

The Manning Community News

NOV / DEC 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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Plus
Tomato Problem Solver



Pass this paper to a friend or neighbour before recycling

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HOW TO KILL KOALAS!

A local takes a long hard look at the future of Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest.



The purpose of Bio diversity credit schemes is to offset for the loss to Fauna, Flora and Environment caused by a development.

In Tea Gardens the Parry Cove and Myall River Downs developments plan to add 2381 dwellings plus commercial facilities yet provide no genuine biodiversity offset. Both developments appear to rely on the dubious process of 'offsetting'. This too often means setting aside unusable land which is flood prone, wetland, swamp marsh or similar in order to gain biodiversity credits.

The Parry Cove and Myall River Downs bio-diversity offset credits add nothing to improve the environment, reducing the plant and wildlife area and corridors by fragmenting and isolating fauna into 'sterile biodiversity offset

pockets', a process that inhibits any opportunity for koalas and other threatened fauna to live undisturbed and acquire genetic diversity.

If Parrys Cove and Myall River Downs do not provide convincing evidence that their offset credits are improving the fate of Tea Gardens or Hawks Nest koalas, threatened fauna, flora, environment then the biodiversity offset scheme is being "gamed" by developers.

(See "How to Kill Koalas" (Reference reading-Jean Shaw, Conference on Status/Plight of Hawks Nest- Tea Gardens Koalas)

The process for developers is - Eliminate the most favoured feed trees for the threatened Koalas, Squirrel Glider, Blossom Bats so they have to move away to feed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

We need Peter Epov

Re-Elected to MidCoast Council!

VOTE

1

in **Group C** for Change
'ABOVE THE LINE'

Choose Wisely! Make your Vote Count!



MID-COAST COUNCIL ELECTIONS

DECEMBER 4

Councillors are Wasting Your Money It's Time To Make Your Vote Count.

- **Unnecessary redevelopment of Master's Site at Taree, costing almost \$40m, taking money away from vital community projects.**
- **\$80,000 salary increase for General Manager with NO performance review.**
- **Lack of transparency in Decision Making.**

Here's the list of **restanding Councillors who voted to waste your money. Some of them are now heading a team of candidates. Please consider whether you really want them making decisions on the future of our community? If not, take note of their names.**

- David West, Len Roberts, Claire Pontin, Jan McWilliams, Troy Fowler, Katheryn Smith and Karen Hutchinson all voted for both the new Council Chambers on the old Master's site and General Manager's increase.
- Kathryn Bell voted in favour of the new Council Chambers.

Below are the details of their financial decisions.

An example of Council's attitude to providing basic levels of transparency, a foundation of good governance, is also provided.

If you agree it's time for a new direction, please forward this email to your mailing list.

If not, thank you for your time.

REDEVELOPMENT OF 'MASTER'S SITE'

In spite of strong community opposition, most Councillors decided they needed a glossy new building, at our expense. Council's own consultant report (by Balmoral Group) put the cost at **\$39.2 million**. COVID has since demonstrated the practicality of remote working, making this expenditure unnecessary and a financial burden on ratepayers for years to come. Community projects, many that have been promised for decades, will continue to be just a dream.

One example is a bicycle path in Hallidays Point. Linking the villages of Tallwoods, Blackhead, Redhead and Diamond Beach, initial planning began

20 years ago. Doubtless, financial constraints will now push it back another 20 years.

Every area throughout the Mid-coast LGA will have similar stories.

CAREFREE WITH OUR MONEY.

The promised economies of scale and financial savings from the NSW Government sponsored Council amalgamations has not materialised. In fact, this Council has overseen a 20% increase in staffing costs over the last 2 years. Not surprising when you consider some of the re-standing Councillors approved a salary increase for the General manager from \$350,000 to \$430,000 two and a half years into a four year contract. An \$80,000 pa.increase, with no performance review to justify their generosity ..

In light of criticisms from the NSW Government Audit Office regarding timeliness and methodology of this Council's financial statements, you would have to wonder what Key Performance Indicators this Council, under the leadership of mayor, David West, was measuring.

How do your salary increases compare? Are they tossed about with no performance review?

TRANSPARENCY OF DECISION MAKING

It's now obvious this area we are proud to call home has been discovered. Development is not only inevitable, but has the potential to enhance our lifestyle and economy. What is critical is development that benefits the community, not just developers. Currently there are a number of enquiries by community groups for information on DA's that are before Council. Council is rejecting those applications for information, claiming it's **'not in the public interest'**.

Council is there to represent us, not dictate to, or patronise us. Our community and our environment should not be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Transparency of decision making will be critical to ensure that occurs.

The Councillors listed above failed us last time... Don't give them another chance!

Concerned residents of Midcoast Council LGA.



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MORRISON UNVEILED . . .

What has been on display for too long for the world to see is Morrison's character - or lack of it.

It is not the cancellation of the French submarine deal, although that is bad enough, it was the way it was done and the way the subsequent diplomatic crises has been handled.

Morrison humiliated Macron. Gallic sensitivities were ignored, crushed and trashed. Putting aside that Morrison is gauche, who the heck is advising him? Certainly not DFAT. Morrison and whoever it is who has his ear have managed to seriously and substantially offend Xi Jinping over unsubstantiated claims relating to the origin of Covid in Wuhan.

You would have thought they might have learnt something but no, they went out of their way to offend Macron and the French and then in an act of bloody-minded defensiveness wound Morrison up, or at least did nothing to prevent him repeating calls for a Wuhan investigation at the G20, held some days ago in Rome.

Unlike America, China, Russia, France and Germany, Australia does not have power. It has influence, or it did until Morrison, Joyce, Dutton, Murdoch, ASPI and the IPA began a process of shedding it. Influence takes a long time to build, years, and many people contribute to the sum total; artists, actors, athletes, academics, authors, diplomats, foreign aid, acts of decency and kindness.

What Morrison has done over the past twelve months is to go on an influence spending spree like a problem gambler, culminating in an all or nothing throw of the dice on beating Macron's allegation of lying - which he lost.

Australia has a rapidly depleting store of influence and it's leader is seen to be morally bankrupt. He bet the farm and lost.

The recent round of betting started to go badly for Morrison when he didn't have the courage to advise Macron the deal was off. Who has heard of a head of state not being able to get through to another unless, as with China, the other head of state doesn't wish to be contacted? There were many channels available, from

the Australian Ambassador in Paris, to the French Ambassador in Canberra, to members of Macron's staff. There were also US and the UK diplomatic channels available to him if our own were not available.

Morrison lied.

When faced with Macron's anger Biden chose to dump on Morrison, calling the process of notifying the French, clumsy. Morrison and advisers failed to read the room. Having secured his back with the US, Macron was free to give Morrison a serve. Calculating and smart he waited.

When the opportunity presented, he struck, calling Morrison a liar. That was extraordinary. It is very rare for one head of state to call another a liar. In my lifetime I can't recall it having occurred, not even during the Cold War.

Morrison's reaction to being called a liar was the equivalent to taking a flame thrower to clean up an oil spill. He claimed Macron was aware of Australia's intentions from hints dropped at dinner at the Elysée Palace earlier in the year. It was a poor and clumsy attempt to cast Macron as stupid.

The LNP inferiority complex kicked in. How dare the French make a fool of their Prime Minister, no matter how easy that might be.

Presumably after a great deal of thought, it was decided to leak a text message between the two leaders to a Murdoch publication intending to show Macron knew the game was up on the submarines. It showed no such thing. It indicated Macron wanted to know if everything was on track.

The leak indicated to the world not to trust Australia with sensitive and confidential information. Morrison doubled down on his lying and the world knew it. The man, and his advisers, seem not to understand the environment in which they are operating. The Canberra merry-go-round was spinning so fast it was in danger of killing the kids.

It has not helped for a 15-page email to be leaked claiming to show the US and the UK were co-conspirators in a plan not to announce the

scraping of the submarine deal until AUKUS was announced. If the document is genuine, it confirms the utter duplicity in keeping France in the dark.

Then onto the scene came the French Ambassador, Jean-Pierre Thebault, giving a timely address to the National Press Club on 3 November. His balanced presentation was measured and mature, a bench mark in diplomacy. Something seen all too rarely in Australian public life.

He was at pains to point out that the submarine deal was not just a commercial arrangement, it was the foundation for a much deeper strategic relationship in a region where Australia and France have considerable shared interests.

The Ambassador called the deceit and deception of the failure to take France into Australian confidence over the decision to scrap the submarine deal and the strategic alliance, 'a stab in the back'. He stressed that media talk of cost blowouts was mischievous, pointing out that at Senate estimates last week Australian officials confirmed that costs had not blown out.

Ambassador Thebault called the leaking of the text message 'an unprecedented new low' in trust between Australia and France. He said it sent a very worrying signal to all other heads of states that Australia was not to be trusted with confidential exchanges. That, 'they will be eventually used and weaponised against you.'

