

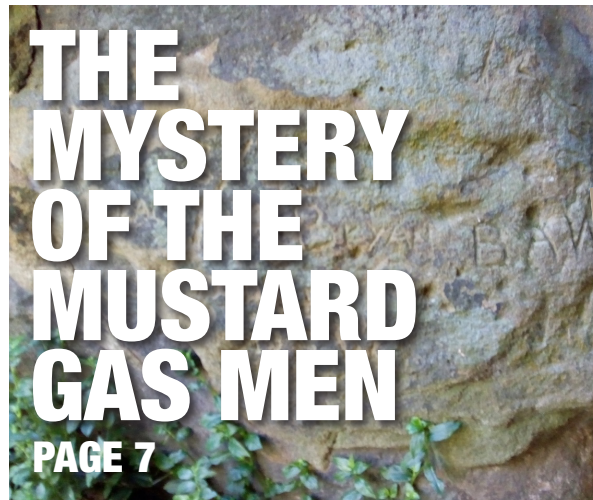
The Manning Community News

FEB 2021

SHARING COMMUNITY NEWS AND VIEWS

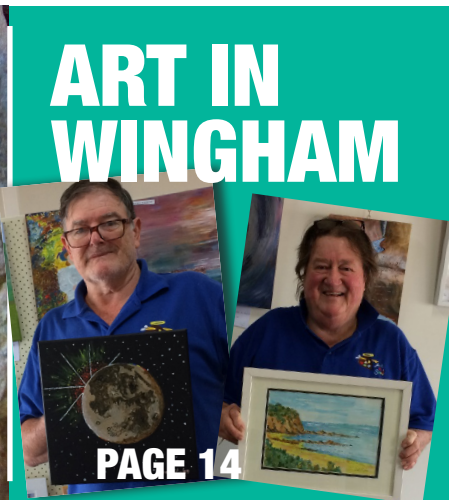
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This paper is being published as a community service to provide readers with factual and independent coverage of news, people and events in our district. If you have a story idea please contact us. PO Box 62, Tinonee, 2430 editor@manningcommunitynews.com



THE MYSTERY OF THE MUSTARD GAS MEN

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ART IN WINGHAM

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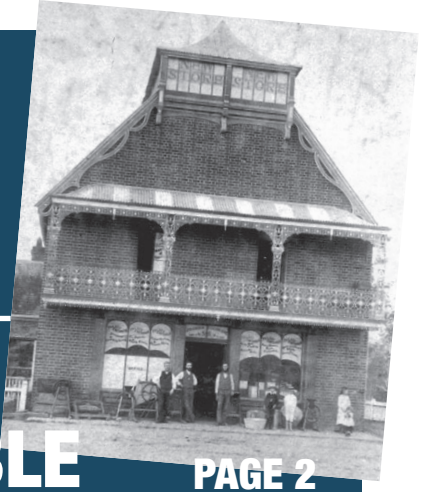
BE QUICK TO CATCH MATT!

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Plus

MAKING OUR TOWNS DESIRABLE

PAGE 2



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

THIS IS OUR LAST CHANCE

After years of government mishandling and deliberate obfuscation, kowtowing to developers, ignoring the climate science, degrading our land, losing wildlife and habitat, it's time to change our environmental laws.

According to The Guardian Australia, The Morrison government must overhaul Australia's environmental laws, including establishing new independent bodies to take on responsibility for monitoring the environment and enforcing compliance with the law, a once-in-a-decade independent review has found.

The head of the review, the former competition watchdog head Graeme Samuel, made 38 recommendations to transform the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

They include short-term reforms, including the immediate introduction of legally-binding national environmental standards to boost protection, and longer-term changes needed to address the "trajectory of environmental decline".

STOP THE LOGGING!

In a major shift, Samuel also called on the government to abolish the effective exemption from environment laws granted to all native forest logging covered by regional forestry agreements between the

federal and state governments.

Samuel said the government would be accepting "the continued decline of our iconic places and the extinction of our most threatened plants, animals and ecosystems" if it shied away from the fundamental reforms recommended by the review.

"This is unacceptable," he

wrote. "A firm commitment to change from all stakeholders is needed to enable future generations to enjoy and benefit from Australia's unique environment and heritage."

The report reiterates Samuel's interim findings that Australia's animals, plants and habitats

are in unsustainable decline, and concludes the EPBC Act is failing both the environment and developers.

He also said the EPBC Act was unclear about what it was trying to achieve for the environment, which was now so under pressure it could

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EVERTON UNMASKED

I was born in Australia in 2010 and when I was nearly four we moved to Texas. Now, moving back to Australia when I am ten years old is really different.

A lot because of Covid.

For example here in Australia you don't have to wear a mask everywhere! In America, we pretty much went a whole year without playing closely with friends and without hugging friends or even family.

Moving back to Australia has been amazing to finally hug people again.

More great things I've been able to do since moving back is eat out in restaurants without a mask, go shopping without a mask, surf in the ocean, ride my bike in the bush and also go to actual school and not online school - and without a mask!

Even though we have to scan in everywhere we go,

I think Australia should keep doing what they're doing because the freedom is all worth it!

Everton Hansen

(Everton is my grandson. Ed.

He hoped Aussies keep obeying the rules "not like America". DM)



MAKING OUR TOWNS DESIRABLE

Wingham is getting a make-over. The most important thing we should remember is - Wingham is a HERITAGE town!

The tourist brochures and websites describe Wingham as - "The oldest town in the beautiful Manning Valley, a lovely historic village on the banks of the Manning River. The village green (*correct expression, not Central Park*) is surrounded by (*what remains of*) National Trust-listed Federation buildings and a world renowned nature reserve of rare subtropical lowland rainforest, including giant Moreton Bay figs, home to a colony of threatened grey-headed flying foxes."

Our first town is now a fading, falling down, shadow of its charming former self.

Look at the original home of pioneer Henry Flett in Flett Street, Wingham. It is a skeleton, where the owners of the property are waiting for it to fall down and be done with it. They have resisted overtures to save it.

Henry went on to marry Miss Wynter and bought land and established an estate across the river called Taree.

GOODS SHED

Another great loss is the great old grey gum Goods Shed at Wingham Railway Station run by my grandfather, Jack Revitt. Cavernous, it housed all manner of goods headed to and from Sydney, from great boxes of pompoms for the slipper factory, to supplies for the grand Cochrane's Emporium, and equipment for the dairy farms. Our milk went down overnight and was on Sydney tables the next day. When the circus came to town all its paraphernalia was unloaded at the Goods Shed. (My mother was once chased down the train tracks by a cranky elephant who escaped.) Pythons lived in the high ceiling of the shed dining on rats and mice, and in its huge cool shadows, I played for hours.

I weep to think what a fabulous gallery or display centre or public space it would be today. (Eric Richardson told

me part of it was saved and sits on a property towards Mt George.)

THE STATIONMASTER'S COTTAGE

Wingham Station was one of the prettiest and well kept stations in the state with hanging baskets of flowers and everything spick and span.

Similarly, the comfortable little Stationmaster's Cottage adjacent to Wingham Station would make a wonderful community centre or train museum or similar. David Hill, when he ran NSW Railways suggested he get us have an old fashioned train dining car to plonk in the front grassy area of the cottage to use as a café.

Several years ago, dismayed at the cottage's lack of use and poor but fixable condition, Cr. Peter Epov suggested turning the Stationmaster's

cottage into a community centre, but the leaseholders refused, despite it not being used. Since then, between neglect and vandals it's deteriorated to approaching non repairable condition.

There is a current move to attempt to rescue the cottage in its pretty (or could be) grounds, but it seems it might be a case of too many cooks and too many ideas judging by one uninvited unsupervised local group, even if they think themselves well intentioned. Their efforts, such as overnight (which is not enforced) camping at the Brush have been a disaster. They say it brings money to the town, despite ruining the river-front for the locals, but visitors can camp at the Wingham Showground where there are proper facilities. They will still spend the same money

in Wingham shops and supermarket! And nobody asked for, or approved, the "gift" of the bedpan waterfall in the village green, the town's gem in the centre of town!

The unnecessary demolition of the Cobb and Co heritage stables after the Wingham Hotel mysteriously burned down, was another recent tragic loss. Instead we gain in the main street possibly the ugliest building in NSW in the shape of cement boxes.

Some of the buildings in Isabella Street had cool verandahs, and many had second story balconies. Imagine what restaurants they could be! Now unachievable since a previous Council decades back ordered all the stanchions supporting the balconies be removed.

If you look at the facades of the buildings there are remnants of old signs, art deco trims and an idea of what the town once looked like with its wide shady footpaths. A good suggestion from one resident is for colonial street lamps (good quality!) to be put in several locations for that heritage look rather than the ugly utilitarian contemporary lamp in the proposed plan.

Pink paving as an idea for footpaths should be dumped immediately.

Mr Spear assures us that a Heritage "person" is being consulted by phone and she will run her eye over the final plans. Surely we need a Heritage landscaper and architect on site at the start of proceedings to see it through all the way!

Ideas like an electric car charging station should be located away from the main street and village green area.

WINGHAM'S MOMENT

Now there is money in the kitty to start to gussy up Wingham rather than a restoration project, but it's thanks to a one million dollar grant from the Federal Government and two million from council coffers with Wingham's name on it. Not enough to do everything, but a start.



Joshua Cochrane's Emporium in Wingham was one of the most impressive commercial buildings in Wingham and was situated at the north-eastern end of Isabella Street - Greater Taree City Council.

Amazingly as soon as the money came in, Council went to a dusty cupboard and whipped out a “Plan to Beautify Wingham” which has a faint look of the 1960s to it.

The Council mentioned this plan on their website asking for submissions. I’m not sure how many people actually trawl though the MidCoast Council website regularly, and as it was the festive season, few people may have noticed the details asking for submissions by February 5.

Then the Council announced there would be a meeting about ideas from the public, but many were disappointed as the “community consultation” was by Invitation Only! Subsequently a display of the plans was set up in an empty shop in the main street with several council people on hand to answer questions.

PROJECT MANAGER

David Spear, the Project Manager, was friendly and helpful. It was pleasing to hear his enthusiasm about the town and that the first thing to be done would be planting specific trees down the centre of Isabella Street. Which would mean digging out the ageing water drainage system which runs along the centre of the street which would take a big bite

or most out of the budget. The process is to be done in stages as more funds are sought.

SHOPKEEPERS PARKING

Mr Spear agreed there was a problem with the shopkeepers and staff taking up a big chunk of parking spaces in front of their businesses. If customers and visitors can’t park they

drive on. It seems many shop people are loathe to walk to the central parking lot which will be roofed and made secure with a sheltered walkway. One lady shopkeeper worried that she might be mugged while walking the short distance to her car in the revamped lot with her takings in her handbag after shutting up shop at 5pm!

Mr Spear remained smiling, polite and patient. Though, being a newcomer to town he’s not quite across all the local history.

IDEAS

Other concerns expressed centred around the village green where the shrubbery that softens the retaining wall will be taken out and possibly local Lincoln bricks be stepped around the park where they expect locals to perch on this “seating.” (Can’t

see the oldies sitting there in the sun with nothing to lean back on.) Sandstone was knocked back as “not Wingham”. (Have we forgotten how all the ships that came up river to Wingham to collect the cedar used Sydney sandstone as ballast which was dumped into the river in front of the Brush. Still quite recently enterprising locals have dredged up blocks of it for gorgeous patios, retaining walls, paths etc).

TREES ARE BEST

There are fears for the trees. (Especially after council workers cut down a beautiful 70 years plus old tree shading the play area in the village green, believing it to be an “invasive species” i.e. privet. It was a multi-trunk Flintwood, but they ignored pleas not to trash the tree planted by old timers.)

Many locals want shady seating to watch the cricket, and an old fashioned bandstand. Mr Spear assured me the entrance to the green, the heart of Wingham, with its mosaics, the plane and the old log will thankfully remain.

MAIN STREET FIRST UP

One hopes something attractive, like a raised seasonal flower bed might adorn the current sewer lid roundabout at the end of Isabella Street. Or as has been suggested by one local, a lovely heritage lamppost.

Mr Spear says he wants to do the trees in Isabella Street first up as it will make a welcome and dramatic improvement and get locals enthusiastic about the project. One hopes that other heritage grants will be available for specific projects like the Stationmaster’s cottage.

THE NEIGHBOURS

Wingham is our first town. Tinnonee, where once the “highway” crossed the river by punt, desperately needs a café as (apart from the museum) there is no reason for tourists to pause since Memories, Artisans and The Mondrook Café stopped opening regularly. We still lament the loss of the Terrace Cinema. However the

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Beechworth, Australia



Daylesford, Australia



WHAT'S A TREE WORTH? LOGGING OR LIFE?

Bulldozers destroy 500,000 hectares of forest every year.
An area the size of the MCG is bulldozed every two minutes in Australia.

Logging poisons our soil and water, suffocates the Great Barrier Reef, kills wildlife, drains our carbon budget, and leaves our towns, cities and suburbs hotter and less liveable. If we want to protect our climate, and the ecosystems that make our lives possible, there's no role for deforestation in Australia's future.

There's a devastatingly simple fix — change our laws.

Without a liveable climate, the vulnerable ecosystems that sustain us, simply won't. Deforestation is Australia's hidden emitter — it's like adding 10 million cars to our roads.

According to **The Wilderness Society** Australia's deforestation ranks in the global top 10, alongside Borneo, the Amazon and the Congo. It's primarily driven by agriculture (mostly for beef production), mining and urban development.

Bulldozers drag thick chains through the landscape, snapping trees like matchsticks. This wood isn't used for anything — it's burned or left to rot. Carbon once stored in trees and soil goes back into the atmosphere. This wastes up to 10% of Australia's carbon budget.

When habitat is bulldozed, many koalas die instantly—while others are left with nowhere to go. Wildlife carers are struggling to cope with mounting numbers of sick and injured animals, the destruction of bushland to blame.

As the only developed country with a deforestation front, it's no surprise Australia's mammal extinction rates are the highest in the world. Iconic native species, like the koala, platypus and the greater glider, are on the road to extinction.

WE'VE LOST HALF OUR FORESTS AND BUSH

Just 50% of Australia's forests and bushlands remain intact compared with pre-European arrival. The other 50% has been either permanently destroyed and replaced with another land use or is classed as degraded forests and bushlands—most of which is previously cleared but regrowing vegetation of different ages.

THE DISASTER OF LOGGING

Meet Jane McIntyre a local resident and member of "No Electricity From Forests" Says Jane -

"Ten years ago, we searched the coast of NSW for a new place to live. Coming from the Northern Rivers, our wish list included healthy native forests, fertile soil and abundant fresh water. We fell in love with 40 ac in the Lorne Valley (between Taree and Port Macquarie) for its mountain views, gentle creeks and 8m waterfall with a plunge pool.

Surrounded by forest and within coo-ee of World Heritage National Parks, we assumed we'd come to a more pristine area than the population-dense Far Nth Coast. We built a house of recycled materials, planted a vegie garden and fruit trees, and kept chickens for eggs and alpacas for mowing and manure. Around ninety bird species visit our native revegetation sites, and families of wallabies bask on the lawn.

It wasn't long before we became aware of multiple log trucks rumbling down our road. Often, they carried mighty logs over 1m in diameter, but just as often, the felled trees were much smaller, some as slender as 20cm across. We wondered about the fate of these saplings.

Asking around, we discovered that where there used to be a hoard of local family-owned mills, there were now only a couple of huge mills. The main receiver of Forest Corporation NSW timber and main mill owner in this neck of the woods is Boral, a \$4.3 billion ASX-listed multinational. To supply its quota, the local native forests are being logged on an industrial scale. We learned that the IFOA harvesting rules changed in 2018 to open up 140 000 ha of native forest between Grafton and Taree, to be intensively logged (read '**clear felled**') in coupes of up to 60 ha at a time.

