The Manning Community News

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This paper is being published as a community service to provide readers with factual and independent coverage of news, people and events in our district.
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Community – a force to be reckoned with!

I was one of the 400 plus ratepayers of MidCoast Council who showed up at the peaceful rally against the Council's plan to centralise operations by moving into the Master's building in Taree.

Part of the 400 strong crown before the council meeting

As requested by organiser, Katrina Pearson, the rally was well behaved, if deeply concerned at Council's reckless ideas, secretive dealings, and lack of community consultation.

Under the shady trees outside the Forster Council Chambers, the crowd made friends, exchanged ideas and networked.

Council may treat ratepayers as a mere mob of locals ready to be milked to fund Council's mistakes and extravagances, but it was a great opportunity to discover who lives in our Council area.

Since amalgamation we are a significant group – over ninety thousand of us; farmers, teachers, shopkeepers, small business operators, retired accountants, solicitors, financial advisors, just for starters.

That's a lot of expertise to call on.

Three hundred plus ratepayers were, however, banned by the General Manager, Mr Panuccio, from attending the rally or the following council meeting. And the discriminated mob? The Council staff.

The GM's edict, issued at 8am on the morning of the rally and Council meeting, if it wasn't outside the rules of Council, did nothing to endear the GM to his staff, most of whom have no desire whatsoever to move to work in Taree.

At the rally, the organisers of the NO Move to MASTERS, compiled a data base of concerned citizens, who added their names with their snail mail and email addresses for further communication. Council doesn't seem to realise (especially given the spectacular failure of their flyer/survey) that there is a long list of members of the community who don't do social media.

But the friendly mood of the crowd changed dramatically once several hundred people, including myself, crowded into the overflowing Council chamber to hear the motion brought by Councillor Peter Epov, supported by councillors Bell and McWilliams. Councillor Epov has been against the idea of the Master's purchase from the beginning because of the underhand and secretive manner that the former GM, Glenn Handford, acquired Masters, and the subsequent secrecy from council management and lack of community consultation.

The opening protocols of a Council meeting were observed, then we were given a stern lecture from the pulpit from the Mayor as to our be-

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No Mines at Gloucester Sets A Precedent

The Rocky Hill Court Decision is a win for Australia

Jubliant residents hear the verdict at Hillview Herb Farm

"Dear residents of the Manning and Gloucester valleys - The Gloucester community is deeply grateful to EDO NSW staff and Barrister Robert White for their unstinting support of the Gloucester residents and assisting in the protection of our beautiful valley.

We are ecstatic that the court has ruled against the proposal for an open cut mine, 250m deep and less than 1km from family homes.

Climate change is the major threat to our regions, water, health and to the planet.

There should be no new or expanded coal mines and the State and Federal Governments need to transition to renewables as fast as they can.

Groundswell Gloucester would like to see a Royal Commission into the coal and gas industries in NSW, including the relevant state government departments that many communities see as giving scant if any regard to the massive and detrimental impacts of coal and gas developments on communities and their environments across the state.

The Rocky Hill licenses need to be removed so we can have certainty as a community and rebuild, prioritize a solar farm initiative and continue to grow Gloucester as the beautiful and clean, green region that we all love.

On behalf of Groundswell Gloucester and wider community we would like to thank Manning Clean Water Action Group, the Knitting Nannas and all the people who supported the fight to stop the Rocky Hill Coal Mine proposal from going ahead.

Thank you all so much for what you have done to achieve this result. Our barrister Robert White said that the grounds for refusal that were raised by the residents were a strong part of the decision - all the hard work and your efforts were critical to the final decision and your input was incredibly valuable. Your submissions were vital.

It has been a massive two weeks with National and International news coverage, twitter storm and Facebook frenzy. Let's keep up the pressure so we can take climate change right up into the hallowed halls of Parliament.

Warm regards

Julie (Lyford)

Chair - Groundswell Gloucester"

When Chief Justice of the Land and Environment Court Brian Preston SC handed down his judgment in a landmark case, refusing approval of a new coal mine to be built just outside Gloucester, he set a national precedent.

This is the first time an Australian court has refused consent for a coal mine on the basis of its climate change impacts. The Court also poses a foundational question for all future fossil fuel projects: "the wrong time" test.

The Court accepted scientific evidence and the concept of a global carbon budget. NSW Environmental Defenders Office CEO David Morris stated "In the face of that acceptance, the judgment presents a foundational question for all decision makers. It is this: given that, if we are to remain within the global carbon budget, only a finite amount of additional carbon can be burned, and that existing approvals already exhaust that budget, why should this particular project be prioritised over any other, or displace an existing approval? That is 'the wrong time' test and will prove an insurmountable barrier for many projects going forward".

The EDO NSW represented the community action group against the mine – Groundswell Gloucester – and argued that the mine was contrary to the public interest and principles of ecologically sustainable development because of its significant social and climate change impacts.

The Court accepted those arguments in deciding to refuse approval for the mine, finding that carbon emissions from the mine will contribute to global warming, such that approving it will not assist in achieving the rapid and deep reductions in

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Jubliant Gloucester Groundswell after court judgement

Masters' update

– squandering on an option ratepayers do not want

Ratepayers are incensed by the attitude of MidCoast Council (MCC) in their proposed centralisation of merged councils (excluding Gloucester Council) and MidCoast Water to the Masters' site at Taree.

Since the original underhand purchase of the Masters' building in November 2017, Council's attitude has been non-disclosure or limited disclosure coupled with underestimation of the real cost to relocate to Masters. Further, Councillors and ratepayers do not know what costs have been incurred to-date. Asking MCC will not yield a satisfactory response as MCC are determined to keep hidden and reveal only fragmented costs. Determining the true costs to relocate, and the actual expenditure to date, is largely an estimation exercise based on the financial reports produced by external consultants and from limited fragmented financial data from MCC's own finance department. Even the Cost Plan produced in July 2018 by Slattery's (consultants) was impounded, hiding the detail cost breakdown to fit out the Masters' building from ratepayer's scrutiny. The well-worn lame-duck excuse "commercial in confidential" shuts the door on ratepayers. Again, no proper disclosure and no transparency. At the very least, a brief synopsis of prime costs would be better than nothing, acceptable to most ratepayers and show a change of MCC attitude. Council's motto "building trust" is truly well shredded and out the window.

Staged Process

In the staged process to relocate to Masters', Councillor's voted (March 2018) to undertake just the Initiation stage. That entailed gathering adequate financial data to primarily enable a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) to be undertaken. That is, for the 350 staff affected, compare and evaluate the costs to accommodate the staff in the existing administration offices (campus option) with the costs to centralise at Masters' (single site option). After practically one whole year of bitter division in Council meetings, a change in General Manager, reports and report addenda from fourteen groups of consultants and reports from MCC's own finance department, no consensus has been reached. And at what cost? (read on.)

At the latest Council meeting (6 February 2019) a motion was carried that proposed to undertake a new CBA subject to external review, with the inclusion of the latest property values for those properties earmarked to fund the relocation, consequently delaying the overdue decision on whether to proceed.

Ratepayer concerns with this motion pushed through by Cr Pontin, despite the more reasonable motion by Cr Epov, backed by Crs Bell and McWilliams are:

1) that the same limited, understated costs will be used in the new CBA,

2) the external review is just another consultant selected and paid by council staff with the limitation of "he who pays the piper" and not truly independent,

3) it makes the assumption that Masters' should be used for centralisation and no other purpose (no other options will be considered) and,

4) no direct ratepayer input and little or no input from ratepayers.

It would appear Councillors are aware of a severe decrease in value of those properties earmarked for sale to fund relocation and hence the inclusion of this item in review and CBA.

Culture Program

One aspect of the motion supported by all Councillors was the elimination of the assumed and grossly overstated financial benefits of the "culture transformation program" (CTP) (where the then GM Hanford claimed that there would be a $76M productivity savings over 20 years, from the culture transformation) a key part of the original Business Case reported by consultants Savills & Syneca (Jan 2018).

It is a relief that Councillors have seen the folly in a desperate attempt to use unrealistic hypothetical financial returns from a nebulous program stretching over a 20-year culture change program. This appears to have been motivated by the previous General Manager (Mr. Glenn Handford) to justify the move to Masters. Even in the revised addendum report presented at the recent Council meeting, the consultants failed to respond to a challenge to identify one public entity or council that has had success with a CTP. Thankfully common sense has prevailed, the CTP will not be part of the new CBA. It certainly falsified the original business plan (including the CBA) on which the decision by Council to embark on the Initiation stage was based.

Consultants

MCC has engaged fourteen groups of consultants to date (6 Feb 2019) at a cost of **$375,000**, a figure from the probity report produced by the consultant group O'Connor Marsden & Associates (OCM), submitted to the recent Council meeting (6 February 2019). It is ironic that at the same Council meeting MCC's senior Director of Corporate & Business Systems (Mr. Steve Emery) submitted a report entitled Taree Office Relocation Investigations Update which stated the costs to date for consultants is $**210,00.** If senior MCC management are inconsistent and not correct in reporting costs to Council, what chance has a ratepayer with limited access to financial data in gaining correct financial data?

Probity

This probity report itself has another serious shortcoming. OCM consultants were appraised by MCC's senior management and informed that the cost to relocate to Masters' is $27 million ($7 million purchase plus $20 million fit out cost). OCM's terms of reference included "accountability and transparency of process". OCM did not do their job properly, naively accepting that $27 million is the correct figure. The $27 million is not correct, the real figure is $40 million plus when cost of capital (loans, cash reserves and sale of property assets) and the cost of the new customer service office at Forster Precinct are included.

The source data has been provided by the Council Staff all keen for the project to go ahead. It has never been independently verified by any of the Consultants.

Property Sales

The original Business Case (Slattery / Syneca report Jan 2018) identified four potential sale-properties to fund relocation to Masters. These properties are MCC Forster and Taree and MidCoast Water Forster and Taree and were valued at a total of $14.56 million. In the revised Business Case report submitted to the recent Council meeting the same properties are valued at $6.665 million, a $7.8 million drop in value in 53 weeks. **MCC need to explain this serious anomaly.** In March 2018 this author reported a $4 million discrepancy in the residual values of IT and audio-visual values in the same consultant's report. These serious discrepancies overstate the benefit / cost ratios, a key figure in the original cost benefit analysis and crucial to Council's decision to proceed with the Initiation stage. This further undermines the credibility of the original Business Case and the decisions based on the financial data in that flawed report.

Expenditure Unaccounted

MCC have not been transparent in identifying and declaring costs incurred in their intention to relocate to Masters'. Many costs are swallowed internally and taken for granted such as: the ratepayer survey via Australia Post, graphic art and website changes to display MCC signage on the Masters' building, the propaganda campaign to convince ratepayers that the cost to relocate to Masters' is $27 million, flyers and inclusions with rates notices, community consultations, cost of proposed independent building certifier, further building fit out design and engagement with consultants. The cost of inter-office travel itemised in the original Business Case seems to have "fallen away": a figure of $2.618 million. That may appear again in the next CBA. It would be interesting to know why this was removed from the latest batch of reports. These expenditure items are besides the major omitted cost of capital items already mentioned.

New CBA

The purpose of a cost benefit analysis is to derive a benefit / cost ratio. The original Business Case gives the reader the impression that a benefit / cost ratio (BCR) above 1.0 is satisfactory and therefore acceptable. A ratio of 1.0 is just getting the original investment returned and no investor would be satisfied with just that after a 20-year investment period, particularly where there is considerable risk. A simple compounding term deposit at 6.0% per annum over 20 years gives a BCR of 1.2 with little or no risk.

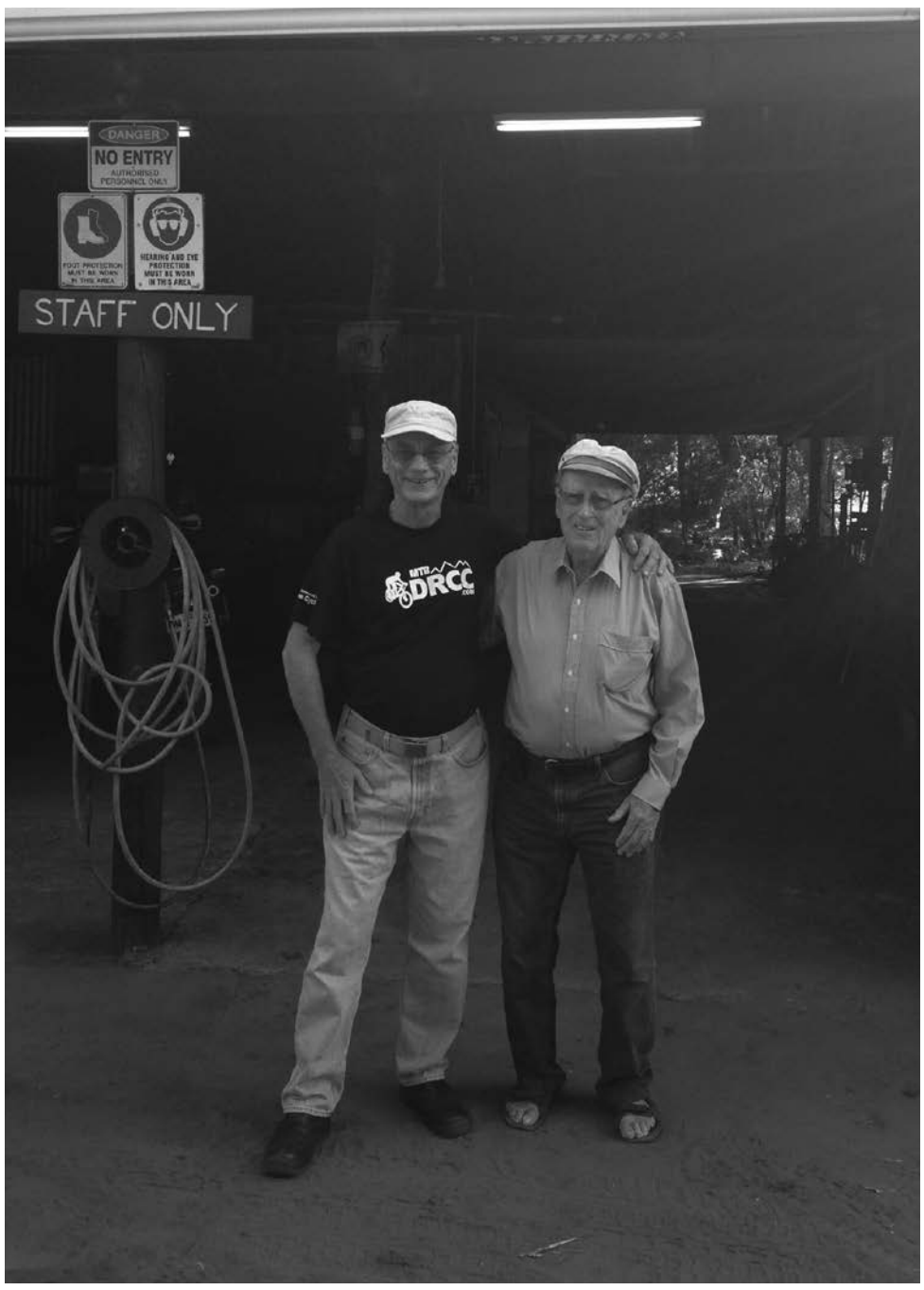
The recent revised Business Case report shows a BCR of 1.5 where the residual value of the Masters' building is included. This has little credibility because the full extent of relocation costs are omitted. Including just the cost of capital reduces the BCR below 1.0.