He made the point that whilst France had no direct input into the decision making of the European Commission currently considering an EU free trade deal with Australia, the ease with which Australia tore up a major contract would be noted. The Ambassador said an Australian promise or signature would be seen to be not worth much.

He was asked whether Macron was correct and justified in calling Morrison a liar and said, 'Was the President lied to? Yes, he was. I have several examples.' And continued, 'Maybe there is a difference between misleading and lying. But you know, among heads

of states and governments, when you mislead a friend and an ally, you lie to him.'

He noted that, Marise Payne and Peter Dutton held a meeting with their French counterparts underlining the importance of the deal just 17 days before the AUKUS announcement.

He was scornful and sceptical about the US submarine deal, noting the lead times and difficulties for Australia around maintaining and servicing nuclear powered engines and loss of sovereignty.

Without spelling it out the Ambassador identified that Australian defence and foreign policy is now in the hands of the US; they will not be inclined to work as closely with the French who have extensive military hardware in the region and expertise.

The point of Morrison being in Europe was to attend the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. His presentation to the conference was poor and to an empty venue. Morrison based his pitch on technology not yet invented. A week before the conference the government did not have a policy. The conference did not achieve it's aims with Australia, China, Russia, India and Brazil insisting on the use of coal for the foreseeable future.

Morrison says there is no need for him to apologise to Macron whom he accused of slurs against the people of Australia. In fact, it was Morrison and Morrison alone who was accused of deceit and lying by Macron.

In one of his more cowardly attempts at deflection Morrison said, 'I don't wish to personalise this... But those slurs, I'm not going to cop sledging at Australia. I'm not going to cop that on behalf of Australians.' How pathetic. Morrison shirks responsibility and in doing so indicates a lack of emotional maturity.

Australia has a problem and it is Morrison. He has not got the capacity for the job of Prime Minister. The longer he remains in the position the more damage he will cause.

Bruce Haigh is a retired Diplomat and Political Commentator.

CHANGE NEEDED!

You do the sums, MidCoast Council's costs don't add up!

Ratepayers can only hope MidCoast Council (MCC) staff have now settled comfortably into their new capacious offices in the refitted Masters' building in Taree, and that positive change is imminent post election.

It is revealing to see the actual status of the promised savings in amalgamation of councils and the subsequent controversial move to Masters.

FIGURES ARE SHOCKERS

Given the disastrous figures, can ratepayers rely on future commitments made by MCC? Does this grand move to Masters stack up? Or do we need people in council who can actually add and subtract?

In promoting the imminent amalgamation of councils in 2016, ratepayers heard the repeated promises of reduction in costs, promises of improvement in services and then the bold promise of reduction in staff costs.

Staffing is the key "Operational Efficiencies" item that in the eyes of MCC we were told justified the office centralisation move to Masters. Without this, the final benefit-cost-analysis on which the Masters' centralisation case entirely relies, is in tatters.

All councillors except one (Cr Peter Epov) approved the Balmoral Group Report presented to Council at the April 2019 meeting (*refer: MCC website, Meeting Agendas and Minutes, April 10 2019 Ordinary Meeting Related Information: Item 8A*). The report states: MCC "indicates" the move to Masters' will deliver a reduction of 25 staff through "staff efficiencies", savings of \$1,937,500 per annum, \$25,561,372 over 20 years – the evaluation period used in the

financial analysis. The latter figure is the key foundation stone supporting the financial case and the report's conclusion that the Single-Site Option (Masters) "provides benefits outweighing costs over the 20-year time period of evaluation".

(Excuse me while I choke on my toast! Have you seen the endless ads for council staff? Ed.)

Well, how does it stack-up? I know it is early days yet, but can we get a reading six-months into the 20/21 financial year? You would expect that at this stage staff should know their way around Masters and have a clue about the council's financial health.

Item 8B is the 10-year Long Term Financial Plan (LTFF) produced by MCC administration in support of Item 8A. It gives income and expenditure figures per year projected over 10-consecutive years. Employee costs are itemised as Employee Benefits & On-Costs with a 20/21 budget figure of \$80.83 million. There is no separate figure for Consultants. Most likely that budget item is included in the foregoing employee costs item, otherwise the integrity of the reports and accounting system are in question.

(Looking at their fees I'm coming back as a Consultant in my next life. Ed.)

Using the latest Quarterly Budget review Statement March 2021 (Ordinary Meeting 2 June 2021), employee costs are \$91.38 million and Consultants \$4.3 million. So mid-way into 20/21 the revised **blow-out** is a total of \$14.85 million in just these two items. The figure of \$4.3 million is equivalent to 54 staff at the current average employee salary. And as at 30th June 2020 the total full time equivalent employees was 819 and this had increased to 884 by 30/06/2021 as per councils financial

statements, with many current positions unfilled at that date.

These figures are from MCC's and approved Consultant's reports. For ratepayers who suffered a 20% increase in council rates over four years just one-year into amalgamation - in breach of State government commitment not to increase rates - this blow-out revelation is bitter news. **No wonder the car park at Masters' looks like a major football match is in progress.**

And that's not all the bad news!

After four years of amalgamation ratepayers ask where are the promised savings? Masters followed the State government decision to merge. Looking at how private enterprise achieves reduction in costs from consolidation of separate businesses, a 20% reduction in employee costs (including consultants) is likely achievable and not unreasonable in merging three separate entities.

Using LTFF, figures, the potential reduction is \$16 million: \$80 million times 20%. How long will ratepayers wait to see this reduction? What about rationalisation in many other budgetary items?

IRRESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT

This blatant disregard for responsible financial management is an abhorrence for all ratepayers who supported amalgamation in the naive anticipation that one council is better than three and normal economy of scale and responsible financial management will bring down costs.

How dumb were we!

Without drastic immediate action this blow-out in expenditure will continue every year.

Ironically, this flies in the face of the recent (April 2021) premature and unjustified extension of the

(MCC) rookie General Manager's contract, coupled with a ratepayer eye-watering salary increase of \$80,000 to \$430,000. (This is his first major appointment as a GM.) We ratepayers need to ask why this was not part of a proper transparent and accountable performance review?

This is just one of a number of key-performance criteria Councillors should have in-place and applied for GM performance review and tenure. Ratepayers should be very irate at this further unjustifiable squandering of funds desperately needed for local roads. The Councillors who approved this without proper review and accountability do not provide due and responsible service to the ratepayers they represent.

Another recent case of obfuscation was the absence of the LTFF at Council meeting 28 July 2021. The Minutes record "that the Long Term Financial Plan covering the period to 30 June 2031 be noted". So where is the report? Why no disclosure? This report in particular will reveal levels of debt, changes in revenue streams redirected to fund Masters and other excesses and blow-outs in expenditure. This long overdue LTFF needs immediate release for ratepayer scrutiny.

New councillors need bold courage and determination, armed with a sharpened chainsaw to slash this bloated mass and to bring the Administration to immediate transparency and accountability.

Ratepayers need to voice their disapproval so that it echoes and reverberates within the walls of Masters and vote accordingly.

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We need Peter Epov

Re-Elected to MidCoast Council!

Over past nine years, Peter has fought for our community:

- Successfully led the Manning Alliance Community Campaign to have the CSG Exploration licence over the Manning Valley lifted.
- Successful led the Community Campaign to stop TransGrid's \$160M High Voltage Transmission Line - which was impacting upon 1100 landholders.
- Successful led the Campaign for Better Roads and Bridges collecting over 21,000 Petition signatures in 21 Days - tabled in Federal Parliament, which helped to restore \$11.4 Million in Commonwealth Roads Funding.
- He Stood Up for Landholder Rights.
- Successfully campaigned to save the parks in Taree & Wingham from being sold off.
- He opposed Rate Rises.
- He successfully led the 'Save Our Pool' Wingham Campaign to stop Council building a concrete bridge through the Wingham Memorial Swimming Pool.
- He has spoken up for our Community at both State and Federal Parliaments.
- He consistently advocates for Council to play a significant and strategic role in economic development across all key sectors from retail and commerce, to industry, manufacturing and farming.
- He is the ONLY Councillor who always voted against the Office Centralisation move to Masters.
- He stood up for the families of the interned at the Bight Cemetery.
- He facilitated a significant donation of face masks from 3M during the fires.
- He opposed and led the campaign to stop Council charging Tip Fees during the recent floods.
- He opposed and spoke out against the "Barrington Coast".
- He has advocated and continues to do so for water security for the Manning Valley and Forster and Tuncurry through new dam at Peg Leg Creek.
- He secured and achieved MidCoast Council's Climate Change Policy and an Action Plan through a substantive Notice of Motion in June 2019.
- He advanced the Northern Gateway project.
- He achieved Council Scholarships for local students to attend Taree University.
- He is the ONLY Councillor who has questioned and consistently voted against the Sanderling Avenue, Hawks Nest Re-zoning. As broadcast on the Four Corners program: OBEID Inc.
- He stands for balanced and sustainable development.

