

# The Manning Community News

MAY 2024

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 7, WINGHAM NSW 2429 editor@manningcommunitynews.com

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# NARKY NEIGHBOURS + RED TAPE = WE (THE COMMUNITY) LOSE

No-one wants narky neighbours and one likes to think we can deal with over the fence issues with some kind of decency and politeness.

**I**nevitably the blame gets sheeted back to “the council” wherever we live.

However we must remind ourselves that we live in a local rural setting and not in a high paced urban city environment. And often it's not the fault of individual Council staff members, as they have limited authority and discretion. It is the guidelines, the direction and framework that is set down by Senior Executives who interpret the policies. As do the elected Councillors who have an obligation to set responsible policies and provide direction to set in place systems to monitor and ensure that the Executive Staff implement the Policies as they were intended.

Ultimately it all gets back to the responsibility of the elected Councillors.

**(Remember the next council election is in September! Potential candidates better get their skates on.)**

I have a file of rants and raves sent to this paper about local people/issues/council/ and general whinges where one can see both sides of the issue. Some border on petty, some are legal issues, some are downright silly, and the bulk pertain to Council. (In this case MidCoast Council.)

Yes, we have rules and regulations. Boy do we ever! But I suppose that's life to a certain degree. The issue is how fairly does our

council deal with them. Sometimes, as in life, there are times to bend or re-adjust interpretation of these regulations. Sometimes a re-think and an exemption is justified. We live in a local rural setting and not in a high paced urban city environment with the movers and the shakers who always know what's going on.

Times are tough. We need a creative and supportive council instead of council seemingly always being the road block, the negative voice and the enemy, rather than trying to facilitate and find a way though to suitable, legal, and helpful conclusions that benefit everyone. (Which is not to say that council has not been supportive

and helpful to some on occasion.)

From the stories we receive (and check) problems arise when either a homeowner, a neighbour or the community up in arms over an issue. Rarely, it seems, do we all unite to fight a common foe. It seems too hard, or no one wants to stick their head up. Eventually many just throw their hands up and walk away or give up.

Red tape which facilitates inefficiency, time waste, frustration and fury seems to a common enemy.

## WHAT WE'VE LOST

In my area I mourn the loss of the Terrace Cinema in Tinonee

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# LISTEN TO THE COMMUNITY

(Gloucester have the right idea about community Consultation! Ed.)

## Dear Gloucester community

How lucky are we to live in such a beautiful and vibrant place. Our community is dynamic, diverse and definitely very active!

The Gloucester Chamber of Commerce and Gloucester Transitions Inc, are inviting the community to a series of table-top conversations about our shared future.

There is a lot happening in our town and region - come and hear what you can get involved with, put forward your ideas, network with others, be heard and above all have some fun!

The idea is a simple one - bringing people together to discuss and plan - engaging with community members who have positive and progressive ideas and want to imagine a sustainable and exciting future for Gloucester.

Do you have ideas for businesses, volunteering, social services, events, arts and culture, rural issues, youth support.....the list is endless!

Please join us for great conversations, acknowledgment of what we already have (it's a lot!) and inspiration for going forward - we need your voice, your ideas and your community spirit. You will be heard and included.

You can expect a welcoming space for you to raise ideas, suggest solutions to current challenges and share your own thoughts of what the future could look like for Gloucester.

Choose a date or come to all three! Do you have an idea for a table-top conversation gathering? Let's plan!

Warmest Regards -

Julie Lyford (Facilitator) - and Chair Gloucester Transitions  
Matt Clinch - President Gloucester Chamber of Commerce.

### Next meeting Dates: -

- May 20<sup>th</sup> from 12.30-2.30pm at the Gloucester CWA Rooms
- May 23<sup>rd</sup> 6-8pm at the Uniting Church Hall

Please RSVP to 02 9061 3288 or via email-  
[hello@gloucesterchamber.com.au](mailto:hello@gloucesterchamber.com.au)

All venues are accessible to all.

Light refreshments will be available

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due to one narky neighbour making complaints endlessly to council .... that half a dozen or so cars parked in a deadend street required an asphalt parking lot, that a cinema outing, or a garden birthday party for a bunch of kids, or a family function and special movie screening, was noisy. Or that people having drinks in the garden before watching a movie, were too loud. . . . and so on it went for months and months. One woman versus a great tourist drawcard as well as popular local venue.

It all got too hard and too expensive. The host/owners (who lived on the premises) closed it down. The classic old cinema with its velvet seats and red tasselled curtain, the classic film memorabilia, the conviviality of a local venue. . . . all gone.

Tourists still come looking for the Terrace Cinema.

Then the fellow who wanted to establish a local winery, The Jacaranda, near the river in Wingham with gardens to enjoy drinks and (hopefully food which Council had denied) in a lovely setting . . . squashed. Thanks to rules and regulations and narky neighbours.

The closure of the Bluebell Hill HiCamp site outside Tinonee, a farm which offered an off grid camping site and had provided accommodation for over 3000 tourists and was voted 2nd BEST HICAMP in NSW was heart-breaking for the owners. Instead of being praised for encouraging visitors to the area they had to shut down due to the onerous and expensive demands from Council.

After two years of red tape, meeting expensive demands (build a road etc, etc) the owners announced on social media that they were closing down. Two hours later their DA approval came through. All too late. The couple had sold and sadly moved away.

I know there are others out there battling the red tape rules. Recently I was contacted by an exasperated Christina Jones who runs Moorland Cottage Café. . . . which incidentally won the 2023 NSW Business Awards for Outstanding Visitor Experience - Mid Coast.

She explained that -

Along with the home baked goodies people go to enjoy at the pretty garden café, they can watch the free ranging chickens clucking around in the garden. A novelty for many city dwellers and for a lot of special needs and elderly clients who gain mentally and emotionally, by watching the chickens.

In the near three years the café has been operating they've had multiple visits from council's food and safety health inspectors. Early on the chickens were discussed and the café was advised that as long as it was kept clean and that the chickens didn't jump on tables that they were happy to allow the free ranging chickens.

Then someone made a complaint about the chickens roaming in the garden and that they should be locked up.

When the health inspectors told Christina about the complaint and that the customer felt she should have a separate designated area for the chickens, Christina told them - *"We do, it's called the garden and if a customer doesn't like, or want, to dine where the chickens are, they are welcome to sit in the courtyard or tea room which are both chicken free areas"*.

The health inspectors agreed that the complaint was unjustified. However apparently the complainant hasn't gone away and threats continue, though their motive is unclear.

And so it goes on with much angst, red tape and who knows where it will end up. Is this not unnecessary stress, pettiness, and a waste of everybody's time and money?

Maybe Council should let a few bantams "book book" around Yalawanyi Gunyah and help sanity and calmness prevail for everyone.

DM

# An Open Letter to our Leaders

**D**ear Prime Minister Albanese,  
And Premier Minns,  
**WOMEN ARE NOT SAFE IN THE COUNTRY YOU GOVERN.**

You have stated that violence against women is an “epidemic” and that “governments have to do better”. You are in charge of the government that has to do better. You are in the lead positions to set the agenda to address violence against women across Australia.

Declare men’s violence against women a national emergency. Say it’s a crisis, not an epidemic. Words matter, actions matter, and it starts with you Prime Minister, and with you, Premier.

Prime Minister, stop cutting our federal funding. Premier, stop slashing our state funding. Ministers, councillors, sector professionals and the public have been calling for more funding, more services, more programs, and yet your government has decreased support in the face of increased need. Domestic and family violence services have operated on the same under-funded contracts for a decade, and only weeks ago were informed they would receive the same level of underfunding for the next five years. And we are told to feel lucky our funding isn’t reduced further!

## NO FUNDS NO SERVICES

Are you aware that under your federal and state government leadership, domestic violence services have had their funding cut and some have therefore had to close their doors? That even maintenance of the same funding for over a decade is tantamount to funding cuts – and an insult to the frontline workers who are underpaid, underappreciated and undervalued. Can I ask: have you received a pay increase at all in the last decade? Why don’t our overworked domestic violence case workers deserve fair salaries and to work in programs that are adequately funded? Why, when it’s their job to navigate an unrelenting series of challenges, convoluted paperwork designed by your government, obstacles and brick walls for their women clients who almost universally don’t qualify for the few programs that do exist?

Why are we expected to ask volunteers to pitch in to help women find clothes, household goods, food, jobs, childcare, lawyers and houses?

## MOVE OUT PERPETRATORS

And more fundamentally, why are women made to flee to safety while abusers and perpetrators sit comfortably in the homes they made unsafe? Where’s the accountability? Why aren’t perpetrators on ankle monitors if they’re not in jail? Why are they let out of jail to cause harm?

Why are courses on respectful relationships not a mandated school subject nationally? Why doesn’t your government fund services to help children who are victim-survivors in their own right, when subject to violent homes? Why does your government only fund women victim survivors? What about their children?

How are we meant to “break the cycle” if we don’t collect the data on children affected and fund trauma informed healing programs for them?

And why are women on temporary visas not eligible for support when they’re abused and assaulted? We welcome them into our country, but when they are made unsafe and vulnerable by a man, they receive no support whatsoever. They’re the mothers of Australian children. Why does your government not help them?

Why has there been no widespread priority ad campaign against violence by men on TV and in newspapers? Where are the billboards? Where are the mandated signs against abuse and violence in every pub and gambling venue?

## Actions Not Words

Why doesn’t your government make women’s safety an actual practical priority over hollow words of “enough is enough”? Why must there be millions of dollars spent on commissions and inquests and enquiries rather than funding the programs that are already in place and proven to work but lack sustainable funding because we are told “there’s no money”. But money can be found when it’s deemed important, such as the 18 million dollars committed by you Premier Minns, within 48 hours of the Bondi attack for an inquest.

The issue is not lack of money. The issue is lack of valuing women’s lives. It is you and your government de-prioritising and de-valuing women. You cannot say your government has prioritised women’s safety from violence by men when almost double the women have been killed this year as this same time last year! And the programs and funding have either been cut or remained the same for a decade. Prime Minister, your government points to the States as responsible, and Premier Minns, you call back at the Commonwealth, each always pointing to someone else’s pocket to provide support, which has not ever materialised at the scale needed to effectively address the problem. The buck stops with you Mr. Prime Minister. This is your moment.

## TALK TO THE WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE

Can you see that it’s time for a radical approach? If you have the will, you can initiate the bold leadership that this issue requires. Give John Howard a call: he can tell you how to put politics aside and rise to a morally imperative moment.

Premier Minns, why don’t you sit down with a frontline caseworker? She knows what’s needed. Why don’t you listen to a woman living the frustration right now, today, of your government’s inaction and inadequacy? I can introduce you to these women. Simply marching to say “enough is enough” is a photoshop opportunity. I’d rather hear you announce violence against women for the crisis it is, with specific commitments that don’t shift responsibility to the nebulous “whole of society, everyone else”. I’d rather see you spend a chunk of a day, not a 15 minute photo opportunity, with a woman trying to survive safely while the system you are responsible for, lets her down.

To stop letting women down - and to stop them being murdered - we need tangible steps, backed by practical and robust funding, and not just words.

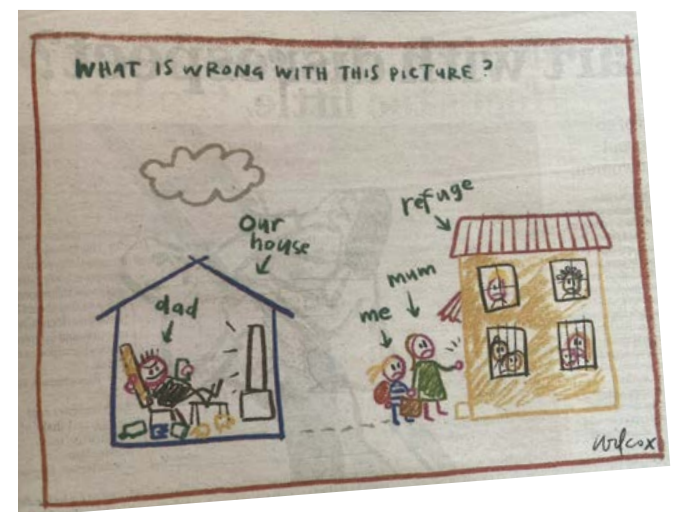
Redirecting the burden from victims to perpetrators: moving perpetrators out of the home so women and children across the nation can stay home, or move in their own timeframe, regardless of where they live; a review of all bail, sentencing, criminal and family court processes; men’s residential programs and more men’s behaviour change opportunities.

Acknowledging and aiding all victims, including children: which includes a funding commitment to enable domestic violence services to offer services to children, with specialist children’s caseworkers, to help them heal, adjust to a new stability, navigate the effects of trauma, and feel safe.

