

The Manning Community News

APRIL 2023

SHARING COMMUNITY NEWS AND VIEWS

FREE

This paper is being published as a community service to provide readers with factual and independent coverage of news, people and events in our district.
If you have a story idea please contact us. PO BOX 7, WINGHAM NSW 2429 editor@manningcommunitynews.com



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RAFFERTY'S RULES ON LAND DEALS?

Many Developers make a mockery of the so-called rules.
Time to call a halt as manipulation becomes blatant.

Quietly, with no fanfare, on Friday the 24th of February 2023, the very last day before the government went into care-taker mode, the Coalition Government changed the State Environment Planning Policy for Forster-Tuncurry and then within a few short hours reversed it.

The developer is the business arm of the NSW Government Landcom. This was done against the express recommendations of Midcoast Council and without any regard or mention of the at least 100 submissions made. Why?

It allowed some 300 hectares of highly valuable endangered species habitat at North Tuncurry to be rezoned for urban development. This includes habitat of 20 species that are part of the NSW 'Save Our Species' red flag' targeted animals including the Eastern Pygmy Possum, the Brush-tailed Phascogale, the Green Turtle, the Pied Oystercatcher, the Koala and the Tuncurry Midge Orchid, which as the name suggests, occurs only in the Tuncurry region. The rezoning approval required the then Minister for the Environment to consider a "strategic assessment" that "will remove the

requirement to address biodiversity issues at the development application stage".

On paper the development looks good. 235 hectares are promised to be preserved and other biodiversity offsets are planned for the enormous nearly 20,000 biodiversity credits required for destroying such incredibly important threatened species habitat. And the argument is, as always, that this will provide much needed housing and 'progress' for the area.

However, if you dig a little deeper, the rosiness quickly fades and reveals an underbelly of ugliness that speaks to why it was done in such undue haste and secrecy.

The proposed development sits on sand upon the Tuncurry Aquifer. As such, increasing of impervious hard surfaces of roads and concrete will lead to massive increases in flood events that will impact on residents and on the hydrology generally, including the aquifer.

There is no proposed drainage plan that will provide mitigation for this threat.

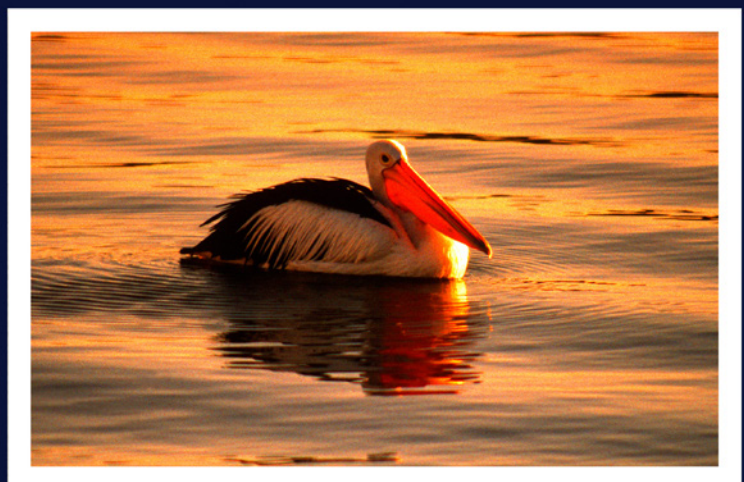
There is no public or social housing included in the 2,100 proposed housing estate therefor disregarding Landcom's supposed key role of

providing affordable housing.

The ecological studies are remarkably impoverished with the most recent consisting of a 2- and 3-day period in the winter months

immediately following the devastating 'Black Summer' fires of 2019-2020 when the ecologies were still

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**RELAXATION TIME
IS NOT WASTED TIME
TAKE TIME TO RELAX**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DICK ASH



WE CAN FARM MINUS CHEMICALS!

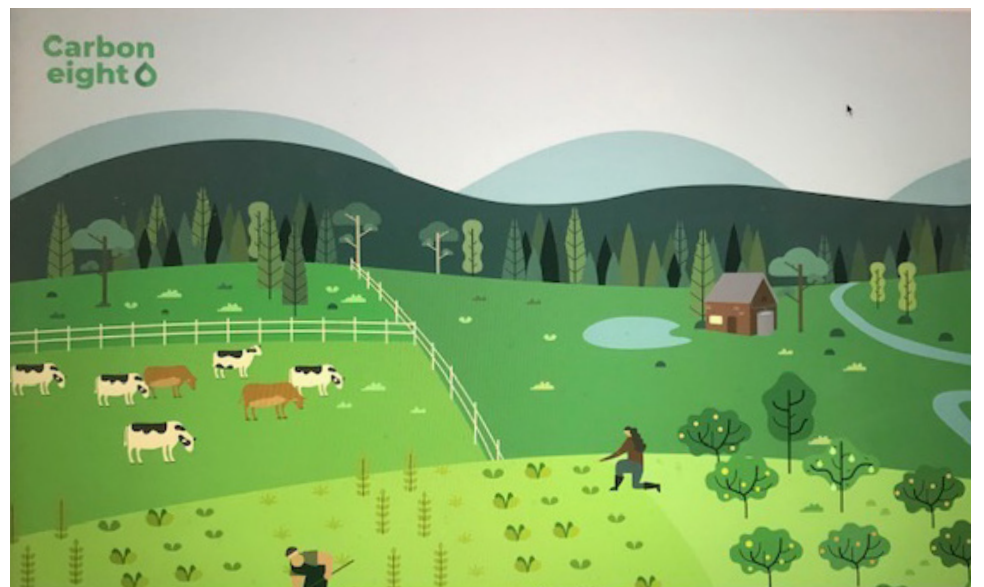
Carbon8 originated as a solution to the 2017 NSW/QLD drought by a farmer, an accountant and an artist. Carbon8 was our response to the impact the drought was having in our lives and on our rural communities.

In time when the only support offered was short-term band-aid solutions, we responded by seeking out the true cause and the true long term solutions to drought.

We welcome primary producers including family farms, small-holdings, farms interested in eco-tourism and young farmers. As we are a social fundraising platform – the amount of donations we secure is directly relevant to the number of farmers we are able to help. As Carbon8 grows nationally (and internationally), so will our ability to help support farmers with a powerful education pathway forward. Our

farmers cannot do this without you and our future cannot do without our farmers. We invite you to come and be on this journey.

We are an organisation created by farmers for farmers, to work together to create our regenerative future. As we share our knowledge with each other, we also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures, and their Elders, past, present and emerging.



www.carbon8.org.au

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in the very beginning of recovery. Advice from (and to) Council's staff that the area is a critically important habitat for far more species than identified at that time has been ignored.

The biodiversity offsets or credits proposed includes land that would never be subject to development anyway, which is the Council owned 380-400 hectares Nabit Sands which form the second water supply for the region. As such it falls within the classic 'double-dipping' of offsets which is a recognised mockery and scandal of NSW government promised biodiversity protection across the state. (See NSW State's Auditor-General Report on the Review of the Effectiveness of Biodiversity Offsets -30 August 2022).

Other offsets held on site are highly questionable in that they are areas that are extremely vulnerable to storm and surge damage, or are long fingers which involve substantial 'edge' issue vulnerabilities such as water and chemical run-off, weed invasion (check around some of our roadways for examples of lantana, Asparagus fern, morning glory, bamboo etc etc) and domestic and feral pet predation.

Others involve acknowledged habitat destruction but with the

promise of regeneration within a 5-year period. That may not sound like much in human years, but for the vital pollinator of the Tuncurry Midge orchid, the tiny midge fly, that is several generations lost with the potential permanent loss of this very special insect and therefore the endangered orchid which depends upon it.

There is no clear stewardship planned for the onsite 'preserved' land with the suggestion that the local Golf-Course which will be upgraded in the plan will provide this management. The question that immediately springs to mind is whether the Golf Course holds the necessary ecological professional credentials to protect such an incredibly important habitat for so many threatened and endangered species.

