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Discover Rosella on page 2

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Local author launches first Hawkesbury Mysteries thriller

The Astrakhan's Feather



A haunting new novel based in the Hawkesbury and blending mystery, atmosphere and psychological suspense has been launched by local author and award-winning journalist Tony Bosworth, marking another milestone in the writer's growing body of work.

The Astrakhan's Feather was officially released this week, introducing readers to a darkly atmospheric story set against the backdrop of the Hawkesbury and is the first in a series of planned thrillers called *The Hawkesbury Mysteries* which will range far and wide across the region.

The thriller follows characters drawn into a world where memory, guilt and obsession intertwine, building towards revelations that challenge everything they believe to be true.

Bosworth, already known locally for his journalism and storytelling - he was the founder of Hawkesbury Post and has also written for and appeared on ABC radio, the BBC, News Corp and Fairfax, among other publishers - said the book had been years in the making.

"This was a story that stayed with me for a very long time," he said and was born out of a local legend. "I wanted to create something immersive - a novel where atmosphere is almost another character."

Bosworth said he drew inspiration from Hawkesbury legends, plus classic gothic fiction and psychological thrillers.

"Australia has these incredible locations where beauty and unease sit side by side. I wanted to capture that feeling in the Hawkesbury."

Early feedback has praised the book's prose and vivid scene-setting, with readers comparing parts of the novel to a cinematic thriller.

Bosworth said writing fiction offered a very different challenge from his work as a journalist.

"Journalism teaches discipline, structure and clarity," he said. "But fiction allows you to explore emotion, ambiguity and atmosphere in a much deeper way. It's a completely different creative experience."

Despite the darker themes explored in the novel, Bosworth said the heart of the story is ultimately about resilience and confronting the past.

"At its core, it's about the things people carry with them - memories, regrets, unresolved grief," he said. "Those are universal themes."

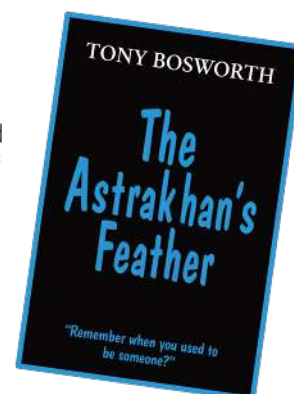
The release of *The Astrakhan's Feather* comes amid a growing resurgence of independently produced fiction and local authors building audiences through online platforms and community support.

Tony is already working on future projects, including additional fiction ideas and ongoing writing work.

For now, however, he hopes readers simply allow themselves to become absorbed in the strange and shadowy world of *The Astrakhan's Feather*.

"I wanted it to feel like stepping into another place for a while," he said. "If readers come away still thinking about the story afterwards, then I've done my job."

The Astrakhan's Feather by Tony Bosworth is available through Amazon as an ebook, paperback or hardback. Just search using the book title and author name.



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\$160m Car Park Expansion for Sydney's North-West Metro Stations

by Diana Paton

Commuters in Sydney's north-west will get up to 1,200 additional parking spaces at two Metro stations under a \$160 million investment announced by the Minns government.

A multi-storey car park holding up to 1,100 vehicles will be built at Tallawong, while an extra storey on the existing structure at Hills Showground will add up to 100 spaces.

Both car parks routinely reach capacity before 8am, leaving drivers circling for a spot or giving up on the station altogether. The new spaces will be folded into Transport for NSW's Park&Ride system, which offers 18 hours of free parking a day to motorists who complete their journey by public transport.

The government has framed the spending as an attempt to close a gap between housing growth and transport capacity in Sydney's outer suburbs. More than 50,000 homes are planned for the North West Growth Area over the next two decades.

Premier Chris Minns said parking at the two stations was "at a premium every day", with spaces regularly taken by 8am. He said the original car parks were not built to cater for demand on the Metro north-west line, and that pressure was expected to grow as the area's population increased.

Transport Minister John Graham called the M1 Metro "wildly popular" and said the announcement was the first of several measures for Metro users, describing it as part of a wider review of their needs.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Western Sydney Prue Car said the investment would make the daily commute easier for hundreds



of residents and reflected the government's focus on infrastructure for growing suburbs.

Member for Riverstone Warren Kirby said parking was the most common complaint he heard from constituents, and blamed the shortage on planning failures by the former Coalition government. Federal Member for Greenway Michelle Rowland said the Tallawong car park would more than double the spaces available and cut the time commuters spend searching for one.

The government says the expansion will complement other work underway, including bus service improvements, active transport links and increased Metro capacity.

The announcement did not include a construction start date, a completion timeline, or the current number of spaces at either station — figures that would indicate how far the new capacity goes towards meeting demand, or how long commuters will wait for relief.

Opposition transport spokespeople have been contacted for comment.

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Cherrybrook Probus Ponderings – Rug up and Head Out

Throughout the chillier weather the Combined Probus Club of Cherrybrook have continued their outings with parkas, gloves and hats close by. Our visit to the Quarantine Station, now a much in demand hotel highlighted the many changes around our city. Our informative guide explained that despite its magnificent location on the harbour the original purpose of the Quarantine Station necessitated quite harsh treatment for those incarcerated in order to guarantee the safety of the community. Naturally we were all grateful to be experiencing this as history and the same could be said of our visit to the



Kokoda Education Centre and walking track. Each venue brought the realisation of the sacrifice of individuals for others.

By contrast our General Meeting brought much merriment as we relived our affection for Arnott's Biscuits through the eyes of Wendell, a former employee of the company.

All were most impressed by Wendell's fabulous Mambo Arnott biscuit shirt (talk about dressing for the occasion!) and of course Arnott's bickies were part of morning tea.

If you are active retirees or even semi-retired and have promised yourselves to get out, meet new people and have new experiences the Combined Probus Club of Cherrybrook could be for you.

Our meetings are held at the Cherrybrook Community and Cultural Centre on the first Thursday of each month.

For information please contact Vicki on 0417 200 351.

We look forward to warmly welcoming you to our Probus Club to share the good times.

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Kenthurst Combined Probus Club

At our July meeting, Kenthurst Probus Club President Burt Stuut was pleased to welcome two new members, Peter & Wendy Paton (pictured).

Members and guests then had an interesting session listening to Guest Speaker Phil Allen (pictured) who spoke about and demonstrated his Handbells. Probians learned that these are individual bells that are hand operated, each producing a single note, but can be played in unison to produce a tune. Phil showed that he has mastered these devices, and serenaded the Club with performances including



"Old Man River", "The Colonel Bogey March" and "Jerusalem". He was very well received.

Kenthurst Probus has organised a Christmas in July luncheon, a guided tour of the Parramatta Female Factory in August and in September will enjoy a Morning Tea function at the Waddell Café, put on by students of Galston High School. Cold weather has limited the Club's walking activities: in the



Spring members will no doubt be on the footpaths again.

Members will enjoy a Christmas Luncheon gathering in December.

Kenthurst Probus Club meets at 9.39 AM on the third Monday of every month (except December) at the Kenthurst Uniting Church building Corner Jones Road and Kenthurst Roads, when guests are always welcome.

Full details can be obtained from Membership Director Roselea Chaloner on 0410 911 917.

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Father's Day

Sunday, 6th September 2026

11 am - 4pm
3-Course Lunch | \$95pp

Children
under 12
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5pm - 10pm
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Dinner: [Bivianosdural.com](https://bivianosdural.com)

2-hour seating limits apply

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From its commanding street presence to its beautifully appointed interiors, every element of Evandale Manor has been carefully considered to create a home of enduring quality and sophistication.

