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National Emergency Medal awarded to NSW RFS members for service during 2019-20 fire season

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NINE members of North Rothbury Rural Fire Service have received the National Emergency Medal for their service during the extreme 2019-20 bushfire season.

The award honours “sustained service” in a nationally significant emergency, and is the fifth such event since the medal was first awarded after Victoria’s 2009 Black Saturday bushfires. The other three occasions were related to floods and cyclones.

It is awarded to people who rendered sustained or significant service during nationally-significant emergencies in Australia. It's presented to those whose service must be in the protection of lives and property, or in the service of interests that are not their own, and who supported the emergency response for a minimum of five days between September 2019 and February 2020.

Chair of the National Emergency Medal



■ Photo above: Josh, Ron, Garry, Sonia, Garth, Brett and Mick. Tom and Darren were unable to attend but also received the medal.

Committee and Commissioner of Resilience NSW Shane Fitzsimmons said there were many reasons why that fire season had earned its place in the awards' history books, including the season's geographical spread across multiple states and territories and the huge firefighting and coordination efforts from national and international agencies. “Time does move on and memories fade, but I will always be in awe of the way men and women stood up day after day to be a part of the extraordinary firefighting effort ... they stood side by side with communities dealing with their darkest days,” he said. “Through all of that, we saw strength, resolve, focus and we saw humanity. In the face of adversity and so much tragedy, the goodwill of Australia shines through.” North Rothbury RFS Brigade Captain Sonia Ivan said that it was with great pride and an honour that she got to stand with her crew to receive the National Emergency Service Medal on the 15th of March 2022.

“The medal was awarded for service during the 2019/2020 fires.....brigades from all over NSW were put to the test and we helped each other out as fires travelled down the east coast. Numerous members of NRRFS put their hands up for deployments to help out in other regions from Queensland to Sydney & being on call 24/7 in our local area as well... from North Rothbury/Greta to Wollombi...this takes a great deal of support from our families & without that support we couldn't do what we do,” said Sonia. As many as 130,000 people across four states and the ACT will receive the award.



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BRANXTON BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT



Tony Chadwick Economic Development and Tourism Manager at Cessnock City Council. Tony was the MC for the evening

LAST Thursday close to 100 people attended a Branxton Business Network Dinner held at the Royal Federal Hotel in Branxton. The evening was co-hosted by Cessnock City Council & The Central Hunter Business Chamber with funding from the Bushfire Community Resilience & Recovery Fund (BCRRF) provided through the joint disaster recovery funding arrangement between NSW & the Commonwealth Government.

Special guests included Cessnock Mayor Jay Suvaal, One Nation candidate for the seat of Hunter, Dale McNamara & National Candidate

Branxton to Greta Shared Pathway Project Status

After making enquiries with Cessnock City Council regarding the project status of Stage 2 of Branxton to Greta Shared Pathway the Central Hunter Business Chamber received the following advise from Nicole Benson, Acting Infrastructure Manager.

Works recently commenced with the site being established last week and, weather permitting, are estimated to take approximately 7 weeks to complete. **Future Stage 3 of the Pathway:** Investigations have continued for utilising the southern side of the New England Highway for Stage 3 of the pathway which will be constructed to West Street, Greta from the end of the Stage 2 section. Transport for NSW continue to work on survey and design for the southern side corridor of the New England Highway as well as the installation of signalised pedestrian crossings. Council is in weekly contact with Transport for NSW seeking updates and providing information to ensure these investigations are finalised in the near future. Project information can also be found on Council's website Major works Cessnock City Council (nsw.gov.au).

for the seat of Hunter James Thomson.

The evening commenced with Mayor Suvaal welcoming all dignitaries, chamber members & guests.

Prior to dinner being served Tony Chadwick, Economic Development and Tourism Manager at Cessnock City Council, gave a detailed analysis of the local economic outlook. He didn't hesitate to say that the local area, particularly in the building sector, is set for good times for some time to come with Huntlee setting the pace. His only qualifier was that the data used was taken from the 2016 national census as the latest census data is yet to be released.

After dinner the guest keynote speaker, ex-RAAF fighter pilot Christian "Boo: Boucousis, entertained the large crowd with glimpses of a fighter pilots mindset, training & active service.



Guest keynote speaker, ex-RAAF fighter pilot Christian "Boo: Boucousis, entertained the large crowd with glimpses of a fighter pilots mindset, training & active service.



Some of the guests who enjoyed a wonderful evening



Cessnock Mayor Clr. Jay Suvaal welcoming members and guests at the start of the evening

He was selected for pilot training in the Royal Australian Air Force at the age of 18, successfully graduating as a fighter pilot, one of only 400 fighter pilots trained over a period of 40 years, achieving his life's dream of flying a F/A-18 solo at the age of 21.

After 11 years he was discharged on medical grounds & then entered the business world doing exceedingly well. His success inspired him to share these secrets to success with others as a custodian of the "fighter pilot way". The evening concluded at around 9:30pm.

COMBINED GUESSING COMPETITION and MOTHER'S DAY RAFFLE

Have some fun and come into Greta Museum to see our mannequin and guess her name.

\$2 a ticket with great prizes.

Hint: She is dressed in original clothing worn by a European migrant from the end of the Second World War.



The Greta Museum is open 11am-3pm each Wednesday and Saturday, at 96 High Street Greta, in the former Greta Council Chambers.

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21st Annual Coalfields Classic Motorcycle Club Show draws large crowd & some unwanted controversy

The 21st Annual Coalfields Classic Motorcycle Club Show, held in Greta on Sunday 20th March 2022, attracted one of the largest crowds in its 20 odd years history.

Unfortunately, it also attracted some controversy with the arrival of the NSW Police Raptor Squad.

A NSW Police spokesperson said officers from Hunter Valley and Port Stephens-Hunter districts, the Raptor Squad, Northern Region Operation Utah and Traffic and Highway Patrol officers conducted a high-visibility operation at the Classic Motorcycle Club Show targeting members of Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMCG). The police spokesperson stated a 56-year-old man was charged with resist police in execution of duty & was granted conditional bail to appear in court next month.

The spokesperson said police also issued 14 move-on directions and more



than 60 infringements in relation to vehicle defects and compliance issues. Hunter Valley Police District Crime Manager, Detective Inspector Matt Zimme, said local police will continue to target and disrupt the activities of

members and associates of outlaw motorcycle gangs.

"Local police districts are constantly working alongside Raptor Squad to conduct proactive and intelligence-based operations, working to focus on and disrupt organised crime in regional areas," he said.



One attendee, who wishes to be not named, said that he and the family always attend the show & the interruption caused by the police action, in his opinion, was not warranted.

"There was a large crowd and a lot of families with younger children. The incident was quite ugly in stages. It was something you would not want younger kids to witness. Speaking with others in attendance on the day that seemed the general consensus".

At Right: Lachlan Dolbel displayed his 1948 FL Panhead Harley Davidson, drawing a large number of spectators (Photos courtesy of Annemaree Winter)

Awards below:-



Pre 1926	It's Endless			
1926 - 1945	Specks Liquor	16	1938 BSA Goldstar	Tony
1946 - 1955	Branxton/Greta Locksmiths	45	1951 BSA Bantam	Wayne
1956 - 1965	CAN Graphic Design	72	ES2 Norton	Allan Perry
1966 - 1975	Classic Bike Spares	103	1972 CB750 Honda	Rob Taylor
1976 - 1985	Atomic Vapourblast	132	YX 490 Yamaha	Joel Drinkwater
1986 to present	BTP Group	171	CR500 Honda	Joel Drinkwater
Bike of the Show	BRANXTON DIG n TIP	76	1960 BSA Goldstar	
Peoples Choice	Tattersalls Hotel	139	1985 Sportstar	Phil Bradley
Best Club Bike	The Mordue Family	254	Matchless V4	Steve Mordue
Clubman of the year	The Lowe Family			Steve Drinkwater



More Branxton Lions Club News page 5

DON'T FORGET: Branxton Lions Household Battery Recycling Project

Only 5% of all spent household batteries in Australia are re-cycled and they should not be disposed of in the household garbage due to their toxicity. So, please discard your dead batteries the safe way - in the cardboard receptacle based in Coles supermarket at Huntlee. This is part of a government project to ensure correct disposal of spent batteries - to recycle the contents of the batteries and prevent them from going to landfill refuse sites where they can cause contamination. So please do your bit to protect the environment and throw your spent batteries into the Lions bin.



Easter is coming – would YOU like to win the Easter raffle prize?

One of the major prizes in the Branxton Lions Easter mega raffle is the scrumptious box of chocolate goodies and lollies pictured on the right. The Easter box raffle prize was generously donated by a Rutherford Darrell Lea distributor. The raffle will be drawn at Easter and tickets will be on sale from 10th April at the Huntlee Easter event. The \$1 Raffle tickets can be obtained from any of the events listed below, or perhaps we will see you around the streets of Branxton?



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2022

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STEVE'S RANT



A QUESTION

Steve,
How come you know that CO2 has no effect on climate and yet tens of thousands of climate scientists think otherwise?
Allan Thomas, Lochinvar, NSW 2321

Allan,
In air carbon dioxide is a trace gas (0.04%) with other gases being nitrogen (78%), oxygen (21%) and argon (almost 1%). There is far more water vapour in air than carbon dioxide which is a minor greenhouse gas. Up to 95% of greenhouse effect is due to water vapour. The reason carbon dioxide has a warming effect is because it is a compound containing three atoms, one carbon and two oxygen. When solar radiation passes through the atmosphere the frequency of the radiation is too high to affect the atoms in the molecule of CO2.”
When the radiation is reflected back off the earths surface or any other reflective element such as clouds the frequency of that radiation changes to a longer wave length which the CO2 compound can absorb some energy from in the form of vibrations between the atoms. As the quantum of this energy reaches a certain level the compound will radiate a photon of energy equivalent to these quanta.
The theory being when these

molecules of CO2 or methane and other complex compounds are heated (absorb energy by increased vibrations) the surrounding gasses or atmosphere heats up. This heat is dispersed by infra-red radiation in all directions, some into outer space, some back to earth, and to other molecules. Attempts to quantify the energy absorbed by CO2 and other complex molecules in the atmosphere are based on laboratory tests which are then extrapolated via computer programmes to calculate the amount of heat absorbed by the atmospheres. But as we know when flying at altitude in your Boeing Airliner, we see the outside air temperature below freezing and getting lower as the aircraft altitude increases. As we know cold air should settle to the lower altitudes and mix with warmer air and therefore atmospheric temperatures are moderated by circulation. However, most atmospheric warming occurs when the air is heated by hot land masses or warm waters giving rise to weather. Or conversely over the frozen areas of the poles. The effect of air circulation and therefore heat transfer far outweighs any heating by greenhouse trace gasses. Circulation of the atmosphere and the oceans ensure the stability of temperatures. Any Global Warming is due to

natural changes in the climate. The recent rain events on the east coast of Australia have been magnified by the massive increase in atmospheric dust caused by the volcanic eruption in Tonga. The normal Southern oscillation rain period was exacerbated by the rain causing particles from

the volcano Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai. Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere played no part in this event. There are not tens of thousands of climate scientists who believe this nonsense. In fact, there are not tens of thousands of climate scientists. Climate science is an

interdisciplinary endeavour which requires very specialist qualifications. Those climate scientists who have these qualifications will not put their name to any denial of the CO2 dogma for fear of losing research grants. Those that do are generally retired. For further information, read;

Ian Plimers GREEN MURDER. ISBN 9781922449825
David Mason Jones WILL THE GREAT BARRIER REEF SURVIVE ISBN 978-0-9924546-3-0
Peter Ridd REEF HERESY? SBN:9781922449306
Cheers, Steve.



with Mike Lowing

I had the pleasure, last Saturday, of meeting one of our many battle weary SES volunteers. I decided that after our garage had been inundated with water 3 times in the previous week it was time to try & rectify the ongoing problem (I am a very

slow learner!). I saw a post on FB last Friday night from out State MP, Clayton Barr, saying that residents who needed sand bags could get some at the SES shed in Pokolbin. I arrived there at about 9am Saturday morning to be greeted by Jenny Ehmsen, our SES Cessnock LGA Unit Commander, who had been there since 7am. Jenny has been a SES volunteer, on & off, for the last 20+ years with the 'off' being punctured by her employment status. As Jenny said, generally



■ Above: Jenny Ehmsen, our SES Cessnock LGA Unit Commander, on the job filling sand bags last Saturday morning.

speaking, if you are *not* employed in a government job you will not get the time off from your employment to volunteer your services in

emergencies. I do understand the cost involved for private businesses to do it. Thank God for our volunteers!



Hurray, back to normal
With the announcement that cruise liners are again welcome in Australia and the abolishment of all restrictive measures like masks, 4 square meter rules, no singing and dancing and anything else that was foisted upon us, we are now back to what our fearless political leaders call 'normal'.
The drive to get back to 'normal' was foremost in the national and state premier's thoughts and here we are. They will trumpet that we (they) have done it. We have come through this; 'How good is that'. And we will get back to 'NORMAL'. Forget about the recent set back of floods and the emerging Japanese encephalitis mosquito bites, we will get through that as well.
It seems the very last thing we should be thinking

about is that this 'NORMAL's is what got us here in the first place. So onwards in the trend of Startrek, go boldly where none have gone before and if anyone is concerned that this may lead us to a new pandemic, in the words of Jo Bjelke Peterson; 'Don't you worry about that now!' Let us all book our international travel, our cruise, road trip, music festival, mega party, etc. Let us continue with the environmental desecration of the planet, the pollution of our waterways oceans and air, because that is what is NORMAL. Heaven forbid that for once some decisions are being made that actually make a difference in not following the path of NORMAL which inevitable will lead us to the next disaster.
D. Wesseling
North Rothbury NSW

Vale to a legend
With the passing of Gavin Hamilton on 23 March, a generation of Australian coal miners comes to an end. Gavin was an outstanding advocate for all workers in the coal industry. From his lived experiences growing up in the coal mining community of Woonona, Gavin knew only too well that nothing had ever been gained without struggle. He understood the needs of coal industry workers and their communities and worked tirelessly toward attaining them. His tenacity and honesty was the stuff of legend. He applied a practical approach to problem solving which ensured industrially, "the wheat was quickly sorted from the chaff".
In may 1972, Clutha, the

owner company of South Clifton, issued notice to its workforce. Clutha then padlocked off the power to the main ventilation fan of the mine. An action which led to mining operations at South Clifton becoming unsafe. It was Gavin Hamilton who then set the scene for what became international industrial history. He took a bolt cutter to the padlock enabling the ventilation of the mine to be safely restored. South Clifton then became the first coal mine in the western world controlled and operated by its workforce.
Barry Swan OAM, former General Secretary of the Miners Federation
"Warning of a 'Catastrophe' with the use of fossil fuels" & our Ash
Since the climate crisis is a global problem, the U.N.

secretary general, António Guterres, is uniquely positioned to understand the big picture. From his perspective "we are sleepwalking to climate catastrophe." Despite dire warnings from scientists, we continue our addiction to these life-destroying fuels. Nations are renege on promises to reduce emissions. Russia's war on Ukraine exposes the grave geopolitical consequences of dependence on fossil fuels that are largely controlled by authoritarian governments.