The minister behind the secretive and hasty rezoning is Anthony Roberts, the outgoing Minister for Planning and Homes. This minister is apparently known for allegedly taking his advice from Urban Taskforce, the enormously powerful lobby group and registered 'charity' for developers and their financiers who have actively worked to undermine the power of local Councils regarding planning and environmental protection. In this role he would back his predecessor's Rob Stokes' policies that were designed

to protect people from the threats of inappropriate developments on flood plains which put them and their family homes at risk, and inappropriate developments that impacted on the increasingly threatened species habitat. In this role he also allegedly met with powerful developers such as Lang Walker without notes taken and then made decisions fast-tracking development approvals on enormous Walker Inc land holdings that also impacted on koala habitat.

The value of the said lands increased massively, and it may only be coincidental that his previous chief of staff, Rob Vellar, now works for Walker Inc. In past events he has been sanctioned for hosting 'special lunches' with other well-heeled developers.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption in 2010 has previously warned that giving Ministers wide discretion to approve projects that are contrary to local plans and do not conform to state strategic plans "creates a corruption risk and a community perception of a lack of appropriate boundaries" and the "perceptions of undue influence". Certainly, that perception seems relevant here.

North Tuncurry is only one of many developments and rezonings all up and down the NSW coast where highly lucrative profits are

being made by developers and consultation with communities and local councils treated as a mockery. Many of these developments are in highly bushfire and flood prone areas where property owners will struggle to get affordable insurance and which contain threatened ecological communities found nowhere else.

Meanwhile NSW continues to face an extinction crisis, with the dubious record of being in the top two states for land clearing and habitat loss.

We need an urgent review and hit pause on all developmental approvals that impact highly ecologically important land and risk already threatened species. We need a state-wide review on where developments can occur that do not put people and their homes at risk.

I would also suggest that we need an urgent senate enquiry into the decisions made by the previous Minister for Planning and Homes with a focus on the influence of big developers and their financiers.

Let's hope this new government truly does consider the State of Our Environment and the increasing tragedy of inappropriate developments putting people, their communities and the environment at risk.

Kym Kilpatrick

THE ELECTION? YAWN.

AFTER 12 YEARS OF SAME OLD, SAME OLD, FINGERS ARE CROSSED.

Twelve years of being taken for granted. It could have been so different.

Myall Lakes has been a safe National seat for too long. Why should they bother actually *doing* much for the area when they know a majority of locals will dutifully go along and vote National. 'Cause they always have.

Has no one noticed that we only get crumbs and general grant handouts to keep us quiet, even though we're told how fabulous this grant is, how lucky we are to be given this sand bucket of funds. They smile for the photo op and disappear till the next handout to keep us quiet.

Meanwhile has no one noticed the Big Nats are filling their coffers with funds from fossil fuel projects et al?

What farmer really thinks the Nationals care about what's happening to our agricultural land, our farms and forests, our welfare, while they lobby for fossil fuel profits and bigtime jobs abroad.

We had a chance here. The grumbles were getting louder then suddenly we had a new contender in the field as a caring Independent.

It's a tough gig to return home after working in Sydney and run to be our State Member. To be known, heard and met in the massive Myall electorate, to gather the funds, helpers, and meet as many people as possible, to get your message across about how you see the future and what you'll do about it.

Dr Jason Bendall moved back home, a breath of fresh air, honest and smart. A local boy who truly cares. We hope like heck he sticks around for the next

time around. Given what he faced though, one can't blame him if he runs a mile.

Said former Mayor Taree Greater Council, Paul Hogan – *"I believe we will see Dr Jason Bendall's name in the future as a local MP. He is a man who genuinely cares for his community. His campaign (against a well funded Party machine) was genuine and caring, conducted with the values he stands for – integrity, respect and empathy for his community. We hope to see more of him in the future."*

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

Major polling booths were a war zone. Running the gauntlet of in-your-face flapping leaflets, red-faced shouts and in some cases, shoves, was daunting.

Occasionally there was a slanging match between those handing out How to Vote leaflets for various parties, which, while some might have been good-natured if stinging, some were downright aggressive and rude.

Witness the following exchange.

Man. 'So who are you supporting?'

Woman. *'I'm wearing purple, who do you think? Read my shirt.'*

Man. 'So? What'dya stand for?'

Woman. *'We stand for Integrity and Honesty.'*

Man. *'Bah. You don't make money that way.'*

The skirmishes started early with the disappearance of some candidates' corflutes (posters) and nasty social media.

One old fellow was busy counting as he stood in a queue to vote.

'Can I ask what you are doing?'

'Counting all the green and yellow T-shirts, bunting, signs

on a building, flags and banners. I've added up a heck of a lot of money. And then there's the donations. Plus the busloads of old folk from the nursing homes they bring in.' He shook his head. 'How can local candidates afford all that? These old people want better conditions in Aged Care, yet they keep voting for the same mob.' He shook his head in some dismay.

"Cause Our Family Always Voted That Way"

The demographics in our electorate are slowly changing, with millennials and city people working from home who want a better, hassle free lifestyle with perhaps a view, a nice back garden, a few chooks and good internet. (Good luck there.) This means people who don't necessarily vote National.

With local grumbles about the roads, hospital, aged care, jobs, somewhere to live, the over development and loss of environment, all starting to be heard down south, we had a parade of senior National Party/Liberal leaders spin through our towns from (former) Premier Perrottet and Ministers down.

But now Myall Lakes is stuck with a party out of office and where Head Office don't seem to give much of a stuff about us up here in no doubt what they consider, the boondocks.

I did not meet candidates for the Legalise Cannabis Party, the Sustainable Australia Party, or the National Party. I did meet Independent Dr Jason Bendall, Labor candidate Mark Vanstone, and Eleanor Spence, the Greens candidate, whom I found to be decent people who ran in the election to help their communities,

mostly funded from their own pockets and credit cards. Hopefully they scored enough votes to help recompense them.

After twelve years, there are fears we are in for more of the same where the new National Party representative, Tanya Thompson, the former staff secretary to the late Stephen Bromhead MP, promised in her TV ads to carry on his work and plans.

At least the leash from the Nationals has been loosened somewhat with the Party no longer in office. But how far down the food chain are we?

In Myall we need new thinking, clever ideas, more care of our environment, help for people doing it tough, inventive business opportunities to provide more jobs. We need a more caring, efficient and up front council who can admit when there's a stuff up, and move to fix the problem openly and frankly.

We hope Tanya will keep a watchful eye on them and now make Manning Base Hospital the priority.

A vote, a say in how we see our community run, is a precious gift. Not to be taken lightly.

Let's hope Labor will break through the crumbling walls of fortress National and do what was promised.

And let's give Tanya a chance to break out and do things perhaps rather differently.

We'll be watching.

DM

(Tanya Thompson was approached for a comment but did not respond before going to press.)

ONE VOICE FOR NATURE

In 200 years we've basically logged what was here on white settlement in the now MidCoast electorate. We're left with an even-age treefarm, not a bio diverse forest. Logged every 40 to 60 years (1% pa they claim), means mature trees have no chance to grow back. Hence fauna dependent on them are now endangered.



Wingham Road Before

Mature trees are landscape air conditioners, providing oxygen and reducing heat. They act as sponges, soaking up stormwater, releasing it into air and waterways especially in drought. They filter water from soil to atmosphere, reducing run-off and siltation. Trees are air purifiers, absorbing carbon dioxide to trap pollutants which makes them essential defence against climate change.

Older trees have more flowers, nectar, fruit and seeds to support our diminishing wildlife.

The webs of their root systems filter toxins, protect against landslides and reduce the need for storm drains.

Trees are sentient, communicating via a fungal root system, scientists call the **Wood Wide**

Web, sharing nutrients to young or sickly trees, sharing information through filaments connecting 90% of plants.