Expansive open-plan living and dining areas, soaring ceilings and abundant natural light create an inviting atmosphere, while premium finishes throughout reflect the superior standard synonymous with Binet Homes.

The centrepiece of the home is a stunning gourmet kitchen featuring premium appliances, stone benchtops, bespoke cabinetry and an oversized butler's pantry—perfectly suited for both everyday family living and entertaining on a grand scale.

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Adding exceptional versatility is the **fully self-contained granny flat**, providing ideal accommodation for extended family, guests, independent living or a private home office.

Every bedroom has been designed as a luxurious retreat, while the primary suite offers a beautifully appointed ensuite and generous walk-in wardrobe, creating a private sanctuary within the home.

Situated within the exclusive **Ayling Manor Estate**, Evandale Manor combines the tranquillity of semi-rural living with convenient access to schools, shopping, recreation and Sydney's metropolitan amenities.

Designed and built by Binet Homes, this exceptional residence reflects more than six decades of award-winning craftsmanship, innovation and excellence in luxury home construction.

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Saturday & Sunday 11:00am – 4:00pm

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CHILD ABUSER EMPLOYMENT LIST RELEASED



The Australian Federal Police (AFP) released the employment history of the Sydney childcare worker charged with hundreds of alleged child abuse offences after a court lifted a non-publication order on Monday, 13th July.

A multi-agency Local Contact Point has also been established to provide parents and carers with information about the investigation, including the man's employment history and available support services.

The AFP said it sought the non-publication order to protect the integrity of the extensive investigation while officers identified alleged victims and contacted

affected families before details were made public.

On Thursday, 16th July, the AFP also released a series of images allegedly located on the electronic devices seized and are believed to have been taken at childcare centres in Sydney.

Operation Moonbi commenced in June 2025 after the National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) reported an online user allegedly uploading child abuse material. Following the man's arrest, investigators seized electronic devices, with the AFP alleging forensic examination identified child abuse material.

He was initially charged with eight online child abuse material offences on 10th July 2025 before further charges were laid in April, June and July 2026. Police also executed multiple search warrants at childcare facilities across Sydney's north-west during 2025 as part of the evidence-gathering process.

The man has remained in custody since his arrest in July 2025, and his Working With Children Check was suspended at that time.

Police allege the man worked at or attended nearly 60 early childhood education facilities between 2009 and 2025, predominantly across Sydney's north-west. They also allege offences were committed at five locations, four childcare centres and his own private business.

According to the AFP, the investigation currently involves 136 alleged victims, with police having contacted 121 families.

Parents and carers can access a dedicated AFP website (www.afp.gov.au) with information about the investigation, available support services and contact details if they believe they require further assistance.

AFP Acting Commander Luke Needham said alleged victims and their families had been contacted and provided with support tailored to their circumstances.

DOUBLE YELLOW LINES

On 13th July 2026, at around 4:30 pm, police will allege that a male driver, 23, of a Hyundai crossed double yellow lines into the path of a Ford Ranger at Annangrove Road, causing it to roll several times.

Police say the Hyundai driver was issued a Traffic Infringement Notice for 'Not keep left of Dividing Line', carrying a fine of \$423 & three demerit points.

ROLLOVER

On Sunday afternoon, 19th July, crews from the Oakville Rural Fire Brigade responded to calls of an accident in Maraylya. The firefighters found a single vehicle rollover into a ditch. The vehicle was then recovered by a tow truck as crews assisted with traffic control. The occupants of the vehicle escaped without injury.

SHOOTING

An investigation is underway after a man died following a public place shooting Carlingford shortly after 7:00 am on Wednesday, 15th July 2026.

Emergency services were called to North Rocks Road, Carlingford, following reports of a shooting.

Officers from The Hills PAC attended and found a man, aged in his 30s, with significant injuries inside a car. The man was unable to be revived and died at the scene.

He is yet to be formally identified. Police established a crime scene and inquiries into the incident are ongoing, with Homicide Squad notified.

BIKE CRASH

On Saturday, 25th July, a trail bike rider died following a crash in Kemp Place, Glenorie. At about 4:30 pm, emergency services responded to reports of a crash. The man was treated at the scene by first responders and a medical team from CareFlight. However, the man could not be revived.

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An investigation into the incident is ongoing. A report will be prepared for the information of the Coroner.

TRAPPED

On Tuesday 14th July, just before 2:00 pm the Mounties Care CareFlight Helicopter was tasked by NSW Ambulance to West Pennant Hills after a woman in her 60s became trapped following a motor-vehicle incident.

CareFlight's specialist doctor and NSW Ambulance paramedics stabilised the patient on scene, treating her for injuries to her abdomen and limbs after Fire and Rescue NSW released her from the vehicle. The patient was then taken by road to Westmead Hospital in a serious but stable condition.

Two occupants of another vehicle were also treated on scene by NSW Ambulance before they were taken to Westmead Hospital. Both were in a stable condition.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Galston Rural Fire Brigade is searching for dedicated locals willing to protect the community.

"Volunteering isn't just about fighting fires. We also need people for communications, community education, logistics, administration and more. You'll receive free, nationally recognised training, gain valuable life skills, and build lifelong friendships along the way," the announcement on Facebook said.

"Whatever your background or experience, there's a place for you."

Contact the brigade at info@galstonrfb.org.au or visit rfs.nsw.gov.au/volunteer/join-the-nsw-rfs

COLLISION

A 32-year-old man was charged following a motor vehicle collision in Kenthurst on Friday, 29th May.

Police alleged the man was driving a white hatchback along Annangrove Road about 5pm when his vehicle crossed onto the opposite side of the road and collided with a stationary vehicle.

The occupant of the stationary vehicle and a passenger were not injured.

Police attended the scene and conducted a roadside breath test, which allegedly returned a positive result. The driver was taken to Castle Hill Police Station, where a subsequent breath analysis allegedly recorded a reading of 0.273.

Checks also allegedly revealed the man was prohibited from holding a driver's licence at the time of the incident.

The man was issued with a Court Attendance Notice for high-range PCA and driving while his licence was refused.

The matter was listed before Parramatta Local Court on 8th July 2026.

If you have any information on any of the above, please contact Crime Stoppers NSW at 1800 333 000.



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Galston500 — A Unique Community Endurance Event Supporting MS Research

In 2013, MS reshaped Allie's life. Four years later, she and her husband Evan stood on the footbridge at Galston Valley Railway exchanging vows, not knowing that the place where they married would soon become the heart of a community fundraiser. A few months later, during the Bathurst1000 — Australia's most iconic endurance race — a simple conversation sparked a daring idea: what if this tiny bushland railway could host its own endurance challenge to support MS research? By 2018, that idea had become the Galston500 — and by 2026, it had raised more than \$78,000 for MS research.

The Galston500 returns on **Saturday, 29th August 2026**, hosted by the Hornsby Model Engineers Co-Op Ltd at the Galston Valley Railway in Galston, NSW. It is one of Australia's most unusual charity events: a miniature railway endurance challenge where volunteer teams from across New South Wales operate 5-inch gauge locomotives for a **combined total of 500 laps of the 1km bushland track**, raising funds for MS research at The Westmead Institute for Medical Research.

Since its first run, the Galston500 has grown into a major community initiative with support from **all three levels of government**, and has been mentioned in both **state and federal parliamentary sittings** — recognition of its contribution to medical research, volunteer organisations, and community engagement.