Fossil fuel interests and their political allies are pushing for "all of the above" energy strategies rather than using this crisis to double down on a rapid transition to clean energy. Mr. Guterres's call to phase out coal, end fossil fuel subsidies and halt further exploration are good first steps, but economists agree that the best way to speed the transition is to make the polluting industry pay an increasing fee on their carbon pollution. The obvious way to achieve energy independence is through renewable energy, since no

nation owns the sun or the wind. The technology is available; only political will is needed.
On another topic, a lighter note, if I can; you won't read a bad word about Ash Barty anywhere in the wake of her decision to retire at age 25 but it's incredibly sad for Aussie tennis fans — and the game in general. How many underachievers and tennis brats did we have to sit through to wait for a gem like Barty to come along? I say far, far too many.
Name & address withheld at request of writer

Submit a letter to the editor

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

or emailed to thenews@hotmail.net.au

YOUR friendly team

The News

Mike Lowing: Editor, Journalist, Photographer & Administrator
Manager Advertising: Helen Lowing
The "Branxton Greta Vineyards News" is bound by an industry code of ethics. If you have a complaint, contact the newspaper first. If the matter is unresolved, then call The Australian Press Council on 1800 025 712. Complaints about advertising should be directed to the Editor and if the matter isn't resolved contact The Australian Competition & Consumer Commission on (02) 9230 9133.

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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MOB: 0412 566 041 0414 757 826
Email: thenews@hotmail.net.au
Office: 12 Clift Street, Branxton, NSW 2335



From the Lions' Den March 2022



The Clean Up Australia and Lions Awareness event had to be postponed to Sunday 27th March because of flooding and extreme weather events. However, the Branxton Scouts and Branxton Lions turned out to clean up the Lions Park and surrounding areas and produced several bags of rubbish discarded there and on the roadside towards Elderslie Road. The Scouts, their families, and members of the Lions Club enjoyed a well-earned sausage snag and a thirst-quenching cool drink after the hard work. Branxton District Guides had already completed their tidy up as Guide Leader Chris Bray explained: '5 adults and 14 junior guides do our bit for Clean up Australia last Tuesday. We cleaned on both sides of the Main Street as we walked down to the Miller Park, and cleaned up around the internal roadway area of the sporting fields. We only found a total of 2 large CUA bags, which was rather pleasing.'

Branxton Scouts and Branxton Lions at the start of the Clean Up and the end



Branxton Scout Charlotte receives the Clean Up Australia / Lions participation certificate from Branxton Lions President, Rod Taylor as part of her completion of the Scout Environment badge. Although the Clean Up team did not pick up as much rubbish as in previous years it was still a worthwhile effort. As Scout Charlotte said: 'It will mean that less rubbish and plastic will be washed down the rivers and eventually into the Oceans. And that will mean less fish will die.' Branxton Lions agreed with Charlotte and thanked everyone for participating in this important project to protect the local environment. Branxton Scout Charlotte receives the Clean Up Australia / Lions participation certificate from Branxton Lions President, Rod Taylor as part of her completion of the Scout Environment badge. Although the Clean Up team did not pick up as much rubbish as in previous years it was still a worthwhile effort. As Scout Charlotte said: 'It will mean that less rubbish and plastic will be washed down the rivers and eventually into the Oceans. And that will mean less fish will die.' Branxton Lions agreed with Charlotte and thanked everyone for participating in this important project to protect the local environment.



Scout Leader, Jean Geal, Rod Taylor and Charlotte.

Lions Awareness Lunch – 12th March



At the recent Awareness Lunch in the Community Hub, Branxton Lions explained to guests the history of Lions in the world and in Australia and why it was important for local people to get involved in community events, help disadvantaged people, and assist the response to major disasters or emergencies. Participants were given some nibbles and partook of sausage sandwiches and soft drinks. Six people at the event expressed an

interest in joining the Lions Club of Branxton and we are always on the lookout for, and welcoming, new members. **PS – See National Disaster Appeal notice below.**



NATIONAL DISASTER APPEAL

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SCAN ME

Upcoming Events in the Branxton Lions Calendar 2022:

- APRIL – Lions Strengthening Membership Month
- Cessnock City Council Seniors Festival – Saturday 2nd April at Greta and Branxton
- Branxton Lions Club meeting - 4pm Wednesday 6th April at Branxton Golf Club
- ANZAC Day – Monday 25th April
- Lions Garden Project – September 2022 - Lions Australia 75th Anniversary garden – Lions Park Branxton.

COMING UP – DON'T MISS IT!

The 2022 Seniors Festival will run from 25 March to 3 April 2022. Mark in your diaries the date of **Saturday 2nd April** when a mega event will take place jointly in Greta and Branxton in the program of the Cessnock City Seniors Festival. The Lions Club of Branxton will be working with the Branxton Greta Men's Shed and the Branxton Women's shed in a craft work open day and market. Market stalls in Branxton will include Branxton District Guides (cake stall); Branxton Scouts (Bric-a-brac); Pickle and Chutney Market; Branxton RSL; Cessnock Library; Yoga / Wellness stall. AND you will be treated to a FREE Lions trademark sausage sizzle and soft drinks. Market stalls in Branxton will include Branxton District Guides (cake stall); Branxton Scouts (Bric-a-brac); Pickle and Chutney Market; Branxton RSL; Cessnock Library; Yoga / Wellness stall. AND you will be treated to a FREE Lions trademark sausage sizzle and soft drinks.

Cessnock City Seniors Festival



On Sunday 20th February at the famous Miller Park cricket ovals. Greta Branxton United Cricket Club held their annual 10-Over Cricket Competition. Branxton Lions provided the popular BBQ and snags.

On Saturday 19th March, Branxton Lions were to be found at Bunnings, Singleton providing sustenance to happy homemakers with sausage sizzle and soft drinks.

And on Thursday 17th March Branxton Lions members had a friendly social lunch together at the local hostelry – the Royal Federal Hotel.

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Members say ..



Member for Cessnock
Clayton Barr MP

Raising the BARR FLOOD AFFECTED LOCALS LET DOWN BY A SLEEPING FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

I am extremely reluctant to weigh into Federal issues, but two weeks ago, Scott Morrison declared a National Emergency for both NSW and Queensland as a result of flood events. I won't go into the details of the announcement being more than a week late for Queensland and at least 3-4 days late for NSW, but we did have to wait for him to become COVID free so that he could be on hand, in front of the cameras, to make the announcement. The Prime Minister took this step, for the first time in Australia, despite not being asked to do so, at the time, by either State. He said that he would talk to the States after the announcement had been made and the photos had been taken for the media.

We all remember Mr Morrison for his "I don't hold a hose" comment when the country was burning and he was in Hawaii back in 2019-20. Following that catastrophic weather event he sought the power of the Federal Parliament to be able to declare a National Emergency so that he could be well and truly in a hose holding ready position the next time disaster struck. In declaring the National Emergency condition two weeks ago, Mr Morrison said it was to "make sure all emergency power is available and we cut through and red tape that might be faced". A good set of words to use in front of the eager media.

Two days later, Cessnock, Singleton and Maitland were declared disaster affected LGA's, along with 9 others. Reasonable people assumed that this would entitle them to also access the Federal Government supports, after all, Mr Morrison was committed to acting ahead of any State requests and committed to removing the red-tape.

As I write this column, it is now 7 days since the State of NSW declared the Cessnock, Singleton and Maitland LGAs to be disaster affected, by the flood events. And on this very same day, despite the best efforts of local State and Federal MP's, the Federal Government have

failed to accept or recognise this disaster declaration, which means that local people devastated by flooding events cannot get any Federal help.

Personally I have tried calling the Federal Minister's office, on multiple occasions, to get the problem sorted out. Unfortunately, despite my calls being made during normal business/office hours, I have only been able to reach the answering machine in the Ministers office, telling me that they are currently closed and that I should ring back Mon-Fri and from 9-5. I have also called the disaster hotline of both the State and Federal level, pointing out the failure of the Federal scheme to add the various NSW LGAs to the eligible list so that payments could be processed. "Nothing we can do" I was told.

I can only figure that the bloke that doesn't hold the hose also doesn't have a process in place to match Federal disaster areas to State disaster areas and clearly doesn't expect his relevant Minister to answer phones or possibly even attend work and have websites and claims procedures updated. Meanwhile we have families sleeping on floors with no furniture, fridges or funds. For goodness sake! 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

Earlier last week I attended the funeral of my friend Senator Kimberley Kitching. It was a sad farewell for a talented person taken far too young. Much has been said and written about the pressure Kimberley was under in the lead up to her heart attack. None of us can know whether that pressure

contributed to her death, but we can take lessons from it regardless.

In my recent valedictory speech, I reflected on the state of politics and parliamentary behaviour. While the culture in the Parliament has grown worse and more brutal over the last 25 years, standards and expectations elsewhere have improved. The two have clashed on the way down and up.

Politics can be, and will always be, robust. But in this 21st Century, there should be no tolerance of bullying and ostracisation. Yet both continue to be a feature of our democratic processes. No one person or party is responsible, we are collectively responsible. Members of Parliament must be, first and foremost, energetic advocates for their electorates. It's the foundation of representative democracy. Yet the major parties continue to impose and enforce party solidarity and discipline like no other party in any other western democracy. This was not envisaged by those who created the House of Commons or our own founding fathers. Party solidarity and collectivism have their place and make for more stable government. But expecting politicians to vote in a way they believe is contrary to the interests of those they represent is a bridge too far. Ostracising someone for standing by their beliefs and values is similarly unacceptable. In recent months various inquiries and reports have provided recommendations designed to bring the Parliament into the 21st Century and in line with standards in the broader workforce and community. These proposed changes are welcome.

But I predicted in my last parliamentary speech that we will not adequately deal with bad culture until we relax party discipline and provide MPs with more freedom. I recently watched 5 Liberal MPs cross the floor of the House of Representatives to vote against a Government Bill. The distress on their faces was obvious. There was immediate speculation there would be consequences for their future ambitions. Yet they put their careers on the line because to do otherwise would be inconsistent with their values, contrary to the majority view in their electorates or both. On a Bill not critical to the survival of their Government, they should have been able to do so without fear of retribution. This is not to suggest MPs should always vote in a way they've assessed to be the

majority view of their electorate. Leadership sometimes requires an elected politician to do what they believe to be the best thing for their electorate and the country even if they feel the majority don't see it that way. MPs often have more information and expert advice available to them than do their constituents. I believe most people understand that and accept that.

But the interests and views of the electorate must be paramount to our elected representatives and attempts to stand in their way can quickly escalate into behaviour best left in the 20th Century.

Cheers, Joel



IND Sue Moore, re-elected
Mayor Singleton Council

\$100,000 to fence one of our local government area's (LGA) newest and most popular children's play spaces and \$333,492 to help with Singleton Track and Field Club's relocation to Cook Park are just two of the projects that will be funded under the latest round of the Australian Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) program. But the value to the community of each of the 10 projects on the list for Phase 3 can't be measured according to cost, especially considering the reaction from parents about the impending fence for the Townhead Park playground and bike track.

One of the great challenges of local government is stretching our dollars further and finding more sources to deliver the services and infrastructure our community wants and deserves. That also means being smart about how we use our resources. In the case of the LRCI program, we're turning \$1.632 million from the Australian Government into \$4.22 million in projects when used with Council funds and other contributions. While meeting our community's needs and expectations will always be our highest priority, it's great to hear from the people running these programs that we share their intention for the funding, and that we're putting it to use in the way they envisioned.

A case in point is the feedback from the Minister for the Arts, Ben Franklin at the opening of the Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre, which was partly funded by a \$2.787 million Create NSW grant. And just last week the Hon Bridget

McKenzie, the Federal Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education, and Senator Perin Davey came to check out the playground and bike track in Townhead Park that was the result of LRCI funding under Phase 2, and which will also benefit from Phase 3.

It signifies again just how important partnerships are, whether it's with any level of government to access funding programs, or with industry groups such as the Bloomfield Group and Glencore through the Singleton Economic Development Fund that is helping local organisations provide the facilities and programs they need to support the people of our community. As we head towards the Federal election, the focus on relationships with local representatives comes into even sharper focus. I've been pleased to be meeting with each of the candidates for seat of Hunter to discuss those issues pertinent to our community and to establish how we can work together to best serve our LGA, regardless of the result at the polls.

Cheers, Sue



Jay Suvaal Mayor of Cessnock

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lotta Jackson, who resigned as General Manager of Cessnock City Council this month. I would like to thank her for her service to both Council and the Cessnock Local Government Area and wish her the best for the future. Lotta had the difficult job of leading the organisation during a period of unprecedented challenges, including catastrophic bushfires, major flooding and the COVID-19 pandemic. Council's Director of Corporate and Community Services, Robert Maginness, has been appointed to act in the role of General Manager until recruitment for an interim or permanent replacement occurs. As a Council, we must move forward and ensure we are delivering for our community. I am hearing loud and clear that the condition of our roads is a key concern, and I want to assure residents, addressing this issue is one of my top priorities as Mayor. We will work to continue to seek funding opportunities for road improvement projects across the LGA. We have a big job ahead of us and I look forward to working with Councillors and staff to ensure Cessnock City Council is a proactive and

productive organisation that continues to deliver positive outcomes for residents of the Cessnock LGA. On the topic of roads, Council crews are continuing to assess the impact on the road network and repair damages from the recent flood event, which has been significant in the Wollombi area. Just last week, Council partnered with Resilience NSW to host a series of pop-up recovery hubs, aimed at providing affected residents with support, information and advice. I must say, while it was a good outcome Cessnock was declared a natural disaster area, I was extremely disappointed to hear that Cessnock was one of only a few LGAs not included in the full federal funding package. While the scale of the disaster was smaller than other regions, the impact on individuals is the same. I have made contact with Joel Fitzgibbon MP and Clayton Barr MP to raise my concerns about this and I'm hoping that together we can get the extra funding for those affected.

Cheers, Jay



Member for Upper Hunter
Dave Layzell MP

COUNCIL ELECTION DECISION

MY THOUGHTS are with residents of the Singleton Council area following the NSW Supreme Court's judgment that requires them to vote again to elect their local councillors. The NSW Electoral Commissioner took the December 2021 result to court in the public interest after the iVote system, which was being used for the first time at local council elections, failed on election day. While the Electoral Commissioner regrets the inconvenience caused, preparations will now commence for a fresh election within three months of the court making its final orders next month. The date will need to avoid a clash with the forthcoming federal election, however, the council will not have to pay for two elections. Under the provisions of the Local Government Act, Singleton Council can still function until the fresh election are held.

FLOOD ASSISTANCE Financial assistance is available to primary producers, small business and sporting clubs following the recent natural disaster declaration covering much of the Upper Hunter Electorate. The natural disaster

declared local government areas are MidCoast including the Gloucester region, Dungog, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter and Mid-Western.

Eligible primary producers can access special disaster grants of up to \$75,000, small business can apply for grants of up to \$50,000 and sporting clubs grants of \$2,000 for clean-up and restoration costs in the aftermath of the flood event.

Primary producers can also access concessional loans up to \$130,000 and transport subsidies up to \$15,000 with concessional loans of up to \$130,000 for small business, up to \$25,000 for not-for-profit organisations and up to \$10,000 for sporting clubs.

