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021 & will re-open on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022

For all emergencies or enquiries please call

0412 566 041 or 0414 727 826



### Fund-raiser for local family

The fund-raising event at Miller Park was recently held for 8-year-old Zane Slomka, and Bob Rhodes attended on behalf of Branxton Lions to pass a cheque on to Zane's parents, Mary Jane, and Jesse Slomka.

Unfortunately, Zane has very serious health problems and a Branxton sporting club is assisting to raise funds to help Zane's parents for transport and accommodation costs when Zane is in hospital.

### L4KIN – Lions for Kids in Need

Branxton Lions were also invited to a fund-raising BBQ at Maitland Showground markets on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December in aid of L4KIN (Lions for Kids in need), but it was unfortunately cancelled due to the spread of COVID-19. This program is aimed at supporting parents who have children in hospital and assists them financially to pay for transport and accommodation. Lions Past District Governor Geoff Kilmurray said: 'I would like to thank all Lions Clubs that have continued to support this program over the past few years, as you can see, this program is very highly regarded by the John Hunter Children's Hospital'. In urging local people to attend and give generously, Geoff said: 'The last B.B.Q. gave the program a profit of \$1,500 a great boost towards supporting our Children within our communities'; unfortunately, an opportunity missed in December due to unforeseen circumstances. A recently published report explained some of the excellent outcomes from the program which showed that children aged from 2 years to 17 years were included and it covered such conditions as Cerebral





The Branxton Lions raffle and Xmas Cake table with Branxton Lions Ken Meany and Cathy Murray.

Palsy, Chronic Allergies, Eating disorders and Kid-

lot of fun and frivolity getting local people into



**Clayton Barr, MP**  
State Member for the Electorate of Cessnock

Phone: 4991 1466  
Email: [cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au)  
Postal: PO Box 242, Cessnock 2325

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

My staff and I would like to wish everyone all the very best for the festive season and to thank you for letting us into your lives, to be your voice, in the tumultuous year known as 2021.

**The Cessnock Electorate Office will close at 5pm on Tuesday 21 December, 2021 and will re-open at 9am on Wednesday 12 January, 2022.**

# For Sale



BRANXTON & VINEYARDS  
REAL ESTATE

P: 4938 3300

## NTH. ROTHBURY



**Two bedroom double brick home on large fenced lot**  
With some TLC this home could be your palace; double brick, extra large bedrooms with builtins, polished floors, leadlight windows, large BBQ covered area at rear, garden shed & large carport.

**All reasonable offers considered**

## NTH. ROTHBURY



## Please fix me up

Cute 3-bedroom cottage with open living, BBQ area, large good shedding.

809sqm fenced block.

A vacant picture to work on

**ASKING \$450,000 neg**

## NTH. ROTHBURY

NORTH ROTHBURY 14.65HA  
STUNNING 34 ACRES BLANK CANVAS READY FOR YOUR DREAM HOME



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

Things You Will Love About This Escape Acreage...

- Approx. 34.3 acre rural holding with dwelling entitlement with consent(RU2)
- Stunning views from elevated sites
- Potential building sites
- Unique lifestyle acreage
- Abundant wildlife and native flora

**ASKING \$965,000**



**Thinking of selling?**  
Prices currently are at record highs.  
Please give us a call for a FREE property price appraisal

## Building Blocks

**NORTH ROTHBURY**  
**Vacant building block ~ 809m<sup>2</sup>**  
Vacant Building Block  
Fantastic visage

**ASKING \$130,000 ono**

## BELFORD

**Vacant Building Block**  
**2559m<sup>2</sup>**  
Vacant Land with building approved  
Lot 1 DP 1205549  
Well over half an acre of good level block.

**ASKING \$160,000 ONO**

## NORTH ROTHBURY

**Vacant building block**  
A 809 square metre block which is relatively flat; an east-west orientation.  
Wonderful views from the back to the north overlooking Huntlee & the mountains to the north.

**ASKING \$135,000**

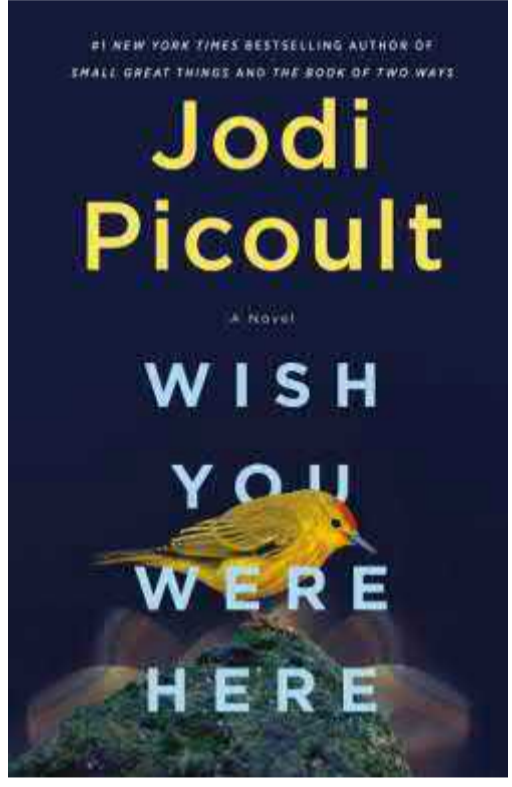


**SOLD**





## Famed author Jodi Picoult novelizes the pandemic in new book 'Wish You Were Here'



Author Jodi Picoult says she couldn't wrap her head around how she might tell the story of the pandemic — to both memorialize it and make sense of it. That was until she heard the true story of a Japanese tourist that ended up stranded in Machu Picchu due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Instead of going back home to Japan, the tourist, named Jesse Katayama, wound up staying in the gateway community of Aguas

Calientes for months until the government offered Katayama special permission to see the historical site. "I thought, oh, I've never been to Machu Picchu. I can't write about that, and I'm not going in 2020," Picoult told Scott Simon on *Weekend Edition*. "But I have been to the Galápagos. We took our kids there many years ago, and it's everyone's bucket list destination. And I thought, surely somebody

got stuck there." Picoult did find someone. There was a young Scottish man trapped in the Galápagos. She tracked him down and did an interview with him and the families he stayed with. From there, she began to craft her story. In Picoult's 26th novel *Wish You Were Here*, released Tuesday — with rights already sold to Netflix — she centers on Diana O'Toole, who is on the verge of 30, an associate specialist at Sotheby's and about to fly off to the Galápagos with her boyfriend, Finn, who's a surgical resident. Everything is going according to plan for Diana. Then March 13, 2020 happens. The pandemic. Finn is told by his boss, as Picoult notes, "You are not allowed to leave the hospital. And he says to his girlfriend, 'Look, this vacation is paid for. You should go.'" And so Diana does. But upon arrival, she is told the island will shut down for two weeks. Her accommodations are voided, and she has to find a way to get by on an island that does not have stable Wi-Fi or good cell service. She's all alone on the island where Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection was formed. Picoult said being there "it's like a beautiful metaphor."

Diana begins re-evaluating her life — her relationships, choices and herself — wondering when she returns back home, would she have evolved into another person? "Diana really learns to re-evaluate the goals she had and the life she wanted and begins to ask herself, 'Why did I want those things in the first place?' - which I think is an experience that many of us had," Picoult said. "The pandemic was such a

strange time because we were all so isolated, but we were all feeling the same things. You know, we just weren't connecting about it." In the Galápagos, Diana learns a lot, not just about herself, but also her job and art, working with impressionist paintings. "I kept thinking a lot about impressionism, and I kept thinking about how if you see a Monet painting from 6 inches away, it's a lot of blobs of pretty color," Picoult said. "But if you step back a few feet, you go, 'Oh, it's a cathedral; oh, it's water lilies' — because you have perspective. And we are just now beginning to get perspective on what 2020 was." As for Picoult, she said learned a lot too, noting how she's a "control freak." And like a lot of us, she said she learned that it's OK to grieve for the things you've lost. But she also pointed to the idea that maybe some of us found new measures of success. "Maybe it's not getting a degree or a promotion or a slot on a bestseller list," she said. "Maybe instead it is having your health and knowing your family's healthy, having a roof over your head, being able to hold the hand of someone who's dying," she said. "You know, and suddenly, I think having all these new senses of what our priorities are, that's what I'm really interested in. Maybe we will be better and stronger in the future because of it." *NPR's Ian Stewart produced Scott Simon's interview with Jodi Picoult for NPR's Weekend Edition. Kroc Fellow Mia Estrada adapted it for the web.*

**ABOUT.....**  
**Jodi Lynn Picoult** born May 19, 1966) is an American writer. Picoult has published 26 novels, accompanying short stories, and has also written several issues of *Wonder Woman*. Approximately 40 million copies of her books are in print worldwide, translated into 34 languages. She was awarded the New England Bookseller Award for fiction in 2003. Picoult writes popular fiction which can be characterised as family saga. She frequently centres storylines around a moral dilemma or a procedural drama which pits family members against one another. Although she is often characterised as an author of chick-lit, over her career, Picoult has covered a wide range of controversial or moral issues, including abortion, assisted suicide, race relations, eugenics, LGBT rights, and school shootings. She has been described as, "a paradox, a hugely popular, at times controversial writer, ignored by academia, who questions notions of what constitutes literature simply by doing what she does

best." Picoult was born in Nesconset, New York, on Long Island and has one younger brother. She graduated from Smithtown High School East in June, 1983. She has described her family as "non-practicing Jewish". Picoult wrote her first story at age five, titled "The Lobster Which Misunderstood". Picoult's mother and grandmother were both teachers, and she says that their influence on her was very important.

