

# Hills to Hawkesbury

Community News

10th – 24th January 2025 | Volume 42 – Issue 01  
Local Stories, Local Events, Local People and Local Businesses

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## AUSTRALIA DAY IN THE HILLS

SEE DETAILS ON PAGES 17 & 18





# Australia Day on the Hawkesbury 2025

Australia Day on the Hawkesbury returns on Sunday 26 January 2025, with a spot of cricket for the very first time!

This year will be the Ultimate Cricket Game so make sure you sign up at the council tent to be a part of a team. Competitions will run throughout the event with some cool prizes to be won. The community event runs from 5pm to 9pm at Governor Phillip Park, Windsor and is the perfect way to enjoy this special day with friends and family.

Event favourite Farmer Dave as event MC will ensure another fun and high-energy event. The thong-throwing championship is back for its third year, with junior, adult and emergency services competitions. Sign up to compete at Council's tent on the day and stake your claim for the 2025 Golden Thong trophy.

To cap it all off will be the always popular fireworks display at 9pm. Australia Day on the Hawkesbury 2025 will also feature an outdoor stage with live entertainment, food and drink stalls plus food trucks, carnival rides, free face painting, Emergency Services Display.

There is an inclusive playspace at Governor Phillip Park. Bring picnic rugs and chairs, but please leave portable shelters at home as they can pose a blow-over risk to other visitors and will not be permitted at the event. Plenty of on-site parking is available. This is a dog-friendly event. Please keep dogs on a lead at all times. For more details visit [www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au) for event updates.

# Celebrate Australia Day 2025 in the Hills

Australia Day celebrations are back at Bella Vista Farm Park with a day of free family fun, food and fireworks.

The festivities won't be limited to Bella Vista with a massive pool party and free barbecue kicking off the day at Waves Fitness and Aquatic Centre from 10am to 3pm.

Families can enjoy a FREE sausage sizzle (limited availability), inflatable obstacle course in the 50m pool, party tunes from a DJ and roving entertainment.

The celebrations at Bella Vista Farm run from 4:30pm to 9pm. Australian singer Ricki-Lee will take the stage as the headline act, performing some of her biggest hits. Audiences can also enjoy an exclusive Bluey Live Interactive Experience and the interactive renditions of Junkyard Beats.

Mayor of The Hills Shire, Dr Michelle Byrne said that Australia Day is a wonderful opportunity for families and friends to come together and celebrate our diversity, spirit, and unity.

"We're thrilled to offer a fun-filled day that has something for everyone – from the pool party at Waves to the fantastic lineup of entertainment and fireworks at Bella Vista Farm," Mayor Byrne said.

"Australia Day is an opportunity to celebrate our vibrant nation and the remarkable community spirit that fills us all with great pride to be Australians.

"I encourage you all to come together to honour our shared values and achievements and this amazing country."

Bella Vista Farm will also feature a wide array of delicious food trucks, FREE activities for all ages, face painting, and roving entertainers.

Visitors can also enjoy carnival rides, community stage performances from local groups, and a spectacular fireworks finale that will light up the night sky at the end of the night.



The Hills to Hawkesbury Community News would like to wish our readers, contributors and advertisers a prosperous and fulfilling year ahead.

Times are harder for us all in this cost of living crisis. Print prices continually rise, *but we are committed to bringing you local information and stories with a very small, dedicated team. Please support our advertisers who enable us to support our community in this way.* ~ Diana Paton Publisher



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

'We acknowledge the traditional Owners and Custodians of the land of the Dharug and Darkinjung People on which we work and pay our respects to Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging'. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the land's first storytellers.

# 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. Its 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.

Please follow us on Facebook @hillstohawkesbury. Printed copies are available at local shopping centres and other outlets. For a full list of drop off points for the Hills to Hawkesbury Community News, visit our website [www.hillstohawkesbury.com.au](http://www.hillstohawkesbury.com.au) or click on the QR code.





# RIVERLAND HARMONY CHORUS ENTERTAINS RIVERSIDE GARDENS at Christmas Time

Riverside Gardens had a Christmas party on Friday evening of 20 Dec. The residents were entertained by the *Riverland Harmony Chorus*. The range of music included Christmas carols, Christmas songs and many favourites from bygone years.

*Riverland Harmony Chorus* is a women's A Cappella Chorus who love to sing, perform and entertain. It was formed in November 1992 and chartered in 1996. An A Cappella Chorus is music where people sing without instruments. Merryl Liston is the Music Director, and she is an accomplished musician herself. Merryl has been the Music Director of *Riverland Harmony Chorus* since 1994. Its Membership is drawn from a wide area of the Blue Mountains City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, Penrith City Council, Cumberland City Council and Camden City Council.

The Chorus meet every Monday evening for vocal training, simple stretch exercises and

breathing techniques that are incorporated into their rehearsals. *Riverland Harmony Chorus* aim to have fun whilst improving its vocal techniques.

The Chorus has competed in various *Eisteddfods* in the area, sung on the *Nepean Belle*, at the *Joan Sutherland Centre*, the *Evan Theatre*, *Blacktown Civic Centre*, *Sydney Town Hall* and at the *Sydney Entertainment Centre*, as well as many other local engagements and others further afield. Conventions for choruses Australia-wide are held annually. Whether it be festivals, charity events, birthday parties or Christmas functions; - *Riverland Harmony Chorus* love it all!

The Chorus also takes part in National Barbershop Conventions. What is Barbershop Harmony you may well ask. This style of harmony is produced by four voices singing without accompaniment (A Capella) – Tenor (above the melody), Lead (melody), Baritone (below the melody) and Bass (below the Baritone). A pitch pipe is used to indicate the starting note and from then on it is up to the Chorus to keep in tune. Barbershop singing is considered an original American art form.

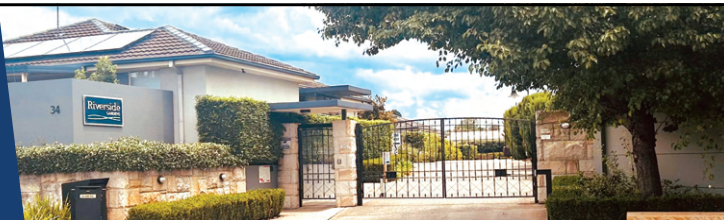


*Riverside Gardens* felt privileged to have *Riverland Harmony Chorus* entertain them, knowing they are also part of *Sweet Adelines International*, a worldwide singing organisation for women, and one of more than 30 *Sweet Adelines Choruses* in Australia and around 450 Choruses world-wide.

After their truly beautiful concert, the Chorus circulated amongst the residents to tell them all about their group and its activities. They said that many lasting friendships have been formed both within the Chorus and with other members throughout Australia.

Their performance was indeed the high note of the Christmas party. As they left the venue many residents described the performances as uplifting, beautiful and giving them a genuine feeling of well-being.

## Riverside GARDENS



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## ROAD RAGE

Riverstone Highway Patrol is appealing for information regarding a road rage incident/assault that occurred around 12:10 PM on Wednesday, 18th December 2024, on Meadow Road, Schofields/Marsden Park. The incident involved a male and female driver.

If you witnessed the incident or have dash cam footage, please contact Riverstone Police Station on 02 9838 2199 quoting event number E84434355.

Information is treated in strict confidence. The public is reminded not to report information via NSW Police social media pages.

## HOLIDAY SPEEDING

At about 1:00 AM, on Saturday 21 December 2024, officers attached to Hawkesbury Traffic and Highway Patrol were patrolling Windsor Road, McGraths Hill, when they located a Mazda utility allegedly speeding.

Police directed the driver to stop; however, when they allegedly failed to stop a pursuit was initiated. During the pursuit the car allegedly reached speeds of 110km/h in an 80km/h zone.

The vehicle stopped on Freemans Reach Road where the driver, a 24-year-old man, was arrested and subjected to a roadside breath test, returning a positive result. He was taken to Windsor Police Station where he underwent a breath analysis, returning an alleged reading of 0.125.

The man was charged with police pursuit - not stop - drive recklessly and drive with mid-range PCA. He was granted conditional bail to appear before Windsor Local Court on Wednesday 15 January 2025.

## UNLICENSED DRIVING

A man has been charged with driving unlicensed, use unregistered motor vehicle, use uninsured motor vehicle and drive with passenger on part of vehicle not permitted.

At about 2 AM on Friday, 27th of December 2024, officers attached to Ku-ring-gai Highway Patrol were patrolling Pennant Hills Road Thornleigh when they observed a Harley Davidson motorcycle carrying a pillion passenger.

Police conducted checks revealing the man to have a suspended Class C drivers licence and no Class R rider licence. Checks also revealed the motorbike to be unregistered and uninsured. Police inspected the motorcycle which was fitted with a rider seat only and no passenger/pillion seat.

Police observed the passenger to have a piece of removable foam with a towel wrapped around it which he was using as a makeshift seat. The foam was placed on the rear plastic fender of the motorcycle.

The man will face Hornsby Local Court in February 2025.

## CHRISTMAS ASSAULT

At around 6:00 AM, on Christmas day, a 28-year-old woman arrived home heavily intoxicated and woke her housemates, a 29-year-old woman and a 20-year-old woman. A verbal argument ensued, escalating to a physical altercation.

The 28-year-old woman then allegedly physically assaulted the 29-year-old woman, causing her to fall onto the shattered glass and sustain significant injuries to her leg and foot.

Hills PAC officers and NSW Ambulance responded to the scene. The 28-year-old woman attempted to avoid arrest by throwing a light projector at an officer, leading to a violent confrontation. A taser was drawn but not discharged. The woman was eventually subdued and taken into custody.

Charges:

- Reckless wounding (DV)
- 2 counts of Assault police officer in execution of duty causing actual bodily harm
- 2 counts of Hinder or resist police officer in execution of duty
- Maliciously destroying or damaging property

An ADVO was granted for the protection of the 29-year-old woman. The 28-year-old woman was refused bail and is scheduled to appear at Parramatta Local Court on 26 December 2024.

## RAINY DAY COLLISION

At about 2:30 AM on Tuesday, 7 January, The Hills Police, NSW Ambulance, and NSW Rural Fire Service responded to a Toyota van that had travelled west along Annangrove Rd, Kenthurst, and collided with a tree and a fence after losing control in wet weather conditions. The vehicle sustained significant damage to the passenger side, pushing the glovebox into the passenger seat.