Why we're reaching out now (8-weeks-out promotional pitch)

We're inviting media outlets to consider **pre-event coverage**, feature stories, online articles, radio segments, and promotional opportunities that help raise awareness, attract attendees, and support sponsorship and donation efforts. We are available throughout July and August for **pre-event filming, photography, interviews, and promotional content**.

On-site media opportunities (on the day)

All media — TV, online, radio, print, and social platforms — are welcome to experience the event from **6:30 AM** to capture the unique pre-dawn preparation of steam, petrol, and electric miniature locomotives. The **first official lap begins at 7:00 AM**, offering rare visuals and strong natural sound.

What makes this event media-friendly

- Visually striking miniature locomotives in a bushland setting
- Steam engines firing up in the early morning light
- A community endurance challenge with a compelling backstory
- Families enjoying rides and activities
- RFS Fire Truck display
- Live music, food stalls, craft stalls, and a celebratory theme
- Strong health and science angle through MS research
- Government interest and parliamentary mentions
- A unique blend of engineering, endurance, and charity

Interview opportunities

- MS Research Team at The Westmead Institute
- Club Officials and Event Organisers

- Locomotive drivers and volunteers
- Families participating in the event

Event Details

Date: Saturday, 29th August 2026

Location: Galston Valley Railway, Galston NSW

Media Access: From 6:30 AM

First Lap: 7:00 AM

Public Hours: 10:00 AM — 3:00 PM

Beneficiary: MS Research at The Westmead Institute for Medical Research

Funds Raised Since Inception: Over \$78,000

We'd welcome the opportunity to work with you on pre-event coverage, promotional segments, or feature stories that help raise awareness, attract attendees, and support MS research.

Allie Thackray 0402 474 636

Email: info@galston500.com

Website: www.galston500.com

Facebook: facebook.com/galston500



Galston 500

The Galston500 challenges a collection of 5" Scale Model Locomotive teams to complete a combined total of **500 laps** of the picturesque 1km track at the Galston Valley Railway, to raise money for **Multiple Sclerosis research**.

With plenty of entertainment planned for the day, both on and off the track. Dress up in your favorite Party outfit and come along to join us as the challenge unfolds!

Galston Valley Railway
29 Md Dural Rd
Galston, NSW

Saturday 29th August 2026

Open to the Public From 10AM Till 3PM!
Come along for a ride behind some of the participating locomotives.

ADULT ENTRY \$10
(Children under 18 FREE)

RIDES \$4.00 EACH
(Fully Enclosed Footwear Required)

More information at:
www.galston500.com

Raising funds for Multiple Sclerosis research at
The Westmead Institute for Medical Research

Sydney 000 Expo Set to Bring Emergency Services and Community Together for A Major Public Safety Showcase

The Sydney 000 Expo is set to return on Sunday 13th September 2026, offering a free, family-friendly day of interactive learning, emergency service demonstrations, and behind-the-scenes access to the agencies that help keep New South Wales safe.



Held at Castle Hill Showground, the event will run from 10:00am to 4:00pm and will bring together emergency services, support agencies, volunteer organisations, and specialist response teams from across the state.

Formerly known as Emergency Expo, the event has been rebranded as the Sydney 000 Expo to better reflect its focus on the "triple zero" services that respond to the community in times of need.

Organisers are working to secure more than 30 exhibitors for 2026, with plans to significantly expand aviation assets, live demonstrations, and hands-on public engagement opportunities.

The Expo will feature emergency vehicles, rescue equipment, interactive displays, and live demonstrations designed to educate visitors about how different agencies respond to emergencies such as storms, fires, medical incidents, and road accidents. Attendees will also have the opportunity to speak directly with frontline personnel and volunteers, gaining insight into the roles and responsibilities of each service.

A key focus of the event is community education and preparedness, helping visitors understand what to do in an emergency and which services are responsible for different types of incidents. The event also aims to build confidence in young people through positive engagement with emergency personnel and interactive learning experiences.

Career pathways will also be highlighted, with many agencies showcasing employment and volunteering opportunities across a wide range of disciplines including emergency response, aviation, engineering, logistics, communications, and healthcare.



Families are encouraged to take part in the popular Kids' Stamp Rally, where they can download a game card (available September) from the expo website, and bring it to expo where children can visit participating agencies, complete simple learning tasks, and collect stamps for a chance to win prizes. The activity is designed to make learning about emergency services both fun and memorable.

Aviation assets, including helicopters and specialist aerial support, are expected to be a major feature of the day, alongside demonstrations from fire, rescue, medical, police, and support agencies.

Free tickets are available through <https://events.humanitix.com/000expo-com-au>

As preparations continue, additional exhibitors and activities will be announced through the official Sydney 000 Expo Facebook page.



The Sydney 000 Expo promises to be an engaging, educational, and family-focused event that connects the community with the people and services dedicated to protecting it.

Sydney 000 Expo – Bringing our community and emergency services together.

SYDNEY 000 EXPO

**Experience Emergency Services
Like Never Before**

Bring the whole family for a day of hands-on learning, live demonstrations, and interactive displays with Sydney's emergency services.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Emergency vehicles
- Interactive Displays
- Live Demonstrations
- Careers & Opportunities
- Family Friendly Fun

WHERE & WHEN

Sunday 13th September
10am - 4pm
Castle Hill Showground
www.000expo.com.au

Galston Community Bank Proudly Supports Galston Early Learning Centre

We are absolutely thrilled to announce that Community Bank Galston has proudly sponsored the Galston Early Learning Centre with a \$27,000 grant!

The Galston Early Learning Centre does an amazing job supporting local families with their educational and childcare needs. Our sponsorship goes directly towards installing a brand new air conditioning system and solar panels for the centre.

This upgrade ensures that the children and dedicated staff have a comfortable, temperature-controlled environment year-round to learn and play. Furthermore, the addition of solar panels highlights a shared commitment to sustainability, helping the centre reduce its carbon footprint and lower ongoing energy costs, allowing them to focus more resources back into early childhood education.

We are thrilled to partner with the Galston Early Learning Centre and look forward to seeing the positive impact these new facilities will bring to the children and their families!

A huge thank you to all our customers, it's your continued support that makes community investments like this possible. When you bank with us, your community benefits!



A self-care routine for Dad.

SHOP FATHER'S DAY GIFT CARDS



Dad doesn't know it yet... But this is exactly what he wants for Father's Day

“Let's be honest: you may be one of the reasons Dad needs a break.”

He taught you to drive, possibly while gripping the door handle and silently questioning every life choice that led to that moment. You ask him for money, lifts, advice and help with the things you could probably Google. He is the person you call when the car makes a strange noise, the Wi-Fi stops working, something needs fixing or you have no idea how to approach that homework question.

Dad takes care of the bills, the bins, the maintenance and much of the worrying. He carries the responsibility of providing, protecting and keeping everything moving, often without saying just how heavy it can feel.

This Father's Day, forget another pair of socks, barbecue tool, or novelty mug. Give Dad something he may not know he wants, but probably desperately needs: the chance to put everything down.

At City Cave Dural, we are your antidote to stress.

A float therapy session allows Dad to step away from the noise, demands and constant mental load of everyday life. In a private room, he will float effortlessly in a warm pool filled with water and Epsom salts. With no phone buzzing, no jobs waiting and nobody asking him where something is, his body can feel completely supported and his mind has space to slow down.

