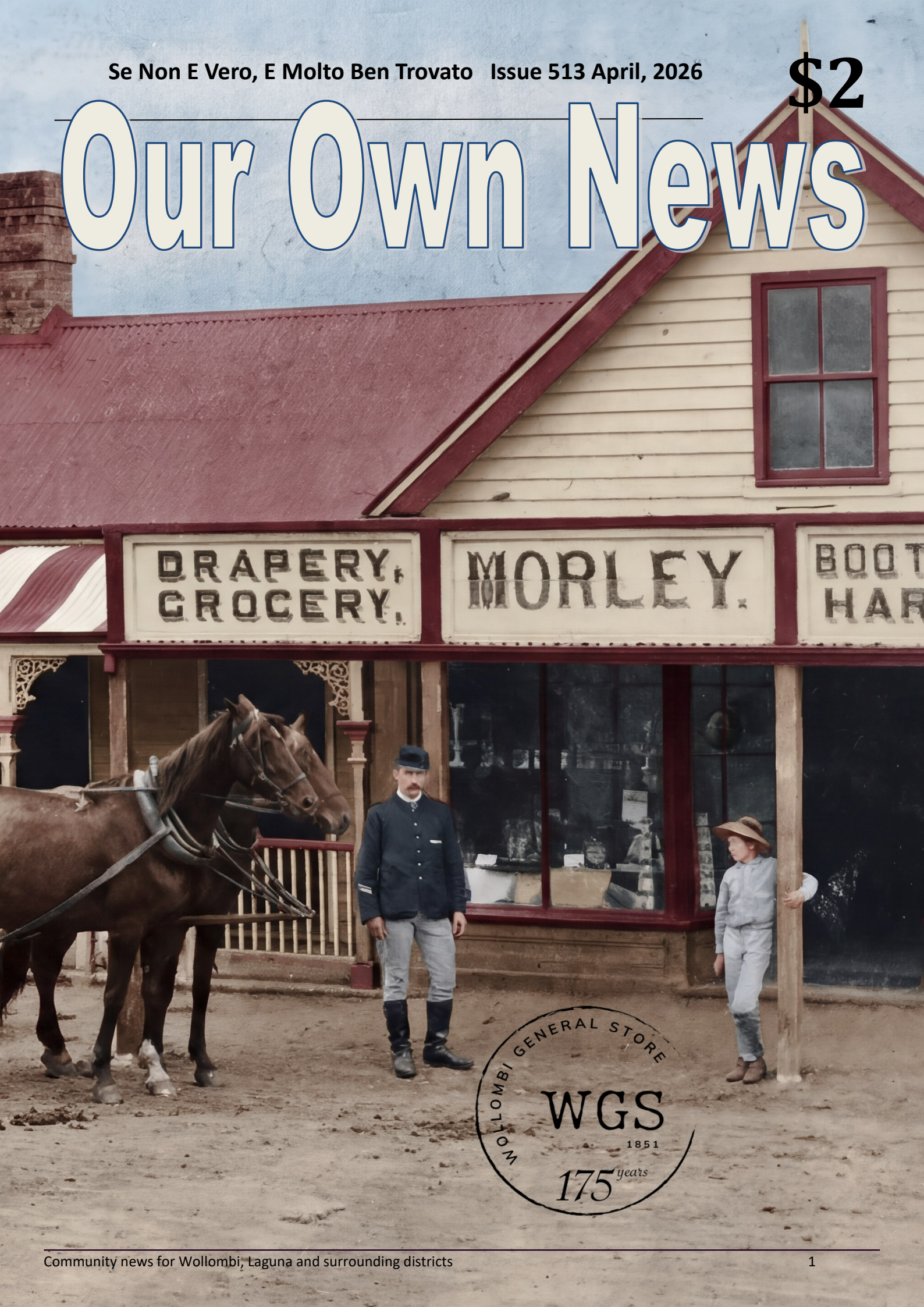


# Our Own News



## Wollombi General Store - 175 years



*The general store at the turn of the century, it was already close to 50 years old.*

This year marks **175 years of the Wollombi General Store**, and they'll be having an official party the weekend of May 2nd & 3rd.

1851 is recognised locally as the year the building began trading as a general store. The structure itself is older, originally operating as the **Harp of Erin Hotel**, believed to date from around the early 1840s when travellers moved along the Great North Road through the valley.

The year 1851 sits at a fascinating moment in world history. **Queen Victoria** ruled Britain, and its colonies and the world was in the middle of enormous social and technological change. In Australia, the discovery of gold near Bathurst in 1851 triggered the first gold rush and brought rapid population growth to the colony.