The Police once again reminds drivers the importance of driving to the conditions. It is advisable to slow down in wet weather to ensure utmost safety and the safety of others on the road.

Fortunately, there was no passenger in the vehicle, and the driver walked away without injuries.

## SHOPLIFTING SPREE

On 30th December 2024, Eastern Suburbs police arrested a 44-year-old man and a 55-year-old woman for multiple shoplifting offences across Sydney. The duo targeted retail stores at Castle Towers, Westfield Liverpool, and Westfield Bondi Junction, allegedly stealing items worth over \$20,000.

Thanks to CCTV footage, police identified and apprehended the offenders at Westfield Bondi Junction. Both were charged and refused bail, set to appear at Parramatta Local Court on 31st December 2024. The stolen items have been returned to the stores.

## SUSPICIOUS BUSHFIRE

Riverstone Police Area Command is appealing for witnesses following a suspicious fire that started in the grasslands at the intersection of Aerodrome Drive and Triton Parade, Nirimba Fields (600 - 700 metres from Veron Road).

At approximately 7:34 PM on Friday, 27th December 2024, two males believed to be between the ages of 14 and 20, were observed at the location by a witness. The witness saw the two males leave the area on trail bikes.

Riverstone Police would like to speak to these two males in relation to the fire. If you were in the area at this time and witnessed anything suspicious or have CCTV footage, please contact Crime Stoppers or Riverstone Police Station.

Police are urging anyone with information about this incident to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or use the Crime Stoppers online reporting page: <https://www1.police.nsw.gov.au/>.

## MINOR P1 DRIVER

At approximately 3:00 AM on Wednesday, 1 January 2025, The Hills Police observed a silver Toyota Aurion travelling on Old Northern Road, with a rear-seat passenger not properly wearing a seatbelt.

Upon intercepting the vehicle, further checks on the driver revealed they were a 17-year-old P1 licence holder. There were three passengers in the vehicle, all under 18 years old.

The driver was issued the following infringement notices:

- Drive with 1 passenger seatbelt/restraint not properly adjusted/fastened.
- P1 driver under 25 years old drive between 11 PM and 5 AM with more than 1 passenger under 21 years.
- Not comply with P1 licence condition not display P plates.
- Drive motor vehicle not carry licence.

The total infringement amount was \$1548, with double demerit points in effect, resulting in 11 demerit points. Consequently, the RMS will suspend the driver's licence.

## GARBAGE TRUCK FIRE

On 31 December 2024, a garbage truck was forced to tip out its load at Wrights Reserve early in the morning after onboard sensors detected a fire within the vehicle.

Fire and Rescue NSW crews extinguished the blaze, and a cleanup crew helped onsite.

Residents in the vicinity of Wrights Reserve, Pye Road, and Highfield Road, Quakers Hill, were advised to keep their windows closed to minimise exposure to smoke and avoid the area during the incident.



# Macquarie Park upgrades to make life by the river safer and more enjoyable

Fancy relaxing at Macquarie Park with your family while gazing across the beautiful Hawkesbury River? Longing for an improved playground experience for your family?

Major improvements are now underway at Macquarie Park in Windsor, breathing fresh life into the beloved riverside recreation space. The \$1.8 million project includes State Government funding thanks to its Places to Swim program (\$839,400), Community Local Infrastructure Recovery Package Community Asset Program (\$600,000), and a \$550,000 contribution from Hawkesbury City Council, creating more options for safe recreation around our river.

The works will include added shade structures, picnic facilities, signage and a path and trail network to improve accessibility. New picnic areas adjacent to the riverbank that will include shade, seating, tables, barbecues and drinking fountain. There will also be an emergency access ramp down to the beach area. The existing picnic area will be upgraded with new table settings and additional shade. Each of these facilities will be suitable for all ages and abilities.

These works will also increase visibility from the park to the riverbank through landscaping, improving safety for river users. Signage will

be upgraded to provide risk, water quality and water safety messaging.

The existing playspace will be upgraded so that it is more suitable for a regional destination park and will include a water play area with water pumps, sluice gates and a nature play creek bed. Other additions include a basket swing, a rope canoe swing spinner and nature balance play. The playspace upgrade will be flood resilient and will include play that is suitable for all ages and abilities, include shade, trees and landscaping.

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Paul Scully, said the NSW Government has invested a combined \$1.8 million towards Macquarie Park foreshore's upgrade through the Places to Swim and Community Local Infrastructure Recovery programs.

"Macquarie Park has long been a much loved place for Windsor and surrounding Hawkesbury communities," Mr Scully said. "This revitalisation will enhance the park, providing a great place to picnic and safely access the water for recreation in Western Sydney."

These works were identified in the Macquarie Park Plan of Management and Masterplan, which was developed from community feedback in 2020, and was adopted by Council in August 2023.

There will be impacts to playground access and sections of the park during construction. Weather permitting, it is expected these works will be completed in winter 2025.

Places to Swim is connecting people to water in places that need it the most, creating better access to get in, on and around inland waterways across NSW through a \$16.7 million commitment to high quality open space. Together with the NSW Government, Hawkesbury City Council is delivering infrastructure that is essential for communities, increasing access to water for recreation across the state.

For more information about the Places to Swim program, visit <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/open-space/open-spaces-program/places-to-swim>



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## Sophie's Slime Factory

Slime, it's sticky, it's messy and it's one of the last things you want in your house as a parent. Yet slime is obsessively loved by children of all ages.

But now there is a solution where everyone wins – Sophie's Slime Factory. A place where children can make and play with slime to their heart's delight whilst parents know their own walls and floors are safe from slime.

Sophie's Slime Factory is the first of its kind in Australia and is based here in the Hills offering children (and adults), the ultimate slime experience. You can let your imagination and creativity run wild as you make your own custom designed slimes. There are 40 additives and 15 scents to add to your slime as colour paint to choose from. Best of all the very friendly and helpful staff guide you through the process of making your own slime. Afterwards, the factory is yours to play in with an area dedicated to play with your slime, make shapes and bubbles. Other fun activities include slinging slime at friends standing behind a Perspex wall, sinking your hands into buckets of slime with differing textures and adding chunks of slime to the dedicated slime wall.

What makes Sophie's Slime Factory even better is that it is owned and run by local teenagers, Sophie and Isabelle. Sophie began her slime business in 2016 at the age of 11. Like many her age, Sophie became "hooked on the slime trend" and used whatever household items she could find, much to her "mum's dismay" to add to her slime creations. Sophie began selling her slime on Etsy and to her school friends.

After attending a friend's party where they all made slime, Sophie had the idea to start slime parties. Joining forces with her sister, Isabelle who has a drive for organisation and management, the girls started a party entertainment business and ran their first party for their cousin in 2017. So successful, Sophie and Isabelle spent the next 6 years travelling around Sydney every weekend hosting slime parties.

After a short break, Sophie and Isabelle opened Sophie's Slime Factory which Sophie

describes as being "one of the best experiences of her life" and one which is "so rewarding that it doesn't even feel like work"

Sophie's Slime Factory has now outgrown its current premises and will shortly relocate to Castle Hill with even more slime activities.

When asked what is the best part about running her own business Sophie said the following:

"The best part about running my slime business is how much I love working with kids and seeing their excitement as they get creative. Slime is so inclusive –everyone, regardless of age or physical ability, can enjoy it, which makes it truly special. I also appreciate how our factory provides affordable kids' entertainment that doesn't rely on physical activity, making it a unique and accessible option for families".

For more information on Sophie's Slime Factory go to [www.sophiesslimefactory.com.au](http://www.sophiesslimefactory.com.au)

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If you are coming from Sydney, and after breath-taking, magnificent views of the valley, you descend into Wisemans Ferry, turn LEFT past the Police Station for 200m and alight the **WEBBS CREEK FERRY**. It's 24/7 and it's free.

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# FORGET DOWNSIZING: In 2025 It's All About Rightsizing to Balance Your Life in Retirement

As retirement approaches, many individuals begin to grapple with the decision of how best to adjust their lifestyle to accommodate the shift from work to leisure. The traditional advice has been to “downsize”—sell the family home, move to a smaller space, and reduce expenses. However, a growing number of retirees and experts are shifting the conversation toward a more nuanced approach: rightsizing.

Rightsizing isn't about minimizing your possessions or shrinking your living space; it's about finding the right fit for your unique life and goals in retirement. While downsizing focuses on cutting back, rightsizing encourages people to carefully consider their needs and desires in this new phase of life, creating a harmonious balance between space, finances, and lifestyle.

The concept of rightsizing involves evaluating what truly enhances your quality of life, from your home environment to your personal activities and social connections. For some, rightsizing means relocating to a new home that better suits their needs—a space

that's more manageable or accessible, but not necessarily smaller. For others, it might involve staying put but optimising their existing home to reflect a lifestyle that prioritises convenience, comfort, and joy.

One of the key benefits of rightsizing is that it enables retirees to remain financially stable without sacrificing the enjoyment of their newfound freedom. Instead of selling a family home and moving into a smaller house that feels more like a compromise, rightsizing encourages individuals to consider how they can use their current assets more wisely, whether it's adjusting their living space, moving to a more vibrant community,

or even investing in experiences like travel or hobbies.

Experts suggest that rightsizing is also a mindset shift. It's not just about where you live, but how you live. It's about curating a lifestyle that enhances well-being, fosters connection, and maximizes enjoyment.

At Windsor Country Village we believe that rightsizing is not just a solution for reducing costs, but a philosophy for living a balanced, fulfilling life. Retirement is no longer a one-size-fits-all journey, and by rightsizing, retirees are finding ways to truly flourish in their golden years. Contact us to discuss how we can tailor a solution to meet your needs.



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MAKE YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION COUNT ...

# Leave a gift. Build your legacy. Change the future for sick kids

Some people make a New Year's resolution to begin something new, change a habit, or perhaps reignite a passion. But for the thousands of parents of sick kids, they just want the new year to bring their little ones good health and laughter.

Parents like Erica and Tom hope for a day when their little Ella will not have to wear bandages to protect her skin from everyday life. Ella was born with a rare and severe skin condition called Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB), making her skin appear as fragile as butterfly wings. A genetic disorder that leaves her skin extremely sensitive, making her daily life painful.