For one peaceful hour, there is nothing to carry, solve, organise or fix. Floating can help ease physical tension, encourage deep rest and leave Dad feeling calmer, clearer and recharged. He can also unwind in an infrared sauna or enjoy a restorative massage - perfect for tired muscles, busy minds and dads who rarely take time for themselves.

Whether he works long hours, trains hard, struggles to switch off or spends most of his time looking after everyone else, this is time that is entirely his. He might never think to book it for himself, and that is exactly why it makes such a thoughtful gift.

Give Dad a self-care routine this Father's Day. Purchase a City Cave gift card and let him choose from float therapy, infrared sauna, massage or a combination of the three at City Cave Dural.

Visit us in Dural or purchase a Father's Day gift card online at citycave.com.au/dural

Downsizing or clearing an estate? Start with an assessment

Downsizing a family home or helping parents manage an estate can quickly become overwhelming. After decades of collecting, it is often difficult to know what should be kept, donated, sold or discarded.

Downsizing or clearing an estate?



It could be exactly what someone else is searching for.



When time is short, valuable pieces can easily be overlooked. Artwork, jewellery, collectables, furniture and unusual household items may be sold for a fraction of their potential value at a garage sale, simply because the owner does not know what they have. Experienced buyers often recognise those opportunities immediately.

Bargain Hunt Auctions has been helping people identify and sell valuable items since 2005. From our local auction house in Cattai, we combine knowledge of the Hills and Hawkesbury community with access to bidders across Australia and internationally.

Our team helps take the uncertainty out of downsizing. We can identify items that may be suitable for auction, explain the process clearly and present them to a wider market of interested buyers, giving families a stronger opportunity to achieve a worthwhile result.

Auctions do not need to be complicated or intimidating. An initial appraisal is free, so there is no risk in asking before you sell, donate or throw something away.

Leave the lower-value household items for the garage sale. Let experienced auction specialists assess the pieces that may deserve a bigger audience.

Request your free appraisal at bargainhunt.com.au



Arcadian Quilting News

With the WINTER SOLSTICE (21st June) behind us we can now look upon every new day as the promise of our lovely summertime not too far away!!

Our Quilting Group has been out and about delivering cosy quilts and the much needed personal comfort bags to homeless women and their families.

Helping Hearts Survive is a contact point for much of what we make and what we can share...

Above are some of the made-with-love bags which we donate to Helping Hearts Survive and what a busy group / shop it is, on the corner of Old Northern Rd and Galston Road, Dural.

We also donate Quilts to this great and busy little shop. This is one place where Communities Work Together so very well.

Arcadian Quilters meet in the Community Health Centre, Cnr, The Glade and Arcadia Rd, Galston on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesday of every month at 9.30 am.

For further information contact Philomena on 0414 971 106.



YOUR VALUABLES COULD BE WORTH MORE THAN YOU THINK

Downsizing, clearing an estate or ready to sell a collection? Bargain Hunt Auctions, based locally in Cattai, helps individuals, families, collectors and estate representatives assess items that may be suitable for auction.

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Rotary Club of West Pennant Hills and Cherrybrook

Rotary
Club of West Pennant Hills
& Cherrybrook

A number of our members visited Coonabarabran to assist our Sister Rotary Club, The Rotary Club of Coonabarabran, run the canteen in the Showgrounds for the Equestrian Expo which took place 29th May - 6th June. This is the largest equestrian event in Australia involving a lot of hard work and fun.

On 3rd June our Club joined with the Rotary Club of Pennant Hills to celebrate the 50th Pride of Workmanship Awards at Pennant Hills Golf Club. Two awardees, Eva Kucharzewski (owner of Lalka Boutique) and JoJo The (President, Cherrybrook Public



School P&C) were put forward by our Club. A special award was given to David Firth for his dedication and selfless efforts in continuing to champion and promote the Pride of Workmanship Awards over many years.

Another successful BBQ and cake stall was held at Bunnings Castle Hill on 6th June with all proceeds going to Rotary charities.

On Friday 21st June the Club held its change over dinner at Springfield House, Dural at which time the new Board was inducted.

Pennant Hills High School P&C again asked our Club to run the BBQ at their Winter Carnival on 27th June. Despite wet and cold conditions a good day was had and all proceeds went back to the school.

The Club held its annual Trivia Night on Saturday 1st August at the Cherrybrook Community Centre. Trivia Night is one of our biggest fundraisers of the year. Last year's quiz master, Robert Bredin, again did a fabulous job. All proceeds will go to Serving Hope On Wheels and other Rotary charities.

A regular program of lawn mowing, line trimming and pruning is carried out by members at several transitional houses at Kenthurst.

Upcoming Events

Bunnings BBQ at Castle Hill on Saturday 5th September 2026.

If you would like to know more about Rotary, be involved or join us at a meeting please call 0412 064 336.

Rotary Club of West Pennant Hills and Cherrybrook

Web page: <http://www.wphcrotary.org/>





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ADVERTORIAL

What really happens in a hearing test – step by step

Many people walk into their first hearing test expecting it to be quick and simple. What often surprises them is how detailed a proper hearing assessment is. That is because it is not just about measuring whether you can hear certain tones. It is about understanding how you hear, how your ears and brain work together, and how this affects your daily communication.

For some, a hearing test feels intimidating. Not because it is painful or risky, but because they are unsure what will happen. It is important to know that a hearing assessment is not about passing or failing. Unless you are completing a specific medical requirement, there is no score you need to achieve. The purpose is to build a clear and accurate picture of your hearing ability.

A comprehensive assessment takes time. Not because the tests are overly complicated, but because understanding your hearing should not be rushed. When you include the initial consultation, ear health checks, hearing measurements, speech testing, and a full explanation

of the results, the appointment can take over an hour. This time is an investment in your hearing health, as every future decision is based on the information gathered here.

In many professional clinics, the first appointment focuses purely on understanding your hearing. Detailed discussions about hearing aids or other technology options are often scheduled for a follow-up visit. This approach is intentional. It gives you time to absorb the information and return with informed questions. It keeps the assessment centred on clarity rather than immediate decision-making.

A proper hearing assessment usually follows a clear and logical process. It often begins with a conversation about your daily life. The clinician will ask about your work or retirement, the environments you spend time in, and the situations you find most challenging. You may also discuss your goals and what improvements would make the greatest difference. Questionnaires are sometimes used to explore the social and emotional impact of hearing difficulties.

You may be encouraged to bring a regular communication partner, such as a spouse or close friend. They can provide valuable insight into how hearing challenges affect conversations and relationships.

The next step is an ear health check to rule out issues such as wax blockages or infections that could influence both your hearing and the accuracy of the results. After that, your hearing is measured through a series of simple listening tests. There are no tricks and no right or wrong answers. The goal is accuracy, not perfection.

Speech testing is also an important part of the assessment. Ideally, it is conducted in both quiet and background noise to simulate real-life listening situations. This helps the clinician understand how your hearing affects everyday communication.

Finally, your results should be explained clearly and in plain language. You should understand what was tested, what was found, and how it relates to your daily experiences.

By the end of a thorough hearing assessment, you should feel informed and reassured. When you know what to expect, the process becomes far less intimidating and allows you to make confident decisions about your hearing health.



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To lodge, view and track the latest Development Applications in your area please visit: hornsby.nsw.gov.au/property



from the Mayor's Desk

On becoming Mayor, I made a pledge to ensure our towns and village centres remain safe, functional and attractive. That they remain welcoming places that support both our community and local businesses. I am delighted to see that construction has begun on the Galston Village Public Domain project, marking an exciting new chapter for this much enjoyed rural hub. I thank the community for their patience as these improvements come together.