Targeting awareness campaigns at high-risk demographics: not all prevention and awareness is created or effected equally. More awareness and interventions need to occur at high risk venues such as pubs, gambling venues, sports betting events and among men who are identified as abusive, controlling or violent by the police, counsellors, medical personnel and community support services.

Ensuring support extends to all victim-survivors, regardless of visa status: women on temporary visas, including those who have children who are Australian citizens, receive no support. Services should be able to access financial resources for these women and children who were welcomed here and are unable to leave, work or gain housing, while parenting their Australian born children. Breaking the cycle is for everyone on our shores, surely?

Enabling crisis response services and refuges to deliver prevention education. Caseworkers are on the frontline and in an ideal position to inform



Courtesy Cathy Wilcox Sydney Morning Herald

schools, businesses and communities on the scope of domestic violence and abuse that communities experience to bolster prevention and awareness education.

When we help women with children experiencing violence and abuse, we need to work with the fathers also. The conversations about respect cannot just happen once in a school classroom, or worse, in a criminal courtroom too little, too late.

These strategies take action, committed funding and bold leadership.

Your announcement from National Cabinet is tone deaf. What is offered is a fraction of the support needed for frontline services. It is the same approach trying to get a different result, which won’t happen.

Support payments of \$5000 (of which only \$1500 is flexible cash, the rest is in services) for a woman to flee and rebuild her life is simply not enough. It’s an existing program that takes weeks to access. And even then the violence keeps escalating. More of the same is no change.

Where is the system change so acutely needed to keep children and women safe in their homes? Where is the funding for Staying Home Leaving Violence? Where is the immediate action on perpetrator accountability, legislation, penalties and deterrents?

Where is the action on targeted interventions around alcohol and other variables that spike violence? Nothing proposed will keep women safer tomorrow, next week or next month.

We need bold leadership and innovative on-the-ground programs, sustainably supported instead we are offered tokenistic funding.

This is a morally imperative moment for our nation, our women and our children for their very lives and we have been let down by not enough instead of enough is enough.

Mr. Prime Minister, Premier Minns, this is what we need from you. Can you back your “enough is enough” words with the actions we need from you as our leaders, to stop men from killing women on your watch?

**Gabrielle Morrissey, PhD**  
**CEO, Women and Children First**

**Mother, advocate, survivor.**  
*(Disclaimer: Dr Morrissey is the daughter of the Editor/Publisher of this paper.)*

# AUREVOIR BORI...

## Boris Janjic 1938-2024

It's hard to say goodbye . . . harder when you can't stop and push away the inevitable.

We knew it was coming and yet Boris ploughed on with a joke and a smile as he fought against Brain Cancer. Out of the blue. No clue till it was too late. Months of no pain, no illness, sometimes forgot what he did yesterday but recalled happy, mad and fun days.

And then on March 14 in a few seconds he dropped and fell. Gone from my life. The last heart breaking months of struggle, frustration, fear, bittersweet moments.... All over, so fast.

I am left with 25 years of wonderful memories together. Plus the shared story of our first meeting and his dream of the inevitable – that we would be together one day.

I was 15. In high school. He was my film director mother's handsome young cameraman. Boris and I spotted each other at the Artransa Film Studios Xmas party and he shyly asked me to dance. The studio photographer snapped us. Little did I know Boris kept that photo for the decades until we met again at my mum's house in Avalon. Both of us divorced with kids. Both knowing now was our time at last.

I had divorced and moved to live for a decade on my own in Byron Bay where I wrote my first 9 novels.

I went to a show biz party one evening and sat opposite the head animator from mum's days at the film studios.

'You're Boris's brother,' I said. 'How is Boris?'

Zoran looked at me and in his Croatian accent announced, 'Borris is divorced.'

'Give me his number!'

And so began our 25 years together.

Boris and I liked to think we shared the best of Byron in that decade or so. Then Mave Richardson invited me to come down open an art show at the Manning Art Gallery. So I decided to set a novel here (The Valley) and for many months Boris and I drove between Byron and "Mansfield on the Manning" where we stayed.

I took Boris on what my mate Tom Keneally calls the "humble origins tour" showing Boris the house my grandfather built in Wingham where my mother was born and where she had me (in the cottage hospital though) and where I take my grandkids on the same nostalgia trip to "Cricklewood", still little changed in Wingham.

Finally, one day fishing in the Manning, Boris said, 'Why aren't we living here?'

So we asked Chris and Graham

Gibbons who owned Mansfield at the time, if they ever found a house for sale overlooking the river to let us know.

And they did. And so the Manning Valley became home.

Each sunset Bori and I sat with a sundowner looking at the river. He always said he'd watch over me each twilight evening and so I do feel he's here with me. Boris, the movie man, always had an eye for a view!

He worked on many TV series, documentaries and movies, but extravagant commercials, especially in those early TV heydays, were his bread and butter. He told a lot of great stories from the shoots with my mother directing as well as other hilarious and outrageous tales.

At one time Boris made the front pages when shooting a commercial where the model was on top of Ayers Rock (as it was then known) and he flew over it in a helicopter with his legs hanging out (the door had been taken off) as the pilot swept above . . . In the sudden tilt and spinning downwards, Boris pulled his legs in but kept filming as they crashed. The chopper was virtually disembodied but he and the pilot were sort of OK. Boris passed out, clutching his camera to his chest. The model on top of the rock snapped a few photos from behind a ledge where she'd sheltered.

The chopper was a write off, the blokes a bit better. They were helped down and onto the front page of the Daily Telegraph. And later fined (by what became National Parks), for "littering Ayers Rock."

I wasn't a happy camper in a chopper, but Boris still adored helicopters so we flew in them as often as we could in preference to "real" planes.

Boris had opportunities and offers to be a bigtime cinematographer in Hollywood, but put his five kids first to stay and look after them . . . though sometimes he regretted the what could have been in Hollywood . . . but he adored his children and 11 grandkids, and made a great name for himself (winning world wide film and TV awards) in Australia.

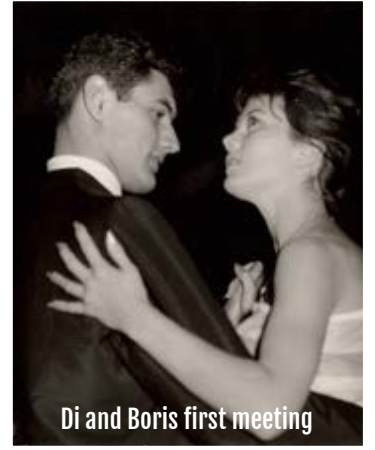
Boris devoted himself to me, my kids, and my career, always supportive, always encouraging and teasing, always believing in me.

We always knew we were meant to be together and so loved each other every day, as I do still.

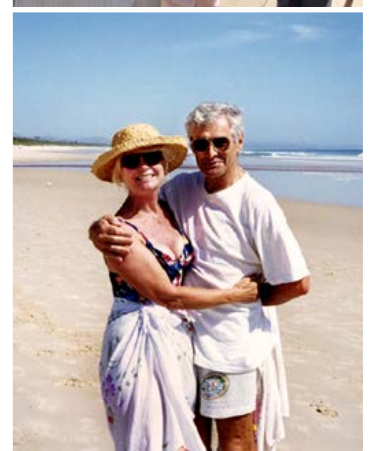
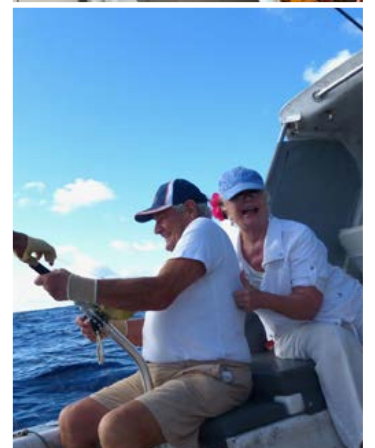
We still had dreams yet to be . . . but I know he's there with me as I chase those dreams to reality.

But bloody hell I miss him.

Di Morrissey AM



Di and Boris first meeting



# WINGHAM'S CEDAR PARTY BRIDGE LOOMS. AGAIN

Nearly six months has elapsed since 22 November 2023 when MidCoast Council voted to award the tender for the construction of the new Cedar Party Creek Bridge to Symal Pty Ltd.

**M**ost Wingham residents are completely in the dark about Council's plans as they watch various barriers being erected and work vehicles being positioned around the main entrance to the town.

What is the timetable for the construction, are there any back up plans for disruptions and what is the design for the single most expensive bridge in the history of the Council?

It is almost 7 years since the last Council conducted community consultations (May 2017) regarding a replacement bridge which sees over 9000 vehicular movements each day. There was much angst when it appeared the bridge would cause the closure of the beloved community funded Wingham pool. After community uproar the plans changed, then seemed to fade into the sunset.

It seems to locals the entire project has been clouded in secrecy, climaxing with a Report to Council back in November 2023, that was deemed as 'Confidential' in its entirety, and not just the tender details, and this instantly restricted the public from learning anything about the proposal.

And the public was excluded from listening to the Councillor's deliberations and for the few who care enough or are patient enough to wade through Council's website.

The estimated overall project cost has now blown out to be allegedly over \$39 Million dollars. Some may remember that a simple bridge similar to the current one was going to cost \$8 million according to Council Officers during the community consultations in 2017.

In order to pay for the new bridge Council was quick to point out in response to Cr Peter Epov's Question with Notice that they: "*re-prioritised*" and not "*sacrificed*" four bridges that were originally approved under round 2 of the Fixing Country Bridges Program totalling \$8.78 Million.

Given Council's significant infrastructure backlog, estimated to be over \$200 million dollars, it will be interesting to see in which decade the four '*re-prioritised*' bridges will now be constructed. Future funding will most likely be based on a competitive state wide basis at a time of global economic uncertainty and high inflation which will mean the four bridges

could cost significantly more than \$8.78 million which was originally approved. All at a time when State and Federal Governments will be cutting back on grants and expenditure. Allegedly Council will borrow \$4.5 million in the 2024/25 Financial towards the costs of the new Cedar Party Creek Bridge.

Community Conversation.

At the Community Conversation staged by Council on the 24 April attend by 17 Wingham residents, Council Director of Engineering and Infrastructure Services, Mr Robert Scott, said that during the bridge construction a temporary low level bypass will be built on the western side of the Wingham Memorial Swimming Pool.

This by-pass will open to all traffic 24/7, weather permitting, including B -doubles, however the bypass could be closed during a heavy rainfall event or inundation or overtopping.

When the bypass is closed motorists will be required to use alternate routes such as the Bight Bridge via Tinonee Road, Gloucester Road, The Bucketts Way where only a small portion of these dangerous and damaged roads have been "touched

up" in preparation for the traffic onslaught. These country roads were never meant to carry the massive trucks, B-Doubles and the traffic avoiding main roads.

100 Year Flood Level

Council says the new bridge will be elevated to meet or exceed the 100-year flood level, raising it to close to the level of the Wynter and Combined Streets intersection as a form of justification for the increased cost to \$39 Million.

Council has not clarified key access points to the new bridge which may be inundated during a major flood making the elevated bridge height superfluous to access in and out of Wingham during a flood.

There is concern that the costs will blow out even further as this is a high risk project and the sum set aside for contingencies may be significantly insufficient, particular in circumstances where there may be delays or a major flood or a series of floods which could wash away the temporary bypass.

(Something about.... *Don't cross that bridge till you come to it??* Ed.)



MARCH 2024

## STRATFORD & DURALIE UPDATE

### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT STRATFORD?

Stratford is still on track to cease mining by **mid 2024**. Closure planning continues, and work has already begun to ensure final rehabilitation is completed to achieve Government sign off.

Once mining stops, employees will remain working at the site for **around four years**, closing operations, removing infrastructure and undertaking rehabilitation. This will be followed by **10-15 years** of ongoing monitoring and maintenance of rehabilitated areas.

We will continue to provide information to employees, suppliers and the local community regarding the site's closure and future uses of the site, once available.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT DURALIE?

Mining operations at Duralie finished in **2021** and the site has transitioned to closure.

Early closure works, such as infrastructure decommissioning, have commenced while detailed mine closure planning is underway.

Rehabilitation activities will ramp up once this planning is complete.



### COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Yancoal proudly funds local projects and initiatives that have the potential to make a positive difference within the community. For 2024, we are pleased to announce that we are supporting **26 local community organisations**, bringing the total contributions since 2010 to over **\$1,000,000**.

The Community Support Program (CSP) is a voluntary initiative and Yancoal has decided to continue this program until bulk works and rehabilitation are completed at Stratford and Duralie. As such the CSP is expected to run until approximately 2028.