Peter is an independent that does really works for Us!

VOTE

1

in Group C for Change
'ABOVE THE LINE'

Choose Wisely! *Make your Vote Count!*

The Peter Epov Group
www.peterepovgroup.com & follow us on Facebook
Contact: 0448 675 984 - Email: pepovmcc21@gmail.com

Last month our front page covered the Sad and Sorry Saga of the Hawks Nest / Tea Gardens Koalas.

The story of Jean Shaw of the Myall Koala and Environmental Support Group whose fight to save the koalas and her speech to a National Koala conference in Canberra in November 2001, illustrated how little, sadly, had changed.

“May God forgive us for what is happening - but the animals of all species were here before us. We should be looking after them, for future generations to see.

Not destroying them.”

Jean Shaw commented that in the thirteen year period (between 1989 - 2001 there were 3180 koala sightings in Hawks Nest / Tea Gardens but by 2001 Jean only recorded 72 sightings.

SO WHAT HAPPENED?

How is it that the Worimi, the Aboriginal custodians of the Hawks Nest - Tea Gardens area can co-exist with koalas for tens of thousands of years and yet in the space of a few decades the destruction of the Swamp Forests - koala habitat, through development for housing, particularly in Tea Gardens, can be allowed to happen?

We are now facing another major proposed development in Tea Gardens, - Parrys Cove, now before MidCoast Council for a 935 housing development and associated infrastructure which it is predicted will wipe out whatever koalas remain.

How is it that the Hawks Nest / Tea Gardens Endangered Koala Population - that was gazetted in August 1999, hardly gets a mention in specialist environmental reports for the Parry's Cove development proposal?

How is it that the Approved NSW Recovery Plan of the Hawks Nest - Tea Gardens Endangered Koala Population (dated July, 2003), by the then Department of Environment and Conservation - has fallen by the wayside?

How is it that 'Core Koala Habitat' declared pursuant to SEPP 44 Koala Habitat Protection upon North Hawks Nest landholdings by Environmental Consultants for Great Lakes Council has been removed from these landholdings by Council officers and others?

How is it that Tea Gardens, up to Toonang Drive, as gazetted in 1999 by the New South Wales Scientific Committee - as being an Endangered koala Population - has never seen a

Koala Plan of Management?

How is it that the Hawks Nest Koala Plan of Management (KPoM), dated May 2001, before Great Lakes Council “has disappeared” - a statutory planning instrument that had to be prepared because of findings of 'Core Koala Habitat' - pursuant to State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 44 ?

Why is it that MidCoast Council has never enacted a harmonised Tree Preservation Policy?

Has MidCoast Council forgotten that koalas and many other Threatened Species live in trees?

How is it possible for forested lands along Myall Way (approaching Tea Gardens) to be recently denuded of forest trees?

Why does MidCoast Council still have koala signs along Myall Way - asking motorists to be aware of koalas - when the trees that the koalas inhabited are now destroyed?

How has it been possible for developers at 'Myall River Downs' and 'Riverside' Tea Garden's, now rebadged as 'Parry's Cove' - through environmental studies (for decades) to declare that koalas do not inhabit these landholdings?

What about the 3180 koala sightings recorded by the Myall Koala and Environmental Support Group between 1989 and 2001?

Are these not historical records for the purposes of 'Core Koala Habitat' - pursuant of Koala SEPP's?

Could readers please inform me of the last time that you sighted a koala in either Hawks Nest or Tea Gardens?

READERS ALSO ASK –

What has happened to the Great Lakes Council Local Environmental Plan (LEP) - that provided for Tree Preservation Orders?

What has happened to the 'Koala Report' that for decades was a weekly report in the Myall Coast NOTA?

Would not tourists be very interested in knowing where they might sight a live free Koala in the Hawks Nest / Tea Gardens area?

Or is it an inconvenient truth that koalas are now practically extinct in this area?

Is it also disappointing that we are told that the Swamp Forests of Tea Gardens - with favoured koala tree species of Swamp mahogany, Tal-

lowwood and Red Bloodwood - have largely been removed from the Tea Gardens area?

Is it a fact that the next Swamp Forest proposed to be 'filled in' at Tea Gardens is the Parry's Cove Development for some 935 houses etc?

How is it that the Parry Cove proposed development does not have a Vegetation Survey - identifying the trees?

Why haven't Vegetation Zones been identified and delineated in the Parry's Cove development footprint in accordance with Section 5.3 of the Biodiversity Assessment Method (2017)?

Where is the Parry's Cove Site Condition data for the composition, structure and function attributes of vegetation integrity in any of the environmental reports listed in Table 1 - in accordance with Section 5.3 of BAM (2017)?

What logic is there in stating that confining Koalas, Wallum froglets and other threatened species be reduced or constricted to land at Parry's Cove and Tea Gardens that are reduced and constricted land parcels that is not to the benefit of certain threatened species?

What likelihood is there for the proposed Parry's Cove Conservation lands (117 hectares), (that are supposed to be administered by MidCoast Council), being compromised by future developments on other lands in the Parry's Cove Precinct ?

How can the Parry's Cove proposed Conservation lands remain a wildlife corridor, when MidCoast Council's 'Future Urban Area Release Area' - includes the Viney Creek Road area - uphill from Parry's Cove?

How can MidCoast Council state : “Koalas are expected to re-colonise the restored and protected habitats at Parry's Cove over time”.

Is somebody going to advise the Koalas that they can set up their new home in the salt marshes and mangrove swamp surrounding Parry's Cove?

How is it possible that a detailed survey of the tree species within the development footprint of the proposed Parry's Cove development has not been conducted as several of these tree species are dominant or co-dominant on the land?

Who decided the Parry's Cove landholdings do not constitute 'Core Koala Habitat' as defined in the Koala SEPP?

k?

How did Parry's Cove become a Major Project Concept approved on 27 June 2013 (as Riverside Estate) and then become modified by another Concept Approval by the Department of Planning on 17 May 2019? So we now face a major inappropriate development with little thought or appreciation or conservation given to the iconic koalas

You may wish to provide a Submission during the Public Exhibition of the Parry's Cove Proposal before MidCoast Council.

Submissions are due by 4.30pm on Tuesday 7 December 2021

Or mail to PO Box 482 Taree, NSW 2430.

Submissions to council@midcoast.nsw.gov.au

DM

I RECEIVED A HEARTBROKEN LETTER FROM JEAN SHAW WHO IS RETIRED IN QUEENSLAND...

JEAN WROTE ...

“I still stand behind those words I spoke in Canberra all those years ago.

Unfortunately the world is governed by money, Money Money in all tiers of Federal, State and Local government . . . not the world of animals, flowers and clean open country.

My heart is now crying about what is happening in Hawks Nest... but I know the fight goes on. My daughter and I stand behind all that is being done in the name of the koalas, animals, wildflowers and trees.

Yours Sincerely,
Jean Shaw.”

VOTE WISELY I SAY !

As we approach the silly season (council elections) we should reflect on the contributions those councillors who are standing for re-election have made over the last five years.

Our esteemed Mayor has had a rather up and down time. His major focus has been on the development of the Masters building. I am not going over old ground as the Mayor and some councillors look at the building through rose colored glasses, but you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. His performance over the last two years has been less than satisfactory and I can only highlight some of his failings.

His control of the council meetings has been appalling; he has continued to allow Councillor Roberts to attack certain Councillors, particularly Epov when he asked questions and put forward motions. This can be verified by listening to the Council meetings.

The Mayor needs to explain to the people of Taree why 1100 of them will be receiving a Christmas present of increased domestic waste charges of between \$45 and \$100 dollars due to Taree escaping the increased charges levelled at everyone else. The council has held back these extra charges until after the upcoming Council elections.

Under the Mayor economic development has gone nowhere and the so called economic development board has not met for many months.

Mr West has alienated the local service clubs over the Australia Day fiasco. The business community is frustrated with his attitude towards them.

Perhaps the Mayor can explain to the people of Wingham why work has not started on the Wingham Library even though the tender was let nearly 6 months ago and it appears they are now recalling for tenders on this project.

Perhaps the Mayor can explain why the staff numbers are down in compliance planning and why there are no suitably qualified project managers in the Liveable Communities Section.

Last but not least we have the Bight Cemetery issues which still have not been finalised.

In his desperation to get re-elected he has joined the Liberal party which will please most people at Forster Tuncurry.

Now for the deputy Mayor who relied heavily on the well-respected

Dr David Keegan to get elected. She was Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee which has folded and achieved very little and she has been on the Internal Audit Committee that has hardly been seen. Rumors from inside the local Labor party branch indicate that she is not popular in the branch.

