

The Manning Community News

JUNE / JULY 2021

SHARING COMMUNITY NEWS AND VIEWS

FREE

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. If you have a story idea please contact us. PO Box 62, Tinonee, 2430 editor@manningcommunitynews.com



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FATHER BRYAN

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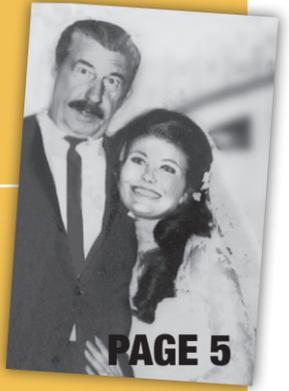
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We are a genuinely independent newspaper. We are not affiliated with any government body/Council nor any political party or religious organisation. We are self funded and supported by occasional personal community donations for which we are very grateful.

IS THERE HOPE FOR OUR HOSPITAL? OR NOT?

The flying visit to Taree of the Parliamentary Inquiry Into Health Outcomes and Access to Health and Hospital Services in Rural, Regional and Remote NSW – ie the deterioration and downgrading of Manning Base Hospital (with too frequently disastrous results), told most of us what we already knew – our hospital is a disaster.

Over 700 lengthy and detailed submissions from the public and professionals were submitted.

Among those who were given the opportunity to speak for several minutes before the Committee were several local doctors speaking as private citizens, other community representatives aligned with community health groups, and the President of the Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group.

In their brief statements all made an impassioned impact. Each was allotted two or three minutes. But reading their lengthy and detailed submissions, (avail-

able online) which would have taken hours of valuable time to assemble, is enlightening if depressing.

Many horrific, shocking and tragic events have been made public. Some instances have not been made public, despite sometimes years of attempting to bring these cases to the notice of authorities. These sad and catastrophic events are more shocking for being ignored or allegedly covered up. The hierarchy's modus operandi seems to be "move on, move on. Nothing to see here."

LIZ HAYES

Sitting quietly in the Hearing audience was TV's 60 Minutes presenter,

Liz Hayes who grew up in the Taree area and whose beloved father died while in the care of our local hospitals (Manning Base and The Mayo). It was revealed that during the entire time he was in The Mayo, he failed to receive his vital prescribed anti-stroke medication. His unexpected death, like others, is, for her, difficult to understand.

**SO WHERE TO START?
WHAT'S NEEDED?**

Essentially everything. It's more than a make-over. The years since The Manning Base Hospital was the main hospital in the area has seen it downgraded and marginalised since becoming

an adjunct to Hunter New England Health.

One priority is to build and fit out a Cardiac Catheterisation Lab at Manning Base Hospital, supported by an adequate number of cardiologists. Additional and updated operating theatres are needed. As are beds. There's not enough for our growing and ageing population. Patients are being turned away and elective surgeries cancelled due to lack of beds and adequate operating theatres.

Nor can extra surgeons be recruited as there aren't the operating

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THE LIGHT ON THE HILL IS FAST FADING

Australian Democracy is fading fast, with little care on the part of the LNP and MSM or realisation on the part of Labor.

It was John Howard who locked refugees in concentration camps in the desert. It was John Howard who curled his lip and sneered we, meaning himself, will decide who comes to Australia. It was John Howard who incorrectly demonised Indian doctor Haneef, with the aid of the AFP, only to see him forced into a humiliating back down and apology.

It was Howard who refused to recognise the Wik, High Court decision relating to Native Title and rammed legislation through parliament to water down the decision. It was Howard who refused to say sorry to Indigenous people for generational suffering and it was Howard who unleashed the ADF on Indigenous people in the Northern Territory in an act of social cleansing known as the Intervention. He went to war with the US in Iraq and Afghanistan in what appeared to be a crusade against Islam.

Howard set the framework for an intolerant and racist Australia which endures to this day. He put in place what might be termed the Howard Regime with the specific aim of making the wealthy wealthier and fostering European supremacy. He inaugurated a raft of terrorism and security laws designed to intimidate and control his fellow Australians as much as to ensure security.

Using the overblown threat of terrorism Howard corralled and controlled the Main Stream Media (MSM) with leaks and releases to tame journalists. Media laws were watered down allowing all but a seat to Murdoch at the Cabinet Table. Labor Prime Ministers, Rudd and Gillard, did not break the mould. They proved to be LNP Light, particularly with respect to the human rights issues of Indigenous Australians, refugees, single mothers, the unemployed and the environment.

Subsequent LNP Prime Ministers have all sought, with success,

to advance the Howard doctrine. Murdoch has been feted and favoured, through installation of a second rate NBN and grants to his media organisations. Sport has been used to deflect attention away from politics and Murdoch has assisted. Indigenous Australian's and refugees continue to be treated badly and the fossil fuel industry has been the recipient of grants.

There are few who believe Morrison to be a successful Prime Minister, he is seen as motivated by self. The vaccine rollout and provision of stand-alone quarantine facilities attest to a lack of leadership.

Morrison's inclination is to govern by decree, unfettered by parliamentary process. In this he has been aided by Covid dictated limited sittings of Parliament, a weak opposition and a Murdoch dominated press which has pushed the ABC to the right.

As a young Diplomat I was posted to South Africa from July 1976 – October 1979. From 1990 – 1993 I ran a program bringing black South Africans to Australia for training and from 2004 I travelled to South Africa in conjunction with the Ifa Lethu Art Foundation which I established with a former colleague.

South Africa, under Apartheid, was governed by a white cabal of men elected on a restricted whites only franchise. They were cruel, weak, corrupt, entitled bullies, fostering white elitism and wealth. There was a small parliamentary white opposition headed by an ineffectual blow hard who condemned Apartheid but did not favour universal suffrage. Consequently, blacks treated him with contempt, but that was nothing compared to the loathing they felt and expressed for the white Afrikaners in power.

The ruling LNP increasingly resembles the white supremacist Apartheid regime. They have destroyed the relationship with Australia's largest trading partner,

China, to preserve what they call Australian values. It is a call based on incipient racism and one bound to fail, but like Apartheid it is centered on a perverse ideology. Australian white supremacy aims to further enrich business leaders, the majority of whom are white men and male dominated sporting clubs. Abbott and Morrison push the 'Anzac and the tradition of Gallipoli' which has the same emotional and ideological hold for right wing Australians as the 'Battle of Blood River' does for Afrikaner xenophobes.

The white opposition in South Africa was weak in numbers and will, they were time servers, energy and sacrifice did not enter their lexicon. Sacrifice was the preserve of black South Africans, just as it is of bush fire and flood victims and welfare recipients, Indigenous people and refugees in Australia.

The white South African regime gutted the State broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Commission (SABC), squeezing it of funds to the point it became compliant and did not report black student protest in Soweto against Apartheid in June 1976. The South African Police (SAP) were subjected to political control and direction. They were willing participants; they supported the ruling white National Party and Apartheid.

Whatever it takes, mixed with retribution, appears to motivate the LNP. An indicator is the secret trial of Bernard Collaery and Witness K. If Morrison gets re-elected expect him to pursue 'disruptive elements' that he will claim are harming Australia's interests and are backed by Chinese money and agents. He will move to consolidate himself in power and render Labor weak and unelectable. Australia could become a one-party state with a token opposition.

You may believe this far-fetched, 'couldn't happen here mate', but it can. I have seen it un-

fold in South Africa, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. It will all be done under the umbrella of a security threat from China and enable the deployment of the considerable arsenal of security legislation already in existence. Australia, like South Africa, will become a pariah state with US backing.

In assessing the capacity of governments to undertake actions inimical to the interests of some if not many of it's citizens the character of the main political players need to be assessed; in that regard the Morrison government does not come off very well, Porter, Hunt and Colbeck being examples.

The leader of the federal Australian Labor Party, Antony Albanese, looks, sounds and behaves as his South African counterpart, Colin Eglin. He displays no sense of urgency but more importantly he evinces no understanding of the dangers posed by the ruling LNP regime. He appears not to understand the mentality he is dealing with. He shows little ability to match them blow by blow.

He appears to hold limited sway with so called swinging voters. He is known to his rusted-on supporters but who else? It cuts no ice to blame a hostile MSM, Albanese has to make waves, that's what leaders do. They say he has a good team, which is true, but as Shorten discovered, election campaigns are won or lost on the leader's performance. It may surprise Albanese but voters are not interested in the fact that he was brought up in public housing, it sounds like self-pity. He gives the appearance of running a 1980's election campaign. Somebody should tell him the times have changed, Canberra is 1930's Chicago. He should shape up or ship out, the stakes are too high for an Arty Calwell or Kim Beazley to be leading the Labor Party at this time.

Bruce Haigh is a retired Diplomat and political commentator.

NSW AUDIT OFFICE SLAMS MCC

In a recently released Report by the NSW Audit Office on 27 May 2021, entitled "Report on Local Government 2020", MidCoast Council came in for considerable criticism for its reporting in the 2018/19 Financial Statements.

The current Report updates the original Audited Reports issued to Councils back 2019, and rather embarrassingly slams MidCoast Council under the category of 'Key Audit Findings' with a number of 'new findings' essentially in what have all been described as 'High-risk findings'.

Five high areas were identified:

FINANCIAL REPORTING

Council submitted draft financial statements for audit on 16 October 2019, one month after the scheduled audit start date. Council advised the delay was due to:

- the implementation of the new accounting system
- council resources redirected away from the financial statement preparation process due to the bushfires.

The financial statements contained numerous errors and disclosure deficiencies. Extensive consultation and direction were subsequently necessary to ensure that the financial statements were compliant with the Australian Accounting Standards and relevant directions prescribed by the OLG.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING

Council's records management

practices relating to information to support balances and disclosures in the 2019 financial statements were not sufficiently embedded to enable the timely preparation of the financial statements.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

Council lacked documentary evidence to support unit rates applied for assets revalued under the replacement cost method.

There was insufficient documentation to support council's rationale, method and approach in conducting the revaluation.

There was a lack of quality review performed over the valuation, resulting in an additional **\$47.7 million error**.

Accounting implications for revaluation increments and decrements did not reflect the not-for-profit requirements of AASB 116 Property, Plant and Equipment.

There were multiple versions of financial statements and supporting schedules provided to the audit team, as management adjusted information originally supplied.

CASH AND BANKING

Council did not reconcile external confirmations from financial institutions to their investment register. Furthermore, confirmations:

- were incomplete and did not cover all investments in council's register
- included balances that were not recorded in council's register.

From a review of council's external confirmations, council did not record balances, totalling \$110,000 as they were unaware of its existence. The bank account was for loan repayments made by a former constituent council (pre-amalgamation).

4.9 Information technology (IT) Management could only provide

limited evidence to demonstrate how it performs its oversight function for IT general controls over the key systems relevant to financial reporting. There were deficiencies in IT policies, IT risk management, user access management, segregation of duties, backup and monitoring and disaster recovery.

This Report only serves to support articles and questions that have been raised over the past three years, and it re-affirms concerns about the Financial Management of Council, and the role of the serving Councillors.



Cr Peter Epov discussing issues relating to China with former Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove at the 100th Anniversary of Rotary in Australia Dinner hosted by the Rotary Club of Taree."

HOW OTHER COUNCILS DO IT BETTER

A friend emailed from her home in Wodonga Vic.

“Our Council has just conducted a major community consultation campaign relating to forward planning and feedback for existing and projected development.

Currently they are developing a new Library and Art Centre, together with the former railway precinct (in 2013, the railway alignment from Albury to Wodonga was changed in relationship to the standard gauge). The realignment took the railway crossing away from the Main Street allowing for this redevelopment.

The Council rationale has been set out with continuous community involvement.

All is going to plan. Monies have come from Council and State Govt.

The High Street has just been revamped with brick paving, antique pole lighting with

underground cabling. The trees are Manchurian Pears and there are several sculptures of native birds and vignettes. They ripped the whole lot out and redid it beautifully with heritage values in mind.

The new library is faced with non corrugated galvo iron.

A park is mandatory on all new developments.

There is an existing Theatre which is treasured.

The pretty ordinary railway station and Goods Shed is now smart cafes and a pub

There is 80 kms of well maintained cycle paths

The Council have their own tree nursery so they can act quickly if a tree needs replacing

The Mayor is a woman. Our MP is a woman Both are loved.

The Mayor does a LOOK WHAT IS HAPPENING BUS TRIP regularly around the electorate and is always accessible.”

Sigh. Ed.



Council allowed my friend to plant her verge out front.



From the destruction of the Bight Cemetery to a main street in Taree, MidCoast Council's aesthetic taste and attitude shines again.

LETTER TO PAUL DeSZELL -
Director Liveable Communities
Yalawanyi Ganya, Taree.

WINGHAM BRUSH NATURE RESERVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

"This morning at 10:20, my wife and I were driving from our residence into town and noticed two Council vehicles parked near the Isabella Street entrance to the Wingham Brush Nature Reserve (closed due to flood damage) with a pole-chainsaw being used to cut branches, with a large pile of vegetation already having been cut. This corner is outside the floodplain and is Dry Rainforest (Floyd's Suballiance No. 28), unlike the majority of the reserve, Subtropical Rainforest (Floyd's Suballiance No. 3) which grows on the basalt-enriched alluvium. This is a very challenging area and the trees are very slow growing here.

The Brush has suffered a lot of damage on its riverine edge, which is another rainforest type again, Floyd's Suballiance No. 26, but Suballiance No. 26 is necessarily adapted to flood battery, but I digress here to illustrate the vegetational complexity within the Wingham Brush Nature Reserve.

Ideally (and the goal) is to produce a rounded verandah edge around the remnant. Sheer lines are to be avoided because they allow light to penetrate within the forest which not only promotes dessication, but also encourage environmental weed invasion.

I woke up feeling pleased we'd mostly got on top of the flood damage here at home. Although I have picked up a large number of environmental weed propagules (clumps of *Anredera* tubers and sprigs of *Tradescantia* were strewn across my property), I haven't completed this on my steep(er) riverbank as it is yet too slippery. So I was looking forward to a quiet morning's shopping with my wife who just finished three weeks radiotherapy Friday week ago with a 200 km daily round trip back and forth to Port Macquarie.

When I saw what was happening, I turned around and approached the workers. I asked the short man who seemed to be in some sort of authority whether he had consulted with NPWS. He answered that he hadn't. I asked him who had directed him to do this work, but he refused to tell me. I told them to get out of my town



and I'd had quite enough of Council vandalizing it. I asked them if they even knew what kind of tree they were cutting, but nobody did. I asked them if they knew this was an Endangered Ecological Community and a Nature Reserve. No response. I was told they were doing this work "so little school kids wouldn't hit their heads on the branches". I tried to imagine little kids seven feet tall running right alongside the fence line and not the sidewalk, but even then I couldn't make any sense of the explanation, except as a feeble attempt to fob me off.

Don't misunderstand me, I firmly support managing the vegetation

on the fringe but trimming it back where needed, but this is not where it was needed. Of all the things that need doing in our town, why damage our major tourist drawcard and irreplaceable natural heritage instead? I understand these workers were "only doing what we were told", but Eichmann said the same thing at Nuremberg.

The vegetation further towards the Isabella entrance to Wingham Brush is slowly growing out towards the fence after the dead exotic *Jacarandas* were removed from inside the fence there in 2016; hopefully it will be allowed to form a verandah edge without ignorant

workers trimming it back knife-edge to the fence line.

When are we going to get a Heritage Master Plan for our town and its irreplaceable assets? When is Council going to consult and work with NPWS and knowledgeable community residents constructively about the Wingham Brush?

After the desecration of the Bight Cemetery, the felling of an exceedingly slow growing 70+ year rainforest tree by staff who believed it to be a Large-leaved Privet (and then poisoned), one would hope that things would be better, but they're not better.

When and where will Council strike next? That's becoming a real concern for me and other residents. *This threat of impending Council vandalism makes Wingham an unliveable community, Paul.*

Who has directed these workers to damage our Brush this morning? Who directed the debacle at the Bight Cemetery? Who directed the removal of the Flintwood in our town square? Has anyone been cautioned, disciplined or sacked?

I look forward to your response.
Sincerely

John Stockard DDS
OAM
Recipient of the Australian Association of Bush Regenerator's Inaugural Award for Major Pioneer in Bush Regeneration (21 July, 2016)"

(Reprinted with permission. Ed)



CINEMA AND SURVIVAL

Iconic Aussie movie star the late Chips Rafferty and producer Lee Robinson would be right at home in the Australian film industry today, especially among the small band of producers making films that travel, but with an Australian accent.