Land clearing causes erosion, siltation clogs waterways causing ever greater floods. Developments are similar, land is cleared to barren earth before building. Fertile farms become urban sprawl, roofs, tar and cement, absorb heat, enhance



After Council efforts



Habitat Corridors – France

ing greenhouse effect and extreme weather events. The Insurance Sector knows climate change is real, they're paying for it!

A sacred cow, the motor vehicle has priority. So to gain 12 inches of roadway, 65 mature trees on Wingham Road were destroyed by Council.

Saplings don't compensate for

these mature trees. Tree planting exercises are good, but it takes 150 years for many natives to mature and in the meantime, climate change races towards us.

Off-sets fail to materialise, at risk of fires, floods, disease, and destruction by livestock.

The Environmental Impact Study on the Wingham Road

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trees identified 11 hollows in the trees. These nesting boxes, made by nature, take 150 plus years to form. They are scarce and much sought after, essential breeding nests for owls, gliders, reptiles, frogs, bats, parrots, cockatoos, kookaburras, rosellas, lorikeets, wood duck and dollarbirds. The Australian Museum lists loss of hollows as a "Key Threatening Process".

A habitat hollow doesn't make a tree dangerous. Trees strengthen their bark around hollows. Hollows are found in older, mature trees which form as a result of wind breakage, lightning strikes, fire and/or from consumption and decay of internal wood by fungi and insects.

Without trees land becomes a desert.

Our Council is responsible for too much destruction throughout our electorate.

Managing risk is Council's duty - to weigh environmental benefits trees provide in climate mitigation needs to be prioritised more than taking the easy road of costly destruction. The benefits of retaining mature trees exceeds the occasional risk of falling branches and potential accidents.

We live in the widest coastal band of vegetation in Australia, but our council pays little heed to their importance. We need to conserve trees everywhere now. And plant millions more.

Council says Wingham and Taree eventually will join

together as one large residential area. Sydney, Hunter and coastal massed suburbs come to mind, is that really what we want?

Nature is the charm and attractiveness of our area. MCC is ruining the picturesque, meandering tree-lined character so vehicles (specifically V-Doubles) can go faster. We know speed kills! Slowing down avoids potential for head-ons. Install crash barriers, reduce the speed limit, save trees.

Council has Water Catchment Officers an Arborist and an Ecologist on staff. There is scope for councils to take their own path, I'm told Austroads regulations are not strict. Roadside margins could become wildlife corridors linking nature reserves. The UK and the Netherlands are re-wilding nature strips.

Go to expensive city suburbs, you will see big trees in abundance. The wealthy value trees. Try cutting down healthy trees in Woollahra or Sydney's North Shore! Look at Carnley Avenue in Newcastle! If they can be

exceptions to Austroads regulations why can't we?

There is an urgent need for MCC to become nature's custodians, to properly evaluate the services trees provide and see them as valuable assets rather than a problem.

Jennifer Allison
Wingham ratepayer and Mid-Coast Council Volunteer

Editors comment: So called exclusive developments design

around mature trees to enhance the homes . . . and price.

The familiar excuse for knocking down trees is that their roots could be a worry. No matter what developers may say, the benefits to communities keeping shade and moisture cooling trees, are more important. Look at all the massive trees close to the front doors of terrace homes in trendy Sydney.

Has anyone enquired into the serious qualifications of council's environmental staff? More than a

couple of months at TAFE is required to know exactly what you're doing in these fields.

We know there is a serious lack of Council staff to maintain/trim trees in such a large electorate, as one can tell by the neglect along roads, fence lines and tree trimming under powerlines. (Many residents have had to fight to stop their trees being totally removed rather than trimmed because council staff can't get around where needed often enough.) DM

***Please sign the ePETITION to
NSW Parliament -***

**ARREST LOGGING and
EXTEND NATIONAL PARKS**



***Protect wildlife refuges
Save koalas***

**Mr Nawal Maharaj, Initiating Petitioner, PO Box 81, Harrington, NSW 2427
with thanks for artwork to Gwynneth Jones 2023 @gwimsy and the
brave but peaceful activism of <https://savebulgaforest.org/>**

REWILDING AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD

Australia has a diverse ecosystem of flora and fauna which is unique in the world. Nowhere else will you find keystone species which include potoroos, bettongs, bandicoots, koalas, platypus and Tasmanian devils.

But Australia also has the unenviable title of the country with the highest mammal extinction rate in the world. Between 7-10% of all species on Earth occur in Australia, yet as high as 10% of globally recorded extinctions are here. To halt this alarming statistic we need to not only prevent further extinction but also restore what we have lost. This is where the concept of Rewilding originates.

Rewilding is a form of ecological restoration. The aim is to recreate an area's 'natural uncultivated state'. The World Wildlife Fund-Australia sits rewilding under three headings. Rebuild. Restore. Rebalance.

REWILDING THE WORLD

Rewilding, an exotic name, conjures up images of savage beasts being introduced into our rural environment. Many will have read about the return of wolves to Yellowstone National Park. But this venture is a fraction of the purpose of rewilding. To quote the words of David Attenborough from, The Global Alliance of Rewilding, "To restore stability to our planet, we must restore its biodiversity, the very thing that we've removed. It's the only way out of the crisis we've created - we must rewild the world."

The Global Rewilding Alliance works in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and Australia. They plan to rewild more than 100 million hectares of land and sea in more than 70 countries. This daunting task commenced in 2020 and already has had many successes.

For examples we look to **Sweden**, where Rewilding Sweden is restoring and securing free flowing rivers to support the migration and breeding of salmon, trout and other species. They are creating 'bluegreen' corridors to connect the mountains to the sea.

In **India** an ambitious project was commenced in 2016 to restore

forests across Assam's 'Elephant Country' for reconciling human and biodiversity needs. Through 'Rural Features', communities act as the primary stewards of habitat restoration and management.

In north eastern **Zambia**, Tondwa Game Management Area is a vast rich ecosystem of 134,000 acres. It holds a pivotal place between National Parks and GMA's. Its protection and management will ensure a contiguous conservation landscape and wildlife corridor.

Heartland, Rewilding's mission in the **USA**, is to reconnect and rewild the Mississippi River Watershed. Once one of the wildest and most biologically diverse regions in North America, it is now almost entirely crops and human development. Their aim is to promote compassionate and respectful coexistence through advocacy and education.

Beijing was once considered home to the **North China** Leopard. The Taihang Mountains and the Yanshan Mountains are a continuous and complete habitat for the North China leopards. In the past, their territories spread between these mountains for 10,000 square kilometres. This area is gradually becoming islands due to highways, villages and farmland. The rewilding aim is to bring the leopard back to its home of Beijing by repairing corridors, awakening people's enthusiasm for the wilderness and bringing the mountains back to life.

In **Southern Scotland** the Borders Forest Trust planted trees in a 1,600-acre valley in the Mofat Hills. Their aim to 'Revive the Wild Heart of Southern Scotland' has seen the establishment of a rich, diverse, wooded landscape of native species. Returning the land to what would have existed in that area thousands of years ago.

For the endangered orangutans, 172 bird species, 65 mammal species and 57 reptile, and amphibian species the Sebangau National Park is home. This is the largest, lowland rainforest remaining in

Borneo. Borneo Nature Foundation is replanting vast areas of burnt and degraded forests with seedlings grown in community nurseries. This initiative provides income and also encourages leadership by local women.

KEY REWILDING THEMES

The examples above illustrate the complexities and diversities of the Rewilding concept. At a rewilding forum held in Sydney in 2016, six key themes were identified from the audience of academics, government and non-government agencies.

Rewilding is a focus on ecosystem processes and function rather than a single species or suite of species.

Rewilding should incorporate people, including consideration of economic gain for communities via rewilding projects.

Rewilding is applicable at multiple scales and in both rural and urban settings.

Rewilding in Australia requires a shared vision in order to progress and meet its potential.

Rewilding efforts should include a research component in order to demonstrate proof of concept and positive ecological change.

Rewilding efforts will require policy changes from government.