I am looking forward to seeing the advancement of additional town centre planning in Pennant Hills and Asquith. Like most of our rail corridor, not much has changed in these locations for many decades.

More broadly, we will soon begin to see the final roll out of our gateway signage completed. This, along with targeted graffiti removal in identified hot spots, contributes to ensuring all corners of our Shire are places to be proud of.

Our environmental work continues with the remediation of the Wiseman's Ferry boat ramp precinct getting attention. The disruption to local ecology as a result of the boat ramp installation and flood events has been recognised and addressed. The environment team, complete with volunteers, has successfully stabilised and restored mangrove plantings. In addition, the original boat ramp has now been integrated back into the landscape.

As Local Government Week 2026 begins on Monday 3rd to Sunday 9th August, I will take this opportunity to recognise the invaluable role local government plays in our daily lives and the many services and facilities that support our community.

I would also like to acknowledge the many dedicated Council staff who serve our Shire. Their commitment, professionalism and hard work help improve our lives every day and make Hornsby Shire the special place it is. Thank you for everything you do for our community.

Warren Waddell
Mayor of Hornsby Shire

HORNSBY ART PRIZE 2026

HORNSBY ART PRIZE 2026

ENTRIES CLOSE 20 AUGUST

Total prize money \$23,000 | hornsby.nsw.gov.au/artprize

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair

Waste-Wise Corner
Thursday 6 August, 2.30pm-4.30pm
Hornsby Library

Kimbriki EcoHouse and Garden Tour
Thursday 13 August, 9am-2pm
Kimbriki Resource Recovery Centre (departing Hornsby Park bus stop)

Waste-Wise: Organic Gardening in Spring
Saturday 15 August, 9am-11am
Community Recycling Centre, Thornleigh

Edgeworth David Community Garden Tour
Thursday 20 August, 10.30am-12pm
Edgeworth David Community Garden, Hornsby

Common Threads: Make & Mend
Tuesday 25 August, 10.30am-12.30pm
Hornsby Library

Bookings essential:
hornsby.nsw.gov.au/waste

DISABILITY CONFIDENCE PROGRAM

Building Disability Confidence in Boundaries and Safeguarding

Thursday 13 August, 10am-12pm. Hornsby Library. Bookings essential

hornsby.nsw.gov.au/disability-confidence

Draft Hornsby Heritage Studies

Submissions close: 31 August

For more information visit: yoursay.hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Explore Your Backyard

Join a free guided bushwalk and discover Hornsby's hidden natural gems.

hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushwalks

Apartment Living Energy Program

Solar and Batteries for Strata Webinar
Tuesday 11 August, 6pm-7pm
Learn how your building can tap into the sun's energy to reduce common area costs and boost your property's value.

EV Charging for Strata Webinar
Tuesday 1 September, 6.00pm-7pm
Is your apartment building ready for electric vehicles? This free webinar will provide a clear roadmap to getting your building EV Ready.

Bookings essential: hornsby.nsw.gov.au/apartment-living-energy

Dural and District Historical Society Inc. News from History Cottage

Mal Johnston has made it his life's work to record the history of Kenthurst and surrounds; while collecting stories and artefacts to record a way of life that is fast disappearing. At our July meeting 130+ members and friends enjoyed Mal's easy style and enormous knowledge during a most rewarding afternoon with the Round Corner as his topic. Picture shows Mal being presented with a thank you gift of a 'bucket' made from a kerosene tin.

Miss June Simeon's first appointment was to Kenthurst's one teacher school. Thus began a long connection with the Hills District. She married "Bert" Roughley and progressed through the Education Department to become principal of nearby larger schools. She developed a great understanding of the unique history of our community and used her ability, as a supreme researcher, to write books on local and family history. Realising much of this history was in danger of being lost, June Roughley, together with like-minded residents, formed the Dural and District Historical Society. As a way of

acknowledging June Roughley's foresight and financial support, the Society holds an annual lecture in her name presented by a recognised academic.

This year, on the 8th August, Dr Michael Griffith will present the June Roughley Memorial Lecture. The subject will be the *Life and Poetry of Francis Webb*. Les Murray once said he thought Francis Webb was one of Australia's greatest poets. For a time Webb lived in Galston and wrote a quartet of poems set in Galston.

Another date for the diary is the 12th September. Member and archaeologist, Elyssa Freame, will talk about the Convict Trail Project. Along its length, from Abbotsford to the Hunter Valley, the Great North Road had enormous influence. It is of national significance and sections are World Heritage listed. Recording and preserving what remains is undertaken by the Project. An interesting talk and one that has connections to some families still living along its way.

The open afternoons are proving worthwhile with good research by visitors. The next of these will be on Sunday the



23rd August 1.00pm to 4.00pm. Maps are always of interest, as are the actual land title deeds that have kindly been lent for copying. These provide more detailed comments for the history of the holding. If any readers do hold their deeds, the Society would welcome the opportunity to make copies to add to its archives.

Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month in the Galston Uniting Church, School Rd Galston starting at 2.00pm. Entry is free with afternoon tea for a gold coin.

All are welcome.

Enquiries: Michael Bell 02 9653 1365

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Castle Hill Art Society



Art Demonstration –
2nd September, 2026
Mellissa Read-Devine -
"How to See and Paint Colour in
the Landscape"

Known for her bold brushstrokes and vivid colour palette, Mellissa Read-Devine transforms the canvas with energy and confidence, sharing her techniques and insights along the way. This engaging session offers an opportunity to learn from her intuitive process, ask questions, and gain fresh inspiration for your own artistic journey. Mellissa is a Fellow of the Royal Art Society and has been an art practitioner for nearly 30 years.

Visitors are welcome to join with the Castle Hill Art Society 7.00pm at Castle Glen Community Centre, 157 Ridgescrop Drive, Castle Hill.

Enquiries 9899 3179 www.castlehillartsociety.org.au



SCHOOL NEWS

On A High Note: OMA's Camp Concert



Pacific Hills Christian School

Students from Pacific Hills Christian School's OneMaker Academy (OMA) recently attended their annual Music Camp to prepare for the OMA Concert held in July.

Students worked hard in rehearsals and workshops, developing their musical skills and refining performances for the concert.

The camp was not only a time of focused practice but also a chance for students to build friendships and enjoy time together through music. From ensemble rehearsals, private lessons to shared activities, the experience was both rewarding and memorable.

At Pacific Hills, we seek to nurture the gifts and talents God has given each of us. Music Camp provided a wonderful opportunity for students to strengthen their musical abilities through excellence, creativity and teamwork. We are proud of the dedication and enthusiasm shown by everyone involved and thankful for the opportunity to celebrate our amazing talents through music. The concert highlighted the hard work, perseverance, and musical development students achieved through the camp which was a great success.

