

Our Own News



Laguna Art Show shines

WHAT'S HAPPENING

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUG

WED 27—MEET THE MAYOR Council Pop Up meeting 10am at Myrtle & Stone. Hear, Listen, Have a say,

FRI 29—PIZZA NIGHT at Wollombi Tavern 5-8pm

SAT 30 —STOMP FESTIVAL ...On again! Cessnock 10am-8pm

SUN 31 —PICKLEBALL—2pm Wollombi Tennis Courts. See P4

SEPT

TUE 2 —WVCC Business Network-Myrtle 10am. Coffee and collaboration. All welcome.

THUR 4—TRIVIA NIGHT Myrtle & Stone 6pm

SAT 6 —STONEHURST Long Table Lunch. Tickets required. See their website for details

MON 8—TALKING TURTLES, Land Services See P4

FRI 12—TAINTED. A burlesque Tragic Opera See P7

SUN 21—ILLUSIONAIRE Caberet Theatre See P7

CANVA HELP! OON WOULD LIKE TO PICK YOUR BRAIN IF YOU CAN HELP

Contact at: oon_news@hotmail.com



Markets will be subject to weather and Wollombi Cattle Yards grounds stability.

Save the date!

Stallholders bookings now open

Volunteers needed -ask how you can help

OUR LOCAL WORLD MASTERS SWIMMING CHAMPION—JIM GROOM

Jim recently competed in the World Masters Swimming Championships in Singapore.



This was part of the World Aquatics Championships held every two years, including not only the masters, but also the elite swimming, diving, water polo and open water swimming. Amazingly, the temporary swimming complex seen at the Paris Olympics moves around the world for such events giving 4 x 50metre pools at the venue!

The Masters swimming is over 7 days involving over 5000 swimmers competing in 5 year age groups starting at 25 years and finishing with 90 year olds. Jim competed in the 70-74 age group. In his 5 events he managed to pick up 2 bronze medals in the 200 and 100 backstroke, fourth in the 50 metre backstroke and ninth in the 2 short freestyle events.

In Jim's words, "The whole event was much more nerve racking than ever envisaged". While he competed very successfully as a teenager, it was the attraction of the "Laguna Village Green" pool that got him back in the water after nearly 50 years, a wonderful testament to how special the local pool has been to so many in our community, both young and older. In turn, Jim has shared his skills and passion for swimming with the youth in the valley. He invested time and money to gain his AustSwim Accreditation so that he could provide free swimming lessons for the local younger generation and importantly play an essential role in the Laguna School Intensive Swim Program.

It was the hope of the late John Forsythe that one day the Village Green Pool may produce an olympic swimmer. Jim 's performance at the World Masters Swimming Championships, combined with his generous and dedicated approach to training the local upcoming generations is a great start to fulfilling this wish.

Proud member of the



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llyndanairn@gmail.com

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Laguna Art Show Wrap Up!

What a fantastic weekend was had by all at the Laguna Art Show (August 15-17). After a few years in hiatus, it was wonderful to see the full event happen again thanks to the hard work of the small but dedicated Laguna P&C. Visitors on opening night were treated to a spectacle of native flora and candlelight in the marquee restaurant, and enjoyed a delicious meal (Wollombi Catering) while enjoying wonderful pre exhibition entertainment (Sioban Turrell, Brian Dillon, Tim Usher). The rousing Welcome to Country by Tim Selwyn will be long remembered by all who witnessed it, and a special mention also to Jim Wilson for doing a great job as compere. Opening night dinner was a sell out event, and many more came to enjoy the exhibition from 8pm. The Ken Maurer Emerging Artist Award (\$500) was presented by Antionette and Ben Maurer to the winner, talented photographer Euan Wilcox. Once the curtains were drawn back to reveal the exhibition, attendees were invited to enjoy art from more than 75 artists, with over 250 unique artworks on display. Red dots began appearing almost as soon as the curtains were pulled back and continued all weekend with visitor numbers very high both Saturday and Sunday. A special mention to Wollombi General Store who were the major sponsors for this wonderful event. The Laguna Art Show was an all round success for both the school and wider Valley communities, and many thanks are due to all who contributed, whether as an artist, a volunteer or by attendance or sponsorship. Well done all!

Jodie Usher

Photo Credits: Phil Janson



Laguna Art Show 2025

Thursday 14th August, in late afternoon, the fairy lights at the marquee in front of Laguna Hall announced growing excitement. The P&C's art show was only 24 hours from Opening Night. Has anything been missed, will the swallows go on a fast, is yet more rain predicted? Countless hours, days, weeks, months had been donated by busy parents. Community members volunteered their help. Wollombi General Store was the major sponsor. Many sponsors donated funds and goods. Artists, both children and adults submitted their works. Friends were emailing, "Are there any tickets for dinner and opening night still available?"

The P & C team of parents and community was led by Richard the effervescent, happy president of the P&C, the exhibition was hung by the talented, thoughtful, calm Steph our resident Roadside Gallery owner, the show was organised by Jodie a woman with an eye for detail not only in her own artwork but all she does. They set the working tone of positive, happy inclusion for all volunteers and there were many hands helping.

Opening Night arrived and it was a smooth, easy flowing evening with delicious food and drinks, lively music and many friends.

This event brings our community together in a positive, heart-warming way as well as raising much needed money to be directed to student's learning.

Thank you, Laguna Parents and Community.

Written by a grateful community member in awe of the determination, creativity and generosity of so many who live in our valley.

The OON is looking at printing each month an article on one of our historical buildings.

Next month's choice : **THE FORGE**

Please send in any memories, history, pictures you may have before 15th Sept, to make the issue.

Send to oon_news@hotmail.com

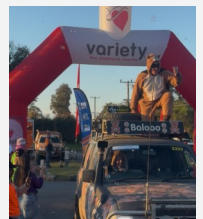
VARIETY BASH BOYS ARE BACK !

Local boys: Nick Brooke and Brett McMullen have returned from the 2025 QLD Variety Bash. Completing the 14 day challenge and personally raising over \$27.5K. QLD Variety Club raising a whopping \$1,680,430 for kids who are sick disadvantaged, or living with a disability.

The boys handed out these cuddly Trauma Teddies throughout their journey to the children, which were a great hit. All lovingly handknitted and donated by generous volunteers.

If you would like to volunteer and knit for the 2026 Bash boys, go to The Australian Red Cross Trauma-Teddy-Pattern on their website, or contact the OON for a copy.