For more information on the Community Support Program please visit:

<https://www.stratfordcoal.com.au>



2024 Community Support Program Recipients

# FROM FOSSIL FUEL MINE TO RENEWABLE POWER SOURCE – THE STRATFORD RENEWABLE ENERGY HUB.

For some years Yancoal has operated two comparatively small coal mines adjacent to Bucketts Way to the south of Gloucester, being the Duralie mine and the Stratford mine. The Duralie mine closed in 2021, and rehabilitation is under way – due to be completed by about 2027.

**T**he Stratford coal mine is due to close this year, and Yancoal, clearly keen to diversify its operations away from coal, has come up with an interesting idea, which is to convert the mine site into the Stratford Renewable Energy Hub (SREH).

The idea is that electricity will be generated by a combination of solar panels and pumped hydro working together. One of the obvious problems with solar power on its own is that electricity is only generated when the sun is shining, and often at times when there is plenty of other electricity being generated.

The Stratford Mine complex has mining voids containing water which are less 150 metres in altitude, but are located next to hills that rise to 460 metres. This is the ideal site for a pumped hydro system, whereby the electricity generated by 660,000 solar panels will be used to pump water to a newly constructed dam higher in the adjacent hills, on land owned by Yancoal. A tunnel will be drilled to connect the lower and upper dams, then when electricity is needed for the grid, say at night, water can be released from the top dam which flows downhill to the lower dam past a turbine generating electricity.

One of the advantages of the Stratford site is that it is adjacent to a high voltage transmission line through which electricity will be exported into the grid.

The project as proposed requires 685 ha of land, of which 325ha (or about 47%) will be within the disturbed land of the Stratford Mine site, and 360ha (or about 53%), will be undisturbed land, being 250ha of pasture and 110ha bushland.

The pumped hydro system will have the capacity to generate 3,600MW over 12 hours, while the solar panels should generate 330MW on a sunny summer day, which is enough to raise all the water from the lower to the upper dams, although on average, taking the seasons and cloud cover into calculations, the grid is likely to have to provide up to 50% of the energy required to raise the water.

The peak times of community electricity are 6am -8am and 6pm -8pm, with the water being pumped back in the middle of the day when the solar panels are generating their maximum. About 200ha of land will be covered by solar panels.

Yancoal hopes to begin construction work in 2025 - lasting 4 years - to construct the upper dam, the tunnelling, the powerhouse, the solar farm, an electrical substation,

relocation of the transmission line within the mine site, and an access road to the upper dam etc. New visual screens of vegetation will be planted along Bucketts Way.

Yancoal comments:

'The SREH could create up to 350 full time jobs over the four-year construction period, and if operational, will employ approximately 10 full time employees, which will increase to around 30 people during periodic maintenance activities.'

The planning for this project is still in its early stages and many of the final details are not yet known. In due course Yancoal will be required to lodge an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which will be made public, and will be open for community comment. The EIS must provide all the detail required by the Department of Planning. A recent Yancoal newsletter said this:

'Yancoal continues to progress preparation of a Feasibility Study for SREH. In parallel, Yancoal is currently preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to support an application for State and Federal approval.'

The NSW Department of Planning explains:

'The purpose of the EIS is to assess the economic, environmental and social impacts of the project.

It helps the community, councils, government agencies and the consent authority to get a better understanding of the project and its impacts so they can make informed submissions or decisions on the merits of the project.'

The EIS will deal with:

- Landscape and visual aspects;
- Biodiversity (including terrestrial and aquatic ecology);
- Traffic and road safety; and
- Cultural heritage

I took the opportunity of asking Yancoal a few questions. Some of those questions and the Yancoal response were:

**Q. 'Can you provide a Cost Benefit Analysis of the various generation/storage options including a comparison of a solar farm / battery storage as an alternative to the solar farm/pumped hydro?'**

A. 'For SREH we have not considered battery storage as an alternative to pumped hydro energy storage. This is primarily because the Stratford site's natural topography, land holdings, water stocks and proximity to existing electricity transmission infrastructure and demand centres makes it an ideal location for pumped hydro energy storage powered by solar (the

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

areas in not conducive to wind power generation).

Pumped hydro energy storage will contribute to the decarbonisation of NSW's energy system (as coal-fired power generation decreases) and support the state's net zero emissions goals.'

**Q. 'Have you engaged or begun to engage with various Gloucester community groups?'**

A. 'Since the start of the project, we have released three community letters addressing the proposed pumped hydro energy storage and solar project, and have also engaged directly with stakeholders. Recently, Yancoal held two Community Information Sessions in March (Stratford Hall on Monday 25 March and Gloucester Council Chambers on Tuesday 26 March), at which Yancoal staff members shared project updates and also individually addressed attendees' questions. Yancoal will continue to engage with the community and stakeholders as the project progresses.

There will be a specific opportunity for interested community members and other stakeholders to gain further information and provide feedback when the project's EIS is submitted for public exhibition, which is anticipated to be in July 2024.'

**Q. 'How much bushland will need to be cleared for the project, and what is proposed to offset this clearing?'**

A. 'We have designed the SREH to use already disturbed land and to repurpose existing site infrastructure as far as possible. The indicative footprint of the project is approximately 670 ha. Approximately 60% of this land has already been disturbed by mining. Any disturbance to native vegetation will need to be offset in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act, which will be addressed in the EIS.

Yancoal will still be rehabilitating other parts of the site in line with Government requirements and looking at beneficial uses for other parts of its landholdings. At Stratford, rehabilitation of 390ha will take until around the end of 2028.'

On its face this project would seem to offer enormous benefits to both the Gloucester and the wider community, however as always, the devil will be in the detail of the EIS, which members of the community will be keen to read.

**John Watts**

# ROTARY DOES STEM: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS

**It is easy to see why Rotarians are called 'People of Action'. Eight local Rotary Clubs (Dungog, Gloucester, Great Lakes, Lower Mid Coast, Taree, Taree North, Taree on Manning and Wingham) have collaborated to form the Regional Youth Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (RYSTEM Engagement Midcoast Inc.) program.**

**This program provides a day of STEM activities for Midcoast students. Community volunteers and sponsors Stratford Coal, Midcoast Council, AGL Energy, Taree Wingham Race Club, Engineers Australia, and Gordon & Heather Chirgwin have helped enormously. The program is based on a STEM program created by the University of Newcastle.**

The RYSTEM Days aim at introducing students to the disciplines and getting them thinking about further education in STEM subjects and then to pursue a career in these disciplines. The goal is to give as many students as possible the experience of working as a team and to develop a solution to a hands-on STEM problem. Teams receive points for completion of an activity. Top scoring teams receive awards, and their school receives \$500 to support STEM activities or materials.

Exciting new technologies in robotics, biomedicine, microfabrication, artificial intelligence and many other areas are changing the way we live and work. Creating beneficial technologies and understanding the skills to use them are learned in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs.

For example, a lot of STEM goes into imagining and creating a robot.

I recently heard about a robot dog created for police forces that are called to rescue hostages. Not knowing where a criminal is in a building or if armed, the police can send in the robot who is able to move from room to room, transmitting pictures to a receiver outside. The dog might receive massive numbers of bullets, but thankfully not the human rescuers.

The RYSTEM Program Committee Chair is John Walton of the Rotary Club of Dungog. The committee has been successful in developing several activities: Robots, Hang Glider, Stomp rockets, Glider Delivery, Computer Generated Electricity Supply, Water Tower, Bionic hand and Bridge building. The committee is in the planning stages of introducing two new activities for 2025 and at least one new activity per year in the future and have successfully negotiated with a local Newcastle firm for a robotic rover.

After a successful pilot day at Dungog in 2021, students from Gloucester, Taree and Forster were engaged in the revised RYSTEM program in 2022. In 2023, there were twelve full competition days for Secondary and Primary schools with 1750 primary and 350 secondary students engaged. There are twelve dates set for 2024 with students from each Rotary area.

*Our RYSTEM days have proven to be very popular in engaging students to think and find creative ways to solve the planned activities and enriching their learning process.*

Contact your local Rotary Club or John Walton with your idea for an activity or to donate towards RYSTEM. Need a jolt of energy? Here is a great way to receive a powerful surge. Volunteer at a RYSTEM Day and be inspired by the enthusiasm and energy of a gym full of STEM engaged students.

Let John Walton know that you will volunteer. All instructions are given on the day (you don't need to know any specific material about STEM). You must have Working With Children Check. Fill out the online form and then take it to Service NSW. Easy-peasy and quick.

John's email is [wendyjohn@bigpond.com](mailto:wendyjohn@bigpond.com) and his phone number is 65588272.

*Rotary's programs are not just for club members. Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), Youth Student Exchange, Ambassador programs and scholarships are intended to help all our youth gain the skills and confidence to become community and global leaders. Visit a club and learn how you can make a difference in our community through Rotary.*



# AUSTRALIA NO LONGER NEEDS BASELOAD POWER

The concept of baseload power – the idea of needing a constant, reliable source of electricity generation to meet the minimum demand – is a thing of the past, especially for Australia.

**N**ew technologies and new ways of thinking about energy, mean investing in baseload is not only wasteful and uneconomic, but hinders opportunities for communities and the environment. That's why as our ageing fleet of coal power plants closes, we don't need to replace them with gas or nuclear.

Australia's climate and geography give us a unique advantage in producing renewable energy. With vast expanses of land receiving high levels of solar radiation and extensive areas exposed to consistent winds, we are well-placed to generate solar and wind power. These resources, unlike traditional baseload sources such as coal or gas-fired power plants, emit no greenhouse gases. But their variable nature has been cited as a challenge for integration into the energy grid, which requires supply to meet demand at all times.

The answer though, is advancement in battery storage and other technologies which have become game-changers, making the variability of renewable sources less of a concern. Large-scale battery storage solutions can store excess energy produced during peak generation times and release it when the demand is higher, ensuring a steady supply of electricity. **Old coal-fired power stations are ideal locations for these battery hubs because the distribution infrastructure is already in place.** Storage capability diminishes the need for constant baseload power generation. Renewable energy plus storage can provide the necessary grid stability



and flexibility. EVs and home batteries also have huge potential to smooth out demand and supply on the grid - by storing when supply is high and sharing back to the grid when demand peaks. Every EV is a mobile battery that can plug into the grid at home, work, or in supermarket carparks to do this.

The concepts of demand and supply response – adjusting demand to match the available supply and vice versa – are also increasingly gaining traction. Smart grid technologies and energy management systems enable more dynamic balancing of supply and demand. Consumers can be incentivised to use energy during off-peak times or when renewable generation is high, reducing the reliance on constant baseload generation. And from a supply perspective, EV and home battery owners can be incentivised to share power during peak times. In the UK, EV owners can now earn rebates of over \$1,200 per annum by agreeing to share power from their EV during demand peaks.

Economically, transitioning away

from baseload power makes sense for Australia. Old baseload power stations run around the clock, burning fossil fuels even when their electricity is not needed. Fossil fuel generation costs are increasing and are set to rise further. Renewable energy sources, in contrast, are already significantly cheaper and continue to fall. Investment in renewable energy is booming, driven by their increasingly attractive economics and the potential for significant export revenues from green hydrogen and other renewable energy technologies.

The environmental imperative for moving away from baseload power generation is clear. Climate change, driven by greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel combustion, poses a significant threat to Australia and the world. Transitioning to a renewable energy based system is essential for reducing these emissions. Moreover, renewable energy projects can be deployed much faster and more broadly than traditional power plants. This allows for a quicker transition to a clean energy future.

Moving away from reliance on baseload power benefits local communities. It fosters community participation in energy generation and management and this helps reduce costs and creates new income generation sources for communities. It also enhances energy independence and resilience - which is particularly important in remote and regional places. And it boosts local economies through job creation and investment. Importantly for communities located close to existing fossil-fuelled baseload power stations, shifting to renewables and storage also means improved health outcomes due to reduced air pollution.

As ageing and unreliable coal-fired power stations close, emerging technology mixes mean we can move away from outdated thinking on the need for baseload. This makes arguments for adopting nuclear - which is already too expensive and too slow - even less compelling. Advancements in renewables technology, combined with energy storage solutions and increasingly decentralised generation and storage, offer more reliable, cleaner, sustainable, immediate and increasingly economical alternatives to coal, gas and nuclear.

Baseload is clearly the dinosaur of Australia's energy debate.

**Gregory Andrews @lyrebird-dreaming.com**

Climate advocate for kids and country. Former Ambassador, Threatened Species Commissioner and climate negotiator.

# WHAT'S ON & WHERE TO GO

## RESTAURANT REVIEW: THE GRILL

15 Beeton Parade, Taree.



**W**hat a surprise to find a quality restaurant in a converted bowling club. Who would have thought? Well, the owners did and as it turns out The Grill delivers a very nice dining experience.