She studied creative writing at Princeton University with Mary Morris, and graduated in 1987 with an A.B. in English after completing a 320-page-long senior thesis titled "Developments." She published two short stories in *Seventeen* magazine while still in college. Immediately after graduation, she began a variety of jobs, ranging from editing textbooks to teaching eighth-grade English. She earned a master's degree in education from Harvard University. Picoult has two honorary Doctor of Letters degrees; one from Dartmouth College in 2010, the other from the University of New Haven in 2012. In 2016, Picoult was selected to be Princeton's Class Day Speaker before commencement.

Picoult became the writer of the DC Comics series *Wonder Woman* (vol. 3), following the departure of Allan Heinberg. Her first issue (number 6) was released on March 28, 2007, and her last was issue number 10, released on June 27, 2007. *Nineteen Minutes*, Picoult's novel about the aftermath of a school shooting in a small town, published on the 9th March 2007, was her first book to debut at number 1 on the *New York Times* best-seller list. Her book *Change of Heart*, published on March 4, 2008, was her second novel to debut at number 1 on that list. *Handle with Care* in 2009 and *House Rules* in 2010 also reached number 1 on the *Times* best-seller list. Jodi Picoult is aware that she is often pigeon-holed as chick-lit author, but stated that what she loses in critical acclaim, she gains in influence: "I'm never going to win the Nobel prize for literature, not going to win a National Book award, never even going to be nominated. What you trade for that is sales and readership. And I would rather reach more people. It would be very nice to not be unfairly accused of being a bad writer, but hopefully if you do pick up one of my books, you will be quickly disabused of that notion." In November 2019, Picoult participated in the criticism of Brooke Nelson, a college student who was mentioned in her local newspaper as



saying she thought that author Sarah Dessen's YA novels were not suitable for the Common Read program run by Northern State University, Aberdeen, and had instead advocated for the inclusion of *Just Mercy*, a memoir by civil rights attorney Bryan Stevenson. Picoult described Nelson's views as "sinister" and "demeaning to women", and encouraged her followers on Twitter to "fight the patriarchy" in response to Nelson's comments. When the story was reported in *Jezebel*, *The Guardian*, the *Washington Post*, and *Slate*, Picoult posted an apology on Twitter, noting that her remarks had resulted in harassment and bullying of Nelson.

In 2016, Picoult joined the advisory board of *Vida: Women in Literary Arts*, a "non-profit feminist organization committed to creating transparency around the lack of gender parity in the literary landscape and to amplifying historically-marginalized voices, including people of colour; writers with disabilities; and queer, trans and gender nonconforming individuals". Picoult's website says that *VIDA: Women in Literary Arts* is a research-driven organization. She was a member of the inaugural Writers Council of the National Writing Project in 2013, an organization which recognizes the "universality of writing as a communicative tool and helps teachers enhance student writing". This inaugural group consisted of 30 published authors. She was a spokesperson for Positive Tracks, which empowers young people to fundraise through the power of athletics and partners with other charitable organizations. In 2010, Picoult led the 5th Annual Children's Hospital at Dartmouth Hero Half Marathon & Relay 5K Walk around Occom Pond and through the town of Hanover, New Hampshire. She is a member of the Advisory Committee for the New Hampshire Coalition Against the Death Penalty, an

organization seeking to end the death penalty in the state of New Hampshire through outreach, education and advocacy. She was the co-founder, with Marjorie Rose, of the Trumbull Hall Troupe in 2004 as a means of providing children with a fun, educational theatre experience. Children from grade 6 through grade 12 audition to be in an original musical written by Picoult and composer Ellen Wilber. The proceeds are donated to local charities. The organization's contributions since its founding have exceeded \$120,000. On January 21, 2017, Picoult spoke at the New Hampshire Women's Day of Action and Unity in support of the Women's March on Washington. **Honours and awards**

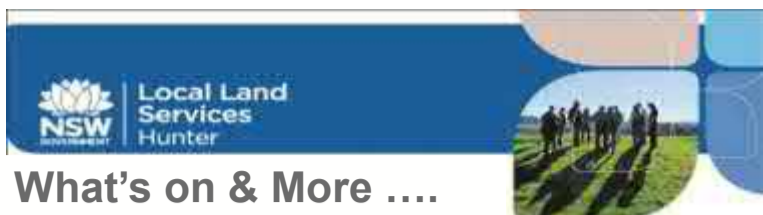
- New England Bookseller Award for Fiction (2003)
- Alex Award from the Young Adult Library Services Association (2005)
- Book Browse Diamond Award for novel of the year (2005)
- Lifetime Achievement Award for mainstream fiction from the Romance Writers of America
- Fearless Fiction Award from *Cosmopolitan* magazine (2007)
- Waterstone's Author of the Year (UK)
- Vermont Green Mountain Book Award (2007)
- New Hampshire Granite State Book Award
- Virginia Reader's Choice Award (2007)
- Abraham Lincoln Illinois High School Book Award (2006)
- Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Award (2007)
- New Hampshire Literary Award for Outstanding Literary Merit (2013–14)
- Princeton Alumni Weekly *Our Most Influential Alumni* list
- Sarah Josepha Hale Award Medalist (2019)

Picoult has been married to Timothy Warren van Leer, whom she met in college, since 1989. They reside in Hanover, New Hampshire with their three children: Samantha, Kyle Ferreira, and Jake.

### The New York Times Best Sellers

Combined Print & E-Book Fiction (19 December 2021)

1. NEW THIS WEEK  
 WISH YOU WERE HERE by Jodi Picoult  
 Diana O'Toole re-evaluates her seemingly perfect life when a pandemic disrupts her vacation in the Galápagos Islands.
2. NEW THIS WEEK  
 LEVIATHAN FALLS by James S.A. Corey  
 The ninth book in the Expanse series. A group of unlikely allies might find a way to bring peace to a vast galactic civilization.
3. 2 WEEKS ON THE LIST  
 GO TELL THE BEES THAT I AM GONE by Diana Gabaldon  
 The ninth book in the *Outlander* series. As the Revolutionary War moves closer to Fraser's Ridge, Claire and Jamie reunite with their daughter and her family.
4. NEW THIS WEEK  
 AUTOPSY by Patricia Cornwell  
 The 25th book in the Kay Scarpetta series. Scarpetta investigates crime scenes in Virginia and outer space.
5. 7 WEEKS ON THE LIST  
 THE JUDGE'S LIST by John Grisham  
 The second book in the Whistler series. Investigator Lacy Stoltz goes after a serial killer and closes in on a sitting judge.
6. 9 WEEKS ON THE LIST  
 THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY by Amor Towles  
 Two friends who escaped from a juvenile work farm take Emmett Watson on an unexpected journey to New York City in 1954.
7. 2 WEEKS ON THE LIST  
 FEAR NO EVIL by James Patterson  
 The 29th book in the Alex Cross series. Cross fights the mastermind who has stalked him for years.
8. 10 WEEKS ON THE LIST  
 THE WISH by Nicholas Sparks  
 Maggie Dawes, a renowned travel photographer, struggles with a medical diagnosis over Christmas.
9. 25 WEEKS ON THE LIST  
 IT ENDS WITH US by Colleen Hoover  
 A battered wife raised in a violent home attempts to halt the cycle of abuse.
10. 5 WEEKS ON THE LIST  
 THE STRANGER IN THE LIFEBOAT by Mitch Albom  
 After a ship explodes, 10 people struggling to survive pull a man who claims to be the Lord out of the sea



What's on & More ....

**TAMWORTH VERTEBRATE PESTICIDE TRAINING**

North West Local Land Services is offering FREE Vertebrate Pesticide Training for Landholders. Completion of this course will give participants a five year accreditation to use vertebrate pesticides (1080, Pindone, RHDV & PAPP) on their property. The course covers a range of topics from the legislative requirements of using vertebrate pesticides through to modes of action and

practical usage. Participants may elect to also complete the Canid Pest Ejector (CPE) course, which will follow the VPT course. Please RSVP to book your spot, call 1300 795 299. Download the Vertebrate Pesticide Training Calendar. Light refreshments will be available. These are COVIDSafe training environments. You will be required to follow all COVID-19 safety plans.

If you are unwell please do not attend, call our team to reschedule.

**When** 16 Feb 2022  
**10:00 am - 4:00 pm**  
**Region** North West  
**Where** Sustainable Farm Training Centre, 4 Marsden Park Road, Calala  
**Contact Number** 1300 795 299



**Detailed Cattle report for Gunnedah**

*Last reported 14th December 2021*

The last sale before a 3 week break saw numbers reduced. Yearlings were very well supplied along with a fair supply of heavy weight grown steers. There were limited supplies in all other categories. The quality of the offering was generally good with a limited offering of secondary lots. The condition of the offering was generally good. The usual feedlot orders were in place along with strong restocker and backgrounder presence. Not all processors operated. Competition was strong and demand high through the young cattle. The limited availability of light weight young cattle to suit restockers resulted in those cattle selling to a significantly dearer market trend. Medium weight yearlings also sold to dearer trends with feedlots putting good numbers onto grass in an effort to sure up supplies over the break. The heavy weight yearling feeder steers saw a firm to dearer market trend with little price differential for breed. Heavy weight yearling heifers to feed sold to a substantially dearer market trend. Heavy weight grown steers over 500kg sold to a much dearer market trend, including a few milk tooth lines. There were insufficient heavy grown steers to process for a quote. Grown heifers to feed were also much dearer. The cow market saw trends slightly cheaper. Heavy weight bulls remained firm.