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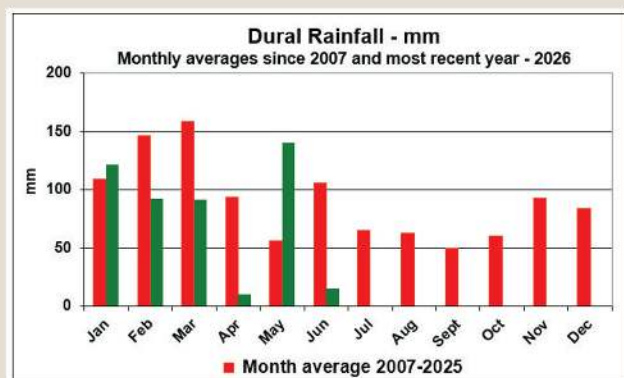
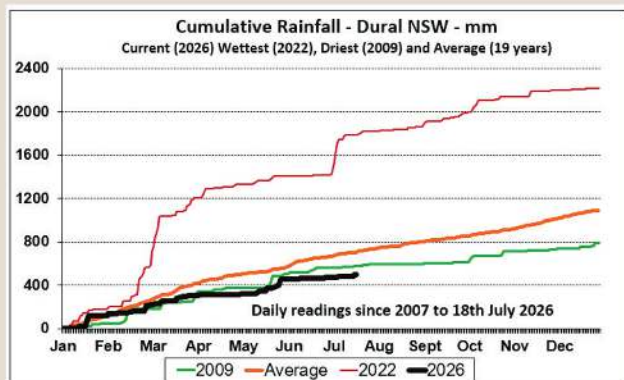


24 Hour Emergency
Service



Dural Rainfall Charts

by Hans Kunnen



Dural Bowling Club News

The club is currently navigating an incredibly busy third quarter of the 2026 calendar year season. The various committees are managing a packed schedule of tournaments. Calendars are filled to capacity, and the energy across the club is electric.



Dural Bowling Club has experienced the finals of the Open Gender Drawn Pairs and Women's Minor Singles on the 27th June and 14th July 2026 respectively. The final of the Men Singles is scheduled for the 18th July.

The winners of the Open Gender Drawn Pairs were Reg Munusamy and Mark Tremain with Glen Davey and Ruth Cheshire being the runners up. Elizabeth Goode won the

Women Minor Single with Anne Hughes as the runners up. These games saw the ultimate culmination of a competition where the top two surviving contenders battle for the championship title. Our congratulations to the winners and commiserations to the runners up.

Entries are now open for the Nominated Pairs Competition and the midweek Pennants. These events are scheduled to start on the 15th August and 2nd September.

Anyone that is interested in playing Lawn Bowls, Free lessons by qualified coaches are available Phone: Rob Whiddon 0411 375 580.

POLITICAL NEWS



James Wallace
HORNSBY MP

Like so many people across our community, I have been deeply shocked and distressed by the reports of child sexual abuse in childcare centres across Sydney, including at centres in our local area.

My thoughts are with the children, families and communities who have been affected. The pain and trauma caused by these crimes is unimaginable, and every victim deserves our support.

This has also shaken the confidence of parents. I know many families rely on childcare. We have all had to question whether our kids are safe when we drop them off in the morning. It's not just because we love our kids. But because our young children are dependent on those entrusted with their care, and the abuse of children is an unimaginably evil act.

The safety of children must always come first. While no law can eliminate every risk, it is clear that we need stronger safeguards and better systems to protect children in early learning and childcare settings.

I am concerned that there are structural weaknesses in the current regulatory framework that require urgent attention. Governments of all persuasions should be willing to examine whether

existing arrangements are working as intended and whether reforms are needed to better identify risks before harm occurs.

In particular, I do not believe the current Working With Children Check system is sufficient on its own. A truly effective system should do more than identify previous criminal convictions. It should help ensure that people working with children are fit and proper persons by drawing on a broader range of information, including prohibition notices, suspensions, substantiated regulatory breaches, and relevant intelligence held by regulators and law enforcement agencies. Better information sharing between childcare providers, regulators and police should be part of that discussion.

We should also carefully examine a system that allows workers to move rapidly between large numbers of childcare centres. This poses an unacceptable risk.

I have also heard from childcare operators who believe the assessment and ratings process has become too focused on compliance paperwork rather than genuine child safety and quality outcomes. These assessments are also infrequent. Effective regulation should support a strong partnership between providers and regulators, with issues identified and addressed early before they become serious problems.

There is important work ahead for government, regulators and the sector. We cannot legislate away every act of evil, but we can build stronger systems that earn and deserve the trust that families place in them.



Jane Seaglove

HORNSBY COUNCILLOR

Hello Residents,

Work has now moved into the next stage of the **Galston drainage upgrade**. While these projects can sometimes be disruptive in the short term, they are an important investment in the future of our village. Improved drainage will help better manage stormwater, reduce the impact of heavy rain and support the long-term sustainability of the village centre.

I'm pleased to share a practical outcome that will help preserve the vision for Galston's new community space. Following discussions with the owners of the Aldi shopping centre, an agreement has been reached to make the centre's public toilet facilities available for community use. This practical solution preserves more open space for the new community gathering area in the heart of Galston Village.

While works are underway in the village, **Galston Library remains open** during its usual hours. The only change is reduced parking directly outside the library. For more information, contact Galston Library on (02) 9847 6160 or email library@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

The **Arcadia Galston Residents Association (AGRA)** has organised a community meeting where updates will be provided on a number of local projects. These meetings are always worthwhile and give residents the opportunity to hear about what's happening in the district, ask questions and share their views. I encourage everyone with an interest, to come along and be part of the conversation. The next meeting is on **25th August** – 7:00pm at the Galston Club.



James Wallace MP

Member for Hornsby

James can help you by

- Representing you in the NSW Parliament
- Assisting you to access State services
- Communicating your issues to the relevant Ministers
- Organising Justice of the Peace applications
- Recognising Community Achievements



Contact James

☎ (02) 9476 3411 @ hornsby@parliament.nsw.gov.au
✉ PO Box 1687, Hornsby Westfield NSW 1635

Authorised by James Wallace MP. Funded using parliamentary entitlements.

Is your property affected by the Draft Heritage Study?

If you haven't had the opportunity to attend one of the Council's information drop-in sessions at Galston, Hornsby or Beecroft, there's still plenty of time to find out more. Visit the Draft Heritage Study page on Council's **Your Say Hornsby** website, where you can search for your property using the **Interactive Map**, view the relevant **Inventory Sheet**, or explore the **Summary of Proposed Changes**. These resources have been designed to help residents understand whether their property is affected and what the proposed changes may mean.

To access the information, visit:

<https://yoursay.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/draft-hornsby-heritage-studies>

The **Galston500 Challenge**, is a local family event held on **Saturday 29th August** from 10:00am at Galston Valley Railway, 29 Mid Dural Road, Galston which challenges a collection of 5" scale Model Locomotive teams to complete a combined total of 500 laps of the picturesque 1km track at the Galston Valley Railway which raises money for MS Research.

Wisemans Ferry Update

I'm pleased to share that the mangrove rehabilitation works around the board ramp at **Wisemans Ferry** have now been completed. Mangroves play a vital role in protecting our waterways by stabilising riverbanks, reducing erosion, improving water quality and providing important habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife. This rehabilitation project will help preserve the health of the Hawkesbury River while enhancing the natural beauty of the area for residents and visitors. Protecting these valuable ecosystems ensures they can continue to support biodiversity and be enjoyed by future generations.

Dural & District Historical Society

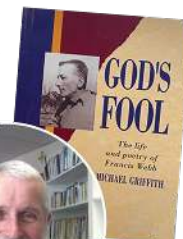
June Roughley Annual Memorial Lecture

Saturday 8 August 2pm

Galston Uniting Church,
11 School Road Galston

Speaker:

Dr Michael Griffith



The Life and Poetry of Francis Webb

Les Murray described Francis Webb as 'one of Australia's greatest poets'. Judith Wright also praised his work.