It is an interesting venue as it not only provides dining at small tables on the left side of the very large dining room, but on the right side are several tables joined together and set up for groups of 20 plus, to cater for large gatherings and special events. Separating the two is a generous well stocked bar.

We need venues like this that can cater for big gathering without the clatter of Keno or poker machines nearby, or the intrusion of wide-screen TVs, that make dining in groups at clubs and pubs particularly off-putting.

I belong to a group of 30 that is always looking for a suitable place to hold mid-year and the end of year Christmas party. Whenever we get together, we tend to make a lot of happy noise.

At The Grill that won't matter, this is because the ceiling in this large multi-purpose dining area is equipped with a special feature that absorbs sound.

There can be singing, high volume chatter and the result is barely a low hum. It means you can easily hear yourself speak, so you don't have to raise your voice to be heard by the person sitting next to you.

What a treat. How many times have you experienced big noisy tables full of happy people close by, striving to be heard?

Added to this is really high-quality food. The Grill has a reputation for their tasty meals such as barbecued ribs, slow braised lamb shanks, pork belly, fresh seafood and prime steak all of which they say is sourced as much as possible from local growers.

My daughter and I only had time to sample one plate each at lunch. The chef cooks everything on the extensive menu from scratch, plus there are no daily 'specials', which means everyone is in for a treat

whatever they choose and service is prompt. Just make sure you go with a good appetite as the servings are large.

I ordered a marinara seafood topped with freshly cooked mussels dusted with parmesan cheese. I found it surprisingly mouth-watering because instead of a seafood mix tossed through the linguini, I was given a wide variety of freshly cooked seafood chopped in small chunks and cooked in a subtle flavoured tomato sauce which did not smother the seafood or pasta.

My daughter, who has a bigger appetite than me ordered her favourite, braised lamb shanks cooked in a rich gravy that was so good she spooned up every mouthful. We couldn't identify the subtle something that made the gravy so delicious!

The service was remarkably fast and attentive considering on the day we went the restaurant was servicing a goodly number of tables. I have no doubt large groups do not have to wait too long, especially as a restau-

rant is often judged by the time it takes between ordering and serving.

This dining experience may have forfeited the feeling of intimacy that often makes smaller venues appealing to me. However, I was informed that this is "on trend" for younger diners and families these days.

Indeed, I found it a pleasure to sit in such a spacious room with rows of old-style windows at each end overlooking the spacious grounds (begging to be turned into alfresco dining or a wedding venue perhaps!)

Our meal was fairly priced especially given the quality of the ingredients. The drinks and mocktails too.

The Grill is open for lunch and dinner 7 days a week, at 11am to 3pm, and 5pm to 9pm.

There is plenty of off-road parking inside the premises located not far from the cinema.

This is surely a welcome addition to a fine dining experience, whatever the occasion.

**RR.**

# FRRR (FOUNDATION FOR REGIONAL RURAL RENEWAL) EMPOWERING RURAL YOUTH TO LEAD LOCAL CHANGE

Grants are now available to fund youth-focused community projects

**FRRR is encouraging not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) in rural communities to work with local young people to adopt or adapt one of the six project ideas developed at this year's ABC Heywire Youth Summit. The ideas emerged in response to the concerns identified as being most current and critical for youth in remote, rural and regional Australia.**

Funded through the [FRRR ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grants program](#), grants of up to \$10,000 are available to kickstart initiatives that promote equitable access to local services and foster a sense of belonging and connection to peers and to the land.

The six ideas developed by the 35 young Summit participants during the week-long youth leadership and skills development event are:

**Bussin':** How might we create more accessible transport options for young people in regional and rural communities?

**MEE (Mentoring Educating Empowering):** How might we close the

gap in accessing quality education for young people in regional, rural and remote communities?

**A Place for You:** How might we improve accessibility to mental health services in remote and regional areas of Australia?

**The Bigger Picture:** How can we empower young people in regional towns to celebrate their differences and foster connection among themselves?

**Safe Sphere:** How might we ensure that young people in regional and remote communities receive relevant and comprehensive sexual education?

**Youth 2 Grassroots:** How might we promote a stronger connection between individuals and their land by fostering a culture of environmental protection and stewardship?

There is \$100,000 in funding available nationally, thanks to the generous support of The Sally Foundation, David Mactaggart Foundation and private donors. An additional \$17,500 is also available specifically to fund projects in Queensland, thanks to a partnership with The John Villiers

Trust.

Deb Samuels, FRRR's People Portfolio Lead, said the Foundation's long-term partnership with ABC has led to significant outcomes for young people and communities.

"Having run the Heywire Youth Innovation Grants program for 12 years, we have been lucky enough to witness the impact that these young leaders, their ideas, and the funded projects have had on rural Australia.

"From mental health first aid training and career open days, to events that foster social and cultural connection and understanding, each project ensures young people have an active role in fostering a place that they are proud to call home. It gives me hope for the future of rural Australia when I see young people working to tackle issues, many of which echo the concerns we see in rural Australia more generally, head on. The projects that these grants fund help young leaders to address issues of equity and wellbeing and change the underlying narrative of what rural communities "don't have", by creating a future where we

can celebrate all that rural Australia can offer its young people," said Ms Samuels.

Justin Stevens, ABC Director News, said the FRRR ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grants program empowered young people to turn their ideas into reality. "The grants that contribute to this help provide remote, rural, and regional communities a tangible means for encouraging the next generation of leaders to have a voice and act on issues that matter to them and their peers,"

To date, more than \$1.5 million in community and philanthropic investment has helped to fund more than 190 projects in more than 142 communities. Applications close 5pm AEST Wednesday 29 May, and recipients will be announced in August.

More information about the six ideas is available at <https://www.abc.net.au/heywire/grants>, and more information about the available grants can be found on FRRR's website at <https://frrr.org.au/heywire-youth-innovation-grants/>.

# THE INVENTION OF MODERN GAS WARFARE

This year is the 110th anniversary of the start of World War I. A notable invention of that war was modern gas warfare. Dr Fritz Haber – the man who invented it – went on to win the Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

**H**aber was a German scientist and he saw gas warfare as a way of helping the German side in World War I. He originally made some of his name with the development of fabric dyes before the war. He soon realised during the war that the toxic side effects of the fabric dyeing could become a weapon to help the German cause.

His invention was first used on April 22 1915 against French and Algerian troops in Belgium. The green chlorine gas rolled over the Allied frontline and created panic.

The chlorine burnt the lungs and the Allied soldiers died slowly. Two days later, the gas was used against the Canadian lines with similar results. Allied casualties in the two days of gas attacks were estimated at 5,000 dead, with 10,000 more disabled, half of them permanently.

But Haber was not happy. The German high command had not believed that the gas attacks could be so effective and so they did not make the most of their opportunity to storm the Allied frontlines. Indeed, they were reluctant to use gas at all.

It was only when the Western front had become bogged down in a stalemate, running from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, that the German High Command listened to Haber's suggestion about gas warfare. The two front lines were so close that it was often risky to fire shells, in case they fell short and landed on one's own line.

Haber thought that gas warfare

could end the stalemate. If the German high command had listened fully to his strategic advice, then the war could have had a very different outcome.

The Germans could have mobilised all their western front forces for a "blitz"-type run across the Allied lines and on to the English Channel. They could have done far more to exploit the shock value of gas warfare. The war could have ended while the Gallipoli campaign was hardly underway.

Instead, the German high command did not have enough troops ready to follow up the gas offensive, and those that they did have, did not have enough gas masks. A German advantage had been squandered by the conservative high command.

Meanwhile, the Allies soon developed their own gas weapons and so the stalemate became even more deadly. Many thousands of people continued to suffer from the effects of the gassing for the rest of their lives. They may have survived the war but they often did not have a life worth living.

One of Haber's victims was a British soldier named Fred Cayley. He was gassed in 1917. He had poor health for the rest of his life, and he had to visit a doctor every week until his death in 1981. The coroner recorded that Cayley had been "killed by the King's enemies".

This is the statement that would have appeared on his death certificate if he had been killed outright 64 years earlier. As far as the coroner was concerned, Cayley was

good as dead back in 1917 – it was simply that he did not get buried until 1981.

Dr Fritz Haber was born in Breslau, Germany in December 1868 into a wealthy family. He was a brilliant pioneer in the Germany chemical industry.

In the first decade of last century, the rapidly increasing demand for nitrogen fertiliser greatly exceeded the supply.

Haber helped invent ways of making fertiliser. This artificial fertiliser may have been an even greater contribution to the German war effort than the chemical weapons because he helped Germany become more self-sufficient in agriculture. His invention has gone around the world and many millions of people have been able to feed themselves because of his brilliance.

Around 1908 he discovered a way to tap into the atmosphere's vast reservoir of nitrogen gas and convert it into compounds that plants can use. The innovation, called the Haber-Bosch process, produced liquid ammonia. This is the raw material for making nitrogen fertiliser.

Haber was a very patriotic German and so when the war began he looked for ways to assist the military effort. His first major critic was his wife Clara. She was a talented chemist herself who had a doctorate.

She was appalled at the use of science to kill people. A few days after the first use of gas, she used his army pistol to commit suicide. This did not deter Haber. He

went off to supervise the use of gas warfare on the Eastern front and he left others to handle her funeral arrangements.

Haber never went on trial after World War I as a war criminal. Instead, the Nobel Prize committee thought Haber's pre-war work, especially on artificial fertiliser, was so important that he was awarded the prize for chemistry in 1919.

This was a controversial decision because of his wartime work. But Haber was not worried. He said that gas warfare was a "higher form of killing" because it took a soldier out of the battle, but it did not necessarily kill him. Therefore, the gas could end a person's role in war but still give him the opportunity to live in peacetime afterwards.

After the war, Haber's research institute in Berlin became the world's leading centre of research in physical chemistry, mainly for the benefit of civilian science. It attracted a staff from around the world.

Haber's life ended tragically. Haber had been Jewish but later converted to Christianity.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, all the Jewish staff at Haber's research institute had to be sacked. Haber decided to leave Germany as well. He died in Switzerland in 1934, in his 66<sup>th</sup> year.

His death was hardly publicised in Germany. He himself is now hardly known, even if for dubious reasons.

**Dr Keith Suter**  
[www.globaldirections.com](http://www.globaldirections.com)

Must Read . . . and weep! (Ed.)

# THE FOREST WARS

## (THE UGLY TRUTH ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR TALL FORESTS)



David Lindenmayer

Allen &amp; Unwin 2024

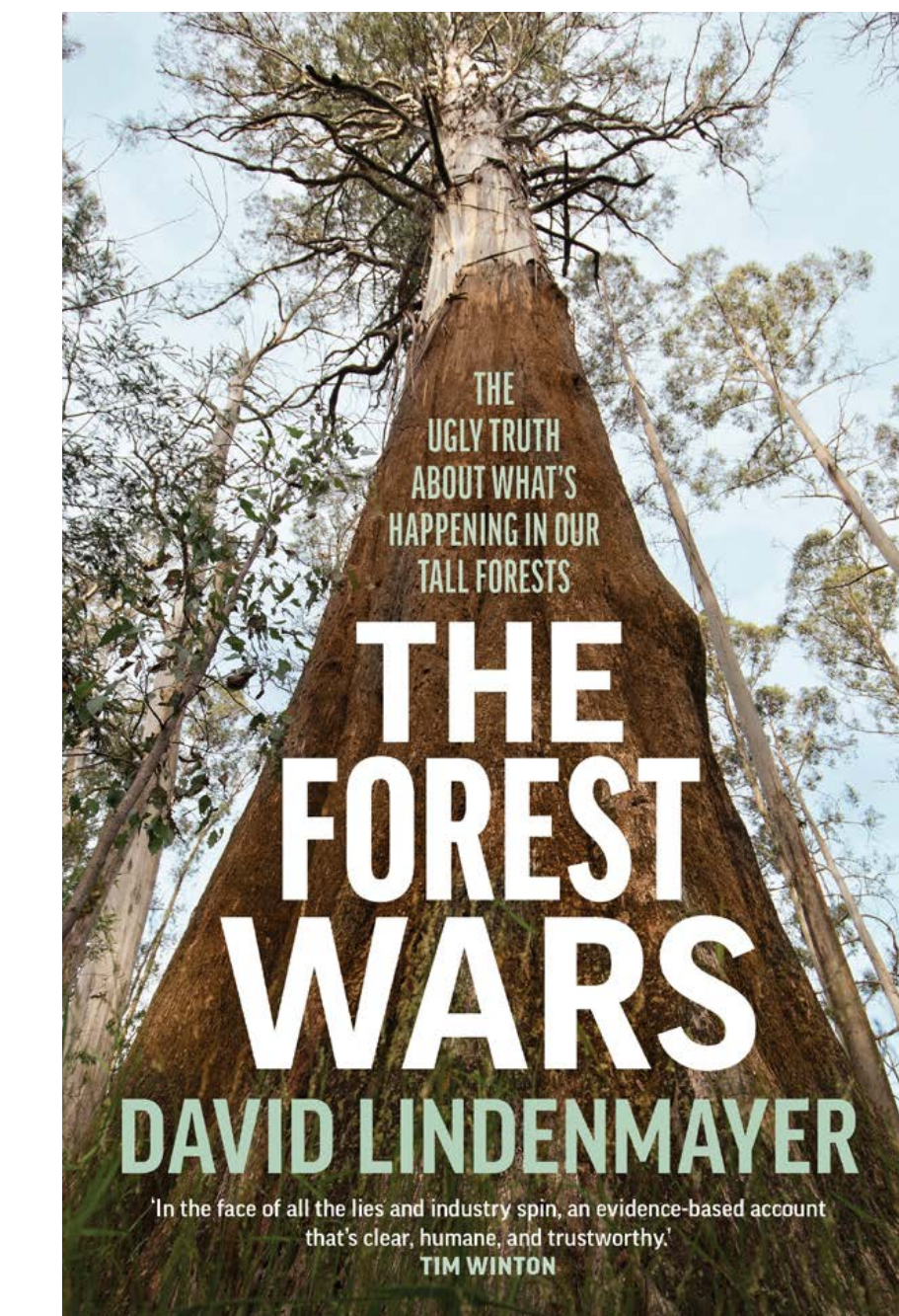
Rrp \$34.99

**R**eading this brilliantly written book, those concerned about our diminishing koala population, and the destruction of our natural environment, are likely to experience a varying range of emotions - from disbelief to sadness, and perhaps anger, as Lindenmayer exposes the various false, and dishonest arguments used by governments and the forest industry to continue the practice of native forest logging.