Applications for assistance must be lodged by September with more details at: <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/disaster-assistance/declarations&www.nsw.gov.au/floods/financial-support-for-businesses>

COVID-19 INFORMATION UPDATE

COVID-19 remains a health concern as an Omicron sub-variant sparks new cases and everyone eligible for vaccination or a booster dose is encouraged to act without delay.

Face masks are still required in certain high-risk settings such as public transport and public transport waiting areas, planes, and indoors at airports, public hospitals, private health facilities and residential aged care facilities or hostels.

It's strongly recommended to wear one where it's difficult to keep your distance from others including at supermarkets and shopping centres. To help us better understand how to keep our family and community safe, NSW Health has released a new flow chart on what action to take if you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19. The 'Exposed to COVID-19? Here's what you need to do' ready reckoner is available from the photos section of the NSW Health Facebook page.

More information is also available at the NSW Government's COVID-19 website: www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/management/people-exposed-to-covid
Cheers, Dave

Members say

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Prevention - the best weapon against Flu

The formulation of influenza vaccine for use in Australia is determined by the Australian Influenza Vaccine Committee based on information and recommendations from the World Health Organisation (WHO). As in previous years, the Australian Government will provide flu



vaccine free of charge to everyone 65 years plus; and those people qualifying for the “free allocation” also include pregnant women, indigenous people 15 years and over, and anyone six months of age and over with a condition “pre-disposing to severe influenza illness” – such as heart or lung diseases.

Most children cope pretty well with the flu but young children are especially vulnerable to new strains of the flu such as the “swine flu” which was first identified in 2009. Their underdeveloped immune systems can’t manage the invading virus.

So the flu virus picks its victims, singling out those people least able to resist the adverse effects. The greatest concern for doctors and patients alike is the danger, not just of the flu itself, but of severe complications such as pneumonia and the effect of influenza on existing medical conditions. People with chronic heart, kidney or lung disease, diabetes or other long-term illnesses are particularly at risk. The stress caused by influenza can worsen these conditions and even cause premature death.

Today, prevention is our major weapon against influenza. You can help protect yourself by regularly washing your hands, personal hygiene and making sure your lifestyle is healthy with regular exercise you enjoy and a daily diet that includes the widest possible variety of foods. And, of course, annual vaccination against the flu is recommended for all people in high risk categories.

Everyone 65 years or older should have the flu vaccine. As well, at any age, you should be vaccinated if you have an ongoing illness such as diabetes, kidney disease, asthma, heart or circulation problems, or compromised immunity as a result of HIV, cancer or longer-term steroid use. Your doctor or Piggott’s Pharmacist can give you more details. Each year in Australia, influenza causes an estimated 3,000 deaths in older people. There are also the economic costs to the community of more than one and a half million lost work days, 300,000 doctor visits and 18,000 people admitted to hospital. However, it’s not just older people who are affected by the flu. The fact is, rates of flu infection are highest among young children; although children under the age of five are less likely to show typical symptoms of the flu – the fever and the cough – so you may not know that your child has actually contracted the infection.

Now there is also a special effort to ensure people who might spread the infection to the above groups are vaccinated. This includes health workers – doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, carers and even children. There is mounting evidence that widespread vaccination of children against influenza slashes infection rates in both children and the more vulnerable elderly.

For more advice about whether the flu vaccine is right for you speak with your Doctor or Ask Piggott’s!

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The greatest concern for doctors and patients alike is the danger, not just of the flu itself, but of severe complications such as pneumonia and the effect of influenza on existing medical conditions. People with chronic heart, kidney or lung disease, diabetes or other long-term illnesses are particularly at risk. The stress caused by influenza can worsen these conditions and even cause premature death.

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Cessnock City Council’s General Manager, Lotta Jackson, has tendered her resignation at the last Ordinary Council Meeting, which the Council accepted in a confidential session. Ms Jackson will be taking a period of accrued leave before formally vacating the role on 6 May 2022.



General Manager CCC Lotta Jackson has resigned

Council’s Director of Corporate and Community Services, Robert Maginnity, has been appointed to act in the role of General Manager until recruitment for an interim or permanent replacement occurs.

Ms Jackson said that with the borders finally being open, she has decided to plan to visit her close and extended family that she hasn’t seen for years, and the experience of COVID has certainly assisted her decision. She also believes that this is the best timing with the newly elected Councillors having an opportunity to select a new General Manager early

in their term. “I wish to thank the Mayor and Councillors, senior colleagues and all staff during my time as General Manager, starting with bushfires, floods, the pandemic and more floods,” Ms Jackson said.

“The community is in good hands with Mayor Suvaal and I know that the future is bright for Cessnock LGA and that it will be a continued growing and thriving place to live, work and visit.”

Cessnock City Council Mayor, Jay Suvaal, thanked Ms Jackson for her service to both the council and the broader Cessnock community.

“Lotta had the difficult job of leading the organisation during a period of unprecedented challenges which have included catastrophic bushfires, major flooding and a once in 100 year pandemic, and always tried to put the community first,” Mayor Suvaal said.

“I personally thank Lotta for the support she has shown me as Mayor and wish her all the best for her next endeavours.”

Some of the key achievements during Ms Jackson’s time as General Manager are:

- Completing Bridges Hill Park Playground
- Constructing Gingers Lane, and the Government Road and Hart Road roundabout
- Building Paynes Crossing Bridge
- Completing the Local Strategic Planning Statement
- Formalising the agreement with Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association
- Implementing the Buy Local campaign and undertaking many economic stimulus grants and community resilience grants that followed the bush fires
- Supporting the community during COVID with our libraries and youth services; and
- Supporting Council’s committed staff. In 2020/21 alone, the Customer Service staff attended to 85,000 phone calls.

VEGEMITE-glazed chicken thighs



5m prep ~ 55m cook ~ 4 servings

Allergens: Recipe may contain gluten, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish

We've got dinner covered with juicy baked chicken thighs smothered in a sticky VEGEMITE

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1.5kg **chicken thigh** fillets, on the bone
 - 20g (1 tbsp) VEGEMITE Squeezy
 - 1/3 cup honey
 - 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar



- 1/4 cup sweet chilli sauce
- 1 tbsp kecap manis
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 tsp finely grated fresh ginger
- Cooked white rice, to serve*
- Steamed green vegetables, to serve*

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 190C/170C fan forced. Arrange **chicken** in a greased OR baking paper lined oven roasting pan.
2. Combine remaining ingredients in a large jug, whisking to combine. Pour over the chicken. Bake for 50-55 minutes, turning and basting every 15 minutes until chicken is tender and falling off the bone and the sauce is thick and sticky.
3. Serve with white rice and green

Tinea (Ringworm)

Tinea is a common skin infection caused by a fungus. It usually affects warm, moist areas of the skin and often occurs between the toes and around the groin. It can also affect other body areas, including the scalp and nails. Most cases of tinea can be treated with medicines available from a pharmacist.

Signs and symptoms

Foot tinea (athlete’s foot)

- Foot tinea most often occurs between the toes. Tinea between the toes:
- looks moist, with peeling and cracks
 - may be white or red
 - is often itchy and may burn or sting
 - may have an unpleasant odour.

Tinea can also cause itching, scaling, peeling and cracking on other parts of the foot. Small blisters may form in the affected area.

Groin tinea (jock itch)

- Scaly, red rash on the groin and inner thighs. It may also occur on the buttocks. It does not usually occur on the genitals or anal area. The rash often has red, scaly, raised edges and may have a pale centre.
- Small blisters may form in the rash area.
- The rash can be very itchy.

Tinea on other body areas

- Scaly, often red patch (or patches) on the skin. The patch may have red, scaly, raised edges and a pale centre. Small blisters may form in the patch. The patches can be itchy.
- Tinea on the scalp may look like severe dandruff, but usually causes itchy, red, scaly patches with hair loss (the hairs break off leaving a bald patch).
- Nails infected with tinea can become white, grey or yellow and thick, deformed and crumbly. Toenails get infected more often than fingernails.

Medicines

Tinea infections can be treated with non-prescription antifungal creams, gels, lotions, powders, solutions or sprays available from a pharmacist.

- Read and follow the product instructions carefully.
- Continue regular treatment for as long as instructed. Some treatments need to be continued for 2 weeks after a tinea skin rash has cleared.

Ask your Piggott’s Pharmacist for advice.

- Antifungal spray or powder can be used inside shoes and socks to help treat and prevent foot tinea.
- To stop tinea spreading, wash your hands well after applying treatments.

A severe tinea infection, or nail or scalp tinea, may need treatment with antifungal tablets, which must be prescribed by a doctor.

Self care

To protect against tinea infection:

- Wash and dry your skin well every day.
- Wash and dry your skin well after physical activity, or if sweaty.
- Use a drying product to keep your skin dry. Ask a pharmacist for advice.
- Wear loose clothing made of a natural fibre (e.g. cotton or wool), or a fibre that keeps your skin cool and dry.
- Do not share towels, shoes, socks, underwear, hats or hair brushes and combs.
- Wash socks, underwear, bedding, towels and bathmats in hot water and detergent, or use a special antifungal laundry product. Ask your Piggott’s Pharmacist
- While infected, avoid transferring the tinea to another body area. Use a separate, fresh towel to dry the infected area and wash your hands well after touching the infected area.
- Check family animals for tinea. On animals, it looks like a patch of skin with fur missing – ask a vet.

It starts with you'th at Cessnock's Youth Week



Youth Week 2022 is shaping up to be a huge week of fun COVID safe events for young people in the Cessnock Local Government Area. In fact, it's so big Council has turned Youth Week – April 4-14 – into youth month with a program of events kicking off on March 29 until April 21.

Themed "It Starts With You'th", this year's program includes Big Breakfasts at Kurri Kurri, Cessnock and Mount View High Schools. Also on the program is a skate jam, fun fair, cooking classes, a gaming event and jewellery making. And, if you are thinking of up-

skilling, Youth Week has you covered with Barista training courses, and even a power tools training session. In all, there are 24 action packed, free youth friendly events to help celebrate and empower Cessnock youth.

Cessnock City Council Mayor Jay Suvaal said Youth Week shone a light on the importance of supporting and acknowledging young people in the Cessnock LGA.

"This is a great program of events that will introduce young people to new and positive experiences," Councillor Suvaal said.

"Youth Week is an opportunity for Cessnock's young people to come together to express themselves and maybe even learn something new. "I encourage all young people in the Cessnock LGA to get involved with this year's program." Download the Youth Week 2022 program on Council's website at www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/YW2022 and keep an eye on the CYCOS Facebook page for updates at www.facebook.com/CessnockYouthCentre.

■ Photo above: Youth Week 2022 Ambassadors Taylor Grant & Jordan Flint

Joel Fitzgibbon MP Federal Member for Hunter

My time as your local federal MP ends when the election is called.

It has been a great privilege to serve over such a long period. I am thankful for the opportunity.

Every good local outcome is won in partnership with other people and organisations. I thank all those who have worked with me over the course of the last 26 years.

The Hunter region is a wonderful place to live, work, and to raise a family. We can be proud of it.



joelfitzgibbon.com

Follow me on:   

Authorised by Joel Fitzgibbon, Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch), 3 Edward Street Cessnock 2325 NSW.



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



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House prices hit a 20 year record for annual growth

House prices have increased at the highest rates in two decades with a rise of 25.1% for the twelve months ending December 2021, the latest Real Estate Institute of Australia's (REIA) Real Estate Market Facts has found.

REIA President Hayden Groves said the weighted average median house price for the eight capital cities increased to \$1,021,710 for the December quarter. "Over the quarter, the median house price increased in all capital cities except Darwin. At \$1,601,467, Sydney's quarterly median house price continues to be the highest amongst the capital cities, 56.7% higher than the national average.

"At \$525,000, my home town of Perth remains the most affordable with the lowest median house price across Australian capital cities, 48.6% lower than the national average.

"With Western Australia finally opening the borders it will be interesting to watch how this impacts on property prices," he said.

Mr Groves said it is the first time since June 2002 that the annual increase has been higher than 20.0%.

"The weighted average median price for other dwellings, such as villas and flats, for the eight capital cities increased to \$658,577 a quarterly increase of 1.8%.

"Over the quarter, the median price for other dwellings increased in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Hobart but declined in Adelaide, Canberra and Darwin.

"At \$802,255, Sydney's median price for other dwellings continues to be the highest amongst the capital cities, 21.8% higher than the national average. At \$412,500, Adelaide has the lowest median price for other dwellings across Australian capital cities, 38.2% lower than the national average."

According to Mr Groves, over the 12 months to the December quarter, the weighted average capital city median price for other dwellings increased to \$471 per week, a rise of 1.5% over the quarter.

"Over the December quarter, the weighted average median rent for 3 bedroom houses in the eight capital cities increased to \$471 per week, a quarterly increase of 1.5%.

"The median rent for 3 bedroom houses increased in all capital cities except Sydney, where it remained stable and Darwin where it decreased by 3.7%.

"During the quarter, the weighted average median rent for 2 bedroom other dwellings increased to \$435 a week. The median rent increased in all capital cities except in Sydney, where it remained stable and Darwin where it decreased 0.5%," Mr Groves said.

Mr Groves said investor and regional activity remained strong with property seen to be a 'go to' investment destination with growing global uncertainty.

"Regional markets have generally enjoyed a period of sustained growth with key centres like Wollongong (30.4%), Launceston (49.3%), Sunshine Coast (32.9%) and Mt Gambier (14.9%) recording large annual increases.

"Household investor finance increased by 13.4% in the December quarter with investors continuing to enter the market confidently in this phase of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Floods set to impact vacancy rates across New South Wales

The REINSW Vacancy Rate survey results for February 2022 show that residential vacancies in Sydney have dropped for the third consecutive month. "While there was a steady exodus of people from Sydney for much of last year, the tide has certainly turned over recent months," REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin said.

"Decreasing by 0.4% for the month, the vacancy rate for Sydney overall is now 2.1%. This drop is attributable to fewer vacancies in Sydney's Inner and Middle Rings, which now have rates of 2.8% (-0.6%) and 2.4% (-0.5%) respectively. The Outer Ring remained stable at 1.5%."

Outside Sydney, vacancies rose slightly in Newcastle to 1.9% (+0.1%), but remained stable in Wollongong at 0.4%.

Across much of the rest of regional New South Wales, the number of available rental properties remained

extremely tight. "Rates in the Albury, Central West, Coffs Harbour, Mid-North Coast, Northern Rivers, Orana, South Coast and South East areas all rose," Mr McKibbin said. "The Central West, Murrumbidgee, New England and Riverina areas all recorded drops.

"After the unpredictability experienced in the residential rental market last year due to COVID-19, the beginning of 2022 brought new hope. In January, as the pre-Christmas lull started to reverse, many REINSW members reported an increase in demand for rental accommodation across Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and many regional areas. "However, unpredictability may be set to return as we wait to see what impact the floods have on the market.

While the full impact is yet to be assessed, we know that many tenants have been displaced across New South Wales and this will inevitably affect vacancy rates in the coming weeks.

"Our thoughts are with all landlords, tenants and property managers at this incredibly difficult time."

RBA holds cash rate at 0.1 per cent despite inflation rising faster than expected

The Reserve Bank of Australia has kept the official interest rate on hold at its first meeting of the year, despite inflation rising faster than its expectations.