Francis Webb spent some time in the 1950s living with his sister in Galston and came to love our bushland and history. He wrote a quartet of poems set in the area that immortalise memories such as the Black's horse-drawn bus rushing through the Gorge, the horrors of bush fire and the beauty of Foster's Waterhole.

Dr Michael Griffith is a retired university lecturer in English, Australian and American literature. His PhD on Francis Webb was published in a book *God's Fool*.

Free entry, gold coin donation for afternoon tea.

All welcome. Information Michael Bell 96531365





Dr Michelle Byrne
MAYOR OF THE HILLS SHIRE

Orange Blossom Festival Returns in 2026

Our signature Orange Blossom Festival is back in 2026 with the return of three main events and a series of community events to kick off spring.

Echoes - Moon Garden

Nightly, Friday 18th September – Sunday 11th October 2026 | Bella Vista Farm

After a hugely successful debut last year, Echoes returns to Bella Vista Farm with an all-new theme. Wander through an enchanted moonlit garden as the Farm comes alive with spectacular light, sound and storytelling throughout this immersive month-long experience.

Visitors will also be able to enjoy food and drinks from a range of vendors, including Toby's Milkbar and Gelato Messina with a limited-edition mystery flavor.

To get tickets, visit: www.echoesbellavista.com.au

OBF Parade

11am – 4pm Sunday 19th September | Rouse Hill Town Centre

The Main Street of Rouse Hill Town Centre will come alive with colour and fanfare at the OBF Parade, featuring local community groups and special guests, PAW Patrol.

The Parade will end in Market Square, followed by performances from community groups, as well as free face painting and gardening workshops. A dedicated 'Secret Garden' space will be available for neurodivergent attendees seeking a quiet area to retreat to during the event.

Taste of Wisemans

10am – 3pm Sunday 27th September | Wisemans Ferry Park

A Taste of Wisemans is our gourmet food and wine event, which will showcase local wineries, distilleries, orchards and food vendors. The event will also feature live music and a range of free family-friendly activities, including cookie decorating, pony rides, face painting, a petting zoo and circus-themed workshops.

OBF Community Events

Hills Shire community groups are also running a range of events in association with Orange Blossom Festival throughout September and October, including Kenthurst Fair at John Benyon Rotary Park, Jazz at the Pines at Roughley House, and more.

For more information about Orange Blossom Festival events, visit: www.orangeblossomfestival.com.au



Julian Leeson
MEMBER FOR BEROWRA

Cherrybrook Litter Warriors: Making a Difference, One Clean-Up at a Time



Community spirit is alive and well in Cherrybrook, thanks to the dedication of Natalie Bryant and the volunteers behind Cherrybrook Litter Warriors.

What began as one person's frustration with the amount of litter she encountered on her daily walks has grown into a thriving community movement with over 20 members. Rather than accepting the problem, Natalie brought together like-minded locals over a coffee to discuss how they could make a difference. That simple idea has evolved into regular clean-up events that are helping restore local parks and public spaces while building lasting friendships.

Before each clean-up, volunteers meet at The Brook in Cherrybrook to welcome new members, share ideas and plan the morning's activities. Julian recently joined Natalie, Louise, Judy, Phil and Jo, rolling up his sleeves to help collect rubbish around Greenway Park alongside the dedicated volunteers. The morning was a wonderful reminder that even small acts of service can make a lasting difference when neighbours come together with a shared purpose.

The success of Cherrybrook Litter Warriors is about far more than picking up litter. It demonstrates the power of local people working together to improve their neighbourhood, strengthen community connections and take pride in the places they share.

Natalie is passionate about seeing this model replicated in other communities. She is happy to share the group's templates, practical resources and proven approach with anyone interested in establishing a similar volunteer group in their own suburb.

Please contact my office if you would like to connect with her: julian.leeson.mp@aph.gov.au



As your Federal Member, I am here to:

- Assist with accessing Federal Government services
- Attend your local community event
- Arrange congratulatory messages

Please contact my office if I can be of assistance.



JULIAN LEESER MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BEROWRA

Level 11, 423 Pennant Hills Road, Pennant Hills NSW 2120 | 02 9980 1822

julian.leeson.mp@aph.gov.au | julianleeson.com.au | [julianleesemp](https://www.facebook.com/julianleesemp)

Authorized by Julian Leeson MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Level 11, 423 Pennant Hills Road, Pennant Hills NSW 2120.



Mark Hodges
MEMBER FOR CASTLE HILL

Nominations open for 2027 Castle Hill Woman of the Year

Do you know a remarkable woman making a difference in our local community?

Nominations are now open for the 2027 NSW Women of the Year Awards in the Castle Hill electorate. This is your opportunity to recognise a local woman who goes above and beyond to strengthen our community through leadership, service, or quiet dedication.

Eligible nominees must be:

Aged 18 or over

A resident of the Castle Hill Electorate (including Annangrove, Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill, Dural, Glenhaven, Glenorie, Kenthurst, Middle Dural, and West Pennant Hills)

Each nominee will receive:

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An invitation to the NSW Women of the Year Awards Ceremony in Sydney on Thursday, 4th March 2027

Inclusion in the NSW Honour Roll, with potential consideration for the Hidden Treasures Honour Roll (for rural women who volunteer)

Nominations close Friday, 16th October 2026

Nominate online now and help celebrate the outstanding contributions of women across Castle Hill.

Authorised by Mark Hodges MP. Funded using Parliamentary entitlements.



Mark Hodges MP
Member for Castle Hill

Mark can help you by

- Representing you in the NSW Parliament
- Assisting you to access State services
- Communicating your issues to the relevant Ministers
- Organising Justice of the Peace applications
- Recognising Community Achievements



Contact
Mark

02 9686 3110 @ castlehill@parliament.nsw.gov.au
MarkHodges.com.au markhodgesmp MarkHodgesMP
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Clr Mitchell Blue

THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL

Orange Blossom Festival

One of The Hills' favourite community celebrations, the Orange Blossom Festival, returns this September with a packed month of events and activities across the region.

A major highlight this year is the return of the Orange Blossom Festival Parade at Rouse Hill Town Centre on **19th September**. Main Street will be filled with colourful floats, local performers, schools, sporting clubs and community groups, creating a fantastic atmosphere for families and residents of all ages.

Food lovers can also look forward to the return of A Taste of Wisemans at Wisemans Ferry Park on **27th September**. Surrounded by the beautiful Hawkesbury landscape, this popular event showcases the very best local produce, wines and gourmet delights. Visitors can enjoy live entertainment, free family activities, and a wide range of offerings from local wineries, distilleries and food vendors.

Another exciting festival experience this year is Echoes – Moon Garden at Bella Vista Farm. As the sun sets, visitors will be transported into a magical hidden garden that only reveals itself under the moonlight. Wander through a captivating nocturnal landscape where illuminated plants and flowers come alive through stunning light installations, immersive displays and spectacular special effects.

The experience promises to delight all the senses and is set to become a must-visit attraction during this year's festival. Guests can also enjoy a fantastic range of food offerings throughout the evening.

For event details and tickets, visit www.orangeblossomfestival.com.au

Bushfire Preparedness

As Chair of The Hills Bushfire Management Committee and a local volunteer firefighter, bushfire preparedness is a cause I am deeply passionate about. With the upcoming bushfire season approaching, now is the time for residents and landowners to understand their level of risk and take practical steps to better protect their homes, families and properties.