However I am not sure how they would feel about an Australian industry that pays its way by being a Covid-safe back-lot for Hollywood.

Forty-five years ago, in the first flush of the renaissance of our film production industry, the first chair of the newly created Australian Film Commission, Ken Watts, was asked for a benchmark for the success of the Commission. Watts fixed his youthful interrogator with a steely gaze, considered the impertinence of the question and said, 'In five year's time, at the end of my term, success would be the disbandment of the Commission, because the industry was established and self-sustaining, with investments from the private sector.

The industry is still waiting.

The reality is that the film industry in very few countries is sustainable without government support. Even in the United States, Hollywood relies on hidden subsidies, and many states compete with countries like Canada, Ireland and Australia to host big budget production. Of all film producing countries, India probably come closest to self-sustaining.

You read about the huge box-office of Hollywood blockbusters, but the reality is that less than 25 per cent finds it back to the production company. Distribution, exhibition and associated advertising take-up the rest, and few in the food chain make more than decent wages. And blockbusters can cost hundreds of millions to make, so the risks taken on by investors and producers are huge.

The Australian industry is enjoying a boom time at present. The relative success at suppressing the Covid-19 virus has made the east coast an attractive destination for foreign, especially US-based productions, very attractive.

This temporary advantage is buoyed up by two Commonwealth support schemes, the Location Offset, a 16.5 per cent rebate for the production of large-budget film and television projects shot in Australia and the PDV Offset, a 30 per cent rebate for work on post-production, digital and visual effects work done in Australia, regardless of where a project is shot. And government's have been known to sweeten the deal even further.

Australian producers can tap the Producer Offset that provides a refundable tax rebate for producers of Australian feature films, television

and other projects on for expenditure goods and services, the use of land and the use of goods in Australia. And where the subject matter of a film reasonably requires the foreign location, expenditure in a foreign country on goods etc. can qualify for the Offset.

In the mix of government support, the state government are players too. In mid-June, the Queensland government announced \$71 million additional funding for the state's screen industry. The Production Attraction Strategy, that has already snared blockbusters such as Godzilla, Thor and Baz Luhrmann's Elvis Presley biopic, gets \$53 million to sweeten the deal for overseas producer.

This boost brings to the \$100 million that has been invested in the scheme since 2015. A modest \$4 million is added to the Screen Finance Fund for domestic film, television and games production, while the new North Queensland Regional Program receives \$4 million over four years to grow screen opportunities in the state's north.

Queensland's own Post, Digital and Visual Effects Incentive gets \$10 million facilitating an increase from 10 to 15 per cent of expenditure, the most competitive on the eastern seaboard.

In early May, the Victorian government unveiled VicScreen, with a purse of \$120.7 million, for locally initiated film, TV and games projects. The funds are part of a \$191.5 million four-year strategy to put Victoria at the forefront global production.

And there are the film studios that have sprung up over the past thirty years. Studios with sophisticated facilities have been paid for, in part a least, by state governments. And these studios are large. Melbourne's new Docklands Stage 6 encloses an area of 3,700 m² with a lighting grid at 17 metre and a water tank in the floor, 10 metres wide, 20 metres long and 4.5 metres deep. It cost \$46 million of government money.

And the same week as the Queensland splash was announced Russell Crowe said he was backing a new film studio at Coffs Harbour. Unlike other facilities, the studio at the Pacific Bay Resort site would be "a family friendly film studio", one that would provide long-term accommodation for cast and crew, as well as production facilities.

So at the real estate and incentive ends the Australian film produc-



Trail blazing Aussie movie star Chips Rafferty, Godfather to Editor Di Morrissey (at her wedding.)

tion industry looks healthy. And the political rhetoric is largely about employment these days and foreign production certainly provide that, as well as maintaining crew skill and, occasionally, providing a stepping stone to Hollywood for the ambitious.

But how about Australian content, the stories film and television tell?

The scene is not all that rosy either for cinema or television. Few films get back their budget, let alone make profits commensurate with the risk for their investors. The only thing that keeps many from financial difficulties is the various offsets and non-recourse finance available from government.

And if the film-makers ambitions are for an 'art house' market, the barriers are even higher. But it is the art house end of the market that provided one of the original political justifications for governments' underwriting film production. 'Telling our stories', reflecting the Australian experience to Australia and the world, being a rallying cry for Australian identity: these are important to

our understanding of ourselves, reminding us of who and why we are.

But then, today, it is not cool in to do more than slip those issues into a political speech announcing some new government program to support the industry. Nevertheless, a small band of Australian producers and directors continue to make films that are about us and our identity but speak to the world.

So, as the great Spanish cellist, composer and conductor, Pablo Casals, said on his 80th birthday, after reflecting at length on the troubles of the world: *The situation is hopeless. We must take the next step.*

These are the true heirs of Chips Rafferty and Lee Robinson. Be they commercial or arts house production, this band is making films that can travel, but with an Australian accent.

Dr Vincent O'Donnell
Producer: Arts Alive
Media Analyst & Researcher

MIDCOAST COUNCIL ELECTIONS ARE ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2021

Make Sure You Vote, and Choose Wisely!

Councillors are elected to represent the people; to ensure that our money is spent wisely on the Community's priorities.

**Are you satisfied with the spending of ratepayer funds by this Council?
Do you know who is accountable?**

Councillors have the sole fiduciary responsibility for the policy settings, and the expenditure of funds, as well as the direction and the performance of the Council. **They are also responsible for the performance of the executive management. Last year, the 'newly' amalgamated Central Coast Council was sacked; an Administrator appointed, and it is now left to the ratepayers and that community to bear the brunt for the financial catastrophe; through significantly increased rates and reduced services and facilities.** How healthy are MidCoast Council's finances?

Did you know Council's General Manager has been recently re-appointed for 5 years with his salary increased by \$80,000 PER YEAR to \$430,000?

That's more than the Premier of NSW earns! Do you know the Councillors who approved this?

WHAT ABOUT?:

- Fixing the Roads?
- The failure to complete an average of \$30 Million in budgeted projects each year!
- The poor maintenance of our infrastructure and facilities: even just the simple things like filling potholes, grading roads & mowing!
- \$5 MILLION OF YOUR MONEY THROWN AWAY on a CANCELLED desalination plant!
- The 'white elephant' that is now the Forster Civic Precinct. No Promised Library for Forster by 2020, No Service Centre!
- Council being at least 2 years behind in its Four Year \$100 Million Roads Program (*which commenced in 2018*)! ONLY \$6 Million spent.
- The desecration of Bight Cemetery (*and the failure to rectify and make good, after two years*)!
- Overall financial mismanagement, as evidenced by the NSW Audit Office Reports!
- "The Barrington Coast"!
- Incessant delays to Development Applications!
- The lack of community empathy as evidenced by the refusal to drop Tip Fees during the floods - until pressed!
- The Management restructure that triggered new "Executive Manager" positions (each in excess of \$100k) because the Directors need extra 'help' doing THEIR job!
- Poor Service Levels and Responses to the Community!
- The constant story that there is never any money in Council's Budget for Community Projects?
- Failure to invest in Local Economic Development!

Masters Ahead of Everything Else?

September 4 will be our **ONLY** opportunity in the NEXT 3 YEARS to make the changes needed and elect people who can and will reform 'OUR' Council. **Local Government should work efficiently to deliver and serve the needs of the community!**

Don't reward and re-elect those who have held the power, but failed to exercise it wisely!

Be informed, Cast Your Vote Wisely!

Check into the performance of our current Councillors and their voting record (**it will be published**). You can listen to recordings of Council Meetings, which illustrate how they behave, how they speak and debate key issues in Council Meetings. Look at the Questions that they ask for the benefit of the Community, by the Notices of Motion that they put up to Council. Read the Administration's responses to Questions asked on your behalf and consider if they meet the requisite standards?

QUESTION TO YOU: After four years, and \$1 Billion of expenditure by this Council, are things any better in your local area?

Vote for people who have some understanding of finance and how a Council should be managed. Council now has an annual Budget of \$280 million. Over the next three years Council may spend over \$800 Million – **The right people need to be elected to ensure our funds are spent wisely!**

Voting

Vote for a Person and NOT a Political Party at the next MCC Elections. *Often 'Party' candidates don't know nor understand their party's political or*

ideological values / policies; they just use the political party 'brand' as an easy platform to get elected. Party Politics should not feature at Council!

Vote for people who have had a prior history of volunteering for the community, before becoming a Councillor. They will be far more accountable to the Community.

At the next MCC Election there will be genuine and qualified 'Independent' groups of candidates standing above the line, challenging the Political Parties, **they will represent best value for your vote. Make sure you look out and vote for genuine 'Independents'!**

And beware of candidates who may be masking as 'Independents', but flip flop from party to party. Some may even be trickier, whilst not being endorsed as the official political party candidates, they publicly espouse a political party's values, just to get elected (then side with their party's sworn opposition)! Others resign from a political party before an election only to re-join after the election.

Vote for genuine Independents who will CHALLENGE the political parties and act as a true voice for our community!

Encourage people to turn up and Vote!

THIS ELECTION NEEDS YOUR VOTE AND YOUR VOTE WILL COUNT!

Choose Wisely – It's Our Future!

To learn more go to Facebook / **Choose Wisely MidCoast**



WHO WANTS TO BE 100 YEARS OLD?

Bob Dylan is suddenly an octogenarian. His seminal work, written some fifty years ago, 'For the times they are a changing', was seditious, in defiance of the old ways and providing a compass to the young. Now he wears the laurel wreath in literature. Full circle. Paul McCartney is not far behind. When he sang 'When I'm 64', the idea of old age was remote and incomprehensible to our generation, the forever young. Now we are in our 70's, how does it feel?

CURRENT TRENDS

In the previous era, people expected to die soon after retirement. But now the elderly population in developed countries has increased faster than the general population.

Australia has 6000 people aged 100 or more. In the last 20 years, this centenarian population has risen by 270%, compared with a 30% increase in the general population.

The greater chance of a longer life seems like a bonus, but these figures also camouflage a catastrophe because many elders are not in excellent health. A lot feel miserable, in pain or depression. Modern medicine has powerful tools for keeping people alive but not necessarily in happy health.

In a recently published book, 'The Miracle Pill', author Peter Walker found that almost half of middle-aged English people do not walk continuously for ten minutes or more in an average month. He writes, 'How did we get there? Activity became exercise. What for centuries was universal and everyday has become the fettered pursuit of a minority, whether the superhuman feats of athletes or a chore slotted into busy schedules. As a recipe for healthy ageing, that paints a grim scenario'. Walker's simple prescription for continued health is activity and movement.

At a stage performance, Toni Childs, who might be around 70, mentioned onstage that her ambition is to reach 145 years of age. She asked the audience for a show of hands who felt the same. A surprising number went up, reflecting that achieving a healthy ripe old age is very much on the agenda.

How long is it possible to live? Some experts predict that with evolving science, 150 may be possible. 'Sapiens' author Noah Yuval Harari reports scholars saying that

by 2050 (barring accidents), some humans will become 'amortal', that their lives could be extended indefinitely.

Of those who reach the century, the chances of becoming 110 are one in a thousand. There are in the world

must bode well. The manager at Pinaroo commented on his strength of character and mental attitude. 'He's one of the sharpest residents here. His memory is amazing, and his cognitive function is unbelievable.' His ambition? To become Austra-

between chronological and biological age, the tyranny of time against a sense of self. It's worth a note that surgical intervention saved his prostate and his heart at different times.

Guy Warren says, 'Retirement is an absurdity. I've never understood

the idea. Ask me again in ten years.' My older sister Kathy Golski is also a Sydney artist, and so I asked her about this. She said, 'Artists never retire. We can't afford to'. Dr Hippocrates of Kos said more than two thousand years ago, 'life is short and the art long.' Maybe artists can see further than ordinary earthlings.

TAKE-AWAYS

What can we glean from the Wisdom of the Ancients

- about their genetics, activity, energy, nutrition, social life, attitude, luck and how they used health services?

These elders all claim good genetics, so it seems fateful how we choose our parents. How unfair that an individual's chance at longevity may not be a level playing field.

But new evidence is emerging that conscious lifestyle modifications can have a positive influence. Contemporary eating practices, 'too much and too often' as mentioned by Dexter, correlate with degenerative inflammatory disease. We now know that mature onset diabetes can be prevented or even cured by caloric restriction. In this setting, the concept of voluntary intermittent fasting makes sense but new tricks can be a hard ask for old dogs. A moderate start might be an early evening meal, then deliberately refrain from snacking until breakfast the next day. We can pick up better habits a bit at a time. Of course, there are no guarantees. Comedian Fran Leiberich said in an interview, 'While your bad habits may kill you, your good habits still may not save you.'

Dr. David Miller
Is a retired GP who writes on health and travel



Author David Miller "with a little help from my friends". Photo by his daughter, Leah Edmonds

today 300-400 super-centenarians. In the top 50, forty-seven are women, and three are men.

SOME LIVING LEGENDS

Let's look at some of these people to see who can answer the question they all get asked, 'What is the secret to a long and healthy life?'

Aged over 111 years, Dexter Kruger has become the oldest living person in Australia. He supplanted Christine Cock, who died at 114 years and 148 days. In a search for answers, he was interviewed at his current home, the Pinaroo retirement village, for the 'New Daily' by Phoebe Hosier.

Dexter was a grazier and a vet, staying on his farm and riding his horse till his mid-nineties. In reply to the usual questions about his secret to longevity, he claimed genetics, but he also talked about diet. 'People eat too much,' he said. 'They eat themselves into the grave. I lived close to nature and ate mostly what I grew in the garden or off the farm.'

Now he sits in the sun to soak up vitamin D, has a regular exercise routine, and writes his autobiography. 'I didn't have wheels but four legs,' referring to his life on the farm. An intact sense of humour

lia's oldest person- ever. He told the journalist, 'I'd like to live until it's too difficult to live.'

Another one is Australia's oldest working artist. Guy Warren recently turned 100. The striking thing about Warren is his state of health. He was profiled by journalist John McDonald in an article, 'Song for Guy.' (SMH 10 Apr 2021) Far from being an epitaph, this portrayal is about an ongoing human life. He looks comfortable in his home studio in the cover photo, sitting straight-backed in a paint-splattered apron, arms stretched behind his head in an open-hearted gesture. His expression is bemused and alive. Warren is the portrait subject for this year's winner in the Archibald Prize. By strange coincidence, both he and the prize are 100 years old.

In the article, McDonald remarked on Warren's 'affability,' but he said he is sick of being asked the secret to longevity. 'Good luck, good genes and a whisky every night'. What else is there that allows this artist to live a fulfilling everyday life? What can younger mortals learn from the older artist? He said, 'I still feel like I did when I was 55 or even 35- there's no difference.' It reflects his attitude, a mental uncoupling

MEDIA RELEASE

Manning Valley U3A offers many 'Learning for Life' courses



At the recent AGM some of the new 2021-2022 management committee was introduced

Manning Valley University of the Third Age (U3A) is back in 2021 offering a range of courses and activities for the retired/semi-retired over 50 age group.

Our motto, 'Learning for Life!' sums up the rewards for being a part of Manning Valley U3A. These rewards include mental stimulation, physical activities, social interaction, learning new skills and enjoyment.

U3A is run by volunteers and all classes are led by volunteers too. This is based on the idea that members can help other members learn about many things they are interested in.

Right now, we are gearing up to deliver our term three program bringing delight to hundreds of members old and new.

Twenty-two courses cover a range of subjects at low cost, run from two to nine weeks and are mainly held at the Manning

Uniting Church, Taree.

Our courses for term three include the Silver Tones Choir, two ukulele groups, Folk music group, Ballroom Dancing, Philosophy for everyone, Cryptic Crosswords, Social Craft, Time Traveller, Art in the Gallery, Golden Years of Hollywood, Microcredit lending, Open Forum, Just Read, French for beginners and continuers, French reading group, Introduction to Islam, Balance and Bones, Let's Walk, Yoga, and Table Games.

Enrolments for term three are open from 5 July. To be part of it have a look at our website, www.manningvalley.u3anet.org.au

For further information please contact Heather McLaughlin (Secretary) by email, secmanningu3a@gmail.com or by phone, 0425 757 641.