Ella's Mum Erica recalls, ***"I was afraid to pick her up at first if I'm being honest". "After a textbook pregnancy and a planned caesarean section, Ella was not born a perfectly healthy baby as we expected. Born with EB, Ella had skin missing from her right knee and both feet."***

EB is a lifelong condition that needs constant care. All parents know their children's cry - a hungry cry, a tired cry, I want a cuddle cry. For Ella's parents, they have also had to learn the pain cry. For now, this is the only way Ella can tell them she has a new blister that needs careful wound care.

Kids like Ella will need support throughout their lifetime and a very considered way to help is by leaving a gift in your Will to Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation (SCHF).

By leaving a gift in a Will to SCHF you will create a legacy of hope and healing for sick kids – supporting research, equipment and SCHF's mission to deliver the best healthcare available to kids across NSW and beyond.

This year, make your New Year's resolution count by leaving a gift that builds a legacy and changes the future for sick kids. As little as 5% can make an impact and help little kids like Ella with rare and lifelong conditions.

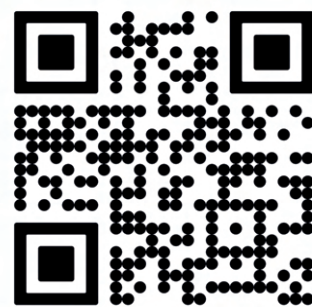
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# Area 37 clubs honored the 100 Years of Toastmasters

by Ramalka Kasige (Area 37 Director, Western Division, District 90 Toastmasters)

The Toastmasters International Centennial Celebration marked a momentous occasion in the history of this esteemed organisation, and Area 37 clubs of Western Division, District 90 toastmasters rose to the occasion with grand celebrations. Bringing together members of their respective clubs, each club celebrated 100 years of empowering individuals to become confident communicators and leaders.

Area 37 is a fairly new area and was the only new area formed in 2020 under its first Area Director, Alicia Leise (2020-2021). Currently it comprises three toastmasters clubs: Hawkesbury Valley Toastmasters, Dural Toastmasters and Rouse Hill Toastmasters. Hawkesbury Valley Toastmasters is a fun-loving and enthusiastic group where laughter is an essential part of every meeting, creating an enjoyable and supportive atmosphere for all

members. Dural Toastmasters is one of the most professional clubs in the district, featuring a vibrant community of members dedicated to helping others develop their public speaking and leadership skills in a welcoming environment. Rouse Hill Toastmasters consistently attracts a large number of visitors to each meeting, and it is a dynamic asset to the area, devoted to supporting both members and visitors in a friendly, encouraging environment.

These clubs each held their own centennial celebrations during their education meetings. Each club has its own style of conducting meetings and this was reflected in their unique centennial celebration-themed meetings as well. The distinctive skill set, energy, and dynamic membership representing each locality contributes a unique flavor to Area 37.

Each meeting had a vibrant blend of speeches, storytelling, and camaraderie. Distinguished speakers shared insights into the history and legacy of Toastmasters, inspiring members to continue striving for excellence. The celebrations also featured engaging Table Topics sessions, where members explored themes of growth, resilience, and leadership - the very values that have defined Toastmasters for 100 years.



As this historic milestone is now celebrated, the members of Area 37 clubs will be looking to the future with optimism and enthusiasm. Each club's Centennial Celebration wasn't just about honoring the past - it was a call to action for the next generation of Toastmasters to carry the torch forward, continuing the mission of personal and professional growth.

As Toastmasters enters the next century, the memorable, celebration-themed meetings of Area 37 will stand as a beacon, inspiring and empowering individuals to find their voice and lead with confidence, propelling Area 37 to new heights.

## Viva la Toastmasters International!

### Viva la Area 37!

- Hawkesbury Valley Toastmasters meet at 6:30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at Hawkesbury Central Library – Tebbutt Room, Windsor.
- Dural Toastmasters meet at 7:00 pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at Dural Country Club, Dural.
- Rouse Hill Toastmasters meet at 7:00 pm on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month at Vinegar Hill Memorial Library, Rouse Hill.

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\*Bookings essential. Max 30 per session. Suitable for school aged children. Bring your own device with bluetooth so we can airdrop your animation on the spot.



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# SAY GOODBYE TO BLOCKED EARS

## Discover the Cause and The Solution!

We at Ear Studio wish you a wonderful 2025!

As we embrace the warmth of summer and the joy of spending time with loved ones, it's the perfect time to reflect on the little things that make life special. Whether you're soaking up the sun, enjoying family gatherings, or simply taking a well-deserved break, we hope this season brings happiness and renewal. But if blocked ears are getting in the way of fully enjoying the season, you're not alone! Many people experience this sensation, often linked to sinus issues. Here's a quick guide to understanding why your ears might feel blocked and how to address it.

### Do Your Ears Feel Blocked?

Your sinuses and ears are connected inside your head, and sinus congestion can sometimes affect the pressure in your middle ear, causing a blocked or full sensation. This often happens when the **eustachian tube** – a small channel connecting the middle ear to the nose and sinuses – isn't functioning properly or becomes obstructed.

The eustachian tube equalises pressure in the middle ear, but when it's not working, you may feel fullness or pressure in your head. A test called **tympanometry** can measure the

pressure behind your eardrum and identify if the eustachian tube is functioning correctly.

### What Causes Blocked Ears?

Blocked ears can result from various issues, including:

- Excess ear wax
- Fluid buildup behind the eardrum
- Foreign objects in the ear (e.g., cotton buds or earphone tips)
- Sudden hearing loss

People often adopt a "wait and see" approach to blocked ears, hoping the problem will resolve itself. However, it's crucial to address the issue promptly. At **Ear Studio**, our Hearing care providers can perform tests to pinpoint the cause. If you also have fever or cold symptoms, it is good to consult your doctor as well.

Blocked eustachian tubes can also result from:

- Allergies
- Sinus infections
- Swelling from a recent cold

These conditions may lead to fluid buildup in the middle ear, causing pain, muffled hearing, dizziness, or ringing in the ears.

### Why Are Blocked Ears Common in Children?

Children often experience blocked ears because their eustachian tubes are shorter, narrower, and more horizontal than those of adults. This makes it easier for fluid to accumulate and block the tube.

### Flying and Blocked Ears

It is very important that blocked ears are managed before getting on an aeroplane. When you are on a plane, the cabin pressure changes rapidly, especially during descent. This puts stress on the eardrum, particularly if the middle ear does not equalise appropriately. Flying with blocked ears can be very uncomfortable or painful. When there is continual or increased pressure on the eardrum, it can burst and potentially cause a permanent hearing loss.

### What to Do If Your Ears Are Blocked?

If you're experiencing blocked ears, it's important to see a hearing care provider, such as **Ear Studio**, as soon as possible. We can perform tests to determine the cause of your symptoms. Common treatments for blocked ears include:

- Removing ear wax
- Treating eustachian tube dysfunction with nasal sprays or decongestants
- Referral to specialists if needed

At Ear Studio, we'll help you understand and address your symptoms, ensuring the right care to clear the blocked sensation. Don't wait – early intervention is key!

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We are located inside Lawton House  
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(with under cover, off street parking)





# CHRG Veteran Service Member Program Enters its Third Year

Castle Hill RSL Group (CHRG) is proud to see its Veteran Service Member (VSM) card program enter its third year, providing ongoing support and recognition for veterans across its venues: Castle Hill RSL Club, Castle Hill Fitness and Aquatic Centre, Castle Hill Bowling Club, Club Parramatta, and Lynwood Country Club. The program offers veterans exclusive promotions and activities, fostering community and belonging.

To celebrate this milestone, CHRG has offered free access to its Mini Golf course at Lynwood Golf & Country Club since October. This benefit, available until January 31st, adds a fun, social activity for veterans to enjoy with family and friends. Veterans do not need to be members of the Castle Hill & District RSL Sub-Branch to become a CHRG VSM cardholder – the card is accessible to all eligible veterans.

Since its launch, the VSM program has provided a variety of benefits, including aqua aerobics classes, food and beverage vouchers, free use of Lynwood's golf simulator, social darts, morning tea catch-ups, discounted show tickets, and free bowls lessons.

These offerings continue to evolve, ensuring ongoing value for members.



David O'Neil, Group CEO, reflected on the program: "The Veteran Service Member card is an important part of our overall support for veterans. It helps provide additional recognition and benefits to those who have served and ensures they feel welcome across all our venues. We remain committed to growing these to ensure veterans feel respected and appreciated across all our venues."

CHRG also supports significant commemorative events like the annual Australia Day flag planting tradition, which will take place again on January 26th. Castle Hill RSL Sub-Branch members, along with family, friends, and community members, will plant Australian flags at Castle Hill Cemetery to honour Australian and Allied veterans.

The flag planting will be held from 6am to 6:45am at Castle Hill Cemetery on Gilbert Road, followed by a service at Castlebrook Memorial

Park on Windsor Road at 7am. The service includes a flag-raising ceremony supported by Squadron 336 Air Cadets and music from the North Ryde RSL Pipe Band.

Cheryl Hill, Castle Hill & District RSL Sub-Branch President, will deliver the address before volunteers plant flags. The event will conclude with a breakfast BBQ hosted by Castlebrook Memorial Gardens.

For more information about obtaining a VSM card, email [info@chrg.com.au](mailto:info@chrg.com.au) or contact reception at:

- Castle Hill RSL Club: 02 8858 4800
- Club Parramatta: 02 8865 5100
- Lynwood Country Club: 02 4580 2800

As the program enters its third year, CHRG reaffirms its dedication to recognising and supporting veterans through valuable benefits and meaningful events.



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# The Hills Shire Council News

## AFL Play Well Program for All Abilities

Join our All-Abilities AFL Session at Charles McLaughlin Reserve, Baulkham Hills! This free and inclusive program is tailored for children and young people living with disabilities who are keen to try AFL for the first time.

Led by professional coaches from AFL NSW, the session provides a fun and supportive environment where participants can build confidence, learn new skills, and enjoy the excitement of AFL.

This initiative is proudly funded by the Australian Sports Commission's Play Well Participation Grant.

**When:** 9am to noon on Thursday 23 January

**Where:** Charles McLaughlin Reserve, Baulkham Hills



## Spend the school holidays at the library

Before the school term starts, the Hills Shire Library Service is hosting a range of fun and educational events across its libraries to keep kids entertained and engaged. From hands-on wildlife workshops to storytime for little ones, and the Summer Reading Club, there's something for everyone!

