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## Community News

26th Jan – 09th Feb 2024 | Volume 41 – Issue 02

Local Stories, Local Events, Local People and Local Businesses



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# Monument To Historical Windsor Flood Rediscovered

BY JOSH KERWICK

**A monument to the 1867 flood that devastated the Hawkesbury was recently rediscovered at Windsor Public School, linking the walk along George Street back to a relevant piece of local history.**

The flood, which saw water nearly 18 metres above the river's usual level wash away people's homes and divide the town of Windsor into two islands, is still the most devastating in the Hawkesbury's long history of flooding. The monument is one of two markers in Windsor that indicate where the 1867 flood came up to - the other is on the wall near Macquarie Arms Hotel facing Thompson Square.

The monument was erected in 1969 by the Hawkesbury Historical Society to commemorate where the flood waters came up to. Though covered by hedges for many years, the Society was made aware of its existence in 2023 and worked with Windsor Public School's principal Mike Watson to cut back the shrubs surrounding the display, allowing it to be seen while walking past the school on George Street.

Members of the Hawkesbury Historical Society, Mayor Sarah McMahon, Principal Watson and students from Windsor Public School were in attendance for the official re-unveiling of the monument. Mayor McMahon spoke to the importance of this history to the Hawkesbury: "This find has been extraordinary.



Windsor Public School Principal Mike Watson and Hawkesbury Mayor Sarah McMahon with the rediscovered monument

Windsor is such a historically significant town, both for the Hawkesbury and the story of Australia. There has been plenty of work done by individuals and groups to bring this monument back into view.

Credit must be given to Principal Mike Watson for ensuring the shrubs that were covering the monument are now cut back to display it permanently. Windsor locals Grant Gerrish, Noel Bridge and AJ Papandrea have taken a keen interest in matters such as this, and along with local groups like the Historical Society, it's wonderful that such a collaborative effort has occurred to revive this special tribute. Now that it's on display again, I'm confident it will become part of the permanent fabric of Windsor's historical narrative."

The monument can now be easily seen from the outside of Windsor Public School; an important reminder of the Hawkesbury's long history with flooding since Windsor was settled in 1791.

# Hills to Hawkesbury Community News

Local Stories, Local Events, Local People and Local Businesses

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**The Hills to Hawkesbury Community News** has been serving this area for nearly 40 years. It's name may have changed over the decades but the commitment to providing a free service to the community is still at the heart of what this hyper local fortnightly publication does. Established in 1982 it has evolved into a community news magazine with a big digital footprint. Our aim is to inform, inspire and connect our community. It is a family-owned small business. Our team is local and love what they do.

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# HIGH FLYING OAM SGT JUSTIN KURBAN

BY CORPORAL JACOB JOSEPH

An avionics technician who developed bespoke secure communications for C-27J Spartan aircraft and rapidly assembled a Hercules maintenance crew for deployment to assist in evacuating Afghan civilians has been honoured on Australia Day.

Sergeant Justin Kurban based at RAAF Richmond received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his work at number 35 Squadron and number 37 Squadron over almost a decade, including technical achievements and new ways of managing personnel to improve efficiency.

He implemented a system to track flying hours of maintenance crew, who are often required on board when a plane leaves on task.

"We've had people running about 300 flying hours in the year," Sergeant Kurban said. "A moderate-flying pilot might do around 450 to 500."

For Sergeant Kurban, who has clocked hundreds of hours in the air, passing over deserts and snow-capped mountains, the mission was reward enough.

"With fast jets it was a lot of training flights and bombing camps. In Air Mobility Group, I've been on countless humanitarian tasks and helped lots of people." Sergeant Kurban said. "That's been a driving factor to make the platforms a better capability and made my work feel more worthwhile – but never in my wildest

dreams did I think someone would nominate me for an award."

Sergeant Kurban switched from fast jets to cargo planes almost a decade ago, working with Flight Sergeant Chris Winsor ever since and more recently Sergeant Gavin Jefferis, who both put his name forward for the award.

"He's an expert technician and computer programmer that has enhanced C-27J and C-130J capability," Flight Sergeant Winsor said. "He is an utmost professional that consistently goes above and beyond. When you think about all the things he's achieved over two squadrons; the OAM is fitting."

Several local people have been honoured in the Australia Day Awards both nationally and locally.

For more news about the winners turn to pages 12, 13 and 14.







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## HOME INVASION

Riverstone Police Area Command are investigating an early morning break and enter at a home in Kellyville Ridge where a 63-year-old woman and a 65-year-old man were threatened with a knife.

Three men wearing balaclavas forced their way into the home through an open garage door after 3am on Tuesday morning 16th January.

One of the perpetrators allegedly pulled out a knife and threatened the pair before the group stole mobile phones and cash.

They left in what was described as a dark SUV being driven by a fourth person.

Officers were called to the home in Kellyville Ridge and established a crime scene. Investigators are appealing for anyone with information about the incident to contact Crime Stoppers.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

An 80-year-old man has been charged with the sexual assault of an elderly resident at an aged care home in Galston earlier this month.

Police were called to the aged-care home in Galston on Friday, 12th January following reports an 87-year-old woman had been sexually assaulted. Police were told a man, who is known to visit the facility, had allegedly entered the resident's room, on two occasions before sexually assaulting her.

NSW Ambulance paramedics treated the woman who was taken to Royal North Shore Hospital however she did not suffer any serious physical injuries.

A crime scene was established as detectives attached to Kuring-Gai Police Area Command commenced an investigation

Following inquiries, police executed a search warrant at a home in Asquith about 7.40pm Friday 12th January and arrested an 80-year-old man.

He was taken to Hornsby Police Station where he was charged with aggravated sex assault – victim with cognitive impairment, aggravated – sexually touch another person and fail to comply with direction storage of firearm.

## FATAL CRASH

A teenager has faced Children's court over charges relating to a fatal crash at McGraths Hill in which two young friends died.

Emergency services were called to Windsor Road, McGraths Hill, about 9.40pm Monday 15th January, following reports a Nissan 200SX sedan had struck a power pole.

Officers attached to Hawkesbury Police Area Command attended and found two teenage boys – who were passengers in the Nissan – critically injured; they both died at the scene.

The male driver, aged 17, was treated by NSW Ambulance paramedics for chest and internal injuries before being taken to Westmead Hospital. He was later discharged.

Police established a crime scene with officers attached to the Crash Investigation Unit investigating the crash.

Police were told the Nissan and a Ford Falcon sedan had allegedly collided immediately before the Nissan left the road and struck the pole.

The driver of the Falcon stopped and rendered assistance, calling Triple Zero (000), before undergoing mandatory blood and urine testing.

Following investigations, a 17-year-old youth was arrested when he attended Windsor Police Station about 10pm on Tuesday 23rd January.

He was charged with two counts of dangerous driving occasioning death, and two counts of negligent driving occasion death and faced Children's court on Wednesday 24th January.

## \$14K COIN THEFT

A heavy haul of 14,000 \$1 coins has been stolen from a business unit in Rouse Hill.

Hills Police are investigating the break and enter which happened on Annangrove Rd (near Windsor Rd) between 8pm Friday 12th and 8.30am, Sunday 14th January. Anyone with information about the \$14,000 theft is urged to call Crime Stoppers NSW. Information is treated in strict confidence.

## COMMUNITY HELP

Police have praised residents for reporting suspicious activity in their suburbs in the early hours of the morning.

On Wednesday, 17th January a vigilant homeowner in Applegum Ave, North Kellyville called police at 1.55am when he saw three males shining torches into cars.

Hills Police Area Command deployed cars supported by North West Metro Region Response Squad and the Police Dog Unit to the area which tracked them towards Wellgate Ave.

Another resident called at 2am after car alarms were triggered in Halloway Blvd North Kellyville. While the three men got away police say no houses or cars were broken into.

Police say it is a good example of how Police and Community can work together to reduce crime. Residents are asked to check their CCTV footage between the times of 1am and 3am for any activity.

Anyone with information about these incidents is urged to call Crime Stoppers NSW. Information is treated in strict confidence.

## POLICE PURSUIT

People are asking for help in tracking the people involved in a police pursuit. A 2019 Silver Mercedes A250 sedan which was stolen from Pentonville Ave, Castle Hill on 15th Jan was involved in police pursuit later that evening in the Hills, Blacktown and Parramatta Areas.

The vehicle was recovered in Russell St, Baulkham Hills at 1.30am 16th January. The Police Dog Unit tracked at least one occupant to Dremeday St Northmead before losing track.

Anyone with information is urged to call Crime Stoppers NSW. CCTV footage is also sought.

## HYDRO HOUSE

Police are urging people to be wary of who they rent to after a hydroponic cannabis crop was found under lights at a North Kellyville home.

A rental inspection of the single level house uncovered 40 marijuana plants (valued at about \$2,000 each). Damage to the property is estimated to be around \$200,000.

## STRUCTURE FIRE

Windsor Road, opposite the Carmel Village shops at Box Hill, was blocked for a time as multiple fire crews from RFS and Fire and Rescue NSW extinguished a structure fire.

No-one was injured and damage was limited to a weatherboard building at the site.

Photo Courtesy RFS



# Youthsafe Free Driving Help

BY BEV JORDAN

A program offering free support to people wanting to learn to drive or to regain their licence because of unpaid fines or traffic offences is being offered to Hawkesbury residents.

Youthsafe has been a Driver Licensing Access Program (DLAP) provider on behalf of Transport NSW in the Hawkesbury Local Government area for the past two years and has funding to help up to 100 people get on the road this year.