REWILDING AUSTRALIA

Here in Australia, the Rewilding initiative comes from several organisations working in rural, regional and city locations. **World Wildlife Fund-Australia** has Rewilding as their newest plan of action. **Aussie Ark** believing biodiversity is the interconnecting web of life, they plan to reintroduce plant or animal species, especially a keystone species or apex predator, into a habitat where it has disappeared. **National Parks Association of NSW** aims to build on its citizen science programs with a project led by the University of Sydney called 'nature-based solutions for growing cities: rewilding policies and practice'. The project's

focus is bandicoots in Sydney's inner west; powerful owl movements throughout Sydney and bringing native pollinators back to urban green space.

SUCCESS

A lot of talk? Perhaps you're wondering if there's been any action and success, **WWF-Australia** with partners has reintroduced the rare bush-tailed bettong to mainland south Australia. This marsupial had been locally extinct for more than a century. With dedicated partners they are restoring platypus populations in Sydney's Royal National Park. Through a trial program, the eastern quoll was reintroduced to mainland Australia for the first time. The population will be bolstered by an eastern quoll insurance breeding program and population supplementation program in Tasmania.

Close to Gloucester **Aussie Ark** aims to establish a self-sustaining population of 7 native species back to roam in the Barrington Tops. They now boast the largest mainland population of Eastern Quolls. Many of those quolls have been relocated to Booderee National Park in Jervis Bay, south coast NSW.

UNIQUE AUSTRALIA

Projects that are successful elsewhere in the world might not be as successful here. Australia is different. **Australian Wildlife Conservancy** and **Arid Recovery** have utilised fenced enclosures in remote areas to exclude foxes and cats from destroying the recovery of small native mammals. These programs should not comfortably fit within the rewilding tactics, because they don't create self-sustaining ecosystems, but they have successfully allowed native species to flourish. AWC deliver and influence effective conservation across more than 12.9 million hectares in regions including the Kimberley, Cape York, Kati Thankda-Lake Eyre, and the Top End.

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Bush Heritage Australia is another unique organisation which doesn't necessarily fit within rewilding, but they successfully manage 11.3 million hectares across Australia. They follow five agreed values of, conservation, collaboration, community, culture and safety. Like many of the organisations mentioned, they work closely with First Nation groups to ensure they maintain access and a connection to country. Aboriginal insight, cultural perspective and collaboration is so important to rewilding.

Gloucester

In our Mid North Coast area, the Gloucester Environment Group is busy achieving its own rewilding program. We call it KoalaWays. The revegetation of land in the Gloucester area doesn't fall under the heading of Rewilding but perhaps it should. For several years Gloucester Environment Group (GEG) has taken on the task of revegetating land on private properties in the local Gloucester area. The planting is to preserve and increase the number of trees, both large and small, for our endangered species, the koala. Being an umbrella species, the increase in koala habitat will advantage all species in that environment.

What you can do

You can be forgiven for thinking that rewilding is too big a concept for you. However, this is not the case.

HOW TO REWILD YOUR PROPERTY (LARGE OR SMALL)

- Plant native grasses, shrubs and trees.
- Reduce dependency on fertilisers and pesticides.
- Choose insect friendly plants.
- Compost where possible.
- Declare a section of your property 'wild' (you'll save all that mowing).
- Introduce rockeries or hollow logs for lizards and frogs.
- If a large property, create a wildlife corridor.
- Go for it. Be part of the worldwide rewilding family.

Dianne Montague

Vice-President of the Gloucester Environment Group and co-ordinator of its KoalaWays program.

THE (FORCED) MARCH OF THE MOGULS

One of the biggest media stories of the decade is all but missing from the pages of Australia's one national newspaper, *The Australian*. Since the end of January, from when the story built, its one mention in *The Australian* was on March 12.

It was a wire service story from Agence France-Presse not their own Washington correspondent. It was headlined: *Fox News grapples with revelations in defamation case, but the court knows the case as 'U.S. Dominion, Inc. v Fox News Network'*.

By comparison, the Nine newspapers have run at least seven stories over the same period.

The outcome of this case, before the courts in Delaware, will have consequences not only for the Dominion Inc. and the Fox News Network, but on the media, audiences and readers in both the US and Australia.

THE 'STOLEN' ELECTION

The origins of the case are Fox News' coverage of claims that the November 2022 presidential election was 'stolen' from Donald Trump, the Republican candidate and former President. One of the myriad mechanisms for the theft, promoted especially by former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani and lawyer Sidney Powell, was that electronic voting machines had diverted Trump votes to the Democratic candidate, Joe Biden.

The voting machine company, Dominion, is suing Fox News for \$US1.6 billion (A\$2.3 billion) in defamation for Fox's role in publicising the claim. A rival voting machine company, Smartmatic, is in the wings with a suit against Fox Corporation, Fox News Network, three of its anchors, as well as Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell, on similar issues and claiming US\$2.7 billion.

The Dominion case faces a high bar because US defamation law recognises that public figures, including businesses, choose to be in the public eye and may attract unjust, even false criticism. Simply put, defamation of public figures is not just a matter of speaking falsely and knowing it to be false, but of doing so with malice.

As early as June 2022, a judge denied Fox Corp's motion to dismiss the case. He found Dominion had properly alleged that Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch may have acted with "actual malice" in directing the network to broadcast the vote diversion claims.

A string of revelations over the past two months have strengthened Do-

minion's chance of making the malice threshold. Both the prosecution and defence lawyers have been leaking information, found during discovery, including evidence given under oath by the chairman of Fox News' parent company News Corp, Rupert Murdoch, that he, Fox News executives and on-air anchors believed few, if any, of the claims of vote theft.

Nevertheless, they continued to repeat the claims on air, or at least, did not submit the claims to critical examination, and the reason was fear of losing ratings. The Fox News coverage of the issues and that of other right wing media are held to be partly responsible for feeding the fervour behind the January 6 attack on the US Capitol.

Fox News defence says the claims were newsworthy and the network is protected by the First Amendment, and cited a New York law against using litigation to chill free speech.

Both parties have sought summary judgement, but the case seems set to go before a jury in mid-April. Watch for the headlines.

Fairness and the Media

In a crucial way, this is a cross-roads case for a rapidly splintering nation, as media outlets have become increasingly identified with political or religious sectarian views and their audiences hear only one point of view. This partisanship goes back the revocation of the Fairness Doctrine, a doctrine introduced in 1949, by the United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

It was a policy that required the holders of broadcast licenses to present controversial issues of public importance and to do so in a manner that fairly reflected differing viewpoints. Our ABC is subject to similar expectations, as expressed in its charter, but not so with private media companies.

In August 1987, the FCC abolished the doctrine, Chairman Patrick, saying: 'We seek to extend to the electronic press the same First Amendment guarantees that the print media have enjoyed since our country's inception'. Though Dominion v Fox News is an action for defamation, it is certain to revive calls to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine in some form, and perhaps extend it to social media. The latter will be a big ask.

FAR, FAR AWAY

Far, far from Delaware, the eyes of two teams of lawyers are watching Dominion v Fox News closely.

Lachlan Murdoch, heir-apparent to the News Corp dynasty, is suing the Australian online publication, Crikey, over an article claiming 'Trump is a confirmed unhinged traitor. And Murdoch is his unindicted co-conspirator'. The article was first published on June 29 but removed from Crikey's website on June 30 after Murdoch's solicitor wrote to Crikey. It was republished on August 15, and an open letter in the New York Times provoked one or other of the News Corp Murdochs to sue. Lachlan obliged.

In December Murdoch sought and received court approval to add Eric Beecher and Will Hayward, chairman and chief executive of Crikey's Australian publisher, Private Media, as respondents to the lawsuit. This pushed the March hearing date back to October.