To see all the school holiday workshops and activities available, scan the QR code.



## Join our Council Advisory Committee

Applications are now open to become a volunteer member of a Council Advisory Committee.

The Committees are given delegated authority to advise Council on issues relating to three public spaces.

Council is seeking applicants for three committees:

- Balcombe Heights Estate Advisory Committee
- Heritage Park Advisory Committee
- Castle Hill Showground Committee

Apply by scanning the QR code before February 7.



## Have your say on FOGO and win!

The Hills Shire Council is planning to launch a Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) waste collection service in our next waste contracts which commences in October 2027.



This program will enable you to recycle food scraps by placing them in your green bin instead of your red bin, helping to reduce the amount of organic waste sent to landfill.

To facilitate this, green bins will be changed from a fortnightly to a weekly collection. No changes are currently planned to your red and yellow bins. Your red bin will continue to be collected every week, while your yellow bin will continue to be emptied every second week. At this stage, those who do not have a green bin, will receive one.

We want your input to ensure the FOGO service works best for our community.

We'd like to know:

- What do you know about FOGO?
- How would you like us to communicate to you about FOGO?
- Do you have any concerns or suggestions about this new service?

By completing our quick survey, you can enter the draw to win one of five \$100 vouchers!

To have your say, scan the QR code.



[www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au) | 9843 0555



# YOU'RE INVITED TO THE HILLS Australia Day PARTY!



**Australia Day celebrations are back in the Hills!**  
Celebrate our nation's day at a pool party at Waves,  
followed by a concert and fireworks display  
at Bella Vista Farm.



## Waves Pool Party

Join us at the Waves Fitness and Aquatic Centre in Baulkham Hills from 10am to 3pm for a fun-filled day! Families can enjoy a free sausage sizzle (limited availability), tackle an exciting inflatable obstacle course in the 50m pool, dance to lively tunes played by a DJ, and enjoy some fantastic roving entertainment. It's the perfect opportunity to cool off and have a blast in the pool while beating the summer heat!

Please note, that general admission fees still apply.



## Australia Day Concert

After the pool party, join us at Bella Vista Farm from 4.30pm to 9pm for our concert and fireworks celebration! Enjoy exciting carnival rides and roving entertainment. There will be free activities, including face painting and community performances by talented local groups. A variety of food trucks will be on-site, offering delicious options, including dumplings, ice cream, nachos, bubble tea, hot dogs, and much more.

Head over to the main stage for an exclusive Bluey Live Interactive Experience and interactive renditions of Junkyard Beats. The headline act will be ARIA-nominated Australian singer Ricki-Lee, performing her biggest hits! The electrifying night will conclude with a vibrant fireworks show at 9pm.

4.55pm – 5.00pm	MC Welcome
5.00pm – 5.30pm	Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony & Didgeridoo Performance
5.35pm – 5.55pm	Bluey Show
6.00pm – 6.05pm	Mayoral Official Welcome
6.05pm – 6.10pm	Australia Day Ambassador Address
6.10pm – 6.30pm	Bluey Show
6.40pm – 7.00pm	Junkyard Beats
7.00pm – 7.45pm	La Fiesta Sound System
8.00pm – 9.00pm	Ricki-Lee Coulter
9.00pm – 9.10pm	Fireworks Display

Australia Day in The Hills is assisted by the Australian Government through the National Australia Day Council.



**Australia Day**

Reflect. Respect. Celebrate.

For more Australia Day fun, scan the QR code.



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**THE HILLS**  
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# The Hills Shire Council News



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**THE HILLS**  
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O'Hara's Creek Fire Trail sign



HIDDEN IN THE HILLS BY LACHLAN TURNER

# O'HARA'S CREEK FIRE TRAIL WALK

To commence this walk it is necessary to first drive to the northern end of Porter's Road Kenthurst until a locked gate is reached. Adequate parking is generally available.



Public pedestrian access only is available beyond this point. By following the ridge line in a general northerly to north westerly direction, views are revealed across to the distant mountains as the fire trail passes the local gun club on the right.

Shortly the track makes a distinct turn to the left and commences to proceed down a gentle slope until there appears some interesting rocky outcrops on the adjacent hillside. From here the track becomes a little steeper as it winds its way down the

escarpment to eventually reveal a large lagoon along the course of O'Hara's Creek.

The environment in this valley is much wetter than higher up on the drier ridge. The result is a noticeable change in vegetation types growing here.

A track does continue upstream but soon ends. The return trip requires a great deal more energetic exertion to walk back to the car park. The altitude difference between the lagoon and the gun club is in the vicinity of 100m.

It is advisable to be well prepared by way of appropriate clothing and footwear as well as having a supply of water and a snack bar or two. As with all bushwalking "adventures", it is suggested that a camera is a good idea as there will always be the opportunity to take a photo of something not seen before.

For further information on the Hills Shire Council Self Guided Bushwalks Program go to the Hills Shire Council Website and enter "bushwalks" into the search box, then select "Bushwalks in the Hills".



Rock formation



View from the top of the fire trail

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## New Richmond Bridge takes shape

We're getting a much clearer picture of the design of the new Richmond Bridge, with more details out for people to see and respond to.

I started this battle for a quicker journey across the Hawkesbury River at North Richmond nearly 15 years ago!

Anthony Albanese and I stood on the Richmond Bridge in 2010, providing the first federal funding to tackle congestion and investigate options for a new bridge.

Once the initial study happened, not much more progress was made by state or federal governments for many years.

What the latest information tells us is that the NSW Government, with \$400 million of federal funding plus \$100 million of their own, is looking at a new 4-lane bridge next to the current one.

It will be built 10 metres higher and the additional flood resilience it provides means the bridge, and the approaching roads, would remain open if the floods we've experienced since 2020 were repeated.

The Review of Environmental Factors (REF) also provides more detail on what is covered by the next stage of construction.

Plus it tells us that the old bridge will be kept for pedestrian and cycling use.

You can have a look at the details on the Transport for NSW website, and you can ask questions of the project team, and provide your feedback by Friday 21 February.

There's also an online information session on 29 January with drop-in sessions at the North Richmond Community Centre on Saturday 1 and Wednesday 5 February.

The REF and further information can be found at <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/new-richmond-bridge-stage-2>

While all of that is happening, Transport for NSW is seeking expressions of interest to complete the detailed design and construction of the new bridge.

Tenders are also out for the upgrade of two intersections on The Driftway, as part of Stage 1 of the construction.



## Hills, Hawkesbury Scouts to Make the Most Of Jamboree 2025

By Lawrence Machado

More than 140 Scouts and Venturers from The Hills and Hawkesbury are in Queensland for the 26th Australian Jamboree, providing them an unforgettable 10 days at the Maryborough Showgrounds and Equestrian Park.

The Jamboree, from January 6-15, attracts Scouts from across Australia and even overseas. There are 146 members from 15 Groups across the Hills and the Hawkesbury, including Scouts and Venturer Scouts aged from 11 to 18, supported by Rover Scouts (aged 18-25) and adult Leaders. This is the biggest event on the Australian Scouting calendar since 2019.

Scouts NSW Youth Ambassador and 1st Castle Hill Venturer Scout Amelia Moran said she is excited about the Jamboree.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing the friends that I met at the World Scout Jamboree in South Korea last year," she said. "Some of

them live in Victoria and South Australia, so we can only message each other. This will be the first time we meet again in person."

The other units in Amelia's group include 1st Castle Hill Scout Group, 2nd Castle Hill Scout Group, 1st Kellyville Scout Group, 1st Rouse Hill Scout Group and 2nd Baulkham Hills Scout Group.

The Jamboree has many activities during the day and even more entertainment at night. Previous Jamborees have seen Guy Sebastian and Justice Crew perform to the thousands of attendees, with this year's guest a closely guarded secret.

More than 9000 Scouts from across Australia are attending for the first Jamboree since 2019, with the 2022 event cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Attending a Jamboree is regarded as the ultimate experience for any Scout, with 10 days of activities, new challenges and opportunities to make friends for life. Participants have the opportunity to surf, swim, climb, dance, laugh and explore, enjoy archery, robotics, laser tag and more.

"Scouting is filled with opportunities for young people to push themselves to the limits

and grow in confidence and skills, at the same time having a great time with friends," Scouts NSW Chief Commissioner Lloyd Nurthen said. "The Australian Jamboree is one of the biggest events in Scouting, and there's nowhere else I'd rather be in January."

The local Scout groups attending the Jamboree include: 1st Balcombe Heights Scout Group, 1st Castle Hill Scout Group, 1st Cherrybrook Scout Group, 1st Dural Scout Group, 1st Glossodia Scout Group, 1st Grose Vale Scout Group, 1st Hawkesbury Scout Group, 1st Kellyville Scout Group, 1st Kings Langley Scout Group, 1st Oakville Scout Group, 1st Quakers Hill-Doonside Scout Group, 1st Rouse Hill Scout Group, 2nd Baulkham Hills Scout Group, 2nd Castle Hill Scout Group, 2nd Kings Langley Scout Group, 2nd/3rd Pennant Hills Scout Group and West Pennant Hills Scout Group.





Josaia Delana is very excited to be a part of the GWS Giants roster. Picture Martin Keep



## GWS Giants love what they see in Kellyville Magpies Junior Delana

By Lawrence Machado

Former Kellyville Magpies Junior AFL club player Josaia Delana can't believe he is on the cusp of playing professional footy. Last month, he became the latest Western Sydney product to land in the AFL, with the talented small forward signed up by the GWS Giants as a Category B Rookie.

Another outstanding sporting product from Oakhill College, Delana, 18, is very excited about this big opportunity.

Delana, who has Fijian heritage, enjoyed football, rugby union and rugby league but chose an AFL career with the Giants, having been a part of their academy for two years.

"I love the freedom of the game and it was also nice to not be running at my opposition and being tackled so harshly, they weren't as enjoyable a sport for me," the Blacktown teenager said. "I'm extremely excited to represent the Western Sydney community. AFL is still a growing sport out there and I'm glad to put it forward as an opportunity and pathway for kids in Western Sydney to take. It's not a foreign sport, there are plenty of pathways

that they can take to be drafted and become a professional sportsperson. I'm so excited to represent where I have come from.