This media release from Chris Abbott (Publicity/Media) M. 0400 306 778

GREEN SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE

I am a local high school teacher with more than 30 years experience as a professional communicator and educator. I have worked with local councils in Bellingen and Tamworth as a radio journalist and advocate for small businesses and local festivals. Since settling with my husband in Mondrook in 2015, I have come to appreciate the diversity, history and natural beauty of this region. I am proud to acknowledge the Biripi and Worimi people- past, present and emerging- whose land was never ceded. Having gone through drought, fire, floods and pandemics with my students and neighbours, I am determined to make a difference to this place as we navigate an ever-changing world scene. We have been given a big slice of the Australian dream here, so let's take care of all of it and each other.

Listening and Acting on the ideas of Local people to improve outcomes for people and the environment.

Safer roads and footpaths.

Funds for native habitat.

Attract sustainable jobs and industry.

Learn more or get in touch
Scan the QR code or go to greensoncouncil.org.au/midcoast/
Email - greensmgl@gmail.com



THE STATE OF OUR ROADS – DOES COUNCIL CARE?

It seems the single most significant, constant frustration and concern to the overwhelming majority of MidCoast residents and ratepayers, is the state of our roads.

Whether you live on the “black snake” or have gravel, Council’s performance in maintaining roads, filling potholes, leveling the gravel, or even mowing the verges, is a constant running sore for many residents.

At the 2 June MidCoast Council meeting after some insistent probing from Cr Peter Epov, the Administration finally revealed that the much lauded \$100 Million Roads Program is now at least 18 months behind schedule.

In early 2018, amidst fanfare (and backslapping amongst some Councillors and the Executive) the \$100 Million Roads Program announcement was used to herald the rise of a new era and the success of the newly amalgamated Council.

GRANTS AND LOANS

The Roads program was structured around the NSW Government committing a grant of \$50 million over four years to be matched by Council borrowing \$50 million over the same period.

In 2017 and still under Administration, Council sought a Special Rate Variation (SRV) from IPART even though the NSW Government had promised there would be no rate increases on residents of newly amalgamated Council’s for a period of 3 years.

Following some lobbying in Macquarie Street, and a late night amendment in Parliament put up by Christian Democrat, Paul Green (who failed to be re-elected to the NSW Legislative Council in 2019), MidCoast Council was permitted to lodge the SRV with IPART.

THE APPROVED SRV

The approved SRV provided for a **cumulative increase of 27.3% over four years** including the annual rate peg.

The approved percentage increase per year was:

- 2017/18 – 10%
- 2018/19 – 5%
- 2019/20 – 5%
- 2020/21 – 5%



COUNCIL’S PROMISE

At the time Council justified the SRV by stating on the Mid Coast Council website - *“Funding provided through the SRV will be used exclusively for the express purpose of:*

Addressing the \$5million per year shortfall in funding for renewals of Council’s road and bridge assets.

Starting to address the asset backlog, estimated at \$180million.

Harmonising and supporting an environmental program across the MidCoast region.”

SO ARE OUR ROADS ANY BETTER?

Ratepayers have now been paying a progressive cumulative increase of 27.3% on our rates, but have our roads improved?

The grand announcement of the \$100 Million Roads Program was announced in early 2018, but it appears Council didn’t borrow any money for the program in the 2018/19 Financial year, nor did Council receive any grant funding from the \$50 million grant bucket that was sitting there, waiting to be used.

2019/20 BUDGET

In the 2019/20 Budget, MCC committed to borrowing \$10,182,500 million for the Roads Program, which would then be matched by a NSW Government Grant of \$10,182,500 million for the year. With one month to the end of that Financial Year, Council announced it would but did not follow through on this commit-

ment, meaning \$20,365,000 million in roads works didn’t get done. Prior to this point there was no reference reported to any delays in the Program for the year. *(In that same report Council did confirm that it would borrow \$8 Million for Masters, now the controversial Yalawanyi Gunyah).*

2020/21 BUDGET – THIS YEAR.

Last year in May, for this year’s (current) Budget, Council again promised to borrow \$9.375 million (which would then be matched by a \$9.375 million grant from the NSW Government) as part of the \$100 Million Roads Program.

But at the MidCoast Council Meeting of the 2nd of June, just 28 days from the end of the Financial Year, without any prior reports of delays, Council decided it would only borrow \$3 million of the \$9.375 Million (which would be matched by the NSW Government).

Only two Councillors queried this. The rest of the herd obediently followed along.

However this \$6 million would need to be spent by 30 June this year, otherwise the money would have to be ‘re-voted’ in to next year’s Budget (2021/22) where Council has yet again promised to borrow \$8.625 million (which would be matched by \$8.625 million from the State Grant).

HISTORICALLY LOW INTEREST RATES.

So while we have historically low interest rates, and \$100 million for

roads (to work with) allocated? since 2018, MCC has only committed to spending a total of \$6 million of a four year program, where on average \$25 million should have been spent each and every year!

Interest rates will eventually rise and the later Council borrows money for the Roads Program, the more they will have to repay, reducing their capacity to spend more on our roads in the future.

The next Financial Year (2021/22) should have been the last year of the \$100 Million Roads Program, so that Council could have been applying for new and additional roads funding for the coming year.

FANCIFUL

Council’s claim that they will complete the \$100 Million Roads Program within an additional 18 months, appears to be rather fanciful, particularly as Council has so far only committed to spending \$6 million plus a further \$17.3 million in the next Financial Year, leaving a surplus of \$76.7 million to be spent. Based on Council’s ‘average’ unachieved commitments, plus the projection for the 2021/22 Year, it appears more likely that it will take at least three if not four more years at their current pace, to complete the program.

SHAMEFUL

It is disappointing, indeed shameful, that ratepayers and residents pay their increased rates, yet Council, with an available bucket of \$100 million, is unable to get its act together to make our roads safer and life a little less stressful.

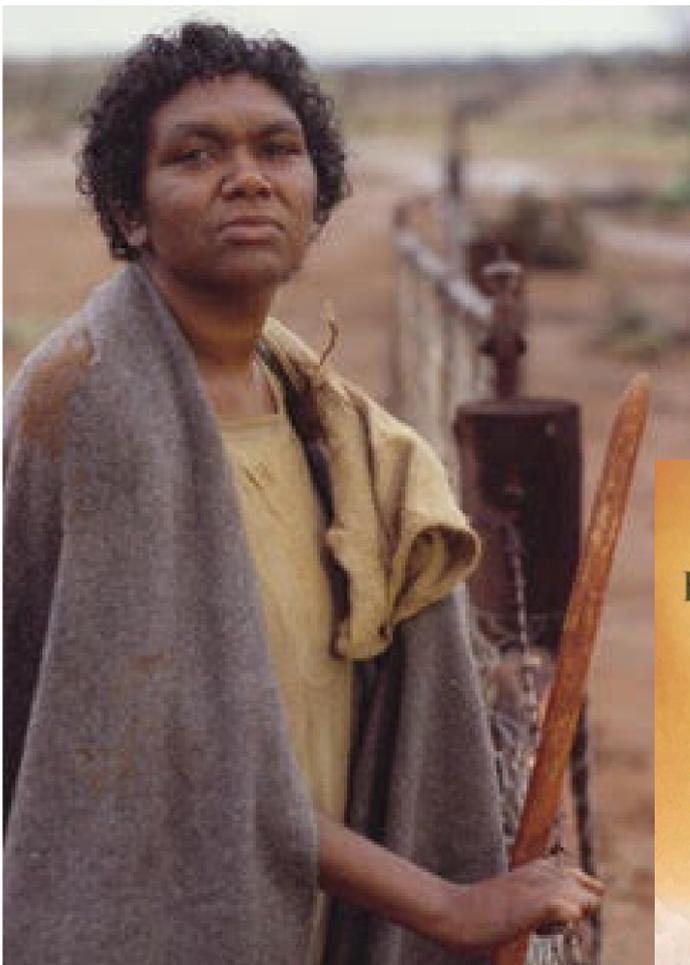
These consequences, pointed out by Cr Epov, would undeniably reduce Council’s credibility to apply for new and additional funding. While this money has not been spent, it means we would be missing out on additional funding for our roads and the community will have to continue to endure poor quality roads - only to get stung at the tail end with loans at no doubt higher interest rates.

September 4. Choose Wisely. Change is needed.

SINGING HER HOME

(This story contains names and images of deceased indigenous persons)

Sydney's acclaimed Bangarra Dance Theatre have based their acclaimed new work, "SandSong", on Ningali Lawford-Wolf's metaphorical knowledge dilly bag which contains the songs and stories of her country, the East Kimberley.



away and make their way back home by following the fence which runs the whole length of Australia.

Years later and Ningali has been cast

join us from Fitzroy Crossing for the filming. Their presence infuses the filming and grounds it. Makes it real.

There is a scene in "Rabbit-Proof Fence" where Maude is collecting her rations at the Jigalong depot. The Superintendent of the depot has told her that Mr Neville is interested in Molly.

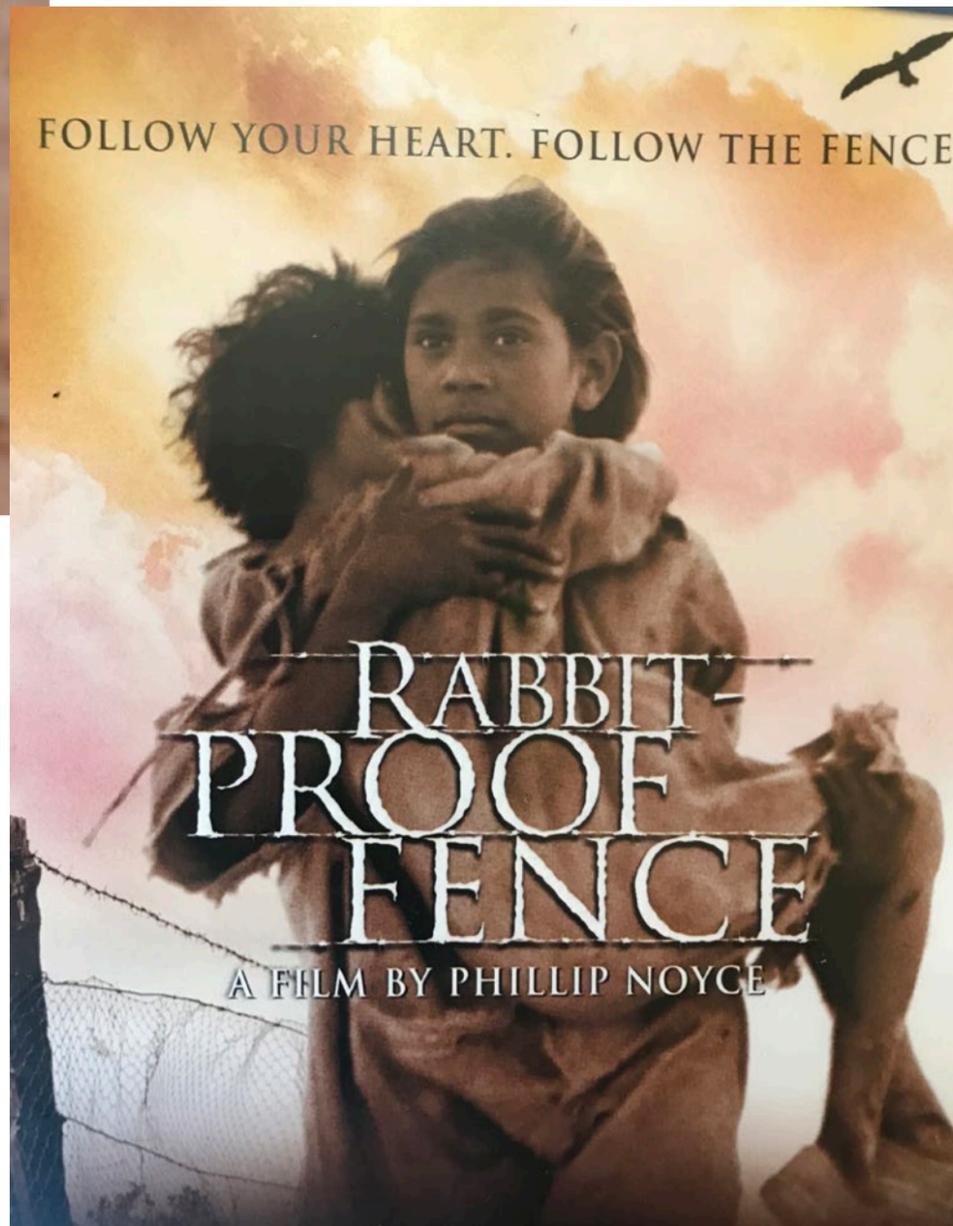
Maude cracks a joke. "You tell that Mr Devil," she says, "that if he

of us that day on the set. It was the end of the day and we finished filming there. But that scream was a portent of what was to come.

The next day we filmed the "taking" scene. Maude (Ningali's) scream should have warned us but it didn't. We film the running, the car, the policeman grabbing the kids, Maude's frantic attempts to save her kids, "my own", Mayarn's head bashing in grief.

At the end of it we are completely devastated. The Aboriginal extras have all crept up to watch. The camel wrangler man has gone to hide in a ditch – he had been "stolen". Ningali's dad was taken. It was as if, only now, that we realised what taking a child was. What stealing a child was. Only now we learned that every aboriginal cast member, crew and extra had had someone stolen from their family.

Just as David Gulpilil as the Tracker guides those kids home – or at least allows them to get home, so Ningali and Mayarn guide those kids home, all the way. Do you remember that look on Maude's face when the fence man tells her, "Hey Maude your kids have gone. They've run away." She knows that they will make it back and she and Mayarn



Ningali was an award winning stage and screen actress. She starred in Phillip Noyce's movie "The Rabbit-Proof Fence" and the stage and film version of "Bran Nue Dae."

She tragically passed away in 2019 while on tour in Edinburgh with the stage production of "The Secret River."

I am looking at a photo of Ningali and my heart fills with love for her. What a woman. I first came into her orbit when I saw her one-woman show at the Sydney Opera House. I had never seen anything like her before – this skinny, cocky, young black woman who owned the stage and who let us into her world. It was magical and transformative.

We floated out into the cold night afterwards and there she was, hands in pockets, chatting to us theatre goers. I had no idea then that Ningali would play such a pivotal role in the making of the movie, "Rabbit-Proof Fence". This tells the true story of three girls taken from Jigalong, a depot on the rabbit-proof fence, and transported to a "native settlement" outside of Perth. The girls, led by Molly the eldest, run

as Maude, the mother of Molly and Ningali's mother, Mayarn.

As producer I'm talking to the Jigalong mob who are involved in the filming. Molly, 82, and Daisy, 76, her youngest sister,

still live in Jigalong. The Jigalong mob are concerned about only one thing - that the language spoken in the film be their common language (they have about 5 languages) – that is, Wangkatjunka.

I ring Ningali, "Hey Nings, what language do you speak?"

"Wangkatjunka" comes the reply!!! So Ningali and her mother Mayarn and a small mob of women

wants a black kid he should make his own."

The expression on Maude's face is one of pure delight. She is a strong woman and the joke is a good one. Moments later she hears the sound of the policeman's car. She sees the car and knows in an instant what is up. She lets out a scream. "Run you kids!"

That scream went through all

sing them home.

So, Ningali, my heartfelt thanks to you and your mob. This will always be your film. Such a presence, such strength. Such an honour to know you.

Christine Olsen
Writer/Producer, "Rabbit Proof Fence"
(first screened in 2002)

MUSIC THEATRE ACROSS THE AGES



BACH TO BUSH

THE BACH TO THE BUSH TOUR IS DESIGNED TO TAKE THE JOYOUS MUSIC OF JS BACH'S 'COFFEE CANTATA' TO AREAS OF REGIONAL NSW DEVASTATED BY FIRES AND DROUGHT. COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS PUT A SPOKE IN OUR WHEEL UNTIL FINALLY OUR FIRST STAGING TOOK PLACE AT THE SMALL TOWN OF BOBIN, NEAR WINGHAM AND THE MANNING REGIONAL GALLERY, TAREE. WE HOPE THIS WILL BE THE FIRST OF MANY.

The Coffee Cantata production is entertaining and can be enjoyed as live theatre regardless of musical tastes. It is designed for a cabaret setting, so the audience can 'eat, drink and be merry'. We have staged it equally successfully in a tiny community hall (Bobin), and in a larger Regional Art Gallery (Taree). At Bobin the community came together beforehand for a meal. We were thrilled to be the catalyst for these fun, uplifting, celebrations.

Members of our team come from regional areas and know how rural communities pull together in moments of crisis. We approached the ABC Rural team, who were enthusiastic and suggested communities they think would benefit from our event, such as Bobin, Balmoral, Willawarrin, Cobargo, Batlow, Malua Bay, Capertee and Blackhead.