Councillor Troy Fowler, who as a first time Councillor has struggled to understand his role of a Councillor he admits that he struggles with understanding council finances and we know he doesn't like Illawarra Flame Trees, but has taken a position on the Internal Audit Committee.

Councillors Smith and Hutchison have tried hard but at times have struggled with some items on the Council agenda. At least Councillor Smith treats most Councillors with respect and she must be embarrassed with the continued attacks on Councillors Epov and Bell.

Last but not least is Councillor Roberts, whose behavior at many council meeting is deplorable and the Mayor is very slow to chastise him. He is the longest serving Councillor and he has had somewhat of a checkered

career in Local Government. The question much be asked is his dynasty coming to an end, as the drums of discontent seem to be beating in the Tea Gardens / Hawks Nest area. Councillor Roberts is heading up claytons National Party Team, they are not a so called political team but have "National Party Values" which could be code for pork barreling and the watering down of the MidCoast Council's Climate Change policies, so could we end up with wall to wall coal mines in our area and massive developments.

At last we come to Councillors Epov, and occasionally Bell, who battled along manfully under the constant attacks from their fellow councillors. Epov asked the hard questions that the other councillors and the senior staff don't like. Epov is the only truly independent councillor on council.

SO REMEMBER TO VOTE WISELY

Neil Hannington
Taree
(Former General Manager Mid-Coast Water.)

Council's 2020/21 'Draft' Financial Statements – MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS.

MidCoast Council's much awaited 2020/21 Financial Statements were finally made publicly available on Council's website on 19 November 2021 in a draft format as they are now required to be re-signed by the NSW Audit Office.

For the fourth successive year MidCoast Council's Financial Statements have been delayed and an application has had to be filed with the NSW Office of Local Government for an extension of time.

Whilst the Council Report boasts a Net Operating Result for the Year of a surplus of \$37 Million, the key figures to look at are those in the Net Operating Result for the year, **before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes**, which show a loss of \$20.9 Million. This result also has to be viewed in the context that the original Budget projection for the year was a loss of \$15.5 Million and the previous year the loss was \$11 Million.

To reach the correct bottom line, grants and contributions which have

been provided for Capital purchases **must be included in the bottom line**, if applied consistently, in Section D1-1 of the Statements, suddenly the 'General Fund' result, Council's main trading entity, turns the Net operating result of \$10 million surplus to a loss of \$31.333m.

WATER & SEWER

What is even more clear is that the Water and Sewer Divisions are both making a profit which is then being applied to subsidise Council's General Fund losses. Little wonder our water and sewer rates are constantly increasing each year.

Perhaps the most troubling and the single biggest issue is the negative balance in the 'Unrestricted Cash', whilst on paper it looks like council is rolling in cash, but most of it has

either an external or internal restriction. This means that those monies can only be used for the purposes of the restriction.

'Unrestricted cash' is the monies available for the actual running of the General Fund, such as wages for staff etc. In 2019/20 there was \$16.009m available, in 2020/21 this has reduced to a deficit of \$54,000. A swing of \$16.063m. This suggests that some 'Restricted Cash' has been used to pay for the deficit. A situation that should not be permitted to continue.

QUESTIONS OF CONCERN

- Workers Compensation has exceeded the Budget by \$962,000.
- Consultants fees have exceeded the Budget by \$1.503m.

- The 'Operating Performance Ratio' of the General Fund is a negative (14.45%) which is quite poor, particularly when the 'official benchmark' is greater than zero.

- The 'Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage' (Debt Ratios) are very high with the General Fund at 9.28%, the Water Fund at 15.5% and Sewer Fund at 17.03%; particularly when the 'official benchmark' is less than 10%.

- So why has Council lost \$10.827m on the disposal of infrastructure?

We look forward to Council's explanation to these questions.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Make sure the trees that are left standing are spaced sufficiently apart so that there is no safe connectivity or reason for koalas to remain in the area. However if a Koala enters such area, it faces danger from the many wild dogs inhabiting Hawks Nest.

Plant favoured koala feed trees front roads to encourage koalas to cross Mungo Brush Rd. to get to the Hawks Nest Golf Club, (Refer Sanderling Av. Planning Proposal); or for Parry Cove have koalas cross the future conservation land fronting Toonang Drive so they can be hit by cars.

On landholdings where clearing has not taken place (including Myall Lakes National Park) ensure that the understory is sufficiently dense so that when fire invariably comes, the dense undergrowth is sure to wreak utter heartbreaking devastation.

Ensure that questions to Council or authorities remain un-responded, institute buck passing, suppression, peddle untruths. Examples suggest higher office holders with knowledge of matters may be ignored or thrown under a bus.

Council unwillingness or inability to provide example of Hawks Nest-Tea Gardens biodiversity offset raises question is the Biodiversity aspirations touted in many Council studies nothing but hollow platitudes?

Council continues with dubious proclamations such as *'Koalas are expected to re-colonise the restored and protected habitats on Parrys Cove over time'*.

Developers and Council Planning open environmental areas with starter cuts, then with precedence set progress with wider and deeper cuts in their good time.

HAWKS NEST NORTH

Some thirty years ago we stumbled onto a jewel, "we" being Councillors, developers, landowners and NIMBY's.

East, West, North, South, all bounded by wonderous ocean, river, National Park and Port Stephens.

This also resonated with Council and developers seeing another booming Surfers Paradise.

So studies were commissioned proclaiming that thousands of houses in North Hawks Nest were needed.

Well on hearing this the NIMBYs went ape, said not on our hallowed unspoiled paradise.

Beleaguered Council packed their pants, conscripted koalas to their cause, commissioned endless koala study plots that "strangely" established koala scats and their evidence in every third tree, even within non-koala trees.

The Statutory Public Inquiry Commission 2001/2, confronted with koala surveys that showed North Hawks Nest overrun with Koalas, then declared the majority of land west



and a strategic section east of Mungo Brush Road to be SEPP 44-Core Koala Habitat.

Then a developer appeared, ready and willing to comply with Council and National Parks Wildlife Services mandate that the west side of Mungo Brush Road be dedicated to Myall Lakes National Park but with a proviso that some of the strategic land east of Mungo Brush Road that had been declared Core Koala Habitat be allowed for development.

This sent Council into overdrive where they came up with a plan to excise this strategic east parcel from the statutory SEPP 44-Core Koala Habitat.

All this came crashing down on 15 June 2016 when NSW Planning and Environment Delegate to the Minister pulled the plug on North Hawks Nest due to 'Notably high conservation environmentally significant land is no longer proposed to be dedicated to the Myall Lakes National Park'.

The reason for such abrupt reversal of the land west of Mungo Brush Road be added to the Myall Lakes National Park remains unanswered despite numerous inquiries to Council since 2015.

So now in the Council meeting of 28 July 2021 comes the latest twist, a proclamation that "We (Council) know there are no koalas east of Mungo Brush Road".

The abhorrent fact is that due to machinations of Council, developers, landowners and NIMBYs through successful implementation of the forementioned 'How to kill Koalas' methods and the unabated illegal clearing as evidenced by drone footage, the wanton destruction of North Hawks Nest, Tea Gardens through to Seal Rocks Core Koala Habitat corridor continues.

Deferring protection of this contiguous corridor by disregarding the application of bio diversity offset credits and allowing degradation by RU2, and clearing by stealth activities will be further damaged by Council's arbitrary decision to defer North Hawks Nest for 10+ years per the Urban Areas Release Report 2021.

SANDERLING AVENUE

Some of the 'How to kill the Koa-

la' methods have been successfully applied, with under scrubbing occurring prior to environmental studies and false proclamation that the land was environmentally destroyed from sandmining, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, including the presence of ancient old man banksias that would not have survived sand mining.

Sanderling land was sold for a pittance, under a cloud it would seem, the outcries by Public Submission have been ignored, some suppressed, with the Planning Approval rammed through for 12-meter-high tower block comprising some 292 dwellings and community facilities and extensively blocking out Hawks Nest from the ocean.

How 292 dwelling will have no impact on fauna, flora, environment and society, where the development is only called to provide 47 Ecosystem credits is highly questionable, however according to the Planning Proposal the koalas do get access to the Golf Course.

No doubt due to some public disquiet there is more to come to light on Sanderling Avenue.

PARRYS COVE.

Many of the 'How to Kill Koalas' methods have been successfully achieved.

Parrys Cove land comprises 218 hectares with plans for 935 dwellings and with 114 hectares slated for bio-bank conservation- largely consisting of land Gazetted SEPP 14-Mangrove and Salt Marsh Swamp. The Voluntary Planning Agreement calls for the retirement of biodiversity credits.