Will the next CBA due for the April 2019 Council meeting be forthright and transparent? The new GM should show leadership, stop the circus and insist on transparency and proper disclosure of costs to relocate. After three iterations of CBA, will the campus option with a $12.9 million price tag to refurbish Council's existing administrative buildings and expenditure of $3.9 million on IT and audio-visual equipment, be the far cheaper and more effective option? Whereas expenditure of that amount could provide modern video-conferencing facilities. So why then continue to squander ratepayer's money on Masters'?

Mike Deignan

The Pearling Game

During the early 1970's Warwick Finlay was working as a sound recordist assigned to the ABC's top-shelf show, "A Big Country." Here he reminisces about one particular shoot.



Warwick Finlay (left) with Lyndon Brown in Broome 2013

By Warwick Finlay

It was my lot to travel around the country in the company of good crew members gathering interesting stories and having a fine time.

In 1971 we, (Terry Byrne, cameraman, Peter Davies, assistant cameraman and I) were assigned to reporter/producer Bob Connolly to travel to Broome to produce a yarn about the pearling industry.

Part of the story was to be shot at Cygnet Bay, in those days a rough journey from Broome of some 200kms kms and two days over very poor roads in a four-wheel drive of doubtful reliability. After doing the sums and in consultation with our Sydney office, it was decided that we would charter an aircraft in and out of Cape Leveque and have the subject of our film, Lyndon Brown arrange a lift to his pearl farm.

A Cessna 206 with cargo pod was chartered and it was with some difficulty that we four plus pilot and equipment fitted into the aircraft. The technology was fairly bulky in those days and the ubiquitous tripod just wouldn't fit in, so it meant a handheld camera for Terry, the master of innovation.

We were met at the Cape Leveque airstrip by a surly, tattooed type who informed us that he was Lyndon Brown's lugger skipper, driving wise men from the East wasn't on his duty statement and anyhow he'd rather be back in his shack drinking home brew. We elected Bob to be his passenger in the cab as we crew piled onto the back of the far from roadworthy decrepit Land Cruiser.

On arrival at the pearl farm, Bob and his new best mate rolled out of the cab laughing and full of bon ami. Such were the interpersonal skills of our reporter that he had won over the skipper and undying love and lifelong friendship were assured.

Not much happened for a while but as we took in our surroundings, we could see that we were firmly in the bush. Few signs of human habitation were evident except for an open work shed and a dwelling constructed from corrugated iron and paper bark. In a scene setting snapshot, I spied a whisp of smoke rising from a stove chimney. Out of the door emerged a tall man whose body language betrayed shyness but he came forward and introduced himself as Lyndon Brown.

As we followed Lyndon, it became evident that this was not a place of laughter but serious work, shrouded in secrecy with an emphasis on security. We were introduced to a Japanese woman who had the skills and the knowledge required to cultivate pearls. She was making wonderful odours come out of the stove with a tiny child at hip.

We were to camp in the shed and eat with Linden Brown.

This was not the time for sightseeing or the usual cup of tea. Straight into it we went. Bolting the equipment together we were transported to the lugger for our voyage. As a sailor, I was smitten by this classic boat, which smelt of things from the sea and made noises that, even today this old sound recordist can recall. Our skipper warmly welcomed us aboard, assuring us that the wind was just right for a nice cruise on Cygnet Bay.

The filming was difficult for Terrry, working without a tripod and hand-holding a large German camera. But you do what you do and we had a complete sequence of a working pearling lugger complete with bell divers, hoses and a harvest of oyster shells each measuring some 20 cms across.

All we required were some wide shots of the lugger from the land, so we went ashore, sent the vessel out again and Terry proceeded to grab some wonderful shots with the camera perched on a fence post.

The next sequence was a real eye-opener and something that had never been recorded on film due to the corporate secrecy covering pearl seeding.

We caught up with in a 'clean' room in the shed where the Japanese lady opened the freshly harvested shells, held them ajar with wooden wedges and with a surgeon's skill, cut the oyster mantle away and placed a tiny polystyrene ball in a secret spot. A polystyrene dome about 20mm x15 mm was araldited to the inside of the shell and the mother of pearl nacre would eventually cover this also. Loads of oyster meat was taken from some shells and we were informed that this was our dinner.

The seeded shells were placed on racks and submerged in fresh-flowing seawater for a speedy return to the growing area in the Bay.

After a fourteen-hour day, everyone was happy that we had earned our 'keep' and in fading light we joined the Brown in his one room home. The interior was rough; a swept, dirt floor, chinks of light entering through cracks, falling on smoke seeping from the Kookaburra combustion stove and the delicious smell of oyster chowder exciting the juices of a hungry crew. We sat around a large bush material table; lit by a pressure lamp on chairs constructed from flotsam and preceded to be served by the Lady of the house dressed in a kimono. It doesn't get much better than this and the visual and olfactory overloads were too much to fully absorb.

The dinner was amazing with all senses on alert but you can only eat so much fresh oyster chowder.

The night, being young, opened itself to a game of poker. My loss is that I don't play but I watched the group set up and do card things. At this time, our New Best Mate, The Skipper, turned up with a milk crate of 'tallies' and I slipped outside to partake of the BEST home brew while the sun set over the ocean.

Some time later I returned inside to watch the game as I had been alerted by the noise of people having fun. The scene was extraordinary, like something out of a pirate's movie; on the table was a huge tray of pearls, some natural, varying from black through fawns to silver but most cultured, descending from perfectly round through to grotesque hybrids, (*known as baroque or keshi pearls which are now highly prized as technology has moved on to produce "perfect" rounds, so the wild natural*

pearls are rarer. Ed) all dazzling in the unique light. This was not a display, these were the poker chips and my mates were hording them like sharks guard their pups.

As it turned out, common sense prevailed and in the sober light of the next day Bob, Terry and Pete showed me their bounty of one or two nice pearls each.

I wasn't forgotten. I bought a nice cultured specimen for a fair price and Lyndon proceeded to use a hole saw to cut out a domed (half round) pearl from shell he had lying around the place. These are now beautifully mounted and part of my wife's jewellery treasures.

The Pearling Game was shown to an enthralled audience on ABC TV and we all went our separate ways.

My way was to eventually leave the ABC for the freelance world where I was to make an excellent living working with local and international clients recording sound around the world.

My clients included the BBC Natural History Unit who would commission me each time they were filming in Australia.

In 2013 I decided to retire after just one more job and the BBC provided me with such a swan song. They were making a series called Treasure Hunt where they looked at diamonds in South Africa, gold in Peru and opal and pearls in Australia.

Now, I'm a guy who's been kissed by an Angel and in my career I've been lucky enough to visit places people pay to go to….. often twice. Here it was happening again; I was to fly to Broome, team up with an English crew, lead them by road to Cygnet Bay and record the sound.

As I drove the lead four-wheel drive with the jet-lagged English folk following my tail in the dust, I mused over what I would find at a place I visited some 42 years ago.

Wow! It's a resort now with a pool, nice steps, a boutique, professional greeters and an old, open shed.

The cool, charismatic head-of-the-whole-shooting-match (nephew of Lydon), James Brown made us feel welcome with a cool drink from the bar. During introductions he looked me square in the eye and said, "You're famous around here, you know"! It's not the done thing for the hired sound recordist to steal the show, especially when there's an English TV presenter being completely ignored. "Yes," James continued, "whenever guests arrive, we show them this old TV program and everyday our staff see your credit."

Things settled down a bit and the presenter went off for a swim in the crocodile infested waters of tidal Cygnet Bay…sheesh.

Afterwards, quietly James told me he would introduce me to Lyndon who was still living at the farm.

Warwick Finlay at Cygnet Bay Pearl Farm

As you do, I found Lyndon shuffling along a nearby road and introduced myself. The eyes of this still shy man lit up and we had a yarn in the open shed.

We looked at the drill press, the same pile of shell, the (now) superseded clean room, checked out the old VCR playing our documentary and took some shots.

The hardships Lyndon and his family went through were sufficient as he is a now comfortably off….but seems to be on his own, and very content at how far he's come.

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Peter is the big picture man!

Peter Tait is the President of Wingham Golf Club. The kind of job a man who's retired, but fit and energetic, might take on as he loves golf.

The Wedding setting in the grounds of Wingham Golf Club

Peter Tait, President WIngham Golf Club

Peter is a local, taught Agriculture at Wingham High for fifteen years. But spend any time in his company and you come away with rockets going off in your head. In a good way.

This is a man who thinks outside the square and looks at the big picture, ideas and innovations tumbling from him in an almost non-stop stream of consciousness.

Since Peter's taken over the club since midway through 2018, he's become action man.

Owns Assets

'A lot of us felt that the proposed amalgamation in 2018 between Wingham Bowling club and Wingham Golf Club meant both would struggle or both would go out backwards. So, in April 2018 after the amalgamation was rejected, the Golf Club created a think tank or a group of like-minded individuals to discuss the future development of the club. After five months of meetings, the outcome was a five year strategic plan with a business plan for 2018/2019 to move forward – our focus was to develop Wingham Golf Club as a truly inclusive and friendly community sporting club that operates according to best practice business principles and we head hunted people we thought would have the right expertise,' he explains.

'This organisation is like a lot of businesses, there's a lot of moving parts to it and if one bit stops moving it becomes unstainable. There is no way we can survive by being "just a golf club." Fortunately as a business the club owns all its assets – all its land especially, so moving forward that gave us options to do a number of things. The area is about 22 hectares, only half of which is the actual course. Unfortunately, we don't own the adjacent motel though we have a symbiotic relationship.'

Included in the club's think tank was the then local co-ordinator of the SES, Ben Matters, so Peter and the group saw an opportunity to work in conjunction with the SES to make the golf club an emergency evacuation centre for the area. 'We're not flood prone, nor likely to get burnt out during bushfires, and we have plenty of vehicular access and accommodation.

'Part of the strategic plan is to put in an RV friendly area so if people can't get home there's a place to stay. We're also aware that camping at the Wingham Brush is highly problematic so putting it here is a win for the community, and will provide a means for developing tourism without ruining a significant area like the Brush. For the golf club the more diversification we can create in the way of income the better.'

So, the Board is focussing on ensuring that the club becomes a wedding venue of choice. 'The club has built an outdoor wedding space and the reception venue is in the club house. The members of the Marketing Focus Group (led by Lesley Steel and Jacquie Pearce) set up a competition on social media for a $5000 gift package and they got swamped within the first week which eventuated in 27 weddings booked straight off. There's the club, ample car parking, carts to ferry people around, the wedding space and the motel all in close proximity.

Funerals

'We're also thinking of having funerals here. We can have the funeral service in the gardens and the wake in the club. We're also looking at tourism tours, places to see and visit in local area. I'm in touch with the local council to work with other groups and get the message out there.'

Peter says the club's biggest cost overhead is power. 'In 2010, I put in solar panels and battery storage at my home and since then I haven't paid any electricity bills, so I figured we can do that here at the club. Initially we've put up 137 solar panels and plan to lease another 170 plus a backup generator so that during an emergency we have power 24/7. We're currently negotiating with providers for the best option. Along with irrigation plans and everything else, we're halfway there to being self-sufficient.'

The club has 600 members mostly social, with 250 playing members. The fees are 270 dollars a year.

'I want to make savings elsewhere and keep fees down. Water is also part of the plan. In significant rain a lot of water is wasted here, runs off down the hill to the local creek and we lose it. We want to increase our water storage facilities with more dams as part of a landscaping plan to beautify the course and attract birdlife. A longer term plan is to store enough water to irrigate the fairways. The bore water here is no good, both the flow and quality are terrible unfortunately.'

Although the club has the room, Peter shakes his head at expanding to an 18 hole course.

'Too expensive. We have a brilliant greenkeeper, a whole bunch of volunteers, all locals, mostly retirees who make the place tick. We plan to make the 9 holes the very best they can be. And utilise the talent and resources we've got and to make Wingham Golf Club as financially viable as it can be with a diversified revenue source.'

Housing Development

His latest idea is to utilise a portion of the club's land

for an over 50s community housing development which might seem an anathema to many, given the proliferation of mushrooming retirement/lifestyle villages on seemingly every piece of prime and pretty land in regional NSW.

Peter dismisses my misgivings. 'We're working with Golf NSW who are supporting similar developments in places like Bega, Eden, Woolgoolga and Muree. Plenty of landscaping, a place where people can enjoy the amenities and lifestyle of a golf club. Currently, the club land they're looking to develop just lies idle and costs the club for mowing and maintenance and the payment of annual rates. If we can do a deal that's beneficial for the club long term, then we'll lease it to them so it will still be part of the club's assets in perpetuity. Buyers will be on a lease arrangement. There's a body corporate associated with it so we will get our rent component and they will get their maintenance.'