The rural tour has been made possible through the generosity of our wonderful donors and by funding from Creative Partnerships through the Australian Cultural Fund. It helps us keep ticket prices to a minimum, while still being able paying our hard-hit, talented performers.

LOCAL PERFORMERS ARE INVITED TO REHEARSE

Local performers and/or school children are invited to join our performances at each location. We will offer coaching and tutoring online, and can work with local performers to encourage and motivate them while they're still in isolation.

LOCAL SCHOOLS CAN GET INVOLVED

Our design team has developed an education package that includes a kit for teachers and support sessions online for children to create their own mythical creature costumes from recycled materials. Instructions for a simple rhythm game will be demonstrated to teachers and via online sessions to students. This will be performed with Grieg's 'Hall of the Mountain King' at the performance with the children in their costumes.

TAKING TOURIST DOLLARS TO THE BUSH

Another way to assist these communities is for our supporters to attend our country performances once the tour schedule is finalised. It's a chance to explore the scenic regional areas and help boost the economies of the small communities and surrounding towns. When tour dates and times are finalised, we'll be posting them on social media and they will be advertised in Destination NSW. If you want to get the tour schedule in your inbox contact us.

We also invite volunteers to act as 'roadies' which would be an enjoyable way to be part of our touring troupe and see some great parts of regional NSW.

WAYS TO JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

We welcome all kinds of volunteers. There are opportunities for volunteers to learn and share skills our upcoming production of Peer Gynt.

Become a mentor or mentee. We particularly welcome skilled, creative, arts practitioners, perhaps retired Super Citizens, who are willing to act as mentors. We also welcome mentees

who wish to benefit from the skills and experience of others.

Suggest someone for our Social Inclusion Program. It provides creative opportunities for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised

through disability or disadvantage.

Get a paid gig. Our productions provide work opportunities for professional musicians, singers, and actors.



2BOB'S MEET THE COUNCIL CANDIDATES –

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 18, 2021

2BOB community radio station invites candidates for the Midcoast Council election to be held on Saturday September 4th to register for their "Meet the Candidates" evening.

This will be conducted in the Manning Entertainment Centre (MEC) on Wednesday, August 18, 2021.

2BOB Radio has previously conducted their Meet the Candidates evenings in Taree's Uniting Church Hall, but as convenor Rob Meaton told the Manning Community News... "we've chosen the MEC as a more suitable and comfortable venue to accommodate the the expected large number of candidates as well as having very good production facilities".

Celebrating 35 years of community broadcasting to the Manning Valley and beyond, 2BOB Radio is pleased to present the Meet the Candidates evening as a free public event, providing the community an opportunity to hear candidates present their reasons for seeking election to council.

2BOB will be recording the evening's proceeding for later broadcast on FM 104.7 and streaming from the website.

All candidates standing for election to MidCoast Council are invited to attend, to register, contact the convenor Rob Meaton via email: beatfactory45@gmail.com

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR ON ELECTION DAY!

On September 4th the day of the Council elections, 2BOB Radio is proud to present the Taree Envirofair & Cultural Festival 2021, and it promises to be the biggest Envirofair Taree has seen in its 29 year history. With thanks to Crown Lands -The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, a grant has been received to ensure that 2BOB will conduct a Covid-safe Festival.



Newly appointed coordinator Timothy Ohl, is eager to take a fresh perspective for this year's fair.

"I'm really excited to be taking over the reins of Envirofair and would like to thank Rosie Smith for all of her hard work and commitment over the years dedicated to this event. This year we will be embracing the diversity in cultures within the Manning Valley by supporting and presenting local talent and screening international films, with a variety of food on offer originating from Serbia, France, Japan, Phillipines and Greece. Most importantly we acknowledge the land and the people of the Biripi Nation on which we are holding the event.

There will be a Welcome a to Country and Smoking Ceremony lead by local Elders."

With the new date in place falling on the same day as local council elections Timothy mentions "There will be the usual 'Talk Tent' with some really interesting people sharing insights into environment, health and multicultural affairs, but with this year's event being on election day we'll also be calling the local candidates to share their environmental policies."

Taree Envirofair & Cultural Festival 2021 will continue its core focus on Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Renew, Repurpose and this year adding Recovery and Renewal to the list, reflecting on the recent drought,

fire and floods that our community and environment has experienced. "When Envirofair started back in the 90's, environmental issues were still largely fringe concerns, but now they are increasingly becoming a part of mainstream dialogue" states Brendan Parker, assistant co-ordinator of Envirofair and newly appointed Volunteer Coordinator at 2BOB Radio.

Taree Envirofair & Cultural Festival 2021 will see a variety of markets, food stalls, information stalls and displays, activities for kids, petting zoo, local bands, live world music, dance performances, international film screenings and an open mic segment where the best original song speaking on environment will

be chosen by the audience.

With the move to spring, Taree Envirofair & Cultural Festival 2021 will operate from 9am-5pm, making the most of the warmer weather and longer hours of daylight. Bring your friends and family to this all day event to experience some of the regions delights whilst considering our incredible country and how we can work together to respect and conserve it.

Interested stallholders and open mic inquiries are invited to contact 2BOB via their facebook page or email admin@2bobradio.org.au or ring the station on 65526200.

REGIONAL COMMUNITIES AND THE ARTS

Judith White

Communities need the arts. They're not a luxury or an extra; they are essential to a healthy society.

This is not news to First Nations people, for whom song, dance, drawing and storytelling have been an integral part of life for millennia.

Ongoing research at Deakin University shows that in Australia art programs "support and promote healthier communities" and "help people recover or deal with mental health issues brought on by fires and drought". According to the Australia Institute, the mood of 73 per cent of Australians has been improved by the arts during the COVID pandemic.

But State and Federal governments are failing to support the arts in regional areas. On paper, the need is acknowledged. The Australia Council states that its program for Community Arts and Cultural Development is "by, with and for the communities". One of the seven listed priorities of Create NSW, the State government agency for the arts, is "supporting more opportunities for more people to experience and shape the arts, particularly in Regional NSW".

Follow the money, and it's clear that these motherhood statements are not matched in practice.

At a Federal level, the Morrison Government has been notoriously slow to support an arts sector hard-hit by the pandemic. The 2021-22 budget promises only \$223m for the arts, with just \$11m to regional tourism and \$5m for touring performance. The Australia Council has suffered a series of cuts since 2015, and is under instruction to give most of its funding to major companies. Meanwhile university courses in the arts and humanities are being defunded.

The State Government bears the main responsibility for assisting regional arts in three key ways: support for local cultural institutions, access to major state institutions, and education and training. But in NSW, the Berejiklian Government is firmly focused on Sydney. While country areas are desperately underfunded, almost \$2 billion is being spent on the Government's current building plans for Sydney cultural infrastructure.

Since 1988 school parties and families visiting Sydney have been able to see Australia's greatest collection of historic science and technology exhibits in one place, at the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo. Now, at a

cost of at least \$1.2 billion, the collection is being dispersed in order to sell off part of the Ultimo site – some items to a storage facility at distant Castle Hill, others to a flood-prone new building in Parramatta. The plan is opposed by museum specialists, flood experts, environmentalists, First Nations people and community organisations, and has been slammed by a major parliamentary inquiry.

More than \$20 million has already been spent on consultants for the project. Leading museums consultant Kylie Winkworth estimates that an architect-designed regional museum could be built for \$10-\$15 million – so two areas could have had brand new museums for the cost of the consultancies alone.

"Cultural equity matters for museums and communities across NSW," she has written. "One extravagant museum project in Parramatta is not a plan, nor is it fair or equitable."

A good museum can revitalise a region. Where I live, the Tweed Regional Art Gallery has become both an arts centre for the community and the area's number one tourist attraction since a bequest from the late artist Margaret Olley, and the generosity of local benefactors Doug and Margot Anthony, enabled its completion. But elsewhere local institutions are struggling. Cessnock Regional Art Gallery in the Hunter had to close completely at the end of 2019 for lack of funding.

Museums worldwide have suffered a massive decline in revenue during COVID and do not expect visitor numbers to return to pre-pandemic levels until at least 2025. But the Berejiklian Government is proceeding with the gargantuan Sydney Modern extension to the Art Gallery of NSW at a cost of \$344 million, based on a business case which has been kept secret but is understood to project visitation of two million a year – unlikely now.

Rather than rein in its vanity projects, the NSW Government has cut recurrent funding for all cultural institutions. That means the Powerhouse and AGNSW will have to run sites doubled in size on reduced funding, endangering cultural heritage that belongs to all the people of the State.

Other funding cuts directly affect the regions. Only \$10m of the State's

\$59m Art and Cultural Funding Program went to the regions in 2019-20.

In August 2020 Create NSW cut recurrent funds to organisations including Writing NSW and AusDance NSW. In November it ended the \$445,000 annual grant to the funding body Regional Arts NSW, claiming the money would be "redistributed". The move, wrote RMIT arts professor Esther Anatolitis, "undermines the state's capacity to strengthen regional creative communities and enterprise exactly when that's needed most".

Allocation of funding is now subject to party political preference. In 2018, for example, \$20 million was granted to the Riverina Conservatorium, in the electorate of Daryl Maguire, then partner of Premier Berejiklian. It was more than went to the other 18 NSW conservatoria combined.

Arts funding should not be determined by electoral considerations or deals with developers and party donors. It requires an entirely new plan, based on the needs of changing society. The pandemic, climate crisis and technological development all impact the way we work and live. City centres are less the centre of our world. People need the arts in their communities.

City-based major cultural institutions of course need supporting, but the best way is not through vanity building projects, it's through sustained ongoing funding for independent artistic direction, professional care for collections and free public access.

An equitable policy needs to ensure every region has at least one well-funded, sustainable arts centre. At the same time improvements in educational funding are needed so that every school has a library of books, a library of musical instruments and a good supply of art materials.

Every child has the capacity to sing, dance, draw and tell stories. Enabling them to do so will make us, at last, the country of the Fair Go.

Judith White is a former executive director of the Art Gallery Society of NSW and author of Culture Heist: Art vs Money. Her website is cultureheist.com.au

RIP "PIPPA"



MISS PIPPA OF TINONEE HAS SADLY PASSED AWAY. OWNED BY GORDON HOPKINS AND DARREN BIRD (OF THE TINONEE CLOCK REPAIR) PIPPA WAS A WELL KNOWN LOCAL, BORN IN MONDROOK, A SISTER TO MISS MINA MORRISSEY. PIPPA TOURED THE VILLAGE EACH DAY IN BETWEEN CLOCK SHOP GUARD DOG DUTIES AND DAYTIME COMPANION TO CLOCK REPAIRER DARREN. SHE IS SADLY MISSED BY US ALL.



IT'S TIME TO KICK THE BANKS OUT OF SCHOOLS, AND TEACH KIDS REAL MONEY SKILLS!

We need a financial revolution in this country, and it needs to start with our kids.

My name is Scott Pape and a few years ago I wrote a book called *The Barefoot Investor*. It went on to become a bestseller. And the #1 question people asked me after I wrote it was:

"Why didn't I get taught this stuff at school?"

So, I set out to answer that question.

It took me on a two-year journey heading into private schools, public schools and remote schools, talking to students, teachers, parents and politicians.

And what I learned was ... we need to do better ... a LOT better.

What we're currently doing isn't working. Too many kids graduate at the bottom of the financial class, into a lifetime of debt, with little understanding of the contracts they're signing.

I've come up with five demands for every State government around Australia to agree to. I want them to commit to kicking out the banks — and teaching our kids the real money skills they'll be tested on every day of their lives.

This is my Money Movement Manifesto.

*** The Money Movement Manifesto ***

Our kids will be tested on money skills every single day of their lives.

Yet most of us had to learn these



skills the hard way, because we were never taught them in school.

We need to do more.

Here are the five core aims of the Money Movement:

1. Implement a practical 4-to-6-week Money Challenge every year

When literacy rates were falling, the Premier's Reading Challenge was set up to challenge kids to read - and it worked! In the same way I'm calling on State governments to get behind a Money Challenge: not just another requirement on an already overcrowded curriculum, but something exciting that schools take up because it's important - and fun!

2. Show primary schoolers the power of working, saving, spending and giving

Get kids excited and it's amazing what can happen. During a pilot Money Challenge at a school in Hervey Bay (one of the poorer re-

gions in the nation), the six-year-olds came up with the idea of using their class 'Give' money to feed homeless people in their community. It was a life-changing experience for them — and for their community.

3. Show high schoolers how to get a job and set up their savings 'buckets'

You remember being a teenager in class thinking "How will I ever use this in the real world?" Well, at a pilot Money Challenge, I saw teenagers who were the first people in their family to get a job and set up their savings buckets. Think what your life would be like if someone had helped you do that on your first payday. I want that for every Australian kid. Let's set them up to win.

4. Commit to professional development financial education for teachers

Teachers aren't in the job just

for the money: it's a vocation. Still, it's hard to stand up in front of a crowd of Year 9s and talk about the dangers of credit cards when you have credit card debt yourself. Bottom line: to raise financial fit kids, we need financially fit teachers.

5. Kick the banks out of our schools

Having banks teach our kids about money is like having Ronald McDonald teach them about nutrition. Our children's financial education is too important to outsource. The government financial regulator (ASIC) is

independent of commercial interests and should be the one to deliver the program.

This is something I truly believe in, and I've been working on — and piloting in schools — for some time now. But now it's time to take the next step and get your state government to take it on.

I want every Aussie kid to learn this. If you do too, then I invite you to join me.

Sign this petition to show your support - change.org

Together we can teach the kids ... help the parents ... and change the nation.

P.S. For the record, I'm committed to working with any government who agrees to take this on — and to offer my time and expertise for free.

BARRINGTON BE BLOWED!

A friend ran into a couple of visiting tourists ... who looked rather lost and confused.

Friend Greg asked could he help, and they asked, 'Where's Barrington Beach?'

He said, 'Well, there isn't one.'

'But they advertise the Barrington Coast...' they

commented, not unreasonably.

'Ask the Sydney consultants, mate. The rest of us live on the Mid North Coast, in the Manning Valley and Great Lakes or up in Gloucester.'

The couple consulted their map and decided to drive to Coffs Harbour.

MONTGOMERY CHURCH

Where The Quiet Can Hide
TOUR 2021



26/27.6 Newport Folk Festival VIC

16.7 Petersham Bowling Club NSW *

17.7 Wallarobba Hall NSW *^

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17.9 Southern Highlands NSW *^

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“Montgomery Church make a rare kind of hill country magic: spinning gossamer tapestries with timeless acoustic sounds, quicksilver vocal harmonies, and the kind of unassuming storytelling that burrows deep into the subconscious. With their glorious debut LP, the duo frequently draws from the same wellspring as Gillian Welch and Dave Rawlings, while also tipping their hats to all corners of the trad. country and Americana compass: Few albums of recent memory plumb such depths of feeling with such exquisite ease”- Gareth Hipwell (Country Update Magazine)

TWO PETITIONS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO MIDCOAST COUNCIL FROM THE WINGHAM COMMUNITY.

The first was on a single issue: to oppose the plan to remove the established and thriving gardens, 22 water gums, 98 perpetually flowering grevilleas and more than 100 gardenia which flank the North and West side of Wingham's Central Park.



Jen's suggestion for the steps

4 3 years a resident and property owner of the Manning Valley, (25 years in Wingham), 70 year old Jennifer Allison stood on the streets explaining the proposed Wingham CBD masterplan to the community, and collected 1,498 signatures on the first petition.

An article in the Daily Telegraph 29 May 2021, quoting project engineer Rhett Pattison, claimed more than 75% of people said yes to the new look CBD. The article mentioned modernising Wingham. Jen had read the Engagement Outcomes report and knew that 75% was a *proportional* representation of the 212 people who had responded to Council's masterplan survey.

Buoyed by overwhelming support from her town, Jen Allison began a Heritage focused petition. She approached shop owners for their signatures, they responded by asking to have a clipboard on their sales counters. She stood outside Coles Plaza for a week, seeking support for the imminent upgrade of Wingham to be done reflecting its heritage style.

The second petition included heritage style

street lights, seats, and flared entrances to Central Park. Also on the petition were the retention of the Rotary heritage clock and the gardens around the outside of Central Park. (The Village Green.) So far the second petition has 1,945 signatures. Combined with the first, a total of **3,443 signatures support keeping the trees and shrubs.**

The community of Wingham has invested much effort in these gardens. 10-12 years ago the trees, shrubs and ground cover gardenias were donated by Greater Taree City Council. Wingham High School students, LandCare, and other community members slaved in the hot sun planting hundreds of trees and shrubs.

