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The News

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THURSDAY 3
MARCH 2022

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

Branxton RV Park set to contract professional management

Cessnock City Council management recommends The Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) manage Branxton RV Park following lengthy report to councillors



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A report presented to councillors at the last ordinary meeting of Cessnock City Council concerning the contracting out of management rights for the Branxton RV Park has been deferred to allow further discussions (some new councillors wanted more information and a chance to inspect the RV Park).

The recommendations in the

report were:-

1. That Council endorses Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia LTD as the preferred applicant to manage Branxton RV Park subject to community consultation;
2. That Council gives public notice of the Branxton RV Park Management proposal for a period of 28 days;
3. That Council provides public notice of the intention to engage Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia LTD as the Branxton RV Park Manager subject to consideration of submissions received; and
4. That the General Manager negotiate a licence agreement for Branxton RV Park Management after considering the public submissions received. The report was made after council asked for 'Expressions of Interest' with only the one submission received from the Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia LTD. In June 2021 the President of Central Hunter Business Chamber sent a formal request that Council explore options to increase visitation to the Branxton RV Park. Following this request Council completed an expression of interest (EOI) process to determine the interest of any parties wishing to manage the Branxton RV Park. The Business Chamber & Council were seeking to

achieve some or all of the following outcomes for the Branxton RV Park:

- Increased visitor numbers;
- An improved customer service experience;
- Improved facilities;
- Site maintenance levels that meets community expectations; and
- Increased expenditure within Branxton

The RV park has been unofficially looked after by the chamber for many years with Branxton RSL President Brian Furner OAM being the doyenne.

The council report indicated that under professional management the RV Park would increase visitor numbers by 5,000 per year with an average overnight spend of \$256 bringing an extra \$1,280,000 into the town. The proposal will go to public exhibition for 28-days next month &, hopefully, will be up & running under the professional management of the CMCA by the end of the financial year. The park is very well used and has some great comments on WikiCamps Australia. It averages around 20-vans per day

A couple of weekends ago there where around 50 vans, a Newcastle camper club, there for the weekend & this weekend another 40+ have booked the site. Well done Cessnock City Council & the Business Chamber!

Need home finance and would like to keep it local?

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Follow up on construction progress; Branxton to Greta Shared Pathway/Cycleway

As stated in the last reporting of the construction progress of the long awaited and much anticipated construction of the Branxton to Greta Shared Pathway/Cycleway (which was last November) is currently still on hold and has been for the over 6 months.

The official commencement of the project, with much fanfare, was in March 2021 & the estimated completion date was announced, depending on weather conditions, to be by this month.

After making enquiries with Cessnock City Council last week I received a reply just on deadline of printing this edition.

I asked for an update and received the following reply A contractor has been engaged to undertake the

Stage 2 section of the pathway from chainage 400 (end of stage 1) to chainage 820 and the letter of award has been issued. Once the works start, it is expected to take six weeks to complete, weather depending.

Investigations are continuing on the remainder of the footpath to Greta on the south side of the highway, and the crossing of the New England Highway. Works will follow once the investigations are complete.

Council appreciates the community's support and patience as they progress the Branxton to Greta cycleway project.

Cessnock City Council secured \$1,950,000 under Round 4 of the Australian Government's Building



Better Regions Fund to build the 3.3km off-road, shared cycleway/pathway & kicked in \$650,000 of its own funds.

The project has been a long time coming as it was first funded and then de-funded in 2004 when the state gov-

ernment provided \$600,000 to be matched by Cessnock City Council but CCC declined the offer from the State Government due to its inability to provide the matching finance of \$600,000 over four years.

Hunter's newest gallery to officially open this Sunday

After more than a year in construction, the State's newest gallery, the Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre will be unveiled this Sunday 6 March, 2022. NSW Minister for Arts Ben Franklin MLC will officially open the Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre alongside Member for Upper Hunter Dave

Layzell MP and Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore in a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The community is invited to be part of the occasion with a special free event in Townhead Park from 12pm to 2pm, with kids' entertainment including jumping castles

and face painting, live music and performances, and a sausage sizzle. People can also book in free guided tours of the centre. The \$4.08million building was funded in partnership between Singleton Council and a \$2.787million Create NSW grant, and boasts more than 300 square metres of state-of-the-art gallery space, and two



artists' workshops including wet and digital studios. The centre will also house Singleton's Civic Art collection. The Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre completes Singleton's Townhead Park precinct, which has been years in the making as a centre for tourism and community connection encompassing the Singleton Visitor Information Centre (VIC) showcasing Hunter Valley operators and products, as well as a café, playground, and children's bike track.

Cr Moore said the Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre would reflect the Singleton community's rich heritage and culture, and was much more than a gallery to house paintings and sculptures. "This centre is something that has been on our community's wish list for a very long time, and it's going to be a brilliant base for all that's happening in showcasing our area as a hub for creativity," she said. "The Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre draws a line in the sand, quite literally, that says Singleton is a place for arts and culture. While people might know our area for mining, wine and agriculture, I can't wait for them to come inside and experience a new way of looking at Singleton and all that we have to offer. "This is a fantastic new attraction for Singleton, cementing Townhead Park as a destination for all ages. I look forward to seeing everyone at the opening to celebrate."

DEATH NOTICE Warren William VICK

Late of Branxton
Passed away suddenly 13.12.2021
Partner of Barbara & father of
Travis

Andrew Valerio & Sons
Funeral Directors Pty Ltd
A Commitment to Personal Service

Cessnock City Council supporting local schools

Cessnock City Council's Economic Development Team has five \$100 educational packs to giveaway to local schools or childcare providers this March as part of its ongoing 'Support Local' campaign.

For the month of March, residents are encouraged to post to Facebook or Instagram and give a shout-out (in 25 words or less) to a wonderful teacher, teacher's aide, librarian, school, preschool or daycare provider in the Greater Cessnock area. Your shout-out will put that education provider in the running to win a wonderful prize pack!

To ensure the team can see your entry, set the post to public and use the campaign hashtag #SupportLocalCessnock. Residents can enter as many times as they like and are encouraged to tag the school or education provider mentioned in the post. Cessnock City Council Mayor Jay Suvaal is encouraging residents to get involved and show their support for our schools and education providers who do such a fantastic job.

"Our local teachers and support staff have faced many obstacles due to COVID, yet their dedication to our children hasn't faltered," Councillor Suvaal said.

"This initiative is a great opportunity to acknowledge their efforts and give back to five local education providers, who will receive new resources to help our local children thrive."

This competition will run from 1 to 31 March 2022. For terms and conditions, visit the [Advance Greater Cessnock website](#) and be sure to follow the [Advance Cessnock City Facebook page](#) to stay up-to-date with the 'Support Local' campaign.

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

Upper Hunter Women in Business

2022 NSW Women's Week event

On March 10, Upper Hunter Women in Business will host the regional flagship 2022 NSW Women's Week event in Denman with special guest Minister for Women The Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC.

The 2022 NSW Women's Week Upper Hunter Women in Business Long Lunch hybrid event (in person + livestream) will celebrate women from across the Upper Hunter and provide an opportunity to hear the importance of connection, communication, and collaboration from local women from different industries, over a three-course lunch and Q&A panel session.

Date/time: Thursday, March 10, 2022 - 12pm to 3pm

Venue: Denman Memorial Hall, 30 Ogilvie Street, Denman NSW 2328

Guest speakers include:

- The Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC, NSW Minister for Women
 - Janie Jordan, President - Scone Literary Festival
 - Ngaire Baker, External Relations Manager - MACH Energy Mount Pleasant Operation
 - Taasha Layer, CEO - Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation
 - Amanda Riordan, Managing Director - The Murrurundi Collective
- Supported by:** NSW Government & LivMedia and Singleton Council, Muswellbrook Shire Council, Upper Hunter Shire Council, Business Singleton, Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Inc), Denman Chamber of Commerce, Scone Chamber, Singleton Women in Business and All The Foxy Ladies. For further details, please visit: <https://events.humanitix.com/2022-women-s-week-long-lunch>

Branxton RSL Sub Branch ~ 100 year Commemoration in 2023

2023 will BIG year for the Branxton RSL Sub Branch as they celebrate the 100 Anniversary of the completion of the Branxton Rotunda (23/6/23) & a 100 years since the establishment of the Branxton RSL Sub Branch (March 1923).

There will be a combined commemorative service next year with the date to be advised.



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ALL CALLS TO 000 ARE VOICE RECORDED

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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 4015 0000
Nth R'bury... 4015 0000
Rothbury.... 4015 0000
Pokolbin.... 4015 0000
Rothbury.... 4991 1733
Bishops Bdg 4015 0000
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BRANXTON WE SERVE
Lions today is made up of people just like you who want to make a change and help do good things in your community. People just like you who are busy, don't have much time, lots of things to do, but care.
Like to help others
Then come and find out how you can
Branxton Lions Club invites you to join us at an information session
Saturday 12th March 2022 12 noon
Lions shed at the Branxton Community Hall
BBQ and refreshments provided
Text or phone today to book your place
Contact Brian Thomas on:
Mobile: 0417282440
Email: ba.thomas@bigpond.com
For catering purposes please
Rsvp: 9 March 2022

New England highway upgrade driving ahead



A major upgrade of the New England Highway between Belford and the Golden Highway is driving ahead, with work to improve safety and travel times along a four-kilometre section of the highway progressing well. Member for Upper Hunter Dave Layzell said the NSW Government is investing \$97 million to provide two travel lanes in each direction and a flyover for vehicles turning right from the Golden Highway towards Maitland and

Newcastle. "Work on the upgrade

"It will also be a game-changer for the freight industry, which relies on this road for coal mining, grain production and other industries in the Hunter Valley and Central West to access the Port of Newcastle"

started in September last year and it has been an impressive first six months with extensive earth-works, rock hammering and drainage underway for the new eastbound carriageway and flyover bridge," Mr Layzell said. "Our community is really

starting to get excited for this upgrade, particularly now they can see the overpass starting to rise between the high-ways and extensive rock removal showing the path for the new lanes. "Work has also recently

started on the new roundabout on the Golden Highway, which will connect to a left turn lane for motorists travelling towards Singleton, as well as provide access for adjoining properties. "Once complete, this project will enable safer, smoother journeys for the 22,000 vehicles that use this vital route each day.

"It will also be a game-changer for the freight industry, which relies on this road for coal mining, grain production and other industries in the Hunter Valley and Central West to access the Port of Newcastle," Mr Layzell said. Work on the project is expected to be completed by late 2024.

William "Bill" Smith
26/4/1939 ~ 10/2/2022
82 years



It is with much sadness that we advise of Bill's passing at home, after being diagnosed with Parkinson's Dementia a number of years ago. We would like to thank Doctor Paul Innes, Branxton Medical Centre for his caring support during this time.

Bill is survived by his wife, Sandie, daughter Kathryn Harvey (Lochinvar), sons Robert (Orange) and Andrew (Mangrove Mountain) and their families.

We would very much like to thank Rev. Nicole Baldwin of the Anglican Parish of Branxton, Greta, Lochinvar. Nicole was so sincere and caring to our family during this sad time, and our heartfelt thanks are extended to her for all the support. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. Nicole at St Johns Anglican Church, Branxton on Friday 18th February. Bill will be remembered by his family and friends as a true "jack of all trades" and a loving and caring family man. *May he Rest in Peace.*



What's happening at the Men's Shed.

The shed is slowly returning to normal activities after the Christmas and New Year festivities. We have now completed most of the painting work and now resume our normal activities at the shed. Shortly we are resuming our Bunnings BBQ at Singleton and also get ready for the Cessnock City Seniors festival at the end of March, where we will be hosting an open day in conjunction with the Branxton Lions on Saturday April 2. As always, we are inviting interested community members to come and have a look at how and what we are doing. No skills required, no need to do anything, just come and have a look, chat and a cuppa.

Whilst we have been busy with the usual 'shed' activities we welcome new members with interest in outside-the-box area such as 3D design and printing, furniture repair, electronics, cabinet making etc etc, just to name a few things. Anything goes at our shed, especially good atmosphere.

For more information contact Jim Cahill 0455990169 or come and have a cuppa at the Shed.

49 Branxton Street, Greta (in the grounds of the old St Mary's primary school), Wed-Fri 08-12.

BRANXTON BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT

A networking event with local business leaders, guest speakers and friends to promote business within the Branxton, Greta, Huntlee and North Rothbury regions.

Thursday 24 March
Royal Federal Hotel, Branxton

Featuring keynote speaker, *The Fighter Pilot Mindset's* Christian "Boo" Boucousis



Funded by the Bushfire Community Resilience and Recovery Fund (BCRRF) provided through the joint disaster recovery funding arrangement between NSW and Commonwealth Government



Resilience NSW



Central Hunter BUSINESS CHAMBER

STEVE'S

RANT

There is a remarkable contradiction becoming evident as the cries of impending doom grow ever more strident and hysterical. Man made emissions of CO2, unless curtailed, will see the end of human kind, against the mounting evidence that CO2 has no role in global warming.

Leaders of the Western World, with a few exceptions such as India and Israel, keep harping on about some climate tipping point where Global Warming will become irreversible.

What is not explained is that global temperature in the past has been much higher than computer modelling suggests is going to happen by the end of this century. Mean temperature as dictated by climate and moves up and down in cycles related to solar activity, orbital variations about the sun and unpredictable events such as vulcanism to name a but a few.

When cyclical events coincide with major tectonic events the climates trips from glaciation to inter glaciation such as we are currently in or back into the deep freeze. CO2 does not cause these cycles but may well be affected by climate change as to the amount of this gas in the atmosphere. The gas (CO2) concentration can be measured as parts per million or as a percentage of the earth's atmosphere. At present the CO2 concentration is 410 ppm.

Or .014% which makes it a trace gas in the atmosphere. At such low concentrations you wonder how plants dependant on CO2 for their source of carbon manage to get enough to grow. One factor is the majority of the earths plant bio-mass is in the ocean and does not get its CO2 from the atmosphere. Land based plant life absorbs CO2 from the atmosphere during daylight when photosynthesis occurs but then uses atmospheric oxygen at night to convert plant sugars into plant fibre. The result is that not much oxygen comes from land-based plants but there is a drawdown of CO2.

The anthropomorphic produced CO2 is not sufficient to cover this draw down. Other sources of CO2 occur to explain the current increasing concentrations of the gas and this involves de-gassing of the oceans, volcanic activity, decay of organic matter and many other sources. To demonstrate the extent of CO2 drawdown by land-based plants, in the northern hemisphere spring and summer readings of the level of atmospheric CO2 drop between May and August every year. This is recorded by the research station on the Island of Hawaii and reflects the rapid growth of forest and crops. This does not



occur to a measurable amount in the southern hemisphere spring and summer for there is less land mass and the massive deciduous forest of the north are not present to create the bud-burst drawdown. There are two points we can take from this. First the turnover of CO2 in the atmosphere by natural causes significantly outweighs man made emissions. Approximately 75 to 80% of which comes from the northern hemisphere and due to the Coriolis effect remains there. The second point is the historical written records document Global Warming events which were hotter than now and where CO2 levels could not have been due to the activities of man. From 500

BC to 500 AD was the 'Roman Warming', an essential enabler of the rise of that empire. The Dark Ages cooling from 535 AD to 900 AD saw the demise of the Romans and a stasis in human events apart from warfare and famine. The Medieval warming from 900 AD – 1300 AD saw the triumph of the Vikings, farming in Greenland and excess crops and wealth leading to the building of the great castles, cathedrals and monasteries. The little Ice age occurred from 1300 AD to 1850 AD and happened very quickly with a drop in temperatures of 4° C in two decades. This led to famine followed by the plague and 50% of Europe's population was wiped out.

A number of years ago I predicted the supposition that CO2 causes the environment to heat up will be proven to be incorrect. This would expose the tidal wave of current opinion amongst the press. Politicians, academia and the renewable energy rent seeking as the greatest ever fraud and misuse of resources the world has ever seen. What then to make of these followers of the 'Cult of Global Warming' who believe the increase CO2 levels is the cause? Their absolute faith in this nonsense is astounding. Expert opinion and scientific facts are available to anybody who takes the time to check. Of course, one must be careful

where one looks so pervasive is the misinformation on the internet, from the bureaucracy, the ABC and just about every media outlet in the world. In parallel is the massive commitment made by all levels of our education establishment to this fraud and the brainwashing of our children. Will these people admit their stupidity? Do we struggle on butting our heads on a brick wall, destroy our way of life, economy and security for the sake of an illogical ideology that has no sound basis of fact?

Cheers, Steve.



Creating chaos
What was Scott Morrison and Dominic Perrotet's aim in blaming the ALP and the union for the mess that has been created on NSW railways, when it is clear the NSW government caused the chaos? Could someone tell them this is not 1955, that "Reds under the bed" scare campaigns will not work on an educated voting population, and they will only win an election with good policy, not shouting. **Paul Robertson, Newcastle**

Stand up to aggressors
If Winston Churchill was still with us, he would be shouting from the rooftops to arm up and to band together to assist the Ukraine with forces that would make Putin seriously reconsider his position. As it is, he is proceeding again just like he did in

2014 claiming the Crimean, reclaiming nearby nations and territories in his empire building. Are we in the West so feeble that all we can do is to slap him on the wrist with sanction after sanction while he goes on to satisfy his hunger to enlarge his empire at the expense of the loss of our like-minded loyal Ukrainians? Stand up to aggressors, beat down cowards and

unite in the West or slowly, bit by bit, our other friends bordering Russia will be "absorbed" and swallowed up by the Putin Russian bear. **Max Press, North Sydney**

Skilled & friendly
There is a new pathology collection facility at Huntlee Shops which is very convenient for Huntlee & North Rothbury residents. I was very impressed with the skilled and friendly phlebotomist. It isn't widely known and I thought there would be many other locals who would make use of it if they knew. It is in the doctor's rooms at Huntlee shops next door to the chemist. Open Mon to Fri 8.30am but not sure what time it closes. It is a NSW Health facility and accepts all referrals. **Margaret Heanes, North Rothbury**



with Mike Lowing

With the easing of public health restrictions regarding Covid-19 in NSW and other states (& added to the easing of restrictions is the opening of our international borders) I would like to warn our local residents that it does not mean the pandemic has bolted; far from it. I would urge you to still wear masks indoors (N-95 are the best), sanitize your hands regularly & stay away from crowds indoors. Since the pandemic hit our shores I have lost 3 friends, 2 buried the same day. I have a twin brother who has just spent 5 days in ICU with the bug; he was double vaccinated and double boosted and healthy.