In the US case, depositions taken under oath from both Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch, reveal the internal editorial workings of Fox News and, by extension, the editorial workings of News Corp., especially, the influence of the Murdochs on daily decision making. These findings could strengthen the 'co-conspirator' claim and the public interest defence. Lachlan Murdoch has yet to demonstrate the article 'caused, or is likely to cause, serious harm' to his reputation' and that he is the Murdoch referred to, not his father. Most journalists and many readers would think of Rupert, reading the word 'Murdoch'.

At a time when there are calls for a Royal Commission into the influence of the Murdochs and the Australian arm of News Corp. on Australian media and politics, both cases will shape our media future and audiences' trust in our media.

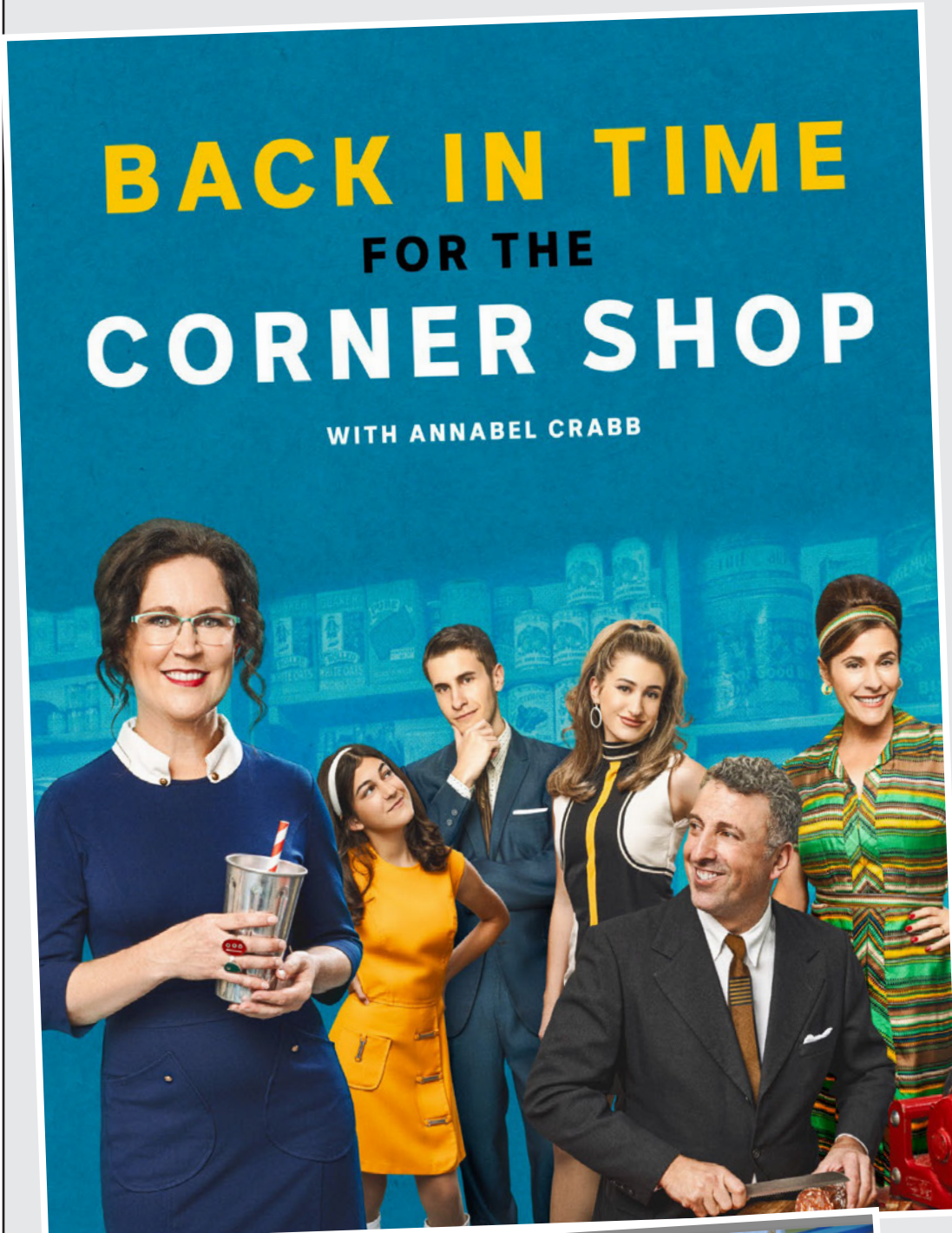
TIKTOK

The clock is ticking on TikTok. The Australian government is expected to ban its use on all Commonwealth-owned devices in early April. More next issue.

Vincent O'Donnell
Media Analyst & Researcher.

ABC TV RECALLS

For more than 100 years the corner shop was an institution for millions of Australians. More than a simple shop, it was the heart of many neighbourhoods.



These days you can buy anything with the click of a button, but ask anyone about their childhood corner shop, and they can still describe it in vivid detail – what they bought and how they bought it, the lollies sold, what the shop looked like, the owners who ran the business.

I remember Humphreys General Store on Barrenjoey Road Mona Vale on Sydney's northern beaches (it became a Mexican Restaurant decades later and is now a lovely restaurant.) The Humphreys became "Uncle Al and Aunty Glad" the dearest and kindest of neighbours for years and years.

So I was keen to watch "Back in Time For The Corner Shop" with Annabel Crabb on hand to help Carol and Peter Ferrone and their children navigate the highs and lows of being shopkeepers through 150 years of Australian History starting in the 1850s.

It charts the social economic changes that shape how we shop, live and connect as a community. We see how the role of the corner shop – otherwise known as the General Store, milk bar or mixed business – has shifted and its status as a community hub has changed. The fashion and décor styles

through each era are a delight. (Oh my gosh, did I really wear stiffened petticoats!)

But it occurred to me, that perhaps it should be mandatory for housing estates to include a corner store within the community estate. A place where the shopkeeper knows the kids in the neighbourhood who can ride their bikes or run to the corner store to get something mum forgot. Or spend pocket money. (Do kids still get pocket money and a Savings Account? Or do they just use a credit card or online bank?)

There's a great local General Store in Tinonee. If they don't stock it, they'll get it. There's newspapers and magazines, wine and lemonade, home-baked sponge cakes made by 80 something Deena, take away coffee and frozen goods and shelves full of stuff you forgot to get at the supermarket. They sell petrol and it used to be the Post Office. (Till a post office opened in the old butcher's shop but then closed so it's now a drive to Wingham PO.)

It's a place lonely locals tend to hang out and chat, catch up on the news, and know someone will notice "Haven't seen Fred the last few days. . . better check up on him."

Sometimes the good old times weren't so bad after all.
(ABC TV Tuesdays 8pm)
DM



THE CORNER SHOP



WINGHAM VALLEY VETS TO CREATE NEW VET SPACE!

At last the sad and empty block where the Wingham Hotel (the “bottom pub”) stood before being destroyed in a fire, is to come to life again. Wingham and Valley Vets are building new premises there. (The current building will be let to another business.)



The design of the roofline, with verandah-style awnings coming out over the footpath are a nod to the design of the old pub. The large equine hospital stables will be a barn-style building with hardwood timber poles (sourced locally from Machins), similar in appearance to the old pub stables. (Whose wonderful heritage Cobb & Co stables singed slightly in the fire were unnecessarily pulled down under council's orders.)

They have chosen a traditional design, as they liked the verandah out over the footpath, the traditional gabled roofline and the use of Wingham Lincoln brickworks heritage bricks so that the hospital would fit in with the Brush School and Wingham Post Office. The inspiration for the building is most definitely the old pub so they purposefully selected local heritage style brick insisting insisted that no substitute brick would be acceptable (partly for aesthetics, partly from a wish to support the local brickworks).

There will be two main buildings – a purpose-built small animal hospital 500m² and an equine stable complex for the hospitalisation of horses and livestock.