Professor Lindenmayer AO is a world-leading expert in forest and woodland ecology, resource management, conservation and biodiversity science. He is based at the Australian National University and has been involved in cutting edge research for over 40 years, having published over 1440 scientific articles, many of which were peer reviewed. Lindenmayer is the author of 48 books, and is probably the best qualified person in the world to write *The Forest Wars*, a book clearly based upon a lifetime of study and research.

The book's introduction is titled 'Our Forests Matter', where Lindenmayer explains how, as a newly minted graduate, he went to work in the towering, wet Mountain and Alpine Ash forests of Victoria's Central Highlands counting, and then becoming fascinated by the Leadbeater Possum, the 'diminutive, sweet faced faunal emblem of Victoria once believed to be extinct.' A fascination that has continued to this day as Lindenmayer explains:

*The beautiful environments I have worked in have motivated my lifelong passion for studying and conserving Australia's forests. I have a deep interest in understanding where different animals live within a forest, how disturbances such as logging and fires affect species and alter*



*ecosystems, and how forests recover and change. Forests have always been a great source of inspiration to me; they are where my new scientific ideas are born.*

Lindenmayer begins by explaining that scientists use a process called triangulation, where they use different types of studies to examine a problem from several different angles to see if there's a similar result from those different perspectives,

and comments:

*The native logging industry is plagued with problems from whatever angle it is viewed - substantial environmental impacts, increased fire risks, poor regulation and governance, major financial losses, and a lack of social licence to operate.*

I suggested above that many readers might feel some anger as they read this book, and chapter one is one such place, when Lindenmayer

er deals with the 2023 announcement by the Victorian Government that they propose to end native forest logging in 2024. Why you might ask would that lead to a feeling of anger? Well, as the chapter progresses the reader will find that the announcement is probably just more duplicitous green washing by government, as it is explained that the announcement has not been backed by any legislation, and that the opposition parties in the Victorian Parliament are staunch supporters of the native logging industry. And throughout the book the reader is provided with numerous examples of where various governments have allowed sectional interests to trump the science - one other example is in New South Wales where the present Minns government has refused to end native forest logging, while coincidentally accepting huge political donations from pro-mining lobby groups, such as the CFMEU. Also the NSW government, despite a promise to do so, has not established the Great Koala National Park, and is allowing logging to continue in the area of the proposed park.

Although Lindenmayer is an academic and scientist, the book is no incomprehensible scientific treatise - it is designed to be readily understood by the average reader. The book contains a list of 37 myths perpetrated by the native forest logging industry, and chapter by chapter each myth is debunked by an analysis of the facts and the science.

Chapter 3 is headed 'Myths about logging and biodiversity,' and here Lindenmayer lists, and then carefully and forensically takes apart, 11 myths such as:

The forest will grow back  
Animals just move on.

Only a small proportion of the

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

forest estate is logged.

Forestry departments do proper pre-logging surveys for animals.

Retaining a few big trees will save the animals.

It is pointed out that the industry has for years suggested that logging did not affect the plants and animals of the forest, and that forests grew back, and that 'the animals were just fine.' However, many scientific studies have demonstrated that 'many species of plants are negatively affected by clear-felling' - the method of timber getting always used by the industry. In addition, the science shows that **most** animals in any area subject to logging actually die.

Chapter 4 deals with the important question of whether logging native forests helps make them less fire prone, something that seems to be accepted by many non-expert commentators. Lindenmayer clearly demonstrates that, although it might be counter-intuitive, logging increases the risk of fires because:

1/ Logging leaves behind debris that increases fuel loads,

2/ Logged forests have drier soil and vegetation,

3/ Wind speeds are higher in logged forests, and

4/ Logged forests lead to a greater chance of a dangerous crown fire.

The book also deals with the contentious issue of Aboriginal cultural burning and concludes that 'cultural burning is complex and highly varied in its application - it seems unlikely to have been widely used in some forest ecosystems.'

It is often said that Australia needs native forest logging to produce sawn timber for such things as house frames, but this assertion is well and truly shown to be a myth by Lindenmayer, who points out that only 4 percent of the biomass in a logged forest ends up as sawn timber, and of that 4 percent, half is used for pallets. 60 percent remains on the forest floor as debris, which is then burnt, and most of the timber retrieved goes into pulp for paper.

The book deals with other issues such as the poor regulation of the industry; its profitability (it is a money loser needing government support), and its non-sustainability, and concludes with two chapters titled 'The need to end native forest logging', and 'A new vision for Australia's native forests'.

The New South Wales government recently called for submissions from the public about the way forward to ensure the survival of koalas in the wild. I would suggest that a good place for the government ministers to start would be to read this book.

It is highly recommended.

**John Watts**

# SIDELINES



**Karen Viggers.**

**Allen&Unwin \$32.99**

**If you have ever spent hours on your precious Saturday watching your child's footie match, or in my case my son's lengthy karate class week after week, then you will understand why I feel such affinity with this book.**

It is a story that takes the reader into the world of kids' sports and the many hours that parents dedicate to give their children the best all round chance in life while at school.

One mother bailed me up when I moaned recalling what I call the "after hours run around" taking kids to music lessons, sports, drama and various other after school activities. She told me she spent most nights each week after work ferrying her kids between cello practice and their sports. When I sympathised with her, she became cross with me. "It's what we mothers are expected to do," she insisted.

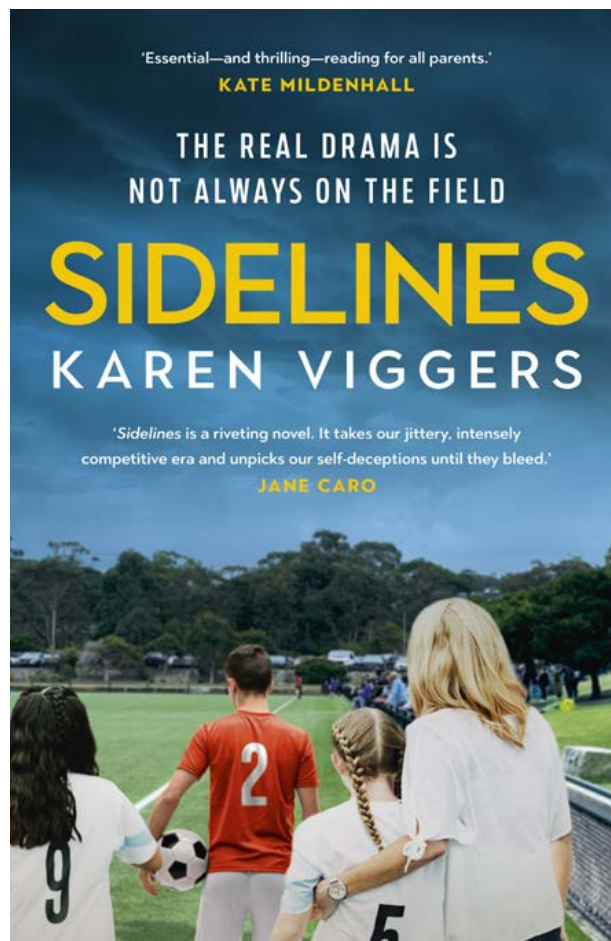
For parents in **Sidelines**, it becomes a high-stakes competition which depends on the performance of their children and through them their popularity and standing within their community.

Reading this well written, insightful book it may also strike you as a seething indictment of the appalling behaviour that happens at some suburban junior matches we hear about, even if we've never seen it first-hand.

Two families are purposefully put at the centre of **Sidelines** to illustrate how determined people can be that their daughters are the best on the sporting field. In the process the parents may unwittingly pass on their flaws and this can over time damage their kids.

One family has a competitive father who is disappointed he didn't make the top team when he was a boy and remains fanatical about soccer.

He's hell bent on encouraging his shy daughter Audrey to learn



the game well enough to be accepted into the Matilda's national team.

He recognises her natural skills and pushes her to train relentless with the boys' team to toughen her up. She's so talented he argues when his wife tries to soften his demands on the child. He insists Audrey's not ruthless enough and he's simply encouraging her for her own good.

The other family has ambitions for their daughter too, but it is the mother who is prepared to go to any lengths to get her daughter Christina noticed by the team's coach and promoted into the boys' team.

She's a bully when it comes to anyone who tries to stand in her way. She is passionate about soccer, could have succeeded if only a bad injury hadn't cost her a place in her school team and now her focus is on her daughter who she insists is just as good as any boy in the soccer team.

Don't for a moment think the responses of these two families are predictable and you can guess what will happen next. The story takes many unexpected turns and along the way makes many important points about family relation-

ships, the boundaries of junior sports, our projected ambitions on to our children, and the tensions that exists when one child in the family receives too much attention at the expense of the others.

**Sidelines** challenges us to look at the cost of winning, the stress on the child, the arguments that flair up between husband and wife when both do not agree with the methods used to encourage their kids to excel.

Indeed, what is really confronting is the question, do we really bother to listen to our kids and what they want as they move from pre-teen into their teenage years? Has their focus and interests changed as they get older, or are we so wrapped up in our idea of who they are and what we expect from them that we are blinded by our "sacrifice" in order for them to become sporting stars.

The dialogue within the families and between the kids at their schools is lively and keen-eyed. It plugs us into the zeitgeist of what's going on in Australian families, even our own for that matter which may be unsettling.

**Sidelines** ends up being a powerful exploration of team sport and the teenagers pressured to be part of it. Karen Viggers pulls no punches in her fast-paced narrative which she brings so skilfully to life.

She writes with heart and rage because she wants us to consider how we handle our young people when they are so impressionable and easily hurt.

The author also makes it easy for us to identify with the parents; the resourceful competitive father, the frustrated damaged mother, the bullying coaches and the partners on the sidelines who don't dare interfere for the sake of family harmony.

Then there are the young players struggling to be heard as they try to mark out their own paths forward, not the paths their parents want them to follow.

**Sherry Stumm**

# HELENA RUBINSTEIN - THE AUSTRALIAN YEARS



Angus Trumble

La Trobe University Press, In conjunction with Black Inc.

Rrp \$36.99

**T**his was a difficult book for me to read, for one thing it is very scholarly which does not normally disqualify it, but when the author spends a number of early chapters on a painting of Helena Rubinstein by the artist Graham Sutherland, does not instantly capture a reader's interest.

I became impatient to know the details of how Helena Rubinstein, a shy girl from Poland with no seed money, was able to steer world wide successful beauty business from early beginnings in Collins St, Melbourne to worldwide prominence.

How the details of her early career have been meticulously researched which proved rewarding. A less truthful biography is her ghosted memoir "My Life For Beauty" (1965) written the year she died and the next year, a not so favourable account was written by her personal executive assistant Parick O'Higgins. He worked continuously for the cosmetic queen from 1951 until her death and was less than generous or accurate in his observations.