Some good news for the local area. Through the urging and lobbying of the local business chamber Cessnock City Council has put a report to the last council meeting recommending that

the Branxton Recreational Vehicle Park (RV) be professionally managed by the Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA). The park is at the bottom of John Rose Avenue and abuts Branxton Oval. The RV park has been unofficially looked after by the chamber for many years with Branxton RSL president Brian Furner OAM being the doyenne. The Chamber wrote to the Cessnock Council GM last June asking that CCC explore options to increase visitation through the RV Park. The council report indicated

that under professional management the RV Park would increase visitor numbers by 5,000 per year with an average overnight spend of \$256 bringing an extra \$1,280,000 into the town. The proposal will go to public exhibition for 28-days next month &, hopefully, will be up & running under the professional management of the CMCA by the end of the financial year. The park is very well used and has some great comments on WikiCamps Australia. A couple of weekends ago there were around 50

vans, a Newcastle camper club, there for the weekend. Well done Cessnock City Council! **Cheers, Mike**

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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.

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Office: 12 Clift Street, Branxton, NSW 2335

Share what you love about our local villages



Kearsley local Jane Goldie with Cessnock Mayor Jay Suvaal at Kearsley Remembrance Garden.

Cessnock City Council is preparing Local Character Statements and Public Domain Plans for 15 local villages and is calling on residents to help identify which ones are important to them and why. The villages highlighted in the project include Abermain, Abernethy, Ellalong, Greta, Kearsley, Kitchener, Laguna,

Millfield, Mulbring, Neath, North Rothbury, Paxton, Pelaw Main, Stanford Merthyr and Wollombi. Community input will help Council define the existing and desired future character and qualities for each village, and capture a community-based vision to help guide the planning for each, including public domain works.

To gain this valuable input from the community,

Council will conduct an online survey and host a series of drop-in and phone consultation sessions from Monday 21 February to Friday 18 March 2022. The drop-in sessions have

been held in Wollombi (1 March) & Ellalong (2 March). The last three 'drop-in' sessions are to be held in Abermain (8 March), Mulbring (10 March) and Greta (17 March) 3pm-6pm. Bookings are required for these sessions which can be done via Council's website

at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/Villages. Cessnock City Council Mayor Jay Suvaal said it was so important for residents to take part in this consultation as no one knows these villages better than the locals do. "Each of these villages has

its own unique qualities, character and history, and so much of this has been influenced by the people who have lived in them, both past and present," Councillor Suvaal said. "Not only will having your say allow Council to develop accurate character statements for each of these



villages, but it will help to capture what you want to see happen in the future." For more information and to share what you love and would like to see in these local villages, please visit the web site.

Have your say on public toilets and outdoor fitness equipment



Cessnock City Council is undertaking a review of its public amenities, and developing guidelines for the provision of outdoor fitness equipment and multipurpose courts across the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA).

The public amenities review will focus on those that are open to the general public and provided in public open space, including some sports grounds. Along with identifying potential gaps (based on existing and future population needs), Council will also undertake an audit of its accessible public toilets and identify priority upgrades.

The development of guidelines for outdoor fitness equipment and multipurpose courts will include a review of what we currently have, developing design principles and criteria, identifying potential and future locations across the Cessnock LGA, an estimate of costs and a priority action plan.

Residents are invited to have their say on these two projects via an online survey which is available on Council's website until Monday 14 March at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/AmenitiesReview.

Cessnock City Council Mayor Jay Suvaal is encouraging residents to take part in the consultation.

"Our region is growing and we need to make sure the future provision of public amenities, outdoor fitness equipment and multipurpose courts reflect our community's needs," Councillor Suvaal said.

Council will also be holding workshops with key community stakeholders. To register your interest in being part of the engagement for this project, email cessnock@otiumplanning.com.au with your name, organisation, contact number and email address.

Joel Fitzgibbon MP

Your Federal Member for Hunter



Planting Trees for the Queen's Jubilee Program

Expressions of interest are now open for eligible not-for-profit groups and organisations in the Hunter electorate for the Planting Trees for The Queen's Jubilee Program.

- The minimum grant amount is \$2,500
- The maximum grant amount is \$20,000

Expressions of Interest forms can be submitted on my website at www.joelfitzgibbon.com/Jubilee and will close on Thursday 10 March 2022 at 5pm.

For additional information please contact my office.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

You can request a congratulatory message from the Prime Minister, Governor-General or the Queen for celebrating a special birthday or anniversary.

LOCAL SPORTING CHAMPIONS GRANT

Local Sporting Champions is a program that provides grants to help young people pursue their sporting dreams. For more information, go to:

joelfitzgibbon.com/champion

3 Edward Street
Cessnock 2325 NSW
joel.fitzgibbon.mp@aph.gov.au
4991 1022

- JoelFitzgibbonMP
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- FitzyMP

For further details, go to: www.joelfitzgibbon.com
or call my office on: 4991 1022

Members say ..



Jay Suvaal Mayor of Cessnock

It was an honour to host a morning tea last Thursday at Laguna Community Hall, with Resilience NSW Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons in attendance, where we announced round two of the recipients of the Cessnock Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Grants. This funding was designed to support small scale community led projects that promote recovery, resilience, disaster preparedness and wellbeing following the 2019/2020 Black Summer bushfires. With COVID being the focus of the past couple of years, these fires seem like a distant memory, but the threat and impact to residents, local fire brigades and volunteers was immense. These grants were part of a \$500,000 commitment from Resilience NSW to fund disaster readiness and recovery in the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA).

There are a number of Council projects currently open for community members to have their say. I strongly encourage residents to visit Council's website, check them out and provide feedback. As Mayor, I believe it's so important that all residents can see, provide input and have a direct impact on Council decisions which shape our LGA. The projects, currently open for feedback, include the Villages Local Character Statements and Public Domain Plans, the Cessnock Public Amenities Review and Open Space Guidelines, and the Apex Park Concept Masterplan. Each of these important projects can be viewed on Council's website at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/ HaveYourSay where you can find out more and have your say.

I am delighted to announce the 2022 Mayoral Scholarship Program opens to applicants from today and I would like to encourage anyone who is currently enrolled at TAFE or University to apply. This program aims to assist students across the Cessnock LGA to achieve their educational goals by providing financial support. Applications close on Monday 4 April and those who are successful will receive \$2500 awarded in

two payments. These scholarships would not be possible without the support of local businesses, individuals and the families who sponsor it. I would like to extend a big thank you to all of this year's sponsors, including Hunter Resource Recovery, Austar Coal Mine, Central Waste Station, Cole Cornford – Galah Cyber, Rover Coaches, Cessnock Leagues Club, East Cessnock Bowling Club, Roche Estate and Dr Russell Kift. To find out more and apply, visit Council's website at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/MSP.

Stay safe & well,
Cheers, Jay



IND Sue Moore, re-elected Mayor Singleton Council

One of the many rewards as mayor is being able to deliver on those things most important to the people in our community, regardless of how big or small. We've been fortunate in Singleton to be the beneficiaries of a number of significant projects in recent years, helped along with government support, that make a big difference to people's lives. From the modernisation of the Town Centre, all-abilities playgrounds and shared pathways, to the Hamiltons Crossing causeway currently under construction, our goal to make life better for everyone in our community is reflected in every project we undertake.

In particular, the opening of the all-new \$4.08million Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre is a unique and special project. Long conversations about a purpose-built, public art space for Singleton had remained just that - words either spoken or written - until the NSW Government announced a \$2.787million Create NSW grant for a dedicated arts and cultural centre.

Now, not too long afterwards, we're about to open the doors to an architecturally-striking facility offering 300 square metres of state-of-the-art gallery space, two artists' workshops including wet and digital studios, all-abilities access and amenities.

Yes, the centre will be the latest in a long list of attractions, natural and built, to draw visitors to Singleton. But the Single-

ton Arts and Cultural Centre is above all a place for everyone in our local government area - whether your ties to this area trace generations or a few months - to celebrate and see our own identity reflected. That's why it's no accident that our inaugural exhibitions focus on the people and the land that is Singleton, and why the first images to hang on the walls of our community's gallery space will showcase faces we know and places we recognise as home.

As we gather to officially open the centre at a free community event on Sunday 6 March from 12pm to 2pm, it's also an occasion to mark the achievements delivered so far from the Towhead Park Masterplan. From the pages of the document we can now enjoy the refurbished Visitor Information Centre, cafe, an all-new children's playground and bike track. A new amenities block complete with art wrap and sensor toilets, and a refurbished sensory garden are also in progress. There's much to see and celebrate in Towhead Park on Sunday 6 March, including free entertainment, jumping castles, face painting and a sausage sizzle. I look forward to seeing you there.
Cheers, Sue



Member for Cessnock Clayton Barr MP

WE REALLY MUST TALK ABOUT HOUSING

It seems that barely a week goes by when myself, my staff and/or my office is approached by a family that is about to become homeless. They are desperate and I am helpless. Our local area, in 2021 and 2022, has found itself in the middle of a massive shortage in rental properties and affordable housing. There are a variety of reasons for this, which I will get to soon, but it's extremely important to note that a recent report by Shelter NSW has identified the Hunter and Central Coast as hotspots. The Central Coast is the state's most desperately under-supplied housing area. Cessnock is at number 3; Newcastle at number 4 and Maitland at number 7.

Our Hunter and Central Coast areas are closely linked to each other - particularly in regards to

employment and housing. A large number of us are constantly moving in and out of each other's LGAs. When I have community meet and greets, almost without fail, one or two people arrive to say hello to their new local MP, given that they have just arrived in the area after having moved from the Central Coast or Newcastle. When I ask why they had moved, almost without fail it is because their previous neighbourhood had become unaffordable. From this new neighbourhood, they would say, they could still drive in/out to their place of work which is now a 1 hour drive.

Nobody reading this column needs to be reminded of the incredible tourist destination that the Hunter Vineyards have become. We experience almost 2 million visitors each year. In the past, their accommodation needs have been met by a huge tourist accommodation industry in the vineyards and surrounds. But then along came online booking systems like Airbnb and the various accommodation markets have been turned upside down. Airbnb has had a huge impact on the number of rental properties in our area available for long term leasing. Landlords weigh up the choice of having a consistent weekly rent, or, take their chances with the less reliable but much higher income from short term rentals to tourists.

Good luck to the weekenders and those landlords doing well in this market, but the flipside is that many in our local community that are just looking for a "home" now have very slim pickings. In addition to all of this, for the houses that do at times become available, because there are so few of them, rents are often quite high and well beyond the affordability of single income families, single parent families or in general our low income families. And I won't get started on the casualised workforce that have unpredictable incomes and live in a constant state of fear about next week's roster. NSW needs a plan to solve these housing problems. The evidence shows that the Hunter and Central Coast are at the top of the list of places that need a housing solution urgently. And we simply cannot rely on developers releasing more land to build more houses, because for those developers it is in their interest to strangle the market of supply so that they can maximise their profits. That is after all the business that developers are in.

For enquiries regarding the State Government or its departments, or to put you in contact with someone who can help, please contact my office. My office can be contacted by phoning 4991-1466, by email to

cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au or call into 118 Vincent Street (PO Box 242), Cessnock 2325.

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



JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Member for Hunter

We've long known about AGL plans to close its coal-fired electricity generators earlier than originally planned. Along with other community leaders, I've accepted the inevitability of the closures and have long urged AGL to invest in new electricity generation in the Hunter including gas, hydro, wind, hydrogen, and solar projects, backed with battery storage. We've also worked with AGL and the unions to ensure Liddell's workforce was taken care of with well-funded voluntary redundancies and the right to transfer to the nearby Bayswater Power Station. The Coalition Government had always accepted Liddell's closure but in the heat of the climate change debate in 2017 it decided to weaponise the issue by attempting to bully AGL into keeping Liddell open well beyond its physical life.

The stunt achieved nothing to protect us from higher electricity prices and blackouts. However, it's likely it won the Government a few extra votes at the 2019 election, as it had hoped. My concern back then was that the Turnbull Government's political games would run interference on AGL's plans for new generation, particularly its plan for a gas peaking station in Tomago. On that matter, I was vindicated. Now, just as the heat appeared to be coming out of the unhelpful climate wars, a new threat to investment plans has emerged from the corporate world. Don't believe for a moment the Brookfield/Cannon-Brookes raid on AGL is about our natural environment. Rather, it's about money. Brookfield and Cannon-Brookes claim they can buy AGL, close its coal-fired generator assets earlier, still make money, all the while keeping power prices down and avoiding blackouts. I doubt they can, and most energy experts agree. Meanwhile AGL says if left alone, it will deliver around

2,000 Megawatts (MW) of renewable generation by 2024 through wind and pumped hydro projects across three states. Battery projects with a combined capacity of 450 MW will provide storage and firming capacity. For perspective, between them, AGL's three existing coal-fired generators are capable of delivering around 6,000 MW of reliable base-load power.

Origin's terrible shock announcement last week that it will close its Eraring generator means the loss of an additional 2,800 MW. In a statement, Brookfield and Cannon-Brookes said they plan to build 8,000 MW of capacity in less time. I doubt that very much. Brookfield as owners, will have an investment advantage over AGL. It doesn't have to worry about green fund managers and will have lower funding costs. In other words, it no doubt believes it can make greater returns running the coal generation assets than AGL has been able to do. This is not primarily about the environment, it's an exercise in economic engineering.

What does this all mean for power station workers, electricity prices and electricity reliability? Sadly, I suggest the answer is, nothing good. There is certainly no good news for Hunter power station workers, many of whom thought they had up to 15 more years of work and in any case, found some comfort in AGL's workforce transition plan. Only the most ardent climate ideologues could believe electricity prices will be lower or energy security more assured if Brookfield and Cannon-Brookes are successful in their bid to buy AGL.
Cheers, Joel



Member for Upper Hunter Dave Layzell MP

DRAFT WATER SHARING PLAN

I sat down last week with the Minister for Water, Kevin Anderson, to express my concerns regarding the impact on Tidal Pool Water Users of the changes proposed in the Hunter Unregulated Water Sharing Plan including the cease to pump provisions. I don't believe the proposed changes will achieve the social, economic and environmental goals that we all seek as a society. As a result, I do not support the draft Water Sharing Plan for the Tidal Pool and have requested the Minister review the issue. I was disappointed that I

could not make it to the recent public forum held by the Tidal Pool Water Users but I have heard many of the opinions from the community. I continue to encourage everyone to submit their views on the draft plan and also copy your concerns to my email address upperhunter@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

STRONG INTEREST Commercial interest for almost 40 gigawatts of renewable generation and storage projects has been received by the NSW Government for the Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone (REZ).

The registration of interest representing over \$100 billion of potential investment includes 24 solar energy projects, 13 onshore and seven offshore wind energy projects, 35 large-scale batteries and eight pumped hydro projects. The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is in the early stages of planning the Hunter-Central Coast REZ and will be using this information to inform the timing, capacity and boundaries of the REZ. It is expected that the Hunter-Central Coast REZ will be formally declared under the NSW Government's Electricity Roadmap legislation by mid-year.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Small businesses that experienced a downturn over summer can now apply for a NSW Government support payment of up to \$5,000 per week. The program will provide targeted support to businesses with an annual turnover of between \$75,000 and \$50 million that experienced a decline in turnover of at least 40 per cent in January 2022 and the start of February 2022.

The payment for employing businesses will cover up to 20 per cent of weekly payroll, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per week.

Eligible non-employing businesses, such as sole traders, will receive \$500 per week. Applications can be made online through the Service NSW MyAccount, by visiting a local service centre, calling 13 77 88
Cheers, Dave

Members

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Pharmacist Advice *with*



Antibiotics

Antibiotics are medicines used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Many bacteria are now resistant to commonly used antibiotics. Infections caused by these antibiotic-resistant bacteria are difficult to treat. Wise use of antibiotics can help to slow down the spread of antibiotic resistance. Many illnesses are caused by microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses and fungi. These illnesses are called infections. Antibiotics can only be used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics interfere with the growth and function of bacteria, but do not affect viruses or other micro-organisms.

Antibiotic resistance
Bacteria can develop resistance to an antibiotic. If this happens, infections caused by the bacteria can no longer be successfully treated with that antibiotic. Some bacteria have now become resistant to most of the antibiotics in common use. Examples of resistant bacteria are methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) and multi-drug-resistant *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (MDR-TB). Infections caused by these resistant bacteria are very difficult to treat.

Using antibiotics correctly
It is very important to use antibiotics correctly. Antibiotics can only be used to treat bacterial infections. They do not work against viral infections such as the common cold, most sore throats, most sinus infections, most coughs, acute bronchitis and the 'flu'. Viruses and bacteria are completely different types of micro-organisms. When an antibiotic is taken for a viral infection it:
• has no effect against the virus. It will not help a viral infection get better faster

or stop it spreading to others

- may allow the growth of resistant bacteria. Then, the antibiotic will not work when it is really needed.