Many Wingham people remember the planting of these gardens, they remember the high school kids involve-



Jen Allison and her Petition of over 3 thousand names

ment, they remember GTCC donated the plants, they remember that Midcoast water sent a truck to water them when the community was struggling to keep them alive in the worst of the five year drought.

These plants are a haven for rainbow lorikeets, finches, honey eaters, wattle birds, bees and echidna. In the five year drought and particularly during the fires, the birds flocked to Wingham. These gardens are a significant source of sustenance for our wild birds.

212 people responded to the Wingham masterplan survey. A request to staff for copy of the survey questions was not successful. Speaking with the people who signed her petitions, Jen Allison came into contact with some of those 212. They expressed distress over the survey.

There was no option to say 'Yes' or 'No' to the brick stepped wall proposed in the masterplan. The closed question choices were only about sandstone or Lincoln brick? Light or dark brick? In order to submit the

survey one of these boxes had be filled. Responders expressed the view that there was no indication, and they were not made aware, that the brick stepped wall required the removal of the community gardens. They concluded it was a token survey, and that consultation with the Wingham community was superficial.

Wingham welcomes the upgrade of its neglected CBD. The small town has waited more than 20 years for this upgrade and so it deserves to be done properly. Wingham people are deeply attached to their heritage and want to see its infrastructure upgraded in an appropriate heritage style.

Jen Allison hopes Midcoast Council is listening to what Wingham. She and the thousands of people who signed the petitions, hope Council staff can be persuaded to a collaborative team effort to ensure that a well funded project such as this Wingham CBD masterplan achieves what the community wants.

(What about the owners of the shops and buildings? How supportive are they??? Ed.)



Council's plan



The sort of inappropriate building in heritage Wingham



Your care is central
at the HealthHub

TWO LOCATIONS

HealthHub Taree

15 Butterworth Lane, Taree

02 6552 5533

HealthHub Harrington

4, 1-5 Caledonia Street, Harrington

02 6556 1855

**24/7
care**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

theatres to offer them. And we don't have a cath lab which should be a pretty basic requirement in an area with the worst cardiac outcomes in regional NSW.

Specially trained nursing staff, cardiologists and equipment plus ongoing funding are needed.

FUNDING

Funding has been a political football and crass vote bait.

Amounts of \$100 million have been dangled with no details or serious agenda. More flirting for votes included a potential hospital at Forster. 'Never happen,' snapped a senior hospital bureaucrat.

Not surprisingly no local political member was to be seen when the Enquiry came to town trailing major media.

Eddie Wood spoke on behalf of the Manning Great Lakes Community Action Group who submitted a comprehensive and detailed submission which not only pointed out problems (of which there are many) but sensibly suggested solutions.

Like most of the 700 plus submissions, a huge amount of thought, details, ideas and shocking facts were detailed in lengthy, no doubt time consuming, detailed submissions.

For those sitting quietly in the room, the passionate statement from Dr Nigel Roberts brought home the anguish our medico's feel when they see not just errors and mismanagement, but actions and gross negligence that causes suffering and death.

EMERGENCY WARD

Alan Tickle, founder of the Hospital Action Group who remains a board member made a submission and spoke before the enquiry. He was asked to elaborate on what he meant by over-servicing in the Emergency Ward which has been the centre of some contentious events.

Mr Tickle said in response that a senior, now retired doctor in Emergency, pointed out that experienced doctors would spend time talking to patients presenting to emergency, took time to take their history and determine if there was a repeat of past issues. This could often be the product of low socio-economic situation where a patient simply could not afford or go to a GP. Yet the treatment needed for them was frequently obvious and simple.

Mr Tickle commented that the young doctors now order a battery of tests that are costly, add to the delay in the waiting room, then on receiving the test results work on a diagnosis that might have been quite obvious had there been more time spent in taking and considering the patients history, looking for the obvious, before considering ordering expensive and sometimes unnecessary tests.

Over several years this paper has received countless letters and emails about the poor events and tragic outcomes at Manning Base Hospital. Most preferred to remain publicly anony-

mous for fear of retribution from the hospital hierarchy. We know of dedicated staff who have become so distressed at what they see and have to cope with they have resigned and even moved from the area seeking jobs elsewhere.

TRAGIC CASE

One woman claims her husband who was mentally fit and alert but had periodic overnight visits to Manning Base due to a chronic condition, on arrival one night was alleged to have been sent by the hospital to an Aged Care Home as "he was taking up a bed" and she says without her knowledge or agreement. Next morning, when she turned up to bring him home she found he'd been taken to the aged care home and alleges he was considered "a nuisance" by Manning Base for turning up every few months for his chronic breathing condition. All his paperwork had "gone to archives."

For the next few days she says she battled red tape to extricate him and bring him home as they had a Level 4 home package. He kept phoning his wife saying his medication was being mixed up or forgotten. He told his wife his phone was taken from him. By weeks end when his wife had the red tape sorted to bring him home, he had been taken back to the hospital. She claims she received a call at 2am to say come in. Tragically her husband died before she got there.

Last word to Liz Hayes –

"I was heartened to see the number of people from the Manning come to the parliamentary public hearing in Taree.

But what many of them had to say was dreadful to hear.

Health services have significantly deteriorated and shockingly, lessons from past horrors don't appear to have been learnt.

And this is from health professionals.

If doctors, nurses and those in allied health services are saying things are crook, then those of us who do, or could one day need their help, the patients, probably should get behind them.

This is a fight for the community's health. Mum and dad, nan and pop, the kids. Everyone. The people of the Manning.

And rather than be defensive, I'd like to think that those in positions of power might embrace the moment. No amount of spin will make those who have already been profoundly let down, feel better.

And after everything we've all heard, it would be shameful if nothing was to change."

The only cold comfort we can take from all this is that we are not alone. There are other rural/regional hospitals in NSW who suffer the same fate of understaffing, under funding, mismanagement and lack of facilities despite dedicated staff.

Do all roads point to Newcastle
????

DM

THE TEN ROSE CARE COMMANDMENTS!



With rose season in full swing, it's a great opportunity to hone in on how best to look after roses. See, roses often get a bad rap for being hard to grow, but that's just not the case. Rose plants are rewarding and beautiful and by following the 10 rose care commandments you can bet on your plants coming up roses every time.



Monika a beautiful new release for 2021



Mr Linclon best selling rose since 1950s



The Childrens Rose our most popular pink

1. THOU SHALT NOT CUT THE STEM WILLY-NILLY.

Cut above an outward-pointing bud. These dormant buds look like little reddish lumps on the stem, at leaf junctions. If you cut just above one of these buds, the new growth will grow in the direction the bud is pointing. The new stem that grows will take around six weeks to re-bloom.

2. THOU SHALT NOT WET THE PLANT WHEN WATERING.

Unlike most plants, which are perfectly happy to be sprinkled with water from above, roses should be watered via the soil. Fungus love to munch on rose leaves, and a lot of these fungi need moist conditions to thrive. If you're watering your rose foliage, you're asking for foliar disease.

3. THOU SHALT MAKE THE BIG CUTS IN WINTER.

Rose plants need to be chopped, hacked and reduced a lot. Roses flower best on new growth and hard pruning each winter is the best way to clear away the old stuff to make way for the new. When you've finished pruning, your rose plant should be about knee-high and consist of three or four evenly-spaced stems growing outwards. No inward-pointing stems. No short, stubby branches. No thick, old, grey wood.

4. THOU SHALT NOT USE BLUNT SECATEURS.

Make sure your pruners are sharp and when pruning, dip the blades into disinfectant to reduce the spread of disease.

5. THOU SHALT NOT BE TEMPTED ONLY BY THE SWEETEST-SMELLING BLOOMS.

When shopping for roses, look for disease resistance too, so you can enjoy a low-care (and perfumed) plant.

6. THOU SHALT NOT FILL THE HOLE WITH FERTILISER AND COMPOST WHEN PLANTING.

Put the compost or manure on top when finished planting, but keep it away from the trunk. As for feeding, wait until the plant shows signs of new growth (e.g. new leaves) before applying rose food.

7. THOU SHALT NOT GROW ROSES IN SHADE.

Rose plants need at least four to six hours of sunshine daily to thrive.

8. THOU SHALT NOT CROWD YOUR ROSE PLANT.

Roses like a spot where other plants and trees haven't taken over with their own roots. Your rose plant won't appreciate being planted in the shade of a large tree, over a concrete pipe or in a tiny pot.

9. THOU SHALT NOT DISCARD THE PLANT LABEL.

This will help you identify the rose variety if you come across any issues. Knowing whether your rose is a climbing 'Crepuscle' or a miniature 'Magic Show' will help your local nursery sort out your rose problem.

10. THOU SHALT NOT OVERFEED.

A common misconception is more fertiliser equals more blooms, but too much fertiliser can kill natural soil bacteria or lead to salt burn, both of which can harm your plant. Yellow leaves or little growth is not necessarily a sign your plant needs more fertiliser. Yellow leaves may be a sign of black spot. Sulphur can be applied to help with black spot. Puny growth can be attributed to heavy clay soil, curl grub eating the roots (use eco-neem) or insects like aphids (use eco-oil or pyrethrum) or thrips (use a spinosad-based insecticide) attacking new shoots. As a general guide, you should feed your rose plant three times a year. First at the beginning of spring, secondly at the start of summer and thirdly at the start of autumn.

Armed with this information now is a great time to create your Rose Garden or add to it. We literally have thousands of roses arriving at the nursery this time of year. Pop in and say hi, check out some of the beautiful new varieties arriving and as usual; If you need any help or assistance come and say g'day to one of our lovely staff at the nursery (who love roses just as much as you do) and can help to get you growing.

Caitlin

Wingham Nursery & Florist

Find us on Facebook or on our new website winghamnurseryandflorist.com.au
02 65534570

FISHING UP AN INTERESTING CHARACTER

Researching my books I do come across some very interesting characters, none more so than former Maitland resident Athel D'Ombra AM. Athel's resume includes photographer, optician, naturalist, author, cricketer, pioneer angler, game fisherman and historian. Born in 1901 Athel's contribution to society and inventiveness were significant. His fishing involvement was of most interest to me.

One of Athel's revolutionary plans was reported in the NSW Game Fishing Bulletin 1947. Athel's vision was to improve communication between boats, operating from Port Stephens and Watsons Bay in Sydney. The plan was to introduce a homing pigeon service during the competi-

tion season which could relay catch records from the boats to a mainland recording base. The birds were to be kept at Ron Duncan's.

It was early in the experiment that a major problem was discovered. Sea eagles and other birds of prey delighted in a feast of pigeon. As a

result no messages were received at home base.

Writing in Australian Outdoors magazine 1964 Athel reports - "The biggest snapper I have ever seen weighed 62lb caught wide out in a trawler". The fish was sold to Bert Rose at the Sea Breeze Hotel in Nelson Bay for £5/10/3. Reliable witnesses were the local constable and Fred Toll.

THE FLEET THAT EMPTIES OUR OCEANS

China's fishing armada operates more hours than the next 10 biggest nations combined. Mother Earth and all the marine creatures stand no chance whatsoever against this formidable voracious onslaught.

China has fished out the South China and East China Seas, the Sea of Japan and the Philippine Sea. So now, they've set sail with an expanded flotilla to conquer the oceans and all life therein.

In their wake, from North Korea to West Africa and along the west coast of South America, many thousands of individual fishermen and their families are starving to death.

How much is enough? More!

China has big plans. At the top of its list is enlarging the Southern Ocean krill take, from 32,000 metric tons to two million metric tons annually, a 60-fold increase.

Antarctic krill are free-swimming miniature crustaceans that live in humongous schools called swarms. Image credit: Australian Antarctic Division

That harvest would have disastrous consequences for the entire southern marine web of life, the largest planetary ecosystem. Krill feeds everything, from fish to whales and penguins to sea birds, and they facilitate the storage of immense amounts of atmospheric carbon.

Krill feed on sea ice undersides, algae. Trillions of krill parachute from the polar ocean surface to the deeper layers several times during the night. Their fecal pellets are stored along the sea floor, feeding an impressive array of bottom dwelling life (e.g. amphipods {small crustaceans}, sea worms and so many others). There's no waste in nature.

Each year, Antarctic krill sequester the equivalent amount of atmospheric CO2 to offset the emissions of 35 million automobiles.

Horrifyingly, the climate crisis has felled 80% of Western Antarctica's krill population. No sea ice. No krill. No life.

If China increases the Antarctic krill harvest amid this worsening climate catastrophe, it will force this breathtaking marine ecosystem into runaway collapse. Unacceptable.

Meanwhile in the Pacific Ocean, China's fishing fleet has ballooned by 500% since 2012. It's accelerating tunas and sharks on the fast track to extinction.

Longline fisheries are a horrid curse that wound, scare and kill many, many dozens of billions of our marine kith and kin, annually. There are enough longlines with a couple billion hooks to encircle the equator 522 times.

China's insatiable demand for tuna is emptying the sea. Never before, since the dawning of life in the oceans, has everything that's large been removed. There's nothing like it within any of the previous mass extinctions. Man's greedy disdainful plunder is utterly appalling.

Each year, fisheries are killing enough marine life to fill 122 Empire State Buildings. That is one building's worth of packed lifeless creatures every 2.9 days! Image credit: silverfinart.com

I asked respected fisheries professor Daniel Pauley, University of British Columbia: "How many lifeforms are being hooked, netted, caged, shot, sliced, bludgeoned, harpooned, stabbed, choked, crushed, gaffed and tortured with metal rods driven into their spines by fisheries?"



He told me in an email, "A quick guess is 10 trillion to 100 trillion per year."

At this unfathomable pace, Dalhousie University professor Boris Worm and others calculated that the oceans would run out of living creatures some time during the fourth decade of this century.

Chinese bottom trawlers are undoing the greatest storehouse of carbon on Earth, seabeds. Bottom trawling demolishes the sea floor and the slowest growing organisms on the globe, cold coral seamount gardens. After fisheries ruins and captures everything on the floor, it releases as much CO2, each year, as the world's entire aviation industry. That means bottom trawling it's adding much more heat to the fossil fuel and wood pellet stoked oceans. Irreversible damage.

As longline and purse seine surface fisheries deplete the oceans,

more bottom trawlers are finishing off seabed marine life and the Gen Zs (under 26s) chance of surviving past midcentury.

We cannot inhabit Earth with lifeless oceans. Hence, WE THE PLANET LOVERS demand an end to the annihilation of all marine life by China and every other fishing nation. The 30% proposed protected areas within the oceans are not sufficient enough. In order to heal, we must leave the oceans in their entirety alone for at least a century.