From this are we naive to conclude that koalas and Wallum Froglets will benefit from reduction of their previously available 218 hectares to a constricted to 114 hectares when Parrys Cove is developed?

What logic is there in confining koalas and Wallum Froglets (and other threatened species) to reduced and constricted land that in large part is not habitable?

What benefit is there for fauna and ecosystem affected by this development, in retiring biodiversity credits

on land that is inhospitable for the affected koalas, fauna and ecosystem?

What is to prevent further cutting off the north-south fauna wildlife corridor were the Tourism Precinct and land immediately to its east that is currently 'removed from concept plan' being developed as a marina as is promoted by the Urban Areas Release Report and why is this likelihood not addressed in the studies?

We are at loss to understand on what basis the Hawks Nest/Tea Gardens Koala and Environment spokesman concurs with Council's Senior Ecologist that the 'Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) 'is an EXCELLENT outcome for the environment in Tea Gardens and how plausible is Council writing that "Koalas are expected to re-colonise the restored and protected habitats on Parrys Cove over time"?

Council, please spare us. So with less environmental land, extremely intense developments, 2381 new dwellings for Parry Cove and Myall River Downs, (plus 292 dwellings at Sanderling), commercial facilities, more land covered in concrete, roofs, cars, ten years of intense earthworks, building and construction disruption, thousands of new occupants, 5000 forecasted vehicles movements per day on Myall Street, and Council writes that 'Koalas are expected to re-colonise the restored and protected habitats on Parrys Cove over time'? (Extending this type of logic would have Sydney CBD overrun with koalas).

MYALL RIVER DOWNS

Much of the forementioned 'How to Kill Koalas' methods have been successfully applied, but curiously we cannot find any reference to Koalas in the available studies.

Attempts to access the PPK Myall River Downs LES from Council has presented formidable obstacles, despite this LES having been on Public Exhibition.

Attempts to understand the biodiversity offset opportunities have also hit a brick wall with Council advising that such matters are currently under negotiation with a developer and will come to light at the Development Application stage.

We question why does Myall River Downs biodiversity offset process contrast to North Hawks Nest where biodiversity offsets were mandated from word go? This also is at odds with advice provided to Council by Biodiversity and Conservation Division letter to Council of 18 September 2020 stating "Avoidance and minimisation measures are best considered as part of strategic planning stages."

PARRYS COVE AND MYALL RIVER DOWNS.

The voluminous Parry Cove DA-171/2020 Studies, comprising 35 appendices and thousands of pages

appear curiously silent on highly important environmental and social impacts that will affect Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest citizens, koalas, and environment when both Parry Cove, Myall River Downs and Sanderling Avenue developments proceed concurrently over the next 10 years, as is planned by Council and Urban Area Release Report.

To comprehend what will be inflicted upon citizens, koalas and environment from such concurrent developments, to enable public to make meaningful submission by closing date of 7 December 2021 for DA-171/2020, requires them to be fully informed of highly pertinent matters, an example being heavy earthmoving vehicle movements.

As we could not find within the 1000's of Study Appendice pages where the bulk earth fill is sourced from, we prepared an earthwork tabulation, having little choice but to base such on some assumptions and we look forward to Council comment.

Our tabulation of heavy truck movements indicates that large trucks require to enter or leave Parry Cove and Myall River Down sites approximately every two minutes over 10 years, working 45 weeks per year, five days per week, 7.5-hour work days.

The number of truck movements requires to be better explained and understood against the Vehicle Movements addressed by Appendix 12, Clause 2.2.3 that assesses a horrendous '5000 Vehicles per day on Myall Street' for Parry Cove.

Also does this 5000 Vehicle Movements per day stated for the Parry Cove development include the concurrent Myall River Down Development?

Issues that need to be clarified before the 7 December closing Public Submission closing date are:

Where is the imported bulk earthwork fill coming from?

Are the fill trucks traversing through centre of Hawks Nest and Tea Gardens?

In addition to the 927,500 tons stated in Appendix 25- Quanto Estimate that will require *25,000 truck and dog trailer 38 ton loads of imported fill estimated for Parrys Cove, will Council advise the tons of fill required to be imported for Myall River Downs?

Adding Myall River Downs could raise the imported fill requirement an additional 2,000,000 tons, this *equates to 53,000 Truck and dog 38 Ton loads.

(*Additional to the possible 78,000 earthwork truck deliveries, empty returns doubles the number of movements to 156,000, to this add building material deliveries.)

Do we ratepayers bear the cost of road repair resulting for the 1000's of heavy truck movements?

Do rate payers bear the cost for upgrading sewage pump systems from Tea Gardens to Hawks Nest and why is this not addressed in the Studies?

How much is the developer paying

for the fill or is it free issued by Council?

If the fill (sand) is dredged, does the developer pay for the dredging and is issuing sand to developer against the offshore minerals act?

As to the borrow on land comprising stages 15 and 16. How deep will this pit be and why is there no study as to its possible effect on the Tea Gardens aquifer?

What license is required for the borrow pit if its depth compromises the aquifer?

How will such intense construction activity over 10 years by council measure provide an 'EXCELLENT' benefit for the endangered Tea Gardens koala population and not simply drive koalas out?

We appreciate the pressure to develop, and if it must occur within next 10 years, would it not be wise to have

only ONE huge development at Tea Gardens while a second development occurs at North Hawks Nest?

We asked and await Council response to such vital questions and reason for their exclusion from the voluminous studies and reports.

NORTH HAWKS NEST VERSUS TEA GARDENS DEVELOPMENT

The positives for NHN development versus Tea Gardens are overwhelming following environmental and social matters where North Hawks Nest provides a genuine Sea Change life style.

With the concentration of dwellings proposed for Tea Gardens it will all end up as a densely stuffed, tacked on suburb, no different from what people are escaping from when leaving cities.

NORTH HAWKS NEST ATTRIBUTES

It provides a genuine contiguous corridor for Koalas, fauna, Flora. (Infinitely more superior than Tea Gardens)

Construction activities are removed from township thereby minimising disturbance to citizens and importantly does not require imported fill.

It will not destroy roads from heavy earthmoving trucks.

The sewage plant is close to simple pumping stations/solutions.

Citizens are within walking distance of beach, Golf Club, fishing, endless walking trails.

But sighting a koala . . . ?

A Concerned Citizen.
(Name withheld.)

Biripi Way office centralisation – in an era of decentralisation
Branded Barrington Coast – when we were not heard
Bight Cemetery bulldozed – driven by a “health & safety” delusion
Nothing to celebrate there – don't go to a party!

This MidCoast Council Election 2021 – go to

BELL TEAM INDEPENDENTS



Laura Boyce (Taree), Nawal Maharaj (Harrington), Kathryn Bell JP (Lead Candidate), Katrina Pearson (Cedar Party), Ron Hindmarsh (Tinonee) and Kay Smith (Bulahdelah)

Every candidate in this team is a true independent (not a member of any political party) committed to local democracy and to carry out council functions in a way that facilitates local communities that are strong, healthy, and prosperous.

VOTE 1 ABOVE THE LINE GROUP 1
Make BELL TEAM INDEPENDENTS
Your VOICE,
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Written by Nawal Maharaj
Authorised by Kathryn Bell JP, 7 Toona Close Taree 2430
 Email: bellteam4midcoast@gmail.com

THE RETURN OF INFLATION – COST OF COPING WITH COVID?

Inflation has not been around in western countries for some decades but now there is concern that inflation could return. Governments are printing unprecedented sums of money to pay for COVID recovery plans.

Meanwhile there have been disruptions caused by supply chains being damaged, and so there are global shortages of food, electrical components, resources and fuel. Some staff have resigned and so employers will need to pay more wages to attract new workers (in the US this is being called “The Great Resignation”).

But the bottom line is that there is nothing new in this debate. Those of us who have been around for a few decades will remember previous concerns about inflation.

“Inflation” means that too much money is chasing too few goods and services. One of the most well known examples come from the early 16th century, with the influx of gold from the Spanish Latin American colonies. The gold poured in but there was not a corresponding increase in food and other items to soak up all the extra purchasing power and so, ironically, despite its new wealth Spain was actually damaged by stealing the Latin American wealth.

The opposite term is “deflation”. This is where the prices of goods and services fall. Customers defer expenditure expecting prices to fall even lower and so a recession is thereby triggered.

The current system of coping with COVID in western countries has been influenced by the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC). The US was the source of that crisis, rather than the backstop to solve it, and the US banking system’s contagion spread to other countries.

The US Federal Reserve’s eventual response was “whatever it takes”. This was different from the “hands off” approach that characterised the Great Depression of the 1930s (which meant letting the market sort itself out because recessions were then seen a natural part of life, like floods and droughts, in which government had only a limited role).