Thank you to all who have donated and supported the journey!



Wollombi Valley Pony Club

Even the wet weather and sodden grounds can't stop the dedicated riding members of Wollombi Valley Pony Club!

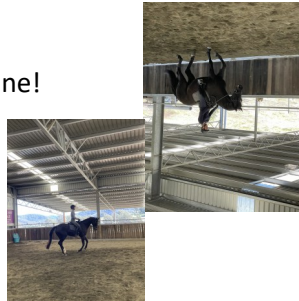
Some of our younger and older members recently took advantage of an indoor riding day at Millfield recently, where a mixture of flatwork, jumping grids and show jumping equitation was thoroughly enjoyed.

Awesome as it was, all members are looking forward to returning to the wonderful Wollombi Pony Club Ground and also enjoying the use of the brand new Pony Club Shed.

Fingers crossed for sunshine!

Simone Smith

Wollombi Valley Pony Club.



The Tennis members are always keen for a hit and with the current weather—it really is hit and miss!

With the promise of some sun we look forward to some fresh air and exercise.

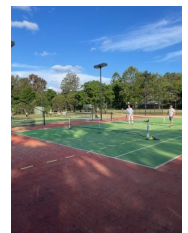
Our next Pickleball game is scheduled for Sunday 31st August, from 2pm. Tea, coffee and a sweet treat will be provided. Come along and try it, the bats and equipment is provided. Just remember to bring a water bottle and appropriate footwear for play.

Don't forget! 500 Cards group

Is on last Monday of the month

Contact: Jan Harrison

janeceharrison08@gmail.com



We look forward to seeing you on the courts.

Enquiries: Julia 0403-500 381

HORSE FOOD IN LAGUNA

88 Murrays Run Road, Laguna

Ph: 0408 495 623

E: apptrak@hotkey.net.au



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Chicken feeds, Sheep, Cattle & Alpaca pellets

As well as we order in: Meals for Mutts, Meals for Meows, Ivory Coat, Supercoat, Advance, Optimum, Fancy feast, Chicken, Bird, Fish & Rabbit food.

Some stocks of pet toys, grooming products, horse rugs & accessories.



Apptrak home grown horses: bred, raised and trained at Laguna!



Local Land Services



Talking Turtles! At WOLLOMBI

Ever wondered about the life of a turtle, what they get up to besides just sitting on logs and how they contribute towards our local landscape and riverine environment?

We invite you to come and find out more about these wonderful animals by joining us to hear from guest speakers Dr Bruce Chessman from Chessman Ecology and Mr Billy Collett from Aussie Ark.

You will find out which turtle species occur in the Wollombi catchment, what their life cycles involve, how they benefit the environment and what we can do to ensure that our turtle populations persist into the future.

Come along for this informative morning of turtle facts and stories! Number limited, register now.

Morning Tea and Lunch provided.



This event is assisted by the NSW Government's Environmental Trust and Hunter Catchment Contributions

Date and time

Monday 8 September

9:30am - 12pm

WOLLOMBI

To Bring

Your interest and any turtle stories or observations you wish to share!

RSVP

Click the link or scan the QR code to register:

<https://comms.lis.nsw.gov.au/pub/pubType/EO/pubID/zzzz6875a081cc098402/interface.html>

Contact

Lorna Adlem, 0437 967 311
Lorna.adlem@lis.nsw.gov.au





WOLLOMBI VALLEY ARTS COUNCIL INC. ARTS NEWS

What's on at the Wollombi Cultural Centre

August – September 2025

The Wollombi Valley Arts Council encourages and fosters all kinds of artistic and cultural expression within the Wollombi Valley in order to support and promote artists and our community. Please visit our website www.wollombi.org

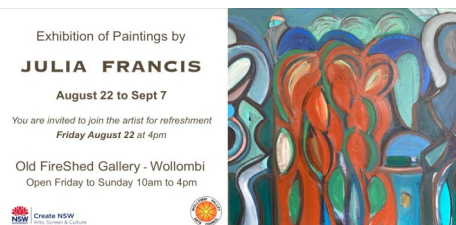
EXHIBITION of PAINTINGS by JULIA FRANCIS

Please join Julia for the exhibition opening Friday 22nd August at 4pm, refreshments provided

"Painting for me is a way of exploration. Inspiration. The way the rays of the sun turn a leaf to silver. The river... the way the rushing water froths around a rock. Dreams...The changing moods and colours of the sky. The connectedness of the landscape in nature in our wild and beautiful valley. The magnetism of a blank white canvas. All these and more inspire me to paint. Oh yes!"

23 August – 7 September 2025

Open 10am – 4pm Fri – Sun



Our next exhibition

JENNIFER LITTLE

13 – 28 September 2025

WVAC EMERGING ARTIST AWARDS

We invite entries in the 2025 Emerging Artist Awards, with three new categories, and increased prize money.

Please visit our website for details www.wollombi.org

Total award money now \$8,000

Exhibition Opening and Awards

Presentation: Friday 3rd October at 6.30pm



Entries close 5pm 28th September 2025

Judges:JOSEPH TURRIN(Curator Performing Arts Centre, Cessnock),MANDY DAVIES, GREG MAJOR (2325 Australian Flora Award)

OPEN SECTION:(Painting, Sculpture, Photography, etc)

Emerging Artist Award\$1,500, Highly Commended\$1,000, Commended\$750

WVAC 2325 Wollombi Award\$500 (Local artist or Wollombi subject matter)

2325 Australian Flora Award\$500 (Australian flora subject matter, local artist)

Sponsored by Greg Major, Future Harvest

Photography Award\$500

Portrait Award \$500 *new*

Sculpture/3D Award \$500 *new*

Indigenous Artist Award \$500 *new*

WVAC Performance Art/Video Art Award \$500 (Entry via a maximum 3 - minute video)

Youth: Under 18's: Highly Commended \$250, Commended \$100, Under 12's: Highly Commended \$100, Commended \$50

The Les Elvin People's Choice Award (announced at the close of EAA)

Most popular \$500

Runner Up \$250

LIFE DRAWING in the OLD FIRESHED GALLERY

August 20, September 10 2025 1pm – 4pm

Phone Mandy 02 – 4998 8686

THE LITTLE YENGO GALLERY

The Little Yengo Gallery was built and is maintained and run by volunteers to celebrate the rich Aboriginal history and culture of Wollombi and surrounding areas. The non-profit gallery displays an extensive range of Aboriginal paintings, artworks and artefacts. The proceeds from the sale of the works, minus a small administrative fee, go directly to the artists. Wollombi means 'meeting place', our totem is the waterhen. Please come and learn the waterhen story and meet the artists. New volunteers and artists are welcome. Visit <https://www.wollombi.org/little-yengo-gallery> for our online gallery

Wollombi Valley Arts Council Inc.