At its monthly meeting on Tuesday, the RBA board also agreed to end its quantitative easing program after its final bond purchases on February 10, but stated that this won't necessarily translate to a near-term increase to interest rates.

The central bank's quantitative easing program began in March 2020, with bond buying, record low interest rates and the term funding facility helping to stimulate the economy as the coronavirus pandemic hit.

The RBA has been buying bonds at a rate of \$4 billion per week since September, with the total bonds purchased expected to reach \$350 billion by the program's end.

But experts believe mounting inflation pressures mean it's only a matter of time before the central bank lifts the cash rate target, with many economists now predicting a rise before the end of the year.

"While we don't know precisely when it will come, it's definitely going up at some point, so households should start gearing up now for that likelihood," said HSBC economist Paul Bloxham.

"While the Reserve Bank originally said it wouldn't rise until 2024, it's quite clear it will happen before that, and it could be as soon as this year, but more likely in early 2023. People now have to start factoring that into their decision-making."

Inflation in the US has jumped to an annual rate of 7 per cent off the back of a domestic economy that has grown faster than expected - 5.7 per cent last year.

The latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) in Australia also rose more than forecast, by 1.3 per cent in the last quarter of 2021, bringing inflation to a total of 3.5 per cent over the year.

The biggest price rises were for new homes at 4.2 per cent, and petrol at more than 6.6 per cent.

Even when the annual inflation rate was trimmed, however, by taking out the biggest price rises and falls, it would still hit 2.6 per cent, the highest rate since 2014.

At the same time, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that the unemployment rate fell to 4.2 per cent, in a continuing sign that the economy is bouncing back - despite the derailment of the Omicron variant - much more strongly than was imagined.

Yet none of that seems to be feeding into any real wages growth, another of the key indicators the Reserve Bank looks at when deciding interest rate movements.

The RBA has consistently stated that the cash rate won't be increased until inflation is sustainably within the 2 to 3 per cent range, conditions requiring a tighter labour market and higher wages growth.

"I think it would be a mistake for them to raise the rate too soon," said Craig Emerson from Emerson Economics. "While the US inflation rate is high, their CPI composition is different to ours with a heavy weighting of new and used cars that we don't have."

"And while we've got a bit of a price spiral going on here, it's more associated with supply constraints and disruptions rather than any excess of demand over supply."

"We've got a strong labour market but we haven't seen any real wage growth, so an interest rate rise would see people really getting screwed. And [Reserve Bank governor] Phil Lowe doesn't want to destroy the recovery!" There's simply too much uncertainty at the moment to risk a rate rise, Mr Emerson believes. No one knows yet if Omicron is spent, or whether a new variant might emerge to spook the economy and do even more damage.

Certainly, the federal government wouldn't take kindly either to a rate rise before a possible May election date, or too soon on its tails, believes CreditorWatch chief economist Harley Dale.

"We could have a rate rise late in 2022, but at the moment I suspect we are going to see the Reserve Bank clearly signalling that they're not going to do anything in a hurry," he said. "There's still so much flux in the economy with the start of the year being impacted considerably by Omicron and a lot of small to medium-sized enterprises getting pretty smashed."



Independent Review of Legal Services

required to advance a claim. A disbursement is a cost to a third party, such as the fee charged by your doctors to provide your clinical notes or to obtain a report from your treating doctor.

Kerri Shaw and Gemma Bunner are both Approved Lawyers with the IRO and are able to apply from an ILARS Grant.

Coal Miners Compensation

If you have been injured in the coal mining industry, the costs' structure is different. You would not have access to ILARS for funding, however if you actioned a claim and it was successful, your legal fees would be paid by the workers compensation insurer, Coal Mines Insurance. The legal fees are paid by Coal Mines Insurance at the conclusion of the claim and

if it is successful.

If your claim was not successful, your lawyer would not be paid. You do not have to pay the fees of Coal Mines Insurance if your claim is unsuccessful. In unique circumstances, a Court could order you to pay the legal fees of the insurer, however this would be in circumstances where your claim was frivolous, vexatious, or fraudulent. This provision is to discourage people bringing fraudulent claims. Disbursements are also recovered from Coal Mines Insurance at the successful conclusion of the claim.

If you have had a work injury and need to speak to a lawyer, do not be afraid of legal costs. Know that you have access to free legal advice and can be informed about your entitlements.

Cheers, Gemma



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We understand that work injury can turn life upside down, and often causes significant strain on your finances. One of the key things we often hear is that injured people are too scared to contact a lawyer as they are worried that they do not have the money to pay for legal advice.

This is really disappointing for us to hear as injured workers in New South Wales do not need to pay for legal advice.

Under the workers compensation scheme in New South Wales, injured workers can speak to lawyer and get advice at no cost. There are several different workers compensation schemes however this article will focus on the general New South Wales scheme and the coal mining scheme. We will explain how the legal costing works in both of those schemes.

NSW Workers Compensation

If you have a workers compensation claim in the NSW system, in most instances you will be eligible to obtain legal assistance at no cost to you. The NSW Government has established the Independent Legal Assistance and Review Services ("ILARS") to facilitate free, independent legal advice for injured workers where there is a disagreement with insurer regarding a worker's entitlements.

The legal advice can also be provided to assist injured workers make a claim, such as a claim for permanent impairment.

The lawyers providing the advice, must be 'Approved Lawyers' with the Independent Review Office ("IRO"), and these lawyers regularly practice in workers compensation matters.

The list can be found here: <https://iro.nsw.gov.au/injured-persons/find-a-lawyer>

ILARS also fund the cost of disbursements that are

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

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DINNER

Wednesday

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

Thursday

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

Friday

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\$5 SPIRITS FROM 9PM

Saturday

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Sunday

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Branxton Public School
 Harmony Day and World Down Syndrome Day were celebrated on March 21st. The school community were invited to wear orange

which signifies social communication and meaningful conversations. The theme this year is Everyone

Kinder Emus and their crazy socks

Belongs. We also wore crazy socks because chromosomes are shaped a bit like socks and people with Down syndrome have an extra chromosome. People all over the world wear colourful, attractive, crazy socks to raise awareness of Down Syndrome. We collected gold coin donations on the day, raising over \$350 for Lismore Public School which has been badly affected by the recent floods. Thank you to

everyone who supported the annual P&C Pie Drive. They made a profit of almost \$1000 which will go towards supporting our students. Their next big event is the annual Mother's Day stall. While we won't be holding an Easter Hat parade, we will still be enjoying Easter fun activities on the last day of term. Year 6 are holding an Easter Raffle which will be drawn in Week 11. Tickets can be purchased on Wednesdays and Fridays at school - 1 for \$1 OR 3 for \$2. Our new gate is now in action and the new electric sign will be operational soon. Great timing now that parents can come onsite to the office. Please watch Mrs Ferguson's video on

Atlin wins his medal

Facebook to see how the gate works. Congratulations to Atlin who was named Junior Boys Swimming Champion at the recent Zone Swimming Carnival. Mrs Ferguson presented his medal at our Monday morning assembly which was a very proud moment for him. Keep updated about school events through SkoolBag and our Facebook.

Dates for the Calendar

Friday 1st April – PBL Assemblies (9:20 K-2, 10:00 3-6)
 Friday 8th April – Last day of Term 1
 Tuesday 26th April – Staff Development Day
 Wednesday 27th April – Students return for Term 2
At Branxton Public School students, staff and community are Respectful, Responsible and achieve their Personal Best.



Harmony day

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Police Report

Additional charges laid as investigations into numerous armed robberies continue - Robbery and Serious Crime Squad

Robbery and Serious Crimes Squad detectives have laid additional charges against a Cessnock man following an investigation into a spate of armed robberies, car thefts, and other offences across Sydney. Detectives from the State Crime Command's Robbery and Serious Crime Squad established Strike Force Lilley to investigate several robberies at jewellers and businesses between December 2021 and January 2022.

Earlier this year, investigators arrested two men – aged 30 and 35 – who were charged over their alleged roles in those robberies and currently remain before the courts. As part of ongoing investigations, Strike Force Lilley detectives laid an additional 12 charges against the 35-year-old Cessnock man at Parramatta Local Court yesterday (Thursday 25 March 2022). The charges include two counts of police pursuit - not stop - drive at speed – 1st offence, three counts of robbery armed with offensive weapon, two counts of steal motor vehicle, two counts of take and drive conveyance without consent of owner, steal from the person value more than \$15,000, armed with intent commit indictable offence, commit s114 offence, having previous conviction, and destroy or damage property. The man is now facing a total of 32 charges relating to his alleged involvement in the robberies. He was remanded in custody and is next due to appear at Parramatta Local Court on Thursday 28 April 2022. Investigation under Strike Force Lilley are continuing.

Anyone with information that may assist Robbery and Serious Crime Squad investigators is urged to contact Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000 or <https://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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ENTERTAINMENT



EASTER RAFFLES
with guest appearance from the
EASTER BUNNY



SAT 9

THOMAS JAMES

6.00 - 9.00pm

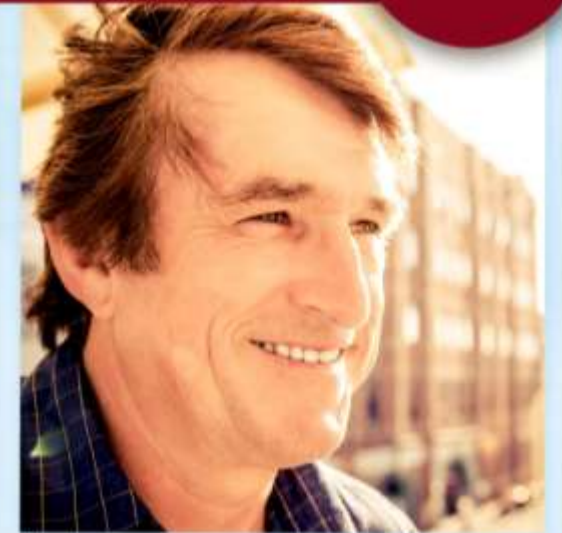
SAT 23



MICK JONES

6.00 - 9.00pm

ANZAC DAY MON 25



RUSSELL SNAPE

1.00 - 4.00pm

114 New England Highway, Lochinvar
Ph: (02) 4930 7216 Em: lochinvarhotelmotel@gmail.com

The hefty price tag of illegal dumping

Cessnock City Council has recently completed a \$143,000 illegal dumping clean-up project in the Crown Land reserve near the Cessnock Waste Management Centre.

The clean-up project was made possible with funding from the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) via its Illegal Dumping, Clean-up and Prevention Grant Program.

Council worked closely with Crown Lands to undertake the site clean-up.

The project involved the removal of 18.54 tonnes of waste, 52 tyres and several abandoned vehicles. This alone cost \$88,000.

In an effort to prevent ongoing vehicle access to the site, fencing was also installed, at a cost of

\$55,000. The new fencing has since been damaged.

Cessnock City Council Mayor Jay Suvaal said illegal dumping was an ongoing issue across the Cessnock Local Government Area, and it comes at a significant cost.

"There is absolutely no excuse for illegal dumping and I can assure people that the fines are far worse than the fees at the Cessnock Waste Management Centre," Councillor Suvaal said.

"Council provides four waste vouchers to all residential properties that receive a domestic waste service. These can be used at the Cessnock Waste Management Centre to assist with the cost waste disposal."

"These vouchers are issued with rates notices sent to property owners each July, so if you're renting and don't receive these vouchers, I suggest you contact your real estate agent."

"Illegal dumping clean-up comes at a significant cost and unfortunately the majority of people are paying the price for the behaviour of a few."

Illegal dumping should be reported immediately. You can report illegal dumping online at ridonline.epa.nsw.gov.au or by calling 131 555.



Peter Kevin Groves

04/09/1945 – 06/02/2022

Aged 76



Peter passed away on the 6th February, his wife Judith and children Dean and Michelle would like to express their gratitude and thank you for the support received from their families, friends and community.

We would like to thank the Rev. Nicole Baldwin, the then Anglican Parish of Branxton, Michael Ford for the Masonic Service and Brian Furner of Branxton R.S.L Sub Branch for the heartfelt service of Peter's life.

Peter is survived by his wife Judith, son Dean and his wife Margaret, daughter Michelle and grandson's Joseph, Thomas, Stirling and Archer. Peter lived in Branxton for the majority of his life and will be remembered dearly by family and friends.

May he Rest in Peace



Locals supporting locals.

We've all been through a lot, lately - drought, floods, bushfires and a pandemic – but despite that, our unrelenting community spirit survived, proving we can do anything, when we all work together.

Locals supporting locals is all about working together. It's about shopping and buying local; as well as hiring local talent – it's about keeping doors open! When we *support local*, every member of the community gets to enjoy the economic, social and environmental benefits; not just now, but well into the future.

#supportlocalcessnock

Take a selfie in your favourite local business, then post on Instagram or Facebook (public setting), with the hashtag **#supportlocalcessnock**. Enter lots, and tag/name the business please!

Every month until September, an Advance Cessnock City representative will choose 5 winning photographs. **So, join in - take a selfie, help a local; you could win a \$100 gift card***

Keep safe, please adhere to the social distancing rules.



#supportlocalcessnock

*Full Terms & Conditions at advancecessnock.com.au/supportlocal



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5:00 PM



Tattersalls

Hotel, Greta

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P: 02 4938 7302

What's On

Wednesday: Social Bowls from 4pm

Thursday: Bowlers Raffle. 6 x Meat Trays, 4 x six packs of beer and 3 x \$25 bistro vouchers. Tickets on sale at 5pm and will be drawn at 6pm. Also, don't forget Betty's wheel, \$2 a number to win \$25.

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 (April beneficiary is Branxton Amateur Swimming Club)

Saturday: Punters Day at the pub. 'Punters Challenge', pick winners & win prizes.

Sunday: Meat Raffle ~ 20 x Meat Trays, a carton of beer and the "Big Kahuna" tray worth \$100. Get everyone you know , bring them for a great meal, a few drinks and win some prizes. Tickets go on sale at 5pm and will be drawn at 6pm. See you all there.



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A vacant picture to work on

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The Match by Harlan Coben—A solid thriller with a host of intriguing characters.

By Crime Fiction Critic
I'm new to Harlan Coben's books, with *The Match* being the first I've read. But it won't be my last. His long and celebrated career as a novelist suggests he consistently produces quality work and this, his latest novel suggests the same. *The Match*, the second book in Coben's Wilde series, offers a solid and satisfyingly suspenseful plot and a host of intriguing characters.

From the modern master of suspense comes a gripping new thriller in which Wilde follows a tip that may finally reveal the truth behind his abandonment only to end up in the sights of a ruthless killer.

After months away, Wilde has returned to the Ramapo Mountains in the wake of a failed bid at domesticity that confirms what he's known all along: He belongs on his own, free from the comforts and constraints of modern life.

Suddenly, a DNA match on

an online ancestry database brings Wilde closer to his past than he's ever dreamed, and finally gives Wilde the opening he needs to track down his father. But meeting the man leads to more questions than answers. So Wilde reaches out to his last, most desperate lead, a second cousin who disappears as quickly as he resurfaces, having experienced an epic fall from grace that can only be described as a waking nightmare.