"I'm a very loyal person as well so to see the Giants have put their faith in me and to play for them makes me extremely excited to give it all back and give everything back.

"It's going to be unreal going back to the clubs and schools and now being the athlete delivering the clinics or going out for training sessions as an AFL player.

"To think that I was one of those kids not long ago to now being supposedly someone they can look up to and gain inspiration from is awesome. It feels so good to be able to give back to this community and I've had a really enjoyable experience coming up through the ranks.



Josaia Delana is a highly-talented prospect for GWS Giants. Picture Albert Perez AFL photos

Possessing clean hands, strong decision-making and an explosive sidestep, Delana represented the Allies on four occasions in 2024, with eight games for the Giants' VFL side.

"I only started playing AFL when I was 13, through the school system and AFL NSW/ACT. Setting up the clinics actually paid for my registration the first year," Delana said.

"I was always playing AFL and league or AFL and union or AFL and soccer, always Sunday footy and when I hit 16, Mum and Dad said it's time to make a decision on what I wanted to focus on and I chose AFL."

Delana has begun pre-season training at the Giants HQ in Sydney Olympic Park. "It's honestly unbelievable," Delana says. "From watching them on the big screen and sitting on the other side of the fence to now having the opportunity to be on the field playing and having those supporters and community that I was a part of, their cheering on is just so hard to still imagine.

"I think about the feeling of running out on the field and I am just so excited."

## HILLS JUNIOR BASEBALL ASSOCIATION LIFT GAYNOR CUP

The Hills Junior Baseball Association girls have been crowned the inaugural 2024 Gaynor Cup champions after a stellar season where they were undefeated.

The Hills girls proved they were up to the challenge in the grand final against a strong Cronulla outfit, winning 5-0 to cap a remarkable 2024 season.

The Gaynor Cup was introduced for the Under-13 girls' section, in honour of Katie and John Gaynor, who have contributed immensely to baseball over the years. The Hills team were presented their cup by the Gaynors.

The Gaynor Cup was a part of Sydney Cup 2024, which concluded at East Hills on December 8. The Hills Junior Baseball Association also took out Under-14 Sydney Cup and Under 14 association Cup making it a highly-successful season for the organisation.





# PETS OF THE WEEK

**The Hawkesbury Companion Animal Shelter (CAS)**  
is at 10 Mulgrave Rd, Mulgrave.  
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<https://hawkesburycas.com.au/>



## AT A GLANCE

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SEX: Male  
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Months and 1 Week  
PRICE: \$49



**MEET JAYDEN**, an eight-year-old sweet soul who's ready to spend his golden years in a loving home. Don't let his quiet and calm demeanour in the kennel fool you. According to the staff at the Hawkesbury Companion Animal Centre, Jayden has a friendly personality and enjoys his little bursts of energy in the yard. But after a quick run around, he's all about that sunbathing life! With his mellow vibe and gentle nature, this handsome older gent is looking for a peaceful home to retire in. A daily stroll, a cozy bed, and some extra senior care will keep Jayden happy and healthy. Staff at the Centre say if you're looking for a laid-back buddy to relax with and share some quiet moments, Jayden is your guy! Visit us during open hours to see if Jayden is the perfect fit for your home! All prices include microchipping, lifetime council registration, desexing and 1st Vaccination.

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

**MEET SASSY**, a young, happy-go-lucky girl who's looking for a home where she can soak up all the love and attention she deserves. According to the staff at the Hawkesbury Companion Animal Centre, if you're seeking a fun, active companion, Sassy might just be your perfect match! This playful gal is full of energy and would thrive in a home with a large backyard, plenty of toys, and an owner who can provide regular exercise and daily walks. Staff say Sassy absolutely LOVES her toys, she can entertain herself for hours with a couple of tough ones. Sassy is waiting to meet you! She's smart, eager to please, and will bring so much joy to the right home. Give Sassy the loving home she deserves and let the adventures begin! All prices include microchipping, lifetime council registration, desexing and 1st Vaccination.

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

## AT A GLANCE

NAME: SASSY  
BREED: Bull Terrier  
SEX: Female  
AGE: 2 Years and  
1 Month  
PRICE: \$49



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*\*terms and conditions apply*



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(02) 8883 0411

### Kellyville

Unit 1/106  
Windsor Rd,  
Kellyville NSW 2155  
(02) 8883 0533

### Baulkham Hills

472 Windsor Rd,  
Baulkham Hills,  
NSW 2153  
(02) 9157 5557

[www.sydneyanimalhospitals.com.au](http://www.sydneyanimalhospitals.com.au)



# Start the Year Right with Your New Puppy or Kitten!

Bringing home a new puppy or kitten is an exciting way to start the year! To help your new furry family member grow into a happy, healthy pet, it's essential to get expert veterinary care and advice from the start.

At Sydney Animal Hospitals, we're making it even easier to give your pet the best start in life. Throughout January and February 2025, we're celebrating all things puppies and kittens with a special offer designed to support new pet owners.

## What's Included?

When you book a FREE Puppy or Kitten Health Check with our experienced veterinarians, you'll receive:

- FREE Vet Health Check
- FREE 1-Month Flea & Tick Protection (Bravecto or NexGuard)
- FREE First Dose Heartworm Protection for puppies at 12 weeks (ProHeart SR12)
- FREE Sample Bag of Hill's Puppy or Kitten Food

## Why Early Vet Care Matters

Early veterinary visits are crucial to ensuring your puppy or kitten grows strong and stays healthy. Our team will guide you through everything you need to know, including:

- **Nutrition Advice:** Good nutrition supports strong bones, a shiny coat, and healthy energy levels. Our vets can help you choose the right food for your pet's breed and lifestyle.
- **Parasite Protection:** We'll explain how to keep your pet protected from intestinal worms, heartworm, fleas, ticks, and mites. These parasites can cause serious health issues, including weight loss, digestive problems, and in some cases, life-threatening conditions like heartworm and paralysis tick poisoning.

## Vaccination & Preventative Care Guidance:

Our vets will ensure your new pet stays on track with vaccinations, microchipping, and ongoing preventative care.

## A Healthy Start for Your New Pet

This limited-time offer is designed to ensure your new puppy or kitten gets the very best care from day one. Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to give your pet a healthy start in life!

Call your nearest Sydney Animal Hospitals clinic today to book your FREE puppy or kitten health check and take advantage of this exclusive offer, available only during January and February 2025.

Visit: [www.sydneyanimalhospitals.com.au](http://www.sydneyanimalhospitals.com.au)



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# Hills author Peter Osterlund Thrives in His Own Orbit

By Lawrence Machado

If you haven't heard of Peter Osterlund, chances are you or your family will soon be seeing and hearing more about this very creative Hills author. The 24-year-old has been out and about signing copies of his first published book, *Lost Orbit*, at the Alfie & Noa store at Castle Towers.

From the first impression, it seems Hills residents can't get enough of their local author, with Peter signing hundreds of copies of *Lost Orbit* already.

The book, self-published in June 2024, is a sci-fi mystery about a scientist investigating Earth's disappearance.

"At the moment, my first book has sold over 1000 copies, which I have to confess I did not expect to reach that number, especially since they're only available on Amazon and at my signings," Peter said. "There have been some sales overseas in the USA but as of now, Australia is the main seller."

Peter followed his debut novel with *The King's Pen Pal*, a fantasy comedy about a King travelling the country to meet his pen pal. Both his books are fast becoming a favourite with readers, with more than 1500 books snapped up so far.

He is already writing more books as he lives his dream of writing science fiction and fantasy.

Peter, who lives in Cattai, works in retail at the Castle Towers. The soft-spoken author lights up when he discusses his passions.

"I was always a big reader as a kid, plus I was always considered 'creative' by coming up with stories and daydreaming about worlds and characters in my head, and I was also into movies," Peter said.

"The current genres I've been writing about are science fiction and fantasy. Those two are my go-to for reading, so naturally, it's what I want to write about."

"I began my first book *Lost Orbit*, over a year ago now. I'd finished the first draft of another story and decided to work on something different in the meantime."

"From start to finish, the book took about a year to write, but I wasn't exactly in a rush to have it finished."

He has received very good reviews on Amazon with one reader Caitlin Miles writing: "A great little book, easy to read, interesting concept, very enjoyable, a good plot and characters, really looking forward to the next book."

Another reader said: "I bought this for my 12-year-old, and he read it non-stop through. He really enjoyed it and it was the perfect length and level of engagement. Great to support a young, local author too. We look forward to the next installment!"

Like many present-day authors, Peter has resorted to self-publishing and has been blown away by the positive response at the book store and online.

"With *Lost Orbit*, I wrote it with the intention of self-publishing as it is relatively short and because I wanted to try it out as an experiment. I figured if it went badly, I'd just go to my other project and try to get that traditionally published. Or if it goes well, then I can keep writing with complete freedom."

He said *Lost Orbit* is part of a series he is planning, called *Broken Planets*, which will be an

anthology so anyone can pick up the series at any book. This and his other book are aimed at all ages (eight plus).

Peter said he tries to write whenever he gets the time. "Whether it be on the one or two days off I have or after a long day at work," he said. "My times change so often - I can sometimes write a good chapter early in the morning after a coffee or can do an all-nighter and write 5000 words."

Asked if he dreams of having his books made into a movie, Peter replied: "Absolutely. I originally wanted to write movies, so to see one of my books adapted would be a dream come true. For *Lost Orbit*, I could imagine someone like Jake Gyllenhaal playing the lead character, Doctor Reed Doyle."

Peter, who attended Marian College, Kenthurst and Macquarie University, is a huge video gamer who spends his free time walking, reading, gaming and of course writing.

"Whether you're a big-time sci-fi/fantasy fan or you're just getting into reading, my books are meant for anyone wanting something easy and fun," Peter said.



## Local Music Artist Wows Hills Seniors

On the Thursday preceding Christmas, the local Hills branch of National Seniors Australia staged their Members Christmas Party. It was known by the membership that the Committee had decided to subsidise the party, but the membership was unaware of the other surprises in store for them.

On arrival at the party held at Baulkham Hills Sports Club they were each given an envelope containing a Christmas Card with a \$10 note included. This was in addition to the subsidised party. An even bigger surprise was when 20 year old Charlie Chech of Cherrybrook arrived with his mother and started setting up a microphone and sound system.

Charlie is a lover of jazz and is also a very talented vocalist and as a performer has also appeared on stage in February 2020 with Michael Buble.