Email: artscouncil@wollombi.org or yengogallery@wollombi.org

Web:www.wollombi.org

F/B: <https://www.facebook.com/artscouncilwollombi>

<https://www.facebook.com/littleyengogallery>



WOLLOMBI SCHOOL COMMUNITY CENTRE INC

Thank you to all who attended our 2025 AGM on 12 August. Our new Committee of volunteers has been elected for the coming year which we anticipate will be an exciting and busy one.

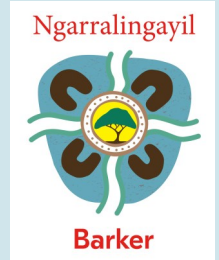
That does not mean you cannot still join either as a WSCC member who wishes to support the goal of keeping this wonderful historic village school in community hands, to apply to become a Committee member, or to join in our coming projects. If you are interested, please contact our Secretary Suzanne on Secretary@wollombischool.com.au. or send us a message via our website wollombischool.com.au.

We are currently renegotiating our lease with the Education Department, and we await the outcome of at least two community- enriching Grant applications, fingers crossed.

The Wollombi School Community Centre Committee



This past week has been a vibrant and enriching time for our students as we took part in a variety of cultural and educational experiences.



This week we visited St. Philip's Christian College to join in their NAIDOC celebration. Students engaged in a wonderful program of activities.

The day was not only well-organised but also deeply meaningful. One of the highlights was hearing from a Torres Strait Islander man, who generously shared his deep knowledge and personal stories about life on the island. Our students were captivated and left with a deeper appreciation of First Nations culture and history.

In addition to our NAIDOC celebrations, our students also had the opportunity to visit Barker College, Hornsby, where they participated in a dynamic mix of activities including music, chapel, and basketball. Our infants also visited the kindergarten classes and joined in with their learning. It was an energising experience and a great way for our students to build connections and skills in new settings.

We were also excited to welcome two interns and two education students into our classrooms out at Ngarralingayil. Each intern/student has been working one day a week teaching & supporting our students, contributing fresh energy and ideas. It has been a valuable learning time for everyone involved, and we're grateful for the enthusiasm and support they've brought to our school community.

It's been a week filled with learning, connection, and celebration—and we're looking forward to carrying that momentum into the term ahead.

Kathryn Cunningham



Wollombi Pilates

Authentic | Gentle | Effective

Mat Class — Wed 9.30am
Chair Pilates — Fri 9.30am
Mat Class — Fri 10.30am
in the Wollombi Community Hall

For more information contact Susan
0403 270 365 or leithsu@bigpond.com

ILLUSIONAIRE

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

G'day fun lovers all! Alan Glover here to tell you about a wonderful show I'm bringing to the valley with the support of Valley Artists Inc. This one is for all the family and will be a Sunday afternoon to remember. You'll experience the unique talents of two great mates, both fabulous performers and masters of the Illusionist arts of mime and magic.

Sam Angelico is world renowned for his unique approach to the art of magic. In 1988 he was awarded the World Champion of Comedy Magic by the International Federation of Magic Societies in Madrid.

Jean-Paul Bell has been described as having a face that can launch a thousand laughs with his unique physical comedy and eccentric characters.

Jean-Paul and Sam have been performing since the mid 1970's both solo and together in Australia, starting in the Melbourne Cabaret scene including the early Comedy Festivals, as well as internationally in the European Festival Circuits, Clubs, major Theatre and Cabaret venues and the established comedy clubs and College circuit in the US.

This largely visual performance is universal in its appeal with magic enrapturing people of different cultures around the world and the art of mime speaking half of all languages on earth.

Illusionaire is a celebration of comic lives well lived. I hope you'll join us. Bring refreshments and your family!

Laguna Hall. 5pm Sunday September 21st

Tickets available through TryBooking

(use QR code on the ad)

Adult \$28 Concession \$25 Kids under 16 \$15

Family (2 adults, two kids) \$75



Laguna Public School

3738 Great North Road

Laguna NSW 2325



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Lovin' Learning at Laguna....

In Week 3, as part of Education Week, we had the opportunity to celebrate the wonderful people in our school community and the amazing activities that happen within our school. It warmed my heart to see so many families come along — grabbing a sausage, visiting classrooms, and helping us celebrate our special award recipients for 2025.

It has been fantastic to have so many people back in our classrooms lending a hand, especially in Bandar. Ms Mexon loves knowing that there is an adult for students to read to every single day — and the students love it just as much. We love seeing our families “at the top of the hill” — that’s where the magic really happens! But I digress...

For 2025, we celebrated the following achievements:

School Program – Chess

We acknowledged the amazing contribution of Mrs Baker and the weekly program involving 42 of our students. One of the first things I learned about Laguna was the impressive chess program being run from the library. Chess offers so many benefits for children — enhancing cognitive skills, boosting concentration and memory, developing problem-solving abilities, and fostering creativity, planning, and sportsmanship. I especially love that our beautiful Kindergarten students are beginning to outmanoeuvre some of our older, more experienced players! Thank you, Mrs Baker.

Excellence in Teaching – Miss Cornish

Recognised for her dedication to the learning of both staff and students, and her ongoing commitment to Laguna Public School. Emma has been a long-serving teacher at Laguna, evolving every year in different roles and capacities. Currently, she is the school’s Assistant Principal Curriculum and Instruction, working closely with teachers to implement the new curriculum. She also works across both Laguna and Congewai schools, and both communities are thrilled with her contributions to enhancing learning opportunities for

students and teachers alike. Congratulations, Miss Cornish, on this well-deserved recognition.

Non-Teaching Award – “Bec”

Celebrated for her enthusiastic dedication to her many roles and her willingness to step in and support staff, community, and most importantly, students. We are so lucky to have Bec as part of our team — whether she’s working in the office alongside Jody, supporting students in the classroom, or lending a hand in the playground with teachers. She is versatile, enthusiastic, and always ready to do whatever is needed to improve the school experience for our students. It was wonderful to recognise her with her beautiful family present — six of her own children sharing in the celebration!

