

Se Non E Vero, E Molto Ben Trovato Issue 509 December, 2025

\$2

Our Own News



**Wollombi Valley
stubbornly wild**

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV

16th—30th 'Flight of Fancy' Art Exhibition, Firedesh P10
29th—Classic Country Community Picnic 4-7pm
Wollombi Tennis Club presented by Sculpture in the Vines.
30th—Wollombi Valley Pony Club—Annual General Meeting 1pm at Wollombi Pony Club

DEC

3rd—Life Drawing —see Arts News P10
5th—Wollombi Tennis Club Xmas Party. **RSVP for catering.** See full details P8
6th—Opera in the Valley matinee—St Michaels Church Bookings P7
6th-11th The Artists Market—Firedesh Gallery P10
21st—St Johns Christmas service 4pm
24th—Christmas Eve
25th—Christmas Day
31st—New Years Eve—Tavern Fireworks

JAN

1st—News Years Day
24th—Movies at Grays Inn garden

LOVE LOCAL

Long time local and resident, Maggie Brown, is one of the many wonderful Volunteers manning the Wollombi Endeavour Museum.

With her wealth of local knowledge, you will find Maggie at the Museum mostly on weekends, giving all our visitors directions for where to go and what to see!

Make sure you swing by and pick up some of Maggie's cute handmade knitted items and gift cards for all occasions.

Thank You Maggie!



SUPPORT LOCAL

REMEMBERANCE DAY



11am
11/11/25

Lest we forget



Four Letters to Santa

#3

SANTA, PLEASE SANTA

So much has happened since last year
when you were about spreading good cheer,
Pony's fine and so is dog
but I think I'd better tell you about frog.

Well the last time that frog was seen
he was on a big leaf heading downstream,
He waved and smiled as he floated by
then stuck out his tongue and snatched up a fly.

But Santa I want to give you a hug
cause I'm *really* enjoying Pony Club,
We've been practicing jumping, pony and I,
trying to jump up *really* high.

We thought if he learns to fly by next year,
he could fill in for one of your reindeer
How exciting, I just can't wait,
come Christmas Santa *please* don't be late.

By Sally Sullivan 15/12/08

Picnic with Purpose: A Thank You to the Wollombi Valley

As **Sculpture in the Vineyards** enjoys its biennial pause, we take this moment to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Wollombi Valley community.

Held every two years, the festival was not on in 2025—but the spirit of collaboration has not left us. Your continued support, patience, and enthusiasm have kept the momentum alive and reminded us why this event thrives.

This year's Community Picnic is our way of saying thank you—and "job well done!"—to everyone who makes the festival possible. To the volunteers who give their time so generously, the business owners who welcome visitors with open doors, the locals who embrace the buzz, and the community groups who rally behind the scenes: your contributions have shaped the largest rural sculpture festival in New South Wales.

So hang onto your hats—it's going to be a celebration of fun and festivities. Thank you to WVCA, WVCC and Noyce Brothers Wines, who are our financial partners and collaborators for this event.

Looking ahead, mark your calendars: **Sculpture in the Vineyards returns 12–27 September 2026**. The next festival is going to be unprecedented, and we look forward to welcoming visitors back to our valley, where sculpture and community come together in spectacular style.

COMMUNITY PICNIC

Saturday 29th November 2025



SAVE THE DATE- bring a chair & a plate to share



4-7 PM Wollombi Tennis Club

Free lemonade & ice cream, sausage sizzle for gold coin donation to support Laguna Public School, plus RFS, Landcare, games, music by Simon Mariner, Noyce Brothers Bar & BYO plus lots more. Free raffle - donated by Wollombi General Store & Where Pigs Fly Laguna.

NOTICE TO THE WOLLOMBI VALLEY COMMUNITY

Committee members of the Wollombi Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Wollombi Valley Community Association attended a meeting arranged by Cessnock Council at Wollombi Tennis Club on 21 November 2025 in relation to Council's proposed Special Rate Variation.

Notwithstanding the manner in which the meeting was organised and conducted, we understand that budget repair is required to address Council's financial situation and to support its sustainability into the future. 38 Councils in NSW have applied for Special Rate Variations over the last 5 years, citing inflation, especially in relation to the cost of maintaining infrastructure and operations. Cessnock Council's situation is compounded by the vast network of local roads, as we in the Valley are acutely aware, the maintenance of which is beyond the financial and practical means of Council.

Cognisant of cost living pressures and the significant burden the proposed 39.9% SRV would have on residents of the Wollombi Valley, we are seeking information on all alternatives considered. Further, given the history of gross neglect of our local roads and infrastructure and the limited services available in the Valley, we are seeking evidence of structural reform and information on, and input into, Council's future investment plans.