Luckily Australia was already on that path in 2008 with “go early, go hard, go household”. Therefore, Australia avoided the early austerity policies in UK, Europe and US, and so escaped largely unscathed that crisis (the UK magazine *The Economist* called Australia the “wonder downunder” because of its having the longest continuous economic boom in western history).

But can governments be trusted with money?

There has been a change in mindset with the rise of “Keynesian economics” (named after British economist John Maynard Keynes, 1883-1946). He argued (i) government *does* have a responsibility in the economy and (ii) individuals should shrug off Victorian notions of thrift, and instead go out and spend.

His critics warned that government would debase the currency and that the British Empire would go the way of the Roman Empire: debt destroys empires.

Ironically, the 2008 GFC showed that the financial regulatory system had been overwhelmed by the markets it was supposed to supervise. Therefore, can we trust politicians (and bureaucrats) with money? Should the market be left to work its magic? This may mean short-term pain but it will be better in the long-term.

Keynes called gold a “barbarous relic”. He wanted a currency that avoided being based on gold.

The gold standard was in effect invented by Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) who was Master of the Royal Mint in London. He said in 1717 that gold standard was “financial gravity” (he had earlier sorted out some of the problems of gravity in physics).

After all, the Wise Men who brought Jesus gifts 2,000 years ago included gold. That gold could in theory buy the same amount today as then: it has kept its value: financial gravity.

The UK set an example for the rest of the world. But it came off the gold standard in the early 20th century because of World War I and the financial problems the UK encountered.

There was a return of sorts to the gold standard in 1944. The Bretton Woods Conference worked out the post-World War II international financial structure. There was agreement (opposed by Keynes, who was shortly to die) that US\$35 would buy a reserve bank one ounce of gold.

The Bretton Woods System gave us an economic miracle. Boomer Australians (born between 1946 and 1966) won the lottery of life. This includes purchasing homes cheaply – and which now makes many older Australians “millionaires” (at least on paper).

But success breeds a disregard for the possibility of failure. The US debased the US\$ with the war in Vietnam and other high government expenditures in the 1960s. The US came off the standard in July 1971. Gold is now just another tradeable commodity.

Currencies are now not backed by precious metals: they are “fiat” currency (“I command you to treat this sheet of paper as currency”). Governments can print extra money because the money is not based on any reserve or other benchmark.

Inflation returned. There was far more lending. In 1973 OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) increased oil prices.

The western world was hit by “stagflation”: mixture of stagnation and inflation. There was even speculation that “capitalism is dead” (the Soviet economy was not too healthy either but that was not so obvious at the time). In Australia, the Whitlam Government was besieged with economic turmoil.

And then the inflation was tamed. US Federal Reserve chair Paul Volcker (1927-2019) pushed up interest rates. They reached 20 per cent in

June 1981. There was widespread economic dislocation and a dramatic increase in unemployment (all of which helped cost Jimmy Carter his 1980 re-election and put Ronald Reagan in the White House). The new president did not reappoint Volcker given his reputation for toughness!

Additionally, there was China’s greatest gift to the world. Post-1979 China was the “factory of the world”. It made many very cheap goods to soak up all the credit sloshing around in the global financial system. This too helped keep inflation low.

The world entered the “Great Moderation”. The Bank of England said we were living in a unique time: “NICE”: Non-inflationary Continuous Expansion.

Inflation is now largely forgotten (except among elderly economists). But with the onset of COVID expenditure programmes a new economic crisis could be emerging.

The US and other governments are back to Keynesian thinking and they have learned from the 2008 GFC. Huge government expenditure is underway.

Australia has very low interest rates to protect economic growth but this has led to a housing bubble. In economic life, one problem is “solved” at the cost of creating another one.

At some point, the Australian Reserve Bank may start to fear the onset of inflation above the target (of around 2%) and increase the interest rate, thereby adding to “mortgage stress”. The Bank’s Dr Lowe still reckons that won’t be before 2024.

Managing debt and paying for all the COVID programmes will be a chief worry for Australian governments for many years to come (and there will probably have to be expenditure cutbacks and so more social dislocation).

Keith Suter
www.globaldirections.com.au

HEALTH GROUP PUSH FOR ACTION

The Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group refuses to accept “No” for an answer. It has requested the public availability of the Hunter New England Local Health District’s Clinical Services Plan for the Manning Great Lakes Gloucester region in its entirety.

The Group was formed in 2016 by Alan Tickle following a public meeting that he chaired in Taree. The Committee has 231 years of clinical service and is now entering its sixth year. Since its inception, the Committee, with the support of its membership, has been proactive in lobbying for increased financial and physical resources for our local Manning Base Hospital and increased health service delivery for our region.

The installation of the MRI at Manning Base Hospital, funded by the Federal Government and, either actual or promised improvements to the value of \$140 million from the NSW Government, is testimony to the Group’s vigorous representations to all levels of government. There is no doubt that, without ongoing pressure from the Health Action Group, this extra funding and the completion of the Clinical Services Plan, which expired in 2017, would not have been forthcoming.

The Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group has made a formal application for the release of the Clinical Services Plan, citing public transparency and accountability as justification for its release. This Plan outlines the direction of health service delivery in our region for the next 10 years.

Michael Di Rienzo, CEO of Hunter New England Health, invited the Committee and representatives of all levels of Hospital staff to a briefing on the Clinical Services Plan on June 16th 2021. However, despite being asked by the Committee to release the whole of the Clinical Services

Plan, Mr Di Rienzo flatly refused. He stated that it was an internal document and that he did not want the community to be confused and misconstrue the contents. We consider that this is an insult to the 94 000 members of the Manning Great Lakes region who are all stakeholders in the health needs of our wonderful area.

“We find it unacceptable that the NSW Department of Health does not insist on uniformity amongst NSW Health Districts. There should be oversight of their policies, stressing objectivity of a Clinical Services Plan and how it links to funding for services or capital works that the State Government funds. Other Health Districts have their Clinical Services Plans freely available on their websites. If there is nothing to hide, why not be open and transparent?” President, Eddie Wood, asked.

We keep hearing about plans for a hospital at Forster. Release of the Clinical Services Plan would indicate to the Manning Great Lakes Community how plans for a new public hospital at Forster might be an essential element of health service delivery in this area over the next ten years.

For that reason, the Committee strongly urges the whole community of the Manning Great Lakes Gloucester region, and particularly Forster, to back our call for the Clinical Services Plan document to be released in its entirety.

The Health Action Group recognises the population growth, particularly in the Great Lakes area, seasonal tourist population spikes and the obvious constraints due to the land-locked current Manning Base Hospital

site. These points all indicate a need for land use planning consideration to meet the future health needs of the Mid Coast Local Government Area.

Mr Wood stated, “Hunter New England Local Health District must engage now with Mid Coast Council as Council is in the midst of reviewing its Local Environment Plan. Appropriate identification and zoning provisioning needs to be made now for a regional hospital that services both Forster and the whole of the Manning Great Lakes Gloucester area into the future.”

The community, as a whole, needs to know where such a hospital might be located, the dimensions of the scope of works, the total funding to be allocated, the services to be delivered and, most importantly, how many beds it would hold. This area already needs a 250 bed hospital, based on the national bed allocation of 2.5 per 1,000 patient population.

Is there provision for a Cardiac Catheterisation Lab considering that the Heart of Inequality Study 2017 clearly states that the Federal seat of Lyne has the worst cardiovascular outcomes in the whole of regional Australia?

It is imperative that we know how a proposed new hospital would affect Manning Base Hospital and its staff and services? What is the plan for them? Staff recruitment and retention is already an enormous problem, one that must be painfully obvious to Health Administrators.

This Health Action Group has taken up the fight for improved physical and financial resources that are required to work and deliver a high level of patient care in a safe and efficient manner.

At the same time, the Group’s advocacy aims to support all categories of clinical and non-clinical staff at Manning Base Hospital for their supreme efforts and dedication, very often working under very difficult and demanding circumstances.

We cannot have secrets about our future health needs for the Manning Great Lakes Gloucester Area. We are all taxpayers and stakeholders and have a right to transparency which is why it is vital that the whole community rallies behind us in our efforts to obtain the Clinical Services Plan in its entirety to improve health service delivery in our local area. Without it, we shall not know what the next ten years has in store for us and for future generations.

It was pleasing to see in Dr. David Gillespie’s Gazette that he says he is backing the Manning Great Lakes as a regional capital. If so this could flow on to vast improvements being made in health service delivery in our area.

Meanwhile, the current office-bearers and committee members have been elected unopposed for the next 12 months:

President: Eddie Wood
Vice-President: Peter Johanson
Treasurer: Helen Halpin
Secretary: Carmel Bartlett
Committee: Vicki Morrison,
Trish Wood,
Alan Tickle,
Tom McDonald,
David Conning

Eddie Wood,
President,
Manning Great Lakes Community Health Action Group



Antiques and Collectables

A hobby that lasts a lifetime and gives much joy and pleasure. Those memorable finds, the great people you meet, the new places you explore when searching. It is a truly engrossing pastime. Find an area, of collecting, that interests you get out there and enjoy.