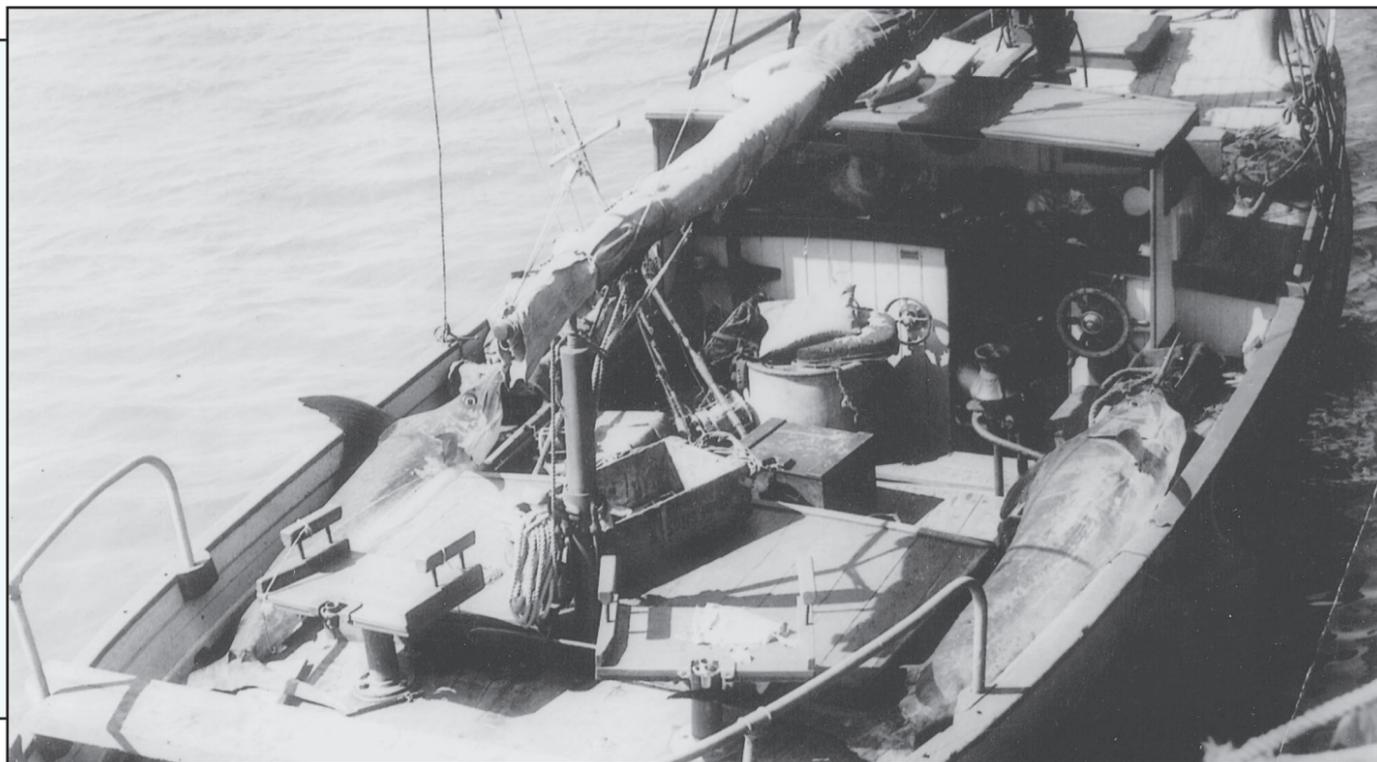
Join the climate and extinction strikes, and the old-growth forest blockades. Become an ocean defender. Support the vital conservation work of Sea Shepherd. Write and talk (if possible!) to your local council.

Dr. Reese Halter

... is an environmentalist based in California who visits here regularly.

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.

Look Closely - Two marlin caught by Athel on The Viking owned by Jack Jensen





BOOK REVIEW

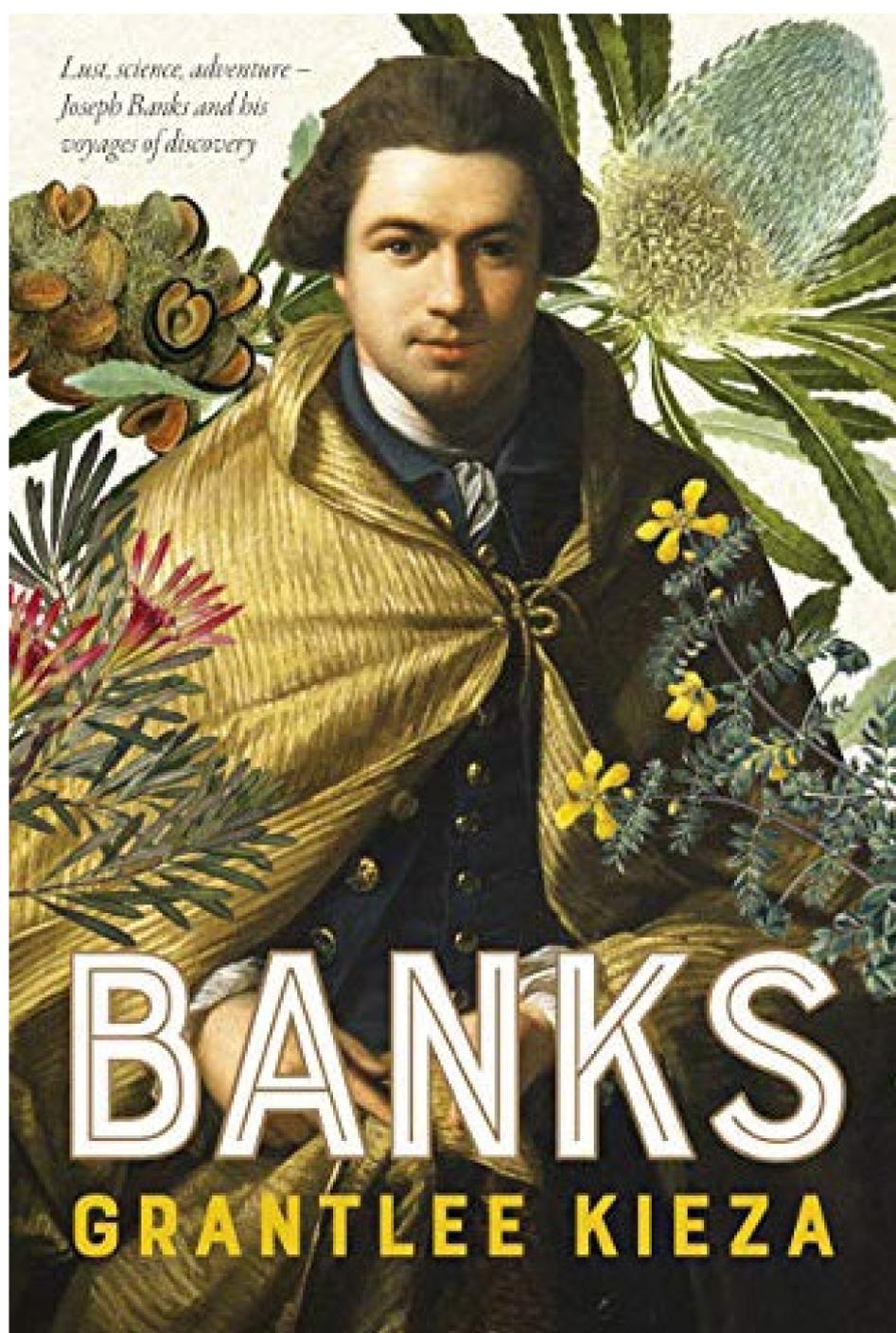
BANKS, A BIOGRAPHY (Part 2.)

Grantlee Kieza OAM

ABC Books, Sydney 2020

RRP \$39.99

This was to be the last great adventure for Banks, who “instead of going with Phipps towards the North Pole” as planned, instead botanized with friends in Wales. “Banks remained the most famous naturalist in Britain” while also considered a “Lothario”. There was a scandal in the press concerning a supposed mistress and child, but Banks had “a hide as thick as the crocodiles’ he had seen in the Endeavour River”.



To be continued next edition.

Banks developed a close friendship with King George III, nicknamed “Farmer George”, only five years older than Banks. At the age of 30, Banks was given “a kind of superintendence’ of the Kew’s Royal Botanic Gardens.

Steadily, Banks morphed from an adventurer into a “stay-put scientist and docile country squire”

after his marriage to 20 year-old heiress Dorothea Hugessen, 15 years his junior, in 1788; the same year saw him elected President of the Royal Society, a position he held uninterrupted for over 40 years. Banks, knighted 23 March 1781, was further awarded the Red Ribbon of the Order of the Bath by the King 1 July 1795. Sir Banks was active in many organizations: “...the Royal Society Club, the

Society of Arts, the Dilettante Society, the Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Institution, the Engineers’ Society, the Literary Club, the Freemasons, the Horticultural Society, the Merino Society, the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society, the African Association, the Linnean Society, and all the associated dining clubs...trustee of the British Museum...the Board of Longitude, the Board of Agriculture, the Coin Committee and the Committee of Trade of the Privy Council.”

Banks was generous and a major wool grower in Lincolnshire, “a benevolent landlord and employer for much of the village”. He funded the annual fair, The Revesby Feast where “according to immemorial custom I am to feed and make drunk everyone who chooses to come, which will cost me in beef and ale near 20 pounds, and I am sure there is no quiet in the house all day.”

“Even more popular...for the local gentry and clergymen were Banks’s fishing parties on the Witham...from a tented horse-drawn barge, sometimes with a band on board.” Banks described one of these parties: “We drew ten miles of fresh water, and in four days caught seventeen hundred-weight of fish; dining always from twenty to thirty masters and mistresses, with servants and attendants, on the fish we had caught, dressed at fires made on the bank: and when we had done we had not ten pound of fish left.”

Banks lived with both his tall and well-built sister and wife Dorothea. His sister, Sophia, was deeply religious like their mother, but Banks was “a nominal Christian...even though he saw intelligent design in the universe and nature, he was indifferent to theology.” Banks and his wife never had children, “and while this was a disappointment to a man whose fortune had been based on

generations of family inheritance, Banks considered his scientific friends around the world to be his family”. Dorothea collected Chinese porcelain while Sophia, likewise barren, “built a priceless collection of coins, medals, visiting cards, satirical prints, advertisements, playbills and newspapers, including a detailed scrapbook on a serial killer known as the London Monster”. After Sophia’s death, 21 months before his own, Banks donated to the British Museum his sister’s “19,000 items and nine volumes of broadsheets and newspaper cuttings”.

“Exactly five years after Banks first saw the coast of New Holland”, the American War of Independence began 19th April, 1775. On 30th July, 1775, Cook returned from his Second Voyage, having lost but one man out of 118. Forster and his son came back with 260 new species of plants and two hundred undescribed animals. Cook had earlier written to Banks 18th November 1772 from Cape of Good Hope, “Some cross circumstances which happened at the latter part of the equipment of the Resolution created...a coolness betwixt you and I, but I can by no means think it was sufficient to me to break of all correspondence with a man I am under many obligations too.” Solander helped repair the relationship and assuage Banks’ bruised ego. Cook went on to be “unanimously elected a fellow of the Royal Society” and was encouraged to author the account of his Second Voyage, enraging the elder Forster who “claimed (Lord) Sandwich had promised him the lucrative assignment”.

Banks never let politics interfere with his scientific relationships and remained good friends with Benjamin Franklin, who helped frame the American constitution, even though the two countries were at war. Franklin, in

turn, used his influence to ensure French ships did not interfere with Cook's Third Voyage which set sail 12 July 1776. On 14th February 1779, Cook, surrounded by thousands of hostile Hawaiians, was fatally stabbed in the neck during a melee while taking a chief hostage for the return of a stolen longboat. Receiving "disturbing reports" via European ships sailing from China, Banks successfully lobbied for an annual pension of 200 pounds for Cook's widow, and organized a commemorative medal struck in Cook's honour.

Although England was at war with France, Banks was elected as a foreign associate of Paris's *Institut National des Sciences et des Artes* on 26 December 1801, and "wrote a letter of thanks to France: a 'nation which, during the most frightful convulsions of the late most terrible revolution, never ceased to possess my esteem'" Banks was attacked in "... *Cobbett's Political Register*, a weekly London-based newspaper that expressed 'disgust at this load of filthy adulation' for 'a novel association of revolutionary philosophers' in a statement 'replete with ...servility, disloyalty and falsehood'." Banks, further to his credit, "oversaw the return of captured natural history collections to the French on ten occasions during their conflicts with the British."

With the French revolution looming and threat of British social unrest Banks observed "he was living in times 'teeming with the monstrous Birth of Equality'." One of six prominent French scientists executed during the French Revolution, "Antoine Lavoisier, a fellow of the Royal Society often described as The Father of Chemistry, had been beheaded on the afternoon of his trial on 8 May 1794 along with 123 others. A frequent correspondent with Banks, "one of the charges against him was that English letters had been found in his house. It was said that it took just an instant to cut off his head, but that one hundred years might not suffice to reproduce its like." Gieza note that "Banks's friend Barthelemy Faujas de Saint-Fond had shared hemp seeds from Kew with eleven fellow scientists in France; eight of them had been dragged to the guillotine during the uprising."

Gieza writes "Under what was called 'The Bloody Code', there were 222 crimes in Britain that carried the death penalty, most of them tied to poverty, such as the cutting down of a tree or even the theft of a rabbit. Transportation was seen as more humane than execution and England had been sending convicts and prisoners

of ware to the British colonies in North America for almost two hundred years."

"In mid-1770's London...the city had become intolerably overcrowded, and the thousands of prostitutes working in Convent Garden, Soho and Drury Lane indicated unprecedented levels of poverty, child labour and crime in England." Jails were packed and the overflow of prisoners housed aboard ships.

The loss of the American colonies led to the search for a new convict depository, and a parliamentary committee was established and chaired by Sir Charles Bunbury, which summoned expert witnesses before it in March 1779. Banks was the first to propose and campaign for Botany Bay, leading to our First Fleet of convicts. According to Bunbury, Banks had testified that there would be "little probability of any opposition from the natives, as during his stay there...in 1770...he saw very few, and did not think there were above fifty in all the neighbourhood, and had reason to believe the country was very thinly peopled; those he saw were naked, treacherous, and armed with lances, but extremely cowardly, and constantly retired from our people when they made the least appearance of resistance...The proportion of rich soil was small in comparison to the barren, but sufficient to support a very large number of people; there were no tame animals, and he saw no wild ones...there were no beasts of prey, and he did not doubt but our sheep and oxen... would thrive and increase; there was great quantities of fish...The grass was long and luxuriant... the country was well supplied with water; there was an abundance of timber and fuel, sufficient for any number of buildings which might be necessary."

Such a new colony held promise for self-sufficiency as well as abetting British trade and its economy. It's remote location, if successful, would allow Britain domination of the South Pacific.

Philip was determined that "Rewarding and punishing the convicts must be left to the Governor...There are two crimes that would merit death -murder and sodomy. For either of these crimes I would wish to confine the criminal till an opportunity offered of delivering him as a prisoner to the natives of New Zealand, and let them eat him. The dread of this will operate much stronger than the fear of death."

Kieza then provides an overview of Australia's early colonial history from the first four naval Governors, Captains Phillip,

Hunter, King and Bligh, through to Major-General Lachlan Macquarie. Bligh receives a lot of attention, inclusive of the Mutiny on the *Bounty* and Australia's only *coup d'etat*, the so-called "Rum Rebellion". Kieza is a researcher, a gatherer of facts and data, often too content with a conventional story line as with Bligh: "Almost twenty years after the *Bounty* was taken from William Bligh, the revulsion the man could create around him had led to revolution...The troops would later claim that they found Bligh cowering under a bed, which he denied and Australia's first political cartoon would depict him being dragged out of his hiding place." The author goes on to describe Major George Johnston as a "Rum Corps commander" in "a rum-based economy". Kieza states "Arthur Phillip had started the rot by granting the New South Wales Corps the right to buy rum at cost price, no more than 5 shillings a gallon, and the drink had gradually become the main currency in the sozzled colony. John Macarthur oversaw a trade that involved soldiers of 'the Rum Corps' holding a monopoly on imported goods and the liquor to pay for them. Much-needed wares were sometimes selling at a thousand per cent mark-up, while Macarthur and his confederates built huge landholdings by driving the Indigenous inhabitants away, and often killing them."

However, as Paul Brunton, Senior Curator at the Mitchell Library, noted:

Bligh was a man of integrity and a man who thought for himself, the sort of man Banks wanted...I don't think he (Macarthur) intended to overthrow Bligh but just destabilise him, as he'd done to his predecessors...the dispute between these two prickly characters simply got out of hand.

Michael Duffy wrote (2008): "The rebellion gave rise to two great pieces of spin. One was the picture of Bligh being pulled from beneath the bed...part of a campaign to brand Bligh a coward, which would reduce support for him in the colony and in Britain... The other great piece of spin was the name Rum Rebellion...it had nothing to do with rum. The label was invented by a teetotal writer, William Howitt, almost 50 years later. *Officers of the corps held a monopoly on rum importing in the 1790's, but this had ended years before the rebellion...The name seems to have persisted partly due to the power of alliteration, and partly because it has allowed left-leaning writers to blame the event on Australia's proto-capitalists.*

Paul Brunton observed that,

following the deposing of Bligh, "the early capitalists of NSW were here to stay".

Kieza enumerates the contents of the *Lady Barlow* when it arrived in England on 19 June 1805, "with the first cargo produced entirely by the colonists: 264 tons of elephant sea oil worth 52800 pounds, 13,730 sealskins worth 2746 pounds, and 3673 feet of bloodwood timber." The rape had begun.

The first and early encounters between Europeans and the peoples of the South Pacific are recounted in detail and it's these details which illuminate this sometimes dry and ponderous biography-history. As history is written and distorted by the victors, we lack the views of the indigenous populations, relying on European descriptions. Returning to Britain in May 1793 Phillip brought Bennelong and Yemmerrawane, although "dressed in the height of London fashion - coats, silk stockings, blue and buff striped waistcoats, ruffled shirts and slate-coloured breeches - they were often sick and longed for home. 'They seemed constantly dejected', the *London Observer* noted, 'and every effort to make them laugh has been for many months ineffectual. Yemmerrawane, the 'good tempered lively lad', died after a long illness far from his home a year after arriving in England, on 18 May 1794.