Was his cousin's downfall a long time coming? Or was he the victim of a conspiracy as cunning as it is complex? And how does it all connect to the man once known as The Stranger, a dangerous fugitive with a growing following whose mission and methods have only turned more dangerous with time?

Thirty-five years ago, Wilde, our main character, was discovered living alone in the woods at an age doctors estimated to be between six and eight years old. He had no memory of parents or caregivers. After his rescue, he was raised by foster parents. The book opens with Wilde somewhere between forty and forty-two.

Deciding to learn something about his origins, Wilde submitted a DNA sample to a genealogy website and locates his sixty-one-year-old biological father (Daniel Carter). But when he visits Carter, Wilde discovers his father never knew he existed. Carter says Wilde must have been conceived during a one-night stand during Carter's military service in decades past.

Learning nothing from his father, Wilde tries to follow up with another contact from the genealogy site, and second cousin, who he eventually identifies as Peter Bennett.

Unfortunately, it proves more difficult to connect with Bennett than Wilde expects. Bennett, a one-time reality television star, caught in a scandal and canceled, has disappeared. Bennett's sister believes he took his life, but Wilde is unconvinced. He keeps looking and enlists the help of his foster sister and his deceased best friend's mother, a high-powered attorney, to help. When someone murders a retired cop who had trolled Bennett after his fall from grace, Wilde's cousin becomes a suspect. But Wilde can't let it go and continues the search, only to end up in the sights of a ruthless killer.

I like that Coben provided the background on Wilde at the beginning for the benefit of readers like me that haven't read the first book in the series. And I'm sure those who have, also appreciated it since it likely continues Wilde's character arc from the first book. There are a few other threads in this book beyond the main story—Wilde's relationships with his foster sister (Rola Naser), David's (his dead best friend) widow

(Laila), his godson (Matthew), and David's mother, renowned criminal defense attorney Hester Crimstein—that offer readers more access to who Wilde is and the man he is. Another intriguing and important thread concerns a group of six people led by a man named Chris Taylor. The group identifies and wreaks vengeance on destructive trolls they learn about who harass and torment innocent people online. The group plays a significant role in the overall plot.

Coben offers twist upon twist in this face-paced, well-written thriller with an imaginative plot that keeps readers guessing as the suspense builds to the ultimate climax. I found the book hugely entertaining and satisfyingly suspenseful. Now I plan to pick up the first book in the series to catch up before the next one comes out. Fans of other mystery and thriller writers like Baldacci and Crais will feel right at home with Coben's writing style. I can't believe I haven't read him before and appreciate another reviewer friend who recommended Coben to me. If you're new to Coben as I was, *The Match* is not a bad place to get acquainted. Grand Central Publishing publishes *The Match* by Harlan Coben from March 15, 2022. I received an advance reader's copy of the book used for this review from the publisher via Net Galley, representing my honest opinions.

ABOUT


Harlan Coben (born January 4, 1962) is an American writer of mystery novels and thrillers. The plots of his novels often involve the resurfacing of unresolved or misinterpreted events in the past, murders, or fatal accidents and have multiple twists. Among his novels are two series, each involving the same protagonist set in and around New York and New Jersey; some characters appear in both.

Coben was born into a Jewish family in Newark, New Jersey, and was raised in Livingston, where he graduated from Livingston High School, with his childhood friend, future governor Chris Christie.

After Amherst, Coben worked in the travel industry, in a company owned by his grandfather.

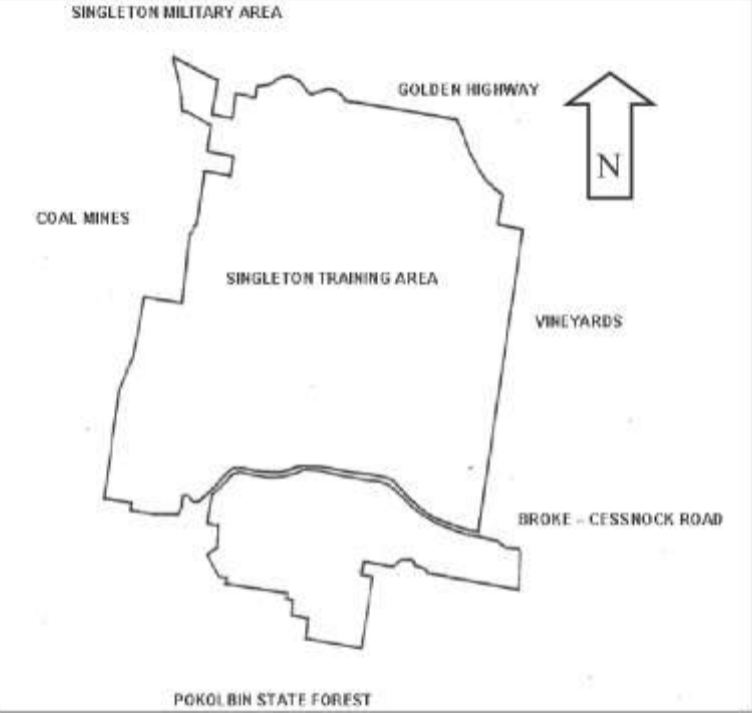
Coben was in his senior year at college when he realized he wanted to write. His first book was accepted for publication when he was twenty-six. His thriller *Play Dead* was published in 1990, followed by *Miracle Cure* in 1991. He then began writing a series of thrillers featuring a former basketball player turned sports agent, Myron Bolitar, who often finds himself investigating murders involving his clients. Coben has won an Edgar Award, a Shamus Award and an Anthony Award. He wrote a short story, "The Key to My Father," which appeared on June 15, 2003. *Tell No One*, his first stand-alone thriller since the creation of the Myron Bolitar series in 1995, was published in 2001. Director Guillaume Canet made a French-language film based on the book, titled *Ne le dis à personne*, in 2006. Coben followed *Tell No One* with nine more stand-alone novels. His novel *Hold Tight*, released on April 15, 2008, was his first book to debut at number 1 on the *New York Times* Best Seller list. In August 2018, Coben signed a multi-million-dollar five-year deal with American company Netflix. Under the deal, 14 of Coben's novels would be developed into original Netflix series or films, with him serving as executive producer on all projects. The first title released under the deal was *The Stranger*, based on his novel of the same name, which premiered in January 2020.



 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

00188

The New York Times Best Sellers

Combined Print & E-Book Fiction

(3 April 2022)

1. NEW THIS WEEK

THE MATCH

by Harlan Coben

The second book in the Wilde series. Questions surface when Wilde connects with family members who have been out of his life.

2. 2 WEEKS ON THE LIST

RUN, ROSE, RUN

by Dolly Parton and James Patterson

A singer-songwriter goes to Nashville seeking stardom but is followed by her dark past.

3. 40 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.

4. 15 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.

5. 38 WEEKS ON THE LIST

THE SEVEN HUSBANDS OF EVELYN HUGO

by Taylor Jenkins Reid

A movie icon recounts stories of her loves and career to a struggling magazine writer.

6. 2 WEEKS ON THE LIST

SHADOWS REEL

by C.J. Box

The 22nd book in the Joe Pickett series. A fishing guide's murder, stolen falcons and a Nazi official's photo album heighten the danger.

7. 4 WEEKS ON THE LIST

THE PARIS APARTMENT

by Lucy Foley

Jess has suspicions about her half-brother's neighbors when he goes missing.

8. 11 WEEKS ON THE LIST

THE MAID

by Nita Prose

When a wealthy man is found dead in his room, a maid at the Regency Grand Hotel becomes a lead suspect.

9. NEW THIS WEEK

GIVE UNTO OTHERS

by Donna Leon

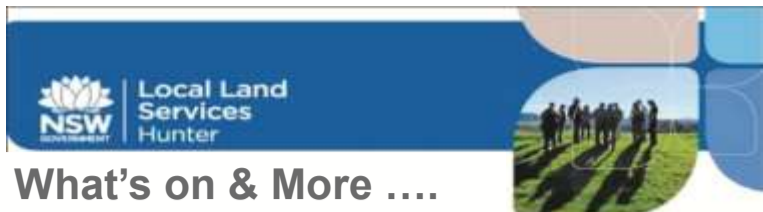
The 31st book in the Commissario Guido Brunetti series. A favor for a family friend leads to an investigation of a venerable Italian institution.

10. NEW THIS WEEK

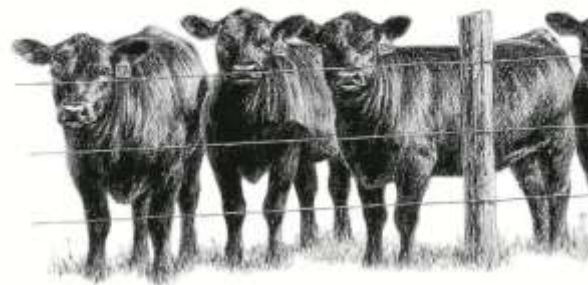
THE KAIJU PRESERVATION SOCIETY

by John Scalzi

To break away from a Covid-19 stricken New York City, a food delivery driver takes a job to help save a group of endangered animals living on another planet.



What's on & More



RATES RETURNING THIS YEAR

Over the last three years the NSW Government waived Local Land Services rates as part of its nearly \$4 billion drought and water security support package to help primary producers through the state's worst drought on record. With widespread improvements in seasonal conditions across the state, rates have been reintroduced this year. Rates collected across the state from landholders, contribute less than 20% of Local Land Services operating budget, and 100% of the rates collected are returned to our customers through our services and support. Under the Local Land Services Act 2013, we must charge rates on all land classified as rateable land under the Act. This is generally land 10 hectares or more in size (40 hectares in the Western Region and 20 hectares in some parts of Murray and Riverina

Regions). Our rates are different to council rates charged under the Local Government Act 1993. Rates contribute to our biosecurity, animal health and emergency management work which helps us, help you when you need it most. Even though you may not have livestock, your property will have benefited from our services including our coordinated pest and weed control programs. For example, incursions of the highly invasive water weed, Frogbit have been identified and controlled in farm dams and local waterways in the Mid Coast and Cessnock LGAs during 2020 and 2021. We understand the last few years have been particularly challenging for some. As the drought eased, much of NSW faced devastating bushfires, followed by flooding, whilst other regions have been impacted by plant and animal pests

including mice and plague locust. This has meant the role of Local Land Services has become all the more important. "The strength of Local Land Services is the regional footprint and locally based team," said Tony Hegarty, Hunter Local Land Services Board Chair. "This allows it to deliver assistance to many landholders when most needed, and by bringing together Ag Extension and Natural Resources Management enables a holistic approach to landscape management." Your rates notice will arrive in January, before then we encourage you to visit our dedicated rates portal to learn more about our rating process and the value you receive from the work we do – www.lls.nsw.gov.au/rates/.

Detailed Cattle report for Gunnedah

Last reported 22nd March 2022

Overall numbers fell by a 1/3rd. Young cattle were well supplied including a run of very light calves. Vealers and yearlings were well represented. Grown cattle were in fair numbers. The quality of the offering was fair to good. Those young calves in plain condition. There were some very good quality vealers and yearlings penned. Not all regular buyers were in attendance. Market trends varied through the young cattle. Restocker activity was high on the calves, with the heavier lines sold on a liveweight basis. About 50 head deemed to light to weigh sold on a dollars per head basis, and made from \$200 to \$240 per head. There was increased weight in the vealers this week with restockers and feedlots purchasing the majority. Market trends firm to dearer across both the steers and heifers. Medium weight yearling steers to restock and feed sold to a cheaper trend, with some breed and quality related price change. The heavy weight feeder steers commanded strong demand to sell to a dearer trend, as much as 20c/kg. Medium weight yearling heifers sold to a slightly dearer trend with the re-introduction of an order. The well finished heavy trade heifers were much dearer. Heavy weight steers to feed over 500kg and including some milk tooth lines sold strongly. Well finished lines to process saw a slightly cheaper trend with some quality related change. Grown heifers to both processors and feedlots sold to dearer trends with breed and quality accounting for some substantial price change. Strong demand saw a dearer cow market with heavy weights showing improvements of 10c to 20c/kg. Market Reporter, James Armitage.

Detailed Cattle report for HRLX Singleton

Last reported 23rd March 2022

Numbers rose by half as many again with an offering of mostly good quality cattle. Included in the penning were consignments of well bred lines of early drafts of yearling and weaner steers and heifers to commence the weaner season. There were also good drafts of butcher veal. All the regular buyers attended to a mostly dearer market. Restockers tendered strong competition through the weaner section to post strong gains in both steer and heifer drafts. There was the odd slip in quality through the heifers that culminated in a slight reduction through that offering. Light yearling steers to background showed strong gains of up to 30c/kg. Medium and heavy feeders steers saw strong trends, to be 22c/kg better. Light and heavy yearling heifers also sold to strong gains, up to 590c/kg to go back to the paddock. A lapse in quality saw cheaper trends for the medium weight feeder types. A very heavy pen of heavy bullocks sold to 460c, grown heifers to process 400c to 488c/kg. A very small cow sale saw a cheaper trend. An offering of PTIC cows sold to 450c, the heifer portion to 605c/kg. Light yearling bulls to feed on 450c to 538c/kg. Market Reporter, Stephen Adams

Detailed Cattle report for Scone

Last reported 22nd March 2022

Numbers increased by a third to offer a good yarding of prime vealers and a worthwhile offering of feeder cattle. However through the penning were quite a few drafts of plainer quality crossbred cattle. It was a minimum cow penning. All the regular buyers attended to what was a cheaper market. Steer weaners sold to significantly cheaper trends, although steers made to 758c, and 708c/kg for the heifers, all to restocker interests. Restockers were competitive through the light weaner section. Similar falls in price for the yearling steers was experienced, however there was strong feeder interest, with operators taking advantage of the corrections. Yearling heifers saw much the same falls in price on the back of last week's strong demand. Drafts of plainer quality cattle plus extra numbers saw averages fall. There were no numbers of grown steers for a reliable quote. Cows sold to stronger trends, medium weights to 386c, heavy weight D4 cows to 12c/kg better. Heavy bulls also dearer. Market Reporter, Stephen Adams.

Detailed Cattle report for TRLX Tamworth

Last reported 21st March 2022

The numbers remained steady with young cattle well supplied. There was a minimal number of vealers. Grown cattle in fair numbers. The overall quality of the offering was very mixed from both a breed and breeding perspective. Condition also varied. There were some absentee's in the buying group. Market trends varied with the few medium weight vealer steers to restock dearer, while the heavier weights sold to cheaper trends. Light and medium weight yearling steers to restock and feed sold to cheaper trends, significantly so in places. The heavy weight feeder steers sold to dearer trends with high demand for certain breeds. There were cheaper trends through the yearling heifers with breed a factor in some considerable price reductions. Grown steers over 500kg to feed, including the milk tooth lines saw little but breed related price change. The well finished heavy weight steers to process sold to cheaper trends with reduced competition and a rise in age. Grown heifers to feed sold to cheaper trends with quality a factor. The cow market was cheaper by as much as 15c/kg with limited processor competition. The best of the heavy weight bulls remained firm. Market Reporter, James Armitage.

The hemispheric long wave pattern has remained stable in recent weeks. There are five main troughs. Currently the most significant troughs are near the longitudes of South Africa, the Indian Ocean, eastern Australia, the south Pacific, and South America.