Employing very few workers, industrial logging degrades watercourses, decimates flora and fauna habitats, encourages weeds, causes soil erosion, and increases the risk of fire. Even old loggers are shocked by the destruction.

The sheer quantity taken means that cutting cycles are being shortened and log sizes reduced. We

discovered that the quantities of 'non sawlogs' (younger trees) to be harvested had been dramatically increased to equal that of sawlogs — hence our observation of the loaded trucks. **Regardless of record-breaking droughts and wild-fires, none of this has changed.**

There have been hundreds of cases of 'unauthorised clearing', with the watchdog EPA mostly turning a blind eye. Far from protecting biodiversity, the NSW Regional Forest Agreement is unashamedly focused on guaranteeing timber supply to large companies.

So, what is the plan for the smaller 'non sawlogs', A.K.A. 'pulp logs', or 'waste', or 'residue'? Consider this: 80% of timber harvested is categorised as 'waste'. And just coincidentally, the Department of Primary Industry (which oversees FCNSW) was issuing press releases as early as 2017 that spoke of 'forestry biomass' on the NSW Mid North Coast being voluminous enough to '*support energy generation systems, with no adverse effect on the environment*'. The DPI even issued photos of felled 'pulp logs that could be used for biomass' very close to our home.

Currently, burning forest 'biomass' for electricity generation forms up to 60% of Europe's so-called 'renewable energy'. The forests of USA, Canada and Eastern Europe are being felled to feed wood-burning power stations in the USA, Europe, Japan and South Korea. Recent changes to Australian legislation count forest 'waste' as a renewable energy source that attracts carbon credits and subsidies. Go figure.

Alarm bells were ringing. With a few other concerned citizens, we formed a group (**No Electricity From Forests**) to spread the word. We toured local halls with a slide show, held regular market stalls, distributed information, lobbied politicians and the media, spoke with FCNSW and EPA, attended Boral shareholder meetings to ask awkward questions, and blockaded a logging site for half a day. We conducted weekend tours through recently logged sites, horrifying visitors with the devastation.

One set of photos we took only a few kilometres from our home

reveals clear felling of about 150 ha. We took photos early in the morning, with lyrebirds calling to each other from opposite edges of the moonscape.

We were often met with incredulity. 'Where in Australia is timber waste being burned to generate electricity?' we were asked. We knew that Queensland timber was being exported to the world's biggest wood-burning power station in Japan. We knew that our wood was being exported to Ireland to burn in power stations as a replacement for peat. But apart from co-generation wood-burning at Vales Point, and the Condong and Broadwater mills, this seemed like a 'sleeping' issue for Australia.

WAKE UP CALL

No longer. There is currently a development application being discussed with Singleton Council from a company called Hunter Energy that proposes to convert the defunct Redbank power station to 100% biomass. The woodchip for Redbank is unlikely to come from land under local council jurisdiction. The new state forestry laws have facilitated more intensive logging in coastal state forests from Taree to Grafton ie an extra 140,000 ha opened up for clear felling of up to 60ha at a time. These are the hubs that the DPI identified as having the potential to supply hardwood for electricity.

The CEO of Hunter Energy is businessman Richard Poole and the chairman is Adam Giles, (check them out for interesting reading) former Chief Minister of NT and Sky News host. If the Redbank DA is approved, it will be the 10th **biggest biomass burning power station in the world.**

Expressions of interest for 'residues' have already been advertised, to be supplied within a 400 km radius of Singleton. That includes our area. It doesn't take many joining of the dots to suspect that the massive bank of 'non sawlogs' at our local Boral mill may find its way to the Hunter Valley.

The poor Hunter Valley. For decades, inhabitants have endured

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stratospheric levels of air pollution from the coal industry. Now they face a new industry that spews out tonnes of hazardous emissions – particulates, carbon monoxide, nitrous oxide, and an assortment of greenhouse gases. The process of converting hardwood to burnable pellets expels volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are anathema to asthma sufferers.

Burning wood pellets releases even more CO₂ than coal per unit of energy. When the IPCC tells us that the world has less than 10 years to tackle climate change, chopping down our carbon-sequestering forests and releasing their carbon into the atmosphere in a rush of combustion is so counter-intuitive and scientifically unsound as to be absurd.

So much so, that we have to ask ourselves: why *do* governments offer carbon credits and other subsidies to this highly polluting and climate-damaging industry? The answer lies in the fallacy of ‘carbon neutrality’. The argument goes like this: as forests grow, they fix atmospheric carbon; we release that carbon when we burn the wood; the carbon is then reabsorbed as new trees grow, closing the carbon loop.

DISINGENUOUS

This disingenuous claim rests on two suppositions: that forests are managed sustainably, and that forests regenerate at the same rate as they are being logged. Both the observable effects of industrial logging and the recent expansion of areas to be logged are antithetic to sustainable forest management.

Regarding replacement time, trees can take decades, even centuries, to reach maturity. We have less than ten years to convert the world to genuine renewables and expand our forest carbon sinks to keep us below a catastrophic 2 degrees of warming – or some predict, as much as 3 to 5 degrees.

LOSE-LOSE

Burning hardwood for electricity is a lose-lose strategy for confronting the climate crisis. With one stroke, forests are decimated and the carbon is released into the atmosphere. We may just as well keep burning coal – at least we might get to keep the forests.

(Watch the documentary *‘Burned: Are Trees the New Coal?’* for a detailed analysis of ‘the accelerating destruction of our forests for fuel ... the policy loopholes, huge subsidies, and blatant green-washing of the burgeoning biomass electric power industry’. It’s coming to your town soon.)

WHO KNOWS DETAILS?

There is currently a DA being discussed with Singleton Council. But how many people are aware of the finer details of the new industry, and its potential for pollution? Hunter Energy is spending lavishly to paint a rosy picture of ethical jobs at the virtuously named ‘Redbank Green Energy Park’, aiming to convince the public that this is a legitimate path to tackle climate change.

After all, the project has the blessing of the Department of Primary Industry, and is consistent with the blithe conclusions of the North Coast Residues Project.

Once the decision is made, only the Minister for the Environment can undo or alter it. If enough pressure is applied to alert the Minister. That Singleton Council is considering the DA begs the question: how can such a major project *not* rate as a State Significant Development, and thus be properly subjected to more intense scrutiny?

THERE ARE JOBS

So much research has already been done on a clean energy future for the Hunter Valley community. BZE (Beyond Zero Emissions) reports that 50,000 sustainable jobs could be created in the next 5 years. The Hunter Jobs Alliance, composed of unions, medical people, teachers and environmental NGOs, aims for job security in genuinely renewable energy industries, such as wind, green hydrogen, and recycling. As coal is phased out, scientists and community groups are missing from the table as government and industry moot the future of the Hunter Valley. But few people are aware of the ramifications of biomass burning. The industry, which employs few, is set to fly under the radar until it is too late.

DEFORESTATION ACCELERATED

And so, we are doing our utmost to spread the word – at a community level, at a political level, and in the media. Up until now, it’s been largely conjecture, not happening ‘in our backyard’. There has been no journalistic ‘hook’. But with Redbank, that has changed. Australians need to be aware that, as we all earnestly discuss re-forestation and carbon sinks, the very opposite is happening.

The rate of deforestation on both public and private land has accelerated, and 80% of that timber is ‘waste’ which can be burned for electricity – that is the reality. This trajectory could not be further from our stated goals of protecting forests and biodiversity, and mitigating climate change.

What on Earth are we doing?”

Jane McIntyre (on behalf of No Electricity From Forests)

MORE INFORMATION AT

[facebook/neffaction](#)

RESEARCH WEBSITES

Where can I find out more about changes to NSW’s logging laws?

npansw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IFOA_BriefingNote_May18.pdf

Pulp logs will be used as biomass for energy generation.

dpi.nsw.gov.au/forestry/north-coast-residues-project

‘Residues’ or ‘waste’ in Nth Coast forests can power 200 000 homes/annum.

dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/media-centre/releases/2017/north-coast-forests-offer-untapped-bioenergy-opportunity

DPI research aimed at establishing biomass hubs at Grafton, Kempsey and Bulahdelah.

dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf/0006/747672/North-coast-residues-report.pdf

Wood pellet fuel has been classified as renewable resource in Europe and Asia: Australia well-placed to provide ‘wood waste’ to this market.

ausfpa.com.au/media-releases/finkel-review-paves-way-for-renewable-energy-from-wood-waste

Is wood ‘carbon-neutral’?

reneweconomy.com.au/displacing-coal-with-wood-for-power-generation-will-worsen-climate-change

e360.yale.edu/features/carbon-loop-hole-why-is-wood-burning-counted-as-green-energy

What do the politicians say?

State and federal ministers endorse use of forest bio-products in transition to low-carbon economy.

agriculture.gov.au/forestry/policies/ministerial-forestry-statement

Govt. promoting forest biomass as renewable energy resource.

agriculture.gov.au/sitecollectiondocuments/forestry/australia-s-forest-policies/fiac/transforming-australia-s-forest-industry

NSW govt. approves whole trees to be burned for electricity.

smh.com.au/environment/devastating-changes-allow-forests-to-be-burned-for-power

Why burning wood to make electricity may not be a good choice for the environment

abc.net.au/news/2018-11-20/why-burning-wood-for...

Australian hardwood pellets to Japan and elsewhere

timberbiz.com.au/Australia-japan-forest-products-trade-strengthened/

timberbiz.com.au/pellets-are-a-growth-opportunity-for-Australia

<https://www.timberbiz.com.au/renewable-bio-seeking-hardwood-biomass/>

Rollover of Regional Forest Agreements

npansw.org/2019/01/17/lack-of-commonwealth-accountability-

npansw.org/2018/11/19/destructive-logging-laws-slammed-

Peg Putt’s succinct explanation of carbon impact of burning wood

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/hobart/programs/breakfast/biomass-energy-peg-putt/12564678>

Specific effects of biomass burning – case study of Enviva USA

<https://news.mongabay.com/2020/07/burning-down-the-house-enviva-giant-u-s-wood-pellet-plants-gear-up/>

The film that details the biomass burning industry

<https://burnedthemovie.com/>

The Redbank Green Energy Park : Aust’s very own first 100% wood burning power station

<https://hunterenergyredbank.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Redbank-Green-Energy-Park-v8-Final-Proofs1.pdf>

DON'T EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM THE BIDEN PRESIDENCY

Joe Biden is the most “elected” president in US history, having won not only the November 3 2020 election but also many court challenges which have reaffirmed the election result. The January 6 formal announcement of his election victory was marred by one of the worst acts of violence in Washington DC history, when the Capitol building was stormed by Trump supporters who were still challenging the result.

There will be a welcome change of tone under Biden. But many of the problems that were not solved by Trump, will not be solved by Biden either.

Two immediate issues result directly from the Trump legacy: alienated voters and the COVID crisis. Trump won more votes in 2020 than he did in 2016 and more votes than any previous Republican candidate (Biden also did extraordinarily well and so beat him). Trump had made politics interesting.

For a vast swathe of Americans who felt neglected by the inner-city, political-correct-driven politicians, Trump gave them a voice. (Tragically he gave them a voice but few concrete reforms, such as reforming the exploitative financial system).

There are now record sales of guns and ammunition and talk of a “cold civil war”. Hopefully the reactions to the violence at the Capitol may dampen the risk of political violence. But Biden will have great difficulty unifying such a divided country.

On COVID, we now know from journalist Bob Woodward that Trump had been briefed on the severity of the risk very early in the crisis. He gambled that the predictions were wrong - and his inaction cost more lives in one year than US involvement in World War II over four years.

Trump was haunted by the need for re-election (and most presidents do get a second term; one has to go back to George Bush 1988-92 for a president who failed to get that second term). Trump reasoned that no president has failed to get re-elected in a booming economy. He gambled on a weak COVID crisis and a continuation of the economic recovery (at least by Wall Street standards) from the 2008 global financial crisis.

Another fact is that every president since 1812 standing for re-election in a war has been re-elected. People rally around the flag. Trump could easily have talked up the “China virus”, declared himself a “war-time president”, and put the nation on a war-footing (which is basically what he did with the amazing devel-

opment of the vaccine). I think he would have been re-elected if he had followed that strategy (especially given the lack of enthusiasm for Biden).

HOW TO FIGHT COVID

Biden’s second immediate problem is therefore combatting COVID. Vaccines don’t save people – vaccinations do. The COVID crisis has highlighted the US’s dysfunctional healthcare system. Trying to get the vaccines distributed will further illustrate that dysfunction.

Biden’s third problem is what gave Trump his stunning 2016 victory: the resentment many people feel about the death of the “American dream”. Trump was besotted by the growth of Wall Street but this was a mirage. That growth was due to financial engineering and the “financialization” of the US economy (bankers and other people who use money to make money – rather than actually make something of use).

In the real economy of agriculture, manufacturing and basic services (such as teaching and nursing) there has not been such a dramatic increase in wealth. For the first time in recent US history, a generation is coming into adulthood that does not expect to be earning more money than its parents. This generation is saddled with student debts, limited good employment opportunities, and the prospect of having to survive in the “gig” economy bouncing from one insecure job to another. The American dream has become an American nightmare.

The new right economic rationalist reforms that began under Ronald Reagan (1983-89) were continued by both Republican and Democrat presidents. The dominant economic paradigm (as it is in Australia) is that the “poor have too much money and the rich have too little”. Hence we beat up on welfare recipients and give tax cuts to the rich. Many Americans live paycheque to paycheque, with limited savings.

Biden will make little progress in reversing the trend. Indeed he was part of it in the Obama Administration and many of his proposed appointees are veterans of that Obama era. That era helped Trump



get elected; Biden’s failures will help Trump or his successor in the 2024 election.

RISE OF CHINA

Part of the American nightmare has been the rise of China as the global factory. China expects to be the number one global power by 2049 (the 100th anniversary of the Chinese communist revolution). It is on a collision course with the current number one power.

Therefore although Biden may use a less aggressive tone towards China, the underlying problems will remain. Trump to his credit did not embark on additional conflicts against extremist Islamic groups. Instead he redirected the US military towards a more conventional military challenge: a conflict with China in the South China Sea. That risk remains.

Incidentally, Australia is like a child caught between divorcing parents. It is an ally of the US but China is its main trading partner. It needs China and US to remain on good terms. Australia does not want to be forced to make a choice between them.

The problems confronting the US are not easily solved by any one president. The US has major structural problems and competitors. COVID and violence extremists may get the publicity but there are deeper issues at work that will overwhelm presidents.

The US has, of course, solved structural problems in the past. Over a century ago, the US government took on oil and railway corporation giants (the Facebook, Apple, and Google of their day) and broke up the corporate giants. In the 1930s the Roosevelt Administration turned away from the new right economic rationalism of the 1920s and created a new American economy (which then gave us the “American dream” of the 1950s and 1960s).

Reform is possible. But I doubt that Biden is the person to do it.

Keith Suter

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THE MYSTERY OF THE MUSTARD GAS MEN: ROSS ASHLEY BRYAN

Janine Roberts.

In July 2020 this photograph was sent to the Manning Wallamba Family History Society in Taree by the Glenbrook District Historical Society. The engraved rock, located at the entrance of the old Glenbrook Railway Tunnel at Lapstone Hill in the Blue Mountains, reads:

8 / 43

LAC R A Bryan

Taree

NSW

Who was R A Bryan and what role did he play in the history of this disused railway tunnel?

HERE'S WHAT I FOUND

Ross Ashley Bryan was born in Taree in 1924. In 1943 he enlisted in the RAAF, perhaps with dreams of becoming a pilot. Instead Bryan underwent training as an armourer at Glenbrook RAAF base and on passing the course in August 1943 was posted to Glenbrook Tunnel.