I understand now why her portrait is important because it says so much about her character. She was painted in her favourite Balenciaga gown at the zenith of her business achievement, her face tilted to show her determined jaw, her thin lips indicating she did not suffer fools gladly, and her proud stance at age 82 symbolic of her incredible career.

Perhaps I was too eager to read how she came to develop her first face cream "Valaze" and the persuasive propaganda she used to sell it. To this end she proved to be a canny young woman. In her mid-20s she registered and trademarked her product with the slogan "Beauty is Power".

Such a statement 120 years ago would have done little to uplift women's expectations at the time, when beauty was largely driven by the need to cater to overpowering male desires.

Through the course of Rubinstein's long and eventful life, this slogan continued to play a central

role in establishing and reinforcing her thinking. Ahead of her time, this would later become part of modern twentieth century orthodoxies.

From the beginning, she conceived and developed her business entirely for women, employed mostly women, approximately 30,000 of them in her many salons, laboratories and factories across the world.

By early 1950s she had succeeded in encouraging scores of women to spend their money on creams like Valeze "to remove wrinkles, freckles and blemishes to give the face a delicate whiteness", while also promoting the idea that she formulated her products herself with clinical, even scientific rigour.

She was so successful in Australia, a testing place for her first cream and business plan, that within four years she had reached all six states of the new Commonwealth of Australia and the five New Zealand cities she visited.

"Helena Rubinstein exhibited an appetite and stamina for risk and a Janus-like degree of confidence in herself. From the beginning of her career belief in herself, her lack of fear regarding her many competitors and her clarity of conviction makes her story relevant today," says author Angus Trumble.

So where did she learn all this? Not from her family. Born in Kazimierz, Poland in 1879, one of seven daughters, Rubinstein was sent by her parents by sea alone to the minuscule town of Coltraine in Victoria with no English, little savings and scant social support, to work as a nanny for her uncle Bernhard Silberfeld. This work for daughters from the lower middle class in Europe, was common within extended Jewish families.

Rubinstein made a break from her country relatives several years later and took a job as a waitress in Melbourne where she met Felton Grimwade who was manufacturing pharmaceutical products to distribute to retail chemists in glass jars and bottles.

Valeze cream, she told him, was developed by a Dr Josef Lykuski, a

Hungarian chemist or Russian skin specialists. She wanted it formulated locally.

It consisted of lanolin, vegetable oil, mineral ceresin wax and rosewater to cut out the woolly smell of lanolin. In her future publicity, Rubinstein always insisted her creams were neither unique nor especially unusual, it was the great Dr Lykuski whose formulations made them special.

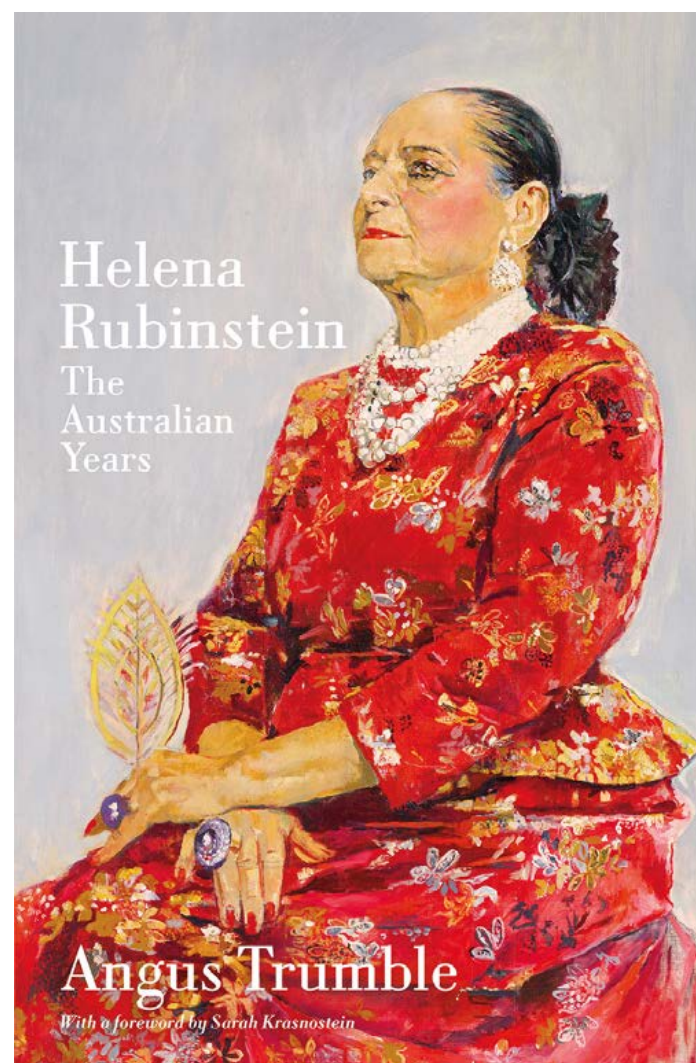
In 1907 she applied for an application to be naturalised a British subject, was accepted and soon after sailed for London to launch her beauty business.

Helena Rubinstein's life from then on followed an uninterrupted trajectory from a Polish ghetto to a Park Avenue penthouse in New York, via Imperial Vienna, colonial Australia and New Zealand and Britain.

She found sanctuary in the US throughout World War 1, side-stepped the Wall Street crash and the ensuing Great Depression, avoided the Nazi occupation of Paris and rode out World War 11, surviving the Holocaust.

Her sister Regin Kolin was not so lucky, she perished in one of the concentration camps, so Rubinstein fiercely protected and advanced the interest of Regina's 3 children, Oscar, Henry and Mala Kolin alongside her own son Roy, who was born in 1909 following her marriage to Edward Titus in 1908.

About to turn forty, Rubinstein married the much younger Georgian emigre, Artchil Giourielli Tchkonias and had a son Horace in 1912. From



then on until her divorce from him in 1932, she revelled socially in the title Princess Giourielli.

In 1938 she made sure most of her extended family were safely brought to America at a time when members of wealthy Jewish families in France could not be persuaded to flee the Nazis.

Throughout the five decades she built her cosmetic empire, Rubinstein never turned her back on the two young countries that gave her the confidence to enter the high fashion centres of New York, Paris and London and visited both regularly by sea.

Few young people today know Helen Rubinstein's name, but a colleague told Angus Trumble she remembers working on the well-stocked Rubinstein counter of a leading Australian department store in the mid-1980s, immediately prior to its sale to the L'Oreal of Paris brand, and are still available.

**Sherry Stumm.**

# AGAINST LIBERAL THEOLOGY

(PUTTING THE BRAKES ON PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY)

Roger E. Olson

Published by Zondervan Reflective 2022

Rrp \$32.99



**I'm not sure how I stumbled across this book – it's certainly not my usual fare, but I found it to be a fascinating read, not I hasten to add, because I agreed with the thesis of the book, but because of how it sheds a light on the multitude of varying, and conflicting, opinions held by those who call themselves Christian.**

Roger Olson is an emeritus professor of Christian theology at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary. He is the author of many books.

Having never heard of Baylor University I checked out its website, and discovered that it is a Texas based Baptist University. Under the heading of 'Mission Statement' we read:

*The mission of Baylor University is to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community.*

*Chartered in 1845 by the Republic of Texas and affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Baylor is both the state's oldest institution of higher learning and the world's largest Baptist university. Established to be a servant of the church and of society, Baylor seeks to fulfill its calling through excellence in teaching and research, in scholarship and publication, and in service to the community, both local and global. The vision of its founders and the ongoing commitment of generations of students and scholars are reflected in the motto inscribed on the Baylor seal: Pro Ecclesia, Pro Texana — For Church, For Texas.'*

Wikipedia, which always needs to be read with caution, tells us that Baylor University sought an exemption from the operation of a law related to discrimination against,

and harassment of LDBTQ+ individuals on the basis that the University requires 'purity in singleness and fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman as the biblical norm', and must 'regulate conduct that is inconsistent with the religious values and beliefs that are integral to its Christian faith and mission.'

These comments about, and from Baylor University should help the reader to understand the environment in which Olson is immersed, and perhaps, why he has the views that he has.

What this book seeks to do is to define what is, and what is not Christian, and by the end of last chapter the reader will have no doubt about Olson's views – and clearly Olson is himself does not suffer by any personal doubts about the correctness of his views.

His purpose in writing the book is made clear in the preface when he says:

'I want to warn Christians against uncritically embracing liberal Christianity, and I want to encourage those who find themselves in liberal churches either to work to change it – back towards warm-hearted and biblical, orthodox Christianity – or to leave it.'

The way that Olson approaches his task is the seek to define what he means by liberal theology, or liberal Christianity, and he does this by considering what a number of liberal leaning theologians have had to say over the years. He suggests that liberal Christianity began in Germany with a pastor-theologian by the name of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768 -1834) who gets regularly mentioned throughout the book.

Olson considers what aspects of traditional Christian beliefs it is that liberal theology generally rejects, and asserts that 'they include the Bible as God's supernaturally inspired

Word; God as a personal being above nature, sovereign, omnipotent, and unchanging; the Trinity.....; Jesus Christ as God the Son.....; miracles, including the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ; and salvation as God's loving and merciful rescue of sinful persons from hell.....'

He suggests that liberal theologians deny the concept of inherited original sin, and deny the existence of hell.

It is clear that all of the things Olson mentions as being denied by liberal theologians are things that he himself believes, and considers that all individuals calling themselves Christian should also believe. He quotes former bishop and liberal theologian, John Shelby Spong as saying:

'I would choose to loathe, rather than worship a deity who required the sacrifice of his son.'

And:

'The Bible is not the word of God in any literal or verbal sense, and never has been!'

Olson is careful to try and suggest that he does not reject science, but gets himself into some logical tangles when it comes to such issues as miracles, and original sin, and 'the fall of humanity.' He suggests that nothing about traditional Christian belief, as he interprets it, is incompatible with modern science and says:

'Nothing about modern science rules out miracles insofar as one believes in God as the author and sustainer on nature.'

So, what he seems to be saying is that anything is possible so long as you believe it to be possible. Fairies at the bottom of the garden?

In relation to miracles, he suggests that they are 'suspensions of the normal operations of natural laws.' Nowhere does Olson try and explain why God sometimes chooses

to suspend those laws, and sometimes chooses not to do so, even to relieve appalling human suffering. Olson tries to pull himself up by his own bootstraps and reveals the logical flaws in his position when he argues that 'sometimes God acts in extraordinary ways not controlled by any natural law. The biblical witness is filled with such events, including the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What law could possibly explain that?' Once again, he suggests miracles happen because the bible says so.

In relation to original sin and 'the fall of humanity', nowhere does Olson explain how that concept fits with evolution. If humans did evolve as science suggests, then at what point were humans perfect, and when and how did 'the fall' take place.

When I was practicing law and had to try and challenge an expert's report, one of the ways that could be done was to examine the factual assumptions upon which the opinion was based. With Olson, the whole of his argument is based upon a huge assumption, and this is made abundantly clear when he says:

'Liberal Christianity, if it is Christianity at all, is what the apostle Paul called a "different gospel". It is a false gospel, assuming the biblical-orthodox gospel to be true.'

And that assumption seems to be solely based upon another huge assumption, which is that the bible is the infallible word of God. If his assumptions are correct, then his opinion about what constitutes a real Christian are probably correct. However, I am sure that many readers will not be able to accept his assumptions, and I'd be surprised if this book changes many minds.

**John Watts**



# WOMEN AND CHILDREN



**Tony Birch**  
**University of Queensland Press**  
**Rrp \$34.99**

**T**his is a gem of a book, a simple story beautifully told, about women, children and justice.

But I admit it didn't grab me at first when I read the back cover.

Then the first few pages drew me in, the writing flowed easily and I was captured by the way the characters were introduced. I wanted to know more about them.

Added to this was author Tony Birch's dedication to his mother and 10 siblings. It read; "we made it out alive." That was intriguing.

Even though he insists this story is fiction and is not based on personal experience, it is about events he must have witnessed and profoundly understands.

We should all read this story to see how and why domestic violence was ignored and/or tolerated in our society in 1965 in the name of maintaining good reputations.

These days, violence against women has come out into the open and we know we can no longer pretend it's an issue perpetrated by a few bad apples.