Market Reporter, James Armitage.

**Detailed Cattle report for HRLX Singleton**

*Last reported 15th December 2021*

The last Singleton cattle sale for 2021 produced extra cattle and the quality was mixed. The majority were younger cattle more suited for the lot feeders and restocker orders, with ample numbers in prime condition and suitable for the butchers also penned. Export cattle were limited in supply. Market trends were solid throughout except for the export cattle selling to a cheaper trend. The over 200kg vealer steers to the restockers trended dearer considering the breed offered and these made from 606c to 832c/kg. Same weight heifer portion also to the restockers trended dearer and received from 558c to 832c/kg. The yearling steers sold according to the breed and quality offered with the better drafts maintaining strong competition. Medium weights to feed and the restocker buyers received from 490c to 682c. Lightweights reached 700c/kg. Yearling heifers to feed received from 506c to 581c for the medium weights with the lightweights reaching 738c/kg. Prime high yielding cattle purchased by the butchers continue to sell well with the best B muscles reaching 600c/kg. Heavy weight bullocks to the processors reached 300c, with the lighter end to the lot feeders ranging from 386c to 552c/kg. Cows trended 25c cheaper, with the better covered heavy weights making from 296c to 364c/kg. Cows rearing calves sold between \$3000 to \$4000/unit.

Market Reporter, Neil Geddes.

**Detailed Cattle report for Scone**

*Last reported 14th December 2021*

The last Scone cattle sale for 2021 produced a fair to good quality penning of mainly younger cattle, with ample numbers suitable for the lot feeders and restocker buyers. There were also consignments in prime condition and high yielding purchased by the butchers and processors. The export cattle were scarce in the pens. The market trends were again solid throughout, however the few cows trended cheaper. The over 200kg vealer steers to the restockers sold to strong competition, however there were some breed and weight price variations, and prices ranged from 652c to 800c and up to 830c/kg for the light weights. The heavier pens remained firm and sold from 652c to 726c/kg. The over 200kg vealer heifers also to the restockers made from 612c to 744c/kg. The medium weight yearling steers to the lot feeders trended dearer and received from 550c to 650c/kg. The heifer portion sold to strong competition, with the restockers and lot feeders paying from 445c to 640c/kg. The high yielding B muscled yearling steers to the butchers reached 600c/kg. Cows trended 18c cheaper, with the better covered heavy weights making from 300c to 358c/kg. The heavy weight bulls trended a little cheaper and reached 320c/kg. Heifers rearing calves ranged from \$2100 to \$4100/unit.

Market Reporter, Neil Geddes

**Detailed Cattle report for TRLX Tamworth**

*Last reported 13th December 2021*

There was a greatly reduced penning to wrap sales up for the year. All categories were represented in a very mixed quality offering. There were few bigger lines available with producers seemingly having a clean up prior to a 3 week break. The condition of the offering varied from plain to very good. Most of the usual buyers participated. A noticeable absentee in the heavy weight trade categories. Demand varied in the young cattle. Light weight restocker steers sold to a cheaper trend for the most part. A single pen of light weight vealers the exception. Medium and heavy weight feeder steers sold to a slightly dearer market trend, some price variation between fat scores. Once again there was little price difference between breed. Medium weights to restockers were dearer. Medium and heavy weight yearling heifers to feed sold to cheaper trends with the greatest correction being for heavy weights. Breed and quality were factors. Apart for a few to local butchers the trade yearlings sold to cheaper trends with reduced competition. Heavy weight grown steers to feed sold to dearer trends. The limited supply to processors were cheaper. Demand was weaker in the cow market with trends cheaper by 15c to 20c/kg.

Market reporter, James Armitage.

week and suggested I send him to either Jason (Grimson) or Jack (Trainor). He thought 'Grimmo' might be the best suited because he's such a hand-on trainer with horses who've had issues," Duffy said.

Grimson only got hold of Boncel Benjamin in late September and 10 weeks later wins the Inter Dominion final.

"He surprised me tonight. To burn out early like that and still finish the race off so strong, that was incredible," he said. "We thought we could win a few sprint races with him and maybe have a go at a race like the Miracle Mile, but he just kept getting better and better.

"When the Inter Dominion was coming up so quickly, we thought we'd enter him and have a crack at it." Regular driver Josh Gallagher jumped off Boncel Benjamin in the series to drive Burnham Boy. It was only 4pm last Monday when he was asked by Grimson to reunite with the speedster and take his first drive in an Inter Dominion final.

"Harness racing has been my life. You grow up dreaming of races like the Miracle Mile and Inter Dominion. This is my first Group 1 win and it's come in an Inter Dominion. It hasn't fully sunk in," Gallagher said. Gallagher became the second youngest driver to

win an Inter Dominion final. He turned 21 on November 6, while Chris Lewis was just 20 when he won aboard Carclew in the 1976 Adelaide pacing final. But Gallagher had to win it in the stewards' room, successfully arguing tactics of David Moran on Expensive Ego, who was first past the post by a head, had denied him a certain victory. "100 per cent there was a run up the inside and he took my running. I was going to

win for sure and easily," Gallagher said. Stewards agreed and reversed the result for the first time in the history of the Inter Dominion, which dates back to 1936.

*\* Adam Hamilton is a paid contributor writing on harness racing for News Corp*



Boncel Benjamin and Josh Gallagher (outer) were promoted to first in the Inter Dominion pacing final on protest after Expensive Ego was first past the post. Picture: Club Menangle

The below quotes are taken from the Bureau of Meteorology regarding the coming weeks and summer months:

- The fortnight from 20 December 2021 to 2 January 2022 has a generally mixed outlook for rainfall, with patches of wetter than median along the eastern coast of Australia, and drier than median in patches elsewhere. Maximum temperatures are also likely to be below median for the southern half of Australia in this

fortnight.

- The La Niña in the Pacific Ocean, the positive Southern Annular Mode (SAM) and the strengthening MJO over the western Pacific are likely influencing the above median rainfall outlooks.
  - January to March rainfall is likely to be above median for eastern Queensland and north-eastern NSW, as well as small patches elsewhere. Much of this area is likely to receive rainfall in the top 20% of historical records.
  - January to March maximum temperatures are likely to be above median for most of Australia, except parts of eastern Australia and the southern coastline of WA where the outlook is either mixed or below median.
  - Minimum temperatures for January to March are likely to be warmer than median nationwide.
  - There is an increased chance of unusually high minimum temperatures (in the top 20% of historical records) for January to March over all of Australia (1.5 to more 4.0 times the usual chance), with the highest likelihoods for northern Australia and north-western Tasmania.
- So, yeah. The broad outlook is that the coming summer months will be hotter and wetter for a good chunk of Australia. Fingers crossed it doesn't impact your holiday plans too much!

Racing Review & News

**Emotional win for Inter Dominion owner**

By Adam Hamilton  
 Steven Duffy took a moment to look to the sky after the pacer he named after his father caused a huge upset and won the Inter Dominion final on protest at Menangle on Saturday night. Just hours earlier, Duffy visited his father's grave just outside Shepparton and told him he was going to Sydney to win the sport's biggest race with \$50 outsider Boncel Benjamin. "I lost my Dad in a car crash when I was just 21. I always wanted to name a horse after him when a really good horse came along and this was the one. "Dad's name was Boncel Benjamin Duffy. I've never heard of anyone else called Boncel.



Steven Duffy made a stopover to visit his father's grave with the 2021 TAB Inter Dominion trophy. Picture: Steven Duffy

"This horse always had ability, but he's done three tendons and it looked like he'd never fulfill his potential." It was just back in March when Boncel Benjamin raced in a "claimer" where all horses were for sale. You'd have bought him for just \$35,000.

"Thankfully nobody did, probably because of his injury history," Duffy said. Soon after Duffy thought Boncel Benjamin, renowned for his early gate speed and brilliance, would be best suited moving to Menangle where they run so many mile (sprint races). He called top Victorian

trainer David Aiken, who ironically had Max Delight and Malcolms Rhythm in last night's final, to ask if he would train Boncel Benjamin. Aiken was on an extended working holiday at Menangle at the time. "David said he was coming home the next



# I have an Idea!



When it ticks over to the new year this December, let's call it 2019 so we can erase the last 2 years. Sound like a plan? Other than having Battles with Google (see Macdroids V Google) and Apple, I also contracted Covid-19 in October. They reckon I was lucky to survive it. Apparently the 1st vax shot helped. Anyway, I'm on the mend and almost back to 100% thanks to the wonderful nursing staff at Maitland Hospital who despite me staying in my undies for the entire time, still came in every 2 hours to check on me; thanks girls. To all my clients that wished me well while I was away, thanks; it's appreciated. Finally, the Service NSW App is working properly...just in time so we don't have to use it anymore. I want their software programmers job! For the last 2 years they stuff around with that App causing all sorts of grief for people using it and when we finally get to rip off these masks and hopefully won't need to be tracked everywhere we go, they get it right.