Bacterial infections that are resistant to antibiotics are a lot more difficult to treat and may not be curable

- may cause side effects such as stomach upset, diarrhoea and thrush
- may cause an allergic reaction.

If antibiotics are used often, and when there is no need for them, the growth of bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics increases. Bacterial resistance to antibiotics is spreading. In the future, many of our common antibiotics may not work.

Self care
There are a number of simple things that you can do to help reduce the spread of antibiotic resistance.

Use antibiotics wisely

- Do not ask your doctor to prescribe antibiotics. Instead, ask how best to treat your symptoms. Remember that most coughs, colds, sore throats and runny noses are caused by viruses, which cannot be killed by antibiotics. Many minor bacterial infections will also clear up on their own and do not need antibiotics.
- Carefully follow the instructions for taking antibiotics. Take them for as long as you have been told to, even if you feel better. Sometimes, your doctor may give you a repeat prescription for a second course of antibiotics. Always ask your doctor whether you need to use the repeat.
- Never share antibiotics with family or friends.
- Do not use antibiotics left over from a previous infection, or old prescriptions for antibiotics, without first checking with your doctor.

Gout

Gout is a common and very painful type of arthritis. It occurs when uric acid crystals form in and around a joint. It mainly affects men over 40 years of age. Gout can usually be well controlled with medicines and changes to diet.

Uric acid (urate) is one of the body's waste products. If uric acid builds up in the bloodstream, it can settle in and around joints as crystals. Uric acid crystals can irritate the joint, causing inflammation (swelling) and pain. People who get gout usually have a high level of uric acid in their blood. Gout usually begins in one joint, most often the big toe joint, but it may spread to more joints. It can affect foot, ankle, knee, hand, wrist and elbow joints.

Signs and symptoms

A gout attack usually comes on suddenly, often overnight. Common symptoms are:

- joint inflammation, with swelling, redness and heat
- a very tender and painful joint, which is sensitive to touch. Sometimes even the weight of a bed sheet can cause severe pain.

If a fever is also present, it is important to get medical advice as soon as possible. Without treatment, a gout attack usually lasts about one week. After the first gout attack, more attacks are likely to occur.

The time between gout attacks can be days, weeks, months or years. If gout is not managed correctly, the time between attacks may get shorter, attacks may last longer and more joints may be affected. Repeated gout attacks can permanently damage joints, and may also lead to the formation of kidney stones.

Risk factors

Some people are more likely to get gout than others. Factors that may play a role in causing gout include:

- a family history of gout
- drinking too much alcohol, particularly beer
- being overweight or overeating
- joint injury or surgery
- some medical conditions (e.g. high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, kidney disease)
- some medicines (e.g. fluid tablets, cancer chemotherapy)
- crash dieting or fasting
- not drinking enough fluids
- eating foods that increase uric acid in the blood.

Foods linked to gout

Foods high in purines may increase uric acid levels in blood. Some of these foods have been linked to gout attacks. They include:

- meat, especially red meat and offal (e.g. liver, kidneys, heart)



Branxton VIEW club working in conjunction with the Smith Family had their first meeting of 2022 with a good attendance of twenty five members. We were delighted to have Ann-Louise O'Connor, former National VIEW president join our club. Welcome, Ann-Louise, I know you will be a valued member of our club with your wealth of knowledge. We have 36 members and all looking forward to a productive year. Our fund raising activities enable us to support seven disadvantaged Australian school children through the Smith Family Learning For Life program

We have our popular donna-lou Fashion Parade set down for the 11th April so please mark your diaries for this enjoyable day. The Smith Family is a childrens' charity that helps

young Australians experiencing disadvantage to create better futures for themselves using education as the key.

Our VIEW club president, Bethany Oldfield, 0419 429 364 is happy to give information to prospective members.

We meet on the second Thursday of the month at Greta Workers Club- 10.30am for 11am start.

Our deepest sympathy to three of our members, Denise Hungerford, Judy Groves and Sandie Smith on the loss of their beloved husbands- Peter Groves, Ron Hungerford, and Bill Smith. Our support and love is extended to you and your families at this sad time. Vale

Future guest speakers for this year include retired police officer, Peter Fox who wrote a book on child abuse

entitled "Walking Towards Thunder". Peter will attend our meeting on Thursday, 14th April.

On May 12th, Sue George from the Singleton Neighbourhood Centre will talk about homeless people.

International Women,s Day will be celebrated on Thursday 10th March with a meeting to be held at Muswellbrook. This occasion is hosted by Branxton, Muswellbrook and Denman VIEW clubs' Denman VIEW Club with a luncheon recognising and celebrating Women's achievements.

There will be four guest speakers. Branxton members will car pool to attend this meeting.

Sincere thanks to Mike Lowing, The Branxton Greta Vineyards News editor for publishing our reports. Thanks also to Branxton Laundry who look after our tablecloths and also to Branxton IGA for their contributions for our raffles.

What a wonderful community we live in! Our thoughts and prayers go out to those folk who are experiencing loss and to those who are not in the best of health. Time and love are great healers and along with the support and love of friends may these sustain you.

Peace and love to everyone
Judy Spillard

New Deputy Mayor

Cessnock City Council has a new Deputy Mayor following last Wednesday night's extraordinary council meeting. Councillor John Moores was elected to the position following a ballot by elected councillors at the first official council meeting after the December 2021 election.

Councillor Moores said he is looking forward to working constructively with Mayor Jay Suvaal and the elected council for the benefit of all who live in the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA).

"With 48 years in Cessnock I have seen things change," Cr Moores said. "I have had three businesses in the town and I come from a mining background."

"I feel that I have the knowledge to assist Jay in moving forward in the town. Let's try to get back on track and let's try to build the town back to how it was."



BBQ butterflied lamb with tahini sauce



You won't be able to resist this succulent BBQ butterflied lamb with tahini sauce. Put some away for leftovers later!

Ingredients

- * 2 x 660g Australian Lamb Butterflied Shoulder with Spiced Marinade
- * 200g Perino tomatoes, halved
- * 1/3 cup coriander sprigs

- * 1/3 cup mint sprigs
 - * 2 tbsp fresh or frozen pomegranate seeds
 - * 2 tbsp pine nuts, toasted
- Tahini sauce**
- * 1/2 cup (140g) Greek-style yoghurt
 - * 2 tbsp tahini
 - * 1 tbsp peanut butter
 - * 1 garlic clove, crushed



- * 1 lemon, rind finely grated, juiced
- * 1/2 tsp ground cumin

Method

Step 1

Preheat a covered barbecue on medium-low. Spray lamb with olive oil spray. Season. Cook lamb, covered, on grill for 10 mins. Turn the lamb and cook for a further 10 mins for medium-rare or until cooked to your liking. Transfer to a plate. Cover with foil. Set aside for 10 mins to rest.

Step 2

Meanwhile, to make the tahini sauce, combine the yoghurt, tahini, peanut butter, garlic, lemon rind and cumin in a bowl. Add 1-2 tbs of lemon juice. Stir to combine, adding a little water, if necessary. Season.

Step 3

Thickly slice the lamb and arrange on a serving platter. Spoon over tahini sauce. Sprinkle with tomato, coriander, mint, pomegranate seeds and pine nuts. Season to serve.



- seafood, especially shellfish, scallops, mussels, sardines, herrings,

- mackerel, anchovies
- foods containing yeast (e.g. beer, Vegemite).

Medicines

There are two types of gout medicine – 'gout reliever' medicines to relieve attacks and 'gout preventer' medicines to prevent attacks.

Relieving attacks
Medicines that reduce pain and swelling are used to relieve gout attacks. 'Gout reliever' medicines should be started at the first sign of symptoms and taken until the attack has settled, or for as long as directed by your doctor. Taking your 'gout

reliever' medicine at the first sign of a gout attack can help to reduce the length and severity of the attack. Ask a doctor or your Pharmacist for information and advice.

Medicines that can relieve gout attacks include:

- anti-inflammatory pain relievers (e.g. diclofenac, ibuprofen, indomethacin)
- colchicine
- corticosteroids (e.g. prednisolone, prednisone).

Greta Workers



the club after a spell in 2021. Kez also continued her stellar start to 2022 and sits on top of the leaderboard with 298.9 points. She scored 100+ for the second month in a row with 125.9 bagging out on Tailor again and 1 Bass. Steve Nevin was second top score for the Open with Trevally, Mahi Mahi, Bar Cod, Flathead, Red spot

Keen Keza claims Cash



The \$100 jackpotted monthly prize went off in the February open with Keza Duncan weighing in a 1.07kg Australian Bass.

Other fisherman who weighed in bass after targeting the cash prize were Judy Masters (0.57kg) Box Miller (0.37kg) and his son Ethen (0.50kg) returning to

Whiting and Pig Fish (115.7 points). Joel Platt broke a Club record with a 3.48kg 77cm Flathead. Judy Masters and Summer Spliet-Miller continued with scores of 71.7 and 11.4. They were joined by a new member to the club Kristen Emmett who opened her account with Bream and Whiting (44.3

points). Aaron "Foxy" Fox steered Steve Nevin around to all the fish but could only manage 25 points himself and Daniel "Boony" Johnson remains in second place overall behind Keza Duncan with 91 points taking him to 191.2

The March outing is Hawks Nest on the 11th 12th and 13th March. The \$50 target species will be Bream. A reminder that you must be fishing the Tea Gardens/ Hawks Nest area which may include the estuaries and beaches in the area and Deep Sea Fishing launching from the Hawks Nest/Tea Gardens Boat ramps. 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. After the March weigh in the prices rise to \$50 single \$100 family.

Pictured below Club President Andrew Jacobs and Treasurer Fee presents Keza Duncan with her \$100 cash prize and Joel Platt with his two big Flatty.

The Women Dominate The Scoring As Fishing Club 2022 Begins!!

The Fishing Club has kicked off for 2022 and with 14 people weighing in for the January Open the Committee are excited about a big year ahead. It was only a matter of time but the Women have dominated this round of Fishing with new member Kezza Duncan dominating the rocks and open water at Seal Rocks. She took out the round on 173 points with a Club Record Teraglin (2.25kg), a couple of Snapper, Morwong and 18 Tailor. Second for the weekend was Summer Spliet-Miller (131.8 points) who fished South West Rocks and weighed in Pearl Perch, Dolphin Fish, Flathead, Morwong, Bream and Snapper. Well done Ladies!!

The best for the Men were Daniel (Boony) Johnson

with 100.2 points, he fished Stockton Beach and weighed in Skipjack, Tailor, Salmon and Bream. Only one Junior weighed in but it was 2020 champion Lewis Jacobs who started strong with 114.8 points and his haul consisted of Trevally, Dolphin Fish, Snapper and Flathead. A special mention for the weekend were Tom Field with a 6.84kg Jewy chasing the trophy in his fathers name, and a stonker Tailor 1.01kg.

Also it was pleasing to see the new Vice President and normally a good fisherman out of luck Jason Salna hit the freshwater and weigh in Catfish, Bass and Silver Perch. "Sumo" as he is better known failed to trouble the scorers throughout 2021 but he has redeemed himself already



this year. The \$50 cash prize for the biggest Drummer was not won and has jackpotted to \$100 for the February Open and the target species is Australian Bass. The rumors are strong that "sumo" will be back to St Clair to visit his Honey Hole. 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.

■ Photos: Thomas Field, at left, with his big Jewy and Lewis Jacobs and Kerin "Kezza" Duncan, above, with their nice Mahi Mahi and Teraglin



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Looming deadline is no holiday for short term rental property owners

By KATRINA CREER

Holiday homes without a proper fire safety plan will not be able to accept bookings from March 1 under new regulations.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) is standing firm on the deadline which is part of a new state-wide regulatory framework to overhaul the growing sector.

Since 1 November 2021, anyone wishing to lease their property for short term rental accommodation (STRA) must be registered with NSW Fair Trading. A mandatory **Code of Conduct** for all participants has also been implemented.

The changes also allow facilitators – in addition to letting agents – to provide property management services for such accommodation.

Why the change?

Technology has made it quicker and easier to book short term rental properties online. The economic upside for homeowners and investors is that empty-houses or rooms can be used to generate additional income.

The new code of conduct aims to address concerns of inconsiderate or anti-social behaviour from short-term tenants. It applies to booking platforms, hosts, letting agents and facilitators.

Under the changes, NSW Fair Trading can take disciplinary action such as a monetary penalty or a ‘strike’ against a property, host or guest, for serious breaches.

It may also list non-compliant participants on an Exclusions Register, effectively stopping them from taking future bookings. Owner corporations can now also adopt by-laws restricting types of short-term rental accommodation within its strata scheme.

Not as easy as it sounds

Already some 33,424 properties have joined the **STRA register** in NSW. The new rules don’t apply to caravans, tents or moveable dwellings. All dwellings must comply with fire and safety regulations, including the installation of smoke alarms powered by mains electricity or non-removable batteries with a minimum life of 10 years.

“In light of the pandemic and lockdowns, we gave the community an extra four months to give them plenty of time to implement the fire safety standards,” said a spokesperson for the DPIE.

“All registered properties must have a fire safety plan finalised by 1 March 2022, including clear evacuation diagrams, alarms, extinguishers, and emergency contacts.”

REINSW member Rebecca Cribbin, who runs a holiday letting business in the Southern Highlands, supports the changes but believes the timing couldn’t be worse with current delays finding tradespeople due to the pandemic.

She employed a company to carry out fire safety inspections and draw up evacuation diagrams for almost 400 properties last October. After months of negotiating, the company pulled out of the project because logistically the project was too large.

“It is okay if you are a mum and dad operator with an Airbnb but when you look after a lot of properties, like us, it is a very difficult task,” Ms Cribbin said.

“While we had a fair amount of warning, it wasn’t just a simple checklist, and some properties need upgrades. Regulators may have the best of intentions, but they don’t understand the logistics of the implementation of their red tape.”

Some STRA investors have opted to move their property into long-term lease because of upfront and ongoing costs.

Facilitator versus letting agents

Central Coast agent Cathy Baker, from Belle Property Killcare, is concerned inexperienced facilitators with no qualifications have been given equal footing to manage holiday bookings. They are permitted to create listings, rental pricing, guest vetting, check-in services and organising cleaning for up to 20 properties.

But unlike letting agents, facilitators do not need a certificate of registration or licence to operate which she describes as ‘ludicrous’.

Key steps to buying a property ~ Part 1



1. CONSIDER STARTING THE PROCESS OF APPLYING FOR FINANCE

If you are planning on borrowing money to buy a property, then before you start looking at properties you may want to begin organising your finance. You can get things started by speaking to a lender or mortgage broker and consider applying for ‘pre-approval’.

Finance pre-approval is when a lender indicates that they may be willing to lend you a certain amount of money subject to certain conditions. Pre-approval can give you an indication about how much you could borrow from a particular lender but is not an offer of a loan.

One benefit of having finance pre-approval is knowing how much you can potentially borrow and understanding what the repayments would be for this amount. It can also make the process of unconditional loan approval faster when you do find a property to purchase. Once you have found a property and had an offer accepted then you can formally make the loan application. The lending body will value the property to determine whether the property is adequate security for the loan. The lending body lends a percentage of the valuation of a property, not a percentage of the purchase price.

The lending body will then issue unconditional written loan approval which indicates that a lender has taken all of your financial information as well as the valuation of the property into account and is willing to move ahead with a home loan for a specific amount for a specific property. Another important aspect to consider with the monetary side of buying a property is

how you are going to pay the deposit. The standard deposit is 10% of the purchase price, it is sometimes possible to negotiate payment of a 5% deposit or payment by way of deposit bond if you do not have the cash but that is subject to agreement by the vendor. Once you have considered your financial position of how much you can potentially borrow and how you will pay the deposit it is time to start looking at properties.

2. AFTER YOU HAVE FOUND THE RIGHT PROPERTY

Once you have found a property you want to buy you can engage a solicitor or conveyancer to review the contract and act on your behalf in the conveyancing process either before you make an offer, or after you have had an offer accepted. Whichever way you decide to proceed it is important that you obtain advice before you sign the contract.

The conveyancing process involves the transfer of ownership to you and making sure that you get a good title to the property. Your representative will review the contract of sale and provide you with advice, they will also negotiate any amendments to the contract where necessary. Once any amendments have been agreed you can then sign the contract which will be held by your representative. Once you have had your offer accepted then you should consider arranging for a pest and building inspection to be conducted. This can help identify any structural or pest problems with the building.

If you are buying the property with someone else, you will need to decide the type of ownership you will have. There are two types of shared ownership:

- o Joint Tenants,

where the property is held by two or more people in equal shares. If one dies, his/ her share goes to the survivor; and

- o Tenants in Common, where the property is held by two or more people in equal or unequal shares. If one dies, his/her share goes to a person named in his/her will.

It is at this time that you will also need to apply for formal loan approval, as outlined above the lending body will value the property and if everything is in order, they will provide unconditional written finance approval.

3. EXCHANGE

When all the reports are in order and the loan is formally approved and you are satisfied with the contract then you will need to make payment of the deposit, this will usually be paid in to the real estate agent’s trust account. Your solicitor will then organise the exchange of contracts, exchange involves the purchaser signed contract being sent to the vendor’s solicitor who will date the contracts and then return the vendor signed contract to your solicitor – this completes the process of exchange. After the exchange of contracts, there is provision in the Contract for a five-day cooling-off period. This means you can change your mind and cancel the contract. If you decide not to proceed during the five-day cooling-off period you will forfeit 0.25% of the purchase price to the seller.

Alternatively, the vendor may request that you waive the cooling off period, if you agree then there is no cooling-off period if you instruct your solicitor to sign a Section 66W Certificate which waives your cooling-off rights and the contract is binding from the date of exchange.