Glenbrook Tunnel was one of 14 bulk storage facilities in Australia that was used to secretly store phosgene and mustard gas in case of chemical warfare attack from Japanese forces. Mustard gas had been used in WWI with devastating effects and as a result many countries, including Australia, became signatories to the Geneva Protocol 1925 prohibiting the use of chemical warfare. Japan however was not a signatory and had likely already used chemicals against the Chinese. In 1942 in a top-secret operation, Australia started importing one million chemical weapons from the UK and US.

A specialist chemical warfare unit was created to handle, transport and eventually destroy the stocks. Bryan was in this unit called the "Mustard Gas Men". A daily duty was to release excess pressure that built up in the drums by unscrewing bungs to discharge the lethal



gas into the air. Without suitable protective equipment, all men suffered gas burns and were constantly

exposed to this carcinogen.

Eastern entrance of Glenbrook Tunnel with bulk storage drums filled with mustard gas. There is a guard dog outside the tunnel. After the war the tunnel was used to grow mushrooms as it was prior to the war. Photo taken mid 1943. National Archives of Australia. Photo courtesy of Geoff Plunkett.

Like the mushrooms previously grown in the tunnels, the men were never completely

informed of the work they would be doing and signed documents which, under the Crimes Act, bound them to secrecy for 50 years. One armourer stated "It [mustard gas] wasn't supposed to be in Australia... wasn't meant to be here... So we just didn't exist..."

After the war, Bryan married Valerie Kedwell at Coopers Creek and worked in a variety of jobs including motor mechanic at Taree, mill hand at Lansdowne and labourer at Gateshead.

It was not until the late 1990s that knowledge of these operations came to public notice and in 2009 the men of Glenbrook were recognised in a plaque-laying ceremony. Bryan died in 2005 unaware his sacrifice had been acknowledged, however through his rock carving we remember him today.

RAAF chemical warfare armourers at Innisfail 5 June 1944 as part of the chemical warfare research facility. Ross Ashley Bryan is wearing a belt standing on the steps behind the man sitting down. Photo courtesy of Geoff Plunkett.

(Special thanks to author Geoff Plunkett who shared his knowledge, photographs and book 'Chemical Warfare in Australia: Australia's Involvement in Chemical Warfare 1914 - Today', Sydney: Leech Cup Books, 2013.)

Glenbrook Tunnel where drums are being cleaned and repainted by a chemical warfare armourer under a tarpaulin, Mid-1943. National Archives of Australia. Photo courtesy of Geoff Plunkett.



SCOTT MORRISON NEEDS TO FINALLY FACE REALITY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

John Hewson

In the last few days, there have been a number of significant statements on the climate challenge.

US President Joe Biden moved decisively, rejoining the Paris Agreement on day 1, and appointing former secretary of state John Kerry as his climate envoy, and with cabinet status.

Kerry, in turn, called on countries to "treat the crisis as the emergency that it is" by reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a matter of urgency.

He warned that the costs of coping with climate change were escalating, with the US spending some \$A350 billion in one year after three storms.

"We've reached a point where it is an absolute fact that it's cheaper to invest in preventing damage or minimising it at least than cleaning up."

A similar message came from our Climate Council, warning of the looming \$100 billion annual cost of natural disasters for which we are not prepared.

Kerry also emphasised that climate is a top priority for Biden.

"We have a president now, thank God, who leads and tells the truth ... and he knows that we have to mobilise in unprecedented ways to meet the challenge that is fast accelerating, and we have limited time to get it under control."

Kerry called for all countries to come to COP26 in Glasgow in November with commitments to meet net zero emissions by mid-century and national plans to reduce greenhouse gases in the next decade.

What a sharp contrast with the lack of truth and leadership on climate coming from Morrison.

This week he claimed that: "The political debate about reaching a carbon neutral future is over," but he will not take a new 2030 or 2035 emissions reduction target to that UN meeting.

Morrison rejects that it is an emergency and he rests on his assertion that he will meet his Paris commitment to reduce emissions by 26-28 per cent by 2030 "in a canter".

Where's the truth in his claim that the politics is settled, when his Coalition partner was lobbying again this week for new coal-fired power plants, which in turn has seen several key city-based Liberal MPs reject the proposal.

Morrison now faces the prospect of significant disunity on the climate issue in what will be an election year.

The Opposition is also dividing seriously on the issue, which has culminated, so far, in the removal of the Opposition climate spokesman.

Both the LNP and the Opposition now seem committed to selling out to the fossil fuel lobby, clearly against our national interest, at a time when a majority of voters, households, leading mining and other businesses, investors, financial institutions, regulators.

Many across civil society are calling on the government to lead decisively.

This will only compound our global ranking as a laggard on climate. Morrison is also being misleading about the nature and significance of our 2030 Paris target.

The government's own Climate Change Authority recommended a target of 45-65 per cent. The decision to announce the lesser target of 26-28 per cent was purely a political decision, not based on science or policy.

Our 2030 target is not consistent with the Paris objective of keeping the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees.

Indeed, our 2030 target is consistent with global warming of about 3 degrees and much more in Australia.

Recently, our Bureau of Meteorology told the Senate that current targets have us on track to warm by a catastrophic 4.4 degrees by the end of the century.

As a member of the Climate Targets Panel, we released a report yesterday - based on the CCA "carbon budget" methodology and government data - that suggests that to be consistent with the 2 degree objective, our 2030 target should be at least 50 per cent, 67 per cent by 2035 and net zero by 2045.

To be consistent with 1.5 degrees, our 2030 target would need to be 74 per cent, achieving net zero by 2035.

The government has plundered much of the carbon budget since 2014: ignoring CCA advice, trying to close it down, repealing the carbon price - and emissions have risen.

Against this hard evidence, Morrison is denying reality, fostering the illusion that he is addressing the climate challenge by sticking with the 2030 target, doing all he can to get to net zero by mid-century, while point-scoring against the Opposition.

The planet is not swayed by politics. There is no vaccine for climate.

The imperative for Morrison is to lead our nation on a genuine and fair transition to a low carbon society.

John Hewson is a professor at the Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU, and a former Liberal opposition leader.

Continued from page 1

not withstand current, emerging or future threats, including climate change.

The centrepiece of Samuel's recommendations was the creation of a new set of national environmental standards that "should be adopted in full and immediately implemented".

Among other recommendations Samuel said successive governments had taken a "piecemeal" approach to the recovery and management of threatened species, and highlighted the failure to adopt and implement recovery plans or properly address major threats.

REGIONAL PLANS

The review recommended the introduction of regional recovery plans to address threats and secure the survival of species and habitats across a landscape.

The environment minister, Sussan Ley, said Samuel's report was "far-reaching", but did not hold a media conference to discuss the report. The government has not released its response to the recommendations.

Ley said in a statement the government was "committed to working through the full detail of the recommendations with stakeholders".

"This is a process that will take some time to complete, as Prof Samuel has flagged, and it is important that our legislation is fit for meeting the challenges facing our natural environment," she said.

She said the government would still pursue its plan to try to pass legislation that would clear the way for the handover of federal environmental approval powers to state and territory governments.

Samuel's final report reiterates his interim recommendation that this occur under a framework of legally-binding standards.

The report warns that while the government should consult the states and territories about the environmental standards, the "process cannot be one of negotiated agreement to accommodate existing rules or development aspirations".

"To do so would result in a patchwork of protections or rules set at the lowest bar," he wrote.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The report makes detailed recommendations for standards covering threatened species, engagement with Indigenous Australians, legal compliance and enforcement, and environmental data and information, with further standards to be developed over time.

In particular, Samuel noted that governments had failed to

support the rights of Indigenous Australians in environmental decision-making and were not harnessing the "extraordinary value" of traditional knowledge in managing the environment.

He found data and information about threatened species and habitats was not easily accessible and that good outcomes for both the environment and heritage - including the cumulative effects of habitat destruction - could not be achieved under the current laws.

Conservationists welcomed the report and its recommendations, including the call for an independent office of compliance.

"It is time to overhaul our national environment law with a full package of reforms that includes strong legally-enforceable standards and an independent regulator - and these must be in force before the government pursues its Streamlining Amendment legislation," said Basha Stasak of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

"As Prof Samuel states, national environmental standards alone are not enough.

"Standards need to be backed up by strong, independent oversight and increased accountability."

The Wilderness Society said the review had accepted the view of scientific and legal experts, and the community, which had "overwhelmingly" called for changes that would halt the extinction of Australian wildlife.

"After all this work, after decades of worsening extinctions, out-of-control habitat loss and without reform, we can't just have another round of this government choosing to consult and ignore. Our ancient and unique natural heritage is at stake," environmental laws campaigner, Suzanne Milthorpe, said.

The Guardian Australia has spent more than three years examining systemic failings under the act.

Their reporting uncovered widespread problems, including poor monitoring of endangered species, major delays in the listing of threatened species and ecosystems, failure to develop, update and implement recovery plans for species and habitats threatened with extinction, failure to list key threats to species, failure to protect important habitat, and threatened species funding being used for projects that do not benefit threatened species.

(Let's hope Mr Samuels report prevails and isn't buried and stalled by procrastination and obfuscation by vested interests. DM)

Article first appeared in *The Guardian Australia*.

500 AND STILL COUNTING

500 may not seem like a large number to some but when Can Assist Manning Valley recently assisted the 500th family since inception 8 years ago members knew that they had reached a huge milestone.

Members can't say that this is a cause for celebration because they would rather have no one faced with the challenges and stresses of cancer. There have been many dedicated members and volunteers with Can Assist Manning Valley over the years. Some have come and gone, others are still working tirelessly. All have contributed to this milestone.

"For me, following my retirement and by chance, I found some online information which lead me to research further into a group called Can Assist Manning Valley. I was amazed by their achievements," said President Janice Latimer. "If you would like to see some of our achievements check out our Facebook page," she added.

Janice made contact with the then President Ms Bonita Lindfield and was invited to attend the upcoming monthly meeting. Janice has now been volunteering with Can

Assist Manning Valley for 2 years.

With both regular and new applicants the demand continues to grow. The requests from applicants are increasing in value no doubt accelerated by drought, bushfires and COVID-19. Costs incurred by rural and regional cancer patients can be up to five times that experienced by patients in metropolitan areas.

Like many not-for-profit charities volunteers at Can Assist Manning Valley have not been able to fundraise this year but the group has continued to volunteer to ensure that all of their applicants have received the assistance they so desperately

needed.

"I must wholeheartedly acknowledge the local community for the support over the past 8 years. From individuals to both small and large businesses; whether it be donations of cash, supporting raffles by donating prize items/purchasing tickets, offering venues or great deals on menus for functions and in many other ways we have never been denied in our fundraising ventures. Many people have continued to make their monthly donations throughout the past 12 months. Without this continued support from our community we could not assist our applicants the

way we do. There are too many to list here but I hope that many will read this article and if they don't already know it ... we are truly grateful," said Janice.

If you have a current diagnosis of cancer, have received conventional treatment for cancer in the past 12 months and need financial assistance due to the extra costs being incurred then please contact Can Assist Manning Valley Branch.

Phone: 0428 593 973
Email: CanAssistManningValley@outlook.com
Post: PO Box 1016, Taree NSW 2430

Donations can be made to: Can Assist Manning Valley Westpac Taree
BSB: 032 587 Account Number: 337740

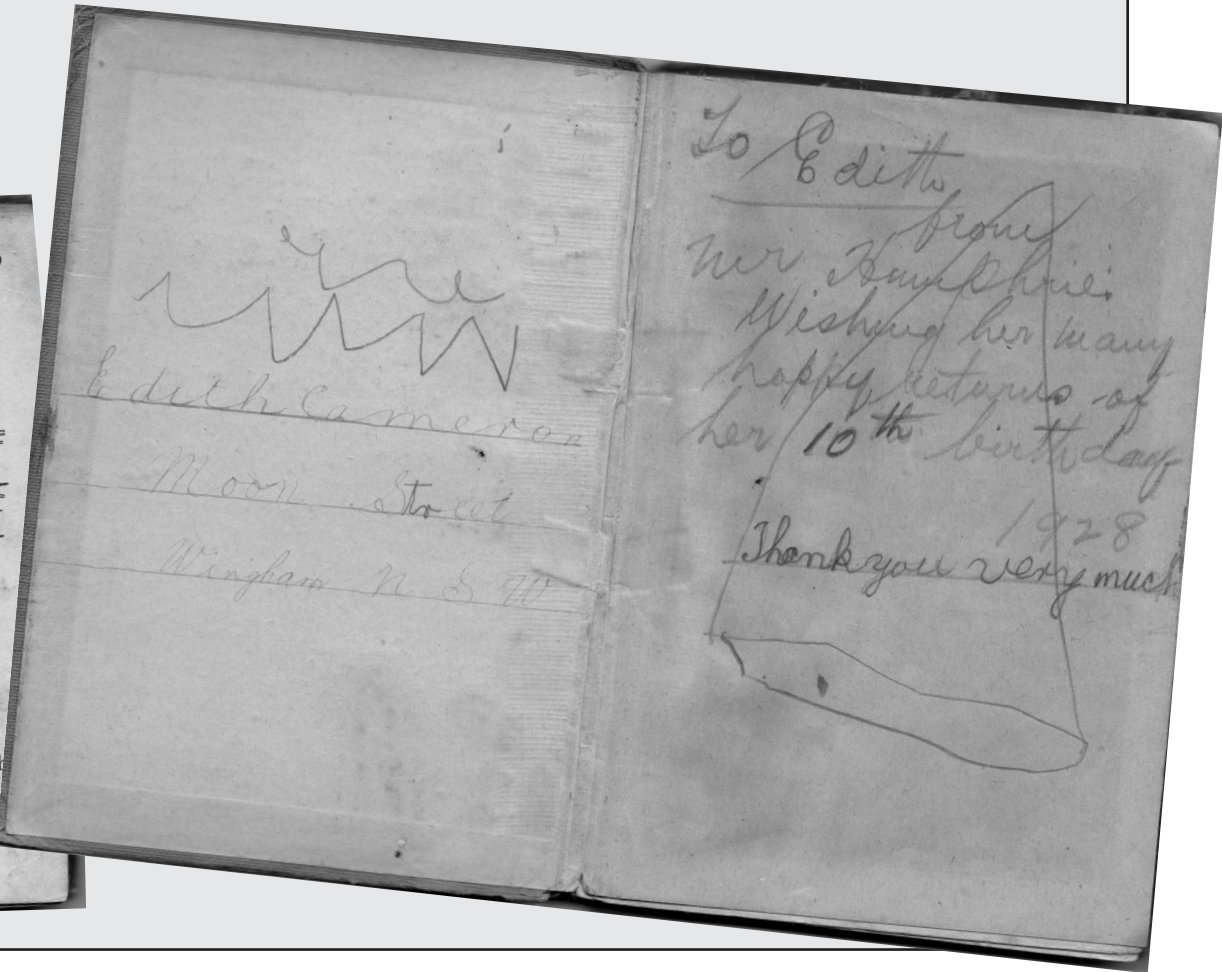
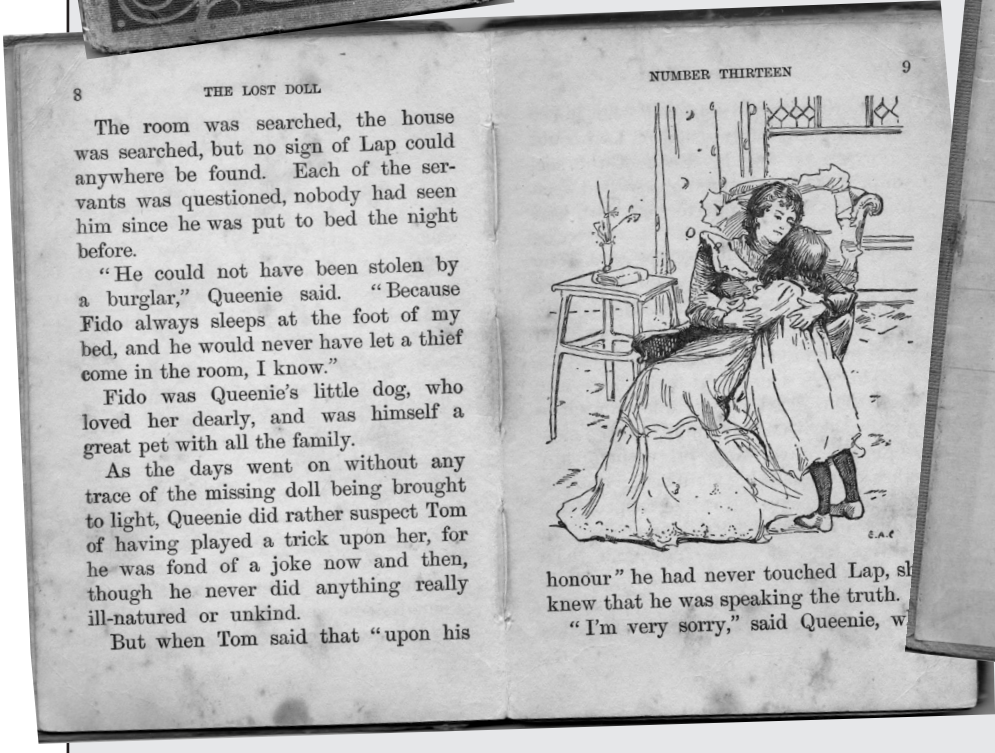
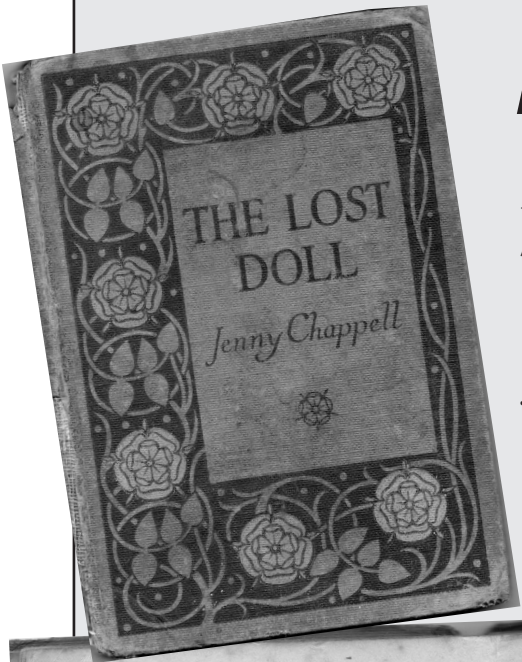