While we consider some rate rise is inevitable, we are concerned to ensure that residents are appropriately informed going forward, and that we take every opportunity to improve outcomes for Wollombi Valley. We are keen to hear from community members who have ideas that support sustainability of our Villages and community into the future, particularly in relation to Council services, investment or other support. Please send any thoughts or ideas to wollombivalleycommunity@gmail.com or info@wollombivalleytourism.com.au

Additionally we encourage anyone who wishes to make submissions on the SRV to do so directly to **Council** or to <http://together.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/long-term-financial-plan-2026-2035>

or to the

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal - <https://tinyurl.com/CCCrates>

We thank the Mayor for attending the meeting in Wollombi. We will be seeking further engagement on this issue and considering submissions to other appropriate forums.

Wollombi Valley Chamber of Commerce Inc

Wollombi Valley Community Association Inc



Wollombi Pilates
Authentic | Gentle | Effective

Wednesday 9.30am
Friday 10.00am
in the Wollombi Community Hall
Doors open 15 mins before each class for sign-in & equipment set up

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



Llynda Nairn JP

0425 279 939

llyndanairn@gmail.com

YourCeremonyYourStory.com.au



Based in Millfield, serving the Hunter and Beyond!
Marriage Celebrant: Commitment Ceremonies
MC: Milestone Family Events : Baby Namings : Funeral Services

Summary of the recent Cessnock City Council presentation

COUNCIL PROPOSES 39.9% RATE RISE

Council recently held a series of briefings on its proposed application to IPART (<https://tinyurl.com/IP399>) for a Special Variation to raise rates across the LGA by 39.9%. Below is a summary of the presentation at the recent Wollombi session.

Proceedings were opened by the Cessnock Mayor, Daniel Watton. Daniel introduced the consultant - Professor Joseph Drew - a local government expert, who led the council review and is writing the application to IPART for an increase in rates. See <https://tinyurl.com/WC399> for a description of the review.

The essence of the application is to prove its reasonableness. The bulk of Joseph's presentation thus covered the evidence of reasonableness:

1. Budget projections show ongoing deterioration over the next 10 years if rates are not raised.
2. The rates in Cessnock are low compared to similar Councils.
3. There are compounding factors; compared to similar Councils, indigeneity is three times the average, but we are on the median with state pensioners.
4. Analysis of ABS data proves the affordability of the rise to rate payers.
5. NSW Treasury recently and independently rejected a loan application by Cessnock Council on the basis of financial unsustainability.
6. The efficiency of our Council is middle-of-the-ground against an international 'Council Efficiency' metric, when compared to others. (Between median and average).
7. The largest budget line is roads.
8. Staff is 23% and are paid in the lowest tier compared to other Councils.
9. Management salaries are below par; there is no glaring evidence of mismanagement and it is an effective management team.
10. As part of his analysis he did a culling of dud and non-deliverable budget items, resulting in minor savings.
11. He also made recommendations about balance sheet write-off practises, that have been incorporated going forward and further highlight the long-term budgetary non-viability.
12. If rates are not raised, the Council will be declared bankrupt in a few years' time - the downside of this is that Administrators focus on cashflow and balance sheet decisions and community considerations take a back seat. The community is often left worse off than before (but with a balanced budget and fewer communal assets).
13. His advice is that if a rise is successful, not to pursue a leadership spill - the current team is doing well under the circumstances, and it will be important to retain organisational knowledge to see any change through.
14. He talked through case studies of how other jurisdictions had responded to rate rises, and the good and bad outcomes.
15. One of his recommendations is if a rise is granted, that 'benefits harmonisation' should be done, to ensure fairness of application and economic efficiency of a new budget.

Marcel van Rooyen

**MEET NEW PEOPLE, LEARN SOMETHING NEW, BRING SOMETHING NEW
JOIN ONE OF OUR MANY LOCAL GROUPS, MAKE NEW FRIENDS, SHARE YOUR SKILLS
OR JUST LEND A HAND ... YOUR COMMUNITY WILL BE GRATEFUL
see our back pages for local organisations**

Protect our Environment and Community:

Reject the Proposed Hunter Transmission Project (HTP) Southern Corridor

An e-petition has been raised to the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, to protest the extensive and irreversible environmental damage which will be caused by the proposed Hunter Transmission Project (HTP) Southern Corridor through Olney State Forest, Watagan State Forest, Pokolbin State Forest, Corrabare State Forest, Corrabare North Flora Reserve and Jilliby State Conservation Area.

The impacts of the project include 762 ha of native vegetation cleared with direct impacts on 7 threatened ecological communities (TECs), 3 TECs listed as critically endangered, including potential serious and irreversible impacts on 2 TECs. There would be direct impacts on 38 threatened flora species, 28 threatened fauna species, including the critically endangered regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*), swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) and three endangered frog species.

The e-petition can be signed at <https://tinyurl.com/WVHTP>. The e-petition closes on 3 February 2026.

Secretary, Wollombi Valley Community Association



WOLLOMBI VALLEY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber Chatter: Wollombi Valley Buzz: Festive Fun Ahead!

The Valley's alive with celebration! Highlights so far include the spooky Tavern Halloween bash and Melbourne Cup festivities—cheers to the Tavern for keeping the party going.