The Transport for NSW initiative was set up to assist people with geographical, financial or other disadvantage and offers eligible candidates

- Support to successfully undertake the Driver Knowledge Test (DKT) - the first stage of the licensing process
- Reimbursement of both the DKT fee (\$52) and the Learner Licence fee (\$28)
- Up to \$150 worth of professional driving lessons (paid direct by Youthsafe to the driving school/instructor)

CEO of Youthsafe Warren Johnson said: "Youthsafe is delighted to be able to offer this support for people who may otherwise be denied the opportunity.

"A licence allows the development of a key adult capability. It is a passport to greater personal independence and provides access to many opportunities including further education, sustainable employment, civic participation and family and community events."

Richmond resident, 19-year-old Karla (pictured) has just completed the program and is now a happy driver.

**"I could not afford to pay for my licence and driving expenses. Financial assistance from Youthsafe has allowed me to become more independent,"** she said.

Youthsafe can support people of any age, provided they live in the Hawkesbury LGA. It also provides the program for eligible residents living in the Local Government areas of Hornsby; Ku-ring-gai; Ryde; Cumberland and Campbelltown.

Over the last two years around 60 people have participated.

For more information about Youthsafe and DLAP call the Youthsafe Education Coordinator on (02) 9817 7847, or email presentations@youthsafe.org or visit the website visit <https://youthsafe.org/driver-licensing-access-program-dlap/>

Warren Johnson from Youthsafe said: "As a charity we are committed to preventing accidental serious injuries of young people.

"We provide a range of programs to young people and the adults of influence in their lives in relation to their use of roads, participation in the workplace and sports. Check out our website to find out how we can help you and your community" [www.youthsafe.org](http://www.youthsafe.org)

Youthsafe was founded just over 40 years by Associate Professor John Yeo in 1982 as the ground-breaking, world first 'Awareness and Prevention Program'.



It was initially run out of a small office in the Spinal Injuries Unit at Royal North Shore Hospital, and later registered as Spinesafe which focussed on school-aged children and young people to demonstrate how easily a spinal cord injury can occur, the devastating impacts and how it can be prevented.

In 1999 the organisation adopted the name Youthsafe recognising that young people were more at risk of serious unintentional injury than any other age group and runs programs with an expanded focus on road use, school-to-work transitions, team sports and socialising in private and public venues.



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## CWA COMMUNITY NOTICE

Galston CWA Branch will be returning to their meetings in 2024 at the Galston Health and Community Centre, starting with their first meeting on February 14th.

Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday morning every month, starting at 10.30am. Please come along and check us out, we welcome visitors and enjoy sharing the friendship that comes from contributing to our community. We also welcome any donations of fruits and vegetables for our clever cooks to turn into relishes and jams, to sell on our stalls.

For any further information, please phone Anne on 0404 228 209 or Patricia on 0412 948 787



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# JOHN MILLER OAM COMMEMORATED AT FREEMANS REACH



Members of the Hawkesbury community gathered on Friday January 19th at Streeton Lookout in Freemans Reach to commemorate a plaque paying tribute to John Miller OAM, a distinguished member of the Hawkesbury community who passed away in March 2021. The recently installed memorial was unanimously voted through by all Councillors in 2022, and its recent installation proved a moment for the community to reflect on the life of an exceptional community member.

The ceremony was attended by Hawkesbury City councillors, state member Robyn Preston and federal member Susan Templeman, as well as John's family and friends in the community. The plaque

tells a portion of John's life story; his passion in promoting

the Hawkesbury's agriculture and tourism, his drive to raise flood awareness, and his many acknowledgements for his service to the Hawkesbury, such as being a Recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2018 for his service to the community of the Hawkesbury.

Hawkesbury Mayor Sarah McMahon paid tribute to John at the unveiling, describing him as a family man who cared deeply about his community. She said: "John was held in high esteem by the community, passionate in promoting the Hawkesbury's agriculture, heritage and tourism, an advocate for local aged and dementia care, and a driving force in raising flood awareness and the need for flood infrastructure. John left an indelible mark on our city and all those who knew him. He is greatly missed."

Streeton Lookout is located at 542 Terrace Rd, Freemans Reach and overlooks the beautiful Hawkesbury river.



## Warril Evans Speaker for February Meeting BSA

The next meeting of the Bromeliad Society of Australia will be on Saturday, 10th February at the Federation Pavilion, Castle Hill Showground, Showground Road, Castle Hill. Bromeliad sales to the public from 10am with the meeting commencing at 12noon.

Long-term member of the BSA Warril Evans has a magnificent garden but does have a particular passion for bromeliads.

She will be bringing some of her very favourite Broms to this meeting for discussion and advice on her methods on successfully growing bromeliads.

There will also be our regular meeting activities such as competitions, Raffle, Show & Tell, and a more recent activity called just "Show" for people who would just like to share a plant with others without it being critically judged or discussed.

For further information please contact Ian Hook, President of BSA on mobile 0408 202 269, email: ianhook1@bigpond.com or refer to www.bromeliad.org.au for the latest updates.



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# A Night of Thrills in The Hills

BY JOSH KERWICK

A new year means a new program for the consistently amazing Castle Hill Players, who are looking to give locals another six plays this year to enjoy in the heart of the Hills District.



Director Dave Went (bottom left) with the cast and crew of An Inspector Calls

2024's opening production is J.B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, a taut and intense drama-thriller that sees the idyllic celebration of an early 20th-century industrialist interrupted by the unexpected arrival of Inspector Goole.

Director Dave Went has been with Castle Hill Players since 1996, and he says that he was drawn to the sense of mystery and drama running through *An Inspector Calls*. He says: "The play is penned by J.B. Priestley, which gives it automatic provenance, but it really is beautifully written. The more you get into it as a director with actors on stage, the more you realise how well-paced and tight the script is – you keep unpeeling layers to the characters and message."

Dave says that though the themes of the play were intended for an audience in 1946, the core message of *An Inspector Calls* is deeply relevant today. "What Priestley was asking was 'How well are we treating those of a lower class or socio-economic group?' There was an allegory there to comment on how people were still clinging onto a lot of these behaviours, rationalising their treatment of servants or others who we consider beneath us. It's a universal message, and it still applies to this day."

*An Inspector Calls* is the fourth play that Dave has directed at the Pavilion Theatre since 2012, but this production is the first time that he's directed a primarily dramatic show. He says: "I think what really appealed to me creatively is that it's a thriller, but not in the Agatha Christie whodunit style. The play is set during a fascinating time, at the height of the British Empire before it began to decline. We've done some interesting things with the set, lighting and sound, as well as some extra bits of information to communicate the message more effectively."

Despite the many productions and adaptations of *An Inspector Calls* there have been, Dave has actually never seen a version of the play himself, making the Pavilion production of the play a unique experience. He says: "I don't want to see something which I think is brilliant and then want to copy it. To me, the text gives you everything. As you progress through it and do more with the actors, the text exposes itself even further, and that's always an exciting process."

Dave speaks highly of his excellent cast, who have been up to the challenge of tackling the psychology of characters from over a century ago. "My approach to directing is to bring out the energy that's in the play," he says. If you can get the energy and the pace required to play, that to me is the most important thing. I have an excellent cast, and it's been exciting finding out how they work together and create their characters. I've worked with many of them recently, and some of them are completely new to Castle Hill Players. It's been very exciting."

That collaborative atmosphere is what keeps Dave coming back to Castle Hill Players. "I really think it's the best theatre facility in the city," he says. "I think that's because it's used year round, and there's always two shows in production at any one time. For that reason, I think it attracts a lot of steady talent, because we offer so many shows. It's also just a really great bunch of people on the committee and behind the scenes, and it's a very inclusive group. It's one of those things where you can put on a great

show, learn something, and have fun doing it! It's a fabulous facility, and it's all there in one package."

Dave recommends *An Inspector Calls* to anyone looking for a tense, exciting night at the theatre. He says: "It's a very tight thriller with well-drawn characters and fantastic dialogue, but it's also got a bit of humour here and there. I won't say too much about it, but if you love the thriller genre, then I think you'll really enjoy this show."

*An Inspector Calls* opens at the Pavilion Theatre on Friday February 2nd, with the season running until February 24th. Tickets for adults are \$30 and can be bought online at <https://paviliontheatre.org.au/aninspectorcalls/>.

## OPEN DAY *at* BELLA VISTA FARM

Please make this an important diary entry!



**What** : First Open Day for 2024  
**When** : Sunday 4th February  
**Time** : 9am-2pm  
**Where** : Bella Vista Farm  
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 and Norwest Boulevard, Bella Vista

All the usual delights will be there - Ann spinning wool from the sheep; Sausage sizzle (onions and home made chilli jam); Devonshire teas; Music in the grounds; Tours of the house (gold coin donation); Trash and treasure stall full of gifts, Plants for sale.

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*out and about*

with **MICHELLE BYRNE**

## The Y Hawkesbury Oasis Aquatic and Fitness Centre

Run by YMCA on behalf of Hawkesbury Council, Hawkesbury Oasis is a community hub offering a range of programs and activities to keep everyone fit and healthy.

For us the biggest attraction was the large indoor lagoon area for families with a beach type entry with water sprays as well as fountains across the lagoon. The water slide attached to the lagoon also provided plenty of entertainment.

The indoor aquatic facilities also include a 25m heated pool. Spa sauna and steam room whilst outdoors there is a heated 50m pool for those wanting to swim laps. Hawkesbury Oasis runs a range of aquatic programs for all ages and abilities including swimming lessons, squad training, aqua aerobics as well as recreation and lap swimming.

A gym and group fitness studio is also on site as well as a creche offering a chance for parents to participate in exercise sessions whilst their children enjoy a variety of supervised activities including craft and games.

The café is hard to resist after a swim and offers a range of food from hot chips and hot dogs through to sandwiches and cakes as well as ice creams and milkshakes. There is plenty of seating around the café as well as outside on the grassed area.

For those looking for a playground after a swim or for a picnic lunch, Church Street Reserve is adjacent to the Hawkesbury Oasis Centre and provides a wonderful all abilities playground with features of a flying fox, swing set, merry go round, climbing equipment.