Each September, the NSW Rural Fire Service hosts Get Ready Weekend, providing communities with valuable information and practical advice to help prepare for the months ahead. This year's event will take place on **19th and 20th September** with many local RFS brigades hosting activities and information sessions throughout The Hills. If you would like to find out more, you can visit the NSW RFS website or contact your local brigade for dates of their events.

Bushfires have long been part of The Hills landscape. From the fires that impacted Glenhaven and Annangrove in 1975, Kenthurst in 1991, and the devastating events of 1994 and 2002 across Maroota South, Glenorie and Kenthurst, our community has experienced firsthand how quickly conditions can change.

It has now been more than six years since Australia's last major bushfire crisis dominated headlines. During that time, significant growth and development have reshaped suburbs such as Box Hill, North Kellyville and Annangrove.

While our communities continue to expand, the bushfire risk remains very real.

That is why The Hills District Rural Fire Service and The Hills Shire Council are encouraging residents to participate in the Four Weeks to Fire Ready program tailored specifically to local conditions in The Hills.

Many people are surprised to learn that homes are often lost not from direct flame contact, but from embers carried ahead of a fire front. These burning embers can travel kilometres on strong winds, landing in gutters, gardens, decks and roofs, potentially igniting homes far from the main fire.

Even newer homes in suburban areas can be vulnerable. Bushfires can also move at incredible speed, meaning residents must have a plan.

Creating a bushfire survival plan takes only a short amount of time, but having a clear plan in place can make a critical difference when every minute counts. Protecting your home is important, but most importantly, it can help protect your loved ones and save lives.

I will have more to say on Four Weeks to Fire Ready on my article next month with dates and activities that will help you and your family be prepared for what could be a busy fire season ahead.

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Flax-Leaved Wattle



When you visit your local bushland areas during summer and early autumn, there is one particular Wattle that is in flower. It is a pale yellow to cream coloured variety called Flax-leaved Wattle (*Acacia linifolia*). It can be found extensively where conditions suit, as it prefers the more sandy soils in open forest

and is often found near rocky outcrops alongside bush tracks.

This plant is generally small and slender, ranging from having a graceful drooping, habit to being somewhat straggly, as can be seen in the adjacent images. Its height can vary from 1 to 4 metres depending upon its situation in the forest. Mostly, the flowers tend to cluster towards the ends of branches.

At times the perfume of this Wattle can be quite strong, but it is nowhere near the strength of the spring flowering varieties.

We usually associate wattle with the approach of spring as the brilliant fluffy balls of yellow start to appear almost everywhere from August onwards.

The sometimes overpowering perfume of the spring flowering wattles is most noticeable where there are many growing in close proximity to one another.

It is also interesting to observe the variations in flower structure and colour of this wattle as they develop and eventually produce flat, oblong seed pods.



This plant can be grown in home gardens as it responds to careful pruning to form a more compact shrub. It can even have a second flower flush in early winter.

There are numerous other small, almost insignificant, wattles that can be found in flower, from late summer through winter, growing in a similar habitat to this month's featured plant.

Throughout the many bushland reserves of the Hills District, one of the large Wattle family can be readily found in bloom somewhere.



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Fuel Build up



The Aussie production 'fired up' producing Aussie Fire pumps ahead of what is predicted to be a massive fire season

Observing the past fire disasters in the region should compel Hills residents to be on high alert. Now is the time to prepare for the extreme fire danger we may see this upcoming summer. The last few months has generated a huge fuel load in bush, scrubland and even

grasslands. Now the pendulum is swinging back to a drier and hotter spring. The threat of serious bushfires is very real.

People living on what the RFS call the "Urban Interface" know that living amongst the gum trees has never been more dangerous!

One Australian company has boosted its fire pump production to make sure they have sufficient product available to protect homeowners from the ravages of what could be Australia's worst and most savage bushfire season for decades.

Australian Pump introduced the Aussie Fire Chief more than 30 years ago. The pump was designed to be better than any other product on the market, with the company making a major effort to improve pump performance, features and value for money.

Aussie Pumps supports Hills homeowners to set up their bushfire protection systems, offering guidance in pump selection and operation. Aussie's website has some excellent and informative videos to help you prepare for this bushfire season.

Further information and free copies of Aussie's "Bushfire Survival Guide" are available from your trusted Aussie Gold Distributor or download from our website aussiepumps.com.au

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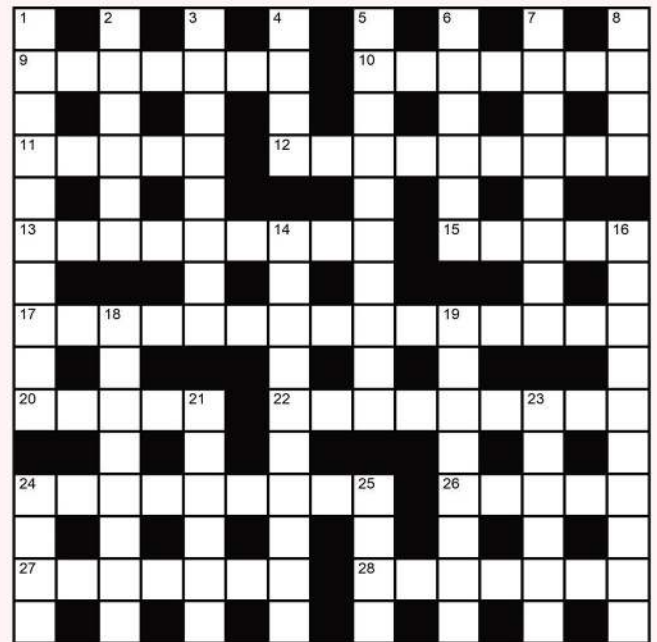
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Across

- 09 Fleet commander (7)

10 New Mexican ufology centre (7)

11 Author Asimov (5)

12 Gold, silver and bronze Olympic swimming medal-winner (3,6)

13 Train isn't running badly, coming or going (2,7)

15 Negotiations (5)

17 Body snatchers (12,3)

20 Arduous journeys (5)

22 Debugger? (9)

24 Won over (9)

26 Seedless orange (5)

27 American reindeer (7)

28 Crash the party (5,2)

Down

- 01 The kiore, an unwelcome visitor (7,3)

02 Transmit (6)

03 Living-room item (8)

04 Cheese chunk (4)

05 Crazy, eats at bars on the Persian Gulf (4,6)

06 Textile souvenir (1-5)

07 Regular swinger (8)

08 Fight (4)

14 Walked vigorously (7,3)

16 Summer-visiting coastal wading bird (10)

18 Rob ---, Virgin Blue co-founder (8)

19 Spatially adjusted (8)

21 Beer bottle (6)

23 Call forth (6)

24 Ice breaker (4)

25 Culinary creation (4)

Answer from July Issue



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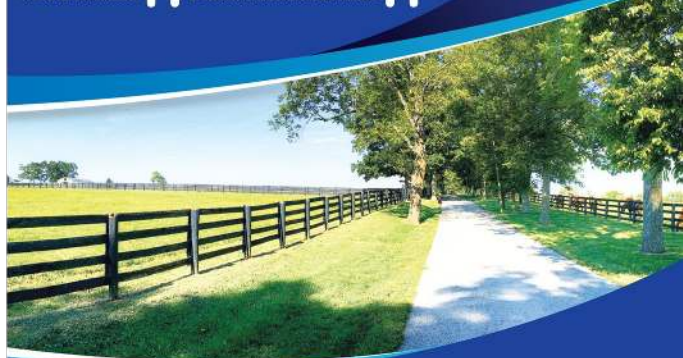


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