Student Achievement – Tex Kidd-Sobol

Acknowledged for his resilient approach to learning and his positive attitude towards all aspects of school life. Tex demonstrates excellence across multiple sporting fields, along with exceptional skills in the Creative Arts. He is a fantastic role model, showing genuine interest and enthusiasm for every element of school. Whether guiding younger students in games during playtime or producing outstanding work in the extension art group, Tex approaches challenges with determination and a great attitude. It was a privilege to celebrate his achievements, and I look forward to seeing the many successes that lie ahead for him.

Community Contribution – Jodie Usher

Recognised for her invaluable contribution to our school, her strong advocacy and support, her dedication to the Art Show, and her many years managing the school’s uniform shop. Laguna is truly blessed with an active and supportive community, and Jodie has been at the heart of it. While 2025 marks her final year as a Laguna parent, I know her involvement will continue well into the future. We thank Jodie for her passion and commitment, and we can’t wait to see the Art Show come to life this weekend. Congratulations, Jodie — a most deserving recipient.

P: 0249 98 8251 E: laguna-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

W: laguna-p.schools.nsw.gov.au F: [LagunaPS](https://www.laguna.nsw.gov.au)

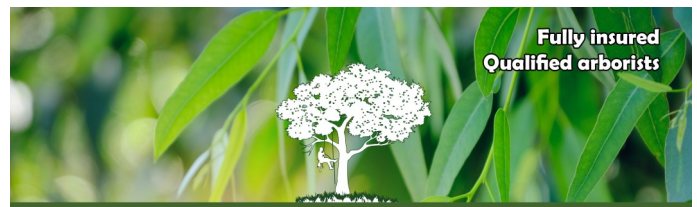


Education

Continued P8...

Continued from P7....

Next episode of OON will be packed for Laguna as we have the Arts Show, Planting Day with Landcare and so much more. While compiling this entry we had one of our students place 2nd in the Regional Spelling Bee!!!! Is there anything these students can't do?? Congratulations Carter! You were truly amazing! Edie our Stage 3 representative is after lunch, I can't wait to see how she goes!



Wollombi Valley Tree Services

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Lewis combines clinical expertise with a warm, person-centered approach. Whether you're an NDIS participant, family member, or provider—Lewis is here to help.

"I'm Lewis. I am an experienced and motivated manager and Registered Nurse with a passion for developing teams and optimising outcomes for our participants. I live a purposeful life – at home with my family and at work. I bring a sense of meaning and purpose to everything I do, and I strive to instil these values in those around me. Along with this sense of meaning, I possess a wealth of leadership and management experience gained over the last 12 years in and out of the NDIS sector. Myself and my team all share one thing in common – we believe in the work we do."

Location: Hunter Valley, Newcastle, Port Stephens & surrounds

Email:
Lewis.Drinkwater@sirv.com.au

More info: sirv.com.au/lewis-drinkwater



SCAN HERE

French conversation group in Wollombi celebrates 10th anniversary

Ten years ago, in 2015, a few friends in Wollombi, who enjoyed speaking French, began a regular conversation group. Every month, for ten years we have met at each others homes on Saturday afternoon for discussions in French on numerous topics such as politics, art, history and accompanied by wine and cheese. On average 8 of the 17 members attend this enjoyable, friendly, relaxed atmosphere. Some are native French speakers who enjoy the opportunity to speak their own language but others are those who enjoy the language as a hobby.

Recently, twelve of us celebrated our 10th anniversary with a delicious lunch provided by Wollombi Catering and hosted by Teresa and Rick in their beautiful Wollombi home. After lunch we were entertained by some of our talented members who played the

piano, guitar and piano accordion. It was also a celebration of Bastille Day on July 14 so we dressed accordingly. We were delighted to have the 'presence' of Pierrot, a well known French pantomime character.



Other French speakers are most welcome to join us.

Contact :

Gwen Lansbury, glansbury@gmail.com

0451 693 376

The Harp of Erin

Top marks to Carl Hoipo for his article on the history of the Wollombi General Store, and of his historical account about the Harp of Erin Hotel in OON's August 2005 edition. And thanks to the contributions on the story from the Sullivan and Patterson families.

I might add my piece.

The Irish part of my ancestry is the Creedon family, established historically in the West of County Cork in the towns and villages of Inchigeela, Macroom and Ballyvourney, the notorious breeding ground of Irish rebellion against Britain.

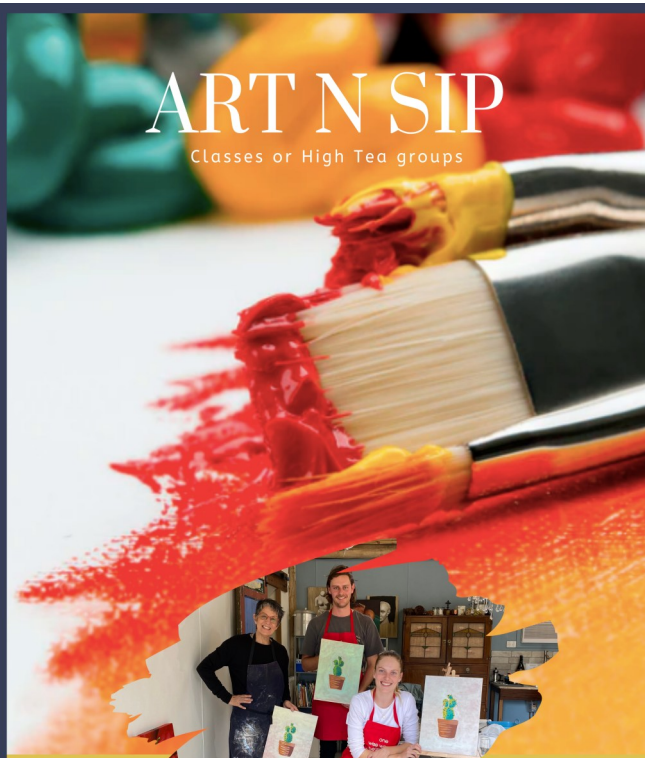
The Creedon family claims to have created the traditional Harp of Erin some centuries ago. In some old Elizabethan documents, known as *Fiants*, Donagh M'Crydon is recorded as his village harper in 1564. Could it be that John Musgrave, the licensee of the Harp of Erin Hotel in Wollombi in 1842, had Irish ancestry?