Like all YMCA centres across NSW, Hawkesbury Oasis aims to build strong connections with the local community in order to empower people particularly the youth by creating safe spaces and creating opportunities for people to participate in activities and engage with others. Hawkesbury Oasis on top of its programs at the centre also runs school holiday programs, delivers regular safety talks at local schools and participates in outreach programs at local events.

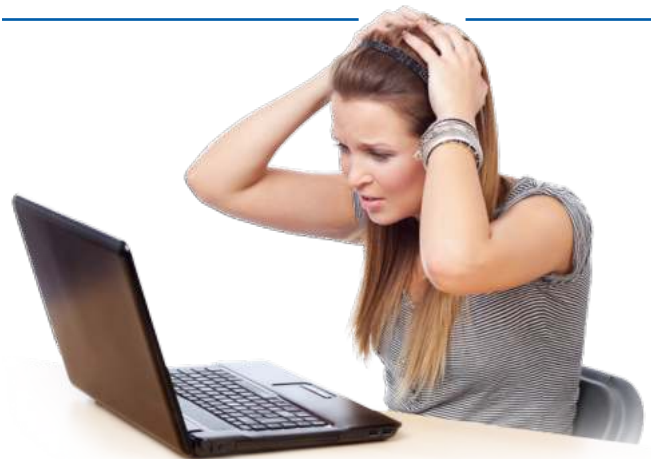
Having visited Hawkesbury Oasis, it is easy to see why Hawkesbury Oasis won the Most Outstanding Fitness Services Award at the 2022 Hawkesbury Local Business Awards in recognition of the centre's ongoing commitment and service to the Hawkesbury.



In 2023 as part of the WestInvest program, the NSW Government awarded \$6.7 million to Hawkesbury Council for the upgrade and improvement of Hawkesbury Oasis. New amenities planned include a Children's splash park, new shallow depth program pool including accessibility ramp and hydrotherapy, extended fitness room with a climbing wall facility, new covered deck to connect change rooms and the outdoor café that operates in summer, touch pads on the 50m pool, additional car parking and an outdoor gym.

We loved our visit to Hawkesbury Oasis and we definitely can't wait to see the upgrades of the centre complete and even more people enjoying everything the centre has to offer.

For more information on the Y Hawkesbury Aquatic and Leisure Centre go to <https://www.ymcansw.org.au/centres/hawkesbury-oasis>



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FT Computer Matters offer a number of services, such as supplying new and used computers, boosting network/internet speed, fixing viruses and speeding up computers. Testimonies from customers speak highly of Fouad's abilities and that he always makes sure to do the job perfectly.

If you're having any trouble with your PC at all, call FT Computer Matters on 0422 576 061 or send an email to [ft@ftcomputer matters.com](mailto:ft@ftcomputer matters.com).

# Falls Risk Prevention starts here!

BY DANIEL FECHNER

In the 2018 Australian Health Report it was revealed that falls are the leading cause of injuries resulting in death. Overall, falls were accounting for 37% of all deaths in Australia.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) a fall is “an event which results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the ground or floor or other lower level”.

Over 70% of falls occur in a person’s residential environment. There are many different causes for a fall, but ultimately it comes down to the fact a person is losing their balance to a point where they cannot recover their footing. Gravity takes care of the rest, resulting in a fall.

The human body operates a very complex and sophisticated system to keep us in balance. This allows us to ride a bike, balance on a ledge, get out of bed and walk through the bathroom at night, even with the lights off.

The brain takes information from the feet, ankles, knees, hips and spine which then combines the information together with what the eyes see and what the inner ear senses (the balance organ). There are over 20 separate ‘sensors’ which help the brain to maintain balance.

Multiple things can affect one or more sensors of this system and the body has

difficulty maintaining balance. The most common contributors include the use of some specific medications or using several at once, losing parts of our hearing (and with that also parts of the Vestibular System – the balance organ), vision impairment, muscular-skeletal issues such as strength and flexibility and other diseases, for example Diabetes.

Falls prevention is especially important to us at Ear Studio, because our founder Daniel lost his own grandfather due to a fall. In our view the first step to reducing the risk of falling is knowledge. Knowing which factors influence your balance is a great starting point. Based on the NSW Health system we have put together a comprehensive falls-risk assessment that incorporates general questions about your health as well as high-tech measurements of your balance functions. With this we can guide you in the right direction and together with your GP, work on improving your balance and thereby reduce your risk of falls.

If you think you or a loved one may be showing signs of being unbalanced/unsteady on their feet or signs of being hard of hearing,

perhaps it’s time to book an appointment with us at Ear Studio, early intervention is key to alleviate the risk of falls.

We are a small independent Audiology Clinic who are a passionate and dedicated team. We compassionately guide our patients through their concerns. From the moment you call us, walk through the door and spend time in your appointment, our aim is to help you feel welcome and at ease. Our highly educated and trained clinicians endeavour to reach the best possible outcome for your personal situation and needs. We look forward to welcoming you to the Ear Studio family.

To learn more or book your appointment please visit [www.earstudio.com.au](http://www.earstudio.com.au) and go to Falls Risk Assessment or call us on 02 9159 6122.



## Struggling to hear?

Let us help you become part of the conversation again.

To book your comprehensive hearing assessment  
Please call us on **02 9159 6122**



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Located inside Lawton House  
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# OUR AUSTRALIA DAY HEROES

BY BEV JORDAN

Several locals were honoured in the 2024 Australia Day Honours and Awards announced by Australia's Governor-General David Hurley today (January 26th) but the oldest of the 1,042 recipients was 100-year-old Lilian Ries from Northmead.

Her family said she was surprised and very honoured by the award which was for over 25 years of volunteering at Ronald McDonald House at Westmead.

Other locals honoured included: Hills Community stalwart John Ebbott (OAM). Prostate Cancer support volunteers Graham and Adele Staggs (OAMs), Prof Maria Wardle (AM), Michael Lee (AM) and former Castle Hill swimming coach and Paralympian Ellie Cole. (See stories below)



The Governor-General congratulated those named saying "Recipients have made a difference and had an impact at the local, national and/or international level. Individually, they are inspiring and collectively they speak to the strength of our communities.

"To each recipient: know that you have the thanks and respect of your nation. In my experience most are humble and often try to deflect attention or praise – please enjoy the moment because your country has decided that you deserve recognition.

Anyone can nominate any Australian for an award in the Order of Australia. If you know someone worthy, nominate them now at [www.gg.gov.au](http://www.gg.gov.au).

**JOHN EBBOTT (OAM) from Tallawong** has notched up over 40 years as a volunteer including 25 years co-ordinating the running of the Crestwood Community Fair at Baulkham Hills which was part of the annual Orange Blossom Festival.

He was a volunteer before he moved to the Hills in 1985 when IBM opened up its head office in West Pennant Hills.

The father of two boys became a scout leader in Baulkham Hills and joined the Hills Shire Orange Blossom Festival Committee. He also became the voice of Crestwood Fair as its MC.

While he was "surprised" to be nominated for an Order of Australia no-one else in the community will be.

His community work runs to a very long list but includes decades as a Rural Fire Service volunteer (which still continues), 12 years community liaison with Careflight and

30 years volunteering with Crestwood Lions which he helped establish by asking members on the Crestwood Fair Committee to join the new service club. He co-founded the Baulkham Hills Leos club and was a member of APEX for many years.

John says he has lost count of the number of sausages he has barbecued over the decades but on Friday that's what he will be doing with his wife Cathy at the Australia Day Celebrations at Bella Vista Farm where three local Lions Clubs will be running the barbecue.

The 73-year-old will have his wife and two grandsons to celebrate with along with fellow Lions members.

"I had a cancer operation in August and was in intensive care for a month," he told *the Hills to Hawkesbury Community News*.



"It has slowed me down a bit but it hasn't stopped me. The thing I enjoy most is passing on knowledge and skills on, particularly to young people."

## River Warning

The hope of a safe summer for visitors and locals on the Hawkesbury River is behind a new high-visibility and multi-lingual safety campaign from Hawkesbury City Council.

New river safety signs have now been installed at Macquarie Park in Windsor. These signs were developed in consultation with Royal Life Saving NSW using best practise design, and internationally recognised safety symbols.

Versions of the signs have also been created in the five most common non-English languages for visitors to the Hawkesbury –

Hindi, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, Arabic and Filipino – which can be accessed by a QR Code via a smartphone.

Prior to Christmas, Hawkesbury City Council approached neighbouring councils to spread the message of safety on the Hawkesbury River. People from neighbouring Local Government Areas are the greatest source of tourism

throughout the year. Messaging was also being provided to Western Sydney Regional Organisations of Councils (WSROC) to help promote it to Western Sydney in general.

"We are encouraging our nearby Councils to help make visitors to the Hawkesbury aware of the need to be safe around our many waterways, including the magnificent Hawkesbury River," the Mayor of Hawkesbury, Councillor Sarah McMahon said.

Hawkesbury City Council is also conducting a multi-lingual awareness campaign on social



**GRAHAM STAGGS (OAM)** and his wife **ADELE STAGGS (OAM)** from **Glenhaven** have both been honoured for their work with the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia for nearly 20 years.

Now in their 80s the couple say the honours are “absolutely amazing”. Adele said her husband underwent surgery for prostate cancer in 2004 and the surgeon suggested he attend the Prostate Support

organisation at The Sydney Adventist Hospital. “It started from there,” she said. “He was (then) asked by the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia to join the Chapeer Council (representing NSW) and from there he was asked if he would lead a support group in Dural.

Graham founded the Dural and District Prostate Cancer Support Group in 2012 and has seen it grown to help hundreds of people.