He says he's spent almost two years negotiating with the company (CEO Nicholas Collishaw was once head of Mirvac). 'There's an opportunity to make this golf club a real showplace. We are looking at landscaping, collecting stormwater and environmental things like solar panels so it will be a sustainable environment. If we do our due diligence and do the thing properly, make sure all the boxes are ticked, it's a huge win-win for the residents as well as the local community as a whole.'

A buffet at EJ's Bistro at the Club, managed by chef Elisha Gyorosi

Retirement Opportunities

He says they are moving cautiously before taking the plunge, as there's not a lot of retirement opportunities around Wingham. Peter estimates the townhouses (*Do retirees want stairs, I wonder*) will sell for approximately 250-300k dollars. 'I know some of our members are considering it - it's certainly an attractive option when the time comes to downsize.'

He's a big picture man and wants to engage with the local Chamber of Commerce about a strategic plan for Wingham.

'Because of council amalgamation everything is fragmented, so unless you have a plan for your area and are pro-active and fight for it, you're stymied. Wingham needs a good strategic plan which would then enable us to go to council and lobby efficiently for roads and all the other things we need, using some creative thinking. If the community works together on these strategies, the results could be very beneficial for our community.'

He cites the example of Wingham's plan from several decades ago to attract young professional people to the town – they were offered a plan to finance land and homes so they would come settle and raise their kids.

Boom Time

'It was a boom time for Wingham. But the minute Wingham amalgamated with Taree all the plans were dead in the water and we've never recovered,' says Peter. 'I was a teacher and because of the quality of the people who moved to Wingham, school standards and results went through the roof.

When I retired from teaching we travelled around Australia for a few years trying to find a better place to live … and couldn't find one anywhere, so we sold the caravan and stayed in Wingham. And, in some ways, that's the blueprint for what we want to do here. This club is 104 years old, and we want to be around in another 100 years or more, with a big community focus, and a variety of services including community emergency services. We want to see Wingham reach its potential.'

New Ideas

Peter is looking at tapping into ideas from a lot of smart business and creative types, many who have retired and have time and expertise to share.

'We want to utilise our old pro shop as place to put on training seminars and run events. Wingham is the best kept secret in Australia. The problem at the moment is that there are too many fragmented groups all trying to row their own boat. We should be working together. That's what this strategic plan for Wingham should be about… putting our heads together for the benefit of everyone. We need people with ideas.'

He's a man on the go, with big ideas and energy that is rather infectious, if maybe exhausting to work with, but here's a man who thinks outside the square.

We need a few more like him!
DM

Delicious vegetarian fritters
from Elisha at EJ's Bistro, Wingham Golf Club

CORN FRITTERS WITH AVOCADO & SWEET CHILLI SALSA

Makes 12

CORN FITTERS
4 Fresh corn cobs, Scaled to kernals
1 diced Spanish Onion
2 cups all purpose flour
250g Ricotta cheese
1 diced red capsicum
1 tablespoon Vegeta (a substitute for salt & pepper)
4 Eggs

AVOCADO & SWEET CHILLI SALSA
1 diced avocado
1 diced vine ripened tomato
1/2 diced Spanish onion
30g diced fresh parsley
1/2 tbls Crushed Garlic
1tbls sweet chilli sauce

FRITTER METHOD
Peel and wash your fresh corn cobs (you may use 3 tins of corn kernels if preferred) scale your cobs into kernel into a large bowl add all other ingredients and mix well. Heat pan with a tiny drop of olive oil and drop in half cup measurements of mixture. Fry each side until golden brown. Sit to rest aside until all your corn fritter batter is cooked into fritters and firm.

AVOCADO SALSA
Dice all fresh ingredients into a bowl, add your sweet chilli sauce and mix well. Top your corn fritter and enjoy.

CONSIDERING A SHADE TREE?

A well-positioned, healthy tree can bring a lush, leafy ambience to your home or work environment as well as protection from the elements. And is known to calm and soothe the soul.

The following check list will ensure you choose the best tree for your situation.

1. **Take a hike**

Look at trees growing in your own neighbourhood. This will give you an idea of how trees will look when mature. Also, whatever you see growing well in your neighbour's garden is also likely to grow well in your own.

2**. Size matters**

When buying a shade tree, find out how big it is likely to grow to ensure it fits in your garden space (both above and below the ground). Ensure that branches cannot grow into power lines or drop leaf litter on your roof, and root systems cannot damage paving or buildings. As a general rule, the root system of a tree is likely to mirror the spread of the tree's canopy (although this will vary with different tree species and soil conditions, so always ask if you're unsure).

3. **Tree shape and pruning**

The best shade trees will have a spreading, umbrella-shaped canopy to block overhead sunlight. Branches should come off the trunk from around head level so you can easily stand and walk underneath them. Pruning off the lower branches of many trees can help 'train' them into an ideal shape.

4. **West facing is best**

The success of a shade tree can often depend on where it is positioned. Shade trees that block sunlight coming from the west will be most beneficial as western sunlight can create unpleasantly hot situations, especially on summer afternoons. Planting a leafy, evergreen tree on the western side of your home or entertaining area will create the perfect kind of shade at all the right times. Try it and see!

5. **Clear the north**

Some kinds of shade are better than others. Sunlight from the north can be very beneficial as it can warm your home or living area during the cold winter months. What's more, homes with a clear northern aspect tend to have a bright, jolly atmosphere because they have good natural light. Shade trees planted on the north (and north-eastern) side of your home should be deciduous (lose their leaves in winter), to allow this wonderful source of winter warmth and light into your home.

6. **The right shade**

Some tree species have a dense canopy that will block all overhead sunlight. Other trees will create semi-shade. Most types of lawn will resent overhead shade, so consider alternatives such as decking, gravel or under storey plants that will enjoy the available light conditions. Some trees are deciduous at different times of year, so make sure you do your research. When in doubt, just ask us at the nursery; we're here to help.

7. **The perfect tree!**

Make a list of other qualities you are looking for in a shade tree — fragrant flowers, beautiful foliage, bird attracting, etc. and visit Wingham Nursery — list in hand! We have a selection of shade tree species for every situation and can help find the right one for your garden.

Caitlin Sawyer
Wingham Nursery & Florist
6553 4570

(Breaks my heart to see all these new housing estates cheek by jowl, where you can reach out a window and touch your neighbour, often no eaves and certainly no back gardens or TREES! Trees and forests are our lungs of the planet! Ed.)

How to have the sun kissed look without the burn

It has been one of the hottest summers on record and with temperatures clearing the 35 degree mark the chance to have a healthy sun kissed glow becomes more and more remote. Any time spent out in the sun without broad 50+ sunscreen can result in a burn and it only takes minutes to damage the skin. This is even more severe for young children and the elderly. So what can you do to have the sun kissed look without the burn?

Spray tanning is becoming more and more popular not only with the younger generation but the appeal is more widespread than ever. In the past, spray tans could leave a yellow tinge and lines along creases in the skin which made the tan look unnatural. Advancements in product technology have improved the quality of the tan and now it can look almost seamless. Here's how they work and how to get the most out of your spray tan.

To start with we need to understand what is the skin undertone colour. To do this we look at the veins on the underneath side of the wrist, cool undertones will present with blue or purple veins, blue to green veins indicate neutral undertones and green to olive undertones indicate a warm skin tone. Spray tan solutions vary in colour intensity by the percentage of Dihydroxyacetone (DHA) for short. The higher the percentage of DHA the stronger the tone of the tan. DHA is originally derived from sugar cane and when it comes into contact with the skin causes a chemical reaction with the amino acids producing a darkening effect. The higher the concentration of the DHA the stronger the reaction.

When considering to have a spray tan there are a couple of things to consider. Spray tans offer no SPF sun protection - although you will feel like you can go out in the sun with your brand new sun drenched skin, the reality is that you will burn just the same as unprotected skin. If it is the first time having a spray tan it is recommended that you have a patch test 24 hours prior to the full spray tan application to ensure that there is no allergic reaction to the products. Certain parts of the body absorb the tan and react with the DHA in the spray tan solution causing inconsistencies in the overall evenness of the tan so to combat this issue we use a barrier cream on the hands, knees, elbows, face. and any other area needing protection. An experienced beautician will already understand this issue and may not use a barrier cream but apply a lighter spray from further away to create the same effect.

Personally I love getting spray tans. It is a really quick service that promotes confidence in the person that receives the service. Everyone will look at you and try to contemplate what is different what has changed, and very few will get it right. To ensure client modesty the client usually uses disposable underwear, sticky feet which attach to the soles of the feet. Usually there is an exhaust fan to suck the sprayed air out of the booth with can assist those who suffer from asthma related issues. Once a person has received the spray tan they need to wear minimal clothing for a period of between 2-4 hours so that the chemical reaction can take effect and then you have a shower to wash it off. What is left is a luxuriant sun kissed complexion.

If considering a spray tan then these tips are an absolute must

Exfoliate using a body scrub two days prior will create an even tone and improve the overall appeal of the tan and place extra focus on hands knees and elbows.

Caution should be taken when shaving or waxing as any process impacting on the can change the evenness of the tan - waxing would be advised two days prior to the service also adding that shaving or waxing after the service will almost instantly erode the quality of the tan after the service has concluded.

Consider after care - Normally a spray tan can last up to 2 weeks after application although

This will be even more is you use the correct after care. Normal soaps are too harsh on the skin that has been spray tanned and if you choose to use a normal Supermarket soap you will watch you tan rinse away down the plug hole of your shower.

The spray tan solution is extremely cold and needs to dry on the skin - This processing time can differ between products although normally I would wait a minimum of two hours

Some products will stain cloths, bed sheets.

Ensure that your skin is completely clean from any products as they will interfere with the tan impacting on the end result.

After the initial drying period which varies depending on the products used and the type of spray tan it is recommended to use a moisturiser

Spray tans are a great way to achieve a darker complexion without impacting on your skin health. They are suitable for almost all people as allergic reactions are quite rare. There is a wide variety of products on the market all of which offer a darkening of skin
tone but what makes a spray tan product stand out from the rest is the overall quality and realism of the tan. Some of the best products that we have found are the Bondi Sands brand of spray tan solution. It offers a great tan very realistic and has a great smell - there are also a great range of after care products to really get the most from your spray tan.

In this age of trying to make a product out of "healthy" alternatives to chemicals, coffee beans and even tea leaves have been suggested as a great alternatives for use in tanning. The thought of getting up at 5 am and rubbing myself with a solution of coffee grounds was not my idea of a good start to the day, but I tried it out.

The verdict - the coffee/lotion solution stains everything it touches. To make it more intensive I added more coffee grounds, but the smell put me off and I love coffee. As with all tanning solutions it did take an extensive amount of time to dry but did give a realistic tan. The main difference between the average and good quality spray tans is how they work over creases of the body like the wrinkles on the inner elbow. For this reason the coffee solution did not provide a realistic tan. Where the skin folds are reduces the amount of solution and therefore leaves lighter areas which looks unrealistic.

Jason.

Travel to a new life, Imran!

Like everyone who has met him, or knows Imran Mohammed's story,- Rohingya refugee, who suffered for five years in detention on Manus Island after fleeing his homeland, Myanmar, separated from his scattered family, we wish him safety, joy and fulfilment on this new journey in his life.

While Australia rejected and punished him for seeking safety and freedom, the USA has gained a talented, gentle and dedicated new citizen. Their gain. Our loss.

I keep in touch with Imran, and I know a lot of you follow his fortunes. Here's an update. If anyone would like to make a donation to Imran's meagre bank account while he dedicates himself to his studies. Let me know and I will send you his bank details.

Di.

Imran in the winter snow in Chicago!

I was welcomed to a world I only thought possible in my dreams, in June last year. I didn't know anything about this part of the world or that Chicago, Illinois, USA, even existed.

I've been amazed to learn how people pursue their goals and how they see themselves in the future. Nothing is easy, and nothing happens overnight but the incredible part of this nation is that it seems anything can be achieved over time, with patience. However there are obstacles, and to overcome them can be overwhelming, especially for new immigrants. Like me.

I came to this country with English which I speak, write and read. I just can't imagine not being able to speak the language as it would close every door of opportunity for me. I would struggle every morning when I opened my eyes until I went to bed at night.

I see hundreds of refugees and immigrants who are bilingual, yet they seem speech-impaired at times as they communicate more by their body language.

I know the feeling of not being able to say what I wanted to say verbally when I was detained in Australia's offshore detention centre on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea and in Indonesia's refugee camp.

I felt so hopeless, vulnerable and completely voiceless.

I am sure those who come here without being able to speak English, feel powerless and never find confidence to seek something better in their lives. It is a massive adjustment because your whole life is upside down. You are reborn the day you come to a new country, as everything is done differently. Innovation is just wonderful, if you are born into it. It can be a lifetime of confusion, if you are not exposed to it when you are growing up.

Everything is done via internet. At home we would pay with cash and get change in cash, here people carry debit or credit cards which allows them to pay for anything, so there is no necessity to actually touch money and I sometimes think that the real value of money is lost.

Despite all of the hurdles and confusion, refugees find ways to improve their lives in order to lay down the foundation of their own family in this nation.

I have been here for nearly eight months and there has not been a day I wasn't fascinated with something. I never get to understand the fact that there are signs which say you are not allowed to feed pigeons, and people love their dogs like their children. The reverse would have been the true at home.

Sometimes my American friends tell me that they are taking their dogs to the doctors; whereas, I saw people die because they weren't able to get any medical attention. I didn't even know people could study to become a vet.

The roads are overrun with cars, and it seemed people pay a machine in order to park their cars. It just didn't make sense at the beginning.

I used to take classes two evenings a week after work, but now I study every morning at Truman College. There are not many students in my class; however, everyone looks so different and there are such a variety of languages spoken on phones during the break between classes.