Every household seems to have a collection of old instruments that have accumulated over the years. Whether in the back of the cupboard or in the storage lock-up we seem to have them. From mouth organs, guitars violins, flutes, trumpet, accordions to harps they just seem to accumulate.

Whether it's a [clarinet](#) or an [accordion](#), a [piano](#) or a [trombone](#), musical instruments are beautiful pieces of engineering, which are lovely to look at but even better to listen to when played by someone who has practiced, practiced, practiced. Instruments can be divided into general categories such as woodwinds, horns, strings, and percussion, although there is often a lot of crossover.

A piano is a percussion instrument with strings, while a [saxophone](#) is actually classified as a woodwind even though it is usually part of a band's horn section. [Flutes](#) are considered the oldest musical instruments, whose hollow-bone ancestors have been dated to 40,000

years old. Duct flutes such as recorders feature a mouthpiece on one end, while transverse or side-blown flutes are held horizontally, with air blown by the performer across what's known as the instrument's embouchure hole.

Drums may be just as old. [Hand drums](#), which are called membranophones, feature a solid, cylindrical frame made of wood, earthenware, or dried gourd, plus a drumhead that's usually fashioned from some sort of dried hide. As with most early instruments, drums were probably used to send signals, to herd animals, and to celebrate religious rituals. The [drum kits](#) that are familiar to concert-goers, with their various toms, bass drums, snares, and [cymbals](#), evolved out of instruments played by military bands.

[Trumpets](#) also have ancient cousins, as in the use of ram's horns as "shofars." Metal trumpets appeared beginning around 1500 BC, while the close relation of the trumpet, the trombone, is comparatively new, evolving in the 15th century.

Wind instruments such as clari-

nets came of age in the 17th century, while the saxophone, the invention of a Belgian named Adolphe Sax, is a 19th-century creation.

All the while, people were playing stringed instruments, too. [Banjos](#) came to the United States with African slaves as hide-covered gourds fixed to a stick before developing, in the early 19th century, into the instruments we recognise today. [Guitars](#) and [mandolins](#) evolved during the same period, from the 1830s.

Ukueles became popular in the early 1900s, especially after the 1915 at the Hawaiian pavilion were a huge hit. A similarly democratic instrument was the [harmonica](#) (mouth organ) and its fixed-reed relation, the accordion. Both were used to play the people's music, from German polkas and Cajun ballads (accordions) to cowboy songs and the blues (harmonicas).

At the opposite end of the music-appreciation spectrum is the piano, an early 18th-century creation of Italian instrument maker Bartolomeo Cristofori, whose *pianoforte* was embraced by composers such as

Bach and Mozart. Eventually the piano would be electrified into organs & such to produce other-worldly sounds.

Finding interesting instruments can be fun for displaying in a music room or for experimenting with their use. Just another great idea for the never ending field of collecting!

May your Christmas sparkle with moments of love, laughter, and goodwill. Jenny and I hope the year ahead will bring you contentment and joy. Have a wonderful Christmas season and may we all have a healthy and happy 2022.

Dave (a good friend) and I have opened a shop (Antiques & Old Wares) at 12 Isabella St, Wingham. Call in and say hello.

I hope that collecting brings you the enjoyment that I have experienced over forty odd years!

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

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

A Bloody Good Rant...

MY PASSIONS, MEMORIES AND DEMONS.



Thomas Keneally

Allen & Unwin Rrp \$39.99

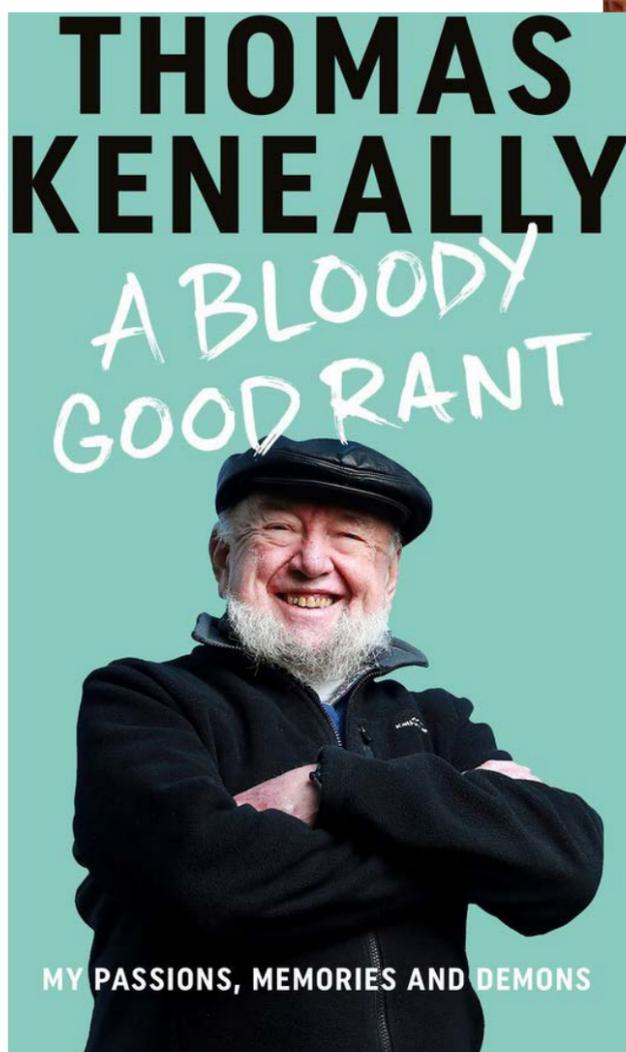
I've known dear Tom for too long to count now. My talented, warm, funny, clever and fiercely passionate and unabashed good bloke of a mate, have shared many times. His beloved, patient and fiercely protective Judy is a joy to know. Our kids played together and remain friends. Tom and I once got lost in a blizzard. (I was following *him*) and each time he brings out a book, I shake my head in wonder, admiration and some amazement.

His energy is formidable. His laughter rarely ceases, but beneath his hail fellow well met, jokes and football fan exterior, is an incisive intellect, a deep thinker on a very broad range of subjects, a man of compassion, anger (well he gets pissed off at fools pretty quick smart) and a particular way with words. He is, as others have declared, a national treasure.

This book makes us sit up and take note once again. This is no rambling reflection of a life well lived by an "old codger". It's thoughtful, intelligent – and, whether you agree or not – balanced, in your face and makes you think about things. Big things, important things. Personal things.

But there is no pomposity or preaching here. Rather he leads the reader to think about issues he raises and discusses to come to our own views and opinions.

Tom is a talker and his strong



Thomas Keneally with Di Morrissey

voice, punctuated with laughter, echoes on every page as he writes. His prodigious productivity speaks of dedication and passion for his art. Though like most of us he wishes his talent might embrace other forms (painting for one.)

But it is revealing to feel one

has peeked into his inquisitive brain where his thirst for knowledge and casual references to his own fallibilities, dreams and horrors of what may yet unfold in his lifetime are described. He does not pronounce from the mountain top, but makes us think.

But perhaps Tom's greatest gift we can all share through his copious outpourings of novels, non

fiction, biography, articles, screenplays, essays, playwriting, speeches, thought provoking quips and media, is that he is a man who is never, ever, boring!

A rant maybe, but a bloody good one!

DM

Make A Submission

The NSW Government has been very active of late with a review of the dusky flathead size and bag limit laws, proposed changes to the crabbing methods in Lake Macquarie and more recently the release of the Draft Marine Park Management Plan.

As we are surrounded by the largest marine park in mainland NSW I would encourage all those who care for the future of Port Stephens, to involve yourself in the process by completing a survey. Open till 31st January 2022 you can visit the survey www.marine.nsw.gov.au/yoursay

One review that will soon be added to the list is that of laws relating to mullocky. Currently classified as 'in decline' the mullocky population in Port Stephens is considered to be healthy with excellent catches being reported from Karuah, the Salamander wreck and the deep water west of Middle Island off Soldiers Point. Experienced fishers, however, who target the fish, do suggest that the average size of the mullocky has definitely declined over the past decade.

Taking advantage of my new-found freedom I spent a couple of weeks in my hometown of Tweed Heads. As much as I feel that the Tweed is a wonderful place it's great to be home in Fingal Bay.



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.