Cheers, Gemma

“There are so many moving parts to short term leases, and they may not have the competency to deal with the conflict resolutions, the trades and bonds and things like that,” said Ms Baker, who is a committee member on the REINSW residential sales chapter.

“By giving them a different title of ‘facilitator’, they have acknowledged that they are someone different to a managing agent. It is almost like they have allowed the holiday business to be de-regulated.”

REINSW: FIRST HOME BUYER SCHEME “A SLAP IN THE FACE”

Despite the announcement to coincide with the by-elections, there are still no details available on the NSW Government’s latest scheme in which it proposes to contribute to the cost of a first home buyer’s home in return for part ownership of their property. But what is clear, says the Real Estate Institute of NSW (REINSW), is Government’s admission it can’t solve the affordable housing crisis for first home buyers. REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin says the absurd proposal is a bizarre attempt to address the symptoms of the problem, not the problem itself: lack of supply.

“This proposal is not only poorly conceived, it is actually a slap in the face to first home buyers,” Mr McKibbin says.

“First, there’s stamp duty to consider. A first home buyer purchases their home with help from the Government and pays stamp duty. The Government takes that stamp duty to refund itself for the equity it has now taken in the first home buyer’s property.

“It creates a bizarre scenario in which the first home buyer is, in part, providing finance for the Government to acquire a portion of their home.

“For first home buyers who have waited a long time and made major sacrifices to enter the market, this is a bitter pill to swallow, and with the median house price in Sydney now over \$1 million and therefore not exempt from stamp duty, any suggestion that this will help people overcome the stamp duty barrier is clearly wrong.

“Many other questions arise too. How might the Government’s interest in a property impact a first home buyer’s ability to secure finance from a bank? Does the Government stand to benefit from increases in the value of the property, particularly if the first home buyer makes improvements?

“The potential pressure on family relationships poses another threat, as there is clearly an expectation in the Government’s scheme that mum and dad will liquidate some of the equity in their home to assist their children. “It raises difficult questions, like what will this do to the relationship if they refuse? There are already many expectations placed on the Bank of Mum and Dad and this proposal potentially adds to these.

“There are many ripple effects such a proposal could have which could distort the market even more. The last thing we need is further Government intervention in a free market which contributes to the demand side of the equation when it’s the lack of supply that is fuelling the affordability crisis,” he says.

Mr McKibbin says the timing of the scheme’s announcement, just prior to the by-elections, shows that the NSW Government understands voters’ concerns about housing affordability.

Unfortunately, it also shows Government does not understand how to solve the problem, he says.

“First we had the property tax and now we have this equity stake scheme. Both seek to treat the symptoms of the affordability issue without addressing the cause, which is the undersupply of homes and Government’s addiction to property taxes,” Mr McKibbin says.



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Zone Carnival

special events like assemblies very soon. Our Kindergarten students are settling in beautifully and a huge thank you goes to their families for preparing them so well! They are well on their way to being readers, writers, mathematicians and so much more. Miss Vicary, Mrs Nimmo, Mrs Turner, Miss Buckingham and Mrs Quilty are looking forward to a wonderful year teaching and learning with Kinder Kookaburras, Magpies, Willy Wagtails and Emus.

We are so proud of our swimmers who attended the Maitland Zone Swimming Carnival. They represented BPS with pride, displaying exceptional sportsmanship throughout the day. Congratulations to Atlin for being the Junior Boys Champion and good luck to Kaleb, Atlin, Syria, Jacqueline & Annika who have qualified to represent the Maitland Zone at the Hunter Swimming Carnival later in the term. Thank you to Mrs Melnik for organising

our swimming carnival and coordinating students at the Zone carnival. The P&C are running a Thompsons Pie Drive which will be delivered on Wednesday 25th March 2022. Perfect timing for the school holidays, so fill up your freezers. All online orders are due in by Friday 11th March at 5pm. Orders can be placed on Flexi schools and will need to be collected from the Branxton Scout Hall on Wednesday 25th March.

Fair Play OOSH (Out of School Hours) has opened at Branxton PS. It certainly looks like great fun and is a much needed service for our local families.

Keep updated about school events through SkoolBag and our Facebook.

Dates for the Calendar Monday 7th March – School Photos Tuesday 22nd March - P&C AGM 6:00pm via Zoom

Officers from Hunter Valley Police District attended and established a crime scene. Hunter Valley PD Crime Manager, Detective Inspector Matt Zimmer, said investigators are treating the fires as suspicious. "Initial inquiries suggest due to the close proximity and timing of the fires, that all these incidents are linked, and that more than one person may be involved. "During an assessment of the scene, police located multiple aerosol cans, which were seized for forensic examination," Det Insp Zimmer said. As investigations continue, police are urging anyone with information to come forward.

Armed robbery – Singleton
Thursday, 17 February 2022
Police are investigating an armed robbery near Singleton overnight. Officers from Hunter Valley Police District were called to a service station on Bridgman Road, Donolly, just before midnight (Wednesday 16 February 2022). Police have been told two men – armed with knives – entered the store before they threatened a female attendant and demanded cash.

The employee handed over a sum of money before both men ran from the store and were last seen headed towards Bridgman Road on foot. The woman was not injured during the incident. One of the men is described as being of Caucasian appearance, aged in his late teens to early 20s, of thin build, wearing a black t-shirt, light brown pants and black joggers, with his face covered.

The second man is described as being of thin build and aged in his late teens to early 20s. He was seen wearing a white one-piece suit, with a white shirt covering his face, sunglasses and boots. Officers attended and established a crime scene, which was examined by specialist police. As inquiries continue, anyone with information is urged to contact Singleton Police or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Anyone with information about this incident is urged to contact Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000 or nsw.crimestoppers.com.au. Information is treated in strict confidence. The public is reminded not to report information via NSW Police social media pages.

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~ Daily Thoughts ~

"A book is a story for the mind. A song is a story for the soul." Eric Pio
"Being convinced one knows the whole story is the surest way to fail." Philip Crosby
"You can't wake a person who is pretending to be asleep." Navajo Proverb


"I dreamed a thousand new paths. . . I woke and walked my old one." Chinese Proverb

~ Quotes and Toasts for the Week ~

She's got a great looking husband, a little boy and all the money in the world. She hasn't got the looks, but you can't have everything. -- Jordan (on Victoria Beckham, Posh Spice)

I once shook hands with Pat Boone and my whole right side sobered up. -- Dean Martin

Joan Collins unfortunately can't be with us tonight. She's busy attending the birth of her next husband. -- John Parrott



If you require assistance please call
0414 757 826

Branxton Public School

The school year is well underway at Branxton Public School. We welcomed many new staff this year as well as many new families. We are all excited about the easing of restrictions in schools which will allow parents to come onsite for



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Police Report

Appeal for information following suspicious fires – Singleton

Sunday, 20 February 2022
Police are appealing for information following a number of suspicious fires in the Singleton area last year. Between 11.30pm on Monday 4 and midnight on Tuesday 5 October 2021, emergency services responded to four grass fires around Lioness Park and John Street at Singleton. The fires were extinguished by Fire & Rescue NSW. On that same night, emergency services were called to the corner of Market and Patrick Streets, about 12.15am, following reports of a building fire. Fire & Rescue NSW extinguished the blaze, with the vacant building destroyed and another seriously damaged. Both buildings were unoccupied at the time and there were no reports of injury.



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Cessnock City Council Public Notices

VILLAGES LOCAL CHARACTER STATEMENTS AND PUBLIC DOMAIN PLAN CONSULTATION

Cessnock City Council is preparing Local Character Statements (LCS) and Public Domain Plans for local villages within the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA).

Between **21 February and 18 March 2022**, Council would like to know which villages are important to you, and why. Your input will help us define the existing and desired future character and qualities for each village, capture a community-based vision to help guide planning, and achieve the vision for public domain works.

A series of online/face to face consultation sessions have been planned for this phase of the project. See below for remaining sessions.

Drop-in / Information Sessions

Ellalong Community Hall, 41 Olney St, Ellalong - Wednesday 2 March, 3pm - 6pm

Abermain Plaza Hall, 3 Bathurst St, Abermain - Tuesday 8 March, 3pm - 6pm

Mulbring School of Arts Hall, 12 Short St, Mulbring - Thursday 10 March, 3pm - 6pm

Greta Arts & Sports Community Hall, 1 Water St, Greta - Thursday 17 March, 3pm - 6pm

15 min individual phone sessions

Wednesday 2 March, 9pm - 12pm

Friday 11 March, 9am - 12pm

Monday 14 March, 1pm - 4pm

To register your attendance at any of the above events, complete the online survey, or provide comments via the interactive map, visit www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/villages.

Please direct enquiries to Council's Senior Strategic Planner on 4993 4248.

CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL RATE SUBSIDY 2022/2023

Section 356 Rate Subsidy - Cessnock City Council may provide financial support of up to 50% in the form of a Rates Subsidy to not-for-profit community organisations to support the provision of a range of activities or services.

In accordance with Council's Rates Subsidy Policy, to be eligible for a Rates Subsidy you must meet the principles and complete Council's Rate Subsidy Application with all supporting documentation prior to Thursday 31 March.

All applicants must contact Council's Team Leader, Revenue on 4993 4150 prior to lodging an application.

 02 4993 4100  62-75 Vincent Street, Cessnock

 council@cessnock.nsw.gov.au  www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au



from the Lions Den....

OWZAT! – Knockout Cricket Competition

Sunday 20th February saw the much-anticipated local 10-Over Cricket Competition organised by the Branxton Greta United Cricket Club. Branxton Lions attended to offer attendees sustenance with the world-famous Lions Sausage Sizzle. A Lions raffle completed the Lions involvement; the winner of the first prize was none other than local Branxton champ Bob (Dusty) Rhodes.



■ Photo: Local young lady, Destiny, assisting Lions President, Rod Taylor to draw the raffle winning ticket.

The Latest Recruit!



The latest recruit to the Lions Club of Branxton is only eight years old – ‘cradle snatchers’ you might say – but Lions member say it is never too young to learn about service to the community. The young recruit is Zane Slomka, who lives in East Branxton and we mentioned in an earlier report that he has serious health problems. Branxton Lions

decided to help Zane and his parents Mary Jane, and Jesse Slomka again with another cheque to assist with travelling and living costs. Pictured below giving the ‘thumbs up’ from the left is Lion Bob (Dusty) Rhodes, Zane (with Lions cap and cheque), Mum Ms Slomka and Lion Alan Beckley.

■ Photo: Lion Bob Rhodes, ‘Lion’ Zane Slomka, Mum - Ms Slomka and Lion Alan Beckley.

Lions District Annual Convention, February 2022 at Wyong Rugby Leagues Club, Kanwal.

Over 100 members of Lions Clubs in District 201 N3 gathered together for their annual Convention which had been postponed from November due to COVID restrictions. The venue was Wyong Rugby Leagues Club at Kanwal. The District comprises of 57 Lions Clubs with 1,078 members and the boundary is Gosford in the South to Gloucester in the north and out to Mudgee in the west. The Convention had two major keynote speakers: Deborah Hutton and Liesl Tesch MP.



Liesl Tesch - Olympian

Liesl Tesch MP gave a harrowing account of the story of her disability but explained how she overcame adversity in an inspirational address telling how she first won Olympic medals in the sport of basketball and then went on to get a Gold medal in Sailing. She is now an MP with a seat at Gosford. She explained the problems of access for people with disabilities – clearly demonstrated in the Rugby League Club with its numerous levels and stairs without ramps for her wheelchair. Liesl did a ‘show and tell’ with her Olympic medals during which she trusted the Lions members to return the Silver and Gold medals!



Lion's first Ambassador!

Lions Australia have appointed Deborah Hutton, pictured, 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. Deborah recommended that everyone should get regularly tested for skin cancer and she spoke about the Lions’ mobile screening vans in Western and South Australia. 201 N3 District Governor, Glenys Francis, has a personal goal to get a screening van in New South Wales.



Convention Remembrance Service – Lions Alan Becker

During the morning of the Convention, the Lions Members who passed away during the year were honoured. A candle was lit in honour of Lion Alan Becker from Branxton who passed in January 2021. Alan’s wife, Cynthia and their two daughters were present for the moving ceremony.



Vale Lion Ron Hungerford

First some sombre news - we regret to report the passing of Lion Ronald Hungerford on Wednesday 27th January 2022 at Maitland Hospital in the presence of his wife, Denise, and family members. Ron’s start date with the Lions Club of Branxton was 7th January 1967 and he therefore had 55 years of active Lions membership. He was born in 1940 and was presented with the highest Lions award of the Mervin Jones Fellow Award for Dedicated Humanitarian Services. For most of his life, he was a Branxton business owner and was well-known in the community working in his butcher’s shop in Maitland Street for many decades. Ron was a very active member of Branxton Lions and filled many essential positions during his time with the Lions.

President: 1971-2; 1989-90; 1990-91; 1995-96; 2005-6; 2006-7, 2007-8, 2008-9.

Secretary: 2003-2004

Director: 2017-2022

Membership Chair: 2003-2004, 2009-10

Ron’s selfless lifetime of voluntary service to the community and the Lions Club of Branxton will be sorely missed by all concerned.



Ron with his Mervin Jones Fellow Award

Branxton Scouts fenced in!

Jean Geale, Cub Scout Leader and Group Leader Scouts NSW thanked the Lions Club of Branxton for a donation of \$500 to help pay ‘the gap between the grant and total costs’ for a brand-new fence at the roadside of the Scout HQ, Branxton, pictured..



Jean said: ‘Many parents

have commented positively about the fence and pleased there is now more security for their children and safety for the hall.’ Information about Scouts in Branxton for boys and girls:

Youth 5-10 years of age (Joeys and Cubs) meet on Tuesdays 6-7.30pm

Youth 11-14 years of age (Scouts) meet on Wednesdays 6.30-8pm

HELP! Branxton Lions need YOUR help

We need more members to ensure we can provide optimum service to the communities of Branxton, Greta, North Rothbury, and Huntlee. Without more members we can’t assist local members of the community who need help, just like young Zane and his parents. Our Lions Membership Chair, Brian Thomas is searching for members of those communities for new members – if you are interested in serving the community, working in a great team and, above all having FUN, please give Brian a call on: **0417-282 440**.

ALSO, all are welcome to come along to the **Lions Awareness BBQ** to be held at 1200 Saturday 12th March, an informal social event for finding out what Lions Clubs do, to be held at the Lions Community Hub, adjacent to the Branxton Community Hall, 35 Bowen Street, Branxton.

MARCH 6th – Clean-Up Australia and Lions Awareness Day

YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO GET INVOLVED!

A major event in the local community is the Clean-Up Australia day – this year it is held on Sunday 6th March and is linked to the important Lions Awareness Day. **All local community groups are invited to attend** to help this essential program to clean and tidy up the local community. Full protective equipment will be provided on the day which is being run by the Lions Club of Branxton in partnership with Branxton Scouts and Cessnock City Council. Some of the famous Lions snags will also be available FREE for your brunch. The Clean Up Australia party will be at Lions Park, Branxton opposite Miller Park to start the clean up at 0900, Sunday 6th March – we look forward to seeing you there!



WORLD GLAUCOMA WEEK – 6–12 March:

7 Sights in 7 Days Challenge – Let’s get involved!

Glaucoma Australia has launched a new fundraising initiative; 7 Sights in 7 Days Challenge. The campaign calls on Australians to share a photo of an amazing sight every day for seven days and raise funds to help take glaucoma blindness out of the picture. Taking place during World Glaucoma Week (6–12 March 2022), the challenge is a part of Glaucoma Australia’s annual *Treat your Eyes* campaign. The challenge is all about appreciating our precious peepers. Look at what you can see! How amazing is that sight? Imagine not seeing that ever again, because you didn’t find out you had glaucoma until it was too late.



Individuals and teams are encouraged to Find, Snap, and Share 7 amazing sights in your neighbourhood whilst you fundraise to end glaucoma blindness. Every snap taken, every sight shared reminds us of how precious our eyesight really is and the fundraising efforts will help end glaucoma blindness through early detection, better treatment outcomes and ground-breaking research.

For more information and to register go to <https://www.sevensights.org.au>



..... in the
**Branxton
Lions
Calendar
2022**

MARCH – Lions Environmental Awareness Month

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

World Glaucoma Week – 6-12 March

Lions Awareness BBQ – Saturday 12th March 1200 midday - informal social event for finding out what Lions Clubs do – Lions Community Hub, Bowen Street, Branxton – next to the Community Hall.

Lions Youth of the Year – District Final – Sunday 13th March at Greta.

Lions BBQ – Bunnings Singleton – Saturday 19th March.

Be Connected – from March 2022 – **Information technology** coaching seminars for Branxton / Greta citizens over the age of 50 – watch for details

APRIL – Lions Strengthening Membership Month

Cessnock City Council Seniors Festival – 25 March to 3 April at Greta and Branxton

Lions Garden Project – September 2022 - Lions Australia 75th Anniversary garden – Lions Park Branxton.