“It does make a big difference to some people when they realise they are not alone in this and they realise there are many other men going through the same thing,” he said.

“We never give medical advice but were are experts in the experience.”

Adele said she started the carers' support group because she could see that getting the support of other carers was important.

“We go to coffee shops and talk about how we are coping and people feel better.”

The Dural and District Prostate Cancer Support Group meets on the third Monday of the month at 7pm at the Blue Gum Centre at Glenhaven Green Village.

**LILIAN “LIL” RIES (OAM)** of **Northmead** was recognised for her volunteer work at Ronald McDonald House at Westmead.

She decided to volunteer at Ronald McDonald House, which provides a home away from home for seriously sick children and their families, while she saw it being built and told her husband she would like to volunteer as soon as it opened.

Her son Peter said his mum was one of the first volunteers.

“She would make the beads, wash up and bring sewing home. She would do whatever was needed.”

Lil loved volunteering and only stopped in her 90s. She was so respected that when she turned 100 in July last year her family held her 100th birthday celebrations at Ronald McDonald House.

Her family (she has 3 sons, 9 grandchildren and 14 great, grandchildren) are very proud that she has been honoured for her volunteering.

They will be joining her for Australia Day celebrations at her home.

Other major recipients named in the Australia Day Honours by the Governor General include Paralympian and former Castle Hill Swimming Coach (Castle Hill Fitness and Aquatic Centre from 2013 to 2018) **Ellie Cole**.

Ellie who has an OAM was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to sport as an advocate for diversity and inclusion.

Also appointed AMs are **Professor Glenda Wardle from Cherrybrook** for her work in the field of science and in particular evolutionary biology and **Dr Michael Leigh from Pennant Hills** for significant service to tertiary education, and to Australian-Asian relations.



media. The messages urge visitors to consider other fun activities around the river instead of swimming in local waterways. These include walking, camping, boating, fishing and picnics. Locals are also urged to consider visiting local pools over summer.

“This campaign is about raising awareness to save lives so that we can all have a wonderful summer without seeing tragedies like we have seen in the past,” the Mayor added.

“The water in the river can be unexpectedly cold, there are submerged trees and rocks

and deceptively strong currents. Sometimes people may overestimate their swimming ability, or may have consumed alcohol before swimming, or may be unfamiliar with local conditions or recent changes to the river.

“Local rivers and other waterways can be dangerous places to swim, even for experienced swimmers. Unfortunately, drownings have occurred in local waterways over the years.”

For river safety advice see [www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/your-spaces/river-safety](http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/your-spaces/river-safety)

For important tips from Royal Life Saving NSW visit [www.royallifesaving.com.au](http://www.royallifesaving.com.au)



# Hills' Citizens Receive Australia Day Honours

BY JOSH KERWICK

Ellen Kulbicki of the Fit Kidz Foundation has been named The Hills Shire' Citizen of the Year for 2023. She was honoured at Hills Shire Council's Australia Day Awards event, held on Tuesday January 16th at the Pioneer Theatre in Castle Hill. The event honoured 28 finalists across five categories for their remarkable community work in 2023.

The other winners were the Fit Kidz Foundation for Community Group of the Year, Lilly Schwartz for Environmental Citizen of the Year, James 'Jim' Smith AFSM for Senior Citizen of the Year and siblings Aiza, Aish and Abdullah Khurram of Little Helpers on the Run for Youth Citizen of the Year.

Ellen Kulbicki is an educational and developmental psychologist and the Service Director of the Fit Kidz Foundation, a not-for-profit Early Intervention Service that helps neurodivergent kids and their families get the assistance they need to thrive through various therapy services and group activities to build key skills. Of particular note is the Foundation's yearly event Stronger Together, the only event of its kind in Sydney for parents and carers of neurodivergent children to connect with one another while hearing from key guest speakers and local service providers.

Ellen says: "At the Foundation, we're proud to provide a huge range of programs for the community, for children who have a disability and their family. 2023's Stronger Together conference was a huge success, bringing together 200 local parents and carers to celebrate the successes and advances in the support of neurodivergent children. We also have a range of other support services and programs at the Foundation - group therapy, siblings groups, parent connection groups - all sorts of stuff."

Ellen was deeply humbled to receive the Citizen of the Year award: "I'm feeling



overwhelmed. I'm really thankful to be surrounded by such a dedicated team and supportive community, I couldn't have received the award without them. There are so many wonderful community members in the Hills Shire, and I'm very grateful to receive this award." Ellen plans to continue providing support to the community while growing the Fit Kidz Foundation even further throughout 2024.

Lilly Schwartz of the Cattai Hills Environment Network was the winner of the Environmental Citizen of the Year, thanks to her work as the founder of the Flora and Fauna of Hills/Hornsby/Hawkesbury Facebook group and organiser of the Hills - Hornsby Koala Project. Lilly explains her role on both endeavours: "Through the Flora and Fauna Facebook group, I've been bringing people together who are interested in the environment; ecologists, councillors and citizens. We post shots of wildlife, but we also serve as a biodiversity monitoring site.

"I'm also running the Hills - Hornsby Koala Project, which is surveying the local community and finding out who's had koala sightings, and then investigating them. We go out with some metres and cameras to investigate, and we try to figure out the population density of our area to see if it's a stable breeding population or not."

Though a little shy to accept the award, Lilly was proud to have received it: "It was really good. I felt a little bit guilty that not everyone could get it, but it was really exciting. I'm

grateful for getting these things." Lilly will be continuing her work on both projects in 2024, and hopes to use thermal drones to more accurately determine koala population density across a wide area.

The award for Young Citizen of the Year went to sibling trio Aiza, Aish and Abdullah Khurram of Little Helpers on the Run. The trio have been with the organisation since they were 3, 7 and 11 respectively and have visited over 80 nursing homes since 2016. Since that time, they have created a number of projects for elderly people in the homes they visit to enjoy, including a letter and photo exchange that creates connections with children all over the world. Other activities the trio have planned include art and lego clubs, interactive board games and recording of thank-you messages from elderly people to community helpers.

James 'Jim' Smith (AFSM), long-time member at the Middle Dural Rural Fire Brigade for over 45 years, was the winner of the Senior Citizen of the Year Award. Jim was inspired to join the Brigade in 1975 after devastating fires in the Hills District. He was quick to understand the role of a firefighter, and has taken on the roles of Brigade Captain and Group Captain in his accomplished career and been on a significant number of out-of-state deployments. Jim continues to be an active member and leader at the Middle Dural Fire Brigade to this day.

Congratulations to all winners and nominees!

## Join Dural Scouts

Members of 1st Dural Scout Group come from all over the Hills and Hawkesbury Area.

Scouting aims to encourage the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of all its members. This aim is achieved through a dynamic and active program inspiring our youth and helping them to always "Be Prepared". Your child may embark on a journey that will take them to new places, do things they never thought possible, introduce them to community role models, enjoy adventures in the outdoors and most importantly make many new friends.

### Why not come along and try?

Dural Scout Group is proud to offer scouting opportunities for youth members aged between

5-18 years of age. For any interested individuals over 18 years of age we also have a Rover Scout Unit attached to the group operating for those aged between 18-25 years of age.

During school terms we meet weekly in our Scout Hall at 414 Galston Road, Dural. Throughout the year there are many outdoor activities such as fun days, camps, day hikes or overnight hikes which may be run on the weekends

Our Group Meets on the Following Days:

- Joey Scouts (5-8 years): Thurs 6:30-7:30pm
- Cub Scouts (8-11 years): Wed 6:30-8:00pm
- Scouts (11-14 years): Tues 6:30-8:30pm
- Venturer Scouts (14-18 years): Tues 7:00-9:00pm
- Rover Scouts (18-25 years): Sun 7:00-9:00pm

Dural Scout Group has vacancies now for Girls and Boys from 5 to 25 years. Joeys (5yo), Cubs (8yo), Scouts (12yo) and Venturers (16yo).

Please contact Phirooza: 0411 731 976 or phirooza@bigpond.net.au or Simon: thewolf\_1stdural@bigpond.com)





Days For Girls Working bee at Castle Hill Cheryl is standing

# Days for Girls

BY SOPHIE POREDOS

Nestled away in a leafy corner of Castle Hill, Cheryl-Landon Jones tackles the global crisis of period poverty as a team leader for Days for Girls International.



A Days For Girls kit

According to the World Bank, up to 20% of girls miss school when confronted with period poverty, which refers to an unavailability of menstrual products.

Days for Girls International is dedicated to ending period poverty globally. The organisation makes menstrual hygiene products which are then distributed to girls and women in developing countries, reaching over three million women.

Cheryl is one of these dedicated volunteers empowering women to continue working and studying even through their period.

She has been operating as Team Leader within the Castle Hill Branch since September 2016 and within that time has produced over 9,304 kits which have been sent to 25 different countries.

As an ongoing volunteer of five years with this organisation, I wanted to highlight Cheryl's achievements and commitment with this fantastic cause by writing about a recent packing day at Castle Hill for these menstrual kits.

Each liner is hand-made by dedicated volunteers through a balance of compassion and craftsmanship. Over laughs and jovial conversation, each person was stationed in the packing line to assemble the various components, which will last up to three years with proper care.

What draws me to this organisation is the remarkable detail and effort that goes into each kit, offering women dignity through their menstrual cycle.

Every product is quality-checked by Cheryl before being packed inside a drawstring bag consisting of soap, cotton underwear, a wash cloth and information pamphlets directing their use.

Eventually, the finished kits are counted and sealed into boxes, ready to be sent globally to reach countries such as Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

During the morning tea break consisting of delicious baked goods, Cheryl opened up about her passion for leading the Castle Hill group; "As a retired high school teacher, education is very important to me. These kits and the education that goes with them allow girls to live their lives without bounds, embarrassment or shame.

"We are creating a more free and equitable world and who wouldn't want to be part of that!" she told me.