A LOST BOOK?

I found this in my mother or maybe grandmother's collection. Maybe it came from a jumble sale. We always buy the books. The book was given to Edith Cameron for her tenth birthday in 1928 from a Mr Humphries. Edith then wrote very neatly in the cover her name and "Moon Street, Wingham NSW".

Just wondering who Edith Cameron was and if any of her family are still around!

DM



WHAT IS TO BE DONE

– POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND SAVING THE PLANET

Barry Jones Scribe Rrp \$35.00

Part 2.

Jones is puzzled that “there appears to be an inverse relationship between the number of graduates in parliament and the quality of political debate...it is now impossible to get a straight answer to a question, whether asked in parliament and the media.”

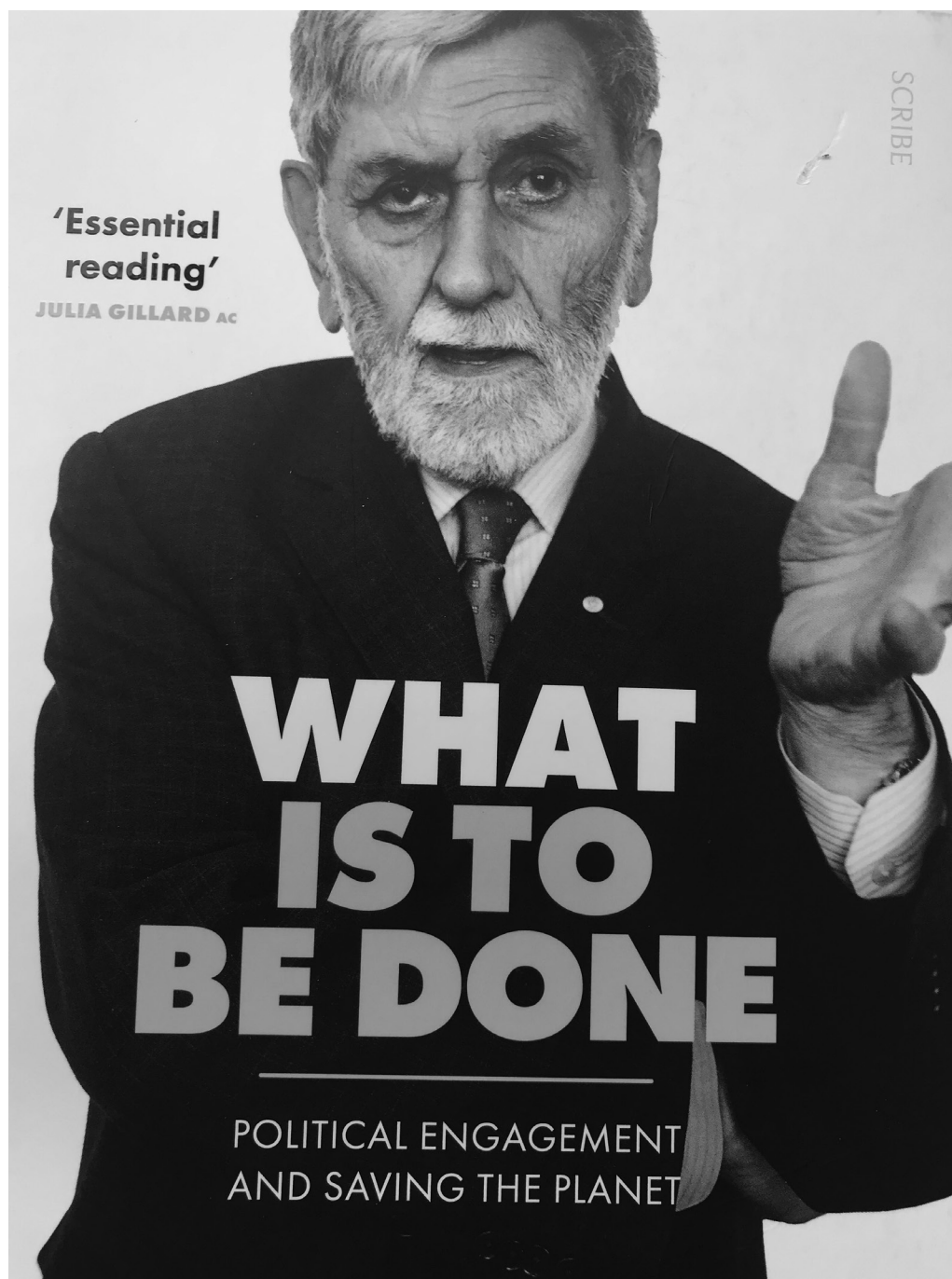
He notes that the 31st Parliament (1977-80), was comprised of males, nearly exclusively of British isle ancestry, and all well above the median age. Although the 45th Parliament is diverse, representing Australia’s ethnically diverse population, and is achieving gender balance, the level of debate is far poorer, “there is policy paralysis”, “some MP’s often rely on a page of dot points and simply declaim the material they have been given, ‘staying on message’ and repeating mantra after mantra *ad nauseum*.” Progressive devolution.

Jones points out “Few Australians recognise that its House of Representatives holds the *international gold medal for the shortest sittings of any national legislature*.” He compares Australia’s average of 67 days with Japan’s 150 days, the U.K.’s 142-158 days, Canada’s 127 days, and the U.S. House of Reps’ 124-145 days. New Zealanders beat us here too, although only averaging 93 days.

In Chapter 11, “Being Honest with Ourselves”, he discusses the White Australia Policy and the racism of the Labor Party. He doesn’t discuss the fear that cheap Asian labour would undermine the living standards of Australian workers at that time, or take their jobs. Hawke and Keating realised those fears when they removed the tariffs which saw Australian manufacturing translocate to Asia with its cheaper labour costs.

ALL AUSTRALIAN

Discussing tolerance and pluralism, all the more strained with multi-culturalism and extraordinary levels of recent migration, Jones notes that “the goal of cohesion and convergence is admirable...but it can become rigid, dogmatic, and authoritarian – and, if taken to extremes, xenophobic and punitive: We’re all Australians



around here, we all speak the same language, and people who live here must conform to uniform values—differences in football codes, perhaps, excepted.” Tolerance, too, can become rigid and totalitarian, as in “political correctness”, something Jones does not seem to fully grasp.

Somehow, Jones has lumped our responsibilities to our “First Peoples” with those to refugees. Although Jones is critical of firearm ownership, he makes no mention anywhere about military hardware manufacturers. He mentions the Iraq War, but focuses on Saddam Hussein, not the U.S. military

intervention in which Australia joined the Coalition of the Willing. Nor does he discuss neo-Colonialism in the middle-East, or the failure of Western media to report the unpopularity of the Shah prior to the Islamic Revolution. Is Jones whistling?

A REPUBLIC?

Jones tackles the monarchy, arguing for a republic, dog whistling racism: “The monarchist cause is essentially the last expression of White Australia, its rhetoric, culture, politics, and the habit of deference. It is a static, essentially nostalgic, position in a society

that, although dynamic in ways, is uncertain how to express itself. It is the politics of amnesia.” It could also be seen as a politics of remembrance, remembering our history, and Western traditions through ceremony. Many Australians dread a Republic after watching the United States, and have no wish for another position to be created for an Australian politician.

He discusses the U.S.’s sense of exceptionalism as unfounded when compared with its 5-eyes Anglophone partners, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. “As it happens, the United States ranks no. 37 in the world for life expectancy. It does rank no. 1 in its numbers of prisoners, in absolute figures: even more than China. And in the numbers of reported infections and deaths from Covid-19. To be fair, it does rank no. 1 in recipients of Nobel Prizes.” The U.S. does see itself as the centre of all progress and achievement, a beacon of freedom and democracy, and force for the good wherever it goes and whomever it bombs and whatever the collateral damage.

Having got a lot off his chest, his Chapter 13, “Saving the Planet”, starts to address what most readers would have expected this book was about. Here Jones discusses the global human population and consumption crisis, noting “If we were prepared to adopt resource parsimony, we could accommodate more people. If not, we couldn’t.” But do we want or need more people? Dick Smith would agree with Jones here: “If population—Australia’s or any other nation’s – is to rise, then something has to be given up. Our report recognised that each increase in population puts additional strain on vital resources (such as water, soil, environment, open space, and transport), so that every million that the population increases by would, and should, have an impact on the way we live—on our use of cars, fuel and water,

and space, and even our diet.”

CLIMATE CHANGE

He quotes an address by historian Simon Schama, who stated “Climate change has destroyed entire ecosystems, radicalising its casualties—long years of drought... in the upper Jordan basin sending migrants into Syrian cities that couldn’t find work for them and ending as recruits for both sides in the most terrible of contemporary civil wars...” No mention of arms manufacturers, the role of neo-colonialism or geopolitical intrigue. Climate change is experienced by the increased frequency and intensity of climatic extremes, not a sudden change of conditions as Schama portrays. Did I hear another dog whistle?

Transhumance, “historically... defined as the seasonal movement of livestock seeking better pastures”, was employed by Schama to describe the human exodus and migration from destructed environments, associated with climate change and over-population. Jones, fond of diagrams and statistics, has created a circular, diagram with clockwise arrows, explaining this process, but the causal relationships between the 12 listed issues are baffling. Jones’ remarkably complicated design/diagram of “Knowledge Nation”, although sensible, was “repeatedly attacked”. Peter Costello, then treasurer, ridiculed it as “Noodle Nation”, in reference to the myriad feedback loops, others called it “Spaghetti and Meatballs”. Jones writes, “*The Australian* obviously thought the diagram was hilarious and published six cartoons by Peter Nicholson based on it.” Jones considers the tactic, “a classic example of spin, meant that the issues raised in the report were never debated...*Don’t debate the contents, just destroy it.*”

Jones writes that Zoonoses like Covid-19 (pathogens across species), is “closely related to climate change”, but it is generally accepted as resulting from human over-population and human pressure on the remaining fragments of natural ecosystems and their fauna, much of which is consumed or “thought to have curative properties.”

“Climate change contributes to the refugee crisis, and to sources of conflict in the Middle East and Africa.” This is somewhat premature, and doesn’t explain the Rwandan Hutu-Tutsi genocide, nor most current conflicts so far. “The World Bank has estimated that by 2050 more than 140 million people will have been displaced from sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. They will be climate refugees. Even now, millions have been displaced by the

reduction in arable land in North Africa, with thousands drowning in the Mediterranean as they have sought refuge... Their misery has failed to generate compassion and understanding. They are not protected by the 1951 Refugee Convention.” Many of these “refugees” are economic migrants and adventurers.

MORRISON ON COVID 19

Jones points out how the Morrison government’s response to the Covid-19 has radically altered our relationship with government and each other: “...in a matter of months...fundamental changes in how we live, work, feed, clothe, educate, transport, and entertain ourselves; transformed the role of government intervention; stretched medical and hospital services to the limit; inflicting lasting damage on the aviation industry and tourism; barred attendance at sporting events, funerals, and weddings; crippled universities and the performing arts; devastated part-time and insecure jobs; widened inequality; and ran some risk of inflaming anti-migrant sentiment. It also profoundly disrupted the world economy.” Jones asks, “Could the government do the same with climate change?” Jones has dog-whistled again against the opposition to Australia’s high levels of immigration. Is Jones also suggesting state emergency powers and the perennial surrender of individual liberties?

At the end of Chapter 13, Jones concludes: “There is common ground on diagnosis of the problems: the difficult part is providing solutions. The only way in which our political paralysis can be ended and effective action taken to save the planet is by active, forceful political engagement by well-informed citizens, changing the political culture and challenging the existing parties. They must engage, engage, engage.” That is his wish, but the reader is left unsure what “effective action” would be under the circumstances.

Chapter 14, “What Is to be Done: political engagement and climate change”, the final chapter, claims “climate change and other major problems will have been caused by us and our contemporaries. But we will not see the outcomes of our greed and thoughtlessness: those who will suffer the worst will not have caused the problem.”

This has been caused by our species over thousands of years. Our population and consumption have reached The End of the Chain after a long process starting with the advent of agriculture 12,000 years ago and the felling of forests with stone axes. The history of

coal mining goes back thousands of years. Surface mining of coal in China is recorded at 3490 BC. The Aztecs were the first known to use it in the Americas. Nearly all the major coalfields in Roman Britain were being mined by the late 2nd Century. Peat, another fossil fuel (the first step in the formation of coal) has been used for heating since Roman times and has been an important fuel in many areas of Europe and is still in use today.