Summary:
Over southern and eastern Australia the cold front events with potential to bring widespread rain are now expected about 29 March to 2 April, 4 April to 8 April, and 18 April to 22 April. Rain events originating in the tropics and moving south are possible about 31 March to 4 April, and 10 April to 14 April.



Racing Review & News

Australia's premier greyhound Aston Rupee retired

By Adam Dobbin
Freakish talent Aston Rupee, the fastest greyhound the sport has seen, has run his last race. On Thursday morning owner Ray Borda and trainer Glenn Rounds made the decision to call time on the career of the superstar sprinter, ruling him out of Saturday night's heats of the Group 1 Golden Easter Egg at Wentworth Park. "We decided the time was right – I watched the reasons why Ash Barty decided to retire (from tennis) and while they are different situations there were similarities as well," Borda said. "He's got nothing left to prove and this is a decision I've been wrestling with for a little while now. His future is at stud and I always said we wouldn't over race him. "You see in the

thoroughbreds the top level sires are lightly raced to ensure they have long and vibrant stud careers and that's where Aston Rupee is at now. "He's had 42 wonderful starts and given us so many great memories. He's the fastest greyhound I've ever been involved with. Without question. "Retiring him fit and healthy and at the top of his game is very important to both myself and Glenn." A regally bred son of Kc And All and Aston Miley, Aston Rupee retires as the winner at 23 of his 42 race starts with a further 14 placings and \$606,463 in stake earnings. His group 1 victories came in the Topgun and Temlee at The Meadows while also tasting group 3 success in the Shootout at Sandown Park and Speed Star triumphs at both

metropolitan Victorian venues. His career is littered with phenomenal performances right from when he launched his career with a scintillating 24.95 maiden victory at Warrnambool in December, 2020. But it's his mind-boggling Sandown Park track record which Borda describes as a major career highlight, posting a remarkable 28.79 when scoring at the track last September. "That was a special day," Borda reflected. "And as fast as he went you need to remember he broke the 29 seconds at Sandown Park on four occasions. "He went oh so close to The Meadows track record



Aston Rupee retires a two-time group 1 winner and multiple track record breaker

last month running 29.39 and that was another special performance. "Being a South Australian the 29.95 Angle Park record he ran in a heat of the Adelaide Cup was another highlight as well. "It's hard to imagine we'll see another greyhound

capable of running the times he can run." Aston Rupee ventures to stud with a pedigree that's arguably more fashionable than his remarkable racing career. By Kc And All, Aston Rupee is out of Aston Miley, the champion brood

that is a full sister to Borda's Melbourne Cup winner turned great sire Aston Dee Bee. "He ticks all the boxes for breeders and I've probably been getting three to four calls a day asking when he'll become available," Borda said. "Something I'm really keen to tell the breeders out there is that in 42 starts he's never had an injury. Not even a bit of soreness. For me as a breeder myself it's something that's really important. "He's a magnificently put together animal with the

racing career and pedigree behind him as well. I can't wait to get him up and going to stud." While understandably excited about his once-in-a-lifetime greyhound's beckoning stud career, Borda was matter of fact about aborting his upcoming Golden Easter Egg tilt. "It is a race that I really want to win," Borda said. "I sponsored the race for a time there and it's a great race on the calendar. After the Egg there is the Million Dollar Chase but as tempting as it is with the starts he's had now it's time to move onto the next phase. "Given the demand we will only be selling straws to people with bitches on season to ensure we can cater for as many as possible. He'll stand at \$3,750."



Here's my theory about Passwords....



I have over 100 different passwords and there's NO chance that I can remember them all. So, I have them written down.

Ooooooh that's risky I hear you say but not so. Because all my passwords are different, if someone is smart enough to hack any of my gear, they'll only ever access that device and they'll never find any of my other passwords, because they are written down.

The Tech Gurus say that's a bad concept but think about it for a minute. If someone hacks one of your devices and all of your passwords are located in Notes, or in a password manager program or in a message or somewhere else on that device, you'd better be quick to tell the bank before your accounts are emptied. However, if your passwords are written down in a book and stored somewhere safe, there is NO chance in hell that a hacker will then come to your house and go looking for a book that may or may not exist. Makes sense right?

Plus, if you do have your passwords stored on your phone and say you lose it, or it's damaged or simply failed, what then?

Many of my clients have that problem of not being able to access their passwords to 'get their life' back to normal because they're not written down anywhere. So, you have to start resetting everything because you can't remember them. I know this could NEVER happen to you but I get a dozen requests for help EVERY DAY to reset passwords, setup a new device with email, Facebook, play store, Google etc., because it's all become so complicated.

Do yourself (and me) a favour, write down ALL of your passwords so you don't have to go from memory.

Everyday someone will come into Macdroid's for a repair and give me the wrong passcode for their phone. It's because they changed it 3 days ago and they can't remember what they changed it to...3 days ago!

Also please pay attention when installing the **Service NSW App**. At least 1 client a day is coming in saying that after installing the App, a password appears on the front screen (passcode lock) that they NEVER had before.

You know, the 4 or 6 digit numbers to get into the phone... they never had one, but they do now. So somewhere along the process of setting up the Service NSW App it installed a passcode. You must pay careful attention to the entire process when installing Apps.

In most cases, we've had to reset the device which means that ALL the data on the phone is deleted...all of it! If they didn't have a backup, they've lost their photos, contacts, call history and anything else important to them.

So here's a summary:

Write down all of your passwords in a book and keep it at home.

When your device is locked with a passcode – sometimes we can remove it, most of the time it's a device reset and you'll lose everything.

Backup Backup Backup – you can back up to Cloud accounts, to a computer and depending on your device, to an SD Card. Macdroid's can help set that up for you.

When installing an App, keep an eye on it to make sure it doesn't install any problems too.

NEVER click on something that you don't know where it came from.

NEVER reply to an SMS or Email if you don't know who it's from. Just DELETE them. If it's important, they'll send you a letter.

NEVER let anyone have access to your device remotely...NEVER! Once you invite them in, your nightmare begins!

Any questions? info@macdroids.com.au or drop into the store at Greenhills

Cheers, Frank

MOVIE REVIEW

THE BATMAN

Comic books have become the dominant source material for franchise filmmaking. There is a staggering amount of IP out there, ripe for exploration on the big screen. And yet, there are a handful of characters to which we invariably return. Characters upon whom filmmakers can't resist placing their own stamp. Few characters have seen the kind of churn that we've gotten from Batman over the years – a churn that continues with the release of "The Batman."

Since Tim Burton's "Batman" hit in 1989, laying the groundwork for the superhero explosion that would eventually follow, we've seen numerous artists and artisans embrace the character in their own way. Early on, we got Burton's neo-Gothic vibes and Joel Schumacher's candy-colored neon fever dreams. After that, Christopher Nolan's trilogy redefined the possibilities of what the character – and comic book movies in general – could be. Next, we got Zach Snyder's stylized grim-dark take as the character was moved into a wider expanded cinematic universe. And now, Matt Reeves has entered the ring.

"The Batman" promises a more grounded take on the character, moving away from the more extreme interpretations and focusing on a younger Batman, one still learning the logistical challenges and harsh realities that come with costumed vigilantism. With Robert Pattinson assuming the cowl, the film seeks to dig into the early years of the hero and his development. The film seeks to embrace verisimilitude – at least, to the extent that a movie based on a superhero comic can – and focuses more on the idea of Batman as detective, an aspect of the character that has largely been underplayed or outright ignored by previous adaptations. The result is a movie that, while uneven, offers room to evolve and expand in ways we haven't yet seen on the big screen.

We meet this Batman (Pattinson) just two years into his crimefighting mission. To this point, he remains a street-level vigilante, one devoted to cleaning up the crime-riddled streets of Gotham; it's a mission reflective of that put forth by his now-deceased philanthropist father, though his methods are far removed from those exercised by Thomas Wayne. He has a complicated but ultimately mutually respectful relationship with Gotham PD lieutenant James Gordon (Jeffrey Wright), though the vast majority of Gotham's finest view the Batman as a nuisance at best and a menace at worst.

Without the mask, however, he's simply Bruce Wayne, scion to a massive fortune that has been steadily dwindling in recent years. His sole confidant is Alfred Pennyworth (Andy Serkis), the man who has been by his side ever since the tragic death of his parents some two decades prior. The already-troubled city threatens to explode when a mysterious masked figure known as the Riddler (Paul Dano) begins to pick off prominent members of the community, wealthy and powerful people that the enigmatic villain sees as corrupt monsters responsible for Gotham's slow self-immolation.

Meanwhile, a young woman named Selina (Zoe Kravitz) has embarked on her own mission, trying to determine what happened to a friend of hers who has disappeared. Selina works at a notorious club well-known for providing a place for power players from all sides to mingle. Said club is run by a thug known as the Penguin (Colin Ferrell), but the real string-

puller is the crime boss Carmine Falcone (John Turturro). Selina – a gifted cat burglar – opts to utilize her particular set of skills to try and unravel the mystery surrounding her friend, leading to her path crossing with that of the Batman. This connection leads to the two of them connecting their goals, with the pair discovering just how deep – and how high – the city's corruption goes. Their efforts place them in the crosshairs of some very powerful people who have a vested interest in the status quo, even as an insane serial killer targets those very same powerful people. In the end, it boils down to who can be trusted – and who cannot.

There's a remarkable ambition at work with "The Batman." Most superhero movies operate on a massive scale, but this one uses that scale in a different way. Those films revolve around huge, world-shattering stakes and scale the presentation accordingly. This film's stakes are much smaller, more grounded. That's not to say they're less important or impactful, however – if anything, the lessening of the narrative bombast only increases our ability to directly connect.

Matt Reeves (who along with directing the film co-wrote the script with Peter Craig) proves to be an ideal choice to shepherd this iteration of Batman. He's shown himself to be a deft hand with genre fare and IP franchise work – he wrote and directed the found-footage breakout "Cloverfield" and helmed the final two films of the excellent "Planet of the Apes" trilogy from the mid-2010s – and executed a clear and distinct vision in this film.

A lot of that vision plays out in the film's, well... visuals. The aesthetic Reeves and company have created is filled with stylized structures and creeping shadows, all of it soaked in a nigh-omnipresent rain. So much of the film is steeped in darkness that even the moments filled with light carry that shadowy undertone.

The stylistic influences on the film are legion and extremely present. There's a '40s noir feeling throughout, a hard-boiled vibe that informs the underlying detective story foundation of the film. But there's also a New Hollywood feel to a lot of the film, stemming from the efforts at crafting a griminess to the setting – the unseemly urban sordidness of Gotham is plucked straight from that tradition. Not to mention the fact that Reeves is unapologetically Hitchcockian in his approach throughout. Elements of paranoid thrillers and clean-up-the-streets exploitation are apparent as well. That said, this isn't pastiche – Reeves simply incorporates these elements to help fill out a world that ultimately proves to be very much his own creation.

(Oh, and the music is awesome. The score, the needle drops – it's all great.) Now, you can't have a Batman movie – even one more interested in Batman as detective – without some action set pieces, and "The Batman" has some good ones. There are a handful of hand-to-hand combat moments that are beautifully executed – there's one lit almost exclusively by muzzle flash that is striking to watch – and a couple of top-notch chase scenes, as well as an explosive and complicated third act sequence that I won't spoil.

Let's talk performances, which are exceptional pretty much across the board. Pattinson makes for an outstanding Batman in this context, brooding and emotionally disengaged and clearly struggling to find the dividing line between Bruce Wayne and the Caped Crusader. There's a sense of psychological disconnect to the character that Pattinson captures nicely, even as he holds his own with the physical demands. Meanwhile, Kravitz somehow gives an even better performance, endowing Selina/Catwoman with a lithe-ness and agility reflected both in her physical presence and her dramatic connection. She oozes movie star charisma and wields it wonderfully throughout. Oh, and the chemistry between she and Pattinson is legit – the screen practically crackles when they share it.

Oh, and have you *seen* this supporting cast? Dano is fantastic as the Riddler, somehow personalizing his menace even through a full-face mask and a digitally altered voice, using his eyes to give us a window onto the character's fractured soul. Ferrell – who is literally unrecognizable – pushes his performance with a glint-in-the-eye gleam; he is a great representation of the Penguin as aspirational mid-level thug. Turturro is largely doing his usual Turturro thing, but it suits the character well, so it works nicely. Gordon is almost always a thankless part, but Wright finds ways to bring something new to a character that often feels like an afterthought. Alas, Serkis kind of IS an afterthought; Alfred kind of gets short shrift here, but what we do get is typically solid. Oh, and we get some dynamite work from Peter Sarsgaard in a couple of scenes as well.

As for the elephant in the room – the nearly three-hour runtime – all I can say is that it is remarkable how fast the time passes. I certainly didn't feel like I had been in the theater for three hours; the overall quality of every aspect kept me more than engaged enough to lose awareness of the film's length. Could it have been trimmed? Sure, but there was little included that felt actively unnecessary; perhaps we didn't need everything we got, but nothing we saw actively detracted from the experience.

Personally, I don't think "The Batman" quite reaches the apex achieved by a few of its predecessors – specifically, Nolan's first two films – but it settles quite comfortably into the tier just below. And yes, there's an argument that perhaps we didn't need to reboot/revise the character quite so soon, but hey – if we were going to get a new take anyway, then I'm really glad that this is the one we got.

Stylish and stark, packed with well-executed action and high-quality performances, "The Batman" is a welcome addition to the canon of the Caped Crusader. Here's hoping we get to see more of what Reeves, Pattinson and the rest have in mind.

[5 out of 5]





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Opinion: The man known as 'Putin's brain' envisions the splitting of Europe — and the fall of China

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness



Alexander Dugin in his TV studio in central Moscow in 2016. (AP Photo/Francesca Ebel)

By David Von Drehle
Columnist

On the eve of his murderous invasion, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered a long and rambling discourse denying the existence of Ukraine and Ukrainians, a speech many Western analysts found strange and untethered. Strange, yes. Untethered, no. The analysis came directly from the works of a fascist prophet of maximal Russian empire named Aleksandr Dugin. Dugin's intellectual influence over the Russian leader is well known to close students of the post-Soviet period, among whom Dugin, 60, is sometimes referred to as "Putin's brain." His work is also familiar to Europe's "new right," of which Dugin has been a leading figure for nearly three decades, and to America's "alt-right." Indeed, the Russian-born former wife of the white nationalist leader Richard Spencer, Nina Kouprianova, has translated some of Dugin's work into English. But as the world watches with horror and disgust the indiscriminate bombing of Ukraine, a broader understanding is needed of Dugin's deadly ideas. Russia has been running his playbook for the past 20 years, and it has brought us here, to the brink of another world war.

A product of late-period Soviet decline, Dugin belongs to the long, dismal line of political theorists who invent a strong and glorious past — infused with mysticism and obedient to authority — to explain a failed present. The future lies in reclaiming this past from the liberal, commercial, cosmopolitan present (often represented by the Jewish people). Such thinkers had a heyday a century ago, in the European wreckage of World War I: Julius Evola, the mad monk of Italian fascism; Charles Maurras, the reactionary French nationalist; Charles Coughlin, the American radio ranter; and even the author of a German book called "Mein Kampf."