Many things we now take for granted were only just appearing. Australia's first free public library would not open until 1854, a few years later. In London, the famous clock tower **Big Ben** would not sound its first chimes until 1859. In the same year, **Charles Darwin** published *On the Origin of Species*, presenting his theory of evolution. That decade also saw rabbits introduced to Australia in 1859 - a decision that would later have enormous environmental consequences.

Agriculture was changing too. The earlier "pastoral age" of large grazing runs was beginning to shift toward more intensive farming. Heavy ploughs and other equipment were slowly transforming how land was worked.

The Hunter Valley looked very different to today. The region was decades away from becoming a famous wine destination, and the coal mining industry that later shaped towns such as Cessnock did not begin until the

1900's. Farming, timber cutting and small village trade dominated the local economy.

In this setting, the general store in **Wollombi** became an important supply point for the valley. With farms scattered across a large and often difficult landscape, people typically bought provisions in bulk - flour and sugar by the bag, tea by the chest. Hawkers and storekeepers also travelled to remote properties with wagons carrying goods and returning with produce.

In the early twentieth century, the business entered another chapter when entrepreneur **Richard Owens** purchased the store. The success of this small Wollombi business would eventually help launch the Savemore chain of grocery stores across the Hunter Valley - a reminder that one of the region's well-known retail stories began in this village.

Front Cover: The Wollombi General Store  
Photo Credit source: Euan Wilcox

### Wollombi Tavern

#### 12th Annual

#### WOLLOMBI CARP CLEANOUT WEEKEND

Wollombi Tavern have done it again hosting the annual carp cleanout on March 20-22.

A huge turnout of keen fisherfolk and a jam packed list of entertainment and prizes!

**Thank you to the WT Team for a fabulous effort!**

ANZAC DAY 2024

**WOLLOMBI ANZAC DAY SERVICE**

**Saturday April 25th at 5:30am**

**WOLLOMBI ANZAC RESERVE**

Community breakfast follows  
Courtesy of The Wollombi Tavern

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**MAR 14-29th Paintings & Mosaics, Fireshed P10**

**APR**

**2-19th Art for Arts Sake, Bhret McIntyre, Fireshed**

**3-5th Easter Church services—see below**

**4th Grays Inn—Outdoor Movie night**

**6th Wollombi Easter Markets at the Saleyards p4**

**11th SIP Wollombi Village Grand Opening p6**

**19th Landcare-Wombat Mange Workshop—P12**

**25th Anzac Day Service 5:30am for a 5:45 start**

**26th Tennis Club -Bunnings BBQ fundraiser**

**MAY**

**1st Wollombi General Store 175th birthday dinner**

**2nd & 3rd Heart of Wollombi Street Party 175 year celebrations, stalls, music, etc - see P5 for details**

**2nd Artisan Collective Grand Opening at The Barn, WGS**

### OUTDOOR CINEMA NIGHT

@ Grays Inn Wollombi

Sat 4th April

BYO picnic rug & chairs

Picnic & Dinner from 5pm

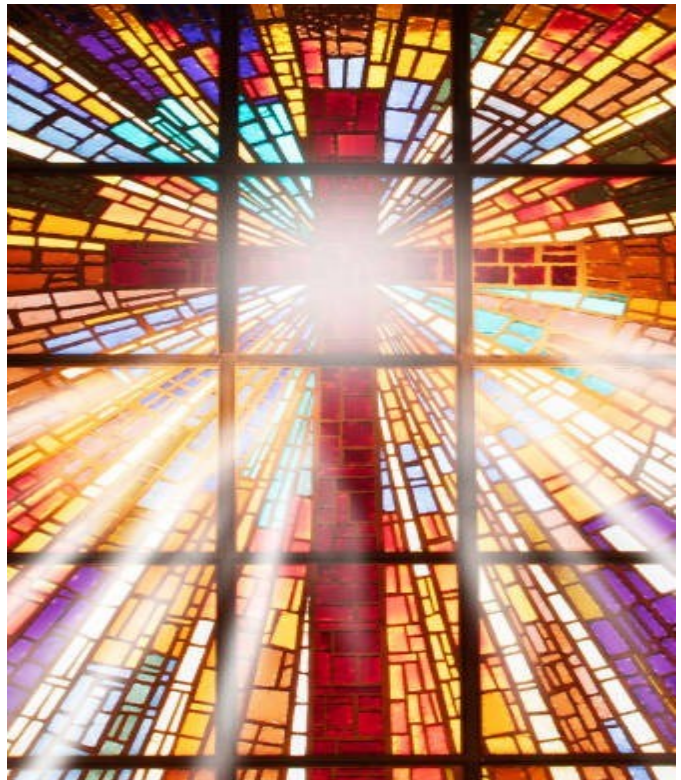
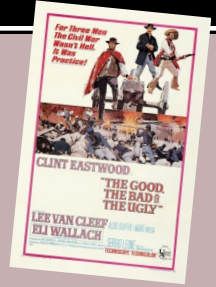
Movie starts: 7:45pm