Discovering this organisation in a small newspaper advertisement over five years ago, I felt called to empower the lives of women to continue their education and work.

"As a year 10 student, I wanted to give women the same level of opportunity that I had as I entered my final years of school. I am now proud to call Cheryl a friend, an inspiring volunteer and a strong leader in my local community."

Whether you wield a needle, are inclined to donate or enjoy the occasional Bunnings BBQ you

can find your local Days For Girls group on Facebook and get in contact at [australia@daysforgirls.org](mailto:australia@daysforgirls.org)

Days for Girls International is leading the de-stigmatization of periods around the world. Let's have the uncomfortable conversation of periods to bridge the gap of gender inequality.



## See you next year!

Each year at the end of fourth term, the catch cry seems to be: "See you next year!" For so many, Creative Activities is a very good habit they enjoy!

They've been coming back for years, even decades. When June Long started Creative Activities back in 1979, she would have had NO idea that it would still be going all these years later and that there would be so many that think that it's Wednesday ~ it must be Creative Activities! Some came back in the 1980's when their children were little and now they've retired and they're back! Our registration day this term will be February 7 and I'm looking forward to greeting so many familiar faces.

If you'd like to join our happy Creative Activities family and would like to learn new or old crafts and make new friends, text Carolyn on 0416 077 291 or send an email to: [carolong4@gmail.com](mailto:carolong4@gmail.com) We'd love to see you!



Creative Activities friends at the Welcome Morning Tea 2023

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**Creative Activities 2024**

**First Term Commences February 7**

**Wednesdays – 9.30am to 12noon**

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86 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill

For information: Text 0416 077 291 or email: [carolong4@gmail.com](mailto:carolong4@gmail.com)

## Box Hill intersection to receive major upgrades

One of the key intersections in Box Hill will soon feature traffic signals after The Hills Shire Council awarded a construction contract for the intersection upgrade of Old Pitt Town Road, Terry Road and Fontana Road.

The works will result in:

- New traffic lights
- Road widening along Old Pitt Town Road
- 60m right turn lane on Fontana Drive to partially replace the existing median
- Shoulder pavement and safety barriers on both sides of Old Pitt Town Road and
- New footpaths, street lighting, landscaping and relocation of services.

Mayor of The Hills Shire Dr Peter Gangemi said the upgrade is important for the local community, having advocated for this project alongside residents to Transport for NSW traffic lights since 2017.

The installation of traffic lights will improve both the safety and flow of traffic at this key intersection in the growing Box Hill area. Construction will commence in early 2024.

If you would like to stay up-to-date, search 'Old Pitt Town Road, Fontana Drive, Terry Road Intersection Upgrade' on Council's website.



## Help Grow Food for Wildlife



Have you heard of the Growing Food for Wildlife project run at Community Environment Centre Annangrove? Council is proud to share that our project was featured on Gardening Australia on ABC TV.

This community-run initiative aims to grow native plants for rescued wildlife that needs it. You are welcome to come along to one of our monthly working bees, connecting with locals as well as learning about native plant species, gardening and our local wildlife.

Visit Council's website and search 'Growing Food for Wildlife' for more information and to view our feature on ABC TV's Gardening Australia.

## Lower Portland Ferry Maintenance

The Lower Portland Ferry will be temporarily out of service for essential maintenance from 29 January 2024 for approximately 12 weeks, depending on the work required. To keep up-to-date, search 'Road Closures' on Council's website.

## Council Meetings

Tuesday 6 February, 2024 – 7pm

For more information, visit [www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au) and search for 'Meeting Agendas and Minutes.'





## Join Council's Disability and Inclusion Reference Group

Apply now to join Council's first-ever Disability and Inclusion reference group.

Membership of the panel will be open to a diverse cross-section of people living with a disability, their carers and experts in the field of disability, access and inclusion.

To submit your Expression of Interest for the Disability and Inclusion reference group, head to Council's website and search for 'Disability.' Expressions of Interest close on Friday 23 February 2024.

## Have Your Say on Council's Model Code of Meeting Practice



Council's Model Code of Meeting Practice provides the rules and procedures to govern the efficient and effective running of all Council meetings.

Hills residents are invited to have their say on the Model Code of Meeting Practice which is currently on exhibition until 30 January 2024. Head over to Council's website and search 'Model Code of Meeting Practice' to view the document and make a submission.

## Ellerman Childcare Open Night



## TOUR ELLERMAN CHILD CARE CENTRE

THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY 6.30pm - 7.30pm  
Cnr Pellitt Lane and Kenthurst Road, Round Corner, Dural

Places are available at Ellerman Child Care Centre for 3-5-year-olds.

We invite you to visit the centre on Thursday 15 February from 6:30pm – 7:30pm to explore our beautiful education environment, meet our educators and discuss how Ellerman can help your child thrive.

To register your interest in a tour, scan the QR code in the photo.

If this time doesn't work for you, please contact our team on 9761 5703 to book a tour at a time that suits you.



Are you enjoying  
The Hills Shire Council News?  
Scan the QR code to let us know.



**THE HILLS**  
Sydney's Garden Shire



# DINING OUT

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## Enjoy High Tea and Travel Lunches at The Centre Café, Dural

The Centre Café in Dural is growing a steady fanbase, particularly among local families and retirees.




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T&Cs apply. Limited time only. Ends 30/06/2024. Not valid with any other offer or discount.

With Sport and Inflatables World on during afternoons and weekends, The Centre is quieter during weekdays, and the café offers a welcoming escape, perfect for a tasty breakfast or lunch. For special events, you can also book a delicious High Tea!

With plenty of parking, level access and space, it is perfect for young families. The playground next to the balcony keeps the kids busy while the adults enjoy their meal.

Every month The Centre hosts a special travel lunch, where participants can imagine themselves a world away. After being treated to a video from an exciting far off place, guests enjoy a tantalising two course meal. Next event takes us to the French Riviera on the 20th February. Bookings essential, see [thecentredural.org.au](http://thecentredural.org.au) or call 8989 0000.



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**WEDNESDAYS**  
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T&CS APPLY. AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY AT PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS. NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR DISCOUNT. DINE-IN ONLY.





Some of the recipients of the 2023 ClubGRANTS program.

# ClubGRANTS 2024 Opens Doors for Local Initiatives

The Hills Shire ClubGRANTS for 2024 is set to kick off on February 1st, opening avenues for local community groups and projects to weave a tapestry of positive change.



Clubs have long been the backbone of communities, addressing needs from supporting returned servicemen to crafting sports facilities. In 2001, this commitment took a formal turn with the inception of ClubGRANTS, ensuring larger clubs in NSW played a pivotal role in enhancing the well-being of their communities.

Fast forward to 2022–23, and the commitment of these establishments has gone above and beyond, contributing a staggering \$121 million—\$50 million more than the mandated minimum. This not only showcases

the industry's dedication but also reflects the genuine desire to uplift disadvantaged groups.

A unique feature of the ClubGRANTS scheme is the local committee grant round. Clubs unite within a council area, forming a collaborative front in partnership with key government agencies to manage and review applications. This synergy aims to maximize the impact of every contribution, fostering a stronger sense of community.

The focus of the Hill Shire ClubGRANTS 2024 is on Category 1 projects, targeting

local community groups and projects that contribute to the welfare and broader social fabric. From community welfare and social services to development, health services, and employment assistance activities, the scope is broad, addressing various facets of community well-being.

However, accessing these funds now involves a digital twist. As of September 1, 2022, all NSW clubs are mandated to process their community support through clubgrants.com.au.

Newcomers to the system must set up an applicant account, ensuring a completed organization profile—a gateway to unlocking the application process.

Once the digital groundwork is laid, applicants can navigate to the page, search for the Hills Shire Grant Round link, and submit their proposals. The QR code will help.

The ClubGRANTS Online system, introduced in compliance with the NSW Government's guidelines, provides a streamlined process for applicants. However, for those treading these digital waters for the first time, the system offers step-by-step instructions under the ClubGRANTS Online Help page. And for any queries that might crop up along the way, a helping hand is just a click or two away.

In essence, the Hill Shire ClubGRANTS 2024 isn't just about funds; it's about fostering a community spirit, supporting grassroots initiatives, and ensuring that every contribution counts. Let's weave a stronger fabric of community together!

The QR code will help you get there.

CASTLE HILL RSL CLUB

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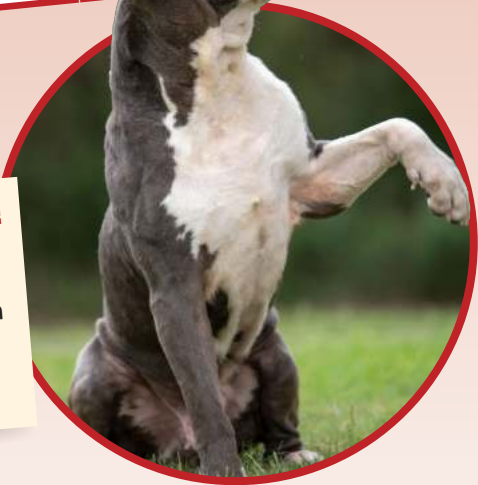


< scan for more information or visit [www.castlehillrsl.com.au](http://www.castlehillrsl.com.au)



# PETS OF THE WEEK

Sydney Animal Hospitals supports  
**The Hawkesbury Companion Animal Shelter**  
 is at 10 Mulgrave Rd, Mulgrave.  
 Call 4560 4644 or visit Hawkesbury  
 Council's Facebook page  
[www.facebook.com/hawkesburycitycouncil](http://www.facebook.com/hawkesburycitycouncil)



### AT A GLANCE

NAME: DIESEL  
 SEX: Male  
 BREED: American  
 Staffy  
 AGE: 9 years  
 PRICE: \$49

**DIESEL** is looking for a home to relax in. Staff at the Hawkesbury Companion Animal Shelter say Diesel is a very loving old boy with a very gentle sweet nature. If you feel you can give this lovely boy the caring home he deserves please come to the shelter to meet him. His adoption price has been reduced to \$49. The adoption price includes the first vaccination, microchipping, desexing and life-time council registration.