Festive Events

- Sculpture in the Vineyards Community Picnic, 4-7 pm Saturday 29th November, Wollombi Tennis Club. Free ice cream, lemonade, games, and family fun.
- * Tennis Club Christmas Party: Friday 5th December. All welcome

Opera in the Valley: Saturday 6th December



Movie Nights at Grays Inn

- Returns on Saturday 24th January—save the date for a relaxed evening under the stars! And fingers crossed... **the new Wollombi T intersection** will be completed in time for Santa's



sleigh to glide through!

Until next time...

Brett, Deb, Dani, Julia, Nick, Annie and Michael

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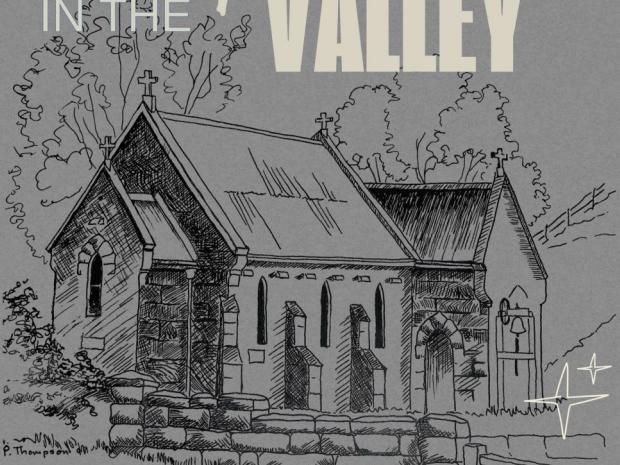
Postal address: _____

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.

AN UNFORGETTABLE AFTERNOON OF ARIAS
IN WOLLOMBI VILLAGE



6TH DEC
Opera
IN THE VALLEY

1PM PRE DRINKS
2PM PERFORMANCE
3:30PM HIGH TEA

AT THE HISTORICAL
ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
WOLLOMBI

A FUNDRAISER
FOR THE ST MICHAEL'S HISTORIC CHURCH
A VILLAGE LANDMARK OWNED BY THE COMMUNITY.



"How often do you get to say, "I'm going to the Opera"?

A world-class performance. Incredible acoustics. Right here in our beautiful Wollombi Village. St Michael's Church building will blow you away!

December 6th

- 1pm Pre drinks
- 2pm Performance
- 3:30pm High Tea

ALL INCLUDED IN YOUR TICKET PRICE

Every ticket sold helps keep our beloved St Michael's standing strong in the village, preserving this little piece of Wollombi history for generations to come.

Book now and don't miss out!

Booking link: <https://events.humanitix.com/opera-in-the-valley-matinee>

Or call to book your ticket:

Rachael 0402 113 109

Natalie 0427 988 227

Experience an extraordinary afternoon as star singers from Opera Australia and international stages fill Wollombi Valley with song.



Brad
COOPER



Alexander
HARGREAVES

Described as a fearless and heroic tenor, Brad Cooper studied with Maree Ryan at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the National Opera Studio in London and with Marilyn Horne at Music Academy of the West, California. Brad continued his development into the German repertoire under the guidance of Siegfried Jerusalem.

Sydney-born baritone Alexander Hargreaves trained at the Royal College of Music, International Opera Academy (Belgium) and The University of York. He has sung numerous principal roles with Opera Australia.

Join us for a world class performance within the intimate beauty of St Michael's Church.

Christmas

SERVICE TIMES

ANGLICAN PARISH OF CESSNOCK

DECEMBER 21 4pm St John's Wollombi

6pm St John's Cessnock
Christmas for all ages

DECEMBER 24 10.30pm St John's Cessnock
Carols Sing-a-long

11.30pm St John's Cessnock
Christmas at Midnight

DECEMBER 25 9am St John's Cessnock
9am St Luke's Millfield



BLUE Christmas SERVICE

A sacred, safe space to name the griefs, losses, changes and endings that leave us feeling disappointed, sad, or fearful that also reminds us that we are never alone.

Monday
15th December 2025
7pm

St John's Anglican Church
3 Westcott Street, Cessnock



 WOLLOMBI VALLEY TENNISCLUB

XMAS PARTY
5th December - from 6pm

Save the date!

Join us for our Annual Xmas Party!
Bring a plate to share, the club will provide cold meats, and BYO drinks. **ALL WELCOME!**
Wear your dancing shoes to dance to the beat of The Runaway Cabbages!
RSVP please for catering purposes.
Julia 0403-500 381 or JuliaBrooke2@gmail.com

JUNIOR TENNIS LESSONS

QUALIFIED COACH

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS

STARTING 22 OCTOBER

WILL RUN UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR

SMALL GROUPS

OPTIONAL ADULT LESSONS OPENING UP AS WELL!

PLEASE MESSAGE ME OR TEXT 0438225086 FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO SECURE YOUR PLACE



The Parish of Cessnock warmly invites you to our **NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS** at St John's Anglican Church Cessnock on Thursday evening, 18th December at 6pm





ART N SIP
Classes or High Tea groups

XMAS GIFT Vouchers available

The Makers Studio
HOLLYBROOK HUNTER VALLEY

Bring your creativity - take home a masterpiece!