Book: Tickets at Door, or phone 4998 3483

Movie cost: \$25

Movie & Dinner by Nathan : \$70

Drink: Beer, wine, spirits avail to purchase at SIP Wollombi Village



### St Michael's for Easter Celebrations

**Good Friday 10:30 am,  
Stations of the Cross. 3rd April.**

**Easter Sunday Mass 12:30am 5th April**



### HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES IN THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF CESSNOCK

#### **Maunder Thursday**

St John's Cessnock @ 7pm

Holy Communion with footwashing and stripping of the altar

#### **Good Friday**

St John's Cessnock @ 9am

A Solemn Liturgy

St Luke's Millfield @ 9am

A Solemn Liturgy

St John's Wollombi @ 2pm

An Hour at the Foot of the Cross

#### **Holy Saturday (Easter Eve)**

St John's Cessnock @ 6pm

Holy Communion with Lighting of the new fire  
and Renewal of Baptismal Vows

#### **Easter Day**

St John's Cessnock @ 9am

St Luke's Millfield @ 9am

Join us to celebrate the Easter Mystery



# THE HEART OF WOLLOMBI STREET PARTY

2ND & 3RD MAY 2026



WANDER THE HEART OF WOLLOMBI AND CELEBRATE VILLAGE LIFE, HERITAGE STREETS, LOCAL BUSINESSES AND FRESH CREATIVE ENERGY.

Discover special events, food, wine, art and village hospitality along the way.

- Wollombi General Store 175th Birthday Dinner
- Myrtle & Stone Devonshire Tea
- All-day artisan market stalls at WGS
- Official opening of the new village streetscape
- SIP Wollombi Village tasting experiences
- Wollombi Tavern live music and lunch special
- The Artisans' Collective Grand Opening & evening supper

Plus gallery exhibitions, local performers, special menus and village surprises throughout the day.

[visitwollombi.com.au/hunter-valley-events](http://visitwollombi.com.au/hunter-valley-events)

BROUGHT TO YOU BY  
THE WOLLOMBI SCHOOL COMMUNITY CENTRE

## WOLLOMBI EASTER MARKET

JOIN US FOR A FABULOUS FAMILY DAY OUT  
**MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL 2026**  
8 AM - 2 PM  
WOLLOMBI SALEYARDS

JUMPING CASTLE, LIVE MUSIC, FRESH LOCAL PRODUCE, BOOKS, HANDMADE CRAFTS, COLLECTABLES, NATIVE PLANTS, BRIC-A-BRAC, FACE PAINTING, FOOD TRUCKS AND LOTS MORE

Wollombi Valley Pony Club

## WOLLOMBI EASTER MARKET TEA ROOM

Come & Support a Local Club Fundraiser

**Monday, 6 April**

Homemade Cakes, Sandwiches, Brownies, Cupcakes & Drinks

Meet the Wollombi Unicorn



## WINNERS ARE GRINNERS!

The Laguna School, Small Schools Swimming Relay Team, won "gold" at the recent Hunter Regional PSSA Championships. It was an outstanding result, as the young team, through dedicated training at the Laguna Village Green Pool, improved their winning swim time from the previous Cessnock Zone Carnival by 14 seconds!

What an amazing life journey for our local youth, made possible by the late John Forsyth and his wife Robbie. The Laguna Village Green Pool has made such a difference to so many people in the Valley, young and "older." It has been an incredible legacy to our local families providing an opportunity for all to learn to swim or train for competitions, and simply, but most importantly, to keep fit. "Thank you", to the Forsyth family for your valuable gift to the Wollombi Valley.



Left Back- Clancy Downie, Centre -Eleanor Graham, Back Right- Ariel Armstrong  
Front Left -Jack Stanley, Front Right- Edie Barnett (Reserve).

### Simone Smith.



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Nick Maurer  
0417 202 645

Wollombi, NSW

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**Wollombi's T-intersection** pedestrian footpaths, curb and guttering upgrades are getting closer to completion.