Ironically, Jones reactionarily advocates returning to the precepts of the European Enlightenment (c.1688 - c.1789) in Chapter 3, “Overturning the Enlightenment”, which led to the Industrial Revolution fuelled by coal. Contrasting with Ecocentrism (Biocentrism), “Enlightenment science passes itself off as a disinterested search for the truth about nature, but, in fact, by disenchanting Nature of her mysteries, nature becomes nothing more than a ‘standing reserve’ of natural resources to be exploited.” We owe our modern concept of nature and ecology to the renowned polymath, Alexander von Humboldt (1767-1835) and the “Romantic Period”. Ecology emerges, studying interdependence and relationships. Continents aren’t fixed but are, and have always, drifted. Species are evolving and disappearing. The Seminal works are Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790) and von Humboldt’s five volume *Kosmos* (1845-1862), which inspired Darwin, Wallace and many others, including Ludwig Leichhardt. Somehow, this critical scientific period has been excised from the Jones syllabus.

PRIORITIES

“After years of agonising”, Jones lists 8 “priorities for our time if we are to survive the next half century without irreversible damage to the biosphere and our social and political institutions.” (See page 324 of his book.) This lengthy and complex vision statement-sentence is followed by seven further visionary planks in Jones’ private political platform which centres on promoting transparent liberal democracy and equality without any specific details as how any of this is to be achieved, or how this would not result in further chaos.

Although Jones argues for greater participation, he concedes “Australia handled the first wave of the COVID-19 crisis exceptionally well but, inevitably, all the major decisions were made by executive government, relying on expert advice. There was nothing particularly ‘democratic’ about it.” How else could the crisis have been handled “exceptionally well”? He goes on to criticize Morrison, as expect-

ed, distorting the PM’s goal to a ‘snap-back’ to pre-Covid freedoms: “*Thanks and goodbye, experts!, and Welcome back, lobbyists!*”

Although Jones states, “I owe the ALP a great deal, particularly for my 26 years as a member of parliament...all Australian political parties have demonstrated their inadequacy.” He then goes on to propose a new political party, “The Courage Party”, supplying yet another wish list/vision statement/platform with 19 dot points, followed by “I would like the ALP to be that party.” Would the visionary “Courage Party” also endorse Ponzi-demography as the ALP and LNP did and still do?

Jones advocates Ross Garnaut’s ‘four great opportunities for Australian industrial leadership in the post-carbon world economy followed by a more detailed discussion and Garnaut’s observation that “Arid and semi-arid rangelands make up about 70% of Australia’s landmass, or around 5.5 million square kilometres” which Jones observes is “no good for farming, but ideal for growing billions of trees with a high capacity to absorb carbon dioxide—especially mallee eucalypts, or mulga in Queensland and New South Wales.” Here we go: making our deserts bloom with forests! *Have a go, mate.* The continued addiction to growth factored into the “post-carbon economy” is particularly concerning. We need somehow to transition to a zero-growth economy, not only a carbon-neutral one.

“Biomass could displace coal as a fuel in some areas, and Australia has exceptional potential here. There is, however, a significant difference of opinion about its use as a fuel.” Indeed so. Jones doesn’t discuss where this biomass is proposed to be sourced.

METHANE EMISSIONS

Jones discusses research with Meat and Livestock Australia, James Cook University, and the CSIRO yielding “encouraging indications that the emission of methane by cattle...can be reduced by more than 50% by feeding them a 1 percent dietary supplement of the common Australian red seaweed, *Asparagopsis taxiformis* or *armata*” at the sporophyte stage of its development. “Metabolites in the seaweed disrupt enzymes that produce methane in the rumen of cattle.” For this treatment to work, “cattle must have it in their feed every day”. This may restrict its practical use to feedlots. The thrust is to find ways to continue to do what we have always done and still get away with it.

Continued on page 12

WHAT IS TO BE DONE – POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND SAVING THE PLANET

Continued from page 11

Many of our problems stem from our arrogant humanism and disregard for nature and natural systems. There is a tendency to believe that the mountain of problems caused by our technological activity will be solved by further technological activity. How many problems in Australia have already been caused by introductions of exotic plants and animals?

"Because Australia *has chosen to be* primarily an exporter of high-volume raw materials and *refuses to seize the opportunities arising from transition to a post-carbon economy...* (italics mine) our ECI (Economic Complexity Index) is falling...The good news for Australia is that we are well ahead of Ethiopia and Papua-New Guinea."

Jones provides a chart comparing ECI rankings from 1995 to 2018. Australia ranked 55th in 1995, slipping 32 places to 87th in 2018. Japan remains in first place and, of the 20 countries listed, every advance has occurred in Asia, with the exception of Switzerland which has advanced from 4th to 2nd place. Our other "5 eyes" partners have all fallen back; Canada dropping from 22nd to 39th, the U.K. from 7th to 13th, and the U.S. from 9th to 11th. Our silent partner, Israel slipped a notch from 19th to 20th. Clearly, the Orient is ascendant; South Korea moved from 21st to 3rd, Singapore 20th to 5th, China 46th to 18th, and India 60th to 42nd during the same period.

REFUGEES

Jones implores us to be more compassionate in our treatment of refugees. The "Children Overboard" affair was disgraceful, but Jones' condemnation of Rudd's decision to refuse asylum to anyone arriving by boat, which has been upheld by successive PM's, deserves scrutiny. Jones points out that the "72,000 asylum seekers arrived in Australia by air in 2016-2019" are "comparatively well treated, and many drift into the community...the most punitive treatment", Jones claims, "is reserved for the dispossessed and desperate". People arriving by plane have passports, and are not as likely to have been victims of people smugglers. Australians across the political spectrum are opposed to uncontrolled immigration and disagree with Jones.

Jones decries fundamentalism, which he notes "has become the dominant force in the Middle East, especially after Western interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan were recognised as tragic—and expensive—failures." So where did Jones' ALP stand on the interventions in

Iraq and Afghanistan? Are migrants and refugees from these regions screened for the fundamentalism spawned by Western interventions?

"Work", Jones writes, "can be classified as 'tangible' or 'intangible'. Physical activity in a factory, department store, warehouse, school, hospital, or restaurant is easy to quantify and tax—usually with taxation deducted at the source. But intangible work in a digital economy, processing symbols—words, sounds, images, numbers, and designs—often across oceans and continents, is extremely difficult to measure. About 40 per cent of Australians now work in the 'information' sector, broadly defined." Still, something tangible or some service must be produced in this sector, or is this parasitical activity? Jones states "The political sensitivity of taxation means that it is never rationally discussed. Its profound moral implications—balancing immediate gains against long-term security—are ignored or discounted, and this has become a major factor in retarding our effective response to climate change and transitioning to a post-carbon economy." So what does Jones propose to do about "political sensitive" issues like taxation?

Jones states "We are individually and collectively faced with moral choices every day. Philosophers and ethicists agonise over the moral dilemma involved when we know that acting to ensure a personal or national benefit will inflict loss and destruction on others. How should we choose? Australia faces an ethical challenge about action on climate change, following the COVID-19 lockdown and the need, we are told, for a rapid return to normality. Australia maintains the highest priority for our fossil-fuel exports, offering the drug dealers' defence. ('If we don't sell it, someone else will.') We can't help ourselves. If Australia maximises its exports of coal and national gas to China and India, it would make a major contribution to GDP and to employment—even to tax revenue, if all the mining corporations could be induced to pay. But if this made a progression towards a 2-degree increase in mean global temperatures irreversible...then the collective memory of our self-discipline over a period of months to address a pandemic would seem to have been a trivial sacrifice compared with the threat to the planet..." Does Jones mean to say our restrictions and sacrifice during this pandemic will be trivial compared with what will be required from us by Climate Change, foregoing the export of coal and natural gas?

Jones believes "to change our

public policies and our view (if any) of our role as global citizens, it appears we need a new narrative; facts won't do it on their own." He then extolls the virtues of Labor politicians, Whitlam and Dunstan in those good old days, the '70's, who "could explain very complex and often controversial issues—in Whitlam's case, in speeches of heroic length—and win public support. Hawke and Keating had a similar gift. Who has it now?" The case against the Adani Mine was well presented. Even Bob Brown travelled up to address the issue. The community decided to let the mine go ahead. FAIL!

CHEST THUMPING

Jones thumps his human chest in a romantic distortion: "Our species *beat* the Neanderthals because our responses were (presumably) quicker. But then modern humans began planning ahead for the next season, planted crops, and were no longer exclusively hunter-gatherers or grazers." Quite a statement! Populations of *Homo sapiens*, outside those in sub-Saharan Africa, are hybrids with at least two other species, *Homo neanderthalensis* and Denisovans. We are undeniably the most destructive species ever to inhabit Planet Earth. Humanists like Jones view *Homo sapiens* as if it were an endangered species, where every individual is of critical value, but we are *an endangering species, a pest species* like certain cockroaches, finally even endangering ourselves. Climate change **began with agriculture**. We are now in full plague. In Chapter 2, Jones states he has "tried to live by his (H.G. Wells) words: 'Three passions, simple, but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind'".

Pity can be a dangerous emotion, as it is universally exploited by sociopaths and psychopaths as a means of preying on others. The psychology is complex. As Nietzsche observed: *There is always something degrading in suffering and always something elevating and productive of superiority in pitying*. This passion for pity may explain Jones' position on refugees and asylum seekers; is it rational or emotional?

Jones decries, whistling conspiracy: "It is, I suspect, not an accident that the study of humanities at universities has been singled out for discrimination by sharply increasing charges in a sector already badly damaged by COVID-19 and the withdrawal of overseas fee-paying students. We must re-

sist the smug and dangerous implication: Who needs philosophers, historians, political scientists, psychologists, journalists, critics, anthropologists, archaeologists, writers, musicians, and creative artists, just because they can throw light on the human condition and help us to find out who we are?"

As many of these pseudo-sciences are heavily politicised and of questionable benefit for Saving the Planet, wouldn't it be preferable to encourage the sciences and scientific research at this very critical time?

CONCLUSION

Jones concludes his book, which might be better titled "The World According to Barry", with his version of Lincoln's Gettysburg address, "A Gettysburg Address for 2020". Lincoln lived at the height of our Print Culture. Have a read of Jones' Electronic Age version and see if you find it inspirational. We must, we must, we must:

"We must highly resolve to save the air, save the soil, save the oceans **to ensure that our species**, and the noblest aspects of its culture, shall not perish from the Earth." Therein lies the kernel of the problem. Before Copernicus, people believed the sun revolved around the Earth. The anthropocentric humanist sees all creation circling about one species, *Homo sapiens*. We are not the centre, *but the central problem*. And our numbers are not sustainable.

What is to be done? On the one hand, Jones champions liberal democracy while, on the other, begging the conclusion it has completely failed us. As Dick Smith quipped, "We need a Dictator". A concentration of power is mandatory for any effective action, but with the well-documented risks of yielding personal freedoms to the state. Have a look at history. Then again, looking down the Barrel of the smoking Climate Gun, what do we have to lose by taking that chance?

Is Eco-fascism our last chance? Liberal democracy has failed. Communism doesn't work.

Greta Thunberg, step up, and be our Supreme Global Leader. We require an Aspie to cut out the neurotypical monkey business that's killing our Planet and make the **hard decisions**. We will all wear recyclable forest green uniforms with armbands sporting an emblem of a single tree hosting two ravens flanked with silver lightning bolts. Plastic will be eliminated. Everyone will report to official food outlets with their own containers

Continued on page 13

BOOKS HAVE A WAY OF LEADING US TO NEW PASTURES, TO TOUCH OUR HEARTS, TO ENTERTAIN, INFORM AND COMFORT US.

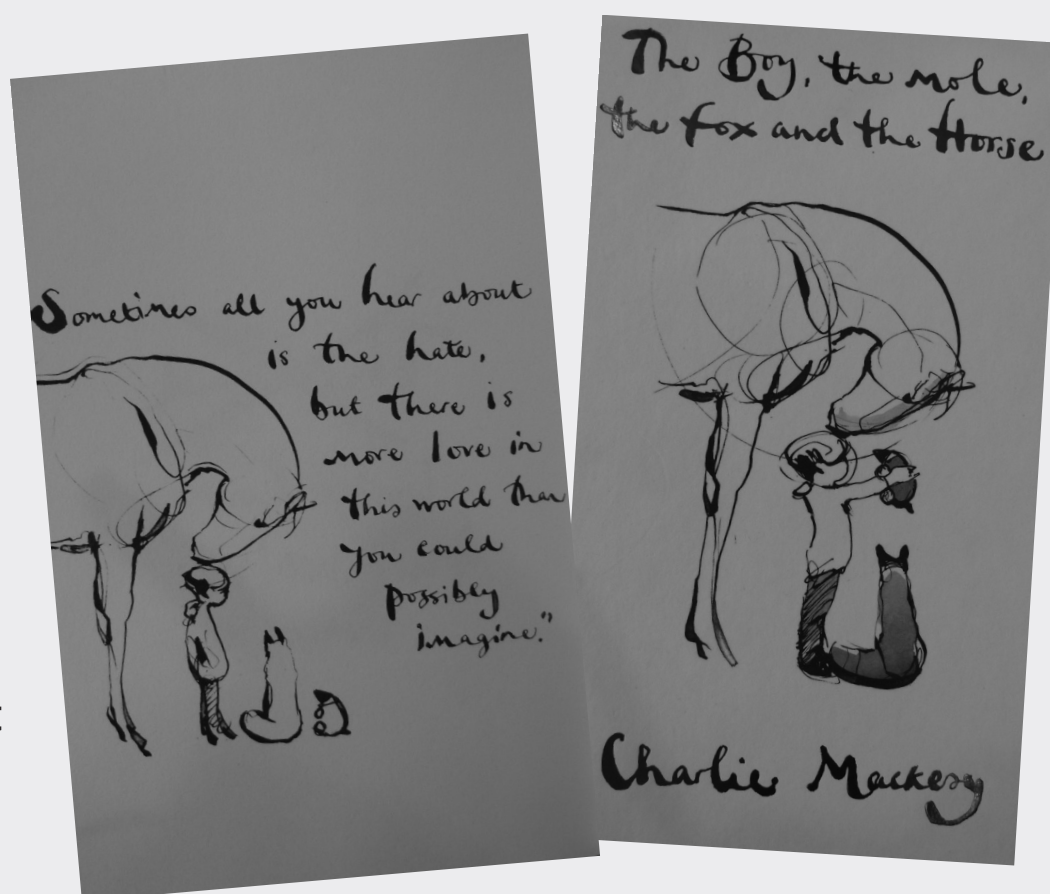
Often, serendipitously, a book falls across our path just as we need it.

Santa happened to leave my granddaughter Sonoma a magical and beautiful book - "The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The horse" published by UK Random Penguin House.

Its simple pen and ink drawings are deeply thoughtful, timely and heart touching from UK artist Charlie Mackesy.

Without spoiling the little journey of the characters whose gentle wisdom brought me to tears, here is a sample . . .

DM



Continued from page 12

and take their portions home with them. Personal containers are the responsibility of the individual, but can be exchanged for replacements when damaged or worn. Capital punishment will be reinstated for Enemies of the Planet and expanded to include the *full range* of anti-social activities. People are living too long. Old Age Homes will be closed and converted into Surveillance Centres. You just can't turn your back on *sapiens*...it will get right back to its monkey business with half a chance. Surveillance is absolutely essential if the Planet is to be saved. Golf courses will be closed and returned to their original vegetation. The African Oil Palm, *Elaeis guineensis*, will be declared a noxious weed anywhere outside its natural distribution.

Prospective parents will require a license and human reproduction will be subject to strict quality control measures. There will be many, many, many radical changes and none of this will be easy. We will all have to make sacrifices and many of these will hurt; really, *really* hurt. Overpopulation must be addressed. First, Greta, our Supreme Global Leader (SGL), will ask for volunteers....