Lions Club of Branxton Inc contact: email: Branxton.nsw@lions.org.au

Mobile: 0426-261948

MILLER PARK HOTEL

MPH

Bistro **LUNCH & DINNER**

BOWLING GREEN

02 4067 4141

Courtesy BUS

Kids PLAYGROUND

Functions WELCOME

TAB

What's On

Wednesday: Social Bowls from 4pm
Thursday: Bowlers Raffle. Tickets on sale from 5pm with a 6pm draw
Friday: Community Meat Raffle ~ 20 meat trays, carton of beer & the "BIG KAHUNA" meat tray valued at \$100. Tickets on sale from 5:30pm & drawn at 7pm (March beneficiary is Miller Park Bowling Club)
Saturday: Punters Day at the pub. 'Punters Challenge", pick winners & win prizes.
Sunday: Meat Raffle ~ 20 meat trays, carton of beer & the "BIG KAHUNA" meat tray valued at \$100. Tickets on sale from 5pm & drawn at 6pm



- * **Restaurant OPEN**
- 7-Days a week for Lunch & Dinner**
- * **Catering for all functions**
- * **Barefoot Bowls**
- * **Parties welcome**

6 Maitland Street, Branxton NSW 2335 P: 4067 4141

BRANXTON & VINEYARDS REAL ESTATE P: 4938 3300

NTH. ROTHBURY

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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...

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- Approx. 34.3 acre rural holding with dwelling entitlement with consent (RU2)
- Stunning views from elevated sites
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ASKING \$965,000

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



not his stepfather.

Political writer Peter Schweizer's latest book reportedly accuses 20 current and former GOP members of having essentially sold out to China.

Released late last month, "Red-Handed: How American Elites Get Rich Helping China Win" has attracted attention thus far mainly for its bombshells about President Joe Biden and his extremely wealthy family.

But also contained within the book is a treasure trove of bombshells about elected Republicans, ranging from current Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell to former President George H.W. Bush.

Regarding McConnell,

Schweizer reportedly writes that the Senate leader and his wife both "enjoy some of the deepest and most abiding ties to Beijing-linked entities of anyone in Washington, D.C."

In a recent interview with the Tallahassee Democrat, he put it even more bluntly: "If Mitch McConnell takes a firm stand against China in the Senate, they could destroy the family business overnight. That's the kind of leverage I think Beijing wants." Citing the info in Schweizer's book, Breitbart reported last week that McConnell's ties to China "mostly stem from" his father-in-law's "massive shipping business ... which has built the family's fortune by sharing a close financial relationship with China-owned companies like the China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC)." Regarding H.W. Bush, though his ties reportedly began before he even became vice president to Ronald Reagan, they "flourished" once he took office in 1989. "Prescott Bush, Bush Sr.'s brother, met with Chinese officials in Beijing in

February 1989 just days before the president was set for an official visit. Prescott's meeting helped close the deal to build a golf club in Shanghai, China for non-Chinese business executives when they were visiting the country," according to Breitbart. "Prescott also met with Chinese officials, on that same trip, to push for the creation of a communications network across China. Prescott was trying to secure the deal on behalf of New York-based Asset Management International Financing and Settlement Ltd. which had been paying him \$250,000 a year." Months later, "Bush Sr. lifted U.S. restrictions on exporting satellite technologies to China — a boon for Prescott's client, Asset Management." Prescott also reportedly launched the U.S.-China Chamber of Commerce, "which exists to this day and has sought to further tether the U.S. economy to China." Schweizer's book also lists connections between China and

- former House Speaker John Boehner,
- former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott,
- former Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, former Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad,
- former Sens. David Vitter, Normal Coleman, William Cohen, Tim Hutchinson, former Reps. Rodney Frelinghuysen, Ed Royce, Jeff Dehman, Lee Terry, Jack Kingston, Cliff Stearns, Charles Boustany, Connie Mack IV, Jon Christensen.

Speaking with The Daily Signal last week, Schweizer explained how these connections — which certainly do occur between China and Democrats as well — usually form. "Oftentimes, these deals come through family members, through a spouse or through a spouse's family. If you are friendly to Beijing, or they want to 'capture' you, as it were, they will give you very, very lucrative deals that can make you enormously wealthy," he said. "If you look at Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Democrat of California, you look at Sen. Mitch McConnell, a Republican of Kentucky, in both instances, their families, their extended families have received hundreds of millions of dollars in deals from Beijing." But just as there are sellouts on both sides of the political aisle, there too are Republicans and Democrats willing to fight back. "Republican Sen. Ted Cruz, Rand Paul and Marco Rubio have been consistently tough, as have Democratic Sen. Mark Warner, Chris Coons and Joe Manchin," Schweizer reportedly writes in his book. As for the public's role in

all this, he believes it's necessary for them to "publicize" all the bombshells he's uncovered and, more importantly, shame the guilty parties. "I think the first thing we need to do is, we need to publicize and provide the scrutiny that allows people to know that this is going on. A lot of people are stunned when they hear about this. It just has not been widely reported enough," he told The Daily Signal.

"I think we then need to go from exposure to, in a sense, shaming, in a way, these political figures that are engaging in this behaviour. I think there are good people on Capitol Hill who have a very clear-eyed, sober view of Beijing and the threat that it represents." But about China, though? In an interview this week with Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, he called for the U.S. to "decapitate" the communist nation's leadership. "Instead of going head-to-head with them, why don't we just basically decapitate their leadership? Why don't we co-opt them and get the leadership to the point where they're not going to take action against us because it'll be to their personal financial detriment?" But with a Chinese-linked president like Biden in office, this seems unlikely to happen ...

ABOUT Peter Schweizer


Peter Franz Schweizer (born November 24, 1964) is an American political consultant and writer. He is the president of the Government Accountability Institute (GAI), senior editor-at-large of far-right media organization Breitbart News and a former fellow at the conservative Hoover Institution. Schweizer wrote *Clinton Cash*, a 2015 book discussing donations made to the Clinton Foundation by foreign entities and Bill and Hillary Clinton's income after they left the White House in 2001. The book was criticized for speculation, conclusions not supported by the evidence presented, and for factual errors which were corrected in the Kindle edition.

While in high school, Schweizer attended the National Conservative Students Conference at George Washington University and was a member of Young America's Foundation (YAF). He graduated from Kentridge High School in Kent, Washington in 1983. Schweizer then attended George Washington University and, subsequently, graduate school at St Cross College of Oxford University on YAF scholarships. He was on YAF staff starting 1993 and edited its magazine.

In 2012, Schweizer and Steve Bannon co-founded the Government Accountability Institute, a conservative think-tank whose stated goal is to "investigate and expose government corruption, misuse of taxpayer money and crony capitalism." Schweizer is president of the organization. It is registered as a nonpartisan organization, but largely focuses on the Democratic Party.

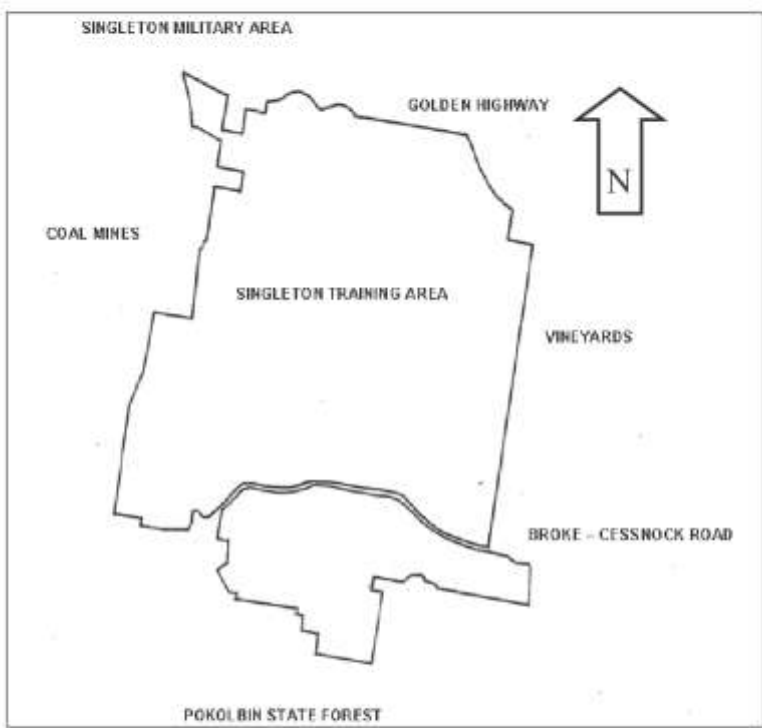
Schweizer's early work at Senator Jeremiah Denton's National Forum Foundation (NFF) focused on the Cold War. He co-authored a *National Review* article with Denton's son, James (often cited as Jim), "Murdering SDI", about the suspicious deaths of several European officials who supported the Strategic Defense Initiative. While at the NFF, Schweizer also published a report titled "The Meaning and Destiny of the Sandinista Revolution".

In 2012, journalist Steve Kroft used Schweizer's work as the basis for a report on CBS's *60 Minutes* about Congressional insider trading. Titled "Insiders: The road to the STOCK act", Kroft relied heavily on Schweizer's reporting in his 2011 book *Throw Them All Out*, which CBS independently verified, to demonstrate how members of Congress trade stocks unethically, and inoculate themselves from prosecution. The following year, Kroft revisited Schweizer's work to create another *60 Minutes* report on how members of Congress use the funds of their political action committees for private inurement. A year later, Schweizer authored another GAI report about the Obama administration, which said that President Barack Obama failed to meet often enough with Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius during the rollout of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). He publicized the report with a story for *Politico* titled "When Barry Met Kathy: Almost never, it turns out. Schweizer's report relied on publicly available information about Obama's schedule. Three months later, after making FOIA requests of non-public documents, *The Hill* found evidence of multiple meetings which both scheduled to attend, including seven specifically about the ACA. They were scheduled but it is not known if any were attended to by both Sebelius or Obama.



Australian Government
Department of Defence

WARNING NOTICE
DEFENCE FIELD FIRING RANGES



Residents of areas adjacent to Singleton Training Area are warned it is a Defence Army Live Firing Range.

Singleton Training Area is described generally as the area bounded to the south by Pokolbin State Forest, to the east by commercial vineyards and to the west by a combination of rural developments and open cut coal mines. The northern boundary is defined by the Golden Highway which separates the range area from the Singleton Military Area.

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

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

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

Persons found trespassing on Defence Training Areas will be prosecuted.

Enquiries regarding the Singleton Training Area should be directed to:

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

The New York Times Best Sellers
Combined Print & E-Book Fiction **(6 March 2022)**

NEW THIS WEEK
HOUSE OF SKY AND BREATH
by Sarah J. Maas
The second book in the Crescent City series. Bryce Quinlan and Hunt Athalar must choose to fight or stay silent

36 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.

NEW THIS WEEK
DIABLO MESA
by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child
When two murder victims are found in Roswell, the archaeologist Nora Kelly and F.B.I. agent Corrie Swanson go back into action

NEW THIS WEEK
SIERRA SIX
by Mark Greaney
The 11th book in the Gray Man series. Court Gentry's work on a C.I.A. action team comes back to life.

11 WEEKS ON THE LIST
VERITY
by Colleen Hoover
Lowen Ashleigh is hired by the husband of an injured writer to complete her popular series and uncovers a horrifying truth.

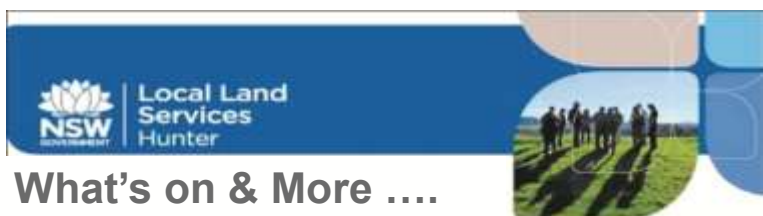
NEW THIS WEEK
FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH
by Arthur C. Brooks
A columnist for The Atlantic espouses ways to shift priorities and habits to overcome waning abilities in later life

78 WEEKS ON THE LIST
THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE
by Bessel van der Kolk
How trauma affects the body and mind, and innovative treatments for recovery.

4 WEEKS ON THE LIST
RED-HANDED
by Peter Schweizer
The author of "Profiles in Corruption" portrays a conspiracy of how the Chinese government might infiltrate American institutions

14 WEEKS ON THE LIST
THE 1619 PROJECT
edited by Nikole Hannah-Jones, Caitlin Roper, Ilena Silverman and Jake Silverstein
Viewing America's entanglement with slavery and its legacy, in essays adapted and expanded from The New York Times Magazine.

2 WEEKS ON THE LIST
THE NINETIES
by Chuck Klosterman
An overview of the cultural and historical impact of the 1990s.



What's on & More

GRASS IDENTIFICATION & PASTURE WALK-THROUGH - MITCHELLS FLAT, SINGLETON

Hunter Local Land Services is running a series of grass ID and pasture walk-through events to help answer some of your questions about grasses and weeds in your paddocks. Join your neighbours and community in these free workshops with local agronomist and grass ID expert, Harry Rose. Hunter Local Land Services Livestock Officer Teresa Hogan will be on hand to

talk about the feed value of some of the species we ID. Participants will receive a free pasture weeds ID book, and grass ID book, and be taught how to use these resources in the field to 'key out' these often tricky-to-identify plants. THIS EVENT IS COVID-19 SAFE. Numbers are limited due to COVID-19 restrictions. All confirmed registrations will be required to comply with

the NSW Government COVID-19 requirements. Subject to cancellation in response to COVID Regulations.

When 12 Mar 2022 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Contact: Regional Weeds Coordinator Matt Kennedy P: 0428 686 178 E: matt.kennedy@lls.nsw.gov.au

Climate outlook overview



March to May (autumn) rainfall is likely to be above median for large parts of Australia. Much of south-western and north-eastern Australia have roughly equal chances of above or below median autumn rainfall.

March to May maximum temperatures are likely to be above median for the tropical north, parts of the south-east, and the west coast. Only a small area of the NSW coastline is likely to have below median temperatures.

Minimum temperatures for March to May are likely to be warmer than median Australia wide.

Climate influences include the La Niña in the Pacific Ocean.

Racing Review & News

Why Queen's horse was sent to Waller



Chris Waller now trains Chalk Stream.

By Ray Thomas
 Chalk Stream, raced by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, made his Australian debut at Royal Randwick last Saturday beaten almost 5-lengths. And his former trainer, Englishman William Haggas was watching from afar when Chalk Stream lined up in the Petaluma Wines Handicap (2000m). It was Haggas who recommended Chalk Stream as the ideal type of stayer to race down under.

"I thought he was the perfect horse for Australia," Haggas told The Daily Telegraph. "He was with us for quite a while and he never trotted a lame step. "I feel these European horses if they are sound it's a real big help when they race in Australia." Haggas has watched Chalk Stream's two Sydney barrier trials for new trainer Chris Waller and said the horse would appreciate the wet track conditions at

Royal Randwick. "I watched him at the trials and the first trial, in particular, he seemed to take a lot of pulling up afterwards," Haggas said. "Back home he ran in the soft and I don't think he minded it at all. He is pretty versatile. "If it is a heavy track at Randwick it will help this horse with his stamina." Chalk Stream is rated as \$9.50 chance last Saturday with champion jockey James McDonald



Detailed Cattle report for Gunnedah

Last reported 22nd February 2022

There was a reduced supply this week. Yearlings made up a large percentage with fair supplies in the other categories. The quality of the offering was generally good, however quite mixed from a breed perspective. The majority of the cattle presented in forward to well finished condition. A similar panel of buyers were in attendance with no extras. There was a very good quality penning of heavy weight vealer steers. They attracted strong restocker competition and sold to dearer trends. The high quality accounting for strong improvement. The heifer portion also sold to dearer trends, both to restockers and local trade. Medium and heavy weight yearling steers to restock and feed saw little change in the market trends, with most price change affected by breed and quality variations. Improved quality negated some of the price falls on a mostly cheaper market for medium and heavy weight yearling heifers. The few heavy weights to the trade were dearer under pressure from feedlotter. Heavy weight grown steers over 500kg, including the milk tooth lines saw feedlotter outbid processors for the most part. There was little change in the market trend, breed related price change however. The best and youngest of the grown heifers to process sold to a dearer trend, while quality accounted for some negative price change. There was little change in the trend for heavy weight cows. *Market Reporter, James Armitage.*

Detailed Cattle report for HRLX Singleton

Last reported 23rd February 2022

Consignments decreased marginally and the quality was mixed, however there were extra numbers of the better bred drafts this week. The majority were younger cattle more suited for the restocker and lot feeder buyers, with numbers of the higher yielding pens to suite the local butchers and processors also penned. The market trend was cheaper although the better bred lots are still selling well. The over 200kg vealer steers to the restockers slipped 20c, with breed and quality contributing in places, as prices ranged from 500c to 748c, and up to 806c/kg for the lighter end. The same weight heifer portion also to the restockers eased 20c, and made from 520c to 664c/kg. The yearling steers trended cheaper, as the lighter weights to the restockers ranged from 470c to 640c/kg depending on breed. The medium and heavy weights to the restockers and feeder buyers received from 458c to 618c/kg. Yearling heifers trended firm with breed and quality the contributing factor, as well bred light weights reached 684c/kg. The higher yielding younger cattle in prime condition ranged from 460c to 594c, for the heavier drafts, with the light weight vealers reaching 570c/kg. The heavy weight older steers to the processors reached 470c, this was recorded for high yielding B muscles classes, as the heifer portion topped at 440c/kg. Cows sold firm to slightly dearer, with the better covered heavy weights making from 355c to 390c/kg. *Market Reporter, Neil Geddes.*

Detailed Cattle report for Scone

Last reported 22nd February 2022

Numbers increased substantially for a penning of mainly younger cattle more suited for the lot feeder and restocker orders. The feature of the market was the supply of over 400kg yearling steers purchased by the lot feeder buyers. Overall there were extra crossbreds this week and this contributed to a cheaper market, with the exception of the popular breeds, they sold at similar rates, week-on-week. The cows also trended marginally dearer, however yield and quality did contribute in places. The over 200kg vealer steers to the restockers lost 10c and ranged from 606c to 740c/kg. The same weight heifer portion also to the restockers trended 10c cheaper and sold from 608c to 680c/kg, as the heavier drafts maintained firm prices. The light weight yearling steers to the restockers trended cheaper, some breed related issues contributed to this, with prices ranging from 522c to 656c/kg. The medium weights also trended cheaper, with the restockers and lot feeders paying from 510c to 600c/kg. The large runs of the popular breeds weighing in excess of 400kg sold to the lot feeders at prices similar to the previous weeks and these reached 622c/kg. The yearling heifers to the restocker and lot feeders trended firm to dearer, and made from 450c to 680c/kg, the latter for the lighter end. The prime conditioned and high yielding cattle to the butchers reached 600c/kg. The grown steers to the lot feeders sold well and reached 546c, as those to the processors topped at 440c/kg. Grown heifers trended cheaper with the processors paying from 370c to 426c/kg. The cows sold dearer, some yield related issues contributed to this, with the better finished heavy weights receiving from 355c to 388c/kg. *Market Reporter, Neil Geddes*

Detailed Cattle report for TRLX Tamworth

Last reported 21st February 2022

The numbers remained steady in what was a very mixed quality penning. There was a good supply of cattle in the heavy weight classes in each category. T Limited lines of straight bred restocker and feeder cattle with mixed pens prevalent. A full gallery of processors in attendance with the return of a noticeable absentee. Strong demand through the young cattle saw a market with few holes in it. Quality variation accounted for most of the negative price change. Medium weight yearling steers remained close to firm with an odd dearer sale. There was great variation in breed through the yearlings. The heavy weight feeder steers also sold on a generally firm market trend. Medium and heavy weight yearling heifers to restock and feed saw trends firm with an odd slightly dearer sale in the heavy weights. Medium and heavy weight trade heifers sold to dearer trends. Heavy weight steers over 500kg to feed including milk tooth lines. saw a much dearer trend with quality contributing. Those to process saw the benefit of increased competition to post strong gains. Grown heifers also sold to dearer trends. The cow market saw a slightly dearer market trend up as much as 10c/kg. The big winner was the bull market with the increased competition boosting the market by significant levels. *Market Reporter, James Armitage.*



entrusted with the ride and the honour of wearing the Queen's world famous racing colours of purple, gold braid, scarlet sleeves, black velvet cap and gold fringe. "They are beautiful racing colours, very different to what we are used to," Chris Waller said.