Dugin tells essentially the same story from a Russian point of view. Before modernity ruined everything, a spiritually motivated Russian people promised to unite Europe and Asia into one great empire, appropriately ruled by ethnic Russians. Alas, a competing sea-based empire of corrupt, money-grubbing individualists, led by the United States and Britain, thwarted Russia's destiny and brought "Eurasia" — his term for the future Russian empire — low.

In his famous opus, "The Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia," published in 1997, Dugin mapped out the game plan in detail. Russian agents should foment racial, religious and sectional divisions within the United States while promoting the United States' isolationist factions. (Sound familiar?) In Great Britain, the psy-ops effort should focus

on exacerbating historic rifts with Continental Europe and separatist movements in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Western Europe, meanwhile, should be drawn in Russia's direction by the lure of natural resources: oil, gas and food. NATO would collapse from within.

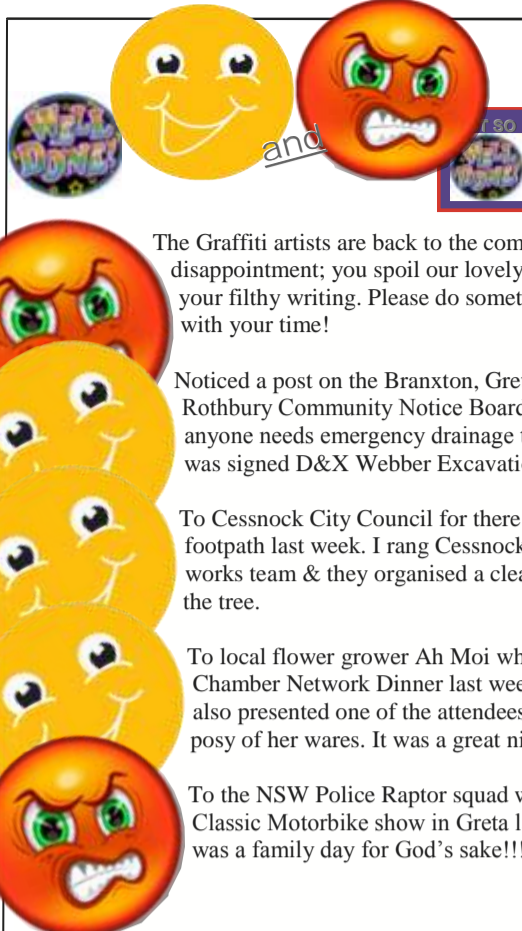
Putin has followed that counsel to the letter, and he must have felt things were going well when he saw window-smashing rioters in the corridors of the U.S. Congress, Britain's Brexit from the European Union and Germany's growing dependence on Russian natural gas. With the undermining of the West going so well, Putin has turned to the pages of Dugin's text in which he declared: "Ukraine as an independent state with certain territorial ambitions represents an enormous danger for all of Eurasia," and "without resolving the Ukrainian problem, it is in general senseless to speak about continental politics."

So what comes next, should Putin manage to "resolve" Russia's "problem" in Ukraine? Dugin envisions a gradual dividing of Europe into zones of German and Russian influence, with Russia very much in charge thanks to its eventual stranglehold over Germany's resource needs. As Great Britain crumbles and Russia picks up the pieces, the empire of Eurasia will ultimately stretch, in Dugin's words, "from Dublin to Vladivostok."

Putin's double-dealing encroachments into the Middle East are influenced by Dugin's idea of a Moscow-Tehran axis. (Israel's government should wake up, smell the samovar and stop playing footsie with Russia.) His seduction of the nationalist government in New Delhi is a reflection of Dugin's insistence that the Eurasian empire must extend to the Indian Ocean.

As important as it is for Western decision-makers to take Dugin's mystical megalomania seriously, it's just as urgent for China's Xi Jinping. Xi and Putin announced a partnership last month to cut the United States down to size. But according to Dugin, China, too, must fall. Russia's ambitions in Asia will require "the territorial disintegration, splintering and the political and administrative partition of the [Chinese] state," Dugin writes. Russia's natural partner in the Far East, according to Dugin, is Japan.

In a sense, Dugin's 600-page doorstop can be boiled down to one idea: The wrong alliance won World War II. If only Hitler had not invaded Russia, Britain could have been broken. The United States would have remained at home, isolationist and divided, and Japan would have ruled the former China as Russia's junior partner. Fascism from Ireland to the Pacific. Delusional? I sure hope so. But delusions become important when embraced by tyrants.



You can e-mail, fax or simply drop your JWD or LNSWD into our office:- 12 Clift Street, Branxton or Fax: 4938 3301 or E-mail: thenews@hotmail.net.au
All contributions welcome

The Graffiti artists are back to the communities disappointment; you spoil our lovely little town by your filthy writing. Please do something useful with your time!



Noticed a post on the Branxton, Greta, North Rothbury Community Notice Board on FB. It was posted 7 March & said '...If anyone needs emergency drainage trenches done I am able to help at no cost'. It was signed D&X Webber Excavation & Hire. How good was that!

To Cessnock City Council for there response to a very large fallen branch on our footpath last week. I rang Cessnock Council & the next day I had a call from the works team & they organised a clean-up & also to have their arborist to look at the tree.

To local flower grower Ah Moi who gave everyone attending the Business Chamber Network Dinner last week, at the Royal Federal, a beautiful protea. She also presented one of the attendees, who was celebrating her birthday, a huge posy of her wares. It was a great night with almost a full house.

To the NSW Police Raptor squad who did their best to try and ruin the Coalfields Classic Motorbike show in Greta last weekend....it was a travesty of stupidity. It was a family day for God's sake!!!

FREE Classifieds 3- for one-off domestic advertising The News will not charge you. Other wise it is \$2/line

Computer Tuition: From basics to highly skilled & learn all about ebay. P: 0429 381 908 repairs. Comtronics P: 4991 1128

Drum lessons: Young Musician studying Bachelor of Music will conduct lessons (drum) your home or mine. (\$25.00 at mine \$30 for away for 1/2 hour). Beginners welcome. call Josh on 0458 611 362

For Rent: 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: agistment, 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.

Dates for your diary

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

FRI 1 APL — Branxton Public School PBL Assemblies (9:20 K-2, 10:00 3-6)

FRI 25 MAR to SUN 3 APL—Cessnock City Council Seniors Festival at Greta and Branxton

Mar 29 ~ Apl 21 — Cessnock Council has turned Youth Week — April 4-14 — into youth month with a program of events kicking off on March 29 until April 21.

FRI 8 APL — Branxton Public School Last day of Term 1

TUE 26 APL — Branxton Public School Staff Development Day

WED 27 APL — Branxton Public School Students return for Term 2

SEPT 2022- Lions Garden Project Lions Australia 75th Anniversary garden — Lions Park Branxton.

Upcoming Concerts

Michael Buble in Concert ~ 30 November 2022 at Newcastle Entertainment Centre

Gin & Jazz Festival @ Hope Estate ~ 2 & 3 April 2022

Aust BIGGEST Outdoors 90's Party @ Hope Estate ~ 14 May 2022 1pm—8pm

Beer & BBQ Festival @ Hope Estate ~ 28 & 29 May 2022 10am ~ 5pm

MARK VINCENT - THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM
Next date: Sunday, 08 May 2022 | 02:00 PM

Australia's most successful Tenor, internationally acclaimed sensation Mark Vincent is touring his brand new show THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM in 2022.

Singing from the age of 15, Mark Vincent has gone on to become one of Australia's most beloved tenors, having released nine consecutive #1 ARIA Classical Crossover Albums, earning accolades both nationally and internationally.

Fans can expect an intimate performance with Mark Vincent performing a rich repertoire of classical music songs and arias made popular by the great artists including Italian-American tenor and actor Mario Lanza.

It has been very busy for Mark in recent years as he has appeared in the popular revival of *My Fair Lady* directed by Dame Julie Andrews at the Sydney Opera House. He has also been touring nationally to promote his new album *Hits include Memory, This Is The Moment, Nessun Dorma, You'll Never Walk Alone, My Way* and many many more.

This will be a concert not to be missed! Dreams do come true!

CCESSNOCK COMMUNITY PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE WHAT'S GOING ON? www.cessnockperformingartscentre.com.au

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS

Tidy Towns due recognition as Singleton takes the lead in a sustainable and strategic economic evolution



Mayor of Singleton, Cr Sue Moore has described the announcement of Singleton as NSW's most Sustainable Community for 2021 as due recognition for a wide range of projects, programs and initiatives in a continued emphasis on sustainability across the local government area.

Singleton was the overall winner at the Keep Australia Beautiful NSW 2021 Sustainable Communities – Tidy Towns Awards on Saturday 5 March, qualifying as the State's representative in the National Awards to be held in Hastings, Victoria later this year.

The official trophy made a visit to tonight's Singleton Council meeting in a special presentation by Singleton Tidy Towns President Lyn McBain.

Cr Moore said the award was a wonderful accolade for the Singleton Tidy Towns Committee, everyone who was involved in the awards submissions and the wider community in a demonstration there was more to Singleton than coal.

As well as being named the overall winner, Singleton took out 12 award categories. "Singleton's application was based on local initiatives, programs and experiences as well as Council's waste services and recycle streams, which are helping to rewrite our identity as a leader in sustainability and innovation that will drive our community, our economy and our region into the future," she said.

"The Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Sustainable Communities – Tidy Towns Awards are highly contested, and this is a significant achievement for our community and well-deserved recognition for the members of the Tidy Towns Committee for their years of hard work.

"We are rightly proud of this Award and the acknowledgement it brings to our emphasis on the future, from investing in sustainable community infrastructure including the recently-opened Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre and \$1million solar energy project, through to the Legacy Fund and Singleton Community Economic Development Fund which is leading an intergenerational approach to Voluntary Planning Agreements with mining companies to better plan for an economic evolution and the future of Singleton."

Singleton will be assessed for the National Title in the coming months and will host the NSW awards on 5 November 2022.

"This is even greater motivation for everyone in our community to keep up the good work and look for even more opportunities to be sustainable, particularly as we continue to roll out the Singleton Sustainability Strategy," Cr Moore said.

"Initiatives so far have helped to cut energy usage and emissions, made sustainability a key consideration in Council's procurement process and put Singleton at the forefront of conversations about the economic evolution of the Hunter region – to name a few.

"I'm looking forward to welcoming the representatives of Tidy Towns Committees from around NSW at the 2022 Awards later this year to show off just what we've achieved in terms of sustainability, and the work we're doing now for the Singleton of the future."

■ Photograph above: Singleton Tidy Towns members with Singleton councillors at last Council meeting.

New impounding service for lost Cessnock animals

Cessnock City Council has teamed up with Maitland City Council to provide impound services for lost companion animals in the Cessnock Local Government Area.

This follows advice from the RSPCA that they were no longer able to accommodate impound services at the Rutherford site beyond late 2022.



The new agreement came into place on 1 March 2022 and is expected to achieve operational savings which will be reallocated to other functions within the budget.

Companion animals collected by a Cessnock City Council ranger are now transported to the Maitland Animal Management Facility, 11 Metford Rd, East Maitland.

Rangers will still try to contact the registered owners of microchipped animals before impounding occurs.

Members of the community who find lost animals should also take them to the East Maitland facility. Collection of animals will be available, from the East Maitland facility, Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm, and on weekends between 10am-1pm. The facility can be contacted on 0438 742 541.

Council continues to advertise lost animals on Council Social media sites and the Cessnock City Council website.

To help lost companion animals being reunited with their owners, council has another 50 free engraved dog tags to give away to residents of the Cessnock Local Government Area. Simply complete the online form: [Cessnock.nsw.gov.au/pets](https://www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/pets)

2022 Cessnock City Seniors Festival

Cessnock City Council is excited to release the 2022 Cessnock City Seniors Festival program which is packed with concerts, films, talks, workshops, open days and more!

Featuring more than 50 free events across the LGA, the 2022 Cessnock City Seniors Festival will run from 23 March to 9 April 2022 and the theme for this year is 'Reconnect'.

Festival highlights this year include Fearless Films 3 followed by a live discussion with Stockman legend Kelvin Gregory, a day of cultural sharing with Ngiyampaa Elder, Aunty D, and a history walk in Chinaman's Hollow. Lower Hunter Transport Services will provide door to door transport to most events for a gold coin donation.

Programs can be picked up at Cessnock City and Kurri Kurri Libraries, and participating venues.

The program is also available on Cessnock Council's website.

CESSNOCK CITY SENIORS FESTIVAL 2022

23 MARCH - 9 APRIL 2022
A FESTIVAL FOR SENIORS AND THOSE NOT-SO-SENIOR!

www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/Seniors2022

CessnockCityCouncil
 CessnockCityCouncil
 CessnockCouncil

WANTED

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES TO LEASE

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

BRANXTON & VINEYARDS REAL ESTATE
P: 4938 3300

"Branxton Gardens" Senior Living, Branxton
Recent sales

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



Things you should never do to your lawn



Whether you have a green thumb or not, it's easy to maintain a blissful, barefoot-worthy backyard. For starters, avoid these no-nos.

- 1. Don't remove grass clippings** ~ Leaving grass clippings on the lawn after you mow can cause thatch problems, right? Nope! That's a myth. Turns out, grass clippings can actually help with the overall health of your lawn. And (bonus!) that means less work for you when you mow.
- 2. Don't skip aerating** ~ Most lawns, whether seeded or sodded, are planted over a fairly skimpy layer of topsoil. Over time, lawn mowers, pets and football games compact the soil, making it difficult for air, water and vital nutrients to penetrate to the grassroots. Your challenge: to restore healthy soil conditions that nurture your lawn. To loosen and aerate the soil, rent a power core aerator. They're available at rental centres, plus some hardware stores and garden centres.
- 3. Don't use a dull mower blade** Dull mower blades rip through the grass blades instead of slicing them cleanly, and that stresses the plant. You can always tell a lawn that's been mowed with a dull blade because it looks brown on the top. Get on your hands and knees and you can actually see the damage. Be sure to sharpen your mower blade each season to keep your lawn in good shape.
- 4. Don't water every day** Did you know your lawn can actually get dependent and needy if it has too much water? Instead of watering every day for 15 minutes, choose one day a week to water the lawn for an entire hour. Your lawn will be watered deeply, and it will be healthier and more drought-tolerant.
- 5. Don't forget to dethatch** Thatch is a layer of slowly decomposing grass stems, roots, clippings, and debris that accumulate at the soil surface over time. It can build up in your lawn and virtually choke it to death. Excessive thatch build-up is commonly found in lawns that have been overfertilized or overwatered and have never been aerated. Thatch build-up of 2cm or more will restrict water and nutrient penetration into the soil (think thatched roof) and can harbour disease organisms that can increase the need for pesticides. Slice open a section of turf. If the thatch is more than 2cm thick, take action.
- 6. Don't wait too long between mowing** If you came back from a holiday and didn't arrange to have the grass mowed while you were away, don't try and mow it down in one day. Cut off some of the length and then wait a couple of days and mow again. This will cause less stress on the grass. You may need three passes depending on how long the grass grew.
- 7. Don't cut grass too short** Every grass type has an optimal cutting height, and you're better off on the high side of that height. Here are a few reasons: The grass blade is the food factory of the plant. Short blades just can't generate as much food as long blades. Long blades also shade and cool the soil. That means weed seeds are less likely to sprout, and you won't have to water as often because water won't evaporate as fast. Not sure what type of grass you have? Take a sample to a garden centre for identification.
- 8. Don't mow in the same direction every time** Instead, mow in a different direction every time: front to back, back to front, diagonal, etc. Repeatedly mowing the exact same way will cause the grass blades to grow at an angle, and you may develop permanent tracks from the mower wheels.
- 9. Don't give up on shady areas** Growing grass under shade trees isn't easy, but one key to success is choosing the right shade grass species and planting method for your region. In cool-season areas, you'll get a better result using seed rather than sod. Sod is grown in wide-open fields under conditions that favour sun-loving grasses. Garden centres will have grass seed mixes formulated for shade. Late summer and mid-spring are the best times to establish cool-season grasses in shady areas.