The turf is taking hold with the soft rains we've been having, and the half barrel flower planters, courtesy of Chamber of Commerce, completes the landscaping.

Even the large pines in front of the Wollombi Real Estate & The Forge, have a decorative border of stone, a nice touch.

We look forward to celebrating the completed upgrade at the Heart of Wollombi and it's official opening at the Heart of Wollombi Street festival.



## Artisans Collective At Wollombi General Store

Most locals know the old barn behind the Wollombi General Store. Over the years it's been used for all sorts of things, but it's now starting a new chapter.

The space is being transformed into the **Artisans Collective**, a working hub for local makers and craftspeople from across the valley.

Rather than simply being a place where finished products sit on shelves, the barn will be a place where work actually happens. Painters, textile artists, jewellers, leather workers and other artisans will use the space as studios, creating their work on site while visitors can see the process up close.

The aim of the collective is to celebrate and support the creative talent that already exists within the valley. By bringing a group of artisans together in one shared space, the barn becomes both a working studio and a place where visitors can discover locally made work and connect directly with the people behind it.

Workshops will also be held in the barn, giving locals and visitors the chance to learn directly from the artisans themselves. The Wollombi General Store will support the collective through promotion, events and shared online platforms, helping connect visitors with the artists and their work while allowing the makers to focus on what they do best - creating.

The official opening of the Artisans Collective is planned for the weekend of **May 2**, although the doors will begin opening earlier as the space gradually comes to life.

The founding Artisans so far include: Bushink Watagan, Chelsey Teale Art, Laguna Leather, Polina Karuso Art, Therapeutic Touch Wollombi, Stovie Creations, Shady Lady and Dried Flower Creations with more local makers expected to join as the collective grows.



## SIP Wollombi Village

There is a new way to taste the Hunter Valley right in the heart of Wollombi Village. SIP Wollombi Village is a curated cellar door, bringing together a small group of boutique producers from across the Hunter Valley in one shared tasting space at Grays Inn.

Rather than asking visitors to spend the day driving between cellar doors, the concept turns that idea around - bringing the producers to Wollombi.

The curated selection will initially feature around six boutique Hunter wineries alongside a small number of regional gin distillers, craft brewers and other local producers. Tastings, producer appearances and small events will take place in the Grays Tasting Room and adjoining SIP Producers Gallery within the historic inn.

The concept reflects a broader shift taking place across the Hunter Valley, where tourism bodies, including Destination NSW and regional planning strategies, are encouraging more experience-led, place-based tourism.

Alongside the region's well-known cellar door clusters, there is increasing interest in smaller, more personal encounters with producers and their stories.

For locals and weekenders alike, it also means that a classic Hunter Valley tasting experience can now begin and comfortably end, right in Wollombi Village.

SIP Wollombi Village is expected to open in the coming weeks ahead of the 2026 Easter period. Scan the QR Code to be a founding member and secure invites to the Producer events and launch party.



## Wollombi Valley Pony Club

We were definitely blessed by the Weather Gods for our last Rally Day. Absolutely perfect weather, so much better than the horribly humid days we have been experiencing lately.

Thank you so much Cody Nettleton for your very informative & interesting talk on endurance riding as well as the heart rate monitor & temperature taking techniques.

Our great little club is manning the Tea Rooms this Easter Market Day so make sure you head down to try some out our tasty treats & meet the famous Wollombi Unicorn.



## HORSE FOOD IN LAGUNA

88 Murrays Run Road, Laguna

Ph: 0408 495 623

E: [aptrak@hotkey.net.au](mailto:aptrak@hotkey.net.au)



"By Appointment"

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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.



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



## Calling for volunteers!



The Wollombi Valley Arts Council are welcoming volunteers for the Little Yengo Gallery. Gallery opening hours are 10-4 pm at weekends and Public holidays. Half and full day shifts available.

Please email your interest to [artscouncil@wollombi.org](mailto:artscouncil@wollombi.org). Att: Kerry

# Laguna Public School

3738 Great North Road

Laguna NSW 2325



Courage, Compassion, Honesty, Responsibility and Respect

## Laguna Public School Community Update

It has been another wonderful and busy few weeks at Laguna Public School, with our students continuing to shine in so many different ways.

You may notice our students proudly wearing their new sports shirts on Fridays. Featuring the words *“Little Faces, Big Futures,”* the shirts capture the spirit of our school perfectly. Our students may be small in number, but they are full of potential, determination and pride in their school.