"Chalk Stream is a very sound horse and it will be exciting to get him out over 2400m and further." Waller met the Queen at Royal Ascot two years ago. The trainer and his wife, Stephanie, were even part of the Royal procession ahead of the fifth and final day of the Royal Ascot

carnival. The Queen has raced horses in Australia previously, most recently Carlton House, who Gai Waterhouse trained to finish third behind It's A Dundeel in the 2014 Queen Elizabeth Stakes at Randwick. Chalk Stream had 10 starts

for Haggas, winning four races and was stakes-placed over 2800m at Ascot. Haggas has become a familiar name to Australian racegoers in the last two years as he sent outstanding galloper Addeybb to Sydney for the autumn carnival, claiming successive wins in the Group 1 Queen Elizabeth Stakes. Addeybb suffered an injury-interrupted campaign when he returned to England last year and Haggas ruled out attempting a three-peat in the Queen Elizabeth Stakes this autumn. "With great sadness, we are giving the Sydney autumn carnival a miss this year but Addeybb is fine now and we will try and get him back for his first race at Royal Ascot in June. I'm not going to force him, it will be when he is ready to race." Haggas said.

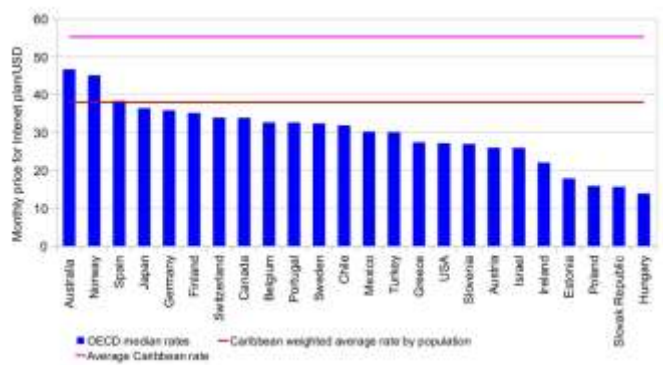


Are we being ripped off?

You know how we've recently spent 40 Billion getting the NBN system installed Australia wide? (that's the new internet/phone system). Is it just me or do you also think that it's not much different to what we previously had, the old ADSL system? And why do we have to pay for a 100/20mbps system when it rarely provides 10/2mbps. Even if you don't know what the numbers mean, you can see that we're only getting about 10% of what we're paying for! And they get away with this by saying you can only achieve maximum speeds if you live within a couple of hundred metres from the exchange or if it's 1am in the morning! For the past few weeks I've received 'propaganda' from multiple ISPs offering me direct Optical cable to the business with speeds of up to 1000/250. Really??? They can't deliver 100/20 so I'm not going to trust them until they prove themselves and get rid of the disclaimers. We should be getting what we're paying for.

Amazing Speeds!

So was the price. A staggering \$500 per month plus I had to sign up for a minimum term of 3 years plus I have to buy a new modem/router (another \$800) So my answer to the question above is YES!!! WE ARE BEING RIPPED OFF. We were promised this superfast world's best Internet system for the price we are current paying, but instead, we get rubbish. This graph shows world prices (in USD) of Internet plans globally. Look who's at the top of the list.



This is one list we DON'T want to be at the top of!

This graph shows the Internet speeds around the world. We're getting there. We've climbed to 52 in the world. Hungary is going OK eh?

They have super low cost plans (check the other chart) and they're 9th fastest in the world. I'd be happy with. Do we have the capacity and systems to be at the top of this list? Hell yeah! But I'm not paying \$500 a month for the privilege (this is the pricing recently announced). So until the ISPs stop treating us like sheep and get real about what they're offering, we're stuck with a slow expensive system.

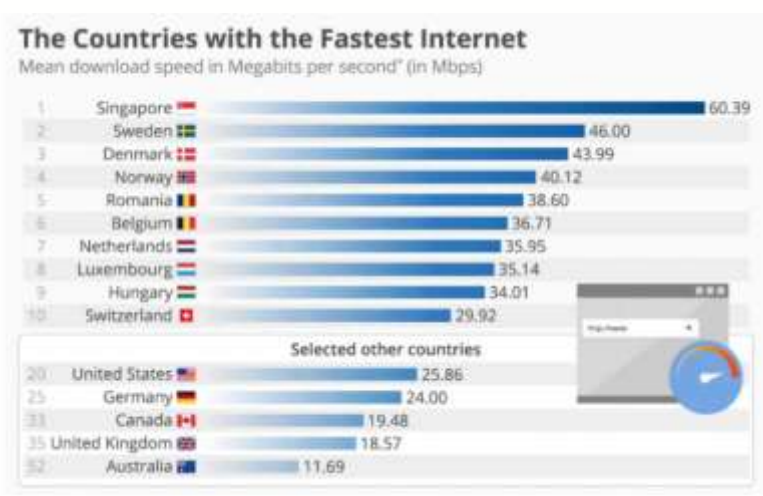
It must be one of the few industries where they can offer one thing, then once you sign up, they deliver something else... and get away with it because of their multiple disclaimers. And I don't know if this bugs you like it does me but I hate paying for a plan as a 'loyal client' for a couple of years only to find out that 'new' clients get the same as what I'm getting, but for half price! WTF does that work?

I better stop here before I get censored I hope this helps with your decision when searching for an ISP (Internet Service Provider). I reckon just go with the cheapest you can find. They all suck!

Don't forget, if you need repairs for any of your devices, pop into Macdroids @ Stockland Greenhills. We're 1 level below Coles and Woolies at the exit to the carpark.

We're the ONLY business in Australia that provides a Life Time Guarantee on repairs, in writing!

See you next month
Frank Macdroids 1300 622 376



MOVIE REVIEW

BELFAST

BELFAST is a movie straight from Branagh's own experience. A nine-year-old boy must chart a path towards adulthood through a world that has suddenly turned upside down. His stable and loving community and everything he thought he understood about life is changed forever but joy, laughter, music and the formative magic of the movies remain.

Rating: (Strong Language)(Some Violence)
Genre: Drama
Original Language: English
Director: Kenneth Branagh
Producer: Kenneth Branagh, Laura Berwick, Becca Kovacic, Tamar Thomas
Writer: Kenneth Branagh
Runtime: 1h 37m



Reviewed by: **Amber Wilkinson**
 "Branagh has an easy way with a camera and isn't afraid of sentiment, but he offsets this with a good line in comedy that cuts through the softer stuff like an astringent." Kenneth Branagh has taken on some of the world's most famous tales - from Shakespeare's Henry V to Agatha Christie's Murder On The Orient Express to fairy tale classic Cinderella - but this time out, it's personal, as he steps back into his own past for the semi-autobiographical Belfast. As the old joke goes, everything was in black and white back then, and so it is, for the most part in Branagh's film, which travels from a brief colour tour of Belfast today back over a wall and back to a monochrome summer of 69 in Belfast. To be specific, the date is August 15, one day after the Battle of the Bogside riot ended, which many historians consider to be the first major event of what came to be known as "the Troubles". Although beginning with an outbreak of violence on a working-class residential street - at that point populated by both Catholic and Protestant families, which was soon set to change - this is a film that is as much about the intimacy of community and family as conflict, with events seen from the point of view of young Buddy (Jude Hill, a real discovery in his first role).

product of proximity. These are terraced streets of small houses, packed with large families, whose children fill the street with their games even as barricades begin to spring up. Nine-year-old Buddy is the perfect companion for an audience, more interested in getting a Catholic girl in his class to notice him than the trouble flaring up on the street, but impacted by the rising tensions anyway. Branagh has an easy way with a camera and isn't afraid of sentiment, but he offsets this with a good line in comedy that cuts through the softer stuff like an astringent. There's mischief afoot as Buddy's older cousin ropes him in on a raid on the local corner shop - her dismay at what he takes will give a chuckle to many who were kids in the era - but there's also a nod to darker times ahead. His cousin, like Buddy, a Protestant, loftily informs him that you can tell who the Catholic kids are by their names but then adds, "You have to get taught it". "Who teaches you?" Buddy wonders, the question hanging in the air, reminding us that prejudice is something we learn not that we're born with. The ability to smuggle in stronger themes while not losing sight of the mainstream entertainment he's crafting has always been part of Branagh's armoury. But the serious stuff never gets in the way of more

everyday observations, like pops taking time out in the outhouse or mum on the phone in the hall. Here we spend a few months with Buddy and his extended family, as his pa (Jamie Dornan) tries to persuade his ma (Caitriona Balfe) that it's time to leave the tensions of Belfast behind them and head for England, while his granny (Judi Dench) and pops (Ciaran Hinds) share sweetly worked scenes as they grapple with the ageing process and the prospect of their family moving away. The tension between ma and pa runs through the film, encapsulating domestic emotions that fed off and reflected the increasing pressures in the wider community. One could quibble that a night of big band music and romance feels almost as though it's popped in from a neighbouring musical, but the child's perspective helps to ease us over these sort of humps, as Buddy experiences things in the heightened way of the young - also indicated by the way that TV programmes, films and even the theatre are shot in full colour as though dragging the youngster into his own private Oz. Although this community would go on to be largely defined by strife in the eyes of the world for many years to follow, Branagh makes sure that what we chiefly feel is the love.

Much of the initial intimacy we see is a



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Emotional scenes as iVote court challenge hears results of 39 council elections now in doubt

ABC Illawarra
By Kelly Fuller

local interest



Councillors have shared their "shame" and "embarrassment" at being drawn into a Supreme Court case sparked by NSW Electoral Commission's iVote crash and vowed not to run again if forced into another election. The court is being urged to throw out the local government election results of Singleton, Kempsey, and Shellharbour Ward A after its electronic voter system failed to accept online votes at the December 4 polls. The commission has named 22 defendants from across all three councils in the case. On the second day of the hearing, Kempsey Deputy Mayor Alexandra Wyatt said the process had left her so traumatised she would not contest another election. "I can't afford it and I won't take any other money out of my family's savings," she said. "There's no guarantee I won't spend another \$5,000 and be sitting here again because another system failed. "For me being a defendant [in the] Supreme Court doesn't produce an image of a good person but a criminal, a bad person, or someone that has committed an offence or crime." "I will just go home and crawl up in the fetal position and emerge when I no longer feel shame, embarrassment, and humiliation." Kempsey councillor Liz Campbell broke down crying telling the court how being dragged into the case had exacerbated a "personal and vicious mistruth" campaign against her. While re-elected with more than the quota she had not been returned as mayor, and locals were now suggesting she was challenging the outcome. "The inference being I am challenging the results of the election because I lost," she said. Holding back tears again she called the case a "deep miscarriage of justice". "To find yourself a defendant in the Supreme Court defending the fact that you were democratically elected is distressing and it has taken a personal toll on me." Shellharbour Ward A councillor Maree Edwards told the court the situation was "entirely" the commission's fault. "It is a monumental error and the commission's failure is now our cross to publicly bear," she said. Cr Edwards' voice trembled as she spoke to the court over a video link. "For those of us who have participated willingly in these proceedings it has been harrowing and all consuming," she said. "My very ill and elderly father was delighted when I was a successful candidate. He along with my family have had to share my stress and dismay due to the actions of the Electoral Commissioner."

The counsel for Shellharbour Council argued that declaring an election void based on statistical modelling and the assumptions behind it was inherently flawed. It also argued the costs of another election would be \$500,000 to council or taxpayers. **As many as 39 councils in doubt** Kempsey councillor Ian Bain introduced mathematical scientist Vanessa Teague to criticise the modelling and data being used by the commission to identify problems with the vote. "What I am trying to explain is that the selection of these three councils is really arbitrary," he said. Dr Teague said because of way the data had been interpreted by the commission the results of 36 additional councils should be in jeopardy. "There is actually just as good a reason to suggest that quite a number of other councils are comparably in doubt," she said. Kiama MP and former state government minister Gareth Ward is representing Shellharbour Deputy Mayor Kellie Marsh and told the court he "feared and doubted" a fresh election would be fair. "There is no doubting my client's election. She romped it in," he said. "Her election and its legitimacy have not once been challenged. "This is not a case where there was rampant widespread voter fraud, or lost ballot boxes, or ballot stuffing. There were no riots our outbreak of warfare that suspended an election. "This was an old-fashioned stuff up. "This is matter for the parliamentary committee that oversees the Electoral Commission. "The commissioner has done absolutely the right thing by bringing this matter to this honourable court to consider, but the relief the commissioner seeks is disproportionate, undemocratic, and unfair." Mr Ward also warned a self-funded, independent candidate like his client would be at a disadvantage in recontesting the position in the Labor-leaning Illawarra where the major party would "mobilise" its resources. After two days of hearings Justice Robert-Beech Jones reserved his judgement. "I will give this the utmost urgency, but bearing in mind the novelty and complexity, even when I deliver reasons ... I certainly won't make a declaration of voidness on the spot." He said if any declaration to void the election were to be made it would not happen before the looming federal election.

SINGLETON COUNCIL STATEMENT – SUPREME COURT PROCEEDINGS

The NSW Electoral Commission has issued the following statement in regards to Supreme Court proceedings concerning iVote and the 2021 NSW Local Government elections: "In early January 2022, the NSW Electoral Commissioner commenced proceedings in the Supreme Court of New South Wales seeking a ruling about the validity of the 2021 NSW Local Government elections for councillors in Kempsey Shire Council, Singleton Council and Shellharbour City Council (Ward A). The proceedings were heard in the Supreme Court before his Honour Justice Beech-Jones CJ at CL on 22 and 23 February 2022. His Honour reserved his judgment and will make a decision at a later time. "During the hearing, representatives for the NSW Electoral Commissioner stated that the proceedings were brought because of an issue with respect to the iVote system which was not caused by, and does not reflect in any way upon, the conduct of any of the defendants to the proceeding. "In particular, representatives for the NSW Electoral Commissioner emphasised that the naming of the individual councillors as defendants involved no suggestion of any wrongdoing or impropriety on their parts. Rather, the individual councillors declared to have been elected in each of the affected elections were named as defendants only because they were legally necessary parties, in that their positions may be affected by the Court's orders (depending on what the Court decides). Public officials are from time to time named as defendants in litigation for that reason. The NSW Electoral Commissioner wishes to make clear that any suggestion that that circumstance reflects negatively upon the persons named as defendants is unfounded. "The NSW Electoral Commissioner will make a further statement when the Supreme Court delivers its judgment." Singleton Council General Manager Jason Linnane attended the hearing in Sydney this week. Following the hearing, he said: "The matter was heard Tuesday 22 February and Wednesday 23 February in the Supreme Court of NSW. "While this is a very unwanted distraction and waste of resources for Council and the other defendants, I was very pleased to hear the barrister representing the Electoral Commissioner publicly state that there has been no act or omission on the behalf of council or any of the candidates to cause this situation. This reiterates our previously stated view. "While we very much desire a decision as soon as possible, we appreciate the need for the proper consideration of the matter by His Honour. For Council, our view is that we have a properly declared governing body and we will keep on with the job of serving our community while we await the decision."

THE NEWS | No.544 | THURSDAY 3 March 2022 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

Jesus weeps when he looks down on Olivia Place, North Rothbury. It reminds me of a slum; no trees when sugar gliders lived and birds screeched and children played. No trees. What's wrong with you people? Waiting for Council to do street trees? Get off your collective butts and do something about restoring woodland for our native babies' habitats. 100 trees cost less than a weekend enjoying the vineyards.