Tomato Problem Solver



If you're one of the many people who planted a veg garden this year after being stuck home in lockdown, you're most likely growing tomatoes right now.



identify the problem or tomato plant disease. When trying to identify tomato plant diseases, use these steps:

1. Identify the affected part of the plant: Is it the tomato itself, the leaves, stems, flowers, or roots?
2. Note differences: When you compare your tomato plant to a healthy plant, how does yours differ? For example, a healthy tomato plant has softly fuzzed, medium-green leaves. If the leaves of your plant have brown or black patches, holes, chewed edges or fuzzy mould growing on them, make a note of that before perusing the list of problems.
3. Look for insects: What insects do you see on your plants? If you need help identifying them, take a photo and contact us at the nursery to identify the insects.

Nine out of 10 gardeners grow tomatoes, and that number would be 10 out of 10 if the holdouts would taste a fresh garden tomato and compare it to a grocery store purchase. Nothing beats the taste of a fresh home-grown tomato!

Many gardeners who grow tomatoes, however, are frustrated with the progress of their plants. The plant may not set fruit. Or your tomatoes may ripen, but have ugly, spongy black spots at the bottom. Worse still, your plants may look great in the evening when you say goodnight to them, but in the morning, they're skeletons waving empty branches in the breeze.

Welcome to the world of tomato problems. This list of common tomato problems and their solutions will help you identify an issue; whether it's just starting or already full-blown- and show you how to correct it, so you can save your tomato plants and harvest yummy tomatoes this year.

HOW TO IDENTIFY TOMATO PLANT PROBLEMS

Before diving into the list, it's important for you to correctly

Armed with this information, you can easily scan this list and narrow down the possible tomato plant disease caused by poor cultivation habits, bacteria, or fungi, plus learn tips on how to fix it. If a disease isn't the issue, then insects may be the culprit.

7 COMMON TRIGGERS FOR TOMATO PLANT PROBLEMS

Diseases, fungi, and certain environmental conditions can quickly cripple your plants. Oftentimes, you can rescue the tomato plant with a little TLC, but some circumstances may require you to destroy it and plant another crop in its place. Here are the most common disease and fungus triggers in tomato plants:

- Over-pruning – Solution: Always use a tomato cage and leave enough foliage to shield the fruit.
- Not enough calcium – Solution: Test your soil pH, apply lime and gypsum as needed. (Bring some soil into the nursery and we can do this test for you too.)
- Planting before temperatures raise to ideal levels.

- Too much water or too little water – Solution: Water them evenly through the growing season.
- Watering overhead, which promotes fungal growths on fruit and stems – Solution: Water at the base of the plant.
- Lack of air flow around plants – Solution: When planting, space tomato plants at appropriate distance from one another and prune leaves (but not too much) as they grow.
- The seventh is Leaf spot; With all this wet weather around it seems the most common issue this season so far and one to keep an eye out for.

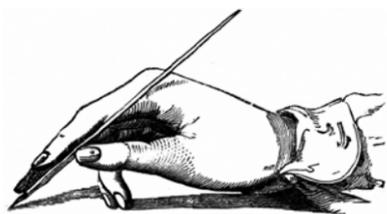
LEAF SPOT

After long periods of rain/overhead watering or even high humidity leaves can begin to break out in black spots. Foliage dies and falls off and if left untreated will spread to other plants and cause eventual death. This is caused by a fungus called *Septoria lycopersici* that infects foliage. Treatment includes removing infected leaves as they appear. And if roughly more than 50% of the plant is infected the use of an organic fungicide is preferable. Eco Fungicide or Copper are great choices, or you can make your own with the recipe below. All methods need to be applied after every rain event for the best result.

Bicarb spray:
 2 teaspoonfuls bicarbonate of soda,
 1 drop of biodegradable dishwashing liquid
 1 litre of water.

Happy gardening,
 Caitlin Sawyer
Wingham Nursery & Florist
02 65534 570
Find us on Facebook





Your Say...

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

Dear Editor

Since I moved into this area 2 years ago, eight huge beautiful trees have been destroyed on private property close to me. The huge size and significance of these trees has changed the place I moved into! When will it stop?

I designed and built my own beautiful house, and I know that the trees could easily have been incorporated into the design, even enhancing the value of the house.

I do not want to upset future neighbours, so I did not complain at that point, particularly as I thought Council had a policy protecting big trees against destruction.

What is Council's policy, and they enforce it? How? Are intending constructors warned, and are new purchasers?

These now-missing trees disappeared overnight, and one doesn't have time to complain or discuss. Air photos will show what is missing, so with climate change

now acknowledged, why is such a policy not enforced? (Two were huge Terpentines, now rare, and not in the road of the house or drive).

The trees, no doubt home of much wild life, were there much before the land was purchased, and no doubt doing their share cleansing the air environmentally no longer!

Victor Cusack
Tallwoods Village

This paper receives a lot of letters, tips, information and complaints about Council!

However one recent letter touched me so I thought I'd ask loyal readers if you can help out a good man who's doing it tough in later life. Errol wrote to me about the tragic and unexpected sudden death of his wife at Manning Base Hospital.

I contacted him and learned in passing that he is at the end of his rope over his lonely future and selling his home in Taree but it needs some TLC he is not able to do any more.

Errol wrote . . .

"I purchased our house in Taree after the passing of my mother with plans for my wife and myself to renovate the house and make it our home. However my wife has now prematurely passed away, after what I believe to be inadequate care by Manning Base hospital. Due to my health I can no longer finish the renovation to the house on my own, so I will have to sell it at a great financial loss!"

I am a 74 y/o retired tradesman, and my only income is my Aged Pension, so I cannot afford to pay someone else to finish the renovations that we started!

My house needs painting inside and outside.

Some Gyprock repairs and floor coverings inside.

I already have around 50 M2 of Vinyl Planks I have bought for some of the floor.

Also, some gardening and yard work outside needs to be done.

I have had to take out a small mortgage for the repairs, so I can afford to buy any materials I need, it is only the labour I cannot afford.

I have been suffering depression and miss my wife. If there is any way I could get some help I would be so grateful."

Errol.

Taree

COME ON CHAPS! ANYONE WILLING TO LEND ERROL A HAND? SEND ME AN EMAIL AND MANY THANKS...DI

editor@manningcommunitynews.com

Dear Editor,

Yours is a great newspaper. Your helpers delivered to my home a note enclosing a \$10 cash donation from someone in the Hastings Valley. This gift is towards the MHAG Bed Inn Bus campaign to get a Sleep Bus for the homeless in the Manning Valley. Unfortunately, there was no information which would enable me to send the donor a receipt, which is what we should do to comply with the complex regulations surrounding trying to be a Good Samaritan in this country. What I have to do to try getting into trouble is pay the money to Sleep Bus with my credit card first, and then I can pay the cash into my bank account or spend it.

Sleep Bus then send a tax deduction receipt to the donor, and a message to me inviting me to thank the donor too. In this case I shall have to give my email address when I pay in the money, so in fact his/her receipt will come to me, when it should have gone to the donor.

Unless you have an Authority to Fundraise from Fair Trading, it may be illegal to collect cash to help poor people. If you incorporate your group to conduct

your campaign, you have another set of laws and rules to follow. The burden on anyone trying to raise money to help the poor is huge. Yet we pay our tax and the government can spend \$5.5 billion dollars to build a venue for a sports club and a premier can say that, in effect, pork barrelling goes on all the time in politics. How much social housing and refuges could be built for that money?

Even Fair Trading won't tell you definitely what you have to do or what the law means. Regarding Authority to Fundraise they send out a guide which states:

"This publication avoids the use of legal language, with information about the law summarised or expressed in general statements. The information in this document should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional legal advice."

In other words, before trying to help the poor, make a lawyer rich. There is a group called Justice Connect, which offers help to groups like MHAG under certain conditions, but even they say that their advice is not legal advice. They are so concerned about the complexity of the rules and laws surrounding charitable activity, they have a campaign

and petition to ask Parliament to make the law simpler.

Maybe I am naive, but why do we need these laws at all? If I set up a fundraiser on a fraudulent basis (e.g. that someone needs expensive cancer treatment, and they don't, or the person does not exist), that is a criminal offence. It doesn't need hundreds of regulations. If I help a genuine charity to raise money and then pocket the cash, or empty the bank account by some dubious means and vanish to the Cayman Islands, it won't matter how scrupulously the other people in the charity were in complying with the rules. I should be prosecuted for theft, but I've scarpared. Will I be extradited back to Oz? And all these rules are only necessary because the assumption is that Australians are not to be trusted. Maybe it's the convict background.

So, if your readers have it in mind to donate to Bed Inn Bus, please do it on the Sleep Bus website. The link is:

<https://www.sleepbus.org/fundraisers/manninghomelessactiongroupatere>

Contact me on 02 6553 1360 or tez_stanton@hotmail.com

Yours sincerely,

Terry Stanton.

Tinonee, NSW 2430.

To keep this paper running, make a donation : BSB 032102 ACCT: 007242 – Thank you!

Publisher and Editor DI MORRISSEY

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