## Go figure.

OK, some tech tips... If you're buying a 2nd hand phone this Christmas, trust no-one! Please make sure that the original owner is signed out of their iCloud account and Google accounts. Make sure that the phone has been reset and none of their details, contacts, photos are still on the phone. Don't buy a phone that's flat. If they can't be bothered to keep it charged for you, take your money elsewhere. Avoid buying a phone that has a cracked screen or rear glass. You know how this happened right?

## IT WAS DROPPED AND HIT CONCRETE!!!

So, why would you risk buying a device that has potential internal damage and/or intermittent faults that may not show up at the time you buy it? They advertise these as "minor crack on the screen but it has no effect on use". Really, so why you selling it? Put your sim card into it and make sure you can make a phone call. They all say its unlocked but we see half a dozen clients a week with locked phones that were "unlocked at the time of purchase". If you insist on buying these "bargains", we can help with new batteries, replacement screens for virtually any phone, cracked rear glass and practically any other type of fault that you may encounter. As the ONLY real phone engineers in the area, you can be certain that when we fix something for you, it comes with a *Lifetime Guarantee* on repairs. The others won't do this because they're not technicians, they use the cheapest parts they can get their hands on and offer a miserable 3 month guarantee. Thanks for supporting Macdroid's during these difficult times and please pop in to say hello next time you're at Greenhills Shopping Centrew. Merry Xmas from the Crew at Macdroid Cheers, Frank



## For Sales, Service & Advice...








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

# 1300 622 376

# MOVIE REVIEW

DUNE


**Director:** Denis Villeneuve  
**Main Cast:** Josh Brolin, Dave Bautista, Oscar Isaac, Jason Momoa, Javier Bardem, Charlotte Rampling, Rebecca Ferguson, Timothée Chalamet, Stellan Skarsgård, Zendaya .  
**Genre:** Action, Adventure, Fantasy, Science Fiction  
**Running Time:** 155 MIN  
**Release Date:** 02 Dec 2021  
**Rating:** M

Dune: A stunning achievement you need to see on the biggest screen you can find

By Graeme Tuckett  
 Frank Herbert's *Dune* has been defying film-makers to come and have a go, pretty much since it dropped off the presses in serial form in 1965. *Dune* is a sprawling and wildly ambitious story. It takes place across galaxies, features a cast with some decidedly alien abilities, and one of its most important plot lines revolves around the existence of 500-metre-long sandworms who – no, really – spend their days defecating a substance that is a hallucinogen of such strength that it can cause its users to bend time and space with their minds, so that intergalactic travel becomes possible. Herbert may have set his novel 8000 years in the future, but *Dune* is still utterly and wonderfully a product of the 1960s. Getting all – or any – of this up on the screen has been tried a few times. David Lynch released a version in 1984, which, although it'll always be a late-night cult favourite, is still a lumpen and ungainly mess. The special effects of 1984 really weren't up to Herbert's imagination – and casting the famously inexpressive Kyle MacLachlan as the hero Paul Atreides was maybe a misstep. Although, by the time a young Sting showed up, wearing nothing but a pout and his battle panties as an evil Baron's murderous nephew, you'd have been too busy laughing to remember who MacLachlan was even supposed to be – and why it should matter. The 2000 Sci-Fi Channel mini-series is apparently worth a look. Me, I just wish that Alejandro Jodorowsky had got his vision off the ground in 1974. But with Salvador Dali, Orson Welles and Mick Jagger in the cast, Pink Floyd providing the soundtrack and a projected nine-hour running time, it was never really going to happen. The documentary *Jodorowsky's Dune*, on the doomed attempt, is still probably my favourite "making of" ever. *Dune* is the story of two dynasties battling for the supply of the aforementioned worm poo – known as Melange, or "spice" – and control of the only planet on which it exists. The Atreideses are the good guys here, led by the apparently decent and noble Leto. Paul is his son and heir. His mum is Lady Jessica, who is also a member of an ancient sisterhood, whose own aims and plans will slowly come into focus. Ranged against the decent and mother-loving Atreideses are the – boo, hiss – Harkonnens, led by a repugnant Baron and his army of sycophants and mercenaries, all of whom look as though they'd push their own granny down the stairs if you promised them an icecream. Picking a side in *Dune* isn't hard. Compressing Herbert's sprawling storytelling into anything watchable and propulsive is. But director Denis Villeneuve has succeeded. Working from a script co-written with veterans Jon Spaihts and Eric Roth, Villeneuve's vision of *Dune* simply gets everything right. The look of the film is exactly what a fan might have hoped for. The effects – digital and in-camera – are convincing and appropriately astonishing. And Villeneuve has set the story in motion at exactly the right pace. There is grandeur and pomp here, and a sense of mighty political foes manoeuvring their way around each other, but *Dune* is never anything less than nimble at getting across the screen. Villeneuve has mistaken humourlessness for seriousness before now. His *Blade Runner 2049* looked and sounded wonderful, but the storytelling was leaden. Here, with a dream cast and a startlingly well-streamlined script, this *Dune* flies. Timothee Chalamet – basically revisiting his performance in *The King* – is perfect as Paul Atreides, with Oscar Isaac and Rebecca Ferguson both fine as his parents. On the opposition benches, Stellan Skarsgard is winningly grotesque as the Baron, with Dave Bautista appropriately thuggish as a right-hand and fixer. The secret weapons here are Josh Brolin and Jason Momoa as the career soldiers tasked with defending the family and mentoring Paul. It's as though Villeneuve has finally realised that having a couple of likeable and gruffly funny characters among all the bloodshed and pontificating might actually be something that propels the storytelling and keeps us invested in what's happening on screen. Once the action moves into the desert, where the worms and their spice lurk, Javier Bardem and Zendaya – representing the Indigenous "Fremen" – are on hand to lead Chalamet and Ferguson, at least, into what promises to be a truly epic second instalment. Villeneuve does pretty much everything you could hope for here. This *Dune* undercuts and interrogates Herbert's "white saviour" narrative early and often, but in a way that leaves other themes intact. The role the mysterious sisterhood will play in the conflicts to come is not clear, but we have not seen the last of them. The coming alliance between the Atreides and the Fremen is barely hinted at here, but it is still thoroughly seeded and ready to bloom. It won't be until 2023 and the release of the second film that we can really appreciate just how well Part One has succeeded. But I've got a feeling this *Dune* is going to be remembered and appreciated for decades. Villeneuve has made *Dune* into something accessible and human, while retaining and celebrating the epic scale of the source. It is a stunning achievement. Go and see it on the biggest screen in town.

# The things we don't know about the emergence of the omicron variant

By Adam Taylor  
with Sammy Westfall

The Washington Post  
Democracy Dies in Darkness



• Passengers sit in their seats aboard KLM Flight 598 on the tarmac at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam after it landed from

As flight KL592 was in the air between Johannesburg and Amsterdam on Friday, the rules of the pandemic changed. The spread of an alarming new covid-19 variant soon to be named omicron, first reported by South Africa, had prompted an abrupt reappraisal of the risks of international travel. The Netherlands banned entry to travellers from southern Africa; suddenly, those onboard KL592 were persona non grata. The Dutch government was following a familiar instinct, eventually taken by more than 30 nations. By shutting down travel from southern Africa, it hoped to keep this new variant out. But that was futile. Not only did the chaotic, crammed scenes involving KL592 and another flight by Dutch airline KLM apparently become a Petri dish for spreading the variant — it later emerged that the virus was already in the Netherlands.

Dutch officials said Tuesday that they had reviewed genetic sequencing data and detected the variant in a sample collected on Nov. 19 and another on Nov. 23, several days before the now infamous flights took off. And the Dutch aren't alone in finding the variant was in their country before South Africa raised the alarm.

According to tracking data from GISAID Initiative, a global database of coronavirus genome, of the two dozen or so countries that have reported cases of omicron, more than half first found the variant in samples taken before South Africa alerted the World Health Organization (WHO) on Nov. 25. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday that the first case of the new omicron variant on U.S. soil has been identified in California in a traveler who returned from South Africa on Nov. 22. A comprehensive understanding of omicron's spread may be impossible — the United States is only sequencing and sharing around 3.6 percent of its coronavirus samples, according to analysis of GISAID data by The Washington Post, meaning that many samples are not studied closely for variants.

And many other nations lag even further behind. The uncertain emergence of the virus represents a significant geopolitical problem, deepening the global division that has emerged during the pandemic. Omicron has heightened anger over how wealthy nations have hoarded vaccines at the expense of poorer ones, while countries in southern Africa have accused nations of "Afrophobia" and "racism" for imposing blanket travel bans.

**Right now, the earliest known cases of omicron were found in South Africa.** On Nov. 8, researchers in the country took a coronavirus sample that was subsequently found to contain the variant, according to the GISAID database. Scores more cases of the variant have been found there since, in part due to the nation's aggressive sequencing responses.

Countries have responded with praise for South African researchers, but also blanket travel restrictions on the nation and its neighbors. Some banned lists have included not only countries that have recorded cases of omicron, but also ones that have not, such as Zimbabwe and Namibia. It's been a bitter pill for many to swallow.

"I can sympathize with the knee-jerk reaction that if you hear there is something new and potentially nasty, you want to keep it out. The problem is that South Africa, at this stage, feels very much the victim of their own good deeds," Wolfgang Preiser, head of medical virology at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, told NPR on Wednesday. "The results were publicized the moment we were sure

about it. And this is actually enabling other countries to look out for it."