I would like to say Congratulations to our News Editor Mike Lowing for receiving the Senior Citizen of the Year Award. Well done. Janet McGilvray

I always get a laugh each local government election with the number of 'independents' who nominate & then group. The Greens, Libs & the ALP tell us who they are so why not be fair dinkum and give yourselves an indicative name; any suggestions?

The game of tennis, after watching the Australian Open, is changing but not always for the better. The standard of play continues to reach new heights while the standard of dress reaches new lows. Many appear on court as though they have bought their outfits from an op-shop rejects bin. It will be interesting to see if Wimbledon this year encourages good dress sense(?). It just annoys me sooo much!

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For Rent: Branxton RSL Hall, air conditioned. Short or long term. P: 0429 438 460
To Lease: Granny flat or use as treatment room, massage etc, great spot, \$200 per week [no kitchen] 4 week bond in advance text, Edwin for pictures 0487427203
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: 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

SUN 6 MAR—Lions Awareness and Clean Up Australia Day – Lions Park, Branxton.
MON 7 MAR – Branxton Public School: School Photos
SUN 19 MAR -Lions Youth of the Year – District Final at Greta.
TUE 22 MAR - Branxton Public School P&C AGM 6:00pm via Zoom
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 — CANCELLED 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

CESSNOCK COMMUNITY PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
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Dates for your diary

Johnny CASH THE CONCERT

JOHNNY CASH THE CONCERT
Next date: Friday, 18 March 2022 | 08:00 PM to 10:00 PM
- Back to San Quentin -
From his acclaimed starring role as Johnny Cash in the January 2020 Melbourne season of *Legends In Concert Las Vegas*, Daniel Thompson will return in 2022 with *Johnny Cash The Concert* celebrating all things Man In Black. In 1969, off the back of the huge success of his *At Folsom Prison* album, Johnny Cash recorded the second of his **legendary prison albums at California's notorious maximum security prison, San Quentin.** At San Quentin cemented his place as a legendary figure and icon of 20th century popular music. After seven national tours and more than 200 shows, *Johnny Cash The Concert* has become lauded as one of Australia's premier tribute acts presenting an unforgettable tribute to one of music's most iconic and influential figures. With more than 80,000 tickets sold Australia wide, don't miss your chance to see what has audiences on their feet and coming back each year for more.

More than \$500,000 provided for community projects under innovative partnership between Singleton Council and mining companies

The first round of the Singleton Community Economic Development Fund will deliver a total of \$526,333 for 13 community projects to support the health and wellbeing of the community, from \$87,997 for upgraded kitchen and bathroom amenities for Singleton CWA to \$12,200 for a regeneration of the PA Heuston Lookout by Singleton Landcare.

Established by Council in partnership with Glencore and the Bloomfield Group, the ground-breaking Singleton Community Economic Development Fund was established to ensure the best use of Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) monies for the Singleton community now and into the future.

Applications for community projects under the first round of the funding were called late last year, and the successful projects formally approved by Council are:

- Singleton Netball Association – lighting upgrade to courts 1- 6: \$56,331
 - Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association – business case for improved connectivity to the nbn: \$50,000
 - Singleton PCYC – BBQ trailer to support PCYC fundraising endeavours: \$20,000
 - Rotary Club of Singleton on Hunter – sculpture seating for the Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre: \$14,200
 - Youth Off the Streets – support services for youth program: \$41,000
 - Hunter Women’s Centre – domestic violence counselling services and prevention: \$30,020
 - Singleton Landcare – regeneration of PA Heuston lookout: \$12,200
 - Singleton Country Women’s Association – upgrade of kitchen amenities: \$87,997
 - On Track Hunter – youth education and employment program: \$60,000 (\$30,000 per year for two years)
 - Singleton Heights Pre-School – food pantry project: \$26,880 (\$13,440 per year for two years)
 - Broke Residents Association – Bulga to Broke discovery trail feasibility study: \$50,000
 - Singleton Triathlon Club – electronic timing device: \$17,705
- Lifeline Hunter – establishment of crisis support hub for suicide prevention in Singleton: \$60,000 (\$30,000 per year for two years)
- Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore and representatives from Glencore and The Bloomfield Group will recognise the successful applicants at a special afternoon tea on Friday 25 February 2022.
- Cr Sue Moore said she was overwhelmed by the range of projects that can now be achieved because of the availability of funding.
- “The high standard of the applications as well as the range of projects that were put forward in the first round were just amazing, and reiterate how valuable this Fund is to support people in our community to deliver projects and services to support each other,” she said.
- “I pay particular tribute to Glencore and The Bloomfield Group for partnering with Council on this wonderful initiative that is paying dividends for the people of Singleton now and into the future – just as we intended.
- “I can’t wait to see the first round of projects up and running and I congratulate all of the applicants for their hard work, insight and dedication to supporting our community through these important projects.”

= Daily Thoughts =

"The most exhausting thing in life is being insincere." ~ Anne Morrow Lindbergh
 "Ignorance is dangerous, but knowledge without responsibility is more dangerous." ~ Bruce B. Clarck
 Insurance covers everything except what happens. ~ Anon
 The less you know... the less misinformed you are! ~ Anon
 "There is only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self." ~ Aldous Huxley

Cessnock wins big with Stronger Country Communities grants

Cessnock City Council Mayor Jay Suvaal is pleased to announce Council has been successful in receiving over \$600,000 in grant funding under the NSW Government’s Stronger Country Communities Fund for three key community projects.

- The projects include:
- \$200,000 for the Cessnock Performing Arts Centre (CPAC) for an accessible entrance, adjacent to Aberdare Road, which forms part of a larger refurbishment project providing new creative arts spaces
 - \$140,000 for the Manning Park Leash Free Dog Area to fence the existing off leash area, provide landscaping and supporting infrastructure that will include access to water, seating and bins
 - \$300,000 for the Maybury Peace Park Play Space Upgrade which will incorporate inclusive play items and provide a unique play experience for the community.

Cessnock United Football Club was also successful in their grant application of \$294,750 for a lighting upgrade at Baddeley Park. Council is partnering with the club to project manage and deliver this project.

Councillor Suvaal said the funding announcements were great news for the Cessnock local government area, and the accessible entrance at CPAC and inclusive play space at Maybury Peace Park were part of Council’s commitment to create community facilities for everybody.

“This is wonderful news for so many in our community – those who love the arts, people with disability, dog owners, families and users of Baddeley Park. I look forward to seeing these fantastic projects get underway,” Councillor Suvaal said.

These projects have been made possible thanks to funding by the NSW Government’s Stronger Country Communities Fund which has provided \$500 million for more than 1,900 local projects since 2017.

• Photo: Cessnock Performing Arts Centre



\$3 million shared pathway to connect Bridges Hill Park to Wine Country

Cessnock City Council is pleased to announce it has been successful in receiving \$3 million in funding for a shared pathway which will connect Bridges Hill Park to Wine Country.

This exciting project is funded through the NSW Government’s NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program. It will start at the popular Bridges Hill Park and finish at St Phillips Christian College on Lomas Lane, Nulkaba.

In addition, the project will include a 2.5 metre shared pathway linking Allandale Road to Nulkaba Public School.

Upon completion, the 2.5 metre wide, five kilometre shared pathway will be enjoyed by cyclists and pedestrians and it will also be wheelchair friendly.

Cessnock City Council Mayor Jay Suvaal is looking forward to the project getting underway and providing better connectivity through shared pathways which is one of his key priorities as Mayor.

“The fact that people will be able to walk or ride safely into the Cessnock CBD from Nulkaba is just fantastic,” Councillor Suvaal said.

“It will also promote a healthier and more active lifestyle for those living in the area. Instead of always jumping in the car to get into town or to drop the kids to school, locals can consider cycling or walking.”

The project will also include end-of-trip/mid-trip bicycle storage infrastructure, water bottle filling stations, seating and shelters.

Quotes are currently being sought for the survey and design of the pathway and construction is scheduled to start mid-year once tenders have been awarded.

This project is proudly funded by the NSW Government in association with Cessnock City Council under the NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program, which aims to deliver safe and quality areas of public open space. For more information, please visit <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Planning-reforms/NSW-Public-Spaces-Legacy-Program>.




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SOLD



SOLD



5 clever ways to prepare your garden for winter

In Australia, we're blessed with a warm climate and experience winters that allow us to enjoy our outdoor area all year round. However, as we prepare for the colder months, we need to make a few adjustments to ensure our garden will survive, thrive and remain useable throughout.

Adbri Masonry brand ambassador and landscape expert Jason Hodges says a change in temperature doesn't have to force us to adjust how we entertain and enjoy our outdoor areas and gardens. "A little preparation and a few smart purchases can winter-proof your backyard by transforming it into a cosy feature area that will be a family favourite year round."

Here are Jason's top tips for getting your garden winter-ready:

1. BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION

"To make the most of your yard during winter, the important thing, before we even get to outdoor heating, is laying a solid foundation," says Jason. Whether it's creating appropriate drainage to avoid your backyard turning into a muddy mess after heavy rainfall, or laying a paved entertaining area for cosy dinner parties, there are certain basic steps you can take to prepare your garden for winter enjoyment.

Choose an area near your back door to pave an entertaining patio. If possible, pave a large enough area to fit an outdoor setting and heating unit. Covering the space with an awning or pergola helps to frame the space and makes it feel more like an alfresco room, as well as shelter it from the elements, adding to the liveability of the space.

2. LAWN LOVING

Winter can be a tough time for lawns but there are ways in which you can prevent this through careful preparation. Choose a slow release fertiliser and feed your lawn throughout autumn ensuring it is healthy and in good condition coming into winter. The north eastern part of Australia gets less rain than in the stormy summer months so if you live in this area, it's important to keep your lawn hydrated during what can be cool and dry conditions. In the southern parts of the country where there is more rain during winter, you can switch to watering as needed. You'll know when grass is thirsty by watching for curling of the leaves or the appearance of dry spots.

3. CHOOSE YOUR PLANTS WISELY

If you are in the process of renovating your yard, it's a good time to consider plant and flower choices. You can't go wrong with camellias, which will flower for over six months a year in the right conditions. If you've got potted plants, take the opportunity to consider their position in the yard and if you can, move them to an area in the garden that may be better suited to capturing more sunlight. Sasanqua camellias are perfect for forming a fast-growing hedge that can be kept clipped to around 2-3m.

4. OUTDOOR LIGHTING

With those short winter days, a well-lit garden is ideal if you want to continue entertaining into the colder months.

Lighting can completely change the look and feel of an area – opt for a floodlight that can be specifically directed at an area or festoon lighting to add ambience (look for the IP44 rating for indoor and outdoor use in all conditions). "Outdoor lighting allows us to create an atmosphere for different purposes whether it's for late night dinners or nights by the fire pit," says Jason. Fairy lights make for a cosy get-together around the firepit.

5. WARM IT UP

No garden is winter ready without a source of heat. Opt for a mobile heater to provide flexibility, or a stylish yet functional fixed strip heater that is perfect if you have an overhead pergola. Backyard fire pits are becoming increasingly popular and can add a real wow factor to your outdoor space.

Fire pits are the new water features; they are a great feature in any backyard, and require a lot less maintenance than a water feature. A fire pit will transform your backyard into a cosy and inviting space, perfect or those chilly evenings.



The 10-Step Puppy Care Guide



So you're going to become a parent to an adorable new puppy – what could be more exciting! But be cautioned; parenting a new puppy is no walk in the park. Puppy care can be all at once fun, stressful, and rewarding; and bringing a new puppy home takes a lot of preparation, work, patience, and love. The good news is that if you do it right, it can be a wonderful experience. Read on to learn the 10 most important steps to care for your new puppy.

1) Puppy-proof your home

Anyone who has welcomed a new baby or toddler into their home knows that there are certain everyday items which need to be removed and kept out of reach for the safety and care of the youngster. Like babies and small children, puppies are naturally curious, and will explore their new territory and its contents. This could mean getting themselves into potentially dangerous situations! To create a safe space, start by designating or fencing off one part of the home, which will become your puppy's new territory for their first few months. Then make sure the following items are out of reach from your new puppy:

- Electrical items and cords
- Chemicals and toxins
- Plants
- Rugs
- Breakables
- Valuables
- Trash

Additionally be sure to sweep or vacuum the area frequently to remove any small hazards, and keep the area clean and tidy so your puppy can safely enjoy his new environment.

2) Get the necessary puppy supplies

Next, be sure to stock up on the most important puppy care supplies. These include:

- ID tags
- Collar & leash
- Food & bowls
- Sleeping crate
- Toys

Try to provide toys and other entertainment that your puppy is familiar with, both to help to keep him occupied and to help him feel more at home. A range of things to play with will make him feel cared-for, comfortable and happy about the new environment.

3) Plan your puppy's diet & exercise

Another essential puppy care tip is to consider the best food choice. They recommend a nutrient-dense dog food which is suitable for

growing puppies. Ensure that your pup will get all the nutrients he needs and enjoys eating the food, too. You can choose from a wide range of choices, including premium, natural, and raw dog foods.

Your new puppy will have a lot of energy, and you can help him to use it in a productive way. However do keep in mind, that puppies need much less exercise than adult dogs. Let your puppy play, walk, run, and explore outdoors in a confined and safe area at least one time per day. You can use the puppy's age (in months) times 5 minutes per month to determine how much play time he should have per day. For example, if your puppy is 6 months, the recommended play time is 30 minutes a day.

4) Set up proper sleeping arrangements

When deciding where your puppy will sleep, we recommend to do the following:

- Ensure you have a designated space for the puppy to sleep, including a dog bed or crate
 - Place the bed in an area where other people are nearby, so your puppy won't be lonely
 - Do not let the new puppy sleep in your bed with you, as this can create an unwanted sleeping arrangement in the long term
- Most importantly, try to be consistent in enforcing the sleeping policy, so that everyone can get a good night's sleep, including your growing puppy.

5) Potty-train your puppy

Puppies need to urinate frequently, so you will need to anticipate their needs and give them an opportunity to relieve themselves at least every two hours. Similarly, you can usually tell when a puppy 'wants to go' because he or she will look around

anxiously, walk in circles and start sniffing in suitable corners looking for a place.

And that's your cue to take your pet outside. If you don't want your pup pooping all over the yard as an adult, pick one area and take him directly there when it's potty time.

6) Train for good behaviour

Take care to start training your new puppy right away. At their young age, they need to learn the rules and will be able to grasp them quickly with good and consistent effort. Don't let your new family member get away with anything just because he is a tiny, cute, little puppy. By teaching your puppy good manners, you'll set your puppy up for a life of positive social interaction.

In addition, obedience training will help forge a stronger bond between you and your puppy. Teaching your pup to obey commands such as sit, stay, down, and come will, additionally, help keep your pup safe and under control in any potentially dangerous situations.

7) Take your puppy to the vet

Take your new puppy to the vet for a check-up as soon as possible. If there's something wrong, the vet can catch it early and get it before it becomes a big problem. It also gives you a chance to talk with the vet about what it takes to raise a puppy; such as feeding, vaccinations, the financial aspect of owning a pet, and everything else you may need to know as a dog owner. Don't be afraid to ask your vet every question that comes to your mind. When it comes to the life of your pet, you can't ask too many questions.

8) Provide supervision

Now that you're getting used to life with your new puppy, be sure to supervise him at all times. This will help you to:

- monitor his health

- train him consistently

- keep him out of harm's way and

- prevent him from getting into (or peeing on) your nice things
- Constant supervision can also allow you to get to know your furry little friend better, so you will start to learn his personality, charms, and quirks. Take turns letting everyone in your household supervise the puppy and he'll feel well-cared for.

9) Ensure plenty of socialization

A new puppy needs lots of love and cuddling, rest and sleep, lots of good, nourishing food and then... more love! Moving to a new home, leaving his mum and litter-mates is a very difficult experience for a puppy. Therefore, try to make the move as easy as possible for him. Give him time with you and your family, and give him the feeling of being safe and secure in his new home.

During the early weeks and months, it is also a good idea to introduce your puppy to a variety of sights, sounds, people and experiences. Let him meet adults and children, the postman and other visitors, and let him approach them in his own time. A well-socialized puppy will be able to cope with all of the situations he's likely to encounter in later life, rather than growing up shy or fearful.

10) Equip your puppy with a GPS dog tracker

While you may do your best to keep your eyes on your puppy at all times, you never know when they might just get spooked, or excited about a cat, and run away. These situations can be a new dog owner's worst nightmare; not knowing if or when your beloved furry friend will return to you. There are plenty on the market & reasonably priced.

BRANXTON GOLF CLUB

SAT COMP

5 February 2022
**STROKE MONTHLY
MEDAL - STROK**

Field: 52
Winners B Ed Garland 68
Grades A Gregory Tearle 70
Grades A Peter Conroy 72
Grades A Toby Grant 73
Grades B Douglas Elphick 72
Grades B Neil Jordan 73
Grades B John Burgess 73
Grades C David Pearce 68
Grades C Andrew Keogh 69
Grades C Steven Primmer 73
NTP 2/11 Ed Garland 265cm
NTP 4 Geoff Geason 423cm
NTP 9/18 Paul Bush 393cm
NTP 13 Daniel Turner 730cm
Balls 14 Distributed down to score: 78

Pro's N.T.P 18th Hole
MICK BARRETT 518cm \$102 Proshop Voucher
Eddie Garland won his first ever Monthly Medal on Saturday with a fine 68 nett score on a day where scoring was quite difficult with the rough back in play as it lies. The strong breeze throughout the day also added to the overall difficulty—Mick Barrett's Nearest the Pin on the last (which earned him the Pro's \$102 voucher) was a solid 5 iron which finished just over 5 metres away. Greg Tearle continued his good form to win A Grade with a very solid nett 70 from his single handicap, just ahead of Peter Conroy's nett 72 with Toby Grant third with his 73. Douglas Elphick won B Grade with his nett 72, just ahead of Neil Jordan and John Burgess who both had nett 73s. David Pearce just missed the overall Monthly Medal with his nett 68 which was good enough to win C Grade, with Andrew Keogh only the third player to break 70, coming 2nd with his 69 whilst Steve Primmer's nett 73 was good enough for third. Eddie Garland hit the shot of the day on the 2nd/11th finishing only 265 cms away. A Nett 78 was needed to win a ball showing how difficult the golf course played on the day.