There are students from so many different countries at Truman. I have heard names of countries I had no idea about, or where they were on the map. I hope to gain my high school diploma as quickly as possible, like everyone else. Everyone is on a mission to finish their education.

I pinch myself from time to time because I can't believe that I am really doing all of these things. It hasn't been easy without any family; however, the greatest gift of my whole life is I finally have a country in which to be free and I have found a home after seven years of imprisonment in many detention centres.

I have kept myself extremely busy so that I can move on to create the life I have dreamed about. I have made choices in order to learn, grow, experience and go to places where I am completely outside my comfort zone.

I know people probably don't want to see it, but their love, support and kindness makes me feel welcomed. There is hope and I can see my future. It is a long road, but I will build the life I have dreamed of and accomplish my goals through hard work.

My 2019 wish is to see all my brothers and sisters who are still held on Manus and Nauru, free in a safe country.

I will be forever grateful to the Australian people who fought for our freedom, and who are still fighting. I know I will cherish this new life, as I have been blessed to have met many incredible people in Chicago. I grew up in a place where dreams are constantly snatched away, but the kindness and support shown by the people here has given me hope of a future.

DREAM WORLD

Green city is carpeted with snow.
Cold gets in my bones and
Runs throughout my body.
Makes my body dance helplessly
Coldness leaves discomfort.

Trees lost their leaves
And sleep,
But their heart is breathing.

Still

Snow falling gives me joy.
It's a dream world with beauty.
I travel through it.

ANTIQUES & COLLECTABLES

Collect the past and invest for your future. Many people start a collection because what they collect gives them pleasure because of past memories.

Classic Art Deco figure with dog and Clarice Cliff geometric design "Sun Ray".

Collectors often look for, and treasure, items from their childhood, things we remember from our grandparents' homes. The things that give us comfort and bring great memories. Also, collecting gives us the great gift of knowledge about history and about the times our ancestors lived.

Art Deco, or Deco, is an influential visual arts design style that first appeared in France after World War I and began flourishing internationally in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s before its popularity waned after World War II.

It is a varied style that combines traditional craft motifs with Machine Age imagery and materials. The style is often distinguished by rich colours, bold geometric shapes and lavish ornamentation.

Deco emerged from the interwar period when industrialisation was transforming the world. One of its major attributes is an embrace of technology. This distinguishes Deco from the organic motifs favoured by its predecessor, of the 1900s, Art Nouveau.

The first use of the term Art Deco has been attributed to a French architect Le Corbusier, who wrote a series of articles in his journal L'Esprit Nouveau under the headline "1925 Expo: Arts Déco".

During its heyday, Art Deco represented luxury, glamour, exuberance and a belief in social and technological progress.

Deco was also influenced by Cubism, Constructivism, Functionalism, Modernism and Futurism.

Many people collect Art Deco items. Some even live the style with their whole house being decked out with the furniture and fittings of the Deco period.

One of the greatest, collected artists of the Deco was an English designer Clarice Cliff. Her bold colouration and geometric pottery designs have been much collected over the last ninety years. Cliff's contemporaries include Susie Cooper, Charlotte Rhead, William Moorcroft, Rene Lalique and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who are also very collectable in their fields.

Clarice became one of the most influential ceramic artists of the 20th Century. She chose a highly atypical career path for a woman of her time. Clarice Cliff broke the barrier that generally separated men and women in the workplace to become the Art Director for two adjoining factories in Burslem, Staffordshire by 1930. Cliff's ceramic designs are highly collectable and are some of the best pottery examples of the Art Deco style. Her "Bizarre" & "Fantasque" ranges were the pinnacle with each different design being designated a name. Although the bulk of her creative masterpieces were created during the 1930s, Cliff continued to maintain a presence in the Burslem pottery works until 1963.

Happy hunting until we catch up again!

I recommend collecting to all. Spend some time wandering the markets, second hand shops, antique shops, garage sales, internet selling sights (ebay, gumtree, marketplace) and local auctions. You never know what you will find. Take the plunge and collect a variety of unique and interesting treasures or limit yourself to just one area. It is always fun and addictive.

If you have items you are not sure of, I may be able to help with information, appraisals and/or sales. I love the history and stories of old and interesting items.

Phone Rex – 0427 880 546.

Continued from page 2

No Mines at Gloucester Sets A Precedent

emissions needed in order to meet Australia's Paris targets.

Significantly, the Court held that **it was not important that emissions from the mine would be a fraction of global total emissions, noting that the global problem of climate change needs to be addressed by multiple local actions to mitigate emissions.** The Court also found that the mine's economic benefits had been substantially overstated.

The Court also found that the Rocky Hill coal project will cause a variety of serious negative social impacts to the Gloucester community, including visual, noise and dust impacts, and significant impacts to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, stating that the mine will severely impact on people's sense of place.

In summing up his judgment, Chief Justice Preston SC said: "**In short, an open cut coal mine in this part of the Gloucester valley would be in the wrong place at the wrong time.** Wrong place because an open cut coal mine in this scenic and cultural landscape, proximate to many people's homes and farms, will cause significant planning, amenity, visual and social impacts. Wrong time because the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) of the coal mine and its product will increase global total concentrations of GHGs at a time when what is now urgently needed, in order to meet generally agreed climate targets, is a rapid and deep decrease in GHG emissions. These dire consequences should be avoided. The Project should be refused."

David Morris concluded, "This is a seminal moment in the development of climate litigation in Australia – and will weigh heavily on the minds of decision-makers considering whether to approve new fossil fuels projects."

This landmark case puts Australia well and truly on the map in terms of international climate change litigation.

60 community objectors, including farmers, doctors, Traditional Owners, old people and young people, gave evidence. Some were opposed because of noise impacts, others worried about how the mine might tear at the fabric of their community. Many were very concerned about their children and grandchildren and the kind of world they will live in if projects like this, which contribute to climate change, continue to be approved.

The NSW Environmental Defenders Office (EDO NSW) is at the forefront of public environmental interest lawyers using the law to protect our climate and environment for current and future generations.

Residents in the Manning Valley take note. An intrusive, toxic recycling waste dump isn't welcome either.

The people have their say

While there were hundreds of people who would have liked to say a few words to the full Council at the meeting at Forster, February 6, seven people spoke passionately about their opposition to the Master's (Biripi Way) Project.

Below are some extracts, Paul Van Drunen and former Gloucester Mayor, John Rosenbaum, also spoke, as did Mike Deignan (see his report on page one.)

They were allowed three minutes. To the second.

Christine Stanton from Tinonee addresses the crowd before the council meeting

Andrew Keir -

"Council has "had the chance" a thousand times over to include the community but the community can't see anything other than a clear and deliberate lack of will in doing so.

How can we understand things like a nebulous "cultural transformation" saving of $76.2 million without dialogue? You know, our community includes people who have held executive positions in both the public and private sectors. People who have experienced corporate or government mergers. People who have discovered from experience that a distributed workforce and a teams-based approach is a viable solution to creating harmony in a blended organisation. Rivalries will inevitably exist when mergers happen but herding the workforce into the same cage can easily result in the office culture equivalent of close quarters hand-to-hand combat. For every consultant who says this will save money you'll find another who will say it won't. This is not a trivial project. This is tens of millions of dollars of public money and projects of this scale deserve a mandate, not a bulldozer.

And it's not just the money. This project has the potential to fundamentally change the way in which Council integrates with the community and is not something that can be easily undone if it doesn't quite work out. There's no going back.

We have reached a tipping point.

Councillors can either choose to start taking the community with them or choose to continue driving the wedge between Council and the community even deeper … until the weight of public opinion topples the tree."

Andrew Keir was the Network Administrator for MidCoast Water. He is now retired.

Alan Tickle -

"There is a juggling act for Council to meet the expectations of vibrancy and community wellbeing but by and large as clearly stated in the Community Plan which forms the basis for strategic planning, the community priority is roads and bridges.

With that in mind, I have concerns on the impact of the Biripi Way proposal on future borrowing capacity and whether the forecast capital works for not one year but going out to 10 years has been factored into the decision on Biripi Way proposal.

The projections on debt servicing ratio have been based on the lowest interest rates in living memory.

One only has to look at Item 8 in the Council agenda where two maturing loans for the water division have come off over 8% interest rates to be re-written at 5 year fixed at 3.22%pa

Can Councillors tell me what the interest rates will be in 5 years time and what the impact interest rate shifts will have on this 16 million loan and debt servicing ratio?

I might add that the former board of Mid Coast Water would be shuddering at the thought of 2million being pulled from reserves for this project that was earmarked for debt reduction as loans matured."

Mr Tickle was first elected to Greater Taree City Council in 2004 and served until the amalgamation was announced. He was also Deputy Mayor at that time, & Deputy Chair Mid Coast Water. He served on Financial Committee for both entities and Internal Audit for Mid Coast Water. He spoke on behalf of the Halliday's Point Progress Association.

Christine Stanton -

"Councillor Pontin's motion moves that "*all subjective savings associated with staff culture change be excluded from any cost benefit analysis."* It should not have been included in the first place since culture change comes from leadership. You cannot believe that moving everyone under one roof is going to effect culture change unless you change the leadership. It's likely to make things worse, when people do not want to leave the environment in which they work now.

Please consider this; when the $76 million is removed from the savings, the total savings for consolidation would come to $26 million. When that $26m is compared to the campus model savings of $15m, you have a difference of $11m (the savings figures are in the Savills report). Why is it worth spending upwards of $36 million in order to save $11 million over 20 years? It just doesn't make sense."

Katrina Pearson

"Why did Councils Engagement process with the community go so terribly wrong?

The Flyer/Survey was treated as Junk! This was the first Community Consultation and Engagement put by Council on this issue. The 'survey' was blatantly biased, the scope of the questions was too narrow and did not address the burning questions the community wanted to have their say on.

The flyer/survey was poorly designed and distributed – if at all received.

It was late being distributed preventing Q&A session dates/locations included in the Flyer to be advised in a timely manner.

This flyer survey cost the community $21,000.

51,200 hard copy flyers were not received by the community. A Facebook question was put to the community by Council asking to comment and your location if you did not receive the flyer. Within 48 hours of the post the responses of NOT RECEIVED from all areas of the MidCoast Council community area reached 493.

Only 110 hard copy flyer/surveys were received by Council and the overwhelming majority were opposed.

Only 224 on-line surveys were received by Council and the overwhelming majority were opposed.

30 written submissions were received by Council and the overwhelming majority were opposed.

The poor community turn-out to the Q&A sessions is a direct result of the failed delivery process. Those who did get to the Q&A sessions the overwhelming majority were opposed.

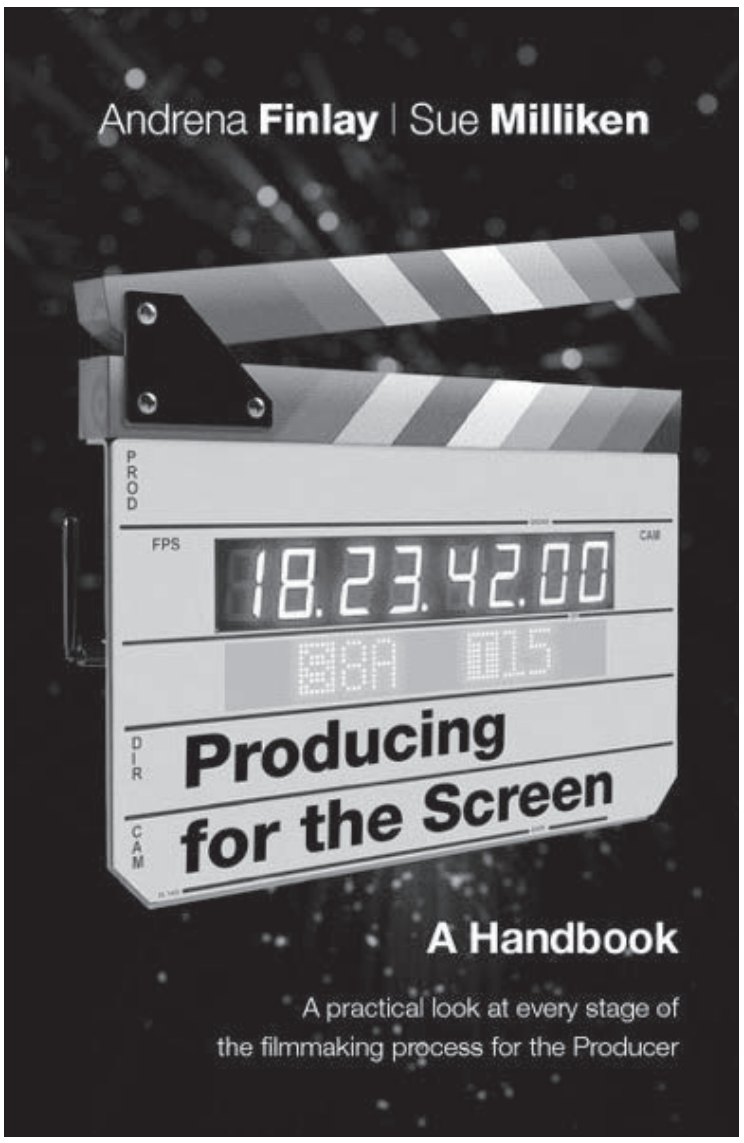
MidCoast Council has access to our entire community data base for Rates Notices and email addresses. It was a serious failure by Council not to utilise this data base to personally distribute a community worthy survey, sent with the last Rates Notice on 19 Oct. 2018. MidCoast Council avoided a genuine unbiased, transparent, accurate information flyer and survey opportunity by not asking their community the question most wanted addressed. This question is **"Do you support the purchase of the Masters building and the development fit-out of a Centralised Administration office for 350 staff?"**