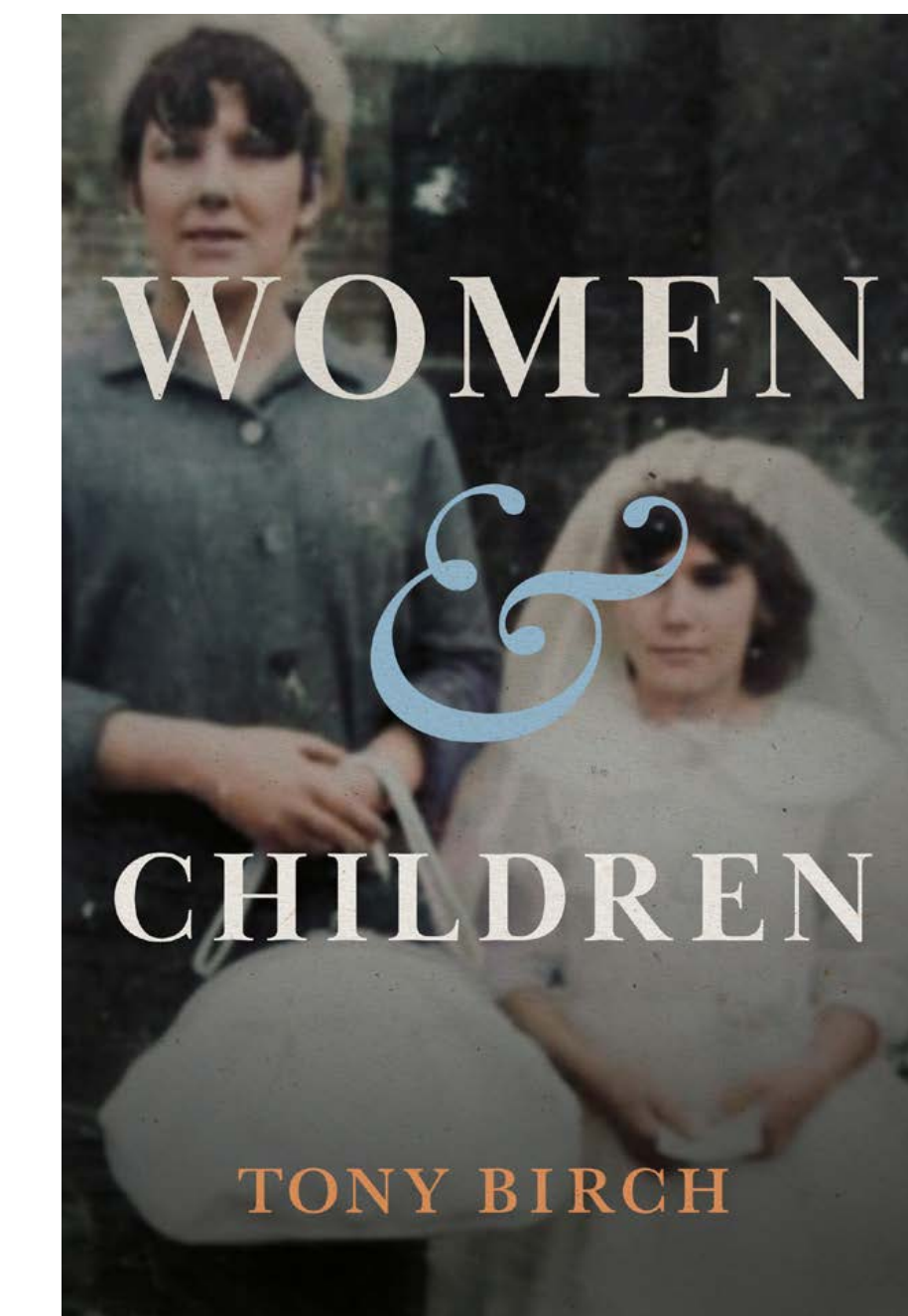
It must be dealt with by everyone together, as numbers of violent incidents rise to obscene levels in our communities.

Tony Birch is an activist, historian and essayist and has received prestige and popularity with his peers, as well as with readers of all ages.

When it comes to fiction he is no slouch, even though this is the first book of his I've read, it won't be the last.

During his writing career he's won a number of awards for his books and short stories.

These include the NSW Premier's Award for indigenous writing, the Victorian Premier's Literary Award, Queensland Literary Award for Fiction and his two books "White Girl" and "Blood" in different years, both shortlisted for the Miles Franklin



Literary Award.

As if that wasn't enough literacy recognition, in 2017 he was awarded the Patrick White Literary Award.

Having read *Women & Children* I understand why. He tells a compelling tale evoking place and time with small details that he drops into his story unceremoniously.

His characters are socially and economically marginalised, but we easily recognise them in the emotionally honest way he portrays them.

It is in the slow build-up of his storytelling that I admire most. The clues are there, but I have to admit I didn't see where events were heading until the final chapter hit me in the face.

The centre of the family is the mother Marion, who is raising two children alone. The eldest girl Ruby quickly learns how to stay out of trouble with the nuns at school.

Her young brother, Joe who has a birth mark on his face and is constantly bullied at school is a dreamy

boy, the recipient of physical punishment from the nuns, though he seldom understands why.

It is not until the school cleaner takes pity on Joe that the beatings are made known to his mother. Marion confronts the local priest, Father Edmund outraged at the pain too often inflicted on her son.

When she insists that the nuns are not to hit her boy again. Father Edmund scoffed at her; "Corporal punishment is an accepted disciplinary practice in the Catholic system," he tells her.

"It is used only as necessary at our discretion. Your child who lives in a home without a father appears unable to avoid trouble."

Marion is furious and retorts; "And it is a cruel act and acceptable to submerge his head in a bucket of cold water as further punishment?"

The eccentric grandfather Charlie knows nothing of this and has taken to hoarding odd items and books he finds at his friend's tip since his wife's death.

It's a routine he enjoys following his retirement as a municipal street cleaner where he has worked for 55 years.

An easy going fellow, he hides a family history of violence he's never told his two daughters Marion and Oona about.

The quiet community where they all live prides itself on social cohesion, but secrets and events can't be kept hidden and quickly collide.

In the face of violence, love and courage surface between the two sisters. Both fear violence from Oona's partner, but are determined to look after one another.

As Edouard Louis once wrote; "the body is the material expression of the violence of the social world."

For Marion's children, the result is also a sudden loss of their childhood innocence.

**Sherry Stumm**

# HOT TYPE!

It may be hard to believe but in 1886, the invention of a machine with 10,000 moving parts had a revolutionary impact on news publishing . . . as revolutionary as the impact of the Internet and the rise of social media has had in the first two decades of this century.

**T**his machine was the Otto Mergenthaler Hot Linotype Machine, invented, of course, by

Otto Mergenthaler. The young Mergenthaler was apprenticed to a watchmaker in Bietigheim in Germany before he emigrated to the United States in 1872 to work with his cousin August Hahl in Washington, D.C., with whom he became a business partner.

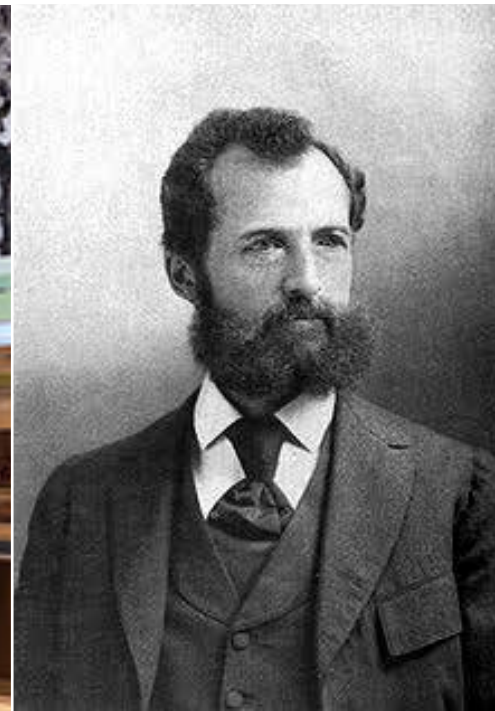
The seed of the idea for such a machine was sown by one James Ogilvie Clephane an American inventor, and legal stenographer, and his associate

Charles T. Moore, who needed a quicker way of publishing legal briefs. Within a decade, Mergenthaler has conceived a way of doing it.

Before the invention of the Hot Linotype Machine, each letter for each word in the plates for printing a page was placed in frames by hand, each letter or symbol picked from bins of sorted letters. This was the moveable type that another German, Johannes Gutenberg, developed around 1440, itself a printing revolution. Apart from improved type and mechanised presses, little had changed in the printing business over the preceding four hundred and forty years.

But a revolution in printing would be still-born without another element: readers.

The Industrial Revolution had an unanticipated social benefit.



the western world, literacy was widespread by the 1880s. While Gutenberg had put books and newspapers within the financial reach of the middle class, they were still too expensive for the

workers.

That is why Otto Mergenthaler Hot Linotype Machine was revolutionary. The operator typed a letter, the machine selected a matrix, a mould for the letter, lined it up with previous selections and then filled the mould with hot liquid metal. Whole lines of metal type could be set in minutes, whole pages in just hours, a whole newspaper overnight and the printing plates were good for a 300,000 print run. Within hours, the news could be read widely in homes, cafes, workshops and pubs. It allowed larger papers, longer print runs and cheaper copies.

Mergenthaler gave books and newspaper to the workers and their families.

It wasn't until the 1980s that phototypesetting and digital typesetting had replaced 'line-

o-type' type setting in industrial printing. Sadly, Mergenthaler did not live to see the full legacy of his invention. He died of tuberculosis in 1899.

Such a fate has not befallen Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the developer of the World Wide Web that enabled the Internet to go from the bedroom of nerds to the phones of the frivolous.

In 2014, the British Council marked its 80th year by asking 'a panel of 25 eminent scientists, technologists, academics, artists, writers, broadcasters and world leaders to choose their most

significant moments of the past 80 years. We then asked 10,000 people around the world to vote to rank the final list.'

Beating out the eradication of smallpox in 1980 (32) and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, leading to the reunification of Germany in 1990 (27) and the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 (8), the clear winner was the invention of the World Wide Web. The Council wrote: "The fastest-growing communications medium of all time, the internet has changed the shape of modern life forever. We can connect with each other instantly, all over the world". (See more at: [https://www.britishcouncil.org/80moments/?\\_e\\_pi\\_=7%2CPAGE\\_ID10%2C5655166218#sthash.UEPyVjqI.dpuf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/80moments/?_e_pi_=7%2CPAGE_ID10%2C5655166218#sthash.UEPyVjqI.dpuf)).

However, unlike the linotype machines which were large and expensive, the World Wide Web, has turned the smallest Internet computer into a publishing machine with near unlimited reach. At the same time, social media platforms, riding on Web

As manufacturing techniques and machinery design became more sophisticated, the level of skills needed to deliver the benefits to investors rose. The workforce needed to be better educated to deliver those benefits hence growing pressure for compulsory education, especially for boys and men, on those with political power. The workforce had to learn to read and write to learn the needed skills.

In the United States, Massachusetts, the first U.S. state to pass a compulsory universal public education law, did so in 1852. By the end of the century compulsory universal education, laws at least to the age of about 14 had passed in 30 states. Western Australia, in 1871, was to first to legislate here, followed by Victoria in 1872. Tasmania didn't get round to it until 1916. But in the industrial centres of

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

technology, are slowly destroying newspapers, especially local newspapers, as viable businesses. The latest casualty is Broken Hill's last remaining newspaper *The Barrier Truth*. It published its final edition on Wednesday April 17, after more than 125 years in print.

The ABC reported that 'It comes after social media giant Meta disbanded its News tab on its platform, effectively limiting the amount of news content that could be shared.'

Associate Professor Caroline Fisher of Communication at the University of Canberra, commented "Perhaps the removal of Meta support from the news will really push the government to make a bigger commitment to rural and regional journalism."

So here is the irony: the linotype machine brought knowledge and hence power to the people. Yes, the knowledge was selective, edited, but a range of newspapers meant a range of opinion was in circulation. In the United States, by 1900, there were some 20,000 newspapers published and about 400 had daily circulations exceeding 100,000.

Access to news and information today is near unlimited but to an increasing degree uncurated, unedited and lacking a factual base. We are, as the US academic Neil Postman put it 'amusing ourselves to death' on the Internet. He asked 'what shall we do if we take ignorance to be knowledge?'

Hence the value of traditional news media, especially local media. They fill a role in the political information economy that the Internet cannot replace, because they can be held accountable by the readership. You can demand fact checking of them, as the Seven Network found after falsely identifying the Bondi Junction killer based on Internet gossip.

Now, if you like to undertake an exercise in futility, ask Elon Musk or Mark Zuckerberg about accountability.

**Vincent O'Donnell**  
Media Analyst /

# THE 2024/25 MIDCOAST COUNCIL DRAFT DELIVERY PROGRAM AND OPERATIONAL PLAN MIGHT NOT BE GOOD NEWS!

**At the 1 May MidCoast Council meeting the elected Councillors voted to place the Draft 2024/25 Delivery and Operational Plan on public exhibition for all to peruse.... If you are so inclined, as it doesn't sound like good news re our rates!**

**The General rate is expected to go up 5.2% but the biggest slug is to our water and sewer charges . The fixed water charge will go up by 7%, first tier water usage charge will increase by 8.5% and the tier two charge by 8.7% while sewer will increase by 2%.**

One can't help noticing Port Macquarie Council seem to have kept to their last election pledge of no rate rises for three years.