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



Rooted in Taoist philosophy, Yin Yoga is the quiet, gentle side of movement — the yin to life's yang. Think of it as moon energy to the sun, winter to summer, stillness to motion. In Yin, we slow right down, settling into floor-based shapes for a few minutes at a time so the body can soften and the deeper connective tissues can gently release.

It's not about stretching harder — it's about letting go. Yin invites you to pause, breathe, and listen to what your body has to say. The magic happens in stillness, where the mind begins to quiet and the whole system finds balance again.

In class you'll find a welcoming space filled with calm, supportive energy. With gentle props like sandbags, bolsters, and aromatherapy to help you drop in, unwind, and feel completely supported. Each class is an opportunity to reconnect with yourself and rest deeply.

Yin is the perfect antidote to our fast-paced world — a way to recharge from the inside out. You'll leave feeling deeply rested, centred, and at peace.

Wollombi Hall

Contact: Helena - elmswoodhidden@gmail.com or 0412369291

HORSE FOOD IN LAGUNA

88 Murrays Run Road, Laguna

Ph: 0408 495 623

E: apptrak@hotmail.com



"By Appointment"



Lucerne chaff, Oaten chaff, 50/50 chaff, Hay, Gumnuts, Easi Sport, Easi Response, Easi Fibre, Biomare, Copra, Rice Bran, Beet & much more!

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!





Wollombi Valley Arts Council Inc.

What's on at The Wollombi Cultural Centre

November – December 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

Our current exhibition...

'FLIGHTS of FANCY' –

A retrospective exhibition by PAM SAHN
15 - 30th November Open 10am – 4pm Friday – Sunday
The OLD FIRESHED GALLERY, Wollombi



Our next exhibition...

THE ARTISTS MARKET

6th December - 11th January Open DAILY 10am – 4pm

This summer the Old Fireshed Gallery will be the hub for some of the Valley's finest artistic talent.

The opening of the exhibition will also be WVAC's end of year celebration. You are invited to join us from 3pm until late, Saturday 6th December, with DJ Submaster Si. All welcome, refreshments provided.



WVAC EMERGING ARTISTS AWARDS:

The winners of the Les Elvin People's Choice Awards have been announced.

Congratulations to the winner, Kaye Lovie for 'Gum Blossom' \$500 and runner-up Jan Bowmaker for 'King Kooka' \$250

LIFE DRAWING in the OLD FIRESHED GALLERY

WVAC has decided to continue with Life Drawing Classes, previously tutored by Mandy Davies until her death. There will be a different tutor each class, a shared endeavour. Please contact us by email if you are interested in attending; arts council@wollombi.org

The remaining class for this year will be 3rd December.

Wollombi Valley Arts Council Inc.

Email: arts council@wollombi.org yengogallery@wollombi.org

Web: www.wollombi.org

F/B: <https://www.facebook.com/arts councilwollombi>

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

Valé Mandy (Amanda) Davies

It is with great sadness that we farewell long-term Watagan resident, Mandy Davies.

Mandy was both an artist in her own right and an incredible supporter of art in our Valley and beyond.

Over the last few years, she ran both ceramics and printmaking classes out of the old Wollombi School weathershed. Mandy fought hard for the use of this space, fitting it out with donated equipment and tools. She also organised regular life-drawing sessions at the Old Fireshed Gallery, encouraging artists old and new to hone their skills.

We were all shocked by Mandy's sudden and untimely death. Our one solace is that she died in her hand-hewn home, in the bush, on a ridge overlooking Watagan. We think this would have made her smile!

Mandy's independence and tenacity will be remembered by many. Her spirit and knowledge will live on as her classes continue, honouring her life-long passion for art.

Linda Wilkinson

On behalf of her many students, fellow artists and the Valley community

Farewell from Ngarralingayil Barker

As our time at Wollombi comes to a close, we are celebrating the success and memories our students have created during their time here. For those who may not be aware, Ngarralingayil Barker will be merging with Darkinjung Barker next year. Although we are very sad to be leaving our beautiful little school, we are looking forward to the new opportunities and experiences that await at Darkinjung Barker in Yarramalong.



We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the many people who have supported us along the way — Phillip Heath, Martin Lubrano, Ali Binet, Annelise Dodd & Tom Spencer — for their leadership, support & encouragement. We are also very grateful to our bus driver Michelle, caretaker Brian, our cleaner Denise, and our neighbour Keith, who have all been a part of keeping Ngarralingayil Barker such a welcoming place.

Thank you also to our supportive parents and grandparents, Leisa & Mandy, and to the broader Wollombi community, who have helped make our time here so special.