*Hawkesbury Council's Rehoming Organisation Number is: R251000145.*



### AT A GLANCE

NAME: DINO  
 SEX: Male  
 BREED: American  
 Staffy  
 AGE: 1 years  
 PRICE: \$49

**DINO** is an active happy dog who just loves everyone. Staff at the Hawkesbury Companion Animal Shelter say Dino would be best suited with a family who will have the time to exercise him each day and keep him stimulated with toys and games to burn off energy. Dino does sit when asked, walks well on lead and has a very outgoing personality. To meet Dino please come into the Shelter anytime during open hours. This adoption price has been reduced to \$49. The adoption price includes the first vaccination, microchipping, desexing and life-time council registration.

*Hawkesbury Council's Rehoming Organisation Number is: R251000145.*

**Sydney Animal Hospitals**



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 start for your  
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FOR NEW PUPPIES  
 & KITTENS

- Health Check by one of our Vets
- Sample Bag of Hill's Food
- Dose of Tick and Flea Protection
- First dose of Heartworm Prevention (for Puppies only)



\*Until the end of February

Norwest 8883 0411 | Kellyville 8883 0533  
[sydneyanimalhospitals.com.au](http://sydneyanimalhospitals.com.au)

Baulkham Hills - Opening Soon 7 Days

# Starting the year with a new puppy or kitten!

**Sydney Animal Hospitals**



Puppies and kittens are a cute addition to the family and to ensure they grow into happy and healthy dogs and cats, it's important to follow the health advice of your veterinarian. The team at Sydney Animal Hospitals are here to help keep your new pet happy and healthy, and during January, February and March, our focus is on all things puppies and kittens!

Good nutrition is vital to ensuring that your new puppy or kitten develops strong bones, a shiny coat and has the energy needed for lots of activity. Depending on your pet's breed and lifestyle, our veterinarians can provide

advice specific to your new pet. Sydney Animal Hospitals stock a range of Hill's puppy and kitten food, and we're offering a free sample bag of Hill's food when you book in for a free puppy or kitten health check with one of our veterinarians during January to March.

It's also important to protect your new puppy or kitten from parasites such

as intestinal worms, heart-worm, fleas and ticks and mites. Intestinal worms can cause your puppy or kitten to lose weight and body condition, and can also cause gastro-intestinal disturbance such as diarrhoea. Heartworm can be transmitted to your pet by mosquito bites, and can be a potentially fatal condition for pets. There are many species of ticks in Australia which can be deadly, so it's very important to protect your pet from ticks.

During our free health checks, our veterinarians will provide advice on the best parasite prevention products for your pet.

Call your local Sydney Animal Hospitals or visit our website to book in your puppy or kitten for their free veterinary health check during January and February, and take advantage of our exciting offer which includes, a free sample bag of Hill's puppy or kitten food, a free first dose heartworm prevention injection at 12 weeks of age for puppies, and a free dose of flea and tick prevention for puppies and kittens.



# WELCOME THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON

Join us for a free  
Lion Dance Parade

**Saturday 10 February**  
**10am - 10.30am**

Starts outside Specsavers and ends outside Red Dollar with special lettuce blessings and dance.

Plenty of selfie snap opportunities too!



[GroveSquareTheHills](https://www.facebook.com/GroveSquareTheHills) [grovesquarethehills](https://www.instagram.com/grovesquarethehills) [grovesquare.com.au](https://www.grovesquare.com.au)

**375-383 Windsor Road, Baulkham Hills**

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# SUMMER IN AUSTRALIA

When Christmas Bells are blooming and sunshine lights the plain

My heart sings out in gladness: "It's summertime again."

And all the dainty flannel flowers, soft petals tipped with green

Say: "It's summer in Australia, just as its always been"

And high up in the mountains and the gorges far below

The dogrose and baronia add colour to the show

Their blossoms pink, and snowy white, perfume the balmy air

And in every nook and crevice grows, the fragile maidenhair.

The big tree ferns and waratahs, like sentinels do stand

To guard the beauty of the bush, in this, my native land.

And everywhere, the flowering gum and golden wattle trees

Give succour to our sweet-voiced birds and busy honey bees.

Summer in Australia, means the bushland scene to me

It's not the same in cities, or even by the sea,

For city lights and milling crowds won't ease this lonely heart

And the ocean leaves an empty space, as every wave departs.

I cannot save a season, to capture nature's gifts

But in my heart! I oft recall, the loveliness that lifts

My weary spirit, to a scene where man and progress have not been

And, when I am not home for summer, my thoughts have ever turned  
To the native flowers and sweet bush smell of moss and bracken fern.

To the laugh of the kookaburras and the magpies melody

These lovely songs of gladness say, "it's summertime" to me.

BY MARY LENNORE SMITH

# A Poem for Summer

Mary Leonora Smith, better known to her friends as "Noreen", turned 100 in September last year and is still enjoying writing poetry.

She grew up on a farm on Seven Hills Rd, Baulkham Hills as Mary Leonora Brown and was given the nickname Noreen when attending Baulkham Hills Primary School and it stayed with her. The farm that she and her brothers Noel and John grew up on was where the Wagon Wheel Nursery and now SummitCare now stand.

Her short stories and poems have won numerous prizes including first prize in the Henry Lawson Festival of Arts. One of her poems was also accepted for the ABC publication: The Year of the Outback.

"Noreen" continues to write and post letters and cards to family and friends and she posted this summer poem to the Hills to Hawkesbury Community News which we have published.

Photo of Mary with her 100th Birthday telegram from the King



**\$30 ONLY\***

## YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US ON Friday Mornings

AT THE PENNANT HILLS COLLEGE FOR SENIORS

For fun, friendship and very leisurely learning.

Term 1 Registrations from 9.30am until 12 noon, on **FRIDAY 2ND FEBRUARY**

Group Activities begin on the 9th February

Beecroft- Pennant Hills Uniting Church  
Cnr. Boundary Road and Bellamy Street, Pennant Hills.

Ample parking available.

### ACTIVITIES

9.30 a.m. Cards (500) Learners & Players, Carpet Bowls, Current Affairs

10.30 a.m. FREE Morning Tea and time for a chat

10.50 a.m. Australian History (First-rate visiting speakers),  
Cards (500) Players, Carpet Bowls

12.30 p.m. Art - Painting with Pals

### Contact:

Phone: 02 9875 3436 Email: [leisure-learning@bphuniting.org](mailto:leisure-learning@bphuniting.org)  
or Arthur on [a.hbaillie5@bigpond.com](mailto:a.hbaillie5@bigpond.com)

\*For the whole of the term & for as many groups you wish to attend.



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## School Student Broadband Initiative helps kids keep up at school.

As another school year begins for students across the Hawkesbury, there are some kids who'll struggle to keep up because their home doesn't have broadband internet.

In my day, kids needed books and pens, coloured pencils and glue, but we all understand that accessing a computer at home, and the internet, is now a necessity for homework and study.

The way students learn has changed since I was at school, and even since my own kids were students. Schools are using more online learning tools as part of their everyday lessons and the internet gives families access to important educational resources.

So if you know someone who doesn't have a home broadband connection, the Albanese's School Student Broadband Initiative (SSBI) may help them get through 2024. To be eligible, there needs to be students enrolled in school, living at home, with no active broadband services over the NBN network.

We want to ensure that every child has access to the transformational benefit of broadband so they can keep up with their peers. That's why

we're investing \$8.8 million to connect up to 30,000 eligible families with school aged children to the NBN.

Getting kids to do their homework and to hand in their assignments on time can already be a struggle of a lot of parents. Not having access to the internet makes completing that work even more difficult and makes it harder for kids to get excited to learn and participate in class.

More than 6,000 households have already been connected to free internet through the SSBI and the affordability initiative has been extended through to 31 December 2025, so more families can benefit from fast, reliable, free internet for longer.

The service, while designed to help kids access education tools, can be used by the entire household, allowing families to access other digital services, like telehealth, online banking, and myGov services.

Families interested in the SSBI can contact the National Referral Centre on 1800 954 610 (Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm AEDT) to have their eligibility assessed.

This initiative is just one way we're helping families manage the cost of living while narrowing the digital divide so all kids get a great start in life.

## The Hills Shire Council Australia Day Awards

Recently, on the 16 January, the Hills Shire Council held its Australia Day Awards Ceremony. The annual ceremony is held to recognise and honour the contributions made to the community of The Hills by selfless volunteers. What a perfect way to celebrate Australia Day, by celebrating local Australians who seek to make our community and our country a better place.

There were twenty-eight finalists across five categories: the Community Group of the Year, Citizen of the Year – Environmental Award, Citizen of the Year – Youth Award, Citizen of the Year – Senior Award, and the Citizen of the Year.

Though there could only be one winner, all nominees were well deserving of their nomination. They are shining examples of the effort and tremendous care these volunteers have for The Hills and truly represent the Australian Spirit.

Congratulations to the winners of each category:

- Community Group of the Year: Fit Kidz
- Citizen of the Year – Environmental Category: Lilly Schwartz
- Citizen of the Year – Youth Award: Little Helpers on the Run – Aiza, Aish, and Abdullah Khurram
- Citizen of the Year – Senior Award: James Smith
- Citizen of the Year: Ellen Kulbicki

It is this selfless act of giving, the care for our local people, that sets them above and beyond, and that makes the people of the Hills stand out. Congratulations to the nominees, and especially to the winners, and thank you for all you have done for the community of the Hills and wider Sydney communities. I look forward to seeing the work of these amazing volunteers in the future.