If you are travelling in Ireland, visit County Cork, and see the Creedon Hotel in Inchigeela and the beautiful town of Ballyvourney.

Meanwhile the Harp of Erin, after all these years, continues to welcome all who come and enjoy the friendship and hospitality awaiting them in our General Store.

Anthony Creedon Palfreeman

Kalamondah. Wollombi



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HOLLYBROOK HUNTER VALLEY

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Open to everyone - info & bookings: hollybrookhuntervalley.com/art



Wollombi Valley
Landcare
Group Inc.



Photo credit: iNaturalist

Weed of the month:

Crofton weed

(*Ageratina adenophora*)

Poisonous to horses, this weed is loving the wet weather...

While more prevalent on the coast, Crofton weed may be found in wetter areas of the Wollombi Valley. It likes a moist but well drained site that is frost-free and the plant thrives on disturbed ground, particularly around drainage lines and water courses.

Crofton weed produces multiple, upright stems that are purplish-red in colour and may be 75cm to 2.5 metres high. Its roots are pale yellow that strangely, smell a little like carrots! Crofton weed leaves are dark green and triangular. The plant produces clusters of daisy-like white flowers (without petals) in spring and sets black seeds that are spread by wind, water, and contamination via hooves, shoes or machinery.

If you own horses, ensure that you are free of Crofton weed as it causes respiratory and heart conditions which cannot be treated and may cause death.

Crofton weed can be dug out manually but make sure you get all the roots. For biological controls, consult the sources below.

Sources: NSW WeedWise <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov/Weeds/CroftonWeed> and WeedssAUSTRALIA <https://weeds.org.au/profiles/crofton-weed-catweed/>

Please do the right thing for injured wildlife!

We are again seeing many wild animals hit by cars on roads in our valley. Hopefully we all know to slow down when driving at dawn and dusk. But at this time of year, kangaroos, wallabies and wombats will often graze during daylight hours as well.

Drivers who encounter a motionless animal on the road have a responsibility to stop and make an assessment. It is a good idea to carry rubber gloves in your car.

If the animal is dead, honour it by pulling it completely off the road. Turn the animal over to ascertain whether it is male or female. If it is female, check if her pouch contains a joey. If it does, do not attempt to remove the joey. Contact the volunteers at Hunter Wildlife Rescue on **0418 628 483**. Once the animal has been assessed, the animal should be marked with a painted cross to indicate it has been checked.

If the animal is injured, try to ascertain the nature of the injuries and then contact Hunter Wildlife Rescue. Whether the animal is injured, or dead and carrying a live joey, you must provide the precise location of where you have found the animal. If at all possible, it is helpful for you to stay with the animal until a volunteer from Hunter Wildlife Rescue arrives. If you see a wombat out during the day, it could be sick with mange. If you can take the time to check and notify Hunter Wildlife Rescue, this may save the wombat from inevitable death.

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I would like a 12month Subscription to OON via ☐ **Email (Free)** or ☐ **Post (\$60)** Renewal ? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name: _____ PH: _____

Postal address: _____

Email address: _____ DATE: _____

Post this form and a **cheque** payable to WVPA Inc./OON to OON Subscription C/- Wollombi General Store, Wollombi NSW 2325 or enclose this form and **cash** in an envelope and pop into the OON box at the Laguna or Wollombi General Stores.

What were the farmers doing.

1840s... Surveyors were instructed to survey land for sale in lots which had the potential for a family to be self supporting. These were generally 40 ac. Lots on the valley floors. Auctions of about 12 of these were held about twice a year in Wollombi.

A new owner of a small farm would probably arrive with a two wheeled cart loaded with a tent, a saucepan & kettle, bucket, axe, saw and spade and hoe for digging. A site for a house near a permanent water hole would be chosen, a small vegetable garden with a picket fence commenced. A hut, often with an earth floor would be quickly built, round bush poles for the frame, walls and roof clad in sheets of stringy bark. There would be a stone fireplace at one end. Trees growing on the creek flats would be ringbarked to encourage the grass to grow for livestock. Grady noted P33..."and these small farmers who live on a field or two of maize and potatoes "

This first hut was replaced as soon as possible with a small house with sawn timber floors and walls, and probably a timber shingle roof.

In contrast to the above, the Milbrodale property offered for sale below shows what could be done if a person had plenty of money and convicts to get things done. In this case. In two years.

Milbrodale – Wollombi TO BE LET OR SOLD, BY MR. BLACKMAN, **TWO THOUSAND ACRE FARM** to be SOLD or LET, for a term of Three, Five or Seven Years, with or without the Stock, consisting of about Six Hundred Sheep, Seventeen Working Bullocks, Three Hundred and Fifty Head of Cattle, Fifteen Horses and Mares, Pigs, Implements, Tools and Stores, at a Valuation.

The improvements consist of a substantial slabbed Cottage, stone barns, Calf, Cow and Sheep Pens, Fifteen Paddocks, Tobacco Sheds, Carpenter Shops, and Blacksmith's Forge, Stables, Vineyard, containing Two Thousand Five Hundred Vines, of the most choice description, Gardens two and a half Acres, stocked with the choicest description of Lemon, Orange, Pear, and other Trees, ALSO, A Fine Hop Garden, and many other improvements, forming a complete Homestead. Fifty Acres of Growing Wheat, Barley and Rye.

Sydney Herald, 4. 12. 1834

Acreage of various crops grown in the Wollombi district, 1840. Wheat

940 - Maize 451 - Barley 94 - Oats 10 - Potatoes 16 - Tobacco 22.

1843... This district has fully maintained its just celebrity this year as a wheat growing country, by the

DONATIONS TO THE ENDEAVOUR MUSEUM.

An enquiry was received from Sandy Conroy, Family History Convenor of the Cessnock District Historical & Family History Society Inc. to the Lions Club of Cessnock regarding the Endeavour Museum and the condition of the former exercise yard attached to the building that needed some refurbishment.

To consider this enquiry, members of the Lions Club of Cessnock and the Cessnock Men's Shed visited the museum, met with Dave Roache, Museum Convenor, to see what was needed.

As a result, the Cessnock Lions Club and the Cessnock Men's Shed have donated \$500 each to assist with the needy repairs of the yard.