Banks's renowned botanist Caley brought his "Aboriginal guide and friend Daniel Moowattin", the third Aboriginal to visit Britain to London, in 1810. Banks, as in the visits of Bennelong and Yemmerrawane eighteen years prior, paid all the visitor's expenses, attiring him "in the very 'pink' of fashion". Daniel was unimpressed by Britain: "The magnificence of the finest buildings, or the dazzling lustre of the principal streets, but little attracted his notice; and when once asked how he liked the fine shops and houses he answered, that they were all very good, but not equal to the woods in his own Country..." Moowattin could never have imagined what the British would finally do to Australia's magnificent forests. Returning to Sydney four years later (1812), Moowattin "became the first Indigenous person to be legally executed when he was hanged for the rape of a settler's fifteen-year-old daughter, Hannah Russell."

The impact of diseases like smallpox is difficult to fathom, and too easily lost in the narrative. A small group of Inuit had been brought to London by a friend of Banks, the trapper and fur trader George Cartwright, in 1773, and "at first enjoyed their visit", but all

but one, contracted smallpox and died. The sole female survivor returned to Labrador only to transport the disease and wipe out her entire tribe. The first Tahitian visitor, Ahutoru, brought to Paris by Bougainville, died of smallpox on his return home. The second Tahitian to visit Europe, Mai (1774) “became a celebrity throughout England”, and was feted with style, “his exotic good looks and gentle manners winning everyone over.” Instructed by the King to “look after Mai in style and send the Crown the bill” Banks did just that and ran up 229 pounds 4 s. Wisely, Banks, while entertaining Mai, arranged his inoculation against the smallpox. In September 1789, “while Phillip was under instructions from home to punish convicts for harming the Eora or stealing from them...Henry Hacking may have been the first colonist to kill a local when he fired into a group of Eora...while hunting on the north shore of the harbour...*By then, the Aboriginal people around Port Jackson were also being devastated by smallpox.*” (Italics mine)

Kieza doesn't tell us the real story, that the first colonists to kill Aborigines likely did so with a cough or a sneeze, or, just possibly it was the “variolas matter” (pus sealed in a glass container taken from a recovering smallpox victim used for inoculation) carried ashore by First Fleet surgeon, John White, for inoculating “any children born in the settlement” somehow mysteriously escaping. If it had been deliberate, this would be called “biological warfare”; Europeans were unintentional vectors of a variety of genocidal diseases. However, regardless of intentionality, it was a devastating biological war wiping out Aborigines and their oral culture built over tens of thousands of years. According to the National Museum of Australia, just 15 months after the arrival of the First Fleet (April, 1789) a major smallpox epidemic broke out, but not among the colonists and convicts who had already faced exposure to it: “Without previous exposure to the smallpox virus, Aboriginal people had no resistance and up to 70% were killed by the disease...Smallpox spread across the country with the advance of European settlement, bringing with it shocking death rates. The disease affected entire generations...and survivors were in many cases left without family or community leaders. The spread of smallpox was followed by influenza, measles, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases, all of which Australia's Aboriginal people had no resistance to, and all of which brought widespread death.” Without the onslaught of

these diseases, Australian colonial history would have been very different indeed. German-American bacteriologist Hans Zinsser (*Rat's Lice and History* 1935) was the first to give due weight to the impact of infectious diseases in human history.

But Kieza virtually ignores this catastrophic impact in his Australian history: “Phillip kept Banks abreast of the situation with the Indigenous people and said he believed that they burnt grass all over the landscape. Despite some early promise of friendship, there was not much of this between the locals and the invaders. British diplomacy usually involved firearms and force, and Phillip complained that the Eora people attacked ‘any Straggler’ they meet: ‘They have been robbed of their Lances etc and now taken their revenge. I shall endeavor to secure a couple of them, in Order to get their Language, which I am anxious to obtain, for I am now satisfied that they will not be persuaded to live with us voluntarily.’”

Insights into Aboriginal views are scattered: Shipwrecked on the Endeavour River while repairs were undertaken, Banks found the local tribe (Guugu Yimithirr) disinterested in the “clothes, beads and trinkets Cook and Banks gave them...and Banks later found the gifts left behind in a heap, not worth carrying. Both Banks and Cook noted the happiness of the Aboriginal people, linking it to their “unfamiliarity with materialism”. Cook wrote “they are far more happier than we Europeans... They live in a Tranquility which is not disturbed by the Inequality of Condition. The earth and Sea of their own accord furnishes them with all things necessary for Life.”

Matthew Flinders, one of many explorers and scientists backed by Banks, used the term “Australians” for Aborigines, concluding “that while the customs and language of the Aboriginal people differed in various parts of the continent, they all belonged to one people.”

Kieza notes that “While Banks revelled in the exotic flowers at Kew...economic botany was his passion.” Banks was a humanist and utilitarian. The concepts of nature, ecology, evolution and biogeography were yet to arrive. The Industrial Revolution starting in his youth marked the start of a steep increase in human population. The world's population in 1750 was estimated at 790 million; by 1850 it was 1.26 billion. We will reach 8 billion this year. It would have seemed to people of those times that the earth's resources were inexhaustible, a perception fuelling an unbridled avarice

and rapacious exploitation of the natural world. Banks hadn't any framework for understanding what damage the introduction of exotic plants and animals could do.

“Banks's greatest legacy is in his laying of platforms on which others could shine. He achieved this by supporting voyages of discovery and the management of institutions to facilitate scientific breakthroughs, while keeping the lines of communication and collaboration between scientists open even during warfare...Banks once said he believed ‘a man is never so well employed as when he is Laboring for the advantage of the Public; without the Expectation, the hope or Even a wish to Derive advantage of any kind.’ A philanthropist and mentor, he paid from his own deep pockets so that he could improve human knowledge. He always saw the study of the natural world as the greatest endeavour.” In spite of his generous philanthropy, at the end of his life Banks' annual income had expanded to 30,000 pounds “from property and investments in the East India Company”.

Kieza doesn't inform us that Alexander von Humboldt travelled to England, meeting Banks in 1789; the start of a twodecade friendship between the two. It was Humboldt who eclipsed Banks, becoming the Western world's greatest naturalist celebrity, laying the foundation for our present understanding of nature and ecology, continental drift, biogeography and ushering in the next phase of European thought: The Age of Reflection, where the whole was seen as of greater importance than the mere exploitable parts of it. Humboldt never married and fathered no children offspring, and completely exhausted his family fortune on his scientific pursuits. Humboldt's proposed expedition to the Himalayas was thwarted by the East India Company.

“On the morning of 19 June 1820, Sir Joseph Banks died aged seventy-seven at Spring Grove, unafraid of his imminent passing and ‘quite easy about the event, which he knew could not be far distant, considering the state of his stomach.’ The man who had been one of the leading lights in Britain for most of his life had asked to be buried in the church or churchyard nearest where he died, ‘in the most private manner’ and with no fuss and no monument; so it was that his grave in St Leonard's Church in Heston remained unmarked for almost half a century.” “Banks remained in an unmarked grave until 1867...by then the Australian continent Banks had nurtured had become an agricul-

tural and mineral powerhouse producing riches in wool, wheat and gold.”

Australia continues to be mined, cleared of its natural vegetation, exploited and ravaged by unsustainable numbers of humans and their introduced plants and animals as part of a global economy. Gregory Andrews, Australia's Threatened Species Commissioner (ABC Fact Check 19 August 2015), stated that Australia has the highest loss of mammal species anywhere in the world: “35 per cent of all global mammal extinctions since 1500 have been Australian (30 out of 84 world-wide extinctions). Australia has lost 29 mammals since European colonisation, and feral predators are implicated in 28 of these extinctions. This compares to the loss of only one mammal in North America...” The losses of mammals in Australia “are especially significant given our terrestrial mammal fauna is extremely unique”.

Australia's Threatened Species Commissioner, Gregory Andrews said there were many reasons for Australia's extinction rates. When comparing places on the Red List, Australia is in the top five for extinction of animal and plant species, and the top 10 for endangered and threatened species.

The Union Jack occupies the upper hoist quadrant of our flag for very good reason and should remain there as a reminder for future generations. Kieza's book is not an easy nor a comforting read. There is an assumption that readers understand that, prior to Linnaeus, flora and fauna, in so far as they were recognized differentially, were known only by common names which varied from locale to locale as well as across language barriers. Kieza also assumes his readership will have some background in both European and Australian colonial history. The copious details can be disorienting as the dates too often exclude the year. Reading Banks is like pushing through dense undergrowth, difficult to see either ahead or where one has been. In that way it peculiarly captures the essence of those perilous voyages of discovery into the unknown which forever changed our world. Every Australian should know the contents of this monumental work, as so many of us are yet stuck, like Barry Jones, in The Age of Enlightenment, which ended with Humboldt and Goethe in the 19th century. How backward can one be?

Dr John Stockard OAM



BOOK REVIEW

WE SEE IT ALL: LIBERTY AND JUSTICE IN THE AGE OF PERPETUAL SURVEILLANCE

Jon Fasman

Scribe Publication

“1984” is arriving soon.

George Orwell’s best-selling novel (written in 1948) was based on an all-seeing Big Brother controlling society and a compliant population beaten into submission. Individualism has disappeared, and everyone is managed and controlled.

Jon Fasman, a journalist with the UK’s *Economist* based in the US, has produced a deeply troubling book about the technology of social control. Most people in western countries have no idea of the full surveillance technology being deployed apparently to make them safe.

This year is the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on New York (“9/11”: September 11 2001). Our civil liberties were already under threat before then but the erosion has accelerated even more so. There is now a “policing-industrial complex” based on combatting terrorism – and a lot more. A lot of people have made a career out of making other people feel unsafe so that they will support this new industrial complex. There is a lot of money to be made out of surveillance.

As Fasman asks: “How much state surveillance are you willing to tolerate for improved public safety?” This is not a question that gets much public debate in the mass media, where there is a headlong rush to support more and more of it to “make us safe”. Fasman is hoping that people will use this book to initiate that type of debate.

In the UK the potential controversy over this technology was hosed down quickly by what happened surrounding the 1993 murder of Jamie Bulger. The shopping centre’s various closed circuit TV monitors picked up Robert Thompson and Jon Venables escorting the poor infant out of the complex on his way to the murder site. Ironically a number of adults heard his screams for help but ignored them – technology helped tracked down the murderers much better than adults. Since then



it has been difficult to maintain a long-term discussion of the pros and cons of the new technology.

Here are some of the US technologies reviewed by Fasman. ALPR: Automatic License Plate Readers are mounted on police cars. (In NSW there is an update each morning – so that ALPRs, rather than police officers, identify unregistered or otherwise suspicious cars).

Body cameras and mobile phone cameras give police and citizens new ways of looking at each other. Drones enable authorities to hover unseen over key locations monitoring and recording what is going on.

Facial recognition technology is a growth area. It is becoming more accurate as time goes by. Similarly US door bells that enable the resident to see who is at the door without opening it, also carry out a 24 hour monitoring of the street outside the home.

To conclude, in popular entertainment we see the advantages of this technology. In the “police procedural” *Vera*, based on a senior

police officer in the north of England, in each instalment she routinely calls on this technology. What websites have been visited? Where were credit cards used? What camera footage (both official and unofficial) such as car dash-cams, is available? Within 90 minutes the apparently baffling crime is solved.

On the other hand, China is an extreme example of what additionally you can do with this technology. Each citizen has a “social credit” which is affected by their daily actions. Their banks accounts, computers and street facial technology are all linked back to the central calculator. Are they buying diapers (a sign of looking after children)? They get

extra points. Are they spending too much time watching video porn? They lose points. Then when they, for example, wish to travel long distance their social credit score will determine whether they are eligible to buy a ticket. A poor social credit score will ban the travel. Prospective marriage partners are interested in the other’s social credit score – you don’t want to contaminate your own good score by marrying a loser.

The future has arrived first in China. When does it reach Australia?

Dr Keith Suter
Global Directions think tank

WE SEE IT ALL



SCRIBE

liberty and justice in the age
of perpetual surveillance

JON FASMAN

THE SLEEPER ELECTION ISSUE THAT COULD BITE MORRISON AND ALBANESE

Scott Morrison has rightly followed the science and medical advice in responding to COVID-19. If his government hadn't closed our borders, and the states hadn't enforced lockdowns and social distancing, imagine the catastrophe.

The Prime Minister quantified it recently when he said Australia had avoided 30,000 COVID deaths. That compares with the 910 deaths caused by the pandemic to date. "I'm not going to take risks with Australian lives," Morrison said.

PRIORITIES?

His government is not treating the hard climate science with the same urgency, although it has been developed over many more decades than the more rudimentary medical science it relied upon in responding to the pandemic.

Last month, the International Energy Agency, a long-time mouthpiece for fossil fuels, called for a global halt to new coal and gas ventures. At the same time, the Morrison government committed to spending \$600 million of taxpayers' money on a new gas-fired power plant in NSW's Hunter Valley.

Inaction on climate change presents us with real costs – in lives, livelihoods and the lost economic growth that would come with sustainable industries and jobs. Economist Nicki Hutley has summarised some of the likely consequences of inaction: "The cost of extreme weather disasters in Australia has doubled since the '70s, reaching \$35 billion over the decade to 2018-19. Economic damages per person are around seven times the global average."

EXPECT MASSIVE DEBT FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

The recent Black Summer fires are estimated to have cost about \$100 billion – 14 times the economic and social costs of the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

Health costs are just starting to be recognised and counted. Hutley reports that the 2011 heatwave "saw a 14 per cent rise in ambulance call-outs and a 13 per cent increase in excess deaths". Particulate emissions from dirty petrol have been reported to kill multiples of the road toll each year.

Research from the Australian National University and the University of Melbourne suggests economic

losses from climate change in a few decades could be like a COVID-sized economic shock every year. A similar prognosis has been suggested by modelling for the NSW government.

WE'RE BEHIND

Australia also runs the genuine risk that, as a global climate laggard, significant trading partners will levy carbon border taxes on our exports, costing billions in lost revenue and thousands of lost jobs.

The benefits of an effective and just transition, meanwhile, are supported by Deloitte, Beyond Zero, the Climate Council and many more in Australia, and by strategies adopted globally, including in the United States, Canada, Britain and Europe.

While Joe Biden and Boris Johnson push for greater emissions reductions, investor pressure mounts on fossil fuel companies. Shell was ordered by a Dutch court to slash its emissions; 61 per cent of Chevron shareholders backed a resolution to force an emissions reduction; and an activist hedge fund won two seats on the ExxonMobil board.

Australia's Federal Court found, in assessing a new coal mine, that our Environment Minister had a "duty of care" to younger people to avoid causing them personal injury from climate change. Expect more class actions against governments on climate.

Disturbingly, Australia's two major political parties are engrossed in a race to the bottom on climate change, seeing who can be less specific about targets and commitments.



John Hewson

Is a professor at the Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU, and former Liberal Opposition Leader.

REAL KULTCHA

It's that time of year again when we *Cockroach* supporters start looking for reasons – any reasons – to support our team against those *Canetoads* from north of the border!

Any sign, omen, auspice, tea-leaf reader, chicken entrails interpreter or even a card picking octopus will do as long as it confirms our deepest desire that this year, the winner of the Rugby League State Of Origin is going to be US: New South Wales! For some years now, we on the Mid-north Coast, have had a trump card up our sleeve as the *Coachroach* captain was our own Boyd Cordner and he didn't let us down. Now however, Boyd has been forced into retirement because he's taken a few too many hits to the head throughout his career and rightly so, he's worried about the long-term consequences. Oh, woe is us, we cried!

But no, there was no reason to cry or fear. The first game rolled around and there I sat in front of the large screen TV with all the essentials FETHed*: coldies in an esky beside my left hand, freshly popped popcorn in a bowl beside my right hand and headphones** tuned in. Into the breach stepped a team that had firepower to burn with Latrell Mitchell (also a local lad) and Tom Trbojevic. To cut a long story short (because if you're reading this you'll know who won) it was one-way traffic and the final score (50-6) flattered the *Canetoads*.

The first game by the way, was supposed to be held at *The G* in Melbourne but because the Victorians are having what appears to be a love affair with COVID 19 (they keep going back to it so what are we supposed to think?) so it was moved to Townsville. By the time you read this the second game will have been played (in Brisbane) and if the octopus can do it again we'll head to Sydney for Origin III two up. Ah, life can be good occasionally.