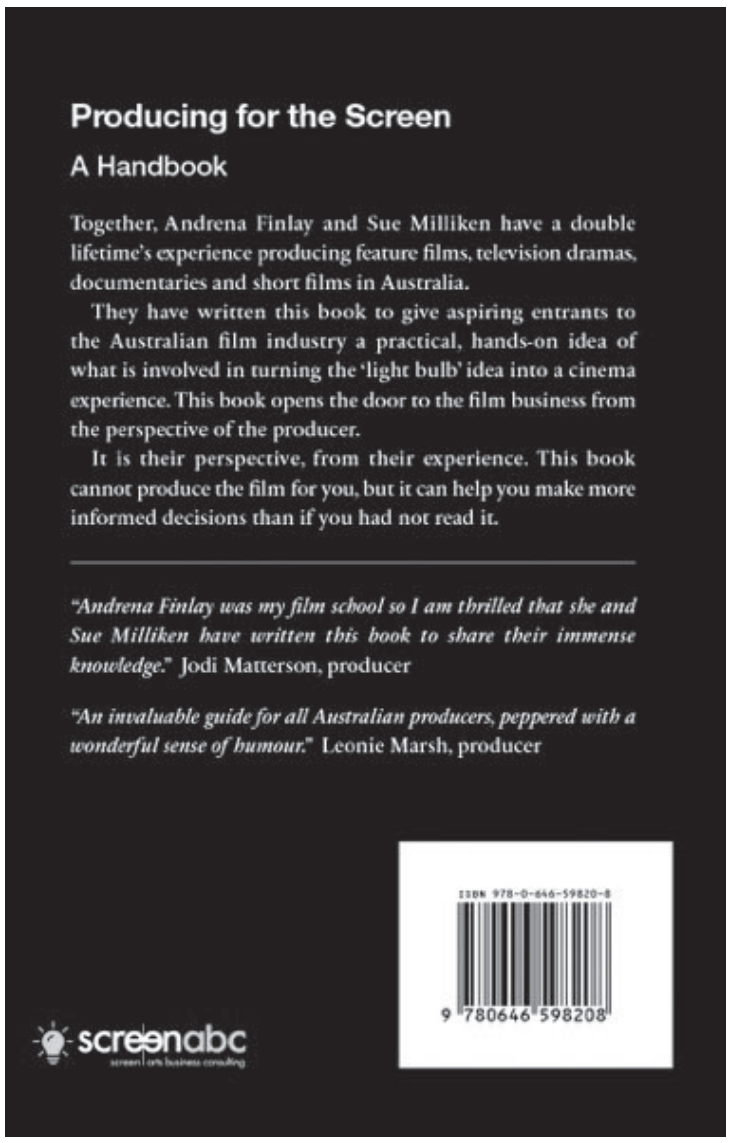
The question now posed is, what will Council do with the reported outcomes from their failed community consultation and engagement? Will Council act on the feedback or yet again completely ignore your community?"

Katrina Pearson is the organiser of the NO Move to MASTERS.

PRODUCING FOR THE SCREEN – A HANDBOOK

by ANDRENA FINLAY and SUE MILLIKEN





What does a producer do? The short answer is, without a producer there is no film.

Two of Australia's most experienced producers, ANDRENA FINLAY and SUE MILLIKEN, have collaborated on a handbook about producing for the screen, encompassing all the stages of feature film production: from the initial idea, development and financing to production, distribution, marketing and launch. Finlay and Milliken between them have produced over 30 feature films, television dramas and documentaries, are winners of numerous prestigious awards, and have had films in official selection in most of the world's major festivals.

Designed for the emerging screen practitioner, it draws on their extensive career knowledge and experience to demystify and illuminate the often complex processes of producing, with a practical look at every stage of filmmaking, as follows:

* **Introduction**, including outline of all producing roles.
* **Development** – discovering the idea, writing the screenplay, evolving the project.
* **Financing and Distribution** – distributors and sales agents, financing and recoupment, the contractual labyrinth, and completion guarantee.
* **Production** – pre-production, production, post-production and delivery.
* **Marketing** - including online marketing and social media, film festivals, premieres.

The 232-page handbook is available now in paperback and on 11th February as an e-book.

Available to order from www.screenabc.com, Amazon and iTunes.

Book prices: paperback - $34.99 (plus postage); e-book - $19.99

THE ENERGY CONUNDRUM

CHARLES POPE

One of the great pieces of legislation that has evaded policy makers is the need to produce energy at minimum cost, maximum reliability, and minimum carbon emissions. Renewables (mainly solar and wind) with battery backup are touted as the next big thing. Currently renewables and hydro deliver around 8% of our energy. There may be some upside in hydro but the possibilities are limited in a flat, hot, dry landscape. So that means to be totally dependent on renewables we have to increase our renewables to twelve times our current capacity.

But wait – there's more. Renewables are highly dependent on the weather. The solar panels on my roof at home have produced 7.8 Megawatts over the last 334 days at an average of 23 kw-hour per day. The daily production varies from 3 kw hours in June to 46.5 kw-hours in December. Imagine an entire electricity system operating with this variability. Would we build for the worst-case scenario or hope for the best?

Batteries! I hear you cry. South Australia now has a battery storage capacity of 129 MW-hour. The Tomago smelter near Newcastle requires 900 MW to operate 7 days a week, 14 hours a day. The battery capacity in South Australia would have the capacity to run the Tomago Smelter for 8.6 minutes so that gives some idea of the sort of battery capacity we would need to guarantee supply for NSW power requirements. Batteries also absorb enormous amounts of rare and precious rare metals.

Furthermore, operation of a national grid requires reliable inputs from multiple sources and to date the only such sources of energy have been fossil fuels (coal and gas) that are major pollutants including carbon dioxide, which is blamed for our climate change dilemma. The present energy mix will not provide reliable supply without fossil fuels.

The answer to the carbon dioxide problem is nuclear power that releases nothing but water to the environment. There are 450 nuclear generators in the world across 27 countries providing reliable 24/7 electricity. French electricity is 75% nuclear. Nuclear provides 12% of all electricity generated world-wide power. It is also extremely safe. More people died installing pink batts in Australia that have died or will die from nuclear causes at Fukushima. People seem to forget that the Fukushima reactors survived an earthquake ten times its design load and the tsunami killed 16,000, quite unrelated to any nuclear cause.

Nobody would deny the tragedy and criminal negligence of the Chernobyl disaster but apart from the courageous firefighters there were no fatalities and apart from mostly treatable thyroid cancers due to Iodine 131 to children in the immediate vicinity there has been no measurable increase in cancer rates across Europe as a result.

Australia has around a third of the world's uranium and also has the ideal conditions for establishing a sophisticated nuclear waste management industry – stable geology, remote areas for storage and (for the time being) a stable political system.

This issue needs a sensible public debate. I'm not necessarily pro nuclear, but I am pro arithmetic. Let's stop shouting and start talking.

Bob's coming for a cuppa, and you're invited!

In April The Bob Brown Foundation is leading a convoy to drive from Hobart to the Galilee Basin, west of Mackay, in a showdown to stop the Adani mine.

And he hopes concerned Aussies will drive with him.

There will be rallies and public meetings along the way in solidarity with the traditional owners who oppose the mine.

It's a showdown to send a message to the politicians that most Australians care deeply about the future of our planet, our environment, especially the Great Barrier Reef, and do not want the colossal Carmichael coalmine in central Queensland.

Bob reminds us that in his lifetime our planet has already warmed by one degree, and he points out that a further six or seven degrees of warming will end all life on Earth.

Dubious Project

Every thinking person knows the whole Adani mine, owned by dubious Indian businessman, Gautam Adani (check *his* track record!) has had a dodgy and murky birth and struggles to survive. And despite it spewing pollutants and poisoning the land and sea, it is its thirst that concerns us most. More than the indecent money thrown at it, government approvals, and ignoring their bogus claims that their filthy mine will save endangered species (like the black-throated finch), it's allowing them unlimited access to *our* water that is the final straw. Let's not even mention the disaster of the Murray-Darling River Basin as an example.

Yet our politicians wave lumps of coal in parliament extolling its virtues, approve gas fracking (Have you seen an aerial of outback Australia lately? It's pin-cushioned with wells.) And now we have proposals of risky deep sea oil drilling in sensitive and pristine seas like the Great Australian Bight.

Too Late?

What are we thinking! What are we allowing to be done in our name? What are our grandchildren going to inherit . . . it hardly bears thinking about. We can turn away from the tragic scenes of bushfires, floods, drought, dead dying animals. But when we are sick, when we can't breathe properly, when we have no clean water to drink, when everything around us looks devastation from a Mad Max movie. . . it will be too late to say, "we should have done something . . ."

Do it now.

Let's tell Bob we're with him, in spirit and action if not behind the wheel. Bob Brown proved people action can save the mighty magnificent Franklin River.

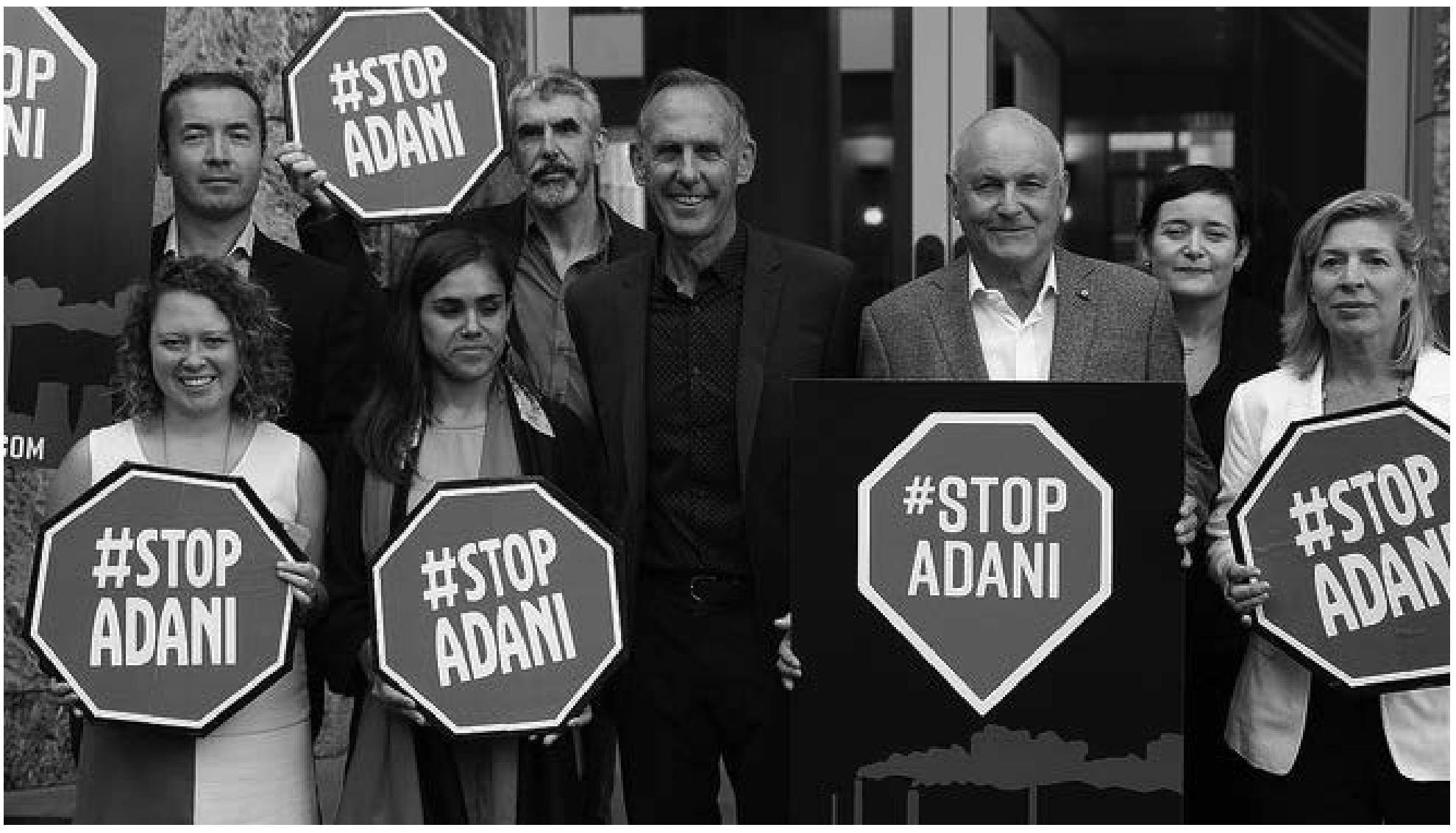
Demand action from our politicians for us and our world, not for corporate pockets and mates. There's not a lot of inspiring choice, but the men and women who are prepared to be brave, will have our support. In the meantime, it's knowing what's going on, speaking up, and fighting if we have to do so. Look at little Gloucester.

It starts in our neighbourhood, with our Councils, our local businesses and leaders, with our media.

Tell 'em we're watching. And holding them to account in thought, word and deed!

If you want to join Bob's "Stop Adani Convoy" see the schedule. Do share with friends across our country.