Pictured with Lindsay Self and Dave Roache from the museum, is Peter Torenbeek, Treasurer of Cessnock Lions Club/President of the Cessnock Men's Shed and Sandy Conroy, also a Lions member, following the handover of the cheques, commentating that "both of our organisations are pleased to make these contributions towards the preservation of the exercise yard repairs at the 1866 sandstone building".

Peter Torenbeek: pst@bigpond.net.au; 0422 336 367



production of an abundant crop of a superior sample. Crops ranged from 20 to 30 bushels per acre. The district also had a good reputation for tobacco growing M.M.

1845... Flour Mills built in Wollombi and Millfield

Carl Hoipo

Articles of the Colonial Era by historian Carl Hoipo

Wollombi of Old

Wollombi, September 1847.

That additional labour is urgently required all employers are unanimous. in believing, for to them it is a feeling subject. Unless a further supply of hands shall in the meantime arrive from some quarter, how is the harvest or sheep shearing to be gotten over. Labour is every day scarcer-almost unattainable and although the Legislative Council have been now sitting for upwards of four months, it does not appear that their collective wisdom has been engaged in endeavouring to remedy such a serious drawback to the continued prosperity of the colony.

We can scarcely take up a newspaper of old fatherland without seeing an account of the exertions being made by landed proprietors to

lessen, by emigration, the population on their estates, as the most eligible means of reducing the distress arising from famine and as, in

numerous instances, the entire expense of conveyance to the United States or Canada is borne by individuals, as not the time been allowed to pass aye, and unaccountably too when arrangements might have been made for large shipments of emigrants to Australia, at

an expense not exceeding ten pounds each.

The Sydney Morning Herald.

Sourced through Trove by Steve Sullivan.

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Wollombi Valley Garden Club

As rain & flood caused our garden Group to be postponed until Monday 1st of September, I have noted a few of the seasonal jobs recently completed in my garden.

- Pruned, manured and mulched the roses & salvias.
 - Resting vegetable beds have been manured and mulched.
 - Tidied up the strawberry patch, removing old & large leaves and excess runners.
 - Manured and mulched grevilleas and other natives and removed any spent flower heads.
 - Trimmed and tidied up geraniums, removed old & large leaves to open up the plants to allow air to circulate better in this wet weather. They really appreciate this treatment.
- Manured and mulched all my citrus. I will fertilise with Citrus Fertiliser in the next week or so as they start to grow and flower both potted and inground plants.

Save the date!

Monday 1st September is at my garden in Yango Creek Road, Laguna. If you wish to join the mailing list or Host a garden visit contact me

on details below.

JUDY ZIEREN -0405 81 845

Or barryandjudy1@bigpond.com



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Hunter Organic Growers Society Field Day at Kawalang

Hunter Organic Growers Society's August Field Day was held at Kawalang, in Murrays Run/Bucketty on Saturday, August 9.

Undeterred by persistent rain, seventeen members gathered for a cuppa and sharing of ideas, projects and aspirations, arriving from all over the Hunter including local members from Wollombi and Upper Yengo.

After a tour exploring what's in the ground and hopefuls in the greenhouse, the group saw a distillation of lemon-scented tea tree, which yields (in addition to tea tree oil), a superb hydrosol that can be used as an effective cleaning product. Samples were shared with all to enjoy.

Members brought plates of food with special things they are growing...creating a sumptuous feast of new tastes. Seeds, plants and fruit, whatever people had in abundance in their garden, were exchanged. For those with a bit of extra time and appropriate footwear, Keith and Brynnie led a walk down to Flat Rock Creek with stunning sights along the way.



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Spring

The influx of those winter holidaying birds returning from SE Queensland is filling our valley with songs and chorus. My first arrivals to herald spring were the noisy friarbirds, olive-backed orioles, yellow-faced honeyeaters, swallows, whistlers, wagtails and cuckoos. With their calls ringing in the valley suddenly the long-term avian residents find reason to sing. The bush is alive again with bird songs. The lyre birds are remembering their repertoire.

Things you can do for our birds:

- If you must poison rats, and remember there are other ways than poisoning to get rid of rats, make sure you use **First Generation** poisons such as those including Warfarin, Coumatetralyl and sodium chloride. Brands include Ratsak Double Strength and Racumin. These poisons carry far less risk of secondary poisoning to the birds of prey. These still contain dangerous chemicals and should always be used in an enclosed bait station. DO NOT use Talon, Fast Action Ratsak, Mortein and The Big Cheese Fast Action baits. Anything labelled "fast action" will contain bird-killing poisons. They are called **Second Generation poisons** because they kill anything that eats the poison PLUS anything that eats the poisoned animal
- For non-poisoning ways to get rid of rats see: https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/you-dirty-rat/12095852?utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared
- Clean out bird baths
- Set birdbaths near a tree or shrub for small birds to hide in after drinking and bathing
- Pop in a small piece of copper which will help, to some extent, limit algal growth. Birdbaths will still need cleaning weekly
- If the bird bath is deep put in rocks that reach above the water surface to help birds have a place to fly out from
- If you have cattle or horse troughs attach a length of rope with a weight at the water end that enables birds to climb out and not drown.
- Dust off your binoculars and be ready for the October Aussie Bird Count 20th-26 October!

Chris Davey

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Council Notifications which may be of interest to the community

Council launches \$96,000 Grant Program for Community, Sporting and Environmental Projects

Cessnock City Council has launched the 2025 round of its highly anticipated Community, Sporting and Environment Grants, with a total of \$96,000 available to support initiatives that enrich the lives of community members across the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA).

The funding aims to assist local community, environment and sporting groups with projects that promote community participation, wellbeing, cultural development, environmental sustainability, or the enhancement of local Council facilities. Eligible initiatives may seek support for minor capital works, equipment purchases, or projects designed to create long-term positive impacts on the region.

Local organisations or community groups are invited to apply for funding across four categories:

- Sporting Facilities
- Community Facilities
- Sustainable Communities – Tidy Towns
- Community and Cultural Development.

Cessnock City Mayor Dan Watton highlighted the importance of the program and reflected on its impact from the previous year, when Council proudly funded over 40 community-driven projects.

"The heart of Cessnock is its people and the groups who work tirelessly to make our community a better place," said Cllr Watton.

"This program is a testament to Council's ongoing commitment to support those driving positive change, whether in environmental sustainability, culture, or sports."

"Investing in local initiatives strengthens our community and improves the services and spaces we all use and enjoy, and I encourage all eligible groups to apply."