Our recent swimming program has been a fantastic success. Every student showed improvement in the water, demonstrating persistence, confidence and a willingness to challenge themselves. It was wonderful to see their skills and confidence grow across the program. We are also incredibly proud of our relay team who will now head off to the Regional Carnival, along with Clancy who has qualified in an individual event. We wish them the very best of luck as they represent our school.

Several of our students have also been selected to represent our zone in upcoming sporting events, including basketball and soccer. These opportunities are a testament to the effort our students put into their sport and their willingness to have a go.

Back at school, chess has begun for the year and has already proven to be a huge success. Under the guidance of Mrs Baker, even our Kindergarten students are enthusiastically learning the game, developing their thinking skills, patience and strategy. It has been wonderful to see such excitement and engagement from our youngest learners.

Looking ahead, preparations are underway for our **Harmony Day celebrations** as well as our first **On Country excursion**, which will provide students with the opportunity to connect with local culture and deepen their understanding of the land and its history.

Another exciting community event on the horizon is our **Easter Hat Parade**, which will take place on **Thursday 2nd April**. This is always a highlight for our students and a joyful celebration for our school community. We warmly invite local community members to join us on the day to watch the parade and share in the excitement.

At Laguna Public School, we are proud of the opportunities our students experience and the strong community that surrounds them. Thank you to our families and community members for your continued support.



P: 0249 98 8251 E: [laguna-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:laguna-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)

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



Education



### Expressions of Interest

for use of the facilities at Wollombi School Community Centre.

There are a number of rooms and areas WSCC members can use as part of their membership.

These can be one-off or long term .

All enquires can be via the website [www.wollombischool.com.au](http://www.wollombischool.com.au) or [secretary@wollombischool.com.au](mailto:secretary@wollombischool.com.au)

### Wollombi Family History Group

met 4th march 2026 at the Wollombi School Community Centre.

Family stories and opportunity of DNA matching with families of ancestors in the cemetery across the road. It was good to be able to do some quick back and forth and checks of headstones.

Some brick walls were solved, a lunch at the general store and a quick visit to the museum with purchases of some latest publications. The skills of Jennifer Burgess and historian Merril Jackson with Gedmatch tips, confirmation of the Bailey family wives and children that do not belong and knowledge of the principal’s residence of what is a renovation and what is an actual original soffit. We await Jennifers latest publication. No conversation was to be missed. The plan is for a weekend drop in at the Centre in September. Attendees came from Canberra, central coast, Tea Gardens ,Mt view and the Valley . As the day progressed we all realised we all had a family connection.

Enquiries for future events [secretary@wollombischool.com.au](mailto:secretary@wollombischool.com.au)

Pic 1 checking the cemetery location prior to heading over



pic 2 computers and ipads checking correct family lines. and DNA searching.



Wonderful to see so many players enjoying the fine weather. With our mid week game starting later, it makes for longer games and relaxed social gathering after.

Come along and have a hit of Tennis or Pickleball. Get fit while having fun! Games are Sunday mornings 8am and Thursday evenings at 6pm.

**NEXT PICKLEBALL GAME:**  
**Sunday 12th April from 4pm.**

*Help wanted for setup please.*  
Contact: Julia Brooke 0403-500 381

Don't forget our **Cards 500** group regularly meet.  
Contact: Jan Harrison [janeceharrison08@gmail.com](mailto:janeceharrison08@gmail.com)



**Remember our Bunnings BBQ fundraiser is on the 26th April !**  
**Come along and support us.**



Recent Australia Day 'Senior Citizen of the Year' recipient, Jan Harrison, proudly holds the plaque which now bears her name along with past recipients.

**Congratulations Jan!**

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**PLUS INCLUSION ON OUR WEBSITE**



## Wollombi Valley Arts Council Inc.

### What's on at The Wollombi Cultural Centre

#### March – April 2026

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](http://www.wollombi.org)

We are now also on Instagram

### 'PAINTINGS & MOSAICS'

An exhibition by **JULIE ELLER, KAYE LOVIE, MARILYN MILLER and MARY FRANCIS**

14 - 29 March 2026

Exhibition open 10am - 4pm Saturdays & Sundays

**OLD FIRESHED GALLERY**

Mary and Kaye started the 'Paintings & Mosaics' exhibitions twenty years ago and have held an annual exhibition ever since. Other artists have joined them over the years. Sadly, this will be their last exhibition in the Old Fireshed Gallery. There are now three painters and one mosaicist, each with their own style, largely focusing on nature through landscapes, flora and fauna.