DM



Stop Adani Car Convoy Itinerary – *Subject to change*

1. **Wednesday 17th April 2019 – Hobart -Devonport-Melbourne (overnight)**

Public Event: Parliament Lawns / event

Departure Point: TBC

2. **Thursday 18th April 2019 – Melbourne event – to Albury**

Public Event and Departure Point held together: venue TBC

3. **Friday 19th April 2019 (Good Friday) – Albury - Sydney**

Public Event: N/A

Departure Point: TBC

4. **Saturday 20th April 2019 – Sydney Event, head from Sydney - Coffs harbour**

Public Event and Departure Point held together: venue TBC

5. **Sunday 21st April 2019 (Easter Sunday) – Coffs harbour – Mullumbimby**

Public Event: N/A

Departure Point: Coffs Harbour showground

6. **Monday 22nd April 2019 (Easter Monday) – Mullumbimby to Brisbane**

Public Event: Mullumbimby showgrounds event (~2PM)

7. **Tuesday 23rd April 2019 – Brisbane**

Public Event: Emma Miller Place – Adani HQ Rally

Wednesday 24th April 2019 – Friday 26th April

Reef - Link Travel Independently

Brisbane – Airlie Beach

Suggested route:

8. **Wednesday 24th April 2019 Brisbane – Hervey Bay**

Public Event: N/A

Departure Point: TBC

9. **Thursday 25th April 2019 – (Anzac Day) Hervey Bay – Yeppoon**

Public Event: N/A

Departure point: N/A

10. **Friday 26th April 2019 Yeppoon – Airlie Beach**

Public Event: N/A

Departure point: N/A

11. **Saturday 27th April 2019 – Airlie Beach Reef Day event and/or camp Nudja**

12. **Sunday 28th April 2019 – Airlie Beach to Galilee Basin**

Departure point: Proserpine showground

13. **Monday 29th April 2019 – Event: Galilee Basin (tbc)**

Twin Hills – Canberra Rally

14. **Tuesday 30th April 2019 – Galilee Basin – Yeppoon or Rockhampton**

Departure Point: Galilee Basin (tbc)

15. **Wednesday 1st May 2019 – Rockhampton – Toowoomba**

16. **Thursday 2nd May 2019 – Toowoomba – Armidale**

17. **Friday 3rd May 2019 – Armidale – Orange**

18. **Saturday 4th May 2019 – Orange – Canberra**

19. **Sunday 5th May 2019 – Canberra event HUGE rally**

20. **Sunday 6th May 2019 – Canberra – Hobart**

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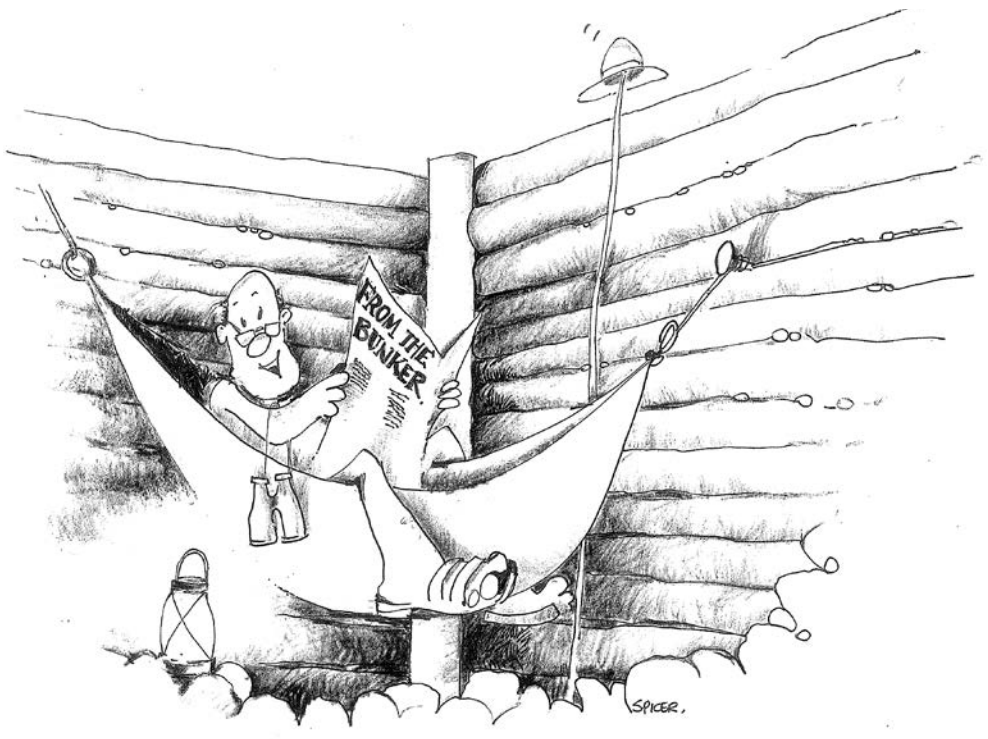
From the bunker

Sparkles cracks a very bad pun



(So far: Not-so-secret agent 001 has breached the defences of Pearly Gates Dormitory Retreat only to find a host of evil geriatric forces ranged against him. He pleads with his Chief …)

I tell you, Chief, Pearly Gates is a powder keg sitting in a bushfire. When it blows there will be a lot of noses out of joint. High-up noses, you can quote me on that.

Remember, you sent me into this geriatric hellhole to finger the dissidents. It was your call, Chief. I recall your parting words, "It is a far, far better thing that you are a better man than me, Gunga Din." Inspirational! I don't know where you get it from, Chief'.

Those words lifted my spirit, strengthened my steely resolve to go above and beyond the call, as it were. "It is the best of times, it is the worst of times," I clichęd to myself. It didn't make a great deal of sense but certainly sounded good. So good, that I repeated it when I was being introduced to the assembled Pearlies.

"It is the best of times, it is the worst of times," I said.

"Wanker," an ancient woman with washed-out red hair cried savagely. When I started to say "It is the season of folly …" she tumbled out of her wheel chair and whacked me on the scone with her walking stick. It's made of iron bark and is knobbly like a shillelagh. It's been all downhill from there.

They patched up my head wound in the little hospice within the home and advised me not to go anywhere near the former red head.

"Old Lily's dynamite with that walking stick," the head nurse chuckled. When I suggested she should be locked away, the nurse

got a bit huffy. "We'd be out of work, out on the streets without Lily," she said. "Without her, there'd hardly be anything for us to do."

I was about to let the conversation slide, but the nurse grabbed me by the throat and said, "Listen, mate, you just listen to what you're told. We don't want trouble-makers here in Pearly Gates."

Trouble-makers! The place is full of them. The old folk are divided into five Houses, just like at school. Tony Abbott's House of Horrors, the Julia Gilliard Eggbeaters, Malcolm Turncoat's Double Dealers, Kevin 07's Cry-Babies and the ScoMo Dunnos. They hate each other with a vengeance, just like on the outside, in suburbia

The Eggbeaters are all women except for one bloke dressed in drag. He's 84, wears a different sequin dress every day – they call him Sparkles – and is a former wharfie.

The hoods from the House of Horrors hate the Eggbeaters, and they particularly despise Sparkles. Five of these latter-day bovver boy Blackshirts waylaid him in the bathroom recently. Sparkles just laughed in their faces and told them, "Line up, lads, and I'll deal with you in sequins." They love a bad pun, the Eggbeaters.

The HH hoods have an image issue. It's freezing cold here in Pearly Gates; wearing shorts isn't an option. All their long pyjama pants come from different Vinnies outlets; they don't match up. What a dilemma for these hardy warriors. Like all fascists, they love a uniform. They've solved the problem by allowing each trooper to wear his individual longies but they all have Tony Abbott budgie smugglers pulled over the top of them, all with Tony's death-skull grin pictured on their backsides. An intimidating sight, I can tell you – a couple of dozen Tony Abbotts grinning you down as they march in lockstep backwards towards you. They can't goosestep going in reverse but make up for it with some impressive precision drill work with their walking sticks.

There's talk of a hunger strike next Tuesday. Are you listening, Chief, I need your attention? They have a hunger strike that day, I'm out of here; I don't care what my secret agent contract says. Tuesday's the only day of the week they have edible food here. Pavlova! Yummy!

Turncoat's Double Dealers are behind the putsch, so it's impossible to tell whether they're fair dinkum strikers or if it's a blind for some other sneaky manoeuvre.

To clarify their position, Kevin's Cry-Babies have issued a statement, reading: "By way of detailed programmatic specificity we have an inherent distaste for grandiose rhetorical actions which don't have any substantive dimension and in regard to possible strike action we believe our community would be going a bridge too far by not going far enough."

When I asked their leader, a goofy old dame named Kevin 09, whether they were striking or not, she plucked a nob of wax from her ear and chewed on it a while, swallowed and caught her breath again. She said: "There's nothing like having a little bit of somebody else in you." I don't know, Chief, I don't know, your guess is as good as mine.

I'm keeping my official report brief, Chief, for obvious reasons. If I have to do a runner, the less I've said on the record, the better my chances of getting away

REPORT # 002 FROM AGENT 001/ STRIKE IN BUNKER 001

Sirs, I have to report that Bunker 001, known as the Pearly Gates Dormitory Retreat, is in turmoil, on the brink of anarchy. Ancient militants from the Tony Abbott clique have been out on manoeuvres in wheel chairs and metal walking frames, conducting complicated drills with their walking sticks. They insist on using military jargon ("Able-Baker-Charlie to base, Able-Baker-Charlie to Base, Come in Base") when they are talking with you face to face and it makes no bloody sense at all. A group of younger pensioners has banded together, touting themselves as the ScoMo's Dunnos. and has hit management with a list of demands. They're all Baby Boomers who, as we know, have been a pain in the you-know-what since birth. Of more immediate concern – Malcolm Turncoat's Double Dealers, have gone underground. No, I don't mean into their graves; they're not talking, to anyone, when normally they'd talk underwater with a mouth full of marbles. Urgent request: 001 seeks immediate compassionate leave.

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Continued from page 1

Community – a force to be reckoned with!

haviour - no interruptions or noise from the gallery would be tolerated.

Councillors sat with their backs to us, facing the row of judgemental looking directors and advisors (to the Mayor) and the General Manager who all faced us.

I have yet to hear a syllable drop from the mouth of the GM anywhere. (Though I missed his remarks when he opened an exhibition at Manning Regional Art Gallery where he allegedly commented it was a new experience for him, being in an art gallery. If this is the case, would you tell the world you've never been in an art gallery??)

But here, true to form he said not one word the entire time. Above his head was a huge power point screen for councillors to read out paperwork or illustrate a point.

Mike Deignan, who was one of half a dozen members of the public who were granted permission to address the council, was however, refused permission to show his one page slide of his figures for the financial breakdown of the true cost of Masters for all present to see. Mike mentioned this refusal in a preface to his remarks. (*Mutterings of disapproval at the refusal from the gallery.)*

The public speakers were given three minutes to speak with a one minute warning – a shout from the Mayor. And if they went over by a second, more shouts from the Mayor. Most were given permission to continue for a further two minutes after a councillor raised a motion and was seconded. (*As each speaker finished, there were cheers, claps and foot stamps from the gallery.*) See extracts from their addresses on p12.)

At the commencement of the "great debate"

Cr Bell suggested that Council move into *'Committee of the whole'* a more simple, less regulated meeting process where councillors can openly discuss, work and build on, the various notices of motion, to agree on additions to the substantive motion regarding the letter from the Office of Local Government. Cr Pontin did not reveal her intent to move the motion that ultimately got up without amendment. To the supporters of Epov's motion, and some of the public across council procedures, it seemed that allegedly Pontin's final motion was pre-planned and allegedly known about by a certain group who knew they had the numbers.

Finally Peter Epov rose to move that his motion that an independent and transparent review of the entire project and not just the Cost Benefit Analysis with the additional requirement to "Consider other applications for the Masters' Warehouse. . . And that the 'source data' in the Cost Benefit Analysis has also been independently verified."

(*Cheers from the gallery. Stern threats to throw us out from the Mayor.*)

And so, for several painful hours we sat in shock and anger as the councillors "debated" Epov's motion. Apparently it all ended up as six pages of minutes, which is unprecedented in terms of length of debate on a matter.

Cr. Smith (Gloucester) spoke first . . . once she'd found her papers, shuffled to the right one, turned on her microphone, cleared her throat and appeared to wish she was anywhere else. (*The gallery was not impressed. Mutterings.)*

The next few hours were excruiating. Not because I and many others were standing, exchanging rolled eyes and raised eyebrows while others muttered "BS"…etc) But as, the, shall we say, "discussion", rolled on, it appeared several councillors had mysteriously come to the exact same position to achieve their desired result.

At one point Councillor McWilliams jumped to her feet and raised her voice at Cr. Roberts. (*Applause for Cr McWilliams, boos for Cr Roberts from the gallery.)*

Cr. Len Roberts practically brought the house down, as he rambled arrogantly, illogically and aggressively in righteous tones. *(Boos and laughter at his far fetched and scrambled reasoning from the gallery*), but the Mayor threatened the gallery with expulsion and gave Roberts permission to continue his ramble -about something that was said in the Newcastle Herald among other illogical points.

The Mayor's attempts to restore order consisted of him shouting and threatening and finally yelling at us to remember that he has "cicadas in his head" so can't hear properly.

Cr Pontin seemed rehearsed and ready, as she moved her motion which doesn't identify who, or how the Cost Benefit Analysis review will be allocated. Which means there is the same problem with this as with the previous reports as the foxes are still in charge of the chook house and the next set of consultants appointed, and terms of reference and brief will be determined by the same council staff. So likely they'll come up with the same result if a transparent CBA doesn't review and audit the base information.

It was a readymade compromise that possibly sounded good, but which the public gallery woke up to immediately.

Cr Epov, who had remained calm, spoke one more time, appealing to reason and sense. Of course Roberts wasn't having *that,* and moved we accept Pontin's motion.

Epov's motion was voted down 7 to 4. The Pontin/Roberts collective won the day. Dr Keegan appeared to have been fence sitting, but then voted with Epov, but the question is, which councillors allegedly knew that Pontin's motion had the numbers?

The fear is that this new Cost Benefit Analysis review they've adopted will simply be a re-hash of existing deficient figures overseen by Council. Which the gallery immediately recognised as a ploy to fudge the numbers. (Angry mutterings from the gallery grew to outrage as the implication became clear. Another lecture from a near hysterical Mayor. Inscrutable expressions from the GM and his table.)

I was moving out of the room as our beloved Mayor let fly with a comment from nowhere along the lines that the Labor Party were a Socialist Government!

As uproar exploded, the Mayor denied he'd said it looking for reinforcement from the GM who meekly whispered…… "You did." But then, for once quick thinking on his feet, the Mayor spluttered a clarification that what he'd *actually* meant was, that Labor cares for the community.

Epov, Bell and McWilliams fought valiantly to try to bring some sensible reasoning with three other motions, but they were all rejected on the same vote on a vote of 7 to 4.

Epov and Bell also presented eight "Questions on Notice" which had to be answered by the General Manager at the Meeting. The General Manager failed to fully answer many of the questions.