## MARK HODGES MP

MEMBER FOR CASTLE HILL

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# LOCAL JOURNALIST EXECUTED OVER WAR CRIMES

I have a habit of picking up information from various sources. Sometime in the past year, I came across a small leaflet published by The Rotary Club of Windsor. The leaflet was titled "100 PLUS HAWKESBURY FACTS" and it revealed to me that in 1895 to 1897, "The Windsor-Richmond Gazette" employed a young journalist aged in his mid 30s.

In 1899, the young writer enlisted with the Second Contingent of the South Australian Mounted Rifles in Adelaide and went on to become the most recognised member of the Australians who fought in the Boer War. The name, when enlisting, was given as Harry Harbord Morant. He had actually been originally named Edwin Henry Murrant on the 9 December 1864 in Bridgwater, Somerset, England. Much of his early life is clouded in mystery but he arrived at Townsville, Queensland, in early April 1883. Using the name Edwin Henry Murrant, he married Daisy May O'Dwyer at Charters Towers, Queensland, in 1884. He was 19 at the time, although he claimed to be 21 years. Thus, the marriage was, in fact, illegal at the time. Murrant's wife soon left him; and, as Daisy Bates, anthropologist, she went on to achieve her own fame for her work among Aborigines.

After they separated, Murrant moved to Winton, Queensland before finding work droving cattle. His reputation as a horseman, drinker and womaniser grew, particularly after he began contributing poetry to the Bulletin under the name 'the Breaker'. Between 1895 and 1898 he moved south to Windsor and started work as a journalist at the Windsor-Richmond Gazette. This newspaper was later to become "The Hawkesbury Gazette".

In 1899 when the Boer War began, Murrant was in Adelaide and enlisted under the name, Harry Harbord (Breaker) Morant (1864? -1902), horseman, balladist and soldier. Whilst in South Africa, fellow Australian Colonel, Joseph Gordon, recommended Morant as despatch rider to Bennet Burleigh, war correspondent, for the London Daily Telegraph. The Mount Nelson Hotel in Cape Town, at which Morant had stayed during November 1900, sent a letter the following January alleging that he had claimed to be a war correspondent for the Daily Telegraph and the son of Admiral Sir George Morant and "had left without discharging his

liability of 16 pounds and 13 shillings." The letter concluded "We shall esteem it a favour if you would let us know the course we had better adopt. We are averse to taking the matter to court till we had heard from you." Sir George Morant later denied being Breaker's father.

All the above may indicate that whilst Moran may have been untruthful and somewhat of a con artist during his lifetime, it is for the final stages of his life that he is most remembered. He was charged and found guilty of involvement in 20 murders in South Africa whilst serving with the Bushveldt Carbineers, a 320-man irregular mounted infantry regiment.

The murders included a revenge killing of a wounded prisoner of war, Floris Visser, for the death on the battlefield of Capt Percy Hunt, a friend of Morant. It was later discovered that Hunt's death was caused by a fall from his horse and not from a wound caused during battle. Other murders included four surrendered

Afrikaners and four Dutch schoolteachers who had been captured at a hospital at Valdezia. Also murdered was the Rev. Carl Heese, who had witnessed these murders. The native African driver of Rev. Heese was also killed at the that time. There can be no doubt that the killings of innocent unarmed civilians such as a Church Missionary, schoolteachers, native driver and surrendered prisoners of war constitutes as war crimes.

The investigation into the alleged war crimes was prompted by a fellow Australian trooper disgusted by what had happened and reported the matter to superior officers. The investigating officer, who was asked to investigate the claims contained in the letter, was also Australian, thus bringing into doubt suggestions of a British cover-up, and that Australians were just victims of this cover-up to protect influential people such as Lord Kitchener and others.



The local newspaper that employed Breaker Morant

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# AS WE WERE

PHOTOS FROM THE PAST

COLLECTION COMPILED BY IVOR JONES SHOWING LIFE IN THE HILLS AND HAWKESBURY AREA DURING PAST DECADES.



Daisy Bates in 1936 and 1937

# Australian great Lonard favourite at Castle Hill golf classic

## Gale heads local challenge at star-studded Webex Players Series Sydney

Daniel Gale, who has hit a rich vein of form, heads the local challenge at the \$250,00 Webex Players Series Sydney hosted by Braith Anasta at the picturesque Castle Hill Country Club from February 8-11.

Australian golfing great Peter Lonard, 56, once the club pro at Oatlands Golf Club, before becoming one of the country's most successful players, is the top contender at this event. Lonard was once ranked as high as 23 on the world circuit, with wins in the US PGA and Australia.

Gale, 27, who has been playing golf since he was seven, will be joined by Castle Hill CC player Alex Edge, and previous member Lucy Harris.

Gale finished last year with a splendid victory at the 2023 Sandbelt International in Melbourne, sealing it with a hole-in-one.



Local hope Daniel Gale is in prime form. Picture courtesy: Australian Golf

The Webex Players Series Sydney is the largest event held at Castle Hill Country Club in more than 20 years and features female and male professionals, top amateurs, and all-abilities golfers.

CHCC general manager Brenden Ellam said they are thrilled to bring an Australian PGA and WPGA event to The Hills.

"There are so many golfers in this part of Sydney who cannot easily access professional golf tournaments, and it makes us so proud to be able to deliver an event of this calibre to these people and to the Hills Shire," Ellam said. "The exposure from the broadcast will shine a spotlight on the North West of Sydney, and it will bring Castle Hill CC back as one of Sydney's premier championship venues.

"In the 1980s, we were fortunate enough to hold two Australian PGA Championships and then four Canon Challenges in 1993-94 and 2000-01. Last November we held the Mulpha Castle Hill Country Club Legends Pro-Am."

Ellam said that the tournament has attracted Lonard, New Zealand Open winner Brendan Jones, 2018 Order of Merit Winner Jake McLeod, recent tour winner Matthew Griffin, and Harrison Crowe.

Australian great Peter Lonard will be the player to watch. Picture courtesy: Australian Golf

In the women's competition, Sydney-siders Kelsey Bennett and Amy Chu take on a field of internationals from the USA, UK, New Zealand, France, South Korea, India, Japan, Malaysia, Cook Islands, Singapore, and Thailand.

PGA of Australia General Manager of Tournaments and Global Tour Relations Nick Dastey said: "Castle Hill has proven to be a great venue for tournament golf with a distinguished list of past champions." According to WPGA Tour of Australasia CEO Karen Lunn, the "Webex Player Series Sydney is going to be a great opportunity to see our best women and men in action together at the same time on the high-quality test that Castle Hill will provide".

The men and ladies tee it up against each other over 72 holes, with a cut after the first 36 holes. The course is set up to allow both genders to compete on a level playing field. On the weekend, 16 players, including four boys and one girl from Castle Hill CC, will compete in the junior tournament. Eight All-Ability players compete in their event. Entry is free.

# Sally, Adele star as Nepean Physical Culture Dazzle at Nationals

Nepean Physical Culture, which has many members from The Hills, is gearing up for another successful year after some very impressive achievements in 2023.

Sally Lamplough from Blaxland East is the overall Australian ladies champion after a scintillating performance at the recent Ladies National Finals. Sally, one of the most successful competitors from Nepean Physical Culture over the years, was first in her section at the Nationals to become the best ladies' competitor in Australia.

Not to be overshadowed, Baulkham Hills ace Adele McGuinness won her over 60s section underlining a brilliant performance that proved that women of any age can get out there and dance like champions. Adding to the Nepean club's success was their Novice Ladies

Championship Grade side who captured the overall trophy making them the best team in Australia.

Sally dominated the over 33 ladies section, having been doing physie since she was just four years. She has won her age group a remarkable 16 times in addition to two Overall Senior Grand Champion and two Overall Ladies Grand Champion titles.

The club have locations in Werrington, Londonderry and McGraths Hill and is a part of Australia's longest-running and premier physie organisation. It was founded 130 years ago by Bjelke-Petersen School of Physical Culture.

According to Kim Annesley, the Head Teacher, BJP has proudly inspired generations of Australians to exercise both body and mind through this remarkable sport.

Nepean Physical Culture has 200 members ranging from three years to over 70. "Physie is a dance sport that fuses dance styles such as jazz, ballet, hip hop, contemporary, aerobic dance and even yoga," Kim said.



Sally Lamplough from Blaxland East is the overall Australian ladies' champion.

Adele McGuinness outclassed her rivals in the Over 60s category.

"We had wonderful success as a club in 2023 with great results in both the individual and team components of our dance sport."

Weekly classes are held at Windsor High School in McGraths Hill.

Other individual results from the Australian Nationals: Lyn Lamont (Glenhaven) second; Lucy Lamplough (Blaxland East) third; Zoe Lamplough (Blaxland) fourth; Ellerie Armstrong (Kurrajong) fourth; Mia Fahy (Regentville) fourth; Francine Lee-Smart (The Ponds) fourth; Erin Taylor fourth (Beaumont Hills); Lucia Posa fifth (Caddens); Hollee Stewart (Bella Vista) fifth.

Details: [www.nepean.physie.com.au](http://www.nepean.physie.com.au)



Nepean Physical Culture's champion Novice Ladies Championship Grade team.