JULIE ELLER



KAYE LOVIE



MARILYN MILLER



MARY FRANCIS

### Paintings&Mosaics

SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS 14 & 15 MARCH, 21 & 22 MARCH, 28 & 29 MARCH 2026  
OLD FIRESHED GALLERY Open 10am to 4pm

Wollombi Cultural Centre, Wollombi Rd, Wollombi, NSW  
CONTACT: 0409 041 833 or 0419 696 225



Wollombi Cultural Centre, Wollombi Rd, Wollombi, NSW  
CONTACT: 0409 041 833 or 0419 696 225

### 'ART for Art SAKE'

A solo exhibition by **BHRET MCINTYRE**

2 - 19 April 2026



### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

The Wollombi Valley Arts Council Inc. committee invites you to attend its Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be held at 3:00pm on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2026 in the courtyard behind the Little Yengo Gallery, followed by a General Committee meeting.

### LIFE DRAWING at the OLD FIRESHED GALLERY 2026

Wednesdays 1- 4pm \$20 - \$25

To register please ring Michael 0468- 730955

April 1 & 22, May 13, June 3 & 24, July 15, August 5 & 19, September 30, October 14 & 28, November 11, December 2

### 2026 EXHIBITIONS in the OLD FIRESHED GALLERY

Paintings & Mosaics: 14 - 29 March

Bhret McIntyre: 3 - 19 April

Wendy Black: 'Heads and Tales' 26 April - 10 May

Laguna Collective: 16 - 31 May

Fibre Artists Plus: 6 - 21 June

Taotocs: 27 June - 12 July

Fiona Bateman & Michael O'Sullivan: 18 July - 2 August

Wayne Munce: 8 - 16 August

Artz Emergence: 22 August - 6 Sept

Sculpture in the Vineyards: 7 - 27 Sept

Family Ties: 3 - 11 Oct

Susanna Chen Chow: 17 - 25 Oct

Jodie Usher: 31 Oct - 8 Nov

Glenda Mellows: 14 - 29 Nov

The Artists Market: 5 Dec - 3 Jan 2027

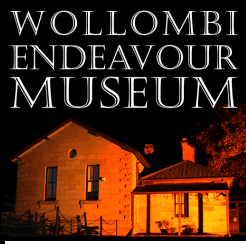
Wollombi Valley Arts Council Inc

Email: [artscouncil@wollombi.org](mailto:artscouncil@wollombi.org) or [yengogallery@wollombi.org](mailto:yengogallery@wollombi.org)

Web: [www.wollombi.org](http://www.wollombi.org)

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/artscouncilwollombi>

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



## The Wollombi Museum

The Wollombi Museum, originally built as The Court House completed in 1866, now exhibits hundreds of artefacts donated by local families which depict the life of early settlers in Wollombi.

The museum also houses historic agricultural equipment and holds many records and stories of early life in the village.

One famous local was Melville John Jeremiah Justice Jurd who accidentally burned the Tavern down on Christmas night 1959.

The story goes that after hosting a large party at his Wine Saloon Mel accidentally topped the kerosene refrigerators up with petrol and burnt the two-story building down.

This was obviously a disaster so the locals pitched in and built a new home and bar for the Jurd family in just six weeks.



To help finance the build Mel combined an old bush remedy of a double nip of port and a nip of brandy with the ingenious idea of saving all the leftovers from the bar and mixing them together and Dr. Jurd's Jungle Juice was created. **Nick Glover**

*If you are interested in local history why not become a member of The Wollombi Museum.*

*Membership costs only \$25 person per year or just \$30 for a family.*

*For information on becoming a member of The Wollombi Museum;*

*Call David Roache 0400330760*

*Or Lindsey Self 04091239589*

*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](mailto:Lewis.Drinkwater@sirv.com.au)

**More info:** [sirv.com.au/lewis-drinkwater](http://sirv.com.au/lewis-drinkwater)



SCAN HERE



Wollombi Valley  
**Landcare**  
Group Inc.



Photo credit: Marie Wyman

## Wombat Mange Treatment Workshop

Sun, 19 Apr, 9am - 12pm  
at the Wollombi Community Hall

Want to learn how to identify and treat wombats with mange? Or have you been treating wombats and want to make sure you are up-to-date with the latest treatment regime?

Join us for a 2-hour interactive workshop based on training developed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Foundation for National Parks and Wildlife Curb Wombat Mange Program.