The Operational Plan represents an opportunity, particularly in a Local Government Election Year, for ratepayers and residents to review the performance of its Elected Council and its Administration and to see what they plan to do next year, and what has been delivered for their hard earned and rising rates - due no doubt to the high Administrative costs at MCC, unlike at some other councils.

Also on public exhibition within the Annual Operational Plan is an Annual Statement of Revenue Policy which incorporates budget information.

What is not included this year is a copy of the comprehensive line-by-line budget which gives context to the Operational Plan and the various projects and activities which are proposed within the Plan. Also not included is an updated version of the Ten-Year Long-Term Financial Plan which is a critical element to understanding how Council's Projected Income and Expenditure for 2024/25 will impact its long-term financial sustainability.

These are fundamental elements that many other Councils provide, and key factors in the community understanding what Council pro-

poses to do in the next financial year.

Transparency dictates that information should be provided clearly, accessibly and in context so that it can be cross referenced and understood. This the only way for Council to build trust and ensure public confidence.

Last year the NSW Auditor General undertook a Performance Audit of MidCoast Council and made a number of important recommendations, which do not appear to have been implemented.

There are no specific measures that have been identified by Council within 2024/25 to address the serious financial consequences that Council will be facing in the future, no accompanying Long Term Financial Plan, nor a line by line budget.

It makes one wonder whether this could be aimed at arresting public concern over Council's long-term viability in an election year given some pretty crushing reports about council.

Some of the key points from the 2024/25 Statement of Revenue Policy pertaining to Council's Budget are:

Projected Income of \$341 million of which:

- \$181 Million will be from Rates and Annual charges
- \$59 Million from User Fees and Charges
- \$12 Million from interest and investments
- \$7 million in other revenue

Apparently Council will receive \$82 million in Grants consisting of \$34 million in Operating Grants and Contributions and \$48 million in Capital Works Grants.

If not for the Operating and Capital Works Grants, and should there be a significant change to State and or Federal funding policies, then MidCoast Council's financial position would be grim.

As usual, Council is promising an expansive program of capital works to the tune of \$153 Million, but they do this every year and then end up underspending funds, which are then shoved into the following Financial Year, but it makes their figures look better at audit time, and this is an election year.

The Water and Sewer Expenditure figures also appear somewhat questionable as some of the projects may just be re-stated works that were withdrawn from this year's budget, only to find their way back into next year's budget.

Council has dropped the 'Business As Usual' Budget tag, although it seems, there is nothing new to the approach to next year's Budget apart from jazzing up the presentation of information, but little attempt at addressing the serious fiscal issues.

This is an election year (in September... look for good candidates to run!), so submit your views - even if it's just on one issue. If we want real change then we all have to contribute, we need to express our views and ensure that the Councillors and the Administration understands what we expect from our Council.

(Compiled from sources including MCC Council website.)



# ANTIQUES AND COLLECTABLES

Collect and enjoy the wonderful items from our past both aged and more recent.  
You will love the thrill of your finds.

**O**ur local Collectors Club are holding a **COLLECTORS MARKET Day** on **Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> MAY, 8am - 1pm**, in the laneway next to the Newsagents at **12 Isabella St in Wingham**. They are hoping for fine weather and plenty community support. **Jot this one down on the diary, calendar or in your phone alert. It should be a fun day.**

Many wonderful people volunteer at the Manning Valley Historical Societies' Museum, at Wingham. It is rewarding work and a good group of people to work with. The team continue to make improvements, to displays and archives, making OUR communities Museum one of the best regional museums in the state. If you haven't been lately, take some friends or relatives and be amazed. Recommend it to visitors! The Museum benefits and continues to function well from the goodwill of our community. Remember Wingham Museum is totally funded and manned by community members. Your ongoing support is needed and appreciated. New recruits, who can volunteer their time for a big variety of tasks, are always welcomed. Just call in to the museum office.

Chances are that you've come across **vintage enamelware** at some point in your life. Housewives relied on it from the early 1900's well into the 1950's. As a result, it can be easily found tucked away in grandmother's cupboard, at garage sales, markets, op shops and a variety of other venues.



A collection of 1930s enamel canisters.

Mothers, grandmothers, great grandmothers owned many pieces of enamelware and used them for a variety of purposes such as canisters, bowls, mugs, jugs, coffee pots, sinks, bathtubs ..... the whole gambit.

Initially developed in Germany in the 16th century, the process of enamelling metal pots and pans made its way to Australia in the latter -1800s. Essentially, manufacturers applied powdered glass to metal and heated it at very high temperatures, melting the glass and fusing it to the metal. This created a sturdy, porcelain type of finish.

Initially, you would find white enamel on the interior of cast iron bathtubs, sinks, and Dutch ovens. Later it would be applied to the entire surface of steel pots and pans, tableware, coffee pots, pitchers, basins, soap dishes, chamber pots, and road signs. Colour and pattern would come later on in the century.

The enamel coating put an end to metallic tasting food and prevented rust from contaminating food. In addition, enamel coated steel products are much lighter than cast iron and also easier to clean.

Unfortunately, the enamel had a tendency to chip, which is why it's rare to find a piece of antique enamelware in perfect condition. In addition, the coating scratches fairly easily so you don't want to use steel wool or other harsh products to clean it.

Various companies through the years (1860's-1930's) called their enamelware products by their own unique names, *agateware* and *graniteware*, for example.

Unfortunately, most enamelware is unmarked so identification by manufacturer, sometimes even country of origin, is quite difficult, if not impossible.

Production of enamelware began to slow down in the 1930's

with the introduction of plastic, stainless steel, and aluminium, not to mention the highly popular Pyrex baking and cookware.

Fortunately, enamelware is still relatively easy to find. Most common are large white bowls with a black or blue rim. When you are out and about shopping or antiquing, you may see the standard shallow white bowl that was used as a wash basin. If you search a bit more, you can find bowls in other colours such as blue and green.

Happy searching!

Don't forget to support your local businesses, they need your help in difficult economic times.

For the collector - Isadoras Antiques and Clancy's Emporium in Taree. Delinquent Funk and Antiques and Old Wares in Isabella St in Wingham. These are great places for ideas, buying and reminiscing.

**I recommend collecting to all. Find the area of collecting that suits you or take the plunge and collect a wide variety of unique and interesting treasures. It is always fun, you are always learning and it is something that can be enjoyed for the rest of your life.**

**If you have interesting old items you are not sure of, I may be able to help with information, appraisals and/or sales. I love looking at old and interesting finds. Ring Rex - 0427 880 546.**

**Find and share a treasure.**

# WHY AUTUMN IS THE BEST TIME FOR PLANTING



You may hear other gardeners talking about autumn being the best time for planting, but why is that the case?

**A**utumn – particularly mid-autumn – is a good time to plant for lots of reasons, but all are to do with creating a stress-free environment for the new plant to flourish and experience less transplant shock.

## THE RIGHT TEMPERATURE

As summer moves into autumn, the weather starts to cool, but the soil is still warm from all that summer heat - making it attractive for root growth. Ideally, the plant can grow its roots into the soil, anchoring itself and moving beyond the planting hole to seek water and nutrients.

In autumn, daylight hours are shorter, so plants experience less stress even if the day does get warm. In many areas, autumn also means more reliable rain, which again means less stress for a new planting.

Autumn is also a nicer time for the gardener to be out in the garden doing heavy work such as digging and soil preparation!

## PLANT AVAILABILITY

In autumn there is generally a lot of good quality plant stock available from nurseries, including shrubs, trees and seasonal annuals and vegetables.

Give all new plantings the extra assistance of a seaweed tonic, such as Seasol, which also helps to encourage strong root development



and increases tolerance to both hot and cold conditions.

## BEAT WINTER DORMANCY

If you plant in autumn, you are giving your plant time to establish before winter. When winter does arrive, the new plant will slow or stop its growth. If the winter is cold and frost occurs it may be necessary to protect the new plant especially if it is not frost tolerant. If winter is very dry, it will be necessary to keep watering the new planting.

Come late winter and early spring when the days get warmer and longer and the soil too begins to warm up, new growth will occur both above and below the ground, signalling the need for fertiliser

and increased watering. An autumn-planted shrub or tree should grow rapidly using those strong new roots it established before winter.

Sure, many of these good planting conditions also exist in spring, but later in the year with summer on the horizon we are moving rapidly towards hotter conditions and longer days - making it more stressful for a new plant. Spring is still a good time to plant, but the plant will need more attention such as extra shade, shelter and water.

## TOP PLANT CHOICES

So, join the autumn colour parade by selecting and planting a deciduous tree, shrub or vine over the months ahead. While many of these

plants are sold while they are dormant as bare-rooted stock, potted specimens complete with autumn foliage are in stock at garden centres during autumn.

Autumn colour is best in cool, mountain and inland climates and lasts longest after good summer rain. However even in warm and coastal gardens there are plants that can be relied on for a good autumn show including ash (especially claret and golden ash), Chinese tallow, Crepe Myrtle, Japanese maples, ornamental pears and persimmon. Ornamental grapevines also put on a striking autumn display and make an impact when they are trained over a pergola. Even wisterias put on a show of golden leaves and become an attractive

feature during autumn.

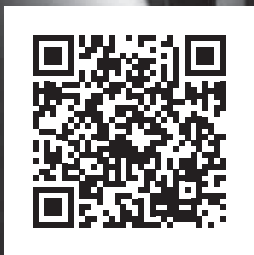
Complete the picture with autumn-flowering shrubs and perennials including sasanqua camellia, roses and salvia.

And of course, if you're looking to plant a veg garden the list is endless: broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, peas, beetroot, silverbeet, spinach, broad beans, shallots, leek, onions, lettuce, radish, carrots, Asian greens... and so many more! So, time to get those seeds in, or get some seedlings from our old-fashioned nursery.

**Happy gardening!**  
**Wingham Nursery & Florist**  
**02 65534 570**

# Tax cuts for every taxpayer

Estimate yours with the tax cut calculator.



**TAX CUTS** / **1 JULY 2024**

Calculate yours at [taxcuts.gov.au](https://taxcuts.gov.au)



Australian Government

# GARAGE SALE!

Leslie's Lane Mitchells Island  
MAY 25 8am

Aluminium extension ladder, plus other ladders.

Builders tools.

3 work benches, 2 with lathes and other fitments.

Planking and other timber, bricks, 3x90mm pipe, garden tools, spanners, JD ride on, 12' aluminium punt. Merc. Outboard engine.

Fishing rods. Power tools, jerry cans etc. etc!

**Be early! Cash Only.**

65532829 Bob and Gwen are closing down.



# PHILANTHROPIST WANTED!

**Do you want to take action on domestic violence?**

Refuges are few and far between and perpetually full.

**Women and Children First**, the third oldest refuge in NSW, with 49 years of experience and expertise and stands ready to open and run more refuges and are proposing to run one in the Manning Valley.

All that is needed is the land.

All be handled by Women and Children First, who have the tiny homes ready to go, the fit out, furnishings and staff.

If you know of land to bequeath, donate, or long lease, please email [ceo@wacf.org.au](mailto:ceo@wacf.org.au).

**Pass this paper to a friend or neighbour before recycling**

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.

[editor@manningcommunitynews.com](mailto:editor@manningcommunitynews.com)

# A HEALING EXPERIENCE OF LIFE AND LOVE

**It can be a healing experience to share the memory of your loved one who has died with family and friends at a special memorial service to be held on Wednesday May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10am.**

The service is in the chapel at the Manning Great Lakes Memorial Gardens, 183 Pampoolah Rd, Taree and is an open invitation to everyone who would like to commemorate a recent death, or even remember the loss of loved ones that occurred years ago.

The memorial, which is held annually by the local district Palliative Care nurses and volunteers who believe the service helps people to share their grief and gives us all a chance to reflect on the value of life, love and our shared experiences.

Transport is available, by phoning Paul on 65929661 or email: [paula.mcinerney@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:paula.mcinerney@health.nsw.gov.au) and make time to stay and talk with us during the morning tea that follows.

# ADVERTISE WITH US!

You may have noticed that MidCoast Council advertise heavily with all local media... except the most read newspaper in the area – this one!

According to a recent survey by the MidCoast Council The Manning Community News is the Number 1 most read newspaper in the electorate!

Email [editor@manningcommunitynews.com](mailto:editor@manningcommunitynews.com) for rates.

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

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