Two particular stand outs were:

Why didn't Council conduct a community consultation immediately after the acquisition of the Masters Warehouse as was promised at the time? And,

What compensation will be paid to the 70 plus admin workers who may have to commute to Taree and back from their homes from around the Forster / Tuncurry area each day?

A bystander commented perhaps the finance department needs some out of school math calculation tutoring in order to give the community correct figures.

A nicely spoken woman next to me, shook her head. "I had no idea. I have never been to a council meeting in my life. If this is what goes on, it's worse than even I thought."

"Phil" later ruminated, "that the event was as provoking as it was despairing. I think there's rat lines between some incumbents and former operatives. They should give an Oscar to the fake outrage of a petulant narcissist. I feel the only independent authority capable of examining it all holistically is the Independent Commission Against Corruption."

People at the back who had spilled into the lobby were asking for clarification as the PA system was almost useless.

'That's alright you can hear it all tonight at 9pm" the lady from 2Bob Radio assured us. (The community radio station has broadcast council meetings for years. However, as it turned out, the GM refused to give her the tape and it was not returned until the following week. I couldn't bear to listen to it all again so I can't be sure if it was edited. I'm told apparently not.)

While proceedings hadn't quite wrapped up, there was now passionate networking like mass speed dating among the collective community members, most who'd never met before, as they exchanged details to keep in touch, share information and ideas to fight Council.

It could be a force to be reckoned with!

What this entire fiasco seems to be boiling down to is that there are a few, (and only a few) fat cat Council executives who want to centralise the operations in Taree, so that they don't have to travel between offices, nor upskill themselves to work in a different way. Or are they afraid of using video conferencing where all their actions, decisions (and vulnerabilities) may be recorded and they may be held accountable?

DM

(*This is not a blow by blow coverage of every precise detail and events of a long afternoon as space does not permit. But you get the gist.)*

Where the heart is – life

McCorriston's farm at Upper Myall

Siobhan and her husband live on a 37 acre property at Possum Brush, and her parents have lived on 225 acres at Upper Myall for almost 40 years. Her parents, Sam and Ingrid McCorriston would like to retire on the land they love after farming it for more than 40 years, by sub-dividing off a five acre lot to retire on for the rest of their days, to age gracefully on the land that is their home. A place that they can bring their children and grandchildren to enjoy with them in their future years and beyond. Also the economics of farming has not allowed them to accumulate a superannuation fund and as a result their superannuation is tied up in their farm.

Passing the Buck

In March 2017 they wrote to Member Stephen Bromhead for assistance in applying to MidCoast Council to carve out a five acre lot from their property as currently their only option is divide it all into 100 acre lots.

Mr Bromhead replied two days later via email in a five sentence note thanking them for their correspondence. ***(line one.)***

(The next two lines are) "I can appreciate your concerns and accordingly have referred the matter to the interim General Manager of MidCoast Council, the issues you have raised. Please be aware that a formal response can take 8-10 weeks".

(He should rubber stamp this last two sentence as he uses it all the time.)

"Thank you for taking the time to bring this to my attention. As you know I enjoy having the benefits of your views, and always work as your representative in Parliament. I believe that the best way to represent the views of local people is to listen hard, act responsibly."

(There was no follow up from the interim GM).

The MidCoast Council is currently reviewing land use, conservation and development, which includes a new Local Environment Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP). "Our last one was 2010 so this will impact future subdivisions in our area for many years to come. However many, many people we've spoken to about it are completely oblivious to this process taking place.'

No Council Consultation

It seems Council strikes again with a poor record in informing and consulting with the community.

Their version of community consultation started in June 2018 til October 2018. It was promoted online as a Rural Strategy and probably won't be reviewed again for many years. These important documents that Council are currently reviewing probably will impact future subdivisions for many years to come. They cover subdivisions, agricultural tourism, marine activities, areas being set aside as reserves. But

on the land

Siobhan and her parents found that very few people on the land knew about this process taking place.

It's All Online

'There was an online Council survey for a short time, which was extended for a few weeks as obviously they had few responses as it was not promoted in places a rural community visits on a regular basis; like the community noticeboards and produce store counters and vendors. We never received a flyer with our rate notices. I emailed Council to ask how the next phase will inform people and was told go to the website and click a box. If you didn't you weren't on their list for information. What if you don't use the internet! They said look in the local paper, but "The Extra" doesn't go to rural areas! By using the community notice boards or local produce stores, our rural community members would see it, have a chat have a chat,' said Siobhan.

They are asking the LEP strategists to fully consider the needs and opinions of ratepayers who are in the same position that they are in. And also that rural community members be better informed by Council using communication modes outside the internet.

They wanted to make sure their voices were heard for the next round, so Siobhan tracked down the Planning Senior Strategic Officer at MCC, Alexandra Macvean, and sent her an email about the "Rural Strategy" outlining why they felt their property should be considered for rezoning from RU1 Primary Production to smaller five acre lots. So far she has not received a response.

Impersonal Response

This year she re-contacted Ms Macvean via the council website and received a mass online response saying-

'. . . . 2018 was a productive year for Council staff working on the MidCoast Rural Strategy, ***(Productive? Ed.)*** and invite you to look through the Rural Issue Summary Papers that were presented to Council in November 2018.' ***(Why don't they go out and see people and talk face to face?Ed)***

Siobhan and her parents are concerned that the Council's previous Rural Strategy states –

"some existing villages and rural living areas should not be in a rural/agricultural zone", and adds that "the draft Rural Strategy will not recommend any new rural living areas or urban release areas."

And continues, "In 2019 Council will be inviting everyone ***(How? Ed)*** from across the Mid-Coast region to workshop rural issues and how they will influence preparation of the Rural Strategy and future land use planning."

Who Knows About This?

These two families are not alone in feeling cut off from any consultation process. "There was a meeting in big places like Teagardens but we are talking about an older demographic on the land, whose voices aren't being heard," says Siobhan.

The Future

"We've seen people move into the area from the Central Coast, taken up lots and cleaned them up and they look magnificent. Those small blocks were available to people wanting to come out of the city to plant a nice garden, have a horse, a couple of goats and chickens, have their kids and grandkids come to stay, I think that kind of lifestyle really improves the area,' said Siobhan. 'We're not thinking of splitting up farms that are viable with acreage above 50 acres. Certainly not land that is fertile and can be used for a business to contribute to the community, but the properties that are too small for a viable business, or those with poor quality soil. We live in such a pretty area with short travel distances to Nabiac, Taree, Tuncurry and Forster and quick access to the Pacific Highway." She adds, "As the Manning Valley attracts new residents relocating to take advantage of our fantastic environment and lifestyle, rezoning Tritton Road would provide spacious lots greater than 2 ha with a lovely rural outlook for those seeking a "tree change.'"

(And certainly better than another crammed MHE or "lifestyle" development!" ed.)

Adds Siobhan's gentle father, Sam McCorriston, 'But at the end of the day, you want to spend those twilight years in the place you've nurtured and loved along with your family all your married life.'

DM

SKILL IS THE REAL DEAL

When it comes to fishing, I am a dinosaur. I haven't changed my methods since I caught my first fish in the Tweed River many moons ago. Bait on hook, toss out and hang on. I reckon, if it works keep doing it. Well things have changed. In recent years the fishing game has gone through a revolution, particularly with the introduction of "plastics".

Kurri champion,young Lucas Towley with a cracker 67cm Fingal snapper caught on a plastic

You may recall some time back when the Americans sent us "Mr Twister", the forerunner to the modern plastic. A weird rubber lure resembling a jelly snake. Most, including myself, passed this off as just another American trick. How wrong we were.

For the uninitiated, a plastic is basically a wriggly, wobbly substance resembling a bait fish, prawn or worm. It might be obvious to us, but fish are convinced that the plastic is the real deal and attack with great intent. Just about every fish is interested in this strange intruder that continually teases their curiosity. Snapper, flathead, bream and mulloway are all keen to feast on this strange object.

One old rule still applies and that is – you will not catch a fish where they aren't. So, finding where fish are, remains the real skill in fishing.

And that's another story, for another day. Tight lines!

Fishing writer, author and radio presenter John "Stinker" Clarke can be heard weekly, throughout NSW, on popular ABC Regional Radio fishing program "The Big Fish". Check him out on www.stinker.com.au or send an email to editor@manningcommunitynews.com with your information and questions.

REAL KULTCHA

Welcome to the Australian sporting world's equivalent of The Bermuda Triangle because nothing of any consequence happens now and anything that does is sucked into a vortex and disappears.

The cricket season is over and at best, I'd suggest Australia's report card would see us with a "C-" (I seem to recall we were beaten by South Africa and India but managed to beat Sri Lanka) but more likely it'll show us with a "D" (I need say no more than Smith/Warner to explain that) and there are many who'd suggest that rating is high! To quote Bett Britain (in a speech she made in late 1992 after one of her castles was fire damaged and several of her kids had marital problems) this cricket season could well be described as an annus horribilis and more could follow if CA reinstates the recalcitrant pair as if all is forgiven. It isn't and won't be for a while! And the football season hasn't started yet so we're adrift in a sea of boredom: we have a large screen TV, many cartons of beer, a comfortable chair and possession of the remote but there's stuff all to watch!!!!

Oh no! Yes, MP, there is lots of soccer to watch! Mate, we had this little chat earlier and while I've acknowledged the right of that game to exist and be played in this region I must "recapitulate back to what I said earlier" (to quote my hero, "The Moose") it's just not my bag. I should also mention the 2019 AFL Women's competition has just begun and not only am I'm amazed their season is so short but the ladies seem to be happy with that. I'm not, I think they should be playing the same number of games as the men in a full season but (if I were a cynic) I'd suggest the AFL is probably scared they'd drawn spectators from the men's comp. If pushed, I'd have to say I think it's just a matter of time before the Women's AFL competition expands and begins to present a real alternative to the established comp.

Golf of course, is also being played intimately at the moment and the format of the recent Victorian Open was of interest. Both gender Opens were played together on two adjacent courses at 13th Beach on the Bellarine Peninsula. I could tell you where that is but then I'd be contributing to your couch potato status and I know you'll remember it longer if you go look it up, so off you hop. Know where it is now? 'story. The two competitions were integrated and by that I mean, each group of 3 or 4 men were followed by a similar group of ladies for the first two days when the field was cut by about a half and this is the normal procedure in golf tournaments. The third day's play was confined to just one course but with the male/female groups still happening with another cut in numbers taking place at the end of the day's play. The final day's play then saw the best male and female players continuing the alternate groupings to the last putt where the prize money was the same for both the male and female winners! It was an interesting format that we might see some more of down the track.

The big sporting news (for me) for the month however, was Super Bowl 53 – or "LIII" as the Americans like to portray it. I knew the result early as it was in every news bulletin and also in one of those strips that creep across the bottom of our TV screens now a days. Anyway, I've managed to flick through my recording and will do so again shortly at a slightly slower pace, so I can appreciate the game better. It wasn't the blow out many of the pundits had predicted and as the roof on the Mercedes Benz Stadium in Atlanta was closed, the weather wasn't a factor. Here in Oz a wet field for a football match is bad luck but in the US recently, ice and snow have been the norm in many regions and mounds of snow could be seen beside several fields during the playoffs where it had just been graded off to allow the games to be played. Tom Brady (the Patriots quarterback) is 41 years old and in a sport where 35 is thought to be almost ancient, Tom is seen as a marvel and when he muses he'd still like to be playing at 45, folk are listening. He has played in 9 Super Bowls and won 6 of them! It's a fair bet the Americans have never heard of our Heather McKay and her run of squash wins but can you think of any other sportsperson who has had a run similar to Tom's.

Was quite surprised recently as I flicked idly through the sports section of my Sunday paper, to be confronted with a two-page spread on the 2019 Rugby season. Despite the thrashing the sport took (alright, alright, that's a bit harsh – I'll start again.) Despite the thrashing The Wallabies took during their recent tour, it appears they intend to go ahead and play the sport again this year! You gotta admire their puck. That said, you've also gotta question their sanity, but to each his own!

Talk at you later,

The Hillside Critic

THE LAKE STREET GALLERY HAS BEEN REVITALISED!

Come and see how local artists have created a contemporary backdrop for the upcoming Great Lakes 37th Annual Open Art Exhibition.

Browse the varied artworks, from oils to watercolours, miniatures to massive art pieces.

Learn about the various classes, workshops and resources available.

Join the Society and enjoy the benefits. Discover your hidden creativity, exhibit your work or just have fun socialising!

Enquire about our upcoming project, *Tell Me A Story*, a writing and illustration competition for young creatives.

The exhibition is open every day from 13 to 28 April from 10am to 4pm at 34 Lake St, Forster.

So What Is Manning Hospital REALLY going to get?

Promises of buckets of money are being thrown around the electorate…must be an election coming on.

Labor, with local medico Dr David Keegan as candidate, are promising $140 million dollar commitment for Manning Hospital announcing that it will match the Nationals health commitments increasing investment from $60 million to $100 million matching the current commitment of $140 million from the Nationals with $20 milion being spent to build the car park already, and the next $20 million due to be delivered over the course of the mid year budget. Labor has also committed to deliver their commitment within the first six months of forming Government.

The upgrade to put Manning Hospital on the path towards obtaining trauma status as a medical facility includes:

- An upgraded emergency department
- Additional operating suites for: o General surgery
- Ear, nose and throat surgery
- Endoscopy procedures
- New and upgraded medical equipment
- A Cardiac catheterization Laboratory
- Integrated mental health and drug treatment
- Transition lounge for discharged and other patients.
- Increase staffing levels to see more than 50 new heath jobs separate to the above.

The pressure on Manning Hospital has forced many patients to travel to other hospitals, such as Port Macquarie Hospital and John Hunter Hospital.

Labor has also announced that we will build a Public Hospital in Forster/Tuncurry with the first stages

being the construction of an emergency department, Pathology and acute care beds.

This will involve planning funding and consultation within the first six months of Government followed by the site acquisition and construction etc.