The idea of a "South African" variant has added fuel to a bitter debate about vaccine equality during the pandemic. As a continent, Africa is lagging far behind in the global vaccination race, with just 7 percent of the continent fully vaccinated compared with 42 percent of the entire world. But South Africa is different than many of its neighbours. South Africa, the second largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa, is far ahead with nearly 25 percent of the population fully vaccinated.

Drugmaker Pfizer also said this week that five of the eight countries included in a travel ban imposed by the United States — Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe — had asked for deliveries of doses to be delayed due to problems with uptake.

But as The Post's Yasmeen Abutaleb and Lesley Wroughton wrote this week, the debate is more complex. Low- and middle-income nations like those in Africa are persistently behind wealthy high-income nations in the line for doses. Problems with hesitancy are intertwined with supply issues, some experts argue, in part due to halts in vaccinations due to waits for doses.

Early cases have also been found in Botswana, where polls show high levels of acceptance of vaccination but less than 1 in 3 have been fully vaccinated. Nigeria set off a flurry of interest on Wednesday after official data suggested that the country had found cases of omicron in October. Officials later explained that this was a mistake and the samples were from late November. Less than 2 percent of Nigeria is fully vaccinated.

**A hunt for the precise emergence of omicron may go nowhere.** The origin of the original covid-19 strain, first detected in Wuhan, China, remains a subject of fierce international disagreement. Another variant, alpha, was initially detected in Britain, while the fast-spreading delta variant that caused so much damage earlier this year was first identified in India.

It isn't clear how long omicron was circulating below the radar, but as The Post's Joel Achenbach wrote this week, the data suggest that the virus "mutated steadily, at a fairly leisurely pace." Scientists are as interested in the "how" the variant developed as the "where." Some researchers have theorized that it could even have evolved in an animal before being passed to humans.

If the variant was unexpected, the reflex reaction was not. Despite the complaints from African nations and more stern warnings from the WHO, countries reverted to blanket travel bans. Many, including the United States, have begun to rethink testing and quarantine measures at their borders, which is more in line with WHO recommendations though also causes disruption to travel and business. Some countries are operating in the shadow of delta. U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson was criticized this summer for keeping travel between Britain and India open as he courted Indian officials for a trade deal. Britain was among the countries to swiftly impose a ban on southern Africa. Political leaders are willing to risk overreacting, given the alarming number of mutations that could impact immune responses.

But it is far from clear that the variant will be able to push out the dominant delta variant or what impact it would have. And given the number of things still not known about omicron, prudence may be a wiser strategy than panic.

THE NEWS | No.542 | THURSDAY 23 DECEMBER 2021 9 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

and

NOT SO

To North Rothbury Tidy Town who have really made our coming Christmas memorable. Every year we, as a family, put 'Christmas Lights' up and as the years have gone on the number of lights has escalated. We enjoy an endless stream of families, leading up to Christmas, driving by and having a look ... wonderful for the kids and, I think, the not so young. Anyway, we had a knock on the door the other evening and were presented with a lovely letter from North Rothbury Tidy Town thanking us for our gesture and a box of chocolates. The letter said ... *at our last meeting it was decided by our members to congratulate those family's, in our North Rothbury community, who have taken the time & made the effort to enhance the Christmas Season by adorning their homes with Christmas Lights. You are one of just 20 homes in North Rothbury that will receive this letter & some chocolates as a small token of our appreciation.* To President Mike Lowing, Mark Stanford & Sue, & members 'Thank you'.

My letter (refer letters 23/12/21) to the ScoMo was not acknowledged, even by the automatic reply machine. Probably because I wrote "BS" in the text. I think I have been cancelled. If I complain again I might well disappear. Welcome to Marxist Leninist new world order. My socks and vegetables are my business.

To North Rothbury Rural Fire Service for there Christmas Lolly Run ... kids just love it!

**FREE 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

**Dates for your diary** 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  
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  
SAT JAN 22-Branxton Lions BUNNINGS BBQ – Singleton Bunnings – get your Lions snags!  
TUE 1 FEB 2022—Branxton Public School. First day for students Years 1 to 6  
MON 7 FEB – Branxton Public School-First day for Kindergarten students  
SAT 12 FEB - Branxton Lions District Convention + Remembrance service Wyong Rugby Leagues Club.  
SUN 6 MAR—Lions Awareness and Clean Up Australia Day – Lions Park, Branxton.  
SUN 19 MAR -Lions Youth of the Year – District Final at Greta.  
FRI 25 MAR to SUN 3 APL—Cessnock City Council Seniors Festival at Greta and Branxton  
SEPT 2022- Lions Garden Project Lions Australia 75th Anniversary garden – Lions Park Branxton.  
**Upcoming Concerts**  
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**

**Dates for your diary**



**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!

### Singleton visitor economy boosted with the reopening of Visitor Information Centre

Singleton’s newly refurbished Visitor Information Centre (VIC) will be unveiled Monday 6 December, just in time for the Christmas school holidays.

Located in the heart of Townhead Park on the New England Highway in Singleton’s town centre, the VIC offers tourist information and unique souvenirs, and will also act as the gateway to the Singleton Arts + Cultural Centre, due to open in March 2021.

Vicki Brereton, Council’s Director Organisation + Community Capacity said 11 years since it opened, the refurbishment of the VIC symbolises Council’s renewed approach to visitor experience, enabling the centre to tell the stories of Singleton as a destination, as well as enable more opportunities for local product and industry promotion.

Works included internal and external painting, roofing, window screening, and new joinery and display spaces.

“It’s an exciting time for Singleton with the unveiling of our refreshed Visitor Information Centre, the new Arts and Cultural Centre close to completion as well as the recent updates to Townhead Park precinct, all of which encourage visitors to stop and spend a while in Singleton while supporting the ongoing growth of our visitor economy,” Ms Brereton said.

“Because the existing VIC building connects to the new Arts and Cultural Centre, it was important that the two spaces were cohesive and connected – not just physically – thereby delivering on our vision to ‘celebrate Singleton’s creative life and identity’.

“The renovation also enables us to improve how we showcase local operators and producers, as well as Council’s ability to support local businesses.”

Ms Brereton said the Visitor Information Centre will play a vital role in boosting the local tourism industry which has been heavily impacted by lockdowns, especially as appetite for travel grows stronger and summer school holidays just around the corner. Pre- COVID figures showed about half a million tourists visit the Singleton local government area each year, which is a rise of 26% over the past five years. The value of the Singleton visitor economy output has also increased to \$140million per year, growing by 32% since 2015.

“Townhead Park is a great source of community pride as a hub for visitors, arts and culture and recreation and leisure, and these works not only promote but symbolise what makes the Singleton area so special,” she said.

“We are extremely excited to relaunch this fantastic facility to service and inspire our residents and visitors alike, and everyone who visits in our reopening week will go into the draw to win a Christmas hamper full of fantastic local product with the winner to be announced at Council’s Christmas on John Street event on 10 December.

“Better yet, you can tick off your Christmas shopping and get an extra chance in the draw by spending \$20.

“I encourage everyone, local or visiting, to stop in and take a look at the new-look centre and plan your next trip in Singleton and beyond.”

The Singleton Visitor Information Centre currently attracts 12,000 visitors a year and is conveniently located in Townhead Park on the New England Highway in Singleton’s town centre. The Centre will open from 9am to 5pm, seven days a week.



Council’s Customer Service Officer Amber Andrews and Team Leader Customer Service Brendon Burness in the recently refurbished Singleton Visitor Information Centre

### School holiday fun at Cessnock City Libraries!

The Christmas holidays are fast approaching and Cessnock City Libraries have a great range of fun events on offer, with something for kids of all ages and abilities.

Throughout December and January, kids will have the opportunity to go to the circus, create upcycled treasures, play giant games, learn all about crystals, and test their Hogwarts knowledge with Harry Potter Trivial Pursuit.

We’re also excited to be offering sensory storytime for the first time. Designed for children with disability and kids who feel overwhelmed by noises and crowds, these sessions combine storytelling with sensory aids to help kids feel calm and comfortable. Sensory storytime aids were purchased with a \$1500 grant from National Backyard Cricket, a program run by national charity, The LBW Trust that fundraises for education projects at country libraries across Australia.

Cessnock’s Library Services Coordinator, Rose-marie Walters is encouraging local parents and carers to check out what’s on offer for kids at our libraries during the upcoming holidays.

“We have a full program of fun COVID Safe events at both Cessnock and Kurri Kurri library branches over summer. Our libraries are fantastic places for children to learn a new skill, be creative, make new friends and, most of all, have fun,” Rosemary said.

For the full program of what’s on, drop into one of our library branches and pick up a flyer, give us a call on 4993 4399, or visit the Cessnock City Libraries website at [www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/libraries](http://www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/libraries). Numbers are limited and booking is essential.



### Spirit of the season takes over Singleton Town Centre with community feedback invited on Christmas on John Street event

The magic of Christmas has well and truly taken over Singleton after the return of Christmas on John Street in Singleton last weekend.

Thousands of people converged on Singleton’s town centre on Friday night and Vicki Brereton, Council’s Acting General Manager said it was fantastic that the community could finally come together again to celebrate after bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the much-loved event from going ahead the past two years.

From entertainment and roving performances to market stalls, fireworks and, of course, Santa Claus in his own grotto, there was something for everyone at the event that has become the unofficial launch of the festive season.

Council is now keen to hear the community’s feedback by completing the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RP96CBD>

“Christmas on John Street is about bringing everyone together to rejoice in the spirit of the season and it’s a wonderful re-enforcement of our purpose at Council to create community,” Ms Brereton said.