Applications for the current round of grants are now open and will close at 5pm Friday 12 September 2025. Successful applicants to be notified of the outcome in by the end of the year.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to review the grant guidelines including eligibility criteria on Council's website www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/grants, where you can also find the application form. Contact the designated staff member listed on the website to discuss your application before submission on 4993 4100.

Latest upgrades at Carmichael Park precinct complete

The regional sporting facilities at Carmichael Park, Bellbird, have received a boost with the completion of the next stage in the Carmichael Park Masterplan.

The latest works included construction of a new public amenities building, shelter with electric BBQs, picnic setting, and connecting pathways at Neville Tomlinson BMX Facility.

The most recent upgrades, which opened today, will support other park improvements delivered over the last 18 months including a new four bay cricket practice nets, a full-size multipurpose court and hit-up/rebound wall, and the hugely popular Neville Tomlinson Regional BMX Facility.

Cessnock City Mayor Dan Watton said the works complement the regional standard facilities that have been delivered in Bellbird.

"Council has transformed Carmichael Park into a destination sporting and youth precinct, and these latest facilities are a great addition," said Cllr Watton.

"It's really pleasing to see the realisation of the vision identified in the Carmichael Park Masterplan, which has delivered a fantastic community space for the people of Bellbird and beyond."

The latest stage of works was funded by the NSW Government through the Club grants Category 3 Infrastructure Grants 2024-25.

Spotlight on Nature: Cessnock City Council Marks Biodiversity Month with Free Community Events

Cessnock City Council will celebrate biodiversity month throughout this September with a range of free and accessible community events, including tree planting, library story time gatherings, workshops, pub trivia events, an ecology walk, and a spotlighting evening.

Not to be missed, a special community event will be held at Poppethead Park, Kitchener on 6 September featuring a bushwalk, spotlighting, Indigenous storytelling, a bushcraft workshop by expert Jake Cassar, and community barbecue by the Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation Group of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Maree McCarthy will host workshops at Kurri Kurri Library on 2 September and Cessnock Library on 25 September focusing on promoting biodiversity in the garden.

Among several pub quiz events throughout the month, Khartoum Hotel will host a picnic trivia afternoon on 14 September, suitable for the whole family – with questions on the theme of biodiversity and exciting prizes to be won. The event starts at 1.30pm in the beer garden – make sure to bring a chair or picnic rug!

Cessnock City Mayor Daniel Watton said there were plenty of opportunities for locals to make the most of what the festival has to offer. "We've got a fantastic program lined up this September, with something for everyone – from outdoor adventures like bushwalks and spotlighting to fun and engaging community events like trivia afternoons and workshops," said Cllr Watton. "These events offer a wonderful opportunity for people to get outside, learn new skills, and connect with their community in a welcoming environment."

"I encourage everyone to come along and be part of the celebrations."

Some events have limited space and require people to reserve a spot – including the bushwalk and spotlighting events. Visit www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/Bushland2025 to do so, and for a full calendar of what's on during the month of celebrations.



MAYORAL COLUMN

Mobile coverage black spots put communities at a significant disadvantage, and Cessnock local government area (LGA) has more than its fair share. These days, many of us rely on our mobile phones for everything from connecting with family and friends, to commerce, education, and wellbeing. Connectivity is no longer a luxury – it's a necessity. That's why I raised the matter at the August council meeting, where my fellow councillors and I resolved to write to federal and state ministers and MPs, and the relevant telecommunications providers, outlining the urgent need to address the lack of digital inclusion in parts of our LGA - like Bucketty and its surrounding communities.

We are also calling for Cessnock LGA to be included in future rounds of the Mobile Black Spot Program and for Bucketty to be prioritised in any future mobile coverage improvement programs. Along with this, I plan to raise the issue of telecommunications infrastructure funding at the Local Government NSW conference in November.

With rapid population growth and an increase in visitors to our region, the lack of coverage is becoming increasingly dangerous. It is not only a barrier to economic participation, but also a significant public safety risk in the event of emergencies such as bushfires, floods or crashes on our roads. Our LGA deserves the same level of digital access as metropolitan areas, and mobile coverage blackspots undermine our ability to attract and support residents, businesses, and tourism.

Meanwhile, it was a thrill recently to see some hard work pay off with wonderful new facilities at Bellbird's Carmichael Park. The project, proudly funded by the NSW Government, includes a new block of public amenities, shelter with electric barbecues and a picnic area, and connecting pathways to Neville Tomlinson Regional BMX Facility and multipurpose courts. These upgrades support other park improvements delivered over the past 18 months. I encourage you to visit Carmichael Park and see the fantastic new facilities for yourself.

Council will celebrate Biodiversity Month throughout September with a range of free and accessible community events, including tree planting, library story time gatherings, workshops, pub trivia, an ecology walk, and a spotlighting evening. It's a fantastic program, with something for everyone, and offers a wonderful opportunity for people to get outside, learn new skills, and connect with their community in a welcoming environment. Some events, like spotlighting on 6 September, have limited space, so visit the events page on Council's website for links to book your spot.

A final reminder that Cessnock STOMP Festival is on this weekend. Get down to the grounds of TAFE NSW Cessnock between 10am and 8pm on Saturday 30 August for an unforgettable day of fine wines, delicious food, live music, and family-friendly fun!

Diary & Events

Church

St John's Anglican Church Wollombi is a festival church. There is a service at Christmas and Easter. Baptisms, weddings, funerals and other services are by arrangement. Please contact the Parish on 02-4991 4761 or 0418-269 892 or email: stjohnscottage@bigpond.com

Other regular Anglican church events

Suspended during Covid

St Michael's Wollombi, Mass is on the 2nd and 5th Sunday of the month at 2pm

Wollombi Valley Home Church

Meets at Tennis Club
1st Sunday of the month at 2pm, followed by afternoon tea.
Contact Keith 0409-909 971 or Pastor Neville 0467-210 478

Crafty Yarns

Knitting/crochet group meets in Wollombi.
For more information contact Jane 4998 8158
or Jillian 0477 519 996.

500 Cards—Wollombi

commence at 6 pm on last Monday in the month.
Wollombi Tennis Clubhouse
Contact: Jan Harrison
janeceharrison08@gmail.com

Chamber of Commerce - Wollombi Valley

General Meetings held every 2nd month. See
www.wollombivalleytourism.com.au for venue.