The small animal hospital will be ‘cat-friendly’ accredited which means the cats and dogs are housed separately so cats are not unduly stressed by being exposed to dogs. There will be a separate waiting area for cats away from dogs with cat carrier storage that is private and off the floor, a separate dedicated cat-only hospital ward and treatment room where noise is kept to a minimum, ‘cat condos’ for housing hospitalised cats (these are very spacious, with elevated rest areas, separate space for a litter tray and spots to hide – all essential for feline comfort); and two dedicated cat consulting rooms so there are no sounds and smells of dogs.

For the dogs there will be 6 very large runs with plumbed oxygen available (useful for tick or cardiac patients – to keep them on intranasal oxygen throughout their

hospitalisation) and ICU runs with camera monitoring. The dog kennels will have glass doors which help with visibility for the staff and also make the runs more homely and more sound-proof than traditional steel cage doors. That will help reduce the anxiety for hospitalised patients so there will be less barking and they will be more comfortable during their stay.

One of the consult rooms will be a dedicated ophthalmology room, where Zac, who has a strong interest in eye medicine, will conduct his eye consults (you need a very dark room and specialised eye equipment to perform eye examinations properly so they have prioritised this.)

The canine reproduction side of the practice has been growing significantly and so there is a dedicated canine reproduction room that will be used for procedures and houses endoscopy equipment and storage tanks. They will offer a more advanced repro service with transcervical insemination using an endoscope, which supercedes

some of the old fashioned and now no longer recommended methods of dog breeding.

There’s a studio apartment for accommodation for Veterinary students – as it is a practice vet students tend to choose from multiple universities. With vet science being such a feminised profession, they’ve thoughtfully provided a dedicated breastfeeding/expressing room to help support employees who are mothers and to make things easier and more comfortable for them as they return to work.

There are two surgical theatres that are constructed to an ASAVA Hospital of Excellence standard (the aim is to have the premises accredited). This will provide local access to more specialist surgical procedures to save owners travelling to Newcastle or Sydney. The surgical theatres have been designed by a veterinary architect plus a specialist surgeon had input into the features so they are suitable for advanced orthopaedics

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which require absolute sterility and so it is essential that the surgical theatres are constructed and maintained to a very high standard.

The equine hospital will have three stables and a foal box to enable the hospitalisation of sick horses and livestock overnight. Two of the stables open out to a horse exercise yard so horses that are in hospital for longer stays (i.e. cycling mares for breeding) have outdoor access and are happier. There will be an on-site horse crush to enable equine reproduction scans and equine dentals. One of the vets, Claire, recently completed an advanced course in Equine Dentistry and so can provide a facility for the local area.

Off the stables is a large undercover area for our behaviour staff to conduct puppy classes comfortably and safely.

We employ 9 vets, 16 nurses/receptionists and 3 behavioural trainers.

Regarding landscaping there will be a mixture of native hedges (Lilly Pilly) and mixed border flowering plants and native grasses, as well as some ornamental feature trees. Alissa loves gardening and wants the garden to be as leafy and ornamental as possible to avoid the 'commercial low maintenance mass planting' look that seems the norm for most developments these days.

Regarding the old premises, the intention is to lease it to another local business.

They have a high quality small

animal ultrasound machine, and Michael has undertaken significant further training in abdominal ultrasound to offer an in-house ultrasound service. Zac has also commenced further study in ultrasound so they're aiming to have two highly trained sonographers in the practice. It has been fantastic for our diagnostic capabilities to improve the standard of treatment.

Cardiac scans are referred as this requires a more specialised probe and additional training. The new building also has a dedicated ultrasonography room, a dedicated digital radiography room and a significant upgrade to the Xray equipment in the past year so it is comparable with that you would find in a specialist hospital.

Behaviour is a huge part of the

practice and the new premises has been designed with fear-free principles in mind to focus on canine and feline behaviour. Hannah is currently undertaking an advanced year-long course in animal behaviour.

The backbone of the practice is a strong positive and supportive culture that emphasises continuing education – so all of the Vets are currently undertaking courses in a variety of subjects (currently - internal medicine, orthopaedic surgery, emergency Medicine, equine dentistry, small animal behaviour and small animal ultrasonography.) Seems their motto is 'when you know better, you do better'!

They plan to open in September this year.

PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT!

Next month will see Taree host the Manning Valley's first ever major Pickleball tournament at the newly refurbished Wrigley Park courts. More than 150 competitors will gather to participate in the two-day Barrington Coast Regional tournament which will attract players from across NSW.

“Pickleball is now Australia's fastest growing sport with more than 500 clubs now established across the country” Halliday's Point Pickleball Club President Sheila Capperault said.

“Our own club has grown a whopping 500% in 3 years, and we continue to offer inclusive programs for players aged 12 to 85 and everyone is always welcome” Ms Capperault said.

The tournament, which is taking place on **20th & 21st of May**, is a major coup for Taree, having been chosen from many other locations by the NSW Pickleball Association.

“We're thrilled to be hosting this event which will offer locals and visitors an opportunity to

show off our talent, our local region and our sport. There will be plenty of matches to showcase the skill of players from all over NSW, not to mention the excitement for spectators watching the fast-paced gameplay,” said Ms Capperault.

Pickleball is a hybrid racquet/net sport which combines tennis, badminton and table tennis. It is played on a quarter sized tennis court and a large, aerated ball is used which changes the 'travel' and requires unique skill to perfect ball placement. And it's growing exponentially. There are now more than 5,000 players across Australia and Tennis Australia is introducing it to its clubs to build participation

and maintain court use across the year. It's officially the world's fastest growing sport and is set to break into the Olympic and Paralympic domains in coming years.

“Pickleball brings the community together in sport, competition, friendship and inclusiveness. We look forward to bringing more people into our sport and encourage everyone to come and support the local clubs next month in Taree” said Ms Capperault.

The Barrington Coast Regional Tournament takes place at Wrigley Park courts, 85 Commerce Street Taree on 20th and 21st May 2023

PEEPING THROUGH MY FINGERS



Glimpses of childhood old age and the dangerous bits in between
 Stories by Sharyn Munro
 Knocklefty Press

“I write to make sense of life. I do that best with the stages of life which I think I now understand,” writes Sharyn Munro, a local author commenting on her recently published collection of short stories.

Her stories cover childhood, adolescence and old age omitting the middle years saying they lie like a tangled muddle; the messy ups and downs of relationships which she still can't quite unravel.

Sharyn Munro does give an insight into how she writes these enjoyable, sometimes humorous stories which she describes as “a selective, fictional ramble through my take on our human lives.”

She admits it is perhaps an unusual way of selecting subjects. They are a result of, not only personal recollections and memories, but overheard conversations which she jots down in a notebook wherever she goes, scribbling phrases and topics that amuse, or trigger story ideas, hence the title Peeping Through My Fingers.

The stories are like those that once regularly graced the pages of our favourite weekly magazines. They are easy to read, light-hearted tales, often with amusing anecdotes, that are woven into a short form that you can pick up when on a tea break or use as a distraction while in the waiting room of a doctor or dentist.

The introduction begins with a story about growing up and ends with the wish

that having survived skidding into a hole that is hard to climb out of. This prompts her to ask the question how can we deal with our youthful impulsive decisions differently? She notes that wise societies

do not allow young people to commit to lifetime attachments until after thirty.

Divided into sections, part one recalls childhood memories and sends the reader on an innocent run

round the neighbour with harmless antics and confusion as to what is expected of teens during their early years as they discover drinking, dating and making sense of the accepted boundaries of normal behaviour.

The second part tackles the confusion of adolescence many of us will identify with. These stories deal with the decisions we make concerning our feelings about romance, sex, marriage, divorce and heartbreak. She doesn't ignore one-night stands, reuniting with former lovers and couples who favour open marriages where each openly flaunts a long-term lover.