Photo of CHARLIE CHECH by Ivor Jones of Hills To Hawkesbury Community News

He now regularly appears on the club circuit around Australia. His style of music appealed to the members of National Seniors as he sang songs made famous by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong.

Many of the members of National Seniors made use of the \$10 given to them by the organising committee in putting the money towards purchasing Charlie's CD.

The organising committee of the local Hills branch of National Seniors and also Baulkham Hills Sporting Club deserve praise for the work and effort put in to a very enjoyable end of year event

## HILLS SENIORS GROUPS Get Together to Travel

The past five years have been tough for quite a few community groups. Organisations such as Senior's clubs like Probus saw a drop in membership due to Covid resulting in some clubs around the country folding. Cost of living pressures and inflation have also seen some reduction in what the clubs have to offer members.

In the Hills however three Senior's clubs have got together to ensure that interstate and country trips can still go ahead for members. As bus hire for such trips have increased greatly in price since Covid, the three clubs, National Seniors Australia (Hills Branch) that meet at Baulkham Hills, the Kellyville-Castle Hill Mixed Probus Club and the Hills Friendship Club which meets at Castle Hill have joined together to ensure that such outings can still go forward. The combined membership of the three organisations helps to ensure that there are enough members to fill a coach for interstate and country trips.

Recently members of the three clubs got together and travelled to Norfolk Island. Their next extended joint holiday is in the process of being finalised where they will visit sights of the Great Ocean Road in Western Victoria. Two of the clubs also welcome new members to join (see P. 25 for details). The Hills Friendship Club has a restricted membership of a maximum of 70 members and is not currently seeking new members.



## 2nd Castle Hill Rovers

www.gwsrovers.com.au

## Annangrove Environment Centre

02 9654 3571 (Thurs) | 02 9843 0533 (Wed-Fri)  
gnolan@thehills.nsw.gov.au

## Arcadian Quilters

Meet in Galston Community Health Centre 1st and 3rd Wed mornings, evening group 2nd and 4th Mon. New members welcome  
Carole | 9894 7749

## Bonsai Society of Australia

Club meetings 1st Tues of the month 7.30pm; West Pennant Hills Community Centre, 42 Hill rd West Pennant Hills.  
Ingrid | 0409 963 438

## Castle Hill Art Society

Art practice for artists of all ages. Mthly workshops by well-known artists  
9899 3179 (ans. machine)  
www.castlehillartsociety.org.au

## Castle Hill Senior Citizens Club Inc.,

Over 55's welcome Cnr McMullen Ave & Old Northern Road, Castle Hill (opp. new Metro station)  
9680 3958 | castlehillseniors@gmail.com

## Christian Over 50s Social Group

Carol | 0412201005

## Computer Pals for Seniors – The Hills

Welcomes seniors for low-cost peer-to-peer courses, discussion groups, and one-on-one training on digital phones, tablets, and laptops. Make friends and learn to love technology – new discussion grp. on Artificial Intelligence.  
Margaret Moxon | 0412 539 110 | cphills.org.au

## Cumberland Bird Observers Club

3 outings/mth to observe birds in their nat. environ. Meetings Castle Hill 3rd Tues of mth. New members welcome.  
Peter | 0412 770 757 or Cathy 9809 5668  
www.cboc.org.au

## CWA of NSW – Castle Hill Branch

2nd Tues/mth at the CWA Hall, 2 Annangrove Road, Kenthurst (off Angus Rd) 10am. Craft mornings 1st & 3rd Tues/mth 10-12.  
Maureen | 0410 582 723  
castlehillcwa@gmail.com

## CWA of NSW – Galston Branch

Meet 2nd Wed/mth. Galston Community Health Centre, Cnr The Glade & 17 Arcadia Rd, Galston. 10am then bus. meeting and BYO lunch. Craft day 4th Wed/mth.  
Jann | 0439 222 217 or Patricia | 0412 948 787

## CWA of NSW – Toongabbie Branch.

Mthly meetings 1st Tues/mth. Toongabbie Girl Guide Hall, Junia Ave Toongabbie 10am. Craft mornings for members 1st and 3rd Tues of mth from 10-12.  
ToongabbieCWA@gmail.com

## Dural and District Prostate Cancer Support Grp

We meet on the 3rd Mon of every month 7:00pm for 7:15pm at the Blue Gum Centre, Glenhaven Green, 607 Old Northern Road, Glenhaven  
Graham | 8677 7896 or 042421062

## Dural Country Club Bowls

04 2131 5074

## Dural Men's Shed

04 0247 8498 | www.duralmensshed.org

## East Kurrajong School of Arts

1st Tues each month 10am to 1pm. Bring along any sort of craft activity, pencil's or brushes to practice your drawing or painting with Ruth. Gold coin donation for morning tea.  
Ann | 02 4576 5031

## Embroiderers' Guild NSW Inc Hawkesbury Grp

For anyone who loves to stitch or would love to learn. Meetings: 3rd Tues 10am-2pm, 4th Tues 6-10pm Stan Stevens Studio, Deerubbin Centre 300 George St. Windsor (Windsor Library level).  
Catherine Delaney | 0413340049  
cdelaney1@vtown.com.au

## Friends of Hills Library

Meets 2nd Thursday of the month at Castle Hill Library. New members welcome.  
Lesley Nelson, President - 0478 000 925

## Friends of the Hawkesbury art community & Regional Gallery Inc.(FOHacARG Inc)

Meets 1st Thursday of Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct, Dec.  
Margaret | 4577 4440.

## Girl Guides Australia

Great programs for girls 6-18. They meet once a week in groups relevant to their age run by trained Leaders and Unit Helpers.  
Margo | 0417 657 433.

## Glenwood Men's Shed

Jim | 0438 701 275

## Hawkesbury Artists & Artisans Trail

02 4567 7400  
www.haat.com.au  
Leanne@mellowcrest.com

## Hawkesbury Camera Club

Club meets at 7.30pm on the first 3 Wed of the mo at the Richmond Club, Francis Street, Richmond. Facebook Hawkesbury Camera Club.  
www.hawkesburycameraclub.com.au

## Hawkesbury District Agricultural Assn

4577 3591 (BH)  
www.hawkesburyshow.com.au

## Hawkesbury Historical Society

Meets 4th Thurs of Feb, Apr & Oct at 7.30pm and 4th Saturday in Jun & Aug at 2pm.  
secretaryhawkesburyhistory@gmail.com

## Hawkesbury Nepean Chapter of the 1st Fleeters

Meets 2nd Saturday of Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct. Pamela Hempel | 0407 660 579  
www.fffhnc.com

## Hawkesbury West Probud Club

Meets at 10:15am on the first Monday of each month at Panthers North Richmond.  
Membership Officer Fay | 0414 341 253  
hawwest.probus@gmail.com

## Hawkesbury Woodcraft Cooperative Ltd

9.30am to 2pm Wed. & Sat.  
www.hawkesburywoodcraft.org.au  
Graham | 02 4576 1517

## Hills District Historical Society Inc.

Meets at 7pm 4th Mon of each month. Museum located at Bldg 10, Balcombe Heights Estate, 92 Seven Hills Rd, Baulkham Hills and opens on the 1st and 3rd Sat of each month 12.00pm to 4pm.  
Secretary Pam Wilson | 0474 204 080  
pam.wilson52@gmail.com

## Hills District Women's Bowling Club

Jenner Street, Baulkham Hills | 9639 2733  
www.thehillswomensbowls.com.au

## Hills Harmony Chorus

Barbershop style 4 part harmony All Singers welcome 7.30pm @ Kellyville Anglican Church, 45 Presidents Rd. Kellyville.  
info@hillsharmony.com.au

## Hills Older Men's Network INC

Meets fortnightly on the first and 3rd Mondays of the month, 10am to 12.30pm at Castle Hill. The group is aimed at retired men over the age of 55  
Robert | 0425 233 783  
HillsOMNI1@gmail.com

## Hills Shire Symphony Orchestra

Welcomes new players and gig enquiries. Rehearsals Wednesday evenings.  
Chris | 0405 994 605  
info@hillsshiresymphonyorchestra.org.au  
www.hillsshiresymphonyorchestra.org.au

## Hills Toastmasters

Meets every 2nd Tues, 7pm. Restore Church: 47 Britannia Rd, Castle Hill. New members welcomed  
Terry | 0488 089 951

## Hills/Toongabbie Music Club

Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays 7.30pm Northmead Scouts Hall 17 Whitehaven. Northmead. Beginners to professionals all welcome.  
Allen | 0439 831 531  
allendavisguitar@gmail.com

## Hornsby Kuring-gai Parkinson's Assoc'n Inc.

A support group of 30+ yrs. We have members who come weekly and find it beneficial for their condition.  
Michael Parkin | 0491009557  
Parkinson's Choir, www.parkypeople.org

## Kurrajong Hand Spun Craft

Come and learn a beautiful old craft at North Richmond Community Centre. Friendly group just bring yourself. Thursdays at noon.  
Margaret | 0403 819 165

## Ladies Probud Club of Baulkham Hills

Baulkham Hills Sports Club on Renown Rd, Baulkham Hills meets on the 2nd Wed of the mo at 10am and welcomes enquiries about our club.