“Many hours of planning through to a lot of hard work on the night goes in to hosting Christmas on John Street, and it’s well and truly worth it when you see so many people out having a great time.

“It was fantastic to see so many people come out for the event to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year, as well as everything that’s great about Singleton.”

Ms Brereton said Friday’s event was the perfect curtain raiser to the festive season in Singleton, with a sleigh of other initiatives in partnership with the Singleton Business Chamber in force to spread festive cheer while supporting the local economy.

“Businesses have decked their shop windows in their efforts to be crowned best decorated in the Light Up Your Business competition. Prizes include a \$1500 Spend in Singleton gift cards for the winning business as well as a \$500 voucher for the local community group of their choice,” she said.

“There’s also 50 \$25 Spend in Singleton gift cards up for grabs for hawk-eyed youngsters who spot one of the many elves keeping watch in local businesses in the Santa’s Little Helper competition.

“It’s extremely easy to get involved – vote for your favourite store or report an elf sighting using the QR code in store or on visit the Spend in Singleton website.

“Plus, if you still have items to check off your Christmas list, be sure to check out the Shop Singleton gift guide on Council’s website which showcases something for everyone – without having to leave town to get it.”



Millie Fenwick, Minka George and Izaak Fenwick, all of Singleton, at Christmas on John Street.



**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



## Simple Gardening Tips and Tricks

1. To remove the salt deposits that form on clay pots, combine equal parts white vinegar, rubbing alcohol and water in a spray bottle. Apply the mixture to the pot and scrub with a plastic brush. Let the pot dry before you plant anything in it.
2. To prevent accumulating dirt under your fingernails while you work in the garden, draw your fingernails across a bar of soap and you'll effectively seal the undersides of your nails so dirt can't collect beneath them. Then, after you've finished in the garden, use a nailbrush to remove the soap and your nails will be sparkling clean.
3. To prevent the line on your string trimmer from jamming or breaking, treat with a spray vegetable oil before installing it in the trimmer.
4. Turn a long-handled tool into a measuring stick! Lay a long-handled garden tool on the ground, and next to it place a tape measure. Using a permanent marker, write inch and foot marks on the handle. When you need to space plants a certain distance apart (from just an inch to several feet) you'll already have a measuring device in your hand.
5. To have garden twine handy when you need it, just stick a ball of twine in a small clay pot, pull the end of the twine through the drainage hole, and set the pot upside down in the garden. Do that, and you'll never go looking for twine again.
6. Little clay pots make great cloches for protecting young plants from sudden, overnight frosts and freezes.
7. To turn a clay pot into a hose guide, just stab a roughly one-foot length of steel reinforcing bar into the ground at the corner of a bed and slip two clay pots over it: one facing down, the other facing up. The guides will prevent damage to your plants as you drag the hose along the bed.
8. To create perfectly natural markers, write the names of plants (using a permanent marker) on the flat faces of stones of various sizes and place them at or near the base of your plants.
9. Got aphids? You can control them with a strong blast of water from the hose or with insecticidal soap. But here's another suggestion, one that's a lot more fun; get some tape! Wrap a wide strip of tape around your hand, sticky side out, and pat the leaves of plants infested with aphids. Concentrate on the undersides of leaves, because that's where the little buggers like to hide.
10. The next time you boil or steam vegetables, don't pour the water down the drain, use it to water potted patio plants, and you'll be amazed at how the plants respond to the "vegetable soup."
11. Use leftover tea and coffee grounds to acidify the soil of acid-loving plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, gardenias and even blueberries. A light sprinkling of about one-quarter of an inch applied once a month will keep the pH of the soil on the acidic side.
12. Use chamomile tea to control damping-off fungus, which often attacks young seedlings quite suddenly. Just add a spot of tea to the soil around the base of seedlings once a week or use it as a foliar spray.
13. If you need an instant table for tea service, look no farther than your collection of clay pots and saucers. Just flip a good-sized pot over, and top it off with a large saucer. And when you've had your share of tea, fill the saucer with water, and your "table" is now a birdbath.
14. The quickest way in the world to dry herbs: just lay a sheet of newspaper on the seat of your car, arrange the herbs in a single layer, then roll up the windows and close the doors. Your herbs will be quickly dried to perfection. What's more, your car will smell great



## Pet Tips for Summer



### Ticks

- During the warmer months ticks and fleas are at a record high. **CHECK!** Run your hand over their body and feel for any unusual lumps or bumps daily. Not only on the surface, nasty ticks can be hiding in soft paw pads, under collars, even in the gum line. Be vigilant.

- **PREVENTION!** Use products such as Nexgard, Bravecto, tick collars, shampoos and rinses designed to prevent ticks. Keep cats indoors, outdoor cats may not make it home in time to get help if affected by a paralysis tick!

- **REMOVAL!** If you find a tick on your pet, it is best to remove it as quickly as possible. Use tweezers or a tick removal system (found at World for Pets). Ensure you have removed the head of the tick as well.

### Storms

Keep your pet safe and secure during Summer thunderstorms and natural disasters. Fireworks and thunder can be very distressing and troublesome for your pets. To prevent them from running away keep them safe and calm indoors with you or on a tether that provides sufficient running space and access to food and water. You could also put them inside the laundry or toilet or in a suitable crate. A thundershirt for your dog or cat is also a great way of keeping them calm from anxiety in stressful situations.

### Dangerous Plants

Many people are not aware of how toxic many indoor and outdoor plants, and also cut flower arrangements can be to our beloved pets. Some pets can be fascinated with plants and the garden. It is important to make sure you are aware of the plants in your household if you happen to have a 'plant-eating pet'. Many people are not aware of how toxic many indoor and outdoor plants, and also cut flower arrangements can be to our beloved pets. Some of the most common culprits are aloe vera, daffodil, baby's breath, carnations and lilies. Consult your garden nursery, botanical garden, local veterinarian, or poisons centre for more information relating to toxic plants in your garden or environment.

### Travelling with Pets

We love travelling with our beloved pets but their health and welfare must always come first. Don't leave your pet in the car. Summer is fun, and you want to spend as much time with your pet in the great outdoors - but sometimes the safest thing for your furry friend is to be left at home with a bowl of fresh water and easy access to shade. If a pet is left in the car the windows down will not

keep the car cool. Remember it doesn't take long for the car to reach exceedingly high temperatures (up to 73 degrees celsius!) – so please remember Pets can Die in Hot Cars.

When your pet is in the car make sure they are secure, the car has sufficient ventilation and the windows are down slightly to allow for fresh air. Secure your mate! The backs of utes can get extremely hot and can lead to burnt paw pads, dehydration, heat stroke or even death. When dogs are travelling on the backs of utes ensure that they are appropriately restrained and have regular breaks to allow for a stretch and water.

### Chill Out

Keep your pet cool with frozen kongs, plenty of water and a splash in a paddling pool. Dogs don't sweat. Cooling occurs through panting (evaporative cooling from the lungs and mouth), lying on a cool surface and drinking cool water. Hot weather paired with high humidity are the most dangerous days for dogs as cooling through panting is not as efficient in these weather conditions. Therefore, always ensure that your **pet's water bowl** is checked on a regular basis and they always have **access to clean, fresh water**. In the event that you are out, ensure that the bowl is big enough to hold enough water for the whole day. In case of a tip-over, **leave two or three water bowls – just in case!** You could also pop in a few **ice cubes** to keep the water nice and cold.

**Shade for the day.** If your pet is in the backyard during the day, ensure they have plenty of **access to shade** – remember the sun moves throughout the day – so ensure your pet has shade from all aspects throughout the day. Pets can suffer heatstroke or even death in their own backyard on a hot Summer's day without shade or water. Dog houses do not provide adequate ventilation; your dog can end up being in a 'hot box', which can make matters even worse.

During a heat wave (or extreme temperatures), it is best to have your dog **inside in a well-ventilated area**, which will give them a break from the scorching sun.

**Sleeping spots.** Dogs will normally find the coolest spot of the house or yard themselves, but place **outside beds or mats in shady or cool spots**.

Try **dampening your dog's blankets** or mats with water to create cool resting spots, or you can also **buy cool mats and cool jackets** specifically for dogs. .

**Bubble bath!** When the heat soars take the opportunity to give your pet a bath with lukewarm water. This will instantly cool them down and prevent any overheating.

**Doggy paddle!** Not all dogs know how to swim! If you have a backyard pool, ensure it is adequately fenced and your dog knows how to swim. Teach your dog to swim to a certain point at the edge of the pool where the stairs are. You can even get a doggy ladder to make the swimming experience easier for your pooch. Or get a small paddle pool (with shallow water) to keep them cool in summer (also makes a great extra water bowl!)

**Popsicles!** Frozen treats in a treat dispenser or kong or even cupcake liners are a great way to cool down your dog and keep them occupied. Get creative in the kitchen! There are many simple recipes to keep your dog cool this summer. Pet popsicles are a great treat and can be made out of all kinds of things your dog (or cats) eat normally, so experiment to see what they like best!

**Let's go walking!** It is essential that your dog gets a regular walk. However, always be mindful of the intensity of the summer heat and the terrible effects the heat can have on your dog. Remember **sunrise and sunset are the most ideal times for a walk**. Try to **walk on grass** rather than hot concrete as this can burn your pooch's paw pads. Also ensure that you always carry a **water bottle and a bowl** to prevent your dog from getting dehydrated.