As we enjoy our final few weeks, we're continuing to work hard right through to the end of term — but also taking the time to enjoy the simple things that make this place so unique. We've been making the most of the beautiful mulberries on our tree to bake delicious pies, connecting to Country, and planning a visit to the local Village Green Laguna pool to make the most of these last sunny days in the beautiful Wollombi Valley. It's been lovely having Miss Kalli, our student teacher, join us in these final weeks too.

Barker will lease Ngarralingayil for another year, and we wish them the very best of luck as this little school begins its next chapter.

nginuwa Ngarralingayil — goodbye, we'll miss you!

Kathryn Cunningham
Teacher



Working Bees are not always known for being enjoyable, but our recent one was with a great turn out of the Committee team and members and a lot was achieved. Thanks to all who pitched in.

The mobile Pre School will be changing its days of operation in 2026 (see attached flyer) and will change to *Thursdays and Fridays in the new year*. This may affect a regular craft group but we are adjusting arrangements — hopefully to everyone's satisfaction.

The death of Mandy Davies was such a shock and great loss to her family and friends and the wider Arts community in the valley. With Mandy having had such a pivotal role in the WSCC Art Studio on our school campus, we are endeavouring to ensure that those who use this resource now and in the future can continue their creative pursuits in this wonderful little venue.

While 2026 seems a long way off, it is of course just around the corner. We recently missed out on some base funding for setting up a Health Hub room in the Centre, which could have been used by a variety of medical, aged care, and other sessional services like podiatry and seasonal vaccinations.

We were also looking to upgrade our IT services to make available privacy and equipment for Telehealth participation by those who may not have that facility at home, or would welcome some support in its use.

We also applied (unsuccessfully unfortunately) for a modest Seniors Week 2026 grant.

These are a few of the resourcing initiatives the Committee has been seeking for the Valley. So if you have some time and your creative and organisational juices are looking for a project, we would love to hear from you, and/or have you join in generating ideas.

Our website is undergoing an ongoing tweak and remember you can join up as a member through wollombischool.com.au or by contacting secretary@wollombischool.com.au. Use these too if you want to book a part of the complex for a one-off or regular event.

Our next Committee meeting is at 10 am on Tuesday 9 December 2025 in the Principal's Cottage, corner of Wollombi Road and Crawford Street. Incidentally we are all bringing a plate to share in a small end-of-year Christmas get together after the meeting ends. You would be most welcome to join us.

The Wollombi School Community Centre Committee

Laguna Public School

3738 Great North Road
Laguna NSW 2325



Courage, Compassion, Honesty, Responsibility and Respect

Lovin' learning at Laguna!

As we head toward the end of the year, Laguna is buzzing with activity and excitement. Here's a look at what's been happening across our school and what's coming up for the community.

End-of-Year Presentation Prep

Our students are hard at work preparing for the End-of-Year Presentation. There's been a wonderful mix of creativity, music, practice and polish as students' get ready to share their many talents with families. We can't wait to showcase their efforts.

Kinder Orientation

Our Kinder Orientation sessions have begun, giving our newest families a warm and informative welcome to Laguna. The children have enjoyed meeting their future classmates on a Tuesday afternoon, exploring the space and getting a feel for what big-school life will be like in 2026.

Teddy Bears' Picnic

A highlight on the horizon is our **Teddy Bears' Picnic**, open to all children in the valley who are considering Laguna in 2026. Bring your favourite teddy and enjoy a relaxed afternoon of stories, play and connection with our staff and students. We can't wait to meet new families and share what makes Laguna such a special place.

Parent Session: "How to Tune Into Your Kids"

Parents across the valley are invited to attend - "How to Tune Into Your Kids." Godelieve will take us on an afternoon of connection and building on our understanding of parenting ideas. From Godelieve - With over 30 years' experience supporting families through times of change and challenge, I'm passionate about creating safe, nurturing spaces where parents feel heard, connected, and empowered. My work centres on strengthening family relationships, building resilience, and finding hope through shared stories and community connection.

Drawing on decades of professional practice in family and youth support, and supporting communities having experienced natural disasters, I genuine belief in the strength that emerges when we are open to listen, learn, and grow.

Based locally, I also offer Active Hope in a Changing Climate and Nature's Wisdom workshops, which complement my parenting work by fostering personal growth, connection, and resilience.

PCYC Gymnastics Day

Our recent PCYC Day was a huge success, with students diving into a range of gymnastics activities. From balance beams to tumbling challenges, rock climbing and trampolining, the children showed determination, courage and plenty of smiles. A big thank-you to PCYC for providing such a fun and energetic experience.

Swimming Season Begins

Swimming lessons have kicked off for the term, and the students are already showing great confidence in the water. These sessions are an important part of building water safety skills, and it's wonderful to see so many children making strong progress.

Pod Learning Success

Our Pod learning sessions continue to shine, with many students demonstrating fantastic improvement in reading and numeracy. The focused, small-group approach is paying off—well done to all the students for their hard work and persistence.

Community Picnic

The Community Picnic is just around the corner, and we're looking forward to firing up the BBQ and sharing a relaxed afternoon together. It is to be held at the Tennis Club on Saturday 29th November. Hope to see many of you there.