(Source: [Pet Ownership in Australia report](#), Animal Medicines

Getting a pet

How much it costs to own a dog or cat

Before you bring your furry friend home, make sure they'll suit your budget and lifestyle.

Find out how much it costs to have a cat or dog, how to choose the right breed and how you can pamper them on a budget.

Cost of owning a pet

Cats and dogs are a big personal and financial commitment.

In the first year alone, a cat or dog will cost you between \$3,000 and \$6,000. After your first year together expect to pay at least:

- \$1,627 each year for a dog
- \$962 each year for a cat

Australia)

On top of this, you'll need to pay for vet bills if your pet gets sick or injured. This can be very expensive. Factor it into your budget and consider whether [pet insurance](#) is right for you. Make sure you consider all the costs of owning a pet:

Work out what you can afford

When you're thinking about getting a pet, consider all of the costs over the life of your pet.

Find the right pet for you

Take the time to find a pet that suits your lifestyle and budget. Breed matters

Research breeds before choosing a new pet. Different breeds can have different temperaments and needs. For example:

- A breed with long hair will

Tips For Your Dogs



cost you more in grooming.

- A larger dog will eat more. Some breeds are prone to health problems that will cost you more in vet bills.

Consider where you live

If you live in a small apartment or work long hours, a breed that gets anxious or needs lots of exercise might not be happy. It may also:

- cause damage to your place
 - cost you more in dog-sitting
- cause problems with your landlord or neighbours

Get a pet from a shelter

Not only can you save an animal that needs a home, it will already be de-sexed, wormed and vaccinated.

Getting a pet from a shelter is

cheaper than getting one from breeders or pet shops. You may also save on local council registration fees.

Look after your pet on a budget

There are simple ways to cut the cost of pet ownership while keeping your pet happy and healthy.

Health

Regular exercise, a good diet and dental care are vital to your pet's health and happiness. It will also save you a lot in vet bills.

Holidays

If you can't take your furry friend with you, ask a friend to pet-sit in your home. It's cheaper than a kennel or cattery and more comfortable for your pet.

Grooming

Wash your dog yourself and learn how to trim its fur and nails. They won't mind if you give them a bad haircut, and you'll save on grooming costs.

Training

Do some research or join a free class and have fun training your dog.

Adopting or buying a pet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from \$0 to \$500 if you adopt, depending on the type of animal and its age • \$500 to a few thousand dollars if you buy from a breeder
Microchipping, vaccinations and de-sexing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to \$1,000 in the first year, or free if you adopt
Vet expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about \$450 each year depending on your pet's health
Pet insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20 to \$60 each month
Pet essentials including a collar, bed, bowls and toys, kennel or scratching post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to \$500 in the first year, then about \$100 each year
Flea, tick and worming medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$300 to \$450 each year depending on your pet's size
Council registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between \$30 and \$190 per year
Pet food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to \$800 each year for premium dog food, plus treats
Boarding kennels and catteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depends on location, time of year and length of stay. Can be between \$25 to \$50 a night
Other services including grooming and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depends on your lifestyle and type of pet

Microchipping

Microchipping your pet cat or dog is very important. If your pet becomes lost then you are far more likely to become reunited if he or she is microchipped.

What is a microchip and how does it work?

A microchip is a permanent method of electronic identification. The chip itself is very small – about the size of a grain of rice – and is implanted just under the skin, between the shoulder blades at the back of your pet's neck. Each chip has a unique number that is detected using a microchip scanner. The microchip number is recorded on a database registry with details about the animal and owner. Should your pet stray or become lost, vets, animal shelters and local councils can scan your pet for a microchip and contact you via the database.

It is very important to keep your contact details up to date on the database so that if you move house or change your phone number you will still be contactable in the event of your pet becoming lost/stray.

Ideally your pet cat or dog should be microchipped prior to you purchasing or adopting your pet. This is the only way to effectively trace the origin of the cat/dog. However, if your pet is not yet microchipped then we recommend that you make an appointment to do so with your vet (even in those states where microchipping is not yet compulsory).

If a pet is transferred to a new owner, the new owner must ensure their contact details are recorded on the database.

Microchipping for cats and dogs is mandatory in ACT, NSW, QLD, VIC and WA. Microchipping for dogs only is compulsory in TAS.



SPORTS RESULTS

RESULTS GOLF

Kyprianou 38, Rob Banks 37, Karina Bush 36, Michael Musgrove 36, Shannon Attewell 35, Tony Krishna 33, Brock Williams 33, Luke Johnston 33, Paul Bush 33, William Mirisch 31, Jacobe Dowell 30, Cameron Davis 30, Nathan Pearson 30 & Mark Fullbrook 30 c/b

Monday 14th March

The Vets Irish Stableford has seen some indifferent scoring handed in with Bill Freeman doing best with 79 points from Peter Perkins 75 and Col Somerville 3rd with 74. Ball winners were: Rox Ling Jr 73, John Carmody 72, Brodie Wells 72, Doug Harley 71, Mick Gilbert 71, Beepa 70, Greg Burke 70, Graeme Smith 69, Kerry Bartlett 69, Barry Maher 68, Phil Douglas 68, Gilly 67, John McLoughney 66, Graham Donaldson 66, Tony Lorrigan 65, Dazza 64, Muz 64, Jeff Shanahan 64, Wayne Burgess 64, Don Bradley 63, Spingy 62, Chris Norman 61, Graham Morris 60, James Schofield 60, Bomber 60, John Stewart 59, Mark Green 59, John Martin 58, Michael O'Brien 57, Larry Forbes 57, John Grayson 57, Paul Bullock 56, Steve Primmer 56, Garry Clarke 56, Banjo Boyd 55 & Rob Hannah 55 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins went to John McLoughney (3rd) Greg Burke (4th) Tom Bell (8th) Peter Payne (10th) & Ruff (17th).

Tuesday 15th March

Brad Murray has taken the Irish Stableford event with an excellent 80 point round from Matt D'Force 79 & Col Bradley 3rd with 77. Ball winners are: Wayne Burgess 75, Jayden Casinelli 74, Dean Morison 73, Rox Jr 73, Larry Forbes 71, Craig MacKenzie 69, Tom Bell 68, Garry O'Shea 68, Beepa 68, Graeme Flynn 65, Rob hannah 63, Bindii 63, John Carmody 63, Peter Franks 63, Andrew Ling 63, Robert Gallen 62 & Paul Smith 59 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Tom Bell (3rd & 8th) David Peel (4th) Michael Cunningham (10th) & Paul Smith (17th)

Wednesday 16th March

The Ladies found the going tough in the damp conditions in their Stableford event with Leesa Robinson taking top spot with 29 points from Robyn Dunlop 27 with Glenda Williams 3rd with 26 on countback. Di Atton & Sue Williams collected balls. Next week the Ladies will contest the opening round of the Golf NSW Medal & Putting comp.

Saturday 19th March

Early rain sent many of the Irish Stableford field home in the Irish Stableford event, A Grade to Lochie Cairns with 79 points from Ben Robinson 75, B Grade to Don Bradley 75 from Anthony Bower 71 & C Grade to Ron Higginbottom 62 with Peter Perkins runner up with 59. Ball winners are: Andrew Zok 70, Mike Carter 68, Max Bryant 68, Phil Small 67, Louias

Siberberg 67, Lee Heuston 66, Luke Johnston 65, Benny Zwolinski 65, Blake Medway 64, Steve Piggott 64, Dan Olsen 64, Adrian Kent 64, Wade Attewell 61, Craig Sharp 61, Joseph Curnow 59 & Paul Bullock 59 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins Mick Hughes (3rd) Dan Olsen (4th) Luke Johnston (8th) Andrew Zok (10th) & George Copas (17th).

Sunday 20th March

The C Grade Pennant team have completed another successful year winning the Pennant for the second consecutive year. Congratulations to Wayne & his team on a great effort. This years Final was fought out at Kurri GC between Paterson & Hunter Valley with HV winning 3 1/2 to 1 1/2. Tony Bowie suffered the only loss 3&4, John Martin 3&2 winner, Paul Neuss drew his match, Darren Mather 6 & 4 winner & Tom Lundy 7&6 winner

A countback was required to find a winner in this week's Weekly Challenge with William Waite getting the better of Alex Burke after both had 35 point returns, 3rd place to Brodie Wells with 34 points also on countback. Ball winners are: Darren Desmid 34, Grahame Mankelov 33, Tania Hutchins 32, Greg Mudd 31, Phil Byron 30 & Marjo Kummeling 28 c/b

Tuesday 22nd March

The Vets played their Medley Stableford round on Tuesday this week with the heavy conditions making Par or better scores hard to come by. Division 1 to Mick Gilbert with 35 points from James Schofield 34 c/b, Division 2 to Peter Franks 37 from Denis Corke 36 & Division 3 to Ken McLaughlan 34 from Peter Perkins 32. Ball winners are: Paul Smith 35, John McLoughney 34, Col Bradley 33, David Blackburn 33, Larry Forbes 32, Graham Donaldson 32, Springy 32, Reddis 32, Michael Tsakissiris 32, Gunner 32, Tom Bell 32, Phil Darcy 31, Darrell Porter 31, Toot 31, John Stewart 31, Bruce Chambers 31, James Hogg 31, Barry Maher 31, Darrell Preston 30, Lindsay Meyn 30, Bill Freeman 30, Alick Bender 30, Wayne Cowan 30, John Grayson 30, Greg Amlöh 30, Marian Radny 30, Arthur Cuttriss 29, Graeme Flynn 29, John Carmody 29, Curly 29, Kevin Smith 29, Wazza 29, Trevor Collins 29, John Pascoe 28, Dvid John 28, Dennis Donn 28 & Paul Campbell 28 c/b. Nearest-the-Pins to Jeanette Irwin (3rd) Doug Harley (4th) Col Bradley (10th) & Tony Lorrigan (17th). Next weeks' event (31st) will be the 2022 Vets 2 Person Ambrose Championship, all entrants must be a financial member of the HV Vets.

Wednesday 23rd March

The Ladies contested the 1st round of the Golf NSW medal in very warm conditions with Sue Wilson victorious on countback to Di Atton after both returning 76 net with Dale Hamilton 3rd with 77. Di Atton won the Putting comp.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Sporting teams of the past The news Issue No 46 1st July 1999 Page 41



At Left ~ Back Row (L-R): Jack Hebbe, Roy Bridge, Byron 'Bill' Smith, Frank Harris & Darcy Owens. Middle Row (L-R): Frank Dever, Neville Andrews, Alby Yates & Ken Wilton. Front Row (L-R): Doug Mansfield, Tommy Thomas, Ivan Hedges & Howard Berkley Ref: Norman Smith from Singleton Who is the ball boy?

The photo at left was given to us by Bill Smith who was a member of that team. Bill seems to think that it was taken in 1946 and has been able to identify each member.

The record for the team that year is not known or is the identity of the ball boy. If anyone can tell us who the ball boy is it would be appreciated. We will endeavour to find the playing record for that year.

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Ball boy found!



At left: The original photo published last issue of the, we think, 1946 Branxton Rugby League Football Team. All members were identified with only one exception ~ the ball boy. Above is 'the ball boy', now identified as Barry Graves.

The photo below was

taken at the 1998 Centenary Reunion of Maitland Marist Brothers which was held at the Maitland Town Hall. From left is John Till, Terry O'Brien, Peter Bogan, Brother Bede (Ex-Principal), Terry Bailey & 'The Ball Boy' Barry Graves.



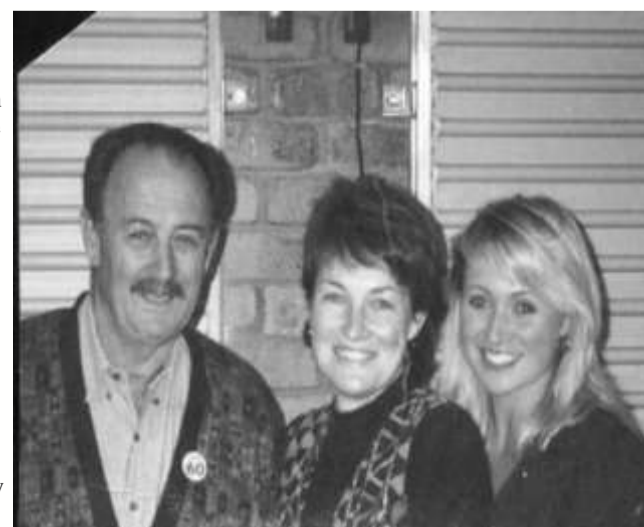
The mystery of the 'ball boy' has been solved

He is Barry Graves, who was born in Branxton (he was actually delivered into this world at the residence of The Branxton Inn) & left the area in 1955 to attend Teachers College in Newcastle.

Barry is now a retired School Principal and lives in Valentine.

The reason he was ball boy was because his uncle Roy Bridge played in the team. Barry attended Teachers College with our retired ex-Member for Hunter, Eric Fitzgibbon. When talking with Barry he did mention, for the records, that he was the youngest player ever to play first grade cricket for Branxton (13 years of age) a fact not mentioned in the history of the Club.

A happy retirement Barry.



Above: Barry with his two daughters Janelle & Rebecca at his 60th birthday

BRANXTON GRETA VINEYARDS

The NEWS SPORT

Greta Workers



Joy for Judy at Hawks Nest

FOURTEEN members weighed in on March 13 after the Hawks

Nest weekend away.

Matty Weilgasz' apprentice Daniel "Boony" Johnson hit the overall lead with a massive score of 202.4 with 17 Tailor, 7 Bream and big Salmon fishing the beaches. Joel Platt also scored well after only one night's fishing with 117 points (Tailor and Bream). Nevo managed one up over arch rival Keza Duncan outscoring her 95.4 to 91.6.

Judy Masters took out the \$50 cash prize with a 0.56kg Bream fishing near Winda Wopper off the bank but not without some stiff competition from various other members who also weighed in Bream. Lewis Jacobs made full use of the cricket

wash out and scored a healthy 72.4 points giving him a good lead in the race for the junior title.

Special mentions to the following who weighed in for the first time this year: Holly Nevin (Tailor), Ruby Nevin (Tailor) and Jamie Langlands (Tailor). As you can gather the Tailor are really biting at the moment after the floods. The next fishing weekend is an Open on the 22nd 23rd 24th April, Weigh in will still be the Sunday as the following day is Anzac Day.

2022 memberships still available, 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 March the price will go up to \$50 single and \$100 family.

Pictured at right Club President Andrew Jacobs presenting a much improved Judy Masters with \$50 for her 0.56kg winning Bream.



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