At the end of this workshop, you will be able to identify mange in wild-living wombats, safely treat mange, know what to expect as the animals recover and how to report your treatment to inform research. You will also assemble your own burrow flap and receive a free treatment kit to take away.

**This event is free**, including a morning tea thanks to a grant from the Wombat Protection Society of Australia.

Register at <https://events.humanitix.com/wombat-mange-treatment-workshop>

## Weed of the month:

### Paddy's lucerne (*Sida rhombifolia*)

Fruiting now in the Valley



Photo credit: weedsAUSTRALIA

You may well have noticed this weed growing around old farm buildings, in disturbed soil, and along roadsides. Though not poisonous, Paddy's lucerne (also known as Common sida) is a pest, particularly since it is easily spread by livestock eating its yellow flowers.

The flowers form singly along stems and are 15 to 20mm across. They set dark brown fruit which produces barbed seeds that lie dormant until growing conditions are favourable. The upright, perennial shrub has oval leaves and grows up to one metre tall. It has the capacity to form clusters of multiple plants that can outcompete pasture and native grassland.

Paddy's lucerne may be pulled out easily enough if the soil is moist, and when it is young. But it quickly develops a robust stem and can be impossible to pull once it gets up. For alternative control measures, consult the following sources:

<https://weeds.org.au/profiles/paddys-lucerne-common/>  
<https://weedscan.org.au/Weed?Id=338>

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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



**ART N SIP**  
 Classes or High Tea groups



**The Makers Studio**  
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Bring your creativity - take home a masterpiece!

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**New councillor elected to fill Ward B vacancy**

Fatmata Bangura is the local government area's newest elected councillor, following a recent NSW Electoral Commission countback of votes from 2024.

Clr Bangura fills a position in Ward B made vacant by the resignation of Clr Chris Madden in January 2026. Clr Bangura was sworn-in on Wednesday, 18 March, and participated in her first Council meeting afterwards.

Cessnock City Mayor Daniel Watton welcomed Clr Bangura to the role, while thanking Mr Madden for his service to the local community.

"I wish Clr Bangura the best as she embarks on her journey with us here at Council, as we continue to strive for sustainability and the delivery of high-quality outcomes for our community," said Clr Watton.

"I would also like to thank Mr Madden for his time on Council, and wish him well for the future."

In October 2024, Council resolved unanimously that a countback election should take place if a councillor resigned in the first 18 months of this term.

Members of the public are welcome to attend Council meetings in-person or online via the live stream on Council's YouTube channel. A full schedule of meeting dates is available here: [www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/meetings](http://www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/meetings)

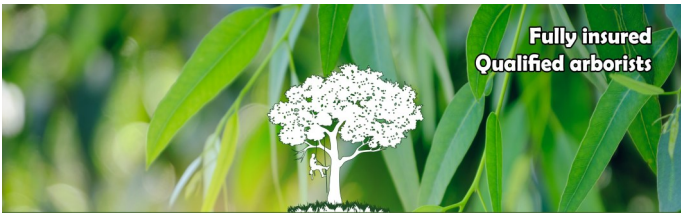


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 Web: [www.wollombirealestate.com.au](http://www.wollombirealestate.com.au)

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Great Northern Trading Post, Laguna

# Wollombi of Old

## Wollombi 20<sup>th</sup> April 1847.

The prospects of the labour market are every day getting more gloomy and never at any period since 1838 has the want of hands been so severely felt by the agriculturist. This must be obvious to everyone, there being yearly additions to the land under cultivation, whilst hundreds of hands then employed are now the employers.

It is melancholy to reflect that whilst thousands in our father-land are starving who are able and willing to work, that we, to whom such numbers would be a blessing, have not the means of lessening their misery and adding such valuable resources to our national strength.

Funds for the relief of the Irish have been liberally raised in this colony, but the best and most permanent relief would be a full and free tide of immigration which would be a charitable boon to those thus relieved from destitution, misery, and death.

It is well known to many residents in Australia that numerous landlords at home would joyfully contribute for the purposes of emigration, and are in fact every season enabling hundreds of their more helpless tenantry to seek a home in Canada and the Far West.

**The Sydney Morning Herald.**

**Sourced Through Trove by Steve Sullivan**

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




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### Notices and advertising in Our Own News

Payments for Advertising and notices are what keeps the OON going and we are happy to provide a rate sheet.

If you are interested in advertising in the OON or placing notices please contact us to assess what costs are involved.