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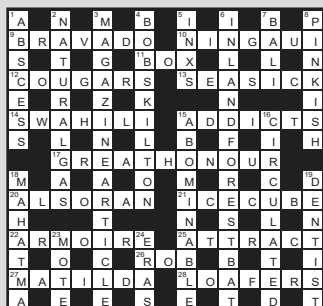
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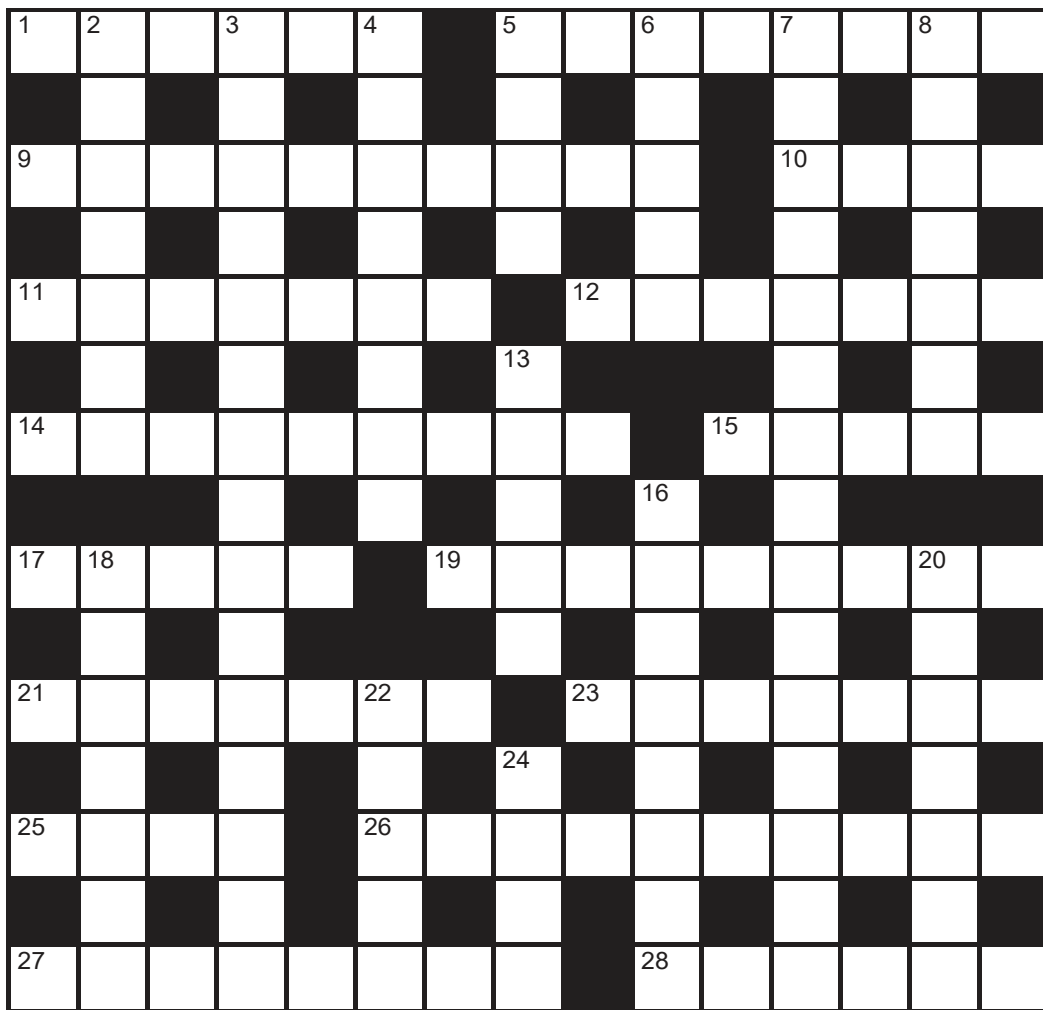
Answers from last issue

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

6	2	8	1	7	3	9	5	4
4	1	9	5	6	8	7	3	2
3	7	5	2	9	4	8	1	6
5	8	7	4	1	9	2	6	3
2	3	6	8	5	7	1	4	9
1	9	4	6	3	2	5	8	7
8	6	2	7	4	5	3	9	1
7	4	3	9	8	1	6	2	5
9	5	1	3	2	6	4	7	8



### Across

- 1 Some optical drives (1, 1, 1-1, 2)
- 5 Scotch rocks? (3, 5)
- 9 Supersonic disturbance causes bangs
- 10 Brown ---, a large seabird
- 11 Hopes
- 12 Lend a hand (4, 3)
- 14 Inordinately greedy
- 15 OK?
- 17 Fatty acid
- 19 Plug
- 21 Side by side
- 23 Priests' subordinates
- 25 E ---, which can be very bad for you
- 26 Type of music
- 27 Firmly inserted
- 28 The preceding generation

### Down

- 2 Type of fishing, often well away from land (4-3)
- 3 Rare (4, 2, 1, 8)
- 4 Like some weedkillers
- 5 Bin chicken
- 6 Actor --- Dingo
- 7 Psychotic Tito punishes cad - it's natural
- 8 Silver-leaved shrub with purple flowers (3, 4)
- 13 Delicious type of crab
- 16 "Not this story again ..." (4, 2, 2)
- 18 Flowering (2, 5)
- 20 Lie on the beach
- 22 Kendo prop
- 24 Wind-driven clouds

## Please don't bin your batteries

The risks associated with improper disposal of hazardous and problem waste in kerbside bins are being brought to light in a targeted campaign to the Hawkesbury community. With the increasing number of fires occurring in collection trucks and at waste facilities, it is important that residents are disposing of problem and hazardous waste in safe ways to ensure the safety of waste workers and the environment.

The improper disposal of batteries and other hazardous waste materials in kerbside bins places

waste collection drivers and their vehicles at risk. The compaction equipment inside waste collection trucks means there is a significant risk of a fire starting.

Other examples of hazardous or problem waste include fluorescent lights, car batteries, gas bottles, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, motor oils, cooking oils, paints and paint tins. Community Recycling Centres (also referred to as CRCs) across NSW accept these hazardous household items at no cost to residents.

For more information on hazardous waste disposal, check out the NSW EPA website [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/waste](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/waste). To learn more about Council's waste services and facilities, visit [www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/for-residents/waste-and-recycling](http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/for-residents/waste-and-recycling) or call Council on 4560 4444.

# WORD SEARCH BOATS

T	T	E	R	E	L	W	A	R	T	Y	W	E	T	S
L	R	U	G	T	T	L	R	X	T	A	H	O	A	X
Q	O	E	G	O	E	A	N	A	M	C	E	N	O	Y
F	L	N	N	B	N	S	A	V	Y	H	R	A	B	H
K	L	I	G	O	O	D	L	A	A	T	R	C	E	G
T	C	R	J	B	O	A	O	O	Y	L	Y	T	S	N
R	A	R	N	X	O	H	T	L	O	R	A	T	U	I
O	T	L	A	L	U	A	C	A	A	P	R	P	O	D
O	A	M	U	A	C	O	T	S	N	E	Y	E	H	N
K	M	W	K	G	I	E	Z	E	T	T	Y	N	F	P
Z	A	T	U	M	G	H	Y	D	R	O	F	O	I	L
I	R	M	P	P	P	E	L	I	F	E	B	O	A	T
P	A	B	X	L	Z	S	R	L	T	F	R	A	F	T
T	N	F	E	G	R	A	B	Y	E	L	L	A	G	O
Y	Z	T	A	O	B	W	O	H	S	N	C	P	Y	L

Answers from last issue

## WORD SEARCH

R	U	B	Y	H	L	A	C	E	S	U	R	C	B	S
I	F	W	R	E	V	L	I	S	S	N	O	R	I	Z
A	N	E	S	R	E	H	T	A	E	L	P	V	C	R
N	H	U	C	O	L	E	E	T	S	K	O	V	C	A
I	L	E	H	Q	L	I	N	E	N	R	A	S	J	L
H	M	J	M	O	A	I	E	R	Y	Y	C	C	Q	
C	T	A	P	E	A	R	L	D	B	S	E	O	D	N
A	S	F	X	R	R	V	P	R	A	L	X	T	I	P
O	C	K	E	M	A	Q	E	A	J	I	T	A	N	
B	S	T	O	P	M	L	T	W	R	E	O	M	O	G
A	O	U	S	A	A	F	S	D	S	R	Z	N	O	L
Q	T	M	Z	P	O	Y	O	U	U	C	N	O	N	L
R	W	N	I	L	R	P	R	A	R	J	O	R	D	D
Z	X	F	B	C	W	O	O	D	Z	T	R	D	T	D
O	R	H	Q	R	X	C	O	R	A	L	B	U	X	X

## CODE WORD

A	C	T	I	V	I	T	Y	S	T	U	N
J	E	E	O	A	O						
A	G	A	I	N	R	E	L	A	X	E	S
R	S	E	Q	I	I						
E	Z	U	M	P	T	E	E	N			
P	E	R	F	U	M	E	R	S	E		
E	E	A	S								
D	W	L	L	O	C	U	S	T	S		
I	K	E	B	A	N	A	T	C			
G	A	M	I	H	L						
R	A	V	I	O	L	I	C	R	E	D	O
E	E	N	E	M	L						
E	A	R	L	H	A	R	D	B	A	L	L

- BARGE
- CANOE
- CATAMARAN
- DINGHY
- FERRY

- GALLEY
- GONDOLA
- HOUSEBOAT
- HYDROFOIL
- LIFEBOAT

- LONGBOAT
- LUGGER
- RAFT
- SCHOONER
- SHOWBOAT

- SLOOP
- TRAWLER
- TUG BOAT
- WHERRY
- YACHT

Numbers in the grid (1-26) correspond to each of the letters of the alphabet from A-Z in some order. Solve the puzzle and fill in the letters in the key provided as you find them. Three letters are provided to give you a start.

# CODE WORD

12	3	7	19		20	12	5	7	3	7	22	22													
23		11		19		6		21		16		12													
14	12	18	4	10	9	24		9	9	10	4														
22		12		16		8		2		15		25													
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A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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# SUDOKU

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

			4			6			1	8				
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	7				4					6				
	8	6	2	7			5	3	4					
8		5	3			2	7	4	1					
4	1		8				6							

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