Continued over

Trivia Night — 5 December

Get your thinking caps ready! Our Trivia Night is coming up on Friday 5 December. Start forming your teams for an evening of friendly competition, prizes and plenty of laughs. We hope to see many families and community members there.

Jaclyn Zoneff



P: 0249 98 8251 E: laguna-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
W: laguna-p.schools.nsw.gov.au F: [LagunaPS](https://www.facebook.com/LagunaPS)



Wollombi School Community Centre

Thursdays and Fridays

9.45am—3.15pm

\$30 enrolment fee is the only charge for the whole year

Please call 02 49346725 or email

lhactivityvan@bigpond.com to enrol your child

Licensed by NSW Department of Education

Hunter Mobile Preschool — providing education to rural children since 1979.

Registered as Lower Hunter Children's Activity Van Association Inc. ABN 62 343 435 832.

Trading as Hunter Mobile Preschool

www.huntermobilepreschool.com.au

Highly Recommended and Now Local to the Hunter Valley

Lewis Drinkwater



Registered Nurse & NDIS Professional

With over 12 years in healthcare and a strong background in the NDIS, Lewis Drinkwater has recently relocated to the **Hunter Valley** and is proud to support the local community through his work with **Sirv**.

Specialising in:

- Supported Independent Living (SIL)
- Complex & high-intensity supports
- Personal care & community access
- Behaviour support & capacity building

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



Wollombi Valley
Landcare
Group Inc.

Weed of the month:

Aaron's Rod (Verbascum thapsus)

Its yellow spires are in flower now...



Photo credit: gobotany@nativeplanttrust.org

We were going to feature broad-leaf privet this month but will hold off on this until the January edition because Aaron's Rod is having a strong run at the moment!

Aaron's Rod, otherwise known as Great Mullein or Shepherd's Blanket, is a short growing annual or biannual herb that in spring produces a tall flower spire (one to three metres) from a spreading leaf rosette. It usually has one main stem and its hairy leaves are grey-green. Aaron's Rod produces bright yellow flowers that are densely clustered near the top of its stems. The flowers set ovoid, hairy fruit capsules that turn from green to brown before releasing seeds.

The plant typically grows in sunny well-drained sites, proliferating in disturbed ground, sandy pasture, creek beds and along roadsides. Aaron's Rod is believed to have medicinal properties. It is poisonous to stock though the plant is not often ingested because of the irritation caused by the tiny hairs on its leaves.

While the plant can be controlled by pulling out of the ground, you need to ensure you remove the entire long tap root and carefully dispose of the seeds. For alternative control measures, refer to the sources below.

Weeds of Australia: https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/Verbascum_thapsus

and weedsAUSTRALIA: <https://weeds.org.au/profiles/great-mullein-shepherds/>

Some months ago, we featured the spreading weed, richardia. A long-term Landcare member has conducted controlled experimentation on eradicating the weed.

Interested readers should contact Wollombi Valley Landcare Group for the results of this trial: wollombi.landcare@gmail.com

**Vale Evelyn Bloom
and Valerie Milgate**

Wollombi Valley Landcare Group acknowledges the passing of two foundation members this year.

Evelyn Bloom ran the historic Wollombi House for guest accommodation over several decades before moving to Tasmania in 2017. She contributed a great deal to WVLG, particularly in the early years of its formation. Evelyn was extremely knowledgeable about native plants.

Valerie Milgate lived at Blaxlands Arm with her husband John, and son Paul, from the 1980s. She was a passionate advocate for native fauna and flora in the valley and a member of several community groups. Valerie was the instigator of the initial round of roadside wombat warning signs and an active member of the 'WARTS' group that restored the Wollombi Nature Trail.

Both women are sorely missed and we offer our condolences to their respective families.



Wollombi Valley Tree Services

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inspection and quote

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Tree removal
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Wollombi Valley Landcare Group Inc.

New Burrow Flap for Treating Mange in Wombats

Members of Wollombi Valley Landcare and a Sydney University student, have designed a new burrow flap for the treatment of mange in wombats:

1. It uses materials that are biodegradable, reducing the introduction of plastic and aluminium into the environment.
2. Is easier to assemble than current designs, meaning members can assemble it themselves from a supplied flat pack kit, versus previously being assembled by volunteers.
3. It is easier to refill while mounted while retaining a rain cover.
4. Comes with a more robust and versatile mounting frame, which performs better when force is required to mount in hard clay, allows hammering, while remaining bendable by hand in the field.
5. Has critical material safety and user instructions printed on it, to assist with in-field deployment and compliance.

Materials were sponsored by Bunnings and Edcon Steel. The Nepean Men's Shed, developed the laser-cutting model and also manufactured the first batch of flaps at a nominal cost, while a WVLC member designed and manufactured the first batch of mounting frames.

We are receiving good feedback from members who are trialing the burrow flap, and we plan to scale this to replace the current design in the next mange season.