Fire Brigade—Laguna

Training 3rd Saturday of the month with breakfast at 8.30am followed by training from 9am to 11am. Laguna Fire Station. Members meeting 11am after training in March, June, September and December.

Fire Brigade—Wollombi

Training 3rd Saturday monthly 8.30am Wollombi Fire Station. Members meeting 11am following training in even months. All welcome. Enquiries to brigade@wollombibushfire.org.au

Fire Brigade - Bucketty and District

Training 3rd Saturday monthly from 9am - 12pm
Members meeting 1pm on the even months.

Garden Group

1st Monday monthly.
Contact Judy Zieren 0405-281845

Conversations en francais à Wollombi

Rencontres detendues pour ceux qui veulent parler francais a Wollombi. Nous nous reunissons les samedis une fois par mois vers 17 heures chez des particuliers. On discute l'art, l'histoire, la politique, la France – avec un bon vin et fromage bien sur.
Contactez: Gwen Lansbury, glansbury@gmail.com
Ph: 02-4998 3141, 0451 693 376

Landcare Group - Wollombi Valley

Join us to learn more about caring for the land and the wildlife on it. We meet regularly for workshops, planting days and other events. New members are always welcome! Contact us at www.wollombilandcare.org.au or wollombi.landcare@gmail.com

Monthly Historical Ghost Tours

Newcastle Ghost Tours & Jo Potter Ph: 0411-357 519

Museum—Wollombi

6pm summer – 5pm winter, 1st Wednesday monthly except January, Wollombi Cultural Centre

Pony Club—Wollombi Valley

Every 3 weeks contact President Simone 02-4998 8214 for details

Playgroup (all kids 5 and under welcome)

10.30am every Tuesday, at Slacks Park Wollombi

Theology in the Pub discussion group:

4th Sun/month at Wollombi School Residence 2:00.pm

Wollombi Valley Community Association

Community meetings held during the year. Please see OON for advertising of these.

Wollombi Tidy Valleys

11am, every 2nd Thursday Bi-Monthly Wollombi School Meeting Room. All welcome. Contact—Bernice 4991 1688

Wollombi School Community Centre:

Committee meetings held 10am on 2nd Tuesday of each month.

Transport

Grape Experience Tours 0414 457 956

Wine country taxis Cessnock (02) 4990 1111

Sport and Fitness

Pilates Classes

Mat Classes are held Wednesday 9.30am & Fridays 10.30am.
Wollombi Community Hall
Contact: Susan 0403-270 365

Wollombi Tennis

Wednesday from 5:30pm
Sunday 8:00 am
All welcome.
Contact: Julia Brooke 0403-500 381

Eureka Taekwondo

Thursdays 4pm – 5pm
Wollombi Community Hall
Contact: Steve Turner 0400-002 951

YOGA

Wednesday 7:30-8:30pm Vinyasa
Thursday 5.30-6.30pm Yin
Saturday 8.30-9.30am Hatha Flow
Wollombi Community Hall
Contact Helena 0412-369 291

Zumba Classes:

Fitness With Milly Monday Wollombi Hall
7:45am HIIT
9:00am Zumba Gold
Friday Wollombi Tennis Club 8:30am Zumba
Contact: Milly Ph 0414-435 576

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Local Accommodation**Bellbird**

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Laguna

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 Ipakey Cottage 02 4998 3219
 Kawalang Studio –Bucketty/Murrays Run 0404 896 396
 Laguna Cottages 02 4998 3219
 Twin Pines Cottage 0403 083 381
 Valle Laguna 0408 809 471
 Valley Field Escape 0488 436 001

Millfield

Bellbird & Swallows Cottages 0414 786 705
 Neudorf Country Retreat 0414 920 013

Congewai

Brown Muir Cottage 0409 416 416

Wollombi

Applegums 0419 416 416
 Blair Athol Estate 02 4998 3323
 Capers Cottage 0409 305 285
 Cedar Creek Cottages 02 4998 1576
 Corrabare Cottage 0409 416 416
 Cowboys Cabin 0423 109 558
 Cranky Rock Cottage 0438 757 442
 The Farm @ Hunter Escape 0418 114 303
 Grays Inn 02 4998 3483
 Gypsy Willows 02 4998 3404
 Hollybrook Hunter Valley 0411 968 873
 Hunter Valley Escapes 0409 416 416
 Ironbark Cottage 02 4998 3427
 Maggies in Wollombi 0416 039 081
 Mystwood Retreats 02 4998 3234
 Myrtle Cottage Accommodation 0409 416 416
 Pepper Tree Cottage 0416 039 081
 Redleaf Hunter Valley 0412 566 637
 Somewhere Unique 02 4998 3257
 The Studios 02 4998 3182
 Tiny Escape 0426 891 870
 two8seven5 Boutique Stays 0437 977 798
 Undercliff Settlers Cottage 02 4998 3322
 Wild Edge Retreat 02 4998 3304
 Wollombi Barn Stay 02 4998 3221
 Wollombi Birdhouse 0423 376 804
 Wollombi Brook Family Farm Stay 0422 515 905
 Wollombi Bush Retreat 0432 156 396
 Wollombi Farm Country House 0416 039 081
 Wollombi Stays 0416 039 081
 Woodcutters House 0416 039 081
 Yango Creek Farmhouse 0416 039 081

Restaurants, Pubs and Stores

Laguna Village Providore 0478-712613
 Millfield General Store 02 4998 1263
 Myrtle & Stone Cafe 02 4998 3220
 The Trading Post Laguna 02 4998 8244
 Twine Home Store 02 4498 3331
 Wollombi Café—Next Door 0408-599177
 Wollombi General Store 02 4998 3230
 Wollombi Tavern 02 4998 3261

A NOTE FROM THE OON TEAM

Our Own News is a Wollombi Valley Community Association (WVCA) initiative co-ordinated by volunteers.

Articles or advertisements must be emailed as a **word file** with photos attached as a separate **jpeg** file to **oon_news@hotmail.com** no later than the *15th day of each month* for publication in the following month's edition.

Articles are not edited but printed as received unless otherwise agreed and there is no guarantee of publication. Articles must be no longer than 200 words.

WVPA and the OON Team accept no liability for statements made or opinions expressed and are not responsible for the veracity of articles or advertising material.

Opinions expressed in OON are not those of WVCA or the OON Team, although they have the final word on content. If you are mentioning someone in an article please check details and facts with them and obtain their permission prior to submitting any articles for print.

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The OON Team