Suzanne Dennis | 96390324 (home)  
0412424593 (mobile)

## Learning in the Hills

To find out more about the huge range of courses available call 9639 7918  
www.hca.org.au/learning-in-the-hills/

## Lions Club of Richmond Inc.

Geoff | 0412 969 651

## Lions Club of West Pennant Hills - Cherrybrook

westpennanthills\_secretary@lions.sydney  
Raj | 0429 440 746

## Lions Club of Windsor Inc

Pam | 0413 395 145

## Macquarie Towns Garden Club

The Club meets at 2 pm on the 1st Thurs of the month, in the Tebbutt Room of Hawkesbury Central Library at Windsor.  
macquarietownsgardenclub.wordpress.com

## National Seniors Australia (Hills Branch)

Meets on the 1st Thurs of every month at Baulkham Hills Sports Club Renown Rd at 9.30am for 10am. New members welcomed.  
May | 0414 634 572  
maybruce@bigpond.com

## North Rocks View Club

Meetings 2nd Thurs each month at 10.30 am. The Vikings Club, 35 Quarry Rd, Dundas Valley.  
Pam | 047 420 4080 or Margaret | 9872 1405

## Norwest Sunrise Rotary Club

We are a breakfast Club and meet every Friday morning at 7.15am. The Rotary Motto is Service Above Self. If you want to meet like-minded people pls join us.  
norwestrotary.org.au

## Pennant Hills VIEW Club

meets 10.30am at Baulkham Hills Sports Club on the 2nd Tues of each month. A guest speaker will be featured each month. 4th Tues of the month a social outing is organised.  
Margaret | 9873 2402

## Pennant Hills Garden Club

Meets 4th Wed at 9.30am at Pennant Hills Community Centre. Inquire or just come along to a meeting.  
pennanthillsgardenclub@gmail.com

## Probus of Baulkham Hills

Meets 1st Thurs each month 1.30pm Baulkham Hills Sports Club, 11 Renown Rd Visitors welcome. Activities every Thurs.  
Peter | 0407 013 411  
probus56830@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Carlingford North Rocks

Meets at the Vikings Sports Club every 3rd Mon of the month at 10.30am. Membership is open to recently retired and semi-retired members.  
Ken | 0408 963 060 | thebunts2@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Cherrybrook Combined

A mixed gender club of retirees and semi retirees. Meetings on 1st Thurs of each month at the Cherrybrook Community & Cultural Centre.  
Ross | 0411 104 863  
rossfitzpatrick@icloud.com  
www.probusouthpacific.org/microsites/cherrybrook/Welcomer

## Probus Club of Combined Castle Hill Club

General Meetings 3rd Tuesday of the month at 10am at Cherrybrook Community Centre..  
Helen | 0403 751 934  
enquiries@probuscastlehill.org.au

## Probus Club of Glenhaven

Meets 10 am on 2nd Tuesday of each month at Castle Hill Bowling Club.  
secretary.glenhaven.probus@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Glenorie

This Club meets every 4th Wed at 11.00am at Glenorie RSL Club. New members are welcome.  
Wendy | 9653 1022  
wendyireneblack@yahoo.com.au

## Probus Club of the Hills Inc

Is a mixed club and meets at the Galston Club 21-25 Arcadia Road, Galston on the 2nd Wed of each month commencing at 10.30 am.  
Ken | 02 96296459

## Probus Club of Kellyville Castle Hill Mixed

Meets at 10am on 2nd Thurs of each month at Baulkham Hills Sports Club, 11 Renown Road, Baulkham Hills 2153. New members welcome.  
Ian Sandercock | 0419 567 608  
patiansandercock@bigpond.com

## Probus Club of Kellyville Combined

Mts 2nd Mon/mth 10am-12pm, Glenhaven Community Centre, 76 Glenhaven Rd, Glenhaven  
Veronica | 0408 025 577 or Susan | 0400 039 308

## Probus Club of Pennant Hills Mens

John | 9487 1385

## Probus Club of Pennant Hills Combined

Meets at Hotel Pennant Hills every 3rd Monday of the month at 10am.  
Lorene | 0429 396594

## Probus Club of Pitt Town

Meets at 10:00am on the 2nd Tues of the month at the Pitt Town and District Sports Club, 139 Old Pitt Town Rd. New members welcome.  
Denise Fairfax | 0435 447 414

## Probus Club of Rouse Hill

Mts 4th Fri of mth 09.30am The Fiddler Commercial Road, Rouse Hill NSW 2155. Visitors welcome and membership is open.  
Secretary | 0413336005  
probusrousehill@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Round Corner (Dural)

Julie; PO Box 822, Round Corner 2158

## Probus Club of Winston Hills – Northmead Combined

Meets at 10am at Toongabbie Sports Club, 12 Station St, Toongabbie, 2nd Thursday of the month. New members welcome.  
winstonhillspobusclub@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Windsor

Meet first Wednesday of the month at 10am at the Windsor RSL club 36 Argyle St. South Windsor  
Ann | 0414298945 or Elaine | 0428844461  
windsorprobus2756@gmail.com

## RDA (NSW) Tall Timbers Centre

Equine assisted programs, Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy and Volunteering Opportunities. Located at Gables/Box Hill  
9679 1246 | admin@rdanswtalltimbers.org.au  
www.rdanswtalltimbers.org.au

## Red Cross – Castle Hill Branch

Meetings 2nd Friday of the month 10.15am to 11.45am at Wesley Uniting Church, 32-34 Showground Rd, Castle Hill.  
Donna | 0416 082 626

## Richmond /Windsor VIEW Club

Meets every 2nd Wednesday of the month at The Richmond Club. VIEW (voice, interest and education of woman) supports the Smith Family and Learning for Life  
Trish Carter | 0417 010 619

## Scouts Australia – Greater Western Sydney Region

9639 2488 | www.greaterwestscouts.com.au

## Sleep Disorders Australia – NSW

02 9990 3514 | www.sleepoz.org.au

## Soroptimist International of Hornsby Inc.

Meets on the first Wednesday evening of the month at Pennant Hills Bowling Club.  
Pam | 0425 229 615 | sihornsbys@siseap.org

## Soroptimist International The Hills

Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at Crestwood Community Centre Baulkham Hills 6.30pm for a 7pm start.  
Cathy | 0435 837 118 | sithehills@siwp.org

## The Hills Community Aid and Information Service Inc

9639 8620

## The Hills Learning Centre

02 8850 0555 | info@thehillslc.com.au  
facebook.com/thehillslc

## The Hills Shire Garden Club

Meets on 3rd Monday of the month at 1pm; Barton Hall, 178 David Road Castle Hill.  
9624 5034

## The Hills District Pipe Band

Practices at Stamford Hall, Balcombe Heights Estate, Baulkham Hills every Wednesday 7-9pm. Instagram: @hillsdistrictpipeband  
Suzie Whitaker  
pipeband.hillsdistrict@gmail.com  
www.hillsdistrictpipeband.com

## The Hills Trefoil Guild

Elaine | 0417 330 196

## The Inner Wheel Club of Baulkham Hills

Meets the 4th week of each month.  
Robyn | 0416 035 655

## The Sydney Hills Branch of the Association of Independent Retirees

Mal Steel | airsdynehill@gmail.com

## Thursday Ladies Tennis Competition in the Hills District

hillsladiestennis.org

## Wanderers Bushwalking and Outdoor Club

Meetings are held on the 2nd Tues of each mo at 8 pm at Crestwood Community Centre, Cnr Crestwood Drive and Conway St, Baulkham Hills.  
John | 0423167467  
www.bushwalkingsw.org.au/wanderers

## West Pennant Hills Sports Club

Ladies social tennis Tues 9.30 to 11.30 (no play school holidays) 103 new line Rd W. Pennant Hills

## Windsor RSL Fishing Club

Meets on the last Tues of the month at Windsor RSL Club at 6.30pm. New members welcome.  
Les Mison | 0421 821 1990

## Winston Hills Joey Scouts

9862 8482 | hsara@optusnet.com.au

## Wisemans Ferry Community Men's Shed Inc

Meeting Tues and Sat 9am - 5pm  
Alan Hunt | 4566 4626 or 0428 784 425  
Adrian Acheson | 0448 833 781

## YMCA NSW Community Visitors Scheme

9633 8209 or 0402 255 193

## Zonta Club of Sydney Hills

0414 641 408 | www.zontadistrict24.org



# A BLOCK A CHOC OF HISTORY

Just a week or so before Christmas, Bev Jordan, our senior journalist, told me she had been discussing, with her brother, the nostalgic topic of chocolates of the past. Coincidentally, a few days later, at a Christmas party for The Hills branch of National Seniors, boxes of "Cadbury's Favourites" were sprinkled on the tables, including "Fry's Turkish Delight". This prompted me to mention to another patron at the party, that Fry's Chocolates was the first chocolate manufacturer to create, what is now, the popular chocolate bar way back in 1847. Not only did they produce the first chocolate bar, but also the first cream-filled chocolate bar in 1853.

I was born and raised in Bristol, England, where Fry's was first established in 1761 by Joseph Fry. The Fry family, like the other families that controlled the chocolate industry in England up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, (Cadbury and Rowntree families) were Quakers. Apart from the "Turkish Delight" bar that was launched in 1914, the other product for which the company is most famous is "Fry's Chocolate Cream" bar launched in 1866.

When I left England for Australia, aged 11, Fry's were amongst the three largest employers in Bristol, the others being the large tobacco company of W.D. & H. O. Wills (now better known as British-American Tobacco) and the Bristol Aeroplane Company (now known as the British Aircraft Corporation and home of the Concorde supersonic aircraft).

It was in 1919 that Fry's and Cadbury merged and the company was renamed British Cocoa and Chocolate Company with the Fry family controlling 45.44%. Fry family interests were diluted gradually as the company acquired other companies over the following years including Pascall sweets and, in Australia, "MacRobertson's", "Red Tulip" and "Ricci Remond". The Australian operations were renamed Cadbury-Fry-Pascall and based at Claremont, Tasmania, later moving to Ringwood, Victoria.

Another famous chocolate brand, first launched by Fry's, was "Crunchie" in 1929. Fry's Crunchie is now branded as "Cadbury Crunchie" and when I left England in the 1950s it was branded as Fry's Crunchie. One of my many favourite chocolates from the 1950s was Fry's 5 Boys, a milk chocolate bar. In 1847, Fry's produced the first solid chocolate bar for widespread consumption, and in 1902 they began selling the UK's first milk chocolate - 3 years before Cadbury's Dairy Milk was introduced. Fry's branded their new product as 5 Boys Milk Chocolate, linking it in the consumer mind to the trusted 5 Boys (dark) chocolate they had already been producing for some years. The famous advert shows a young boy's face passing through 5 expressions of 'Desperation, Pacification, Expectation, Acclamation and Realization' as he eats his Fry's chocolate. The image was reproduced as a postcard and sold

widely at food and industry exhibitions during the Edwardian period.

Another favourite was "Fry's 5 Centres" which was introduced in 1934 and was similar to Fry's Chocolate Cream in packaging and design. The five flavours produced over the years changed as tastes changed, however the bars marketed under the 5 Centres name ceased production in 1992 due to the increased costs in production.

After the Fry's name was dropped and the company reverted from British Cocoa and Chocolate Company to Cadbury, which continued until 2010, the company was acquired by Kraft Foods of the US. By 2012 Kraft Foods combined all their chocolate and biscuit brands, including Tobler and Milka into Mondelez International whilst the dairy and other grocery brands formed a new Kraft Foods Corporation in 2012.



## ALIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

BY LEONIE DIXON

We all know just how busy it gets at Christmas time and it's like the station has been on steroids with a lot of the volunteers almost making Alive their whole life, especially our Chairman, Andsley Dennis who not only organises many of the events but attends them and puts in an enormous amount of effort to ensure their success. Outside Broadcasts (OBs) really help connect with our listeners and the latest OB was at Parramission where 1,000 meals were served to people experiencing homelessness, isolation and mental health issues. Our team broadcast numerous interviews with the dignitaries and danced and sang along with the crowd. Many commented it was the highlight of the year.

The week before it was off to broadcast at the Glenhaven Carols night where lots of the carollers received free hand-outs from the station and really got to know many of the presenters. A fun night!

Finally, the last fund raiser for the year was a Bunnings sausage sizzle where the whole team were dressed in the new Alive Christmas shirt and Santa made his appearance for the kids. It was another social occasion members really enjoyed which is available to everyone who becomes a member by visiting [alive90.com.au](http://alive90.com.au).



*Greetings to you all. Have a great year!*

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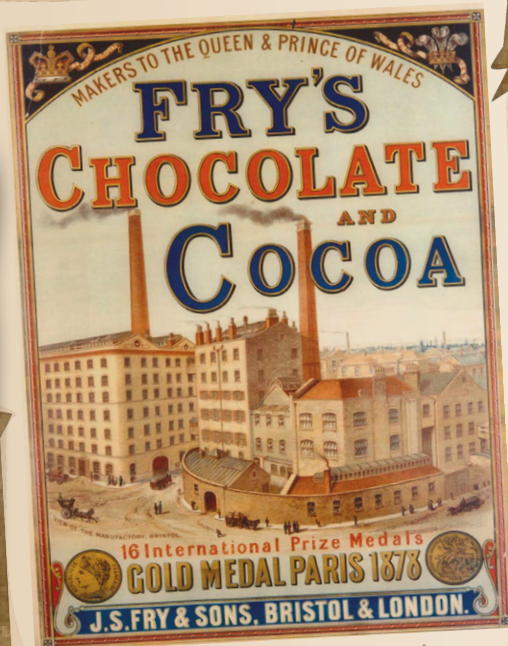
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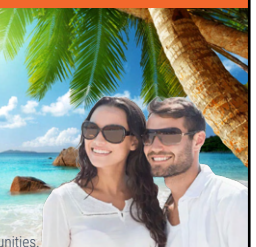
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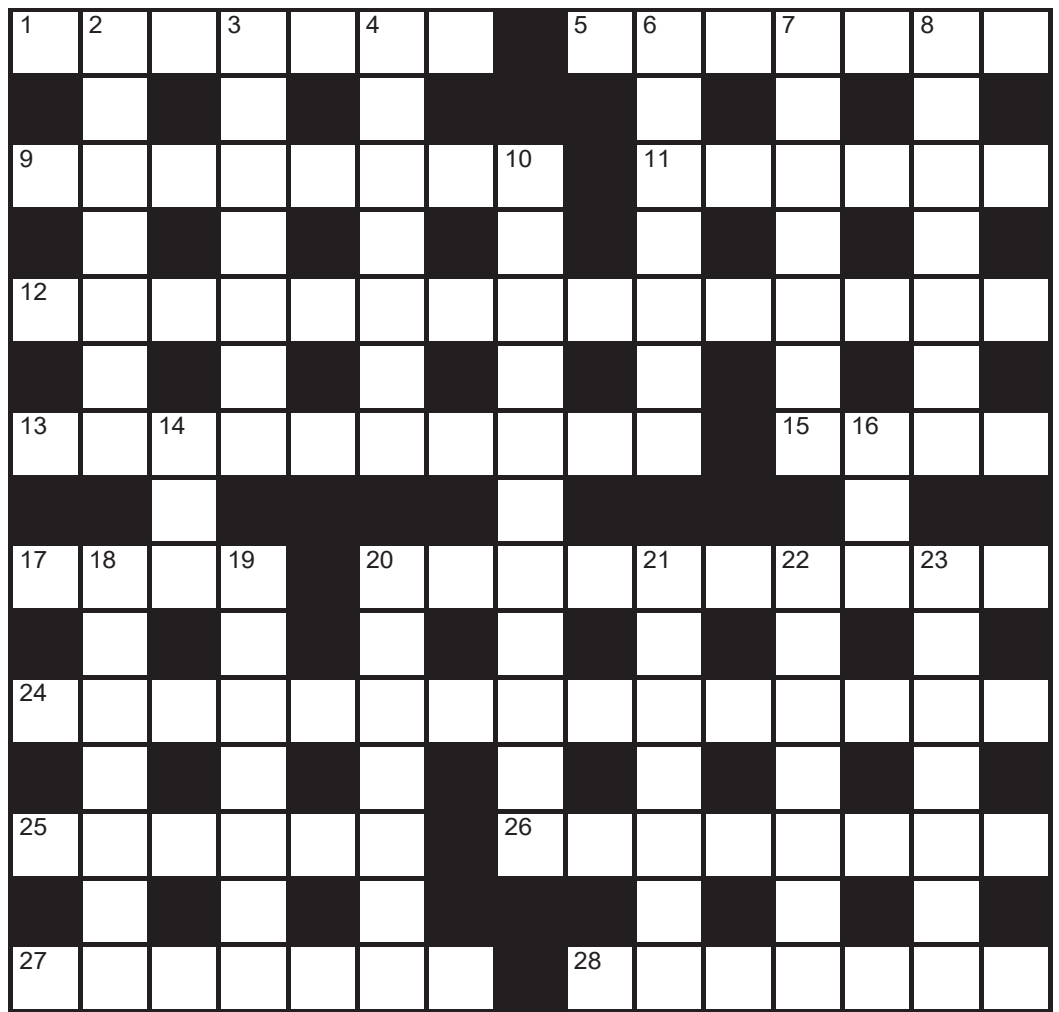
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### Across

1. Four-sided pillar
5. Gulp down
9. We drones got drunk, went downhill
11. Former South Vietnam's --- Van Thieu
12. Sky worker
13. They're not rural
15. Ollie's ally
17. Tom Clancy hero Jack ---
20. Small NSW seaside resort with brilliant white sand
24. Arising at the same time
25. Panda food
26. Moron
27. Bizarre
28. In a tasteless manner

### Down

2. A very hot day
3. Italian restaurant choice
4. Artisan fixed singer
6. Players at the edge
7. Saint Bernadette's city
8. Australia is its biggest component
10. "--- Holt", and disappear
14. Fur scarf
16. "--- With Mussolini" (1999 Zeffirelli film)
18. Salty Western Australia Nature Reserve
19. In a remarkable way
20. Olympic hockey gold-medallist Robert ---
21. Australasian ---, a porgie
22. Brought to bear
23. Local government body

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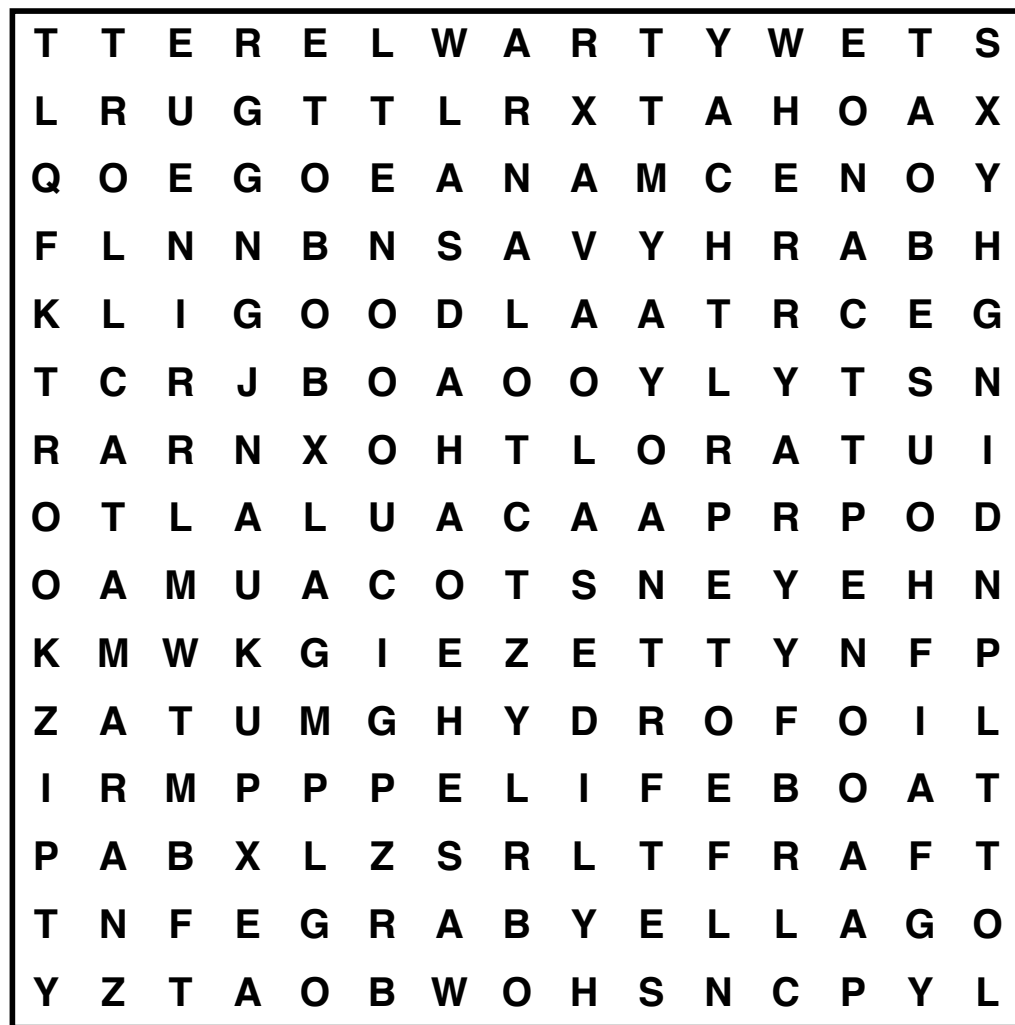
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Answers from last issue

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