For information on how to become involved in treating mange in wombats on your property please contact us at
wollombi.landcare@gmail.com



WOLLOMBI GARDEN GROUP

November's garden outing was outstanding, our hosts

Ant & Alice provided the perfect setting for an evening of gardens, food & good company.

Ant has created a 'Hilltop Sanctuary' of sprawling lawns, towering gums, specimen trees, gardens & amazing sculptures all with views over the surrounding valleys.

The table was laden with great food and there was a constant hum of conversations well into the evening.

2025 has been a wonderful year for our garden group with more to come in 2026. If you wish to join our mailing list or host a garden visit please contact me. Our first outing for next year is to Sonia's garden in Wollombi in March (February is usually just too hot).

JUDY ZIEREN

0405 281 845 or barryandjudy1@bigpond.com



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Wollombi of Old

Postal Arrangements, Wollombi District. 23rd December 1915.

From the Postmaster General's Department, Sydney, under date 21st December, Mr. W.M. Fleming, M.H.R., has received word that his letter of the 17th instant is under consideration, and that a further communication respecting it will be addressed to him as soon as a decision has been arrived at in the matter, which was a request for a twice-weekly delivery of mail matter to Dairy Arm and Murray's Run from Laguna.

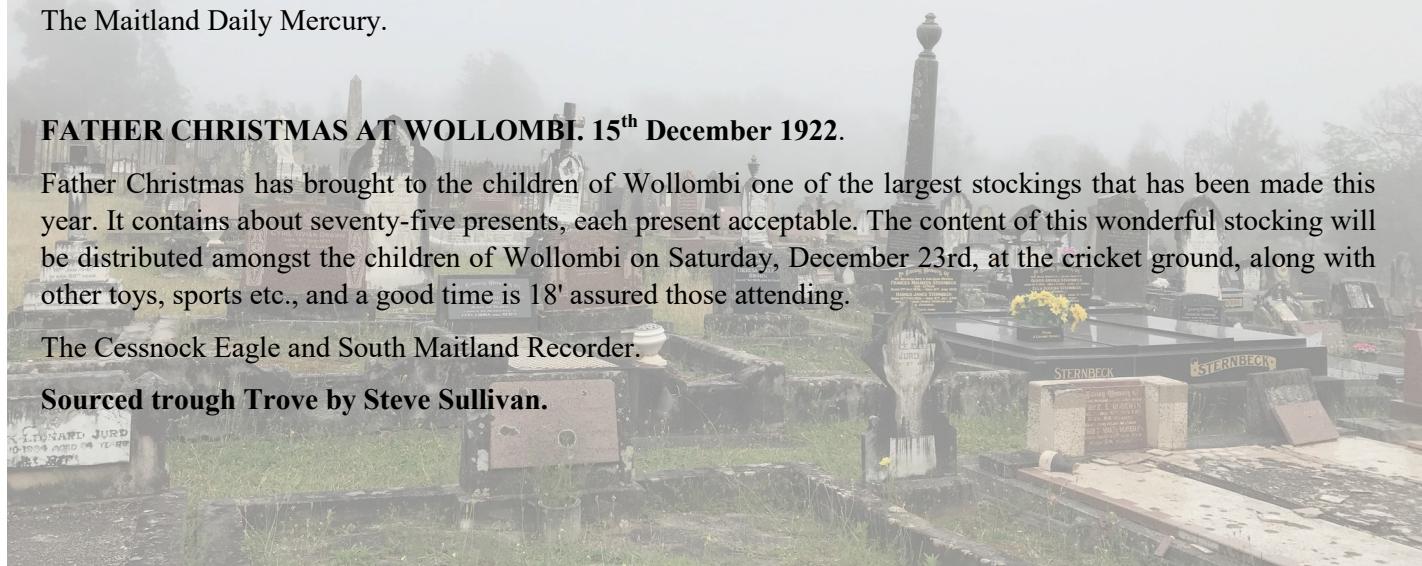
The Maitland Daily Mercury.

FATHER CHRISTMAS AT WOLLOMBI. 15th December 1922.

Father Christmas has brought to the children of Wollombi one of the largest stockings that has been made this year. It contains about seventy-five presents, each present acceptable. The content of this wonderful stocking will be distributed amongst the children of Wollombi on Saturday, December 23rd, at the cricket ground, along with other toys, sports etc., and a good time is 18' assured those attending.

The Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder.

Sourced trough Trove by Steve Sullivan.