There has of course, been a lot of talk about the need for players to wear helmets because they (that nebulous group of "experts" that never seem to have a name or qualifications stated) say that helmets (as are worn in American football) would stop this brain trauma! What a load of codswallop! A player is concussed by the rapid stopping of their head and this will happen during a tackle when the body is stopped rapidly or the player's head hits another body or the ground. The brain is not lashed securely within the skull as say, a car is tied down on the back of a trailer. If the trailer comes to a violent stop, generally speaking, the car will stay put because of the structure of

the trailer and the ropes holding the car in place, absorb the stress. The brain floats within the skull and if the skull's momentum (such as when a player is running hard) is stopped abruptly the brain (for a split second) continues in the direction it was going, surging towards the inside of the skull and then hits it. It doesn't travel far but it does travel and the more violent the stop, the greater is the potential for damage. The more times the brain is concussed then the greater are the chances that eventually this trauma is going to push towards permanent injury. The biggest problem currently, is doctors can't see the damage like they can see a broken arm. They know what's happening but the only real test for the amount of damage that has occurred is during an autopsy and that's a bit late to manage the injury for a player.

You don't have to be a genius (and I'm certainly not) to understand a helmet is not going to stop the surge of the brain inside the skull if the player's head is violently and suddenly stopped be it in a tackle or when their head hits the ground. You'll have to do a power of talking to convince me that a helmet is going to do little more than stop a player suffer the odd scratch.

That's why there is the current push to wipe out the high tackles in the ARL. If they don't get out in front of this issue (and there is plenty of evidence to suggest they're already late and should have begun this process years ago) there will be law suits flying around like confetti at a Greek wedding! Lawyers just love to get involved in this sort of thing and sometimes they might be doing it for all the right reasons – not just money!

So the next time you watch an ARL game and see a player *with a bit of a wobbly boot on* be concerned because they've just been concussed and if they don't pass the HIA test the League is insisting they're out for at least 10 days to let their brain recover. Multiple concussions means you and I will never see a player like Boyd Cordner grace an ARL field again and that's got to be a tragedy.

Talk at you next month,
The Hillside Critic

*: Falls Easily To Hand. And you thought you'd never learn anything while reading this rant.

***: The Child Bride doesn't like to hear the dribblers shouting their commentary but will sit and watch the game so I listen on my headphones.

THE STORY OF THE MANNING GREAT LAKES WOODWORKERS

All good stories start out with “Once upon a time....”, so here is a true story that started in the town of Taree, way back in 1993.



Woodies Verity and Geoff

desired. There is no limit placed on any new member’s knowledge or experience, all are welcome whether male or female, young or older, and it does not matter what your level of expertise is about woodworking – as long as you want to “mess about” with wood you are welcome.

The central meeting room is the obvious place to start the day with tea and coffee available. During this time various world and local events are solved.

Monthly meetings are held, followed by a “Show and Tell” where members offer some of their latest work for viewing and comment. Photos are taken and appear in our monthly e-magazine, “The Woodworm”.

As an aside, it should be noted that the club membership is roughly one third female and two thirds male.

GALLERY OPENED

The Bridge Gallery was re-worked in 2015 and opened in time for the 75th anniversary of the nearby Martin Bridge on 17th May, about 250 visitors came through the doors on that day. All the items on display are made by the members reflecting the variety of work possible. At the time of writing there seems to be a friendly contest to see who can make the smallest turned goblet, currently one about 20mm high seems to be the smallest!

However, we do other work such as intarsia, marquetry scroll saw work, wood turning, pyrography, jigsaws, toys, boxes, etc. Examples of all these techniques and skills can be seen in the gallery.

For anybody who may be interested in joining us, please contact the

Secretary, Kim Fetherston, on 0404 481 084. Details can also be found on our website, www.mgl-woodworkers.com

Good stories always end with a comment such as “they all lived happily ever after” - in our case we are very happy with our location, we enjoy each others company, and we all have learned new skills which gives each of us a sense of achievement.

Gallery opens every Saturday between the hours of 9.00am and 2.00pm

Admission is free. Most items are for sale and all items are hand made by our members.

Kim Fetherston



Woodies bridge gallery



Woodies Geoff



Woodies Cowboy

club spent about 3,500 man hours (and approx. \$30,000 of the clubs own money) and transformed the site into an impressive group of buildings which provide a respectable view of Taree to visitors crossing Martin Bridge. The support of many local businesses in

helping the club achieve the end result is gratefully acknowledged.

The original buildings have now been transformed into the Bridge Gallery, a central meeting and social room, and a workshop.

The workshop has a range of woodworking tools and machinery which all members have access to, as well as a good supply of various wood, mainly locally sourced. However, the main “tool” available to members is the knowledge and skills that are available within the membership, all of which is shared to foster and encourage existing skills and acquire new woodworking knowledge if so

Once upon a time a small group wanted to get together and form a club to enjoy the art of working with wood. Initially there were some problems in locating suitable rooms to meet and enjoy the fellowship of fellow woodworkers but after some effort, space was found in Chatham High School.

For various reasons, this was not a very satisfactory solution in the long term, so after a number of enquiries, better space was found in the Taree Showgrounds in the form of a tin shed. This did for some years but space became a major concern as the

number of members grew, and the increasing number of machines and storage of wood were not helped by frequent floods in the area.

The club became aware that the old buildings that was once the old Taree Swimming pool may be able to be recycled.

RENOVATIONS

So in March, 2011, the club members started renovating the interior of the three very dilapidated and vandalised buildings which consisted of the original male and female change rooms and the central administration building.

The Council started renovating the exterior of the buildings. The



ANTIQUES AND COLLECTABLES

The hobby that lasts a lifetime



A selection of pre decimal currency Australian coins

I recommend collecting to all. Choose the category that suits you or take the plunge and collect a wide variety of unique and interesting treasures. It is always fun and can be profitable. Collecting brings you joy, knowledge, appreciation of and an understanding of how far our society has come and where we have come from. I started collecting some forty years ago and the enjoyment and thrill of interesting 'finds' still continues.

I hope everyone has recovered from the recent flood events. A lot of clean up required. It is wonderful how most people bounce back after disasters. Thank goodness for all those fantastic volunteers, helpers, supporters and those who are just there. We thank you all.

Our new shop, Antiques & Old Wares - 12 Isabella Street in Wingham, is keeping Dave and I both busy and entertained. Lots of variety, with many unique finds to be discovered. The collecting hobby has now continued into our retirement years. If you get a chance, call in and say hello. Whilst in Wingham also call in to our 'best little MUSEUM' anywhere which is on the corner of Bent Street. You will be amazed with the displays.

Another shop to keep you entertained is Sue's Delinquent Funk with vintage, retro and antique items. Again, in Wingham, there are some delicious cafes, bakeries and eateries. Well worth the day trip.

Barry has Isadora's Antiques in Victoria St, Taree and has a great variety of unique items. Darren, right at the school end of Manchester St in Tinonee, has wonderful antique clocks on display and for sale and is also deals a clock repairer.

Many old timers to youngsters enjoy collecting coins. Some advice for the new coin collector. DON'T CLEAN YOUR COINS, this can devalue them greatly. Pick up a magnifier or loupe to view your coins or potential purchases more closely. Store your coins away from PVC. Many coin storage accessories contain PVC so ask the question before you purchase albums, coin pocket pages or coin flips. "Are these PVC free?"

Collect what you like, not what other people tell you that you should be collecting. Coin collecting is supposed to be a hobby, and therefore enjoyable. If you are doing something because you've been told you have to do it, not because you'd like to and want to,

makes you lose the enjoyment. Nothing kills interest and enthusiasm in a hobby like turning that hobby into something that doesn't suit you. And if other people tell you, "those coins are useless junk, why are you collecting those", your answer is simple: "I like them and I enjoy collecting them". There are no rules about what you can and cannot do.

Stay connected with other collectors. Joining an Internet forum is a good start. You might want to consider joining a local coin club. Make friends with your local coin dealers. It has been scientifically proven that coin collecting is not a hereditary disease; this means it can be a lonely pursuit at times, with perhaps nobody else in your family or circle of friends understanding your passion. It helps if you have reminders now and then that you are not the only crazy coin collector on the planet.

Learn whatever you can about the coins that interest you. Again, Internet forums are a great place to learn. Other websites are good, too (let Google be your friend). Buy or borrow coin books and read them; the old guys at the coin club always say "first the book, then the coin" – meaning, spend money on books before spending money on coins, otherwise you

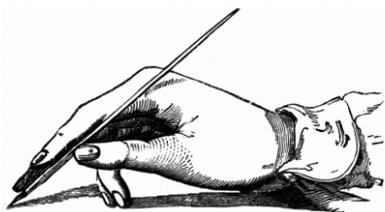
are more than likely going to be wasting your money. Take every opportunity to examine and study coins, even coins that do not belong to you (this is where "making friends" and "joining a coin club" can assist you).

Beware of eBay; there are plenty of sharks in that ocean. In particular, be aware of things that sound "too good to be true", because they probably are. Beware of clueless sellers selling valuable "mint errors" that are really just worthless damaged coins. Beware of coin sellers from China; that is where most of the modern fakes are coming from these days. If there is something you are not sure of ask questions before purchasing.

A valuable resource for any collector in this category is – Renik's 'Australian Coin & Bank Note Values.' – put out yearly.

If you have Antique or Old Wares, (from shed to fine display items), that you are not sure of, I may be able to help with information, appraisals &/or sales. I love the history and stories of old and interesting treasures.

**Phone Rex – 0427 880 546.
Take care and stay safe!**



YOUR SAY...

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

**Letter to the Editor,
In response to "Why I Opposed the MCC Budget!" by Cr Peter Epov.**

Dear Editor,

Running our region is a business. We can't let it fail.

Last year, I made a 7-page submission on the 2020 budget, delivery/ops and cultural plan, much of which mirrored Cr Epov's article for this following year. Nothing materially changed in the time between, it seems.

It's tiresome to write this, repeating concerns, wasting time. I at least got a laugh at the audio from the [28 April 2021 MidCoast Council meeting](#). When Cr Epov raised the issue of presenting an incomprehensible draft budget to the public, Mayor West stated that the budget draft is just that – a draft – and therefore did not need to be complete or up to any particular standard.

Inviting the public to review massive documents that aren't up to a standard of exhibition, then ignoring the submissions and moving forward each year, is not much of a submission process.

There are a few inferences in the mayor's attitude and that of the other councillors:

1. The council does not need to present a transparent, functional budget/plan, instead relying on the public to pull them up on any mistakes.
2. The responsibility therefore lies with the rate-paying community.
3. When someone does make a submission pointing out fundamental issues with the documents on public exhibition, the council will listen and act on the submission, thereby updating a 'draft' into a final, complete, actionable and measurable plan.

There are a few problems in the mayor's attitude and that of the some other councillors:

1. The council should in fact be presenting a budget/plan as close to the intended final version as possible.
2. Most ratepayers are too busy with jobs, families and life's struggles to pour through massive council documents and write submissions – that is if they even hear about the public submission process. (In Randwick City Council, I've seen huge ads on key bus-stops promoting their council's public documents and submission invitations. It's great to see community consultation taken so seriously.)
3. When someone does bother to make a submission, such as my-

self, it is disregarded, wrongly put in the late pile appendix, responded to only in the briefest strokes until followed up, and was even the catalyst for one councillor to tell me never to contact them again.

Again, the points I made mirror much of what Cr Epov wrote – no correlation between the budget and the delivery/ops plan, not following the integrated reporting and planning framework, little use of S.M.A.R.T. objectives, and lack of transparency in budget lines and costings. These fundamental issues have not been addressed, despite the public submissions.

To support these points, the NSW Audit Office published its [Report on Local Government 2020](#) on 27 May 2021. It included several high-risk findings against financial reporting, record keeping, IT, asset valuations, lack of quality reviews, evidence, and rationale... and this was for 2018-19, as council "submitted draft financial statements for audit on 16 October 2019, one month after the scheduled audit start date... The financial statements contained numerous errors and disclosure deficiencies." (4.2 Financial reporting)

It is not clear that council has actioned meaningful improvements in the two years since.

Cr Epov also raised a question regarding the GM salary increase. West said council doesn't decide the GM's salary, and that the decision falls to him based on the 'industry' / expert recommendations, without being specific beyond the fact that amalgamation occurred several years ago, making the job harder.

This is a fair point, but it requires evidence of the industry/performance review and aforementioned expert recommendations. The [Guidelines for the Appointment and Oversight of General Managers](#) state that discretionary increases require a formal performance review and a governing council vote.

The lack of transparency is a concern that the mayor's comments simply magnify.

To council and executive, please want to do the job properly – or step aside. Or at least don't bother putting things on public exhibition if it's just to tick another box. If there are issues raised about key management plans affecting the entire region, consistently, year on year, then please address those issues.

Listen, and act, for the long-term sake of the community you represent.

Kieran J. Hennessy

Dear Editor,

A recent visit to Harrington opened my eyes to *The Manning Community News* when I picked up the May edition.

I was drawn particularly to the fourth column, front page, Editorial. News of your endeavours in establishing an independent regional voice has had exposure in mainstream media yet the apparent stifling of that voice is little known

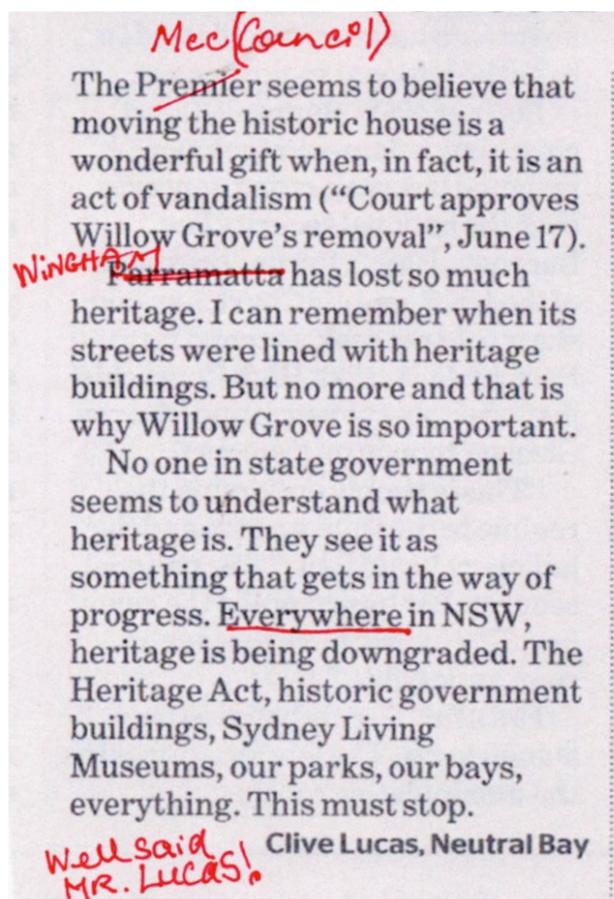
outside the area of circulation.

Local mastheads have long been the 'Parish Pump', reflecting and helping to weave the social fabric of the community. Those who seek to silence the voices of others do not, in the main, reflect the of the majority who deserve a platform for a broad church of thought and ideas.

Allan Gibson OAM

Cherrybrook NSW 2126

FROM A RECENT SYDNEY MORNING HERALD LETTERS PAGE



Dear Editor,

Preserving heritage is not just about respecting the past. It has the potential to generate significant economic spin-offs. Bellingen and Bangalow are shining lights of what is possible when you recognise shopping malls are not what attracts tourists.

Wingham can be a vibrant town built on heritage, or another soulless country town frozen in the car headlights.

Warren Cross
Upper Lansdowne

I couldn't agree more with the plea to save our town of Wingham eloquently and passionately expressed by Di Morrissey in *The Manning Community News*. For a long time I and many of my friends have watched in dismay as many of the beautiful characteristics of our wonderfully unique town of Wingham have been slowly but surely unravelling before our eyes, aided in part by some insensitive and often outrageous decisions made by our council (think the "bedpan"water fountain for one). Heaven help us if

more of such proposed "ideas" go ahead.

We need enlightened council members with strong voices dedicated to the aesthetic advancement of this lovely town with ideas which both reflect its heritage and enhances its sensitive and prosperous future direction. Wingham is now a multicultural and eclectic town, full of quaint and richly diverse offerings, but is rapidly becoming another ho-hum town of mundanity. It has so much more to give.

Judy Finch
Cedar Party 2429



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