DR MARY WHITE OF JOHNS RIVER

The late palaeobotanist Mary White, recipient of honorary doctorates from four Australian universities as well as the 1999 Riversleigh Medal for "excellence in promoting understanding of Australian prehistory", received a Lifetime of Conservation Award from the Australian Geographic

Society. She was further awarded the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science's Mueller Medal in 2001. In 2009, she was made a Member the Order of Australia (AM) for "service to botany as a researcher and through the promotion of increased understanding and awareness of the natural world". Dr White purchased a large forested property in 2003, "Falls Forest Retreat" near Johns River on our mid north coast, committing herself to its restoration, and establishing a covenant for its protection.

Dr White, in her conclusion to *The Nature of Hidden Worlds*, wrote: "...the Earth was a healthy living entity with the interactions between all its systems, animate and inanimate, in harmony. Then came *Homo sapiens*, a species which like a disease affects the

health of the Earth and threatens its very life. The Fossil Record of the human species on Earth is very short—only a brief record of its earliest steps towards cultural and technological evolution. When time has moved on a few more million years the record may well contain a "Terminal Holocene Event", perhaps marked by a plastic layer worldwide, in the manner of the iridium layer which millions of years ago indicated another crucial time of global stress and change. And *Homo sapiens* will be seen as the not-so-wise Ape which broke all the rules and killed the Earth that had given him life."

A predicament atop a predicament. *What is to be done?*

Dr John Stockard OAM
Wingham NSW

ART IN WINGHAM

The Wingham Art Group is better known as 'Art and Soul' because the group was created specifically for current and former members of Australia's military services and emergency service personnel who are dealing with the stresses of job separation, PTSD, depression, or workplace injury.

By offering the opportunity to help in a safe and supportive location, the art group eases the impact of job-related stress through a range of art-based innovative experiences that help with mental and social wellbeing. The positive effects of being creative and making something is not only enjoyable but will help shift a low mood and help find a way to express identity.

Hosted by medically retired Police Officer and artist Jillian Oliver, and former art teacher and artist Ron Hindmarsh, the group has a large open studio in Wingham. No previous art abilities are required and new members are welcome to visit for morning tea and a chat with friends.

**CALL JILLIAN ON
0428 146 210 TO SAY
HELLO AND LEARN HOW
THE GROUP CAN HELP YOU.**

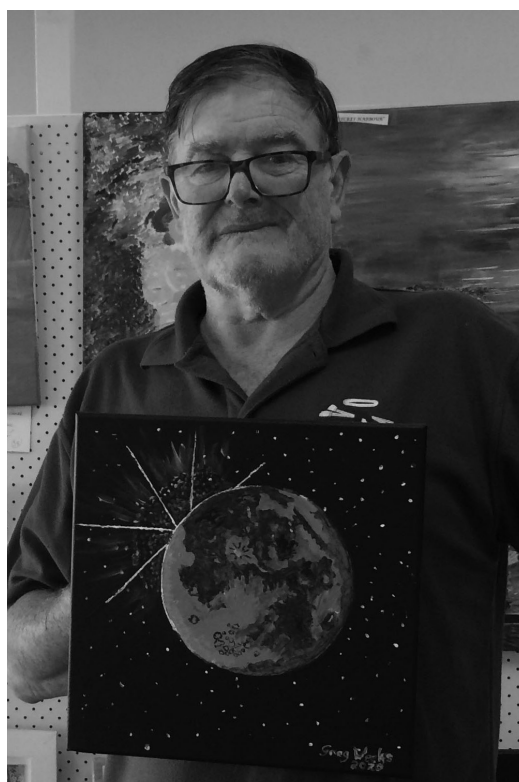
Fred Bullen



Ron and Jillian outside the gallery/studio.



Dennis proudly holds his work 'Bateau Bay'



Greg holding his painting 'Luna Eclipse'



Terry and his painting of an Italian seaside village

KOALA TREES IN THE MANNING AND GREAT LAKES AREA



One of our most popular Facebook posts at the nursery of late, has been the discussion about all of the beautiful Grey Gums (*Eucalyptus propinqua*) after they had shed their bark due to the deluge of rain that we experienced over the last few weeks.

As the trees usually shed their bark much later; usually in February, by which time the usual hot and dry weather has faded the bark to light pink/grey. By shedding early, they have retained their inner bark's rich colour.

This discussion prompted me to do a bit more research about our local endangered species; - Blinky Bill, who regularly dines upon these native trees.

It would seem that Koala's are not quite the low maintenance leaf-eaters that we presume them to be! While there are particular species that they like to eat, Koala's also enjoy different tree species for other recreation. As I have found on my own property, Koalas often prefer a more-dense canopy for shade throughout the day- while they get their beauty sleep. Our resident male is often perched in our spotted gums (*Eucalyptus maculata*) and we have also seen them lounging in palm trees at Port Macquarie.

As it turns out, not all eucalyptus trees will cut the mustard however. Grow the right variety in the wrong

PH soil or the incorrect climate, and the tree may produce toxins in the leaves like terpenes and phenols. This changes the flavour and the little furry guys won't eat them- no matter how many you have planted.

This is because they have a complex habitat selection of food trees, which requires them to balance nutrient and water intake against those toxins. Tender tummies indeed.

Thanks to climate change, drought and fire, more than 2 million acres of habitat has died since August 2019. It has become quite urgent that we really address this situation or the koala's *will* be threatened with extinction by 2025.

Koala's feed and occupy trees with a girth of no less than 20-30 cm, and they also need a home-range area which is sired by one male Koala for any number of females. This equates to 25-30 trees per hectare to be able to support that colony. Breeding often needs a 5 hectare home-range, so things start to look a lot more complicated than just planting a few trees here

and there.

As more males are born into the colony, they will be forced out by the alpha male and they may have to travel up to 40-50 km away to start their own home range, taking some younger females with them. This also helps with the gene pool.

Add to that, Koala's often change their food preferences too. This requires a mix of both Primary and Secondary food trees to be planted. This reduces the need to travel which we know comes with many risks, like injuries from cars and dogs.

So, it looks like half a dozen trees here and there is just not enough to sustain food for our Koalas as we move forward into the future, while subdivisions along the East coast flatten their forests for retirement living.

So, I make this suggestion. Have a family member on a farm, or a neighbour with more acres? Buy the trees and cultivate them together.

Time is running out for Blinky.....

Depending on availability and season, we stock these varieties in tube stock size.



Eucalyptus species suitable for the Manning Valley and Great Lakes areas -

Eucalyptus Propinqua	Small fruited Grey Gum	Suits well drained soil, gravel-ridge soil structure.	Secondary food
Eucalyptus Robusta	Swamp Mahogany	Suits wetter soils and gullies.	Primary food
Eucalyptus Microcorys	Tallowwood.	Suits well drained soils and ridge-gravel sites.	Primary food
Eucalyptus Tereticornis	Forest red gum	Suits river-banks, low hills and plains, average drainage.	Primary food
Eucalyptus punctata	Grey Gum	Coastal areas, sandstone/shale, well drained soils.	Secondary food

CALLING GLOUCESTER ARTISTS

GACCI is pleased to offer COMMUNITY ART CLASSES in Gloucester to be tutored by local artist Karen McPhee.



Classes will accommodate artists of all abilities from beginners to advanced to create art in an informal and friendly environment. Three hour classes will be held over a nine week period and will cover various approaches to artmaking from traditional to contemporary.

Artists will be able to work at their own pace either on their own project or the set class project of the day. Students will learn different techniques and approaches to drawing and painting and be introduced to various mark making materials including charcoal, graphite, inks, pastels, acrylic and oil paints.

With an emphasis of 'no right or wrong' and with a 'try it and find out' approach encouraged, students will discover the endless possibilities within their art making practice.

Please bring any art materials that you have, an easel if you have one or can borrow, a flat board for working on, any sized paper, A3 or A2 is good, (butchers is fine and available at most newsagencies), bulldog clips or pins or tape to fix paper to board, charcoal (willow or compressed) or soft graphite pencil (5-8B). We will discuss materials further including paint colours and drawing and painting surfaces in class. A list of suggested online art material suppliers is available.

Karen McPhee is an artist who enjoys the exploration and journey of drawing and painting. Her artmaking is divided between studio based studies that include still life and figurative work, and the experience of working outdoors (en plein air) using direct observation and available light to study and sketch the landscape for her studio work or to complete a work onsite, (alla prima), all in one go.

Karen holds a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Sydney College of the Arts) and a Fine Arts Diploma (TAFE Hunter Institute).

Karen's work can be viewed on Instagram, karen_mcphee_art, or on her Facebook page, karenmcpheeart.

ART WORKSHOPS BY



KAREN McPhee

Term 1 starts on Feb 3rd and
concludes March 31st at CWA Hall

Morning class 9am - 12pm

or

Afternoon class 12.30pm - 3.30pm

\$250 for GACCI members per term

\$260 for non GACCI members per term

For bookings contact Julie Lyford: **0424269784**

Bookings close on Fri 22 Jan unless classes are
filled before that date

Up to 12 people per class

Please make your payment at the
Gloucester Gallery or via bank transfer:

Account Name: GACCI

BSB: 932000

Account No: 500190978



Your care is central
at the HealthHub

TWO LOCATIONS

HealthHub Taree

15 Butterworth Lane, Taree

02 6552 5533

HealthHub Harrington

4, 1-5 Caledonia Street, Harrington

02 6556 1855

24/7
care

BE QUICK TO CATCH MATT!

“Dis ‘n Dat” is 2BOB Taree’s radio’s program appealing to anyone with a disability, physical, mental or emotional. It is produced and presented by wheelchair user Matt Earley.



Matt is employed by 2BOB thanks to funding from the Community Broadcasting Foundation in a special program designed to reach out to those living with a disability.

Local man Matt, 36, was born with *spina bifida* which has meant a life in the chair. Matt doesn't let this hold him back though, he's a high achiever, a qualified audio engineer but didn't stop there and he went on to do a diploma in Event Management on the Gold Coast and a Bachelor of Communications through the Open University so he's ready for anything life throws up.

Matt's passion from a young age has been music. He took up the guitar at six and over the years has taught himself to play several other instruments. He writes, sings and records his own music in his home studio. He puts his radio program together there too.

Matt attended Old Bar Primary before graduating from Taree High in 2002. He played wheelchair tennis and wheelchair basketball as a kid. His biggest hero is Kurt Fearnley now a TV presenter, and also Dylan Alcott, Olympic wheelchair tennis and basketball champ and successful radio broadcaster.

Matt made the big move from

home after highschool to further his education.

Since Matt has come back to live in the Taree area he was determined to get fit and has been going to the gym three days a week and doing the Taree Parkrun on Saturday mornings. He's the man to beat, though Parkrun is not competitive.

One of Matt's ambitions is to help other people with disabilities through organising Group Personal Training.

Matt includes disabled guests on “Dis ‘n Dat” who are from major disability support providers like Mid Coast Assist, Life Without Barriers and Valley Industries.

He encourages anyone with a disability to reach out to him at 2BOB on 65526200 or email m_onwheels@hotmail.com

It can just be to request some favourite music or even to talk to Matt on air. He can do a phone chat with you. He really would like to help build a more inclusive society in all aspects of life, be it schooling, work or in relationships. Give him a call.

Andy Colvin

Dis n Dat – 2BOB's Disability Advocacy and Inclusion Program
Mondays 12 till 2pm on FM 104.7

SNAKE BEANS ARE THE IN GLOBAL FOOD GARDEN

Tin Hta Nu

We volunteers in Kendall Community Hall's Global Food Garden started planting seeds and seedlings at the end of September in our newly constructed raised beds. Now our vegetables are producing which we sell at our Thursday market.

We appreciate The Kendall Hall management inviting us to be involved in raising funds for Riding for The Disabled (19th September Spring Fair) and Camden Haven Community at 3's (5th December Christmas Fair) selling our fresh and preserved produce. At present The Global Food Garden has herbs, carrots, zucchini, fat hen, amaranth, button squash and yard long beans growing.

Yard long beans also called snake beans originated in East and South East Asia and is most widely used in these regions. It was known as Pear daunk shay, by the Burmese, buah cacang by the Indonesians de gok by the Chinese and pole sitao in the Philippines. In Australia, early Chinese settlers first grew them and they were mostly known as snake beans (Scientific name *Vigna unguicula*). Seeds can be sown after frost from early October until January. It is a prolific grower, given adequate water and sunshine in well-drained soil. It is also bean fly resistant. It is best to pick when it is about 30 cm long and seeds still small. We need to pick regularly to encourage fruiting. If not, the birds can easily peck the mature beans seeds which are bigger than the picking size. Also when old, the yellowed skin is thin and papery. A trellis is needed for the plant to climb which also gives shade to other smaller plant seedlings. Snake beans are an annual crop and as it is a legume, it contributes nitrogen to the soil. If the soil is rich with humus, self-sown seedlings pop up next year.

Plant leafy greens after snake beans in a 4 year crop rotation. Some type of snake beans have black seeds and some have brown or red seeds. I found the red seeds take less time to cook. One snake bean variety has red skin but is not as tender as the green variety. For preserving, snake beans can also be preserved by fermentation with oth-



er summer vegetables or freeze the steamed beans. It does not taste well frozen fresh. I still have frozen steamed snake beans from last year.

HEALTHY

Snake beans have health benefits as they are rich in vitamin A, vitamin C and magnesium according to Western health research. The Eastern Ayurvedic knowledge advises to consume some sweet flavours in hot weather, sour in cold weather and bitter flavours in rainy weather in addition to your usual staples and savouries. Snake beans are regarded as sweet so we should eat the sweet seasonal snake beans in summer. I make a salad with citrus such as lemonade or orange in cold weather and made curry with bitter melon during rainy days.

Snake beans are used in western

and Middle East cuisines. In Asian cuisines, snake beans are used in soups, stir fries, curries, salads (raw or cooked). Here is my favourite snake bean salad suitable for hot summer days.

INGREDIENTS

Snake beans 200 grams chopped and steamed (please do not steam longer than 5 minutes and after steaming, put in cold water to stop cooking)
100gms grated carrot
1 small onion sliced
75 gms Peanuts or cashew nuts (processed)
salt to taste

DRESSING

3 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 tablespoon honey, 2 table spoons sesame or olive oil, ½ vegetable stock powder cube.

Put the snake beans, carrots, onion, and processed nuts in a bowl. Mix the dressing ingredients and taste. Add a small amount chilli if you like. Pour the dressing on the ingredients in the bowl and mix. Garnish with fried onions, sesame seeds and small button squash or a diced hardboiled egg.

Can serve four as a side dish.

If there are leftovers will keep in fridge for 3 days.

We volunteers of Global Food Garden thank everyone for their support and wish you healthy, safe, happy and prosperous 2021.

CARING FOR THE CARERS

There are now more than 2.5 million unpaid carers in Australia – people who selflessly look after family, relatives and friends - many of whom probably don't realise they are classified as carers.

Carers Australia defines carers as “people who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged”.

These people are an integral part of Australia's health structure and are the foundation of the country's aged, disability, palliative and community care systems.

Caring may include help and support in any of the daily activities of the person being cared for. It may include physical and personal care and assistance such as dressing, lifting, showering, feeding or providing transport.

Commonly, carers are responsible for the management of medications. Carers provide emotional, social or financial support. Caring may also involve helping the person they are caring for to be organised, reminding them to attend appointments and dealing with emergencies.

National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia George Tambassis says that community pharmacies and carers often have a close relationship.

“This is especially the case for primary carers who provide the most substantial amount of care to one or more people with disability, chronic illness, mental illness or who are classified as frail aged,” he said.

“It is widely recognised that carers tend to neglect their own health because so much of their focus is on the person they are caring for. Community pharmacists and staff can help carers by making them aware of services which are available to assist them to cope by providing information about respite services, counselling, peer support, and carer training opportunities.”