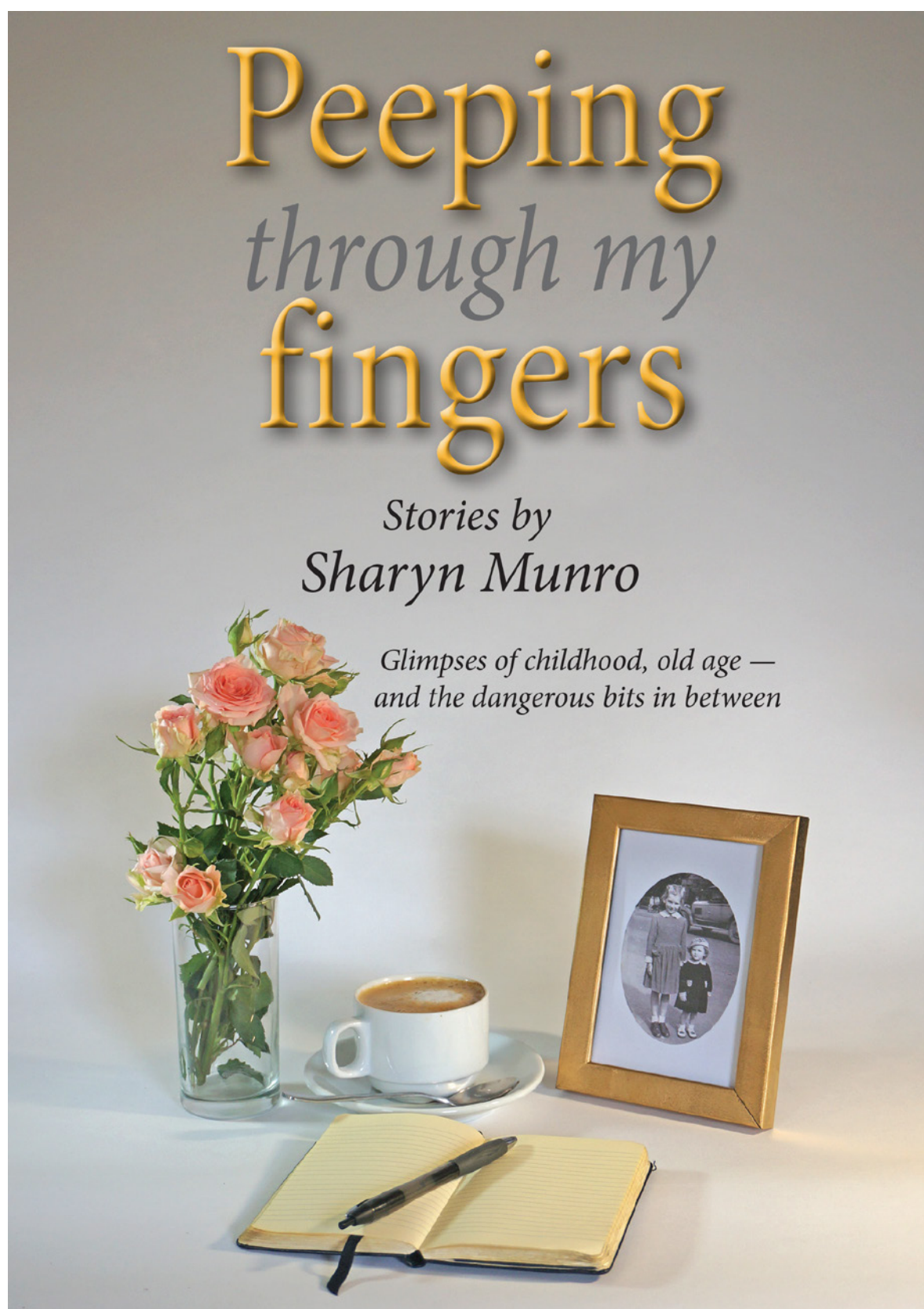
Sharyn finally shines the spotlight on how growing through early adulthood we so desperately want to fit in with societal expectations.

Her concluding section looks at the decline and indignity of old age and this she does in a gentle way musing on the loss of physical vitality, the disappearance of youthful appearance and how easy it is for older women in particular, to become invisible. Like life she says, there is no happy endings at this time highlighting the need for friendships.

Like her two earlier books, she does not hold back on her deep love and appreciation of the Australian landscape and of its animals.

Sherry Stumm.

* “Peeping Through My Fingers”, is available to order from the author at www.sharynmunro.com



UNDERGROUND LOVERS



Alison Pouliot

NewSouth Publishing

RRP \$29.99

Don't be misled by the title, this book is not a raunchy tale of a dangerous passionate liaison between two members of the French underground during the second world war.

It's a semi scientific book about the often strange, bizarre and sometimes deadly lives of something most of us think little about except perhaps when we tuck into a plate of mushrooms on toast.

The subtitle gives it away. It is *Encounters With Fungi*.

Alison Pouliot is an ecologist, photographer and author who has chosen to make fungi her life's work. We learn early on in the book that those who specialise in the study of fungi are called *mycologists*, which was a new word to me. We are told that Pouliot roams the forest daily 'exploring fungi through multiple lenses.' Her earlier books were titled *The Allure of Fungi* and *Wild Mushrooming*.

Even though Pouliot is a scientist, this is not in any sense a heavy inaccessible textbook although, given the nature of the topic, it does contain some unavoidable scientific jargon. Pouliot cleverly weaves the science of fungi in and around many of her own personal experiences travelling around the world to places such as outback Australia, Iceland, and the mountains of the western United States.

Whilst Pouliot's book might not succeed in making fungi sexy or be a great page turner, it does contain much interesting, important, and sometimes surprising information which will be new to most readers.

One important point made by the book is the relationship between fungi and plants. We are told that:

The survival of most plants relies on their beneficial unions with fungi, or mycorrhizas as they are known. The term mycorrhizas – literally, 'fungus roots' – refers to the mutually beneficial relationships formed between fungus mycelia (the matrix of thread-like branching of fungal cells) and the roots of most plants.

Pouliot then goes on to explain in detail how this all works and its importance.

Some of the interesting issues the



book goes on to deal with are:

The role that fungi played in the lives of Australia's Traditional Custodians and their use.

The various misunderstandings about fungi and why some are seen as enemies of agriculture. She points out that most 'fungal outbreaks' are a symptom of poor human management.

The effect of fire on fungi in forests. She explains that older forests have more complexity and diversity and are therefore have more resilience to fire and then discusses the controversial issue of fuel reduction burns and their effect on fungi.

The impact of climate change on

fungi and how the impact on fungi is often ignored in the debate. There is a discussion about the role that fungi play in relation to carbon sequestration.

How some fungi are parasitic. One gruesome example is that of a fungus that makes its way to the insides of caterpillars and then liquifies the innards of the caterpillar taking it over completely, transforming it into a fungal mummy.

The fact that there is a relationship between Peter Rabbit and the world of fungus. Apparently in the years before she created the world of Peter Rabbit, Beatrix Potter was an amateur mycologist, but because

she was a woman, she was denied membership of the prestigious Linnean Society which we are told is the oldest active biological society in the world.

One of the interesting and timely discussions in the book is about how forests and fungi are affected by disturbances created by logging. Although as a scientist Pouliot recognises the need for objectivity she tells how she was emotionally affected by witnessing the devastation caused by modern day logging methods:

Logging operations and the conservation of rare and threatened species seldom align.

All around us lay smashed remnants of a broken forest. Crippled limbs lay severed and twisted. The once luxuriant moistness of the forest floor crunched underfoot. And it smelt bad. The usual mingling of forest scents was reduced to the cloying funk of slowly baking mud. Old logs had been bulldozed into piles on the side of the track....

In the middle of the felled area, a solitary tree – a supposed habitat tree....stood pathetically alone.... Little more than a battered and splintered trunk remained....I realised that it was a farce. What animal in its right mind would choose and isolated and damaged habitat tree as home?

...this tree had only a slim chance of survival.

Powerful stuff, which should be read by all those who continue to support the insane logging of our native forests.

Pouliot comments that she was once asked by a politician why the preservation of biodiversity was important. She says that she was initially flabbergasted by such a question. However, it underlines the fact that many people do not understand the complexity of nature and the interdependence of all plants and animals. Reading this book about fungus would be a good place for anyone wanting to better understand why biodiversity and the conservation of the natural world is so important.