**Slip Slop Slap for your Pet!** Dogs

and cats with smooth/thin hair and white-coloured ears or noses can be more susceptible to skin cancers, so be mindful of this when the sun is out. To ensure that your dog doesn't get sunburnt, keep your pet out of the sun in the hottest hours of the day and consider sunscreen.

Watch out! **Heat stress can sometimes be more prevalent as a result of the animal's physiological attributes.**

Brachycephalic (flat face) breeds, such as pugs, boxers, bulldogs, terriers and cavalier king charles spaniels are far more susceptible to heat stress than other breeds. This is due to the fact that dogs naturally reduce their body temperature by panting (evaporative cooling from the lungs and mouth). Brachycephalic breeds have shortened airways which reduces the effectiveness of panting. The weather does not even have to be particularly hot for these breeds to develop symptoms of heat stress.

**Dogs in Hot Cars** Each year, the RSPCA receives hundreds of distress calls about animals (usually dogs) being left in cars in the heat. Never leave your dog unattended in a car.

Cats will generally find a place to keep themselves cool in the heat. It is helpful to make sure their **water is in the shade or inside** and convenient. You can leave a **fan on** indoors or put down some **wet towels** and cats will use them if they choose to. You will find cats won't be too active in the heat and find a cool place to nap.

Cats can suffer **heat stress if they get caught outside in the sun or use up energy** (e.g. running or playing). Watch for signs of heat stress such as panting and excessive salivation. If you see such signs, make sure your cat is in the coolest part of the house and use a wet cloth and dampen the fur. Do not try and dunk your cat in water because that will usually add to the stress.

To keep your cat safe from skin cancer, keep white cats or cats with light pigmentation indoors.



once again, won the Pro's NTPin on the last—the first time anyone has won this prize twice. This is not surprising as Pete has always been considered to one of the best iron players so this is a testament to his great iron play. Victor Matt finished third with his 71 nett. Dave Hodges returned to form to win B Grade with a very solid 68 nett, just ahead of Joe Bereza's and Doug Elphick's 70 nett scores. James Elphick won a very competitive C Grade with an excellent 66 nett, just ahead of Club President Richard Crooks with his 67 nett (his best round in 2 years) with Michael Ostini third with a 68 nett. A 74 nett was needed to win a ball indicating that some solid golf was played in this monthly medal. The shot of the day belonged to Rod Wilton on the 9<sup>th</sup> (pity it wasn't the last hole—his brother took the spoils!). Captain Steve informed me that the "new grading system" started today with A Grade now 0-11; B Grade 12-18 and C Grade 19+. It was done to even out the fields as the handicaps have changed with the current GA Handicap system with players off lower handicaps due to this rating system. These changes were based on rounds played over the last year, with A Grade sometimes taking in half the field so "something had to give". From all reports this was well received once they understood the reasons for the change.

**HUNTER VALLEY GOLF CLUB**

**Sunday 5th December**  
The Weekly Challenge has been won by Michael Nissen with 41 points from Claudius Sihole with 39 & Jeff Shannahan 4rd with 38 on countback. Ball winners are: Do Hoon Song 38, Andrew Zok 38, Nick Tossman 38, Brent Musgrove 38, Sool Kim Jong 37, Yong Choi 37, Geoff Tolson 37, Stephen Zok 37, Steven Tan 36, Tim Roberts 35, Tony Krishna 35, Phil Douglas 35, Stephen Marchant 34, Steve Abel 34, Phil Byron 34, Nathaniel Hodges 33, Kim Yun Ho 33, Il Moon 32, Don Curran 32 & Jeff Morton 32 c/b.

**Tuesday 7th December**

After a barnstorming back nine which included a 'chip in' Birdie on the 18th Col Somerville took top spot on the Podium with 40 points on countback to Paul Smith in 2nd place and Phil Darcy with 38 on countback in 3rd. Ball winners are: Beepa 38, Pam Snaddon 36., Toot 35, Chris Taggart 34, Greg Snaddon 34, Ryan Wilson 33, Andrew Edwards 33, Peter McIntyre 33, Bailey Pockett 32, Jayden Casinelli 31, Tom Bell 31, Wally 30, Brandon Cole 29 & John Carmody 29 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins went to Andrew Edwards (3rd, 8th & 10th) & Peter McIntyre (17th)

**Wednesday 8th December**

The Ladies Championship is developing into a battle between current 1 shot leader Jenny Chambers & ultra experienced Melita Watson with the concluding round next Wednesday. Jenny is holding a 4

shot lead over Isabel Skeates in A Grade handicap. Leesa Robinson has a large lead over Mary Fortey in B Grade scratch with Mary having a 4 shot lead over Leesa in the handicap section. Jeanette Irwin has a 3 shot lead over Robin Dunlop in C Grade with Robyn leading Jeanette by the same margin in handicap.

**Thursday 9th December**

With the early rain ending just in time most of the field turned out in the Vets Medley Stableford with the 'bigger hitters' dominating the scoring with the heavy surface providing minimal 'run'. Division 1 went to Dave Hollis with a scratch round of 70 to record 43 points from Wazza with 37, Division 2 to Garry Clarke with 41 from Jock Kendall 40 on countback & Division 3 to Toot Matthews with 34 from Kevin Gibson 33 c/b. Ball winners are: Chris Norman 40, Noel Elenor 39, Doug Harley 37, Don Bradley 37, Peter McIntyre 37, Gary Arnold 37, Fluff 37, Steve Piggott 36, Greg Burke 36, Dave Gellwiler 35, John Carmody 35, Graham Donaldson 34, Mick Gilbert 34, Geoff Gibson 34, James Schofield 34, David Peel 33, John Stewart 33, Graeme Smith 33, Kerry Bartlett 33, John McLoughney 33, Doug Wand 33, Michael Cunningham 33, Graham Morris 33 & Steve Jurd 33 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to John McLoughney (3rd & 8th) Michael Cunningham (4th) Trevor Collins (10th) & James Hogg (17th).

**Saturday 11th December**

The second round of the Club Championship has seen Adam Jackson still maintain a solid 7 stroke lead from Phousang Sihapanya and a further 2 shots to Jason Cowburn. Adam also leads the handicap section by a mile for Tom Bell & Phousang another 3 behind Tom. B Grade has seen Eddie Barrett with a slim 1 shot lead over Dean Freebairn, Nic Bates & Jeremy Holden. B Grade handicap has Doug Wand take a handy 6 shot lead over Jeff Morton with Eddie & Garry Clarke tied another 2 shots back. C Grade Scratch in led clearly by Scott Jones with Tony Butler 5 shots behind with the trio of Bomber, Russ Lightfoot & Glenn Williams tied 2 further back. Scott is a big leader in C Grade handicap also with Glenn Willimas & Terry Webb tied in 2nd spot. Tracy Morison only needs to return next weeks card to claim the Ladies weekend title as today's only Lady entry.

The Daily Medley Stableford played in conjunction with the Championship has seen Tom Bell take out A Grade with 36 points on countback to Nathan Bendeich, B Grade to Doug Wand with 41 points & 'round of the day' from Eddie Barrett 37 & C Grade to inform Scott Jones with 39 to Kim Yun Ho with 38. Ball winners were: David Crowley 37, Max Hindmarsh 37, Brian Connolly 36, Gary Arnold 36, Bomber 36, Garry Clarke 36, Adam Jackson 35, Glenn Williams 35, Jeremy Holden 35, Phousang Sihapanya 34,

Terry Webb 34, Paul Campbell 34, Dean Freebairn 34, Russ Lightfoot 33, Dan McLeod 33, Andrew Zok 33, Jeff Morton 33, Garry Marsden 32, Trevor Collins 32, John Grayson 32, John Parish 32, Scott Sibson 32, Nichalos Hain 32, Craig Sharp 32, Ben Pickering 32, Bill Harden 32, Jason Cowburn 32, Paul Bullock 32, Damien Porter 32, Sool Kim Jong 32, Hugh Le 32, Graham Morris 31, Mick Goldman 31, Dean Morison 31, Tony Butler 31, Adrian Kent 31, Geoff Boyd 30, Bruce Chambers 30, Gerry Irwin 30, James Schofield 30, Wade Attewell 30, Beepa 30, Patrick Wand 30, John Chenery 29 & Mick Hughes 29 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Jeremy Holden (3rd) Scott Vowles (4th) Jeff Morton (8th) Nic Bates (10th) & Paul Bullock (17th).