Carers responsibilities include handling prescription and non-prescription medications as well as wound management and specialist hygiene products, and aids and equipment. Added Mr Tambassis, “The task of medication management can present a challenge to carers who are responsible for administering multiple medications in the correct dosage and at the correct frequency; ensuring that they are properly stored and have not exceeded the expiry date; and monitoring and reporting side-effects. Medication management is likely to be particularly challenging where medications change, particularly after discharge from hospital. One of the challenges for carers is navigating the health system – which can be complex, frustrating, and time-consuming. We also know that all-too-often carers neglect to

care for themselves. Because so much of their focus is on the person they are caring for, they can at times relegate their own health to a lower priority. This is something that community pharmacists are well aware of and on the look-out for.”

For more details about being a carer see –

The Carer Gateway website and the Carer Gateway YouTube channel houses many videos to help carers understand the support and services available to them. You can also follow the Carer Gateway Facebook page.

Peter Waterman
Pharmacy Guild of Australia



Continued from page 3

old courthouse in Tinonee is being restored and is going on the market which would make a wonderful guesthouse/café.

KEEP IT COUNTRY

Tourists and city dwellers don't move to or visit places in rural regional areas that look like the western suburbs of Sydney. We know there are lovely villages scattered all over and around our main towns. There needs to be an imaginative, long view developed by Council now to keep the open spaces clean, green and shady, the river frontages and koala habitat safe and protected.

Wingham could be a peaceful oasis of old world charm and heritage. The Taree riverfront is a lost opportunity. And we are yet to get any clue as to exactly what Figtrees On The Manning will look like.

COASTAL TOWNS

Forster and Tuncurry have a buzzy vibe and cater to the retiring city clientele as well as tourists.

Hawks Nest, with its forested and green spaces along a magnificent coast is under threat with a proposed development next to the golf club for medium density (at the moment, maybe it could go higher) highrise proposal. (There's still time to lodge complaints with council.) More land is being considered for highrises with ocean views which would rake in a possible billion bucks for developers.

Do we really want to have the blight of the Gold Coast along our coast?

NEED POLICE PRESENCE

Sadly my birthplace of Wingham is looking dowdy and boring. Some buildings are so run down they look unsafe when all that is needed is a heritage facelift, not destruction. Shops are being vandalised as there is no police presence day or night despite the Wingham Police Station being functional and its occupant living there but working out of Taree.

If it wasn't for the clean-up Dr Stockard and a very few others do, the Brush would be overflowing with drug paraphernalia and its outskirts littered with trash from some free campers.

And while the trees in the main street of Wingham will be lovely, walk around the side streets where the grass in median strips isn't cut or maintained regularly. Have a look at the footpaths around our Brush, for instance – a disgrace by any standards.

Jump in and have your say before it's too late. Whatever is done to Wingham we'll have to live with it for the next 50 years or more.

DM

MILKING OUR WATER

When the Government decided to merge Mid-coast Water with MCC it was claimed that it would save the Midcoast Water some \$2.4m per year mainly due to the merging of the backroom functions.

Well the reality is that in the period from 01/07/2015 to 30/06/2019 the Administration costs have increased from \$185.19 per property to \$236.75 - an increase of \$51.56 or 28% .

There are approximately 40,000 properties which means we have paid over the last four years approximately. \$2.062 extra in administration charges! This not surprising when the water fund is being milked by the general fund. It's also possible that the 2019/20 costs will be even higher. (These should be available by April this year.)

What is even worse, is the administration costs for the old Greater Taree Council area were \$206.50 in 2014/15 and they were \$309.53 in 2018/19! An increase of \$103.03 or 50%.

It will be interesting to see the administrative costs for 2020/2021 when the travelling expenses for the staff travelling to Taree hit the Administrative charges.

When you add the new rate increases (unknown at this stage) in the GTCC area due to the equalisation of rates across the whole of the council area ,we could be in for a pretty rough year in the Manning area.

Just so it doesn't come as any surprise.

(All of the above figures are taken from the published data on the Office of local Government and Office of Water websites.)



BOOK REVIEW

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE CHRIST

Simon & Schuster Rrp. \$16.99

Greg Blaze
Rrp \$19.95

To purchase go to info@no-wavesinmogadishu.com

Local author Greg Blaze has written four short stories with the same outcome - an encounter with Christ.

Three of the stories are about real events and the author's ideas about what people experienced during their ordeals.

The last story in the book is set in Capernaum a large town in Galilee. Sara is a young woman with a big problem. She's been very ill with constant bleeding for 12 years. In the rules and customs of the Jewish people, women cannot participate in daily life if she has her menstrual period. She is deemed 'unclean' by the Old Testament laws. Sara has therefore been living on the streets for 12 years, humiliated, afraid an outcast. Even if she touches someone, they will also be 'unclean' according to the ancient scriptures.

Sara hears of a 'prophet' who is visiting the area and she sees sick people coming into Capernaum in the hope of being healed. She decides that she also will go to this prophet. The crowds around the Christ are great and thinks that even if she can touch his garment she'll be healed. This is a bold and desperate thought because if she touches him, he will also become unclean.

This story demonstrates the constraints of the Old Testament, in comparison with the freedom of the New Testament.

ANDREW CHANG

The first story in the book is about Andrew Chang. All Australians know the story of the life and death of this young man. We followed the trials and the death sentence imposed, because of his part in

a drug smuggling crime in Bali. His story is told in this book, by some of the people that were involved in his life in the prison system in Indonesia: the drug addict who Andrew helped to beat his habit, the priest that visited the young man and gave him instructions about how to meet Jesus through the Bible, given to Andrew by his brother. The Governor of the Kerobokan prison, who, against his standing as a high profile government official, writes to the President to ask for clemency for Andrew and the other young Australians who helped other prisoners.

Andrew had conducted himself as a selfless helper to the prisoners, helping them through their withdrawal from drugs and telling them about his God that had saved him and given him a new life full of hope and purpose.

Andrew had prayed that his sentence would be changed from death to life in prison, but that wasn't to be. The executioner who was part of the team that was assigned to carry out

the court's orders, was perplexed as he waited for the orders to fire, because he could hear the condemned man singing as they were marched to their place of execution. He couldn't speak English so didn't know what they were singing but it sounded like a song of worship. They were singing Amazing Grace as they were tied to the chairs before the firing squad.

The two other stories are about a Capetown teenager who survived a shark attack, photographed by a Canadian tourist who was interviewed by Greg.

At the moment when the boy saw that he was going to be killed by the shark, he prayed to be rescued, and he was, in a miraculous way.

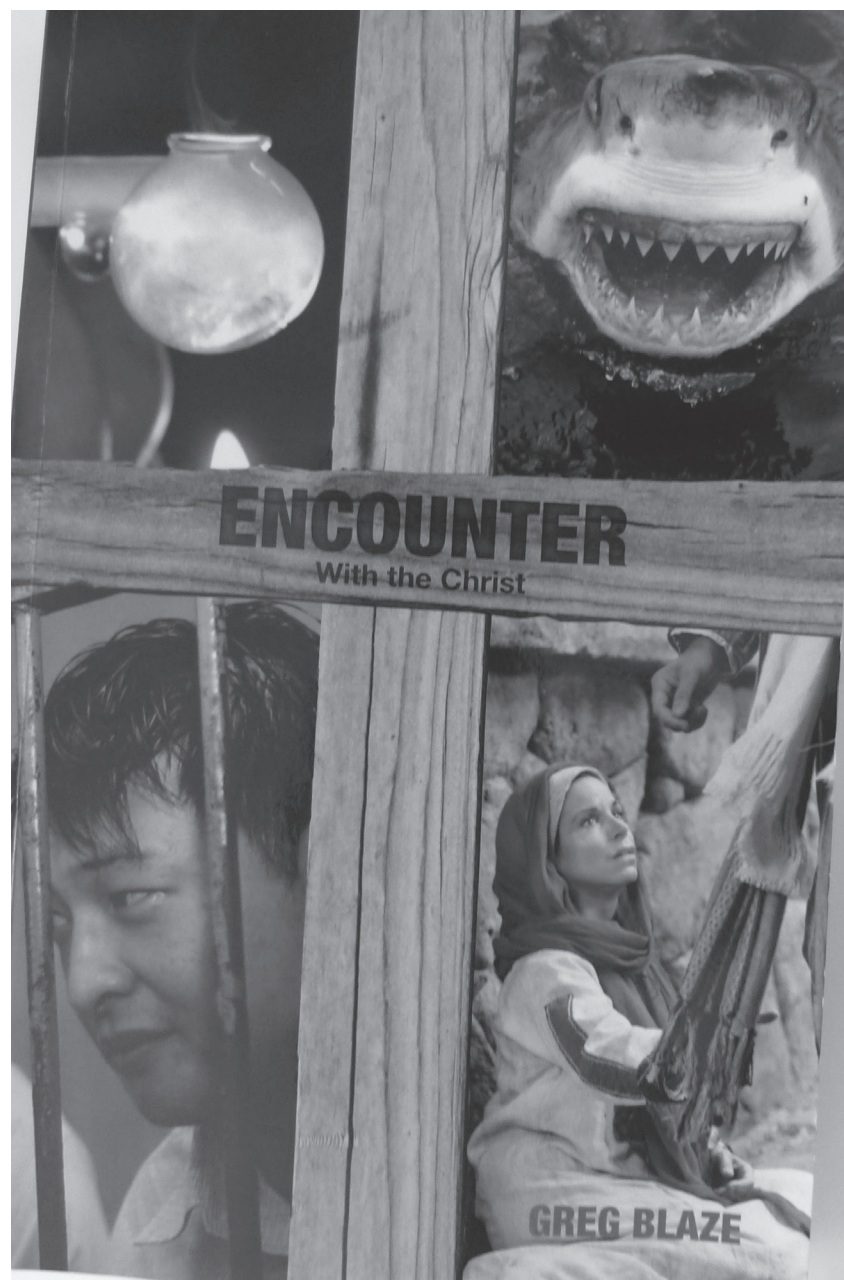
The last story is about ambition and the high life in the financial district in an American city and how trying to gain the heights of your profession can easily send you to the depth of despair where trying to make it through debt, drugs, hopelessness and fear can lead to living in the darkness of evil and demon possession.

At his lowest point a young man sees a light of the visiting prophet and is rescued by the Christ and set free from the darkness of his hopeless existence.

This book is a gentle read with a sense of wonder and hope that maybe there is a greater purpose for our lives here on earth and despite our mistakes, bad choices, bad luck and sin, we can have hope that the Christ will be near to us.

Local author Greg Blaze has written four short stories with the same outcome - an encounter with Christ. Three of the stories are about real instances with the author's ideas about how people felt during their ordeals.

Christine Gibbons





ANTIQUES AND COLLECTABLES

Collect the past and invest for your future. Always for the pleasure it brings and sometimes even for profit.
It is a fun hobby that lasts a lifetime!

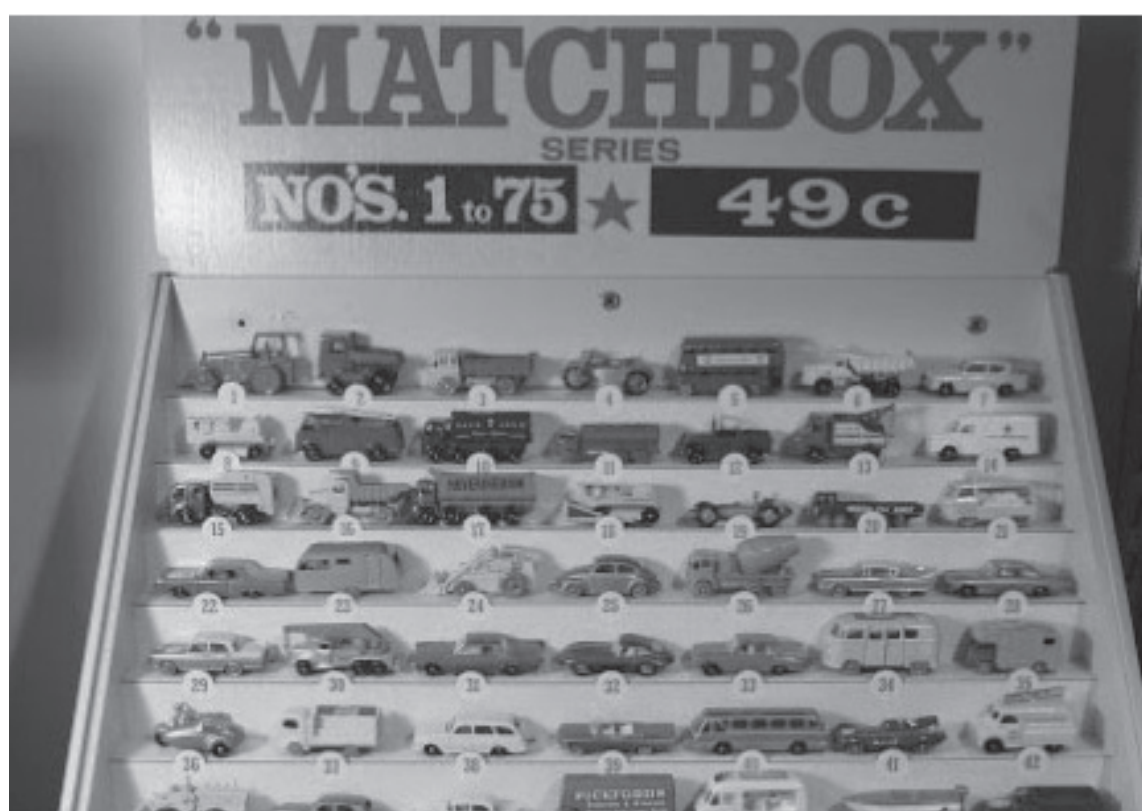
Everyone starts collecting somewhere, and here are a few helpful tips that will help you get a better handle on the world of buying, selling, and simply appreciating antiques of all different kinds.

Go antiquing with an experienced person. It is amazing the little details that you might miss if you've never combed through antiques before, so make a day of digging through markets, garage sales or simply browsing an antique store with someone who knows a bit about the antiques game. They'll offer some great advice on what to look for, and you can see in real time actual antiques and possibly also what reproductions look like. This is also a good way to learn about negotiating a price. There's something to be said about the art of haggling, and it's good to learn some of the etiquette from an expert. Always remember that the person who is selling deserves a fair price.

Ask lots of questions. Many sellers whether at antique shops, fairs or auctions are happy to offer a bit of their expertise and answer questions. Much like you, sellers are very interested in antiques and have likely learned a lot of valuable information over the years. If you're honest about not knowing enough to make a purchase, most will be happy to chat and offer some tips.

Learn more about specific items that interest you. After browsing and figuring out what items really interest you, it could be as general as furniture and dishware or as specific as sewing machines and typewriters, do a little more digging into their history. Research the going rates, key things to look for when buying and read about the subject.

Be aware of budget and style. Collecting a lot of random antiques simply because they are antiques will leave you with an empty wallet and a full house. Be selective initially based on your budget and style, keeping in mind that antiques should be something you will be eager to display around the house. Keeping antiques in the



shed or under the house isn't good for their condition, so remember that they'll need space somewhere in the house or your chosen display area.

Have a reason! You might go to a market one day and find a handful of awesome antiques, and then next weekend not see a single thing you like. Part of the fun of antiquing is the thrill of the hunt, digging through Op. shop shelves and garage sale tables for those awesome finds, so don't grow impatient if you're not seeing exactly what you want right away. Garage sales, markets, Antique Fairs, Op. shops, second-hand stores and of course antique shops are great places to search. Some people like

to search on line, but for me I like to touch, feel, turn over and get a first hand impression of my buys. Everyone develops their preference.