Captain Steve wants to remind everyone to check the local rules board before starting play as conditions do change on a regular basis.
On Sunday the Pennants continued with A Grade losing to The Vintage 0-5 at Maitland, B Grade lost 3-2 to Muswellbrook at Aberdeen, while C Grade lost 2-3 to Singleton at

Scone. The Vets had another tight win, defeating Scone 2-1 at Hunter Valley, with each game going to the 18th.

12 February 2022 STABLEFORD

Grades A Peter Wilton 38
Grades A Peter Conroy 34
Grades A Dean Fowler 33
Grades B Paul Bush 40
Grades B Peter Mackenzie 38
Grades B Neil Jordan 36
Grades C Riley Maytom 40
Grades C Nicholas Redgrove 39
Grades C Andrew McGovern 38
NTP 2/11 Nicholas Redgrove 119cm
NTP 4 Neil Bridge 136cm
NTP 9/18 Riley Maytom 69cm
NTP 13 Peter Conroy 83cm
Balls 6 Distributed down to score: 30
Pro's N.T.P 18th Hole
Dean Fowler 290cm \$100 Proshop Voucher
Peter Wilton showed his class in winning Saturday's Stableford Competition with an impressive 38 pts, on a day when only 30 pts was needed to win a ball. Peter Conroy was runner up with 34 pts, with Dean Fowler third with his 33 pts. Paul Bush continued his recent good Club Championship form by winning B Grade with the day's equal best score of 40 pts, 2 points clear of Peter Mackenzie's 38 pts with Neil Jordan third 36 pts. Riley Maytom made his debut to Saturday Competition golf in winning C Grade with a very pleasing 40 pts, a score which included an outstanding shot to the 9th, finishing only 69 cms from the cup. Nicholas Redgrove played very well to finish runner up with his 39 pts with Andrew McGovern third on 38 pts. Dean Fowler finished his day well by winning the Pro's Nearest the Pin on the last. Club Captain On Sunday, the Hunter District Pennants Competition continued with A Grade earning their first win with a 3-2 win against Singleton at Muswellbrook, B Grade had a bye, C Grade had their first win 3.5-1.5 against Paterson at Maitland, whilst the Vets had a 1.5 – 1.5 draw against The Vintage at Murrurundi. In C Grade Trent McGee won 2 up, Club President Richard Crooks won 4/2, Charles Jubb won 1 up while Andrew Keogh was all square. Lennie Porter lost a very tight contest on the last hole. This was an excellent win as Paterson was one of the leading teams in this competition.

19 February 2022 STABLEFORD

Field: 52
Grades A Joshua Tracey 35
Grades A Lee Hunt 34
Grades A Steve Eccles 33
Grades B Richard Crooks 39
Grades B Geoff Jones 39

Grades B Robert Hale 35
Grades C Andrew Keogh 40
Grades C Luke Matt 39
Grades C Andrew McGovern 35
NTP 2nd Joshua Tracey 90cm
NTP 4th Michael Tracey 281cm
NTP 9/18 Gregory Tearle 215cm
NTP 13th Gregory Tearle 322cm
Balls 16 Distributed down to score: 30
Pro's N.T.P 18th Hole
Peter Wilton 480cm = \$104 Proshop Voucher
Club Champion Joshua Tracey showed his class in winning Saturday's stableford event with a very sound 35 pts on a day where good scores were hard to find. The severe storm that hit the course on Friday night made conditions very soft, long and difficult so Josh's score was very commendable from his near scratch handicap. Veteran's Club Captain, Lee Hunt finished runner up with his excellent 34 pts with Steve Eccles showing some form to finish third with 33 pts. Club President won B Grade, on a countback, with an excellent 39 pts, just ahead of recent Club B Grade Champion, Geoff Jones with the same score, with Robert Hale earning another cheque, finishing third with his 35 pts. Andrew Keogh recorded the day's best stableford score, winning C Grade with his 40 pts, just ahead of Luke Matt's 39 pts with Andrew McGovern third with 35 pts. Josh Tracey hit the shot of the day to the 2nd, finishing only 90 cms from the pin, whilst Peter Wilton, won again, won the Pro's Pin on the last. Greg Tearle had his irons going well as he won two NTPins, on the 9th and 13th—great shot making! 30 pts was all that was needed to win a ball. Andrew McGovern won the Summer Cup. Well done Andrew, a wonderful achievement. On Sunday, A Grade had a strong win against Cypress Lakes 3-2 at Scone, B Grade finally had a win defeating Scone 3-2 at Branxton, C Grade went down to a "red hot" Hunter Valley team, 4-1 at Singleton. The Vets continued their unbeaten run defeating Hunter Valley, 2-1 at Maitland. Andrew Keogh carried his form through from Saturday, winning his match very convincingly 6/5. Richard Crooks went down 2/1 in a very tight contest, while Lenny Porter, Charles Jubb and Lee Jackson all lost 3/2.

Saturday, 26th February ~ Par 3 Championships

A Grade: *Scratch Winner:* Victor Matt 54 c/b
Runner Up: Cameron Johanson 54
Nett Winner: Chris Zawirski 49
Runner Up: Mark Moylan 52 c/b
3rd: Justin Cooper 52
B Grade: *Scratch Winner:* Brendan Clark 61
Runner Up: Gary Wilton 62
Nett Winner: Neil Jordan

49 *Runner Up:* Gary Musialak 52
3rd: Robert Hale 53 (c/b)
C Grade: *Scratch Winner:* Luke Matt 69
Runner Up: Geoff Geason 71
Nett Winner: Graham Bull 45
Runner Up: Adnan Al Dabet 52
3rd: Ted Zawirski 53
Women: *Winner:* Sally Lamb
Runner Up: Karen Johanson

BRANXTON VETS 10 Feb 2022 Stableford

Div 1 Winner T Seamer 31 pts R/u A Jack 30 pts 3rd K Anderson 30 pts
Div 2 Winner C Hughes (SOD) 31 pts R/u R Brooks 28 pts 3rd R McMillan 27
17th Feb 2022 Stableford
Div 1 Winner C Howe 30 pts r/u G Noble 28 pts 3rd G Musialik 28 pts
Div 2 Winner SOD C Hughes 32 pts r/u R McMillan 31 pts 3rd T Young 29 pts
Ladies Winner J Scobie 29 pts r/u T Martin 27 pts
NTPs Ladies N Busch ~ Mens E Barrett
Ladies Winner R McCarthy 26 pts R/u N Busch
NTPs Ladies R McCarthy Mens J Sheedy

HUNTER VALLEY GOLF CLUB Tuesday 15th February

Nathan Sweeney has returned one of his best to claim the Tuesday Stableford with a fine 39 point round from Wayne Burgess 37 and Peter Mullins 3rd with 36 points. Ball winners are: Craig Sharp 35, Bindii 35, Darrell Porter 35, Beepa 35, Thomas Vaughan 35, Mark Barrow 35, Graeme Flynn 34, Ian Newell 34, Rex Talbot 34, Jerry Bowden 34, Steve Piggott 34, James Maloney 34, Ryan Wilson 33, Gary Arnold 33, Tim Melville 33, Geoff Sweetman 33, Ryan Fenton 33, Rick Turchini 32, Kevin Smith 31, Caleb Porter 31, Wayne Cowen 31, Brendan Botha 30, Greg Ireland 30 & GB Harris 30 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Caleb Porter (3rd) Wayne Burgess (4th) GB Harris (8th) Steve Piggott (10th) & Ty Cowley (17th)
Thursday 17th February
The Vets Medley Par event has seen a mixed bag of returns with Division 1 going to Wayne Barber with an excellent +4 round from Gunner with +2 on c/b, Division 2 to Kevin Dick also returning a great +4 from Marek Bartczak +2 and Division 3 to Barry Maher with +1 from Alan MacKenzie sq on c/b. Ball winners were: Ray Boyd +2, Beepa +1, Boss sq, Col Somerville sq, Graeme Smith sq, Larry Forbes sq, Rex Talbot sq, Tony Lorrinan sq, John Ponder sq, Dave Blackburn -1, John McLoughney -1, Graeme Flynn -1, Springy -1, Geoff Sweetman -1, Wayne Cowen -1, Jim Ellis -1, John Kolbas -1, Gary Arnold -2, James Schofield, -2 Paul Smith -2, Ron Findley -2, Bill Harden -2, Peter McIntyre -2, Eric Smith -2, Graham

Donaldson -3, Kevin Smith -3, Chris Norman -3, Tom Bell -3, Wazza -3 & David Peel -3 on countback. Nearest-the-Pins to Bomber (3rd) Darrell Porter (4th) Eric Smith (8th & 17th) & Peter McIntyre (10th) Next Week's event will be a Medley Stableford.

Note: Alick Bender has reached a great milestone playing a round on his 86th Birthday, many more to come Alick
Saturday 19th February
Friday night's downpour led to a soft surface for Saturday's Medley American Stableford with A grade going to Ryan McGregor with 58 points on countback to Ben Bradley, B Grade also needed a countback with Mick Goldman getting the nod from Jeff Morton after both returned C Hughes 32 pts r/u R McMillan 31 pts 3rd T Young 29 pts
Ladies Winner J Scobie 29 pts r/u T Martin 27 pts
NTPs Ladies N Busch ~ Mens E Barrett
Ladies Winner R McCarthy 26 pts R/u N Busch
NTPs Ladies R McCarthy Mens J Sheedy

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Ladies Winner R McCarthy 26 pts R/u N Busch
NTPs Ladies R McCarthy Mens J Sheedy

been won by Jai Kumar with 39 points from Steve Abel 38 & Mark Wiertelwski with 37 on countback 3rd. Ball winners are: Dan Hunt 37, Matt Lightfoot 34, Tim Mowbray 34, Michael Psaltis 33, Grahame Mankelow 33, Mark Fullbrook 33, Jeff Shanahan 33, Beau Scott 33, Steve Gibbs-Skuthorpe 33, Dennis Edwards 33, Phil Byron 32, Phil Douglas 32, Luke Boden 32, Brenton O'Donnell 32 & Marc McGee 31 c/b
Tuesday 22nd February ~
Cameron David has won the Tuesday Stableford with 42 points on countback to Barry Maher with Arthur Cutriss 3rd with 41. Ball winners are: Jayden Casinelli 40, Jayke Clayton 39, John Carmody 37, Beepa 37, Scott Hill 35, Gary Arnold 35, David Peel 35, Scott Ling 35, Caleb Porter 35, Darrell Porter 35, Ryan Cremer 35, Bindii 34, Drew Dewar 34, Peter Franks 34, Larry Forbes 34, Kevin Smith 34, Gary Marsden 34, Greg Ireland 33, Jacobe Dowell 33, Brett Lawson 32, Narhan Sweeney 31, Paul Smith 31, Nick Brooke 30, Wade Frith 30, GB Harris 30, Lindsay Meyn 30 & Wayne Barber 29 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Darrell Porter (3rd) Brandon Cole (4th) Paul Smith (10th) & Caleb Porter (17th)
Wednesday 23rd Feb. ~
The Ladies Season Opening event has been won by Dale Hamilton & Jenny Chambers with Leesa Robinson & Sue Williams 2nd and Sue Wilson & Brenda Mannix 3rd. **Thur 24 Feb** ~ Paul Smith used his years of experience in the wet to

claim the Vets Medley Stableford with a great 40 point round from Gunner who also shone with 39 and Tony Lorrinan 3rd with an even Par 36. Ball winners were: GB Harris 36, Graham Morris 35, Kerry Bartlett 35, James Schofield 34, Dave Gellwiler 34, Paul Wheatley 34, Maureen Donaldson 34, Graham Donaldson 33, Rob Hannah 33, Chris Thomas 33, Peter Perkins 33, Tom Bell 32, John Grayson 31, Mick Gilbert 31, Greg Harder 31. Michael Tsakissiris, Bill Freeman 30, Peter Brame 30 & Terry Webb 30 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Peter Brame (3rd) Tom dead eye Bell (4th,8th & 17th) & Peter McIntyre (10th).
Saturday 26th February ~
The soft conditions suited most of the big hitters in the Medley Stableford with Ben Bradley the standout in A grade with 41 points from reigning Club Champ Adam Jackson with 39, B grade to Garry Marsden with 36 on countback to Mick Hughes & C Grade to Bill Harden 37 points from Barry Maher with 33 on countback. Ball winners are: Michael Cunningham 37, Anthony Bentley 37, Dave Hollis 37, Mick Gilbert 36, Wade Attewell 35, Stephen Zok 34, Shane Waters 34, Scott Vowles 34, James Ellis 34, David Agnew 33, Steve Piggott 33, Jeremie Morton 33, Peterr Pr+erkins 33, Andrew Zok 33, Glenn Williams 32, Denis Corke 32, Bomber 32, Tom Foster 31, Mike Carter 31, Justin Cashin 31, Lindsay Meyn 31, Peter Puerta 31, Brian Connolly 31 & Col Somerville 31 c/b.



with Mark Bercini

SENIOR CRICKET

Week 12 ~ Cessnock District Cricket

After a complete washout out in week 11 of Cessnock District Cricket, week 12 saw wins to first and third grade, meanwhile second grade lost a tight one and fourth grade was washed out.

First grade booked their spot in the CDCA final following a comfortable 80 run victory over Wine Country at Allandale. The Blues were sent in to bat, and managed a very competitive 9-171 which was an above average score in the very heavy conditions. Mark Bercini led the way at the top of the order with a scratchy 44, with Nathan Holz (17), Josh Dagg (17), skipper Joey Butler (17), Jace Lawson (16), Reuben Andrews (15) and Brent Watson (15) all chipping in with runs. The Wood Ducks were all out for 91 in reply, with Pat Andrews (3-14 off 7), and Lawson (2-16 off 6.2), Watson (2-19 off 9) and Dave Condran (2-29 off 5) grabbing a brace of wickets each. Greta/Branxton will take on Bellbird in a repeat of last year's Cessnock District decider at the first opportunity post Coalfields Cup. Greta/Branxton also remain on top of that ladder with two rounds to play.
Second grade went down by 23 runs to competition leaders Bellbird at Miller 1. Chasing 143 for victory, the home side were all out for 119. Connor Thomson led the way with 35, skipper James Halpin blasted a quick fire 34, with John Hamson (25) carrying on his good form with the bat since joining the club only recently. The Blues bowled tidily to restrict Bellbird to 142 earlier in the day, with Correy Stone (2-26 off 4 and Jason Varley 2-28 off 5) their best two with the ball.
Third grade picked up an important win over Wine Country at Miller 2. Greta/Branxton managed 135 batting first, with Jamie McNamara (34), Sam Dagg (28), Zac Watkins (27no) and Harry McNamara (18) providing the majority of the runs. Wine Country were all out for 109 in reply, with Jamie McNamara completing a fine all-round performance with 6-21 off 10. Dave Seabrook supported well with 2-20 off 7.3 with his leg breaks.
Points Tables 2021-22
Coalfields Cup Greta/Branxton 36, Mulbring 36, Bellbird 33, Creeks 21, Valley 21, Wine Country 15, JPC 15, PCH 15, Piranhas 9, Glendon 9.
Ross Smith Shield First Grade Greta/Branxton 39, Bellbird 37, Mulbring 32, Wine Country 31, Piranhas 27.
Second Grade Bellbird 50, Chelmsford Hotel 43, Greta/Branxton 43, Wine Country 42, Piranhas 26.
Third Grade Bellbird 32, Greta/Branxton 32, Cessnock Hotel 29, Mulbring 25, Piranhas 25, Wine Country 21.
Fourth Grade Chelmsford Hotel 55, Wine Country 54, Cessnock Hotel 50, Greta/Branxton 49, Piranhas 47, Supporters 45.
Club Championship Greta/Branxton 525.00, Bellbird 501.20, Wine Country 445.90, Piranhas 365.40.

The NEWS SPORT



Branxtons' Harlan Stewart off to State Championship titles in 3 events

BRANXTON junior athlete, 10-year old Harlan Stewart, has won a place in 3 events at the coming State Championship titles. Harlan has just competed in the regional selection trials at Mingarra and is off to the state championships in long jump, 100 & 200 metre sprint.

4mtrs. In the finals he won gold medal with a jump of 4.49mtrs. He then had his 100m sprint heats and won his heat with a time for 14.32sec Placing him 2nd overall out of 3 heats. In the afternoon he ran the final and came in first place with a time of 14.19sec winning the gold medal and again another automatic qualify for the State Championships. The next morning he had his 200m heat which he won with a time of 29seconds flat, placing

him first out of all of the heats. In the final he missed the start as he wasn't set in his blocks before the start. Amazingly he still ran 29.33sec taking second place winning a Silver medal. "Silver also qualifies for the State Championships so he is off to State in March to compete in all 3 events. He is over the moon!" said a spokesperson for the local club. A student at St Philip's College Nulkaba Harlan has been a member of

the Branxton club from under -7. This is not the first time he has gained state championship selection. As a 8 & 9 year old he got through competing in the longer distance events, 800m etc., but has now decided to concentrate on sprinting. We wish him good luck & hopefully he will bring home some state titles.

■ Photos: Harlan proudly wearing his 3 regional medals & a podium finish in the long jump.



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