**oon\_news@hotmail.com**

**Council Notifications which may be of interest to the community**



**Sponsors to play key role in growth and training of local workforce through Mayoral Scholarship Program**

Businesses across Cessnock local government area have the chance to support the upskilling and growth of the local workforce - and play a meaningful role in the education of motivated students - by becoming sponsors for the 2026 Mayoral Scholarship Program.

Applications for scholarships are now open for Cessnock LGA residents studying at TAFE or university, with \$2500 grants available to assist with costs such as textbooks, course fees, laptops, or other education expenses.

An initiative of the Mayor of Cessnock, recipients are selected on the basis of academic merit, community involvement, achievement, and quality of their application.

Businesses that sponsor the program contribute \$2500 per scholarship, with the total amount awarded to successful candidates – particularly in industries offering rewarding career prospects in Cessnock LGA such as hospitality, tourism, education, engineering, medical, mining, communications, and manufacturing.

Cessnock City Mayor Dan Watton said he was proud of the long-running program and encouraged local businesses to support the worthwhile initiative.

“As someone who has worked with individuals who have experienced barriers to gaining skills they need for their desired job, I know the difference this program makes,” said Clr Watton.

“With the support of local sponsors, the Mayoral Scholarship Program has financially helped 277 students since it began in 2002, easing cost pressures involved with education and allowing them to focus more on their studies.

“I urge local businesses to consider sponsoring the scholarship program in 2026, so we can continue to offer this vital assistance.”

Scholarship applications are open to university or TAFE students of any age who live in Cessnock LGA until 9 April 2026.

Visit [www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/Residents/Community-services-and-support/Mayoral-Scholarship-Program](http://www.cessnock.nsw.gov.au/Residents/Community-services-and-support/Mayoral-Scholarship-Program) for more information on how to apply for a scholarship or sponsor the program.

**OON Subscription form, complete below or email to [oon\\_news@hotmail.com](mailto:oon_news@hotmail.com)**

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

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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.



## MAYORAL COLUMN

**Embargoed until 18 March 2026**

It was wonderful to officially open the new-look Weston Bears Park recently. The much-needed major revamp included refurbishment of the existing grandstand to incorporate a new clubroom, canteen, office, and members' space, as well as construction of new team changerooms, referee facilities, and a gym. New spectator amenities and improved accessibility, as well as a new carpark and associated landscaping, were also part of the project.

It wouldn't have been possible without more than \$3 million from the Australian Government's Growing Regions Program, and will greatly improve the facility for players and spectators alike. Thanks also to Connex Management and Construction for delivering the outstanding result.

It's a first-class venue that will provide a platform for future growth at the club and enable Weston Bears to better support its female player base – and opens the door for potential visits from top-flight teams.

Meanwhile, Kurri Kurri will soon become a vibrant hub of all the colour, charm and energy of the 1950s and 60s for this year's Kurri Kurri Nostalgia Festival – from 27-29 March.

A highlight of the local calendar for more than two decades, 2026 is the first year Council has taken the reins from long-time organiser Towns With Heart – which has done a stellar job building the festival into the success it is today. I'm also pleased we have the wonderful support of Snowy Hydro, which has signed-on as the festival's major sponsor for 2026 and 2027.

There'll be something for everyone – from classic cars, and vintage style to retro market stalls, live entertainment, fashion parades, and an antiques roadshow-style event for punters to get their retro treasures evaluated.



**Wishing all our readers a safe and happy holiday period**

**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**

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED NOW**

[See our back page for all organisations](#)

## 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: stjohncottage@bigpond.com

**St Michael's Wollombi**, Mass is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> month. See [www.wollombivalleytourism.com.au](http://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](mailto:brigade@wollombibushfire.org.au)

### Fire Brigade - Bucketty and District

Training 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday monthly from 9am - 12pm  
Members meeting 4 times per year  
Enquiries to: [bucketty@lowerhunterffs.com.au](mailto:bucketty@lowerhunterffs.com.au)

### 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](mailto: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](http://www.wollombilandcare.org.au) or [wollombi.landcare@gmail.com](mailto:wollombi.landcare@gmail.com)

### Monthly Historical Ghost Tours

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

### Museum—Wollombi

6pm summer – 5pm winter, 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday monthly except January, Wollombi Cultural Centre  
Contact: David Roache 0400330760  
or Lindsay Self 04091239589

### 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 6:00pm  
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

**Services**

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[houndsfelines@mail.com](mailto:houndsfelines@mail.com)

**Local Accommodation**

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**Laguna**

Byora Farm House 02 4998 8227  
 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

**Fernances Crossing**

Willows Retreat 0249 988623

**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**