I was sorry to hear Don and Kate at Antique Solutions in Muldoon St, Taree are closing down. New ventures and new goals. All the very best to both these lovely people.

Many people love to collect diecast model vehicles as a cheaper way to continue their love of cars. It doesn't take up as much room or cost as much as the real thing.

Diecast model cars are built from zinc alloy — and offer a healthy dose of nostalgia. In the peak of their production, these

small-scale cars — typically no larger than the palm of a hand — were carefully modelled after real-life designs produced by automobile manufacturers. For collectors in the market today, diecast cars bring together two popular collecting categories: vintage toys and classic cars. Car enthusiasts may find they can fit a few more 1:43 scale diecast cars in their garage than full-scale Fords or Holdens. Toy collectors may find joy in the careful details offered by each of the four major manufacturers of diecast toys. And, just about everyone can find joy in rolling diecast cars down imaginary roads.

One major appeal of diecast cars is how brands have been able to authentically recreate full-size cars at a much smaller scale. One of the first diecast cars from the iconic toy manufacturer Dinky Toys was a model of the 1930s race car 'The Speed of the Wind,' driven by British race car driver and engineer George Eyston when he broke the land speed record.

Condition is important and collectors really enjoy finding those old classics with their original boxes.

Diecast toys are fun for nostalgists and collectors of all ages. The sheer volume of cars produced over the years makes acquiring quality models accessible for any level of interest in the field of vintage toys. Whether you're interested in a classic Dinky Toy diecast car, a revolutionary Corgi, the economical Matchbox, the fantastical Hot Wheels or one of the myriad of other brands you'll find plenty of examples to capture your imagination.

Our new shop, Antiques & Old Wares - 12 Isabella Street in Wingham, is keeping Dave and I both busy and entertained. A hobby that has continued into our retirement. If you get a chance call in and say hello.

If you have items you are not sure of, I may be able to help with information, appraisals or sales. I love the history and stories of old and interesting items. **Phone Rex - 0427 880 546.**

PULLED OVER? BLAME THE SANITISER!



Excessive use of hand sanitiser could affect your blood alcohol level!

We all are using hand sanitisers far more than ever before Covid became the new norm.

Have you ever considered that using a hand sanitiser could actually impact upon your blood alcohol level? And raise a whole new issue. It's called the Hand Sanitiser Defence.

"Can hand sanitiser applied to your skin affect a breath alcohol test?" The answer is probably not. However....

A 2006 study amongst Australian health care workers tested this very issue. Twenty workers applied a hand sanitiser with 70% ethanol thirty times in one hour, mimicking the use in Intensive Care Units. One to two minutes after the final exposure, six of the workers showed a slight increase in breath-ethanol levels between 0.001% and 0.0025%. After about 15 minutes, all the health care workers breath-ethanol levels had returned to zero.

Other studies have shown that the use of common alcohol-based hand sanitiser may even cause false positive readings with a standard hospital breathalyser when the operator uses the hand sanitiser correctly. Readings are further elevated if more sanitiser is used or if it's not allowed to dry appropriately.

We all are aware that most of us carry bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitisers in our motor vehicles or are continually using them at the supermarket and at work. There are professions such as health care workers and others who are required to use significant amounts of hand sanitiser in their daily work.

The roadside breathalyser machines are extremely sensitive. In the good old days, we use to blow into the machine, now we just talk near the machine. Be cau-

tious because if you have used hand sanitiser very close to the time you are handed the breathalyser in your car, there still may be some fumes and alcohol remaining on your hands. This could affect your roadside test. These machines are so good they can detect alcohol from passengers in the back seat who have been drinking.

Also, the operator of a breathalyser hand-held unit or a breathalyse machine at the Police Station may also have used sanitiser on their hands or alcohol rubs in cleaning the machine.

Obviously, further investigations need to be conducted to determine if the hand sanitiser can affect your alcohol reading and whether the use of gloves diminishes the effect of ethanol-based hand sanitisers on breathalyser machines.

It is up the driver of any vehicle to be able to prove and establish the "sanitiser defence".

Currently, any defence of this nature would be treated with scepticism from the Court unless there is scientific proof and a connection between the use of hand sanitiser, the way the sample was taken, how the machines are cleaned, whether gloves are used, the time between using hand sanitiser and the breath test all need to be taken into account when considering whether or not a defence of this nature should be embarked upon.

So, the moral of this story is, "Don't hold your breath in relation to the hand sanitiser defence".

James Paton.
The legal team at **Paton Hooke Lawyers & Conveyancers** have consideration experience in relation to traffic matters, and especially drink driving disqualifications. If you need any help, please do not hesitate to contact us on 6551 0355.



REAL KULTCHA

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! I've got a feeling 2021 is going to be a GREAT YEAR.

Had a "fan" write saying he felt I was wrong in my last epistle when I said not even Nostradamus saw the mess that was 2020 coming. He commented, "Nostradamus wrote in the year 1551 the following: *There will be a twin year (2020) from which will arise a queen (Corona) who will come from the east (China) and will spread a plague (virus) in the darkness of the night, on a country with seven hills (Italy) and will transform the twilight of men into dust (death) to destroy and ruin the world. It will be the end of the world economy as you know it.*"

Lock the doors – the pseudo-intelligentsia has snuck in!

Oh dear, where to start? First, Nostradamus actually wrote his *Les Prophéties* in 1555 (*Wikipedia*) and that was not a good period to be in the prediction business. If you said anything bad about the rulers of the day you were flying in the face of *The Divine Right To Rule* thinking and that would have you thrown in the pokie. And the pokie in the mid 1500s was a not a nice place to be. If you said anything bad against *The Holy Roman Church* (the only religion in Europe at the time) you'd also be thrown in the pokie! So Nostradamus conjured up his "predictions" in quatrains (stanzas of four lines), threw in bits in other languages and old folk tales and (it's been said) then rearranged the lines so a reader could read into what he'd written, anything they thought fitted. It saved his life and has sucked in readers ever since. If you believe his twaddle and want to talk about a virus and a twin year, how about 1919?

It's estimated some 500 million people were infected and possibly as many as 50 million died! This current pandemic is a small chest cold by comparison! A country with seven hills? I thought that referred to Rome not Italy! Nostradamus lived in southwestern France so the whole of the then known world was to his east and did anybody even know of the existence of China? Nah Macker, read Nostradamus if you like but you'd be just as well informed if you read the horoscope in that bastion of truthful reporting, *The New Idea*!

I have filled in a couple of hours out in the yard, getting up some brownie points with *The Child Bride* so I could spend the rest of the day, the weekend and early next week (maybe) watching the Fourth Test against The Indians. **Warner out for 1!** Ple-e-e-a-s-s-e-e. *The Galahs* are not selected for their good looks because if they were, I'd have been in the side for the last 25

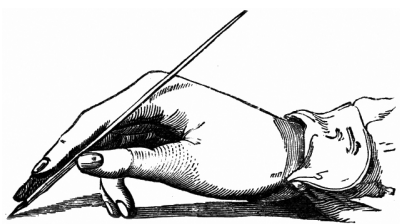
years, at least! Warner is in the side for his batting and if he doesn't, then punt him and select somebody who can. I've said it before and I'll no doubt keep saying it for years, it's harder to get out of *The Galahs* than it is to get in!

Down south (from here anyway) Tennis Australia is determined to go ahead with The Oz Open and there are folk coming from all points of the compass – alright, maybe not to the south of Melbourne, but you get the picture. I was only half listening to the news t'other night when the talking head mumbled something about 23 flights are scheduled (that's pronounced *shed-ul-ed* and certainly not *sked-ul-ed*. Get it right you morons) to fly in all the officials, players and the motley band of hanger-ons. The Victorian Government is quite adamant: they're all to go straight into quarantine; their daily routines are already set; there will be no exemptions; and Tennis Australia will be sent the bill for it all. *The whole event will not cost the Victorian taxpayer a cent.* Yeh, right! That's a classic bit of government *p-p-h-h-r-r-t-t*. A bill might be sent but what are the chances of Tennis Australia actually paying it? There'll probably be social distancing in place, which means fewer people will attend, which means less income, but they've still got to pay the cost of the quarantine hotels, security guards, transport, and of course, the prize money! Still think the Victorian taxpayer is going to skip away untouched? Also, if I were in a group associated with Tennis Australia in any way, shape or form, right now I'd be frantically hiding money because you can bet Big Brother is going to come a-calling and keep calling for a few years to cover the cost of this year's event. Soccer Australia did that with the bill they ran up trying to get the World Cup to Oz several years ago. The fees for every kid who played the sport in Oz went up to pay for that debacle.

All the football codes are starting to gear up for the new season and that includes Oz Rules. You know I support *The Mighty and Glorious Saint Kilda* (though I rarely talk about it) but that also means my local ear worm, the maniacal Richmond *Tigers* supporter is about to start his constant harangue about how good they are, how many games they'll win this year and (this is the sickening part) how many points they'll win this year's Grand Final by! Pray for me, please.

Talk at you next month,

The Hillside Critic



YOUR SAY...

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

Dear Editor,

Every month I look forward to picking up the current edition of the wonderful Manning Community News!

I have read every issue of this wonderful paper since day one five or six years ago, and this one is a real eye opener, with many interesting articles about happenings in this wonderful part of Australia.

I was absolutely horrified after reading the article about thoughtless, ignorant council vandals destroying a very old shade tree in Wingham, which was planted many years ago in the town park.

Dr. John Stockard, the saviour of Wingham Brush happened to come across council workers destroying the tree, even after he tried telling them it was a special tree they made out they knew better, saying it was a weed.

I would have thought council could have learned some sort of lesson after destroying old, heritage trees in the Bight Cemetery, and after vandalising so many headstones in that cemetery.

Dr. Stockard is an expert where trees are concerned, but the drongo council tree destroyers ignored his plea to save that tree.

It really is time for those in charge at council to wake up, and take more care and responsibility.

Gary Hayes
Taree

Dear Editor.

Re: The Year Ahead...
Take A Deep Breath.

Having read your article and the future of living/housing/sharing our country environment, I have to say that Councils have been slow to adapt to the concept of Eco Villages. Lower cost housing is needed, particularly for seniors. A rental

model is particularly attractive to those approaching retirement with limited assets. But they do not have to be the current highly unattractive manufactured villages that strip the environment of all trees. Innovative solutions backed by Council *are* possible. Think, sufficiency in power and water. Trees retained. Community gardens encouraged. It requires innovative amendments to

Local Environment Plans to make it happen. These are basically gazetted by Macquarie Street (in general.) They recognise "eco tourism" but not "eco villages." Change is definitely needed.

Warren Cross
Lansdowne

I am a rate payer and lived in this lovely area for over forty years, and have seen many changes to our roads.

I left school at fifteen and my third job at sixteen was in the building industry, civil engineering and road construction. I have driven on many different roads and surfaces in my travels. Like many others, I have observed how we constantly keep patching and repairing our same roads, over and over, year after year. Our roads are not built in a manner to support 60 plus ton type B double trucks of today.

So unfortunately in our area we have the crazy idea that we can run these very heavy trucks on roads built to a far less standard. I also know that the number of truck axles and air ride suspension have come a long way, but the simple fact is that all the axles and air bags in the world DO NOT make the truck any LIGHTER.

We should have a truck drop off centre/ depot either end of town and should have only tri-axled semi trailers of no more the thirty tons on our roads.

I have seen perfectly good pieces of road ripped up and resurfaced with an inferior finish only to have it ruined by pot holes within weeks. The roads around Wingham are a disgrace. Part of the Bulga Road was resurfaced for some \$435,000 yet there was nothing wrong with it! And to get there, 1km prior, are council signs saying bad road, drive carefully! In the other direction along the Wherrol Flat Road, it is so bad that all four wheels are in pot holes at the same time. I believe it has been tarred once in 40 years. Like many other ratepayers, I see how the yearly special rates increase has failed to deliver better roads when all we see is many millions being wasted on the same roads, simply because they are not

built for 60 plus ton trucks.

Taree's population has barely moved in 20 years, but the outlying towns and villages have increased so much of our commuter traffic comes from these areas where the roads are the worst. We don't need our rates increased or to have detours for months so as to repair the same roads yet again. I contacted the Wingham ratepayers association, no reply, maybe they've given up or been amalgamated with council. I will not accept any more of these wasteful rate rises and will withhold my rates. How much money could have been saved, and we would have good roads, if we had lighter, instead truck which are too heavy on our roads.

I urge the rate payers to come together on this issue.

Ralph Williams
Wherrol Flat

LUV-A- BOAT!

If you live in Jindabyne you need snow skis; if you live in the Sahara Desert you need a camel; if you live in near the sea, or plan to spend an extended period of time in a water wonderland, you need - a boat.

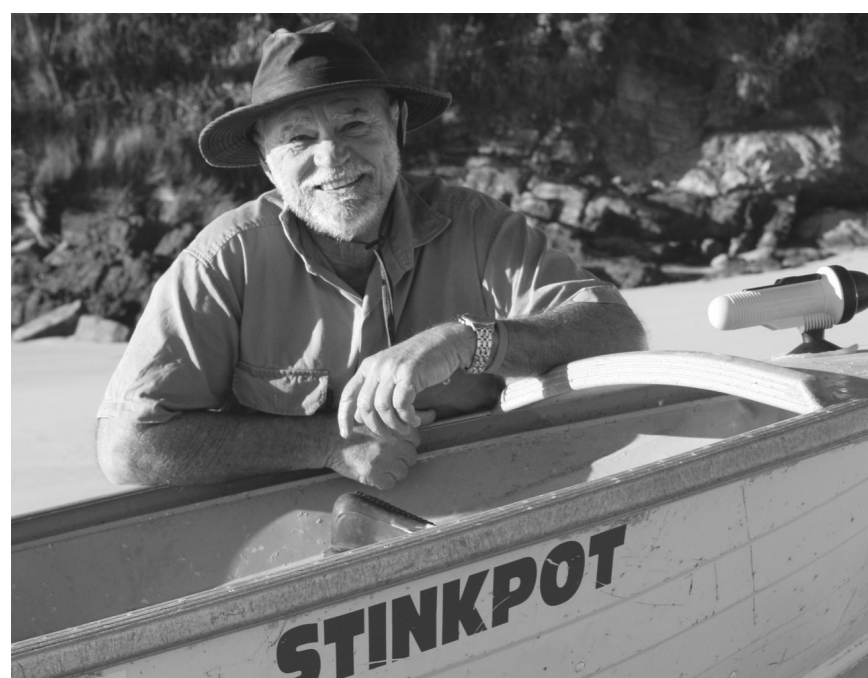
Purchasing a boat is a major decision as there are so many on-water excursions on offer from the upper reaches of the Karuah River to the extensive Myall Lake system and right throughout the port. Outside the heads for me means it's off to Broughton Island, the Outer Light at Fingal or further out to sea.

Does your family like fishing or simply exploring? The major question is – why am I buying this boat and how often

do I intend to use it? There are heaps of boats gathering dust and spiders that haven't moved for years. Don't let your boat be one of those.

I have a couple of boats but the one that is rarely off the water is "Stinkpot", now in its 37th year. A mighty craft of sturdy aluminum around 3.5metres in length with nine horses to push it along.

If I had a choice of every boat in my home area of Port Stephens, I would choose – "Stinkpot".



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

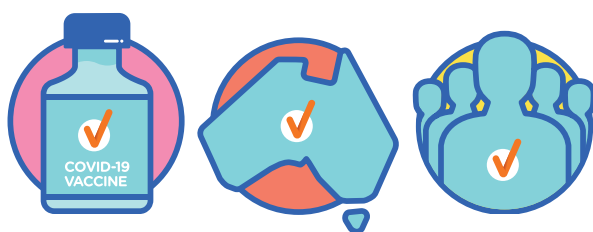
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