Following Labor's promises of the money in the neighbourhood of 100 million dollars, allegedly Mr Bromhead, the sitting National State Member, hurriedly rang the hospital asking what they wanted and suddenly the Nationals upped the ante by forty million.

Funny about that.

However there's a contradiction in Stephen Bromhead's Press Release and Hunter New England Healths' response:

Bromhead… "Since elected to Government I have overseen a 25% increase in recurrent funding to Manning Hospital and over 30 new staff have joined the Hospital team, this year we have made new

medical appointments including 2 Intensive care specialists, 2nd Oncologist, Rehabilitation specialist, Psychiatrist and a new Director of Emergency."

Response from HNEAHB: "The recruitment process of Senior Medical Officers at Manning or any other public hospital is purely run at an organisational level (LMNCS as part of HNELHD) without any influences from external factors. This is the basic recruitment principle in a public health system."

BROMHEAD – "Over the last 12 months NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, Deputy Premier John Barilaro and Health Minister Brad Hazzard have all visited the Hospital and as the Premier indicated during her visit on 1st June Stage 2 planning is underway and I am continuing my discussions to lock in funding for these works."

HNEH "No one is aware of, and as a sector, no one

has received any communication as to what stage 2 is or what it encompasses."

The hospital's action group, led by Alan Tickle, has identified the hospitals drastic needs. It appears their wish list is now similar to what Labor is offering, ideally they'd like -

Relocation MRI from private location to connect with emergency and imaging

Housing a Cardiac Catherisation Lab Short stay unit

Theatre expansion Rehabilitation unit

Refurbishment as needed as set out in re- development plan

Increased bed space provisioning

In general – implementation of the 2012 Master Plan such as Pharmacy and Mental Health Unit expansion.

That's a long list, but it seems the life-saving Cath Lab is a huge priority for the Manning Hospital and everyone living in the electorate. The major stumbling block for improvements at MBH and the

patients of Manning Valley has always been the CEO of HNE, Michael DiRienzo and his advisory group.

The current Health Minister, Brad Hazzard has not been supportive either.

PETS AND YOUR WILL

Have you ever considered what will happen to your beloved pets when you die, whether it be your cat or dog or your pet snake .

Pets are legally the property of their owner and therefore can be gifted in your will just like any other asset you own.

Including your pets in the will is a good way to make sure that provision for them.

If there is no reference to a pet in a will then often the pets become part of the rest and residue or residuary estate.

This may not necessarily be the person you want to have the responsibility to look after your loved pets.

There are several ways in which you can ensure your pets are looked after when you die.

Informal arrangements

This is when you can make an arrangement with your children or next door neighbour or some other person to look after your pets.

This should however, be mentioned in your will so everybody knows what you want.

To be safe you should make sure there are clear instructions in your will as to what is going to happen to your pets rather than leaving it to chance.

Formal arrangements

This can be by way of a formal direction and provision in your will, appointing someone to have responsibility for your animals.

This could also involve leaving a lump sum of money for that person to be able to care and maintain the animal.

This might work well, if you trust the person, however there could be risks involved if that person is unable to look after the animal due to unforeseen circumstances, in that situation it may be appropriate to make an alternative or substitute carer.

In my experience, a gift of money to help care for and maintain the animal is always appreciated and ensures that the animal will be properly looked after.

The cost in maintaining an animal can be expensive including food, housing, kennel fees, vet bills and all the accessories that our animals enjoy.

Further, you could maybe make a legacy or gift to an animal welfare charity such as the RSPCA together with a sum of money with directions for the executors to make enquiries for the animal to be re-homed.

A trust arrangement

You could establish a trust within your will for the care and maintenance of your pets.

This involves setting up a trust within your will for the purpose of the care and maintenance of your pet. The trust would hold a sum of money to cover the costs of the animal for its lifetime, directions can be made as to what the money is to be used for and other directions that you think are relevant for the trustee to take into consideration when looking after your pet. However, you should be aware that under Australian law pets are classified as personal property. Some difficulty may arise if there is an issue where enforcement of a trust could have some obstacles as a principal in law says a trust which is not a charitable purpose trust must have a specified human as a beneficiary as there must be someone who can enforce the trust. If the trustee is not prepared to carry out their duties under the trust, the courts will not force the trustee to do so. In some cases it is been held that a trust is really no more than a non-binding direction, that is a request made to the executor of the will to carry out your wishes. It is therefore important to discuss and make arrangements prior to your death to ensure that the person you're nominated is comfortable with looking after your pet. In my experience this often has been a next door neighbour who knows the pet or your children or close relatives.

Some more things to think about

It is important that the terms you have your will should spell out in as much details as you think is important to provide directions for the care and guidance of the use of any monies left for the care of the pet.

This could include directions that the pet be taken to a vet on a regular basis for check-ups . This could be once a year or more frequently depending on the age and health of the pet.

It is also advisable to leave written details and information about the pet and the health of the animal and your preferred veterinary surgeon.

It's also important to ensure that the trust is left with sufficient funds that will last for the pets' lifetime. Care costs need to cover food and any dietary needs, vetinary expenses, remembering that as the pet ages more often than not the costs increase, what is to happen if the pet develops an illness or age of related disorder and may be need to be put down? Other expenses include grooming, toys, travel expenses, boarding costs and other items that are normally associated with looking after a pet. This needs to be thought out as there have been some cases where there has been insufficient funds available to accommodate the pet's needs

in the wills we have drawn, so some people have been known to establish a trust that provides the carer of the pet with an interest in their home for the life of the pet as well as a fund for the pets' care and maintenance. By making the carer of the pet the beneficiary of any trust any problems associated with the trust can be eliminated. Obviously this is a big decision to make and you would probably love your pet dearly to go to this extent. In this case the carer might be given a right of residency in the property for a life interest on the condition that they care for the pet. You would need to ensure there was an appropriate person to enforce such a gift. A fund could also be established for the maintenance of the pet with a gift if the funds are not expended in the lifetime of the pet.

Consideration also needs to be given if the person you have appointed to look after your pet suddenly dies or is injured or is unable to do so for any length of time.

Arrangements for the care of pets in such circumstances should also be discussed whilst you're alive with the person you are nominating to take on this responsibility.

What happens to my pet if I get divorced

Sometimes, but not often, there are issues in relation to "pet custody".

This can be very important, especially when there are no children from the relationship and the pets become, or have become, the surrogate children, so to speak.

If the parties can come to some agreement in relation to the pets this is obviously the best way forward, however in my experience, there is no such thing as a good separation especially in the initial stages.

In the event that a decision needs court intervention, the courts can consider the merits of each party's application in much the same way that a court would consider which party would benefit more from receiving the pet. Note that it's not all about the pets but about the person in family law.

This can involve the court looking at a number of factors including who is the pet registered to, who cared for the pet and spent time looking after the pet, who fed the pet, who cared and maintained the pet.

It should be remembered that this examination is based purely on an assessment of which party should receive ownership of an item of property in dispute rather than on a concept of what is in the best interests of the pet or who should obtain custody of the pet, as in the case with children.

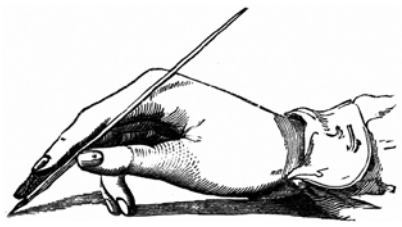
As pets are considered property under Australian law, the courts cannot enforce a person to do or not to do something in relation to the pet.

In reality, under Australian family law the welfare of the family pet has not been thoroughly or conclusively investigated. Normally this issue is resolved by informal agreements between the parties.

Having read this you may now look at your pet in a very different light give them a big hug and enjoy them and the way they live in the moment.

We can learn a lot from our pets.

James Paton.



YOUR SAY...

Letters may be edited for space, offensive language or defamatory reasons.

Dear Editor,

Attending the gathering of at least 300 people outside the Foster Council Chamber and then the Council Meeting which followed, I was shocked and dismayed that the majority of Councillors totally ignored the overwhelming Community opposition to the Centeralisation of MCC under one roof at the old Masters site which was purchased without consultation relating to such a strategy.

It was indicated by Councillor McWilliams that the Council at the time were told of the purchase of the building as an asset, it was not revealed that the Councillors were aware that interest for purchase of the site was already being considered by a job producing private company, if they were, what was the motive for the Councils overbid? Who actually made the decision to put such an enormous land mass Council under one roof in a basically Rural Community? as this was not seen as an intrinsic part of the original Amalgamation strategy.

During the Council meeting the Mayor and several of the councillors indicated that "the staff" were in favour of this centralisation, that is not what the community are hearing first hand, as we all live in the same communities where the "staff " reside and currently work. Which "staff" are they, a few Executives or the majority of the hard woking, courteous and always helpful people we in the Community come in daily contact with.

The volume of public speakers against the the Councils plans for the Masters site, were well informed and had gone to both previously ignored and up to date Council correspondence, which showed the Council to have no real understanding of what they have put intrain. The 4 councillors who spoke in favour of a completely new and independent investigation, tried on several occasions to get the Council to rethink in terms of what the Community are asking for.

It was interesting that there were no Public Speakers in Favour of what the Council proposes

Alas !! what motivates closed minds?

Robin Billings
Hallidays Point.

Hi Editor,

A big "thankyou" for your campaign against the Council's move to the Masters building. Having worked for a council in Victoria (The City of Greater Geelong) that underwent amalgamation, this is the way it panned out: 1. All the smaller councils moved in to Central Geelong. 2. Services to outer lying areas of the council declined because council officers no longer wanted to travel the vast distances involved. 3. More and more work started being tendered out to private industry. 4. Workers eventually lost their jobs due to private industry putting in unsustainably low tenders (to remove councils envolvement). 5. The large council offices that all the taxpayers money had been spent on were now half empty - contract administration was one small department that stayed. 6. Overall, a vast reduction in services to taxpayers. It is my belief that this is an orchestrated campaign to take the control away from local people, and to give the power to State governments, whose ultimate goal is to tender everything they can to private industry to profit from.....A very Liberal ideology.

Wayne Brissett

Dear Editor,

With so many critical issues ignored or mismanaged over the past two terms of federal government, I fail to see how David Gillespie MP can afford to run a smear campaign against the opposition. What a legacy from this government at this point – no action on climate change or energy policy, no increases to wages and pensions to keep up with rising costs or to the miserable New Start Allowance, the Murray-Darling Basin debacle, the Manning Base Hospital situation, no implementation of needs-based education funding, and the desperate asylum seekers still stuck on Manaus and Nauru after all this time.

Sue Baker
Dunbogan

Who's responsible to we ratepayers at MCC??

If you had concerns about Council's Unreasonable Complaints policy, like me, if you've tried complaining about an issue to Council you may be worried about the same aspects as myself, including

1. Unreasonable Council decisions and how we can argue against them without being labelled 'unreasonable'.
2. Council's opaque management systems which makes it very hard to find out who has what roles and responsibilities.
3. Subsequent lack of action.

I sent a letter to Council GM Adrian Panuccio asking him to inform my resident's group who is the Director of Our Compliance department and if they have appointed a Compliance officer, a position that seems to have been vacant for a long time. Getting this information has been a big concern for me and my Rainbow Flat neighbours as we now feel that our on-going complaints have not been heard or processed in an orderly and fair manner.

I went to see Taree Council and asked whom I should direct my mail to in the Compliance Department. One of the receptionists said that they had eight people working in the compliance Department. I asked who was in charge? Who is the Coordinator within the Department? And she said, 'We just divvy them out between them!' I then said 'So no one is in charge?' The other receptionist said quietly that she'd better go and ask. She came back and said I should direct my mail to Bruce Small.

I have had no reply from anyone in Compliance re my concerns about an illegal quarry near us. My next door neighbour has also sent letters in regards to the process of the DA development at Rainbow flat and had zero response.

Susanne Devereaux.
Rainbow Flat

(*We called Council and after waiting for the receptionist to make enquiries, we were told the Compliance Officer is now Adam Farrell. Ed.)*

Time will not wait

Perhaps we all should pause at regular intervals, and take the time to reflect on our world. For now, more than any other time in our lives, we need to consider the human impact on this planet we call home and the supremely complex web of natural systems which have evolved over aeons, that sustain us daily.

Through modern science and technology we may think that we have a good grasp on how to manage our planet and avoid disasters triggered by the ever-increasing human race. However, it is gradually dawning on the majority of us that all may not be well in relation to the precious planet that keeps all living creatures alive. There are significant and at times extreme changes taking place in an ever-increasing frequency across the globe - 'climate change'.

But this is not a result of thousands of years, or even a couple of centuries, but irreversible changes that have occurred over decades and decades, and worryingly, appear to be accelerating, changing faster than our comprehension of in, and in some cases, acknowledgement of it all, and what might be causing it. So just how close are we to the cliff edge?

So, do we have a gloomy future or a future at all? Yes, there is plenty of room for optimism, at least at this point in our history as long as we recognise the problem and move to rectify it.

We humans have a huge brain and unlimited imagination and faced with massive threats thus far we have always demonstrated the ability to dodge a bullet. But what is happening to our globe now, may be the greatest test of all times.

How much time do we have to take action? Who can say for sure. Maybe the majority of us know in our hearts and minds that time might be short, even though the sun came up this morning and the birds were still singing in their trees.

So it may be the time now to take action. Time waits for no one.

The Scribe

To keep this paper running, make a donation : BSB 032102 ACCT: 007242 – Thank you!
Publisher and Editor DI MORRISSEY
Printed by Spotpress, Sydney
Published by The Manning Community News Pty. Ltd. Mondrook NSW
Distribution BORIS JANJIC, COLIN TUBBY AND FRIENDS
Online edition: www.manningcommunitynews.com
The Manning Community News is a member of the Country Press Association of NSW

The Manning Community News is an independent newspaper run by volunteers. It has no affiliation with any organisation, religious or political group.
To advertise or contact The Manning Community News email editor@manningcommunitynews.com

This newspaper is printed on paper approved by the Forest Stewardship Council from sustainable forests using a vegetable dye ink.