**Sunday 12th December**

Paul Neuss has won the Weekly Challenge with a great 42 point round from Don Curran 39 with Steve Smith 3rd with 38 on countback. Ball winners are: Andrew Zok 38, John Knuth 37, Josh Flagstrom 36, Phil Douglas 36, Jill Baidacchino 35, Ian Smith 35, Josh Dixon 35, Jeff Shanahan 34, Phil Byron 34, Tom Way 34, Drew Dewar 33, Adam Batholomew 33, Wendt Wheelodon 33, Dylan Matheson 33, Darren Gold 33, Carly Wren 32, Justin Melia 31, Ian Cutriss 31, Glenda Williams 31 & Paul Brown 30 c/b

**Tuesday 14th December**

Paul Neuss followed up his Weekly Challenge form with another great round of 43 points and the win in the Tuesday Stableford from Adam Taggart 41 with Dean Morison 3rd with 40 on countback. Ball winners are: Alex carrall 40, Drew Dewar 38, John Martin 38, Paul Campbell 38, Andrew Cameron 37, David Peel 37, Greg Ireland 36, Nick Brooke 35, Andrew Cawsey 35, Garry Marsden 35, David John 34, Greg Snaddon 34, Col Bradley 34, Pam Snaddon 34, Angello Wood 33, Wade Firth 33, Scott Ling 33, Graeme Flynn 32, Ben Asbjerg 32, Chris Taggart 32, Dan Olsen 32, Marc McGee 31, Beepa 31, Darren Russell 31 & Mark Barrow 31 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Wayne Barber (3rd) John Stewart (4th) Dan Olsen (8th) Drew Dewar (10th) (& Scott Ling (17th))

**Wednesday 15th December**

The Ladies deciding Championship round has been played out in ideal conditions with an epic battle resulting in Melita Watson overtaking round 1 & 2 leader Jenny Chambers by a very slim margin to claim the 2021 title. B Grade Scratch winner is Leesa Robinson while C Grade Scratch has gone to Jeanette Irwin. The 54 hole over the field winner is Jenny Chambers with A Grade net to Jill Slatter, B Grade to Maureen Donaldson & C Grade to Robyn Dunlop. Congratulations to all of our winners and to those who turned out for this years event. The Daily Stroke round played in conjunction has

been won by Jill Slatter with 68 net from Jenny Chambers 71 & Melita Watson in 3rd place with 75 on countback. **Thursday 16th December**  
The efforts of the Greens Staff have been clearly reflected in the scoring handing in by our Vets in this week's Irish Stableford event. Division 1 has been won by Tom Bell in a 3 way countback with 77 points with Graeme Flynn 2nd on countback, Division 2 to John Grayson with the round of the day a staggering 86 points from Geoff Boyd 77 and Division 3 to John Tancred with 81 from Bill Harden 75 on countback. Ball winners were: Scrum 77, Dave Gellwiler 75, Greg Ireland 75, Graham Donaldson 74, Muz 74, Ruff 73, Kerry Bartlett 73, Ray Boyd 72, Jock 72, Paul Ireland 72, Rex Talbot 71, Paul Smith 71, GB Harris 71, Wayne Barber 71, Peter the Pom 71, Dave Archibald 70, Jeff Morton 70, John McLoughney 70, Silver 69, Wazza 69, Jeff Taylor 69, Springy 69, Reddis 68, Spot 68, Bruce Cahmbers 67, John Stewart 67, Wayne Cowen 67, Doug Wand 67, Ken Blackett 67 & John the Pom 67 on countback. Nearest-the-Pins to Graham Morris (3rd) Bomber (10th) & Tom Bell (4th & 17th). Next week the Vets will play a Medley Stableford

**Saturday 18th December**

Adam Jackson is HVGC 2021 Champion after completing the 3rd & final round to record a total of 225 and a 6 stroke advantage over Phousang Sihapanya as scratch runner. After being elevated to A Grade after the opening round Nic Bates has won B Grade scratch

with a 3 round total of 66 points from Garry Clarke 64 who fell just shy with a great 3rd round & Tony Butler has handed in 3 consistent rounds to nudge the 1st & 2nd round leader Scott Jones on countback. The 54 hole net over the field winner is Doug Wand with 114 points, A Grade net winner is Nathan Bendeich with a 219 total, B Grade net to Garry Clarke with 112 points and C Grade net winner is Glenn Williams with 103 on countback to the unlucky Scott Jones. Tracy Morison is the Weekend Ladies Champion for 2021. Congratulations to our winners and to those who competed.

The Daily Stableford event played in conjunction with the Championship has Nathan Bendeich winning A Grade with 37 points from James Marsh with 35 on countback, B Grade to Matt Merlo with 40 from Garry Clarke with 39 on countback & C Grade to Darren Mathers with 38 from Tony Butler with 37. Ball winners are: Gary Arnold 39, Tracy Morison 39, Geoff Boyd 37, Alan Provenzano 37, Paul Campbell 37, Garry Marsden 35, Mark Noble 35, Nick hain 35, Dan McLeod 34, Aaron Dries 34, Doug Wand 34, Lee Heuston 34, Graeme Smith 34, Phil Small 34, John Grayson 34, Lindsay Meyn 34, Beepa 33, Joshua Noble 33, Jeff Morton 33, Damien Porter 33, Ben Pickering 33, Craig Sharp 33, Darrell Porter 33, Nic Bates 33, Peter Payne 33, Paul Bullock 33, Graham Morris 33, Peter Huckfeldt 33, Russ Lightfoot 33, Glenn Williams 32, Danny

Schofield 32, Col Somerville 32, Wade Attewell 32, Bruce Chambers 32 & Adrian Kent 32 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Darrell Porter (3rd) Lee Heuston (4th) Patrick Wand (10th) & Phousang Sihapanya (17th).

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**December Fishing Club Update**

The final fishing weekend for the Greta Workers Fishing Club has ended and with only the AGM and Christmas party to go we look towards a bigger and better 2022. On the 5<sup>th</sup> December a good crowd of members met for their final weigh in after an Open weekend. Members fished Hawks Nest, Broughton Island, Lake ST Clair, Stockton and some keen anglers even went on a Charter off Port Stephens. Joel Platt finished on top for the weekend with 155.8 points bagging Trag, Trevally, Bream, Bass and a Jew. Closely followed was the late to register Daniel Johnson (152) who has finished the year like Makybe Diva in the 2003 Melbourne Cup who got a bigger Jew fishing next to Joel as well as a Skipjack, a few Trag and a Salmon. Andrew "Jakey" Jacobs (148.3) finished in third for the weekend with Whiting, Flathead, Snapper, Tailor and Trag. Jakey's skipper Aidan "deer in the headlights" McDougall was fishing well until a Rock Cod spike forced him to retire early and seek medical attention that came in the form of a couple of dozen Great Northern Cans.

Another big thanks to our loyal sponsors for another great year for the Fishing Club, The Greta Workers Club, Elite Concreting, GoCon Rural Fencing, The Greta Bottlo, The Harvest Bistro, and The Sea Shanty have been great supporters to us, we cannot thank you enough. Pictured at right: Daniel "Boonie" Johnson and Joel Platt with their nice pair of Jewy caught up at Hawks Nest. Reports say it was the experience of Anthony "Salami" Field who actually put them onto the fish.



# BRANXTON GRETA VINEYARDS

## The **News** SPORT

Greta Workers



### Fishing Club comes to a close for 2021

on 771. Fee Jacobs won the Women's for the third straight year on 172.5 points and Riley McKewen won the Junior on 299.3 points. Joel Platt won the committees pick for a memorable fish with his Jewy weighed in on the Stockton weekend. Other Individual species winners were, Ruby Nevin, Dominic Platt, Tom Field, Jason McKewen, Cohen Spliet-Miller, Riley McKewen, Judy Masters, Joel Platt, Mark Dever, Matt Wielgasz, Steve Nevin, Jayden Miller, Andrew Jacobs, Aidan McDougall, Troy Field, Anthony Field, and Kye Barnes. Charli Fox won the lolly jar guessing competition on the day and the winners of the Major Raffle were 1<sup>st</sup>-Sammy Everleigh, 2<sup>nd</sup>-Jack

Hoffman, 3<sup>rd</sup>-Anthony Field, 4<sup>th</sup>-Orey Dorn, 5<sup>th</sup>-Blake Nicholls, 6<sup>th</sup>-Joel Platt, 7<sup>th</sup>-Marie and Ken Cheetham, 8<sup>th</sup>-Steve Nevin. After the Presentation Darryl Carrot Bowen and the Collective entertained the main bar with a terrific music performance and they had the crowd screaming for about 10 "one more's". You have to look them up on Itunes and download some of their tracks. The Fishing Club would also like to pass on all their thoughts and prayers to our outgoing President Bradley "Larry" Timmins who is currently fighting a terminal illness. May all the close family and friends know that the community is behind them all the way. There will be bigger and

better prizes in 2022, apart from the kids getting Christmas presents and lucky door prizes there will be Overall winner \$400 BCF voucher, and two perpetual trophies including the Troy Field Memorial Award Women's winner \$200 BCF voucher and perpetual trophy **Junior winner** \$200 BCF voucher and perpetual trophy \$50 BCF voucher for all runner ups \$20 BCF vouchers for all individual species \$20 BCF vouchers for all individual species-under 13 category \$50 cash on each weigh in for the heaviest fish weighed in for the target species that month \$100 BCF voucher for the

biggest Bass  
\$100 BCF voucher for the biggest Bream  
\$100 BCF voucher for the biggest Snapper  
\$100 BCF voucher for the biggest Jew plus a Troy Field "biggest Jew" Trophy Committee pick for a memorable fish \$100 BCF voucher  
2022 memberships are now open please contact Steve Nevin 0457547478 Steve.nevin@hvo.com.au , or contact the Greta Workers Club Social Fishing Clubs Facebook page. Alternatively you can come to our Wednesday Raffles 4:30-6pm or weigh ins and sign up then. Cost is \$30 for a single membership or \$75 for a family. If you are turning 19 in 2022 you will need to sign up as a single membership. Another big thanks to our loyal sponsors for another great year for the Fishing Club, The Greta Workers Club, Elite Concreting, GoCon Rural Fencing, The Greta Bottlo, The Harvest Bistro, and The Sea Shanty have been great supporters to us, we cannot thank you enough.  
■ Photo: Keen angler Riley McKewen who took out the Junior winner for 2021 as well as biggest Tailor and Luderick.



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