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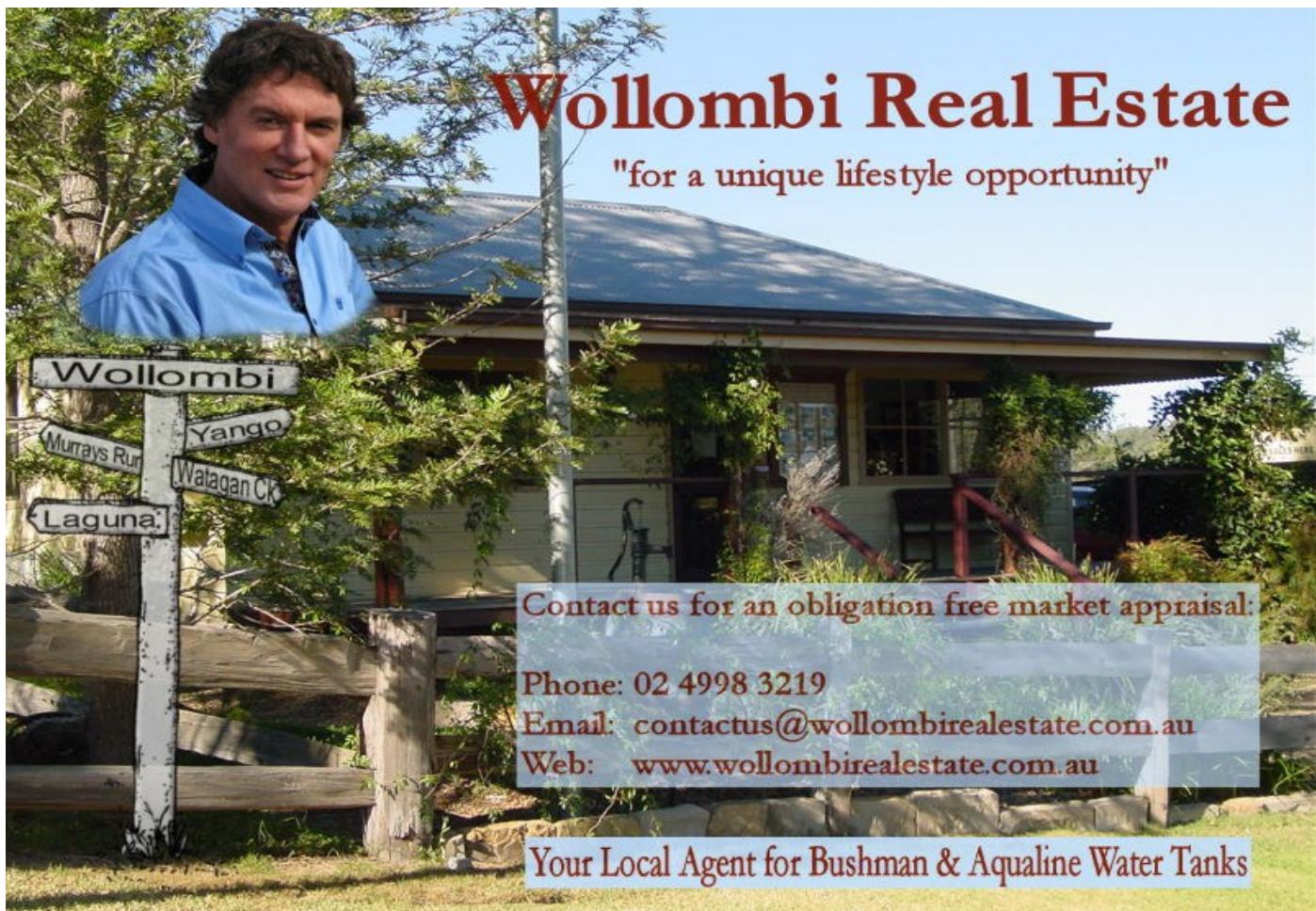
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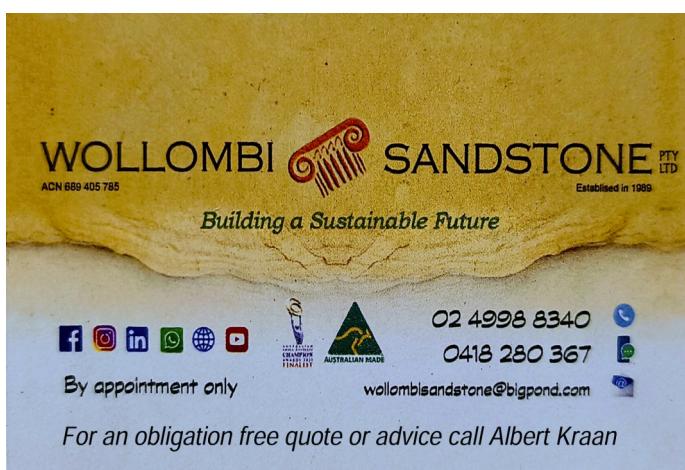
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Diary & Events

Church Services

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

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
janecharrison08@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 français à Wollombi

Rencontres dépendantes pour ceux qui veulent parler français à Wollombi. Nous nous réunissons 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 3rd Thursday of the month,

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. Venue is the Principal's Cottage on Cnr of Crawford & Wollombi Roads, Wollombi. Interested persons welcome.

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

Thursday from 4:00pm
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 7:30-8:30am Vinyasa
Saturday 8.30-9.30am Hatha Flow
Wollombi Community Hall

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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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

Local Accommodation**Bellbird**

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Laguna

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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
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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

Fernances Crossing

Willows Retreat	0249 988623
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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