I expected this book to be pretty mundane and dry. I was surprised at how accessible and interesting it was. It's well worth a read.

John Watts

HOW MANY MORE WOMEN? EXPOSING HOW THE LAW SILENCES WOMEN

Jennifer Robinson and Keina Yoshida.

Allen & Unwin Rrp \$36.99

This interesting book seeks to shine a spotlight on sexual and gender-based violence. The authors, both practicing barristers in England and Wales, refer to women and girls, but they point out they are acutely aware that misconduct, harassment, abuse and rape affect people of all genders including trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming groups.

To Jen, as she likes to call herself, and Keina, this feminist thinking and activism is not just about men, it is also about the system and, particularly, the tyranny of patriarchy and toxic masculinity, sexism, gender stereotyping and patriarchal laws set up by men, often centuries old, that tend to oppress and discriminate against young girls and women.

It is not often that a reviewer is confronted with pages of blacked out lines censoring information in chapters concerning court cases provided as examples. This unusual course has been taken because some of the outstanding cases discussed are about stories that have not yet been resolved at the time of publication. They are often about well-known people and they are allegations only serving to illustrate how gender-based violence, rape, coercive control and violent physical assaults are handled by the courts.

The majority of women who have been raped or subjected to domestic abuse often do not report their allegations through shame, victim blaming and the fear of reprisals and even disbelief. Those that do report, ultimately find that few receive justice as they face numerous hurdles negotiating their way through the criminal justice system.

You just have to look at the way Britany Higgins was mercilessly questioned during her recent trial; questions about her alcohol consumption, the way she dressed and her previous sexual activities in contrast to the male she alleged raped her, who chose to remain silent.



For Jen and Keina, this is an example of the law as it stands shaming and silencing the voices of victims and survivors. "Some of the laws are designed to protect women, but in practice they end up protecting perpetrators, silencing the few brave victims who are prepared to speak out," writes Jen.

The authors point out this global picture of silencing must be fully understood, especially how it undermines women's rights and the right to be free from violence.

"The silencing also underlines why it is so important to defend free speech as a women's right and as an equality issue. We must ensure," they emphasise, "that journalists can do their work and not be silenced by draconian defamation laws. That women who are willing to speak out can do so safely inspiring other women to come forward and advocate for changes in the legal system and not by laws that impede their speech and keep in place gender censorship".

Grace Tame is someone who fought for and advocated breaking this silence and who ran the risk of being sued by her perpetrator, legally sanctioned by her state laws, humiliated, tormented. After her abuser had served his prison sentence he continued to harass and try to control her through intimidation and online hate mail.

By Grace breaking her silence with her *Let Her Speak* campaign which changed her state law and journalist Tracey Spicer's call during *MeToo*, for women to reach out with their stories, many women were encouraged to come forward. For Tracey this resulted in her being overwhelmed by 2,500 stories of sexual abuse and harassment.

Tracey co-founded *NOW*, an organisation which was meant to be the Australian answer to the UK's *Times Up*. It promised a triage service to help women who wanted to speak out, directing survivors to journalists and the legal support and counselling they needed. Spicer ended up stepping back from *NOW* to allow more diverse voices into the space and protect her mental health.

Chanel Contos was motivated to tell her own story leading her to set up an initiative for young girls in schools to share their stories and show up rape culture in Australia. In the process she was horrified to learn that most of her friends had been sexually assaulted and pretty much all of them had had a "close call". In early 2021, Chanel decided to start an anonymous Instagram survey whereby survivors would simply say the name of the school the perpetrator had attended. She too was overwhelmed by the response and started a web site to show how big the problem was and how the onus was on our private schools to better educate their boys. She went on to start a petition calling for better consent education in schools and within three weeks had 30,000 signatures.

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Chanel founded an organisation *Teach Us Consent* which calls for earlier and ongoing holistic consent and sexual education for children. In February last year the organisation achieved its goal: the Federal and state governments agreed to provide sexual consent education for schoolchildren from age five.

Jen and Keina argue for a better criminal justice system that works for everyone; to build a society in which women and girls can live free from violence. This begins with talking about it, which is why they are so concerned about how the law is being used as a weapon to silence women and why we should be aware that there is a clear personal and public interest in speaking out.

They point out that their book is not about the criminal justice system and how it is failing women because there are already many excellent books that have been written about systemic racial and gender bias and sexist reasoning from police, lawyers and judges.

They are asking: "How many women will be raped and killed before we fix the system? How many women are scared to walk home alone? How many women receive justice in our courts? How many women need to speak out before things change? How many women will be sued for defamation for speaking? How many women will be silenced by non-disclosure agreements? How many women do we need in parliament before laws are change? How many women need to protest before society changes the way women are treated?"

These are the issues which have haunted these two authors since 2012, long before the *MeToo* movement began. They both worked with news organisations to publish stories such as the one about the powerful Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. For decades he escaped countless serious allegations of sexual misconduct until the *MeToo* movement bought together the collective power of women speaking out and finally saw him given a series of prison sentences.

This book is a must read if you want to understand where you stand when protesting against domestic violence, whether to take your rape story to the press, the ramifications to you and your family of speaking out, fighting for justice and fairness through the courts, how to cope if you are sued and what online violence to expect.

Jen talks about how to deal with online silencing of women's speech, undermining women's public participation along with their ability to speak out, share information about gender-based violence and how it can lead to mental health consequences.

She sites as an example, the vitriol and abuse that Amber Heard faced online after making allegations of domestic abuse against Johnny Depp and during the two defamation trials that followed, both of which were unique and unprecedented.

"The trolling of Amber, her friends and lawyers and the witnesses who gave evidence for her in court was relentless," says Jen. "But it has also sparked an important global conversation about misogyny, online harm, the responsibility of platforms like Twitter and Tik Tok and the need to better protect women who make accusations of domestic and sexual violence."

In fact, in 2021 the Australian media union recognised that women journalists were suffering post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the online violence they faced and which is now being described as an occupational health and safety issue.

Feminists around the world have been thinking about how we can 'take back tech' and ensure women's rights to free speech are protected and respected.

Dr Michelle Ferrier, an American journalist who founded *TrollBusters* which provides first-responder assistance to women facing online abuse, offers free lessons on digital hygiene, conducts training on digital security and publishes a monthly magazine online called *Toxic Avenger*. The organisation, *Vita Activas* similarly provides support and strategic solutions for women and LGBTQI journalists, activists and defenders of gender, freedom of expression; it offers resources which focus on self-care and cyber-security against digital violence.

Jen and Keina conclude with the hope that the strategies they describe and the inspiring stories of women who have broken their silence and faced brutal backlash, of women who are organising, campaigning, litigating and fighting back, will serve to inspire more women to know that they are not alone and that many options are available to them.

Legal change is possible they insist. "Fight back collectively, we all must. If we don't, how many more of us will be silenced?"

Sherry Stumm

OVER THE HILL AND UP THE WALL

Todd Alexander

Harper Collins. Rrp \$34.99

Comedy author Todd Alexander returns with a new take on ageing. While it might not be a funny topic for all, Todd has applied his typically dry and self-deprecating humour to something that is inevitable for all of us... and better than the alternative!

Over the Hill and Up the Wall is an affectionate, funny look at the frictions of taking a more active role in our elders' lives. It's a nod to every child who has waited three hours for a parent to fasten their seatbelt, and every parent whose child assumes they can't count to twenty. And, if your parents are just hitting middle age, it may well be a warning of things to come!

Says Todd, "Of course, we love our parents. Even if they do so many things that drive us bonkers.

Like how a mother - for argument's sake, let's say mine - taps her fingernails on the car window whenever she sees a place of interest (seven taps for a regular haunt, up to twenty for somewhere fascinating). Or the way a father - let's call him Dad - practises deafness but can miraculously hear a suggestion of no ham at Christmas over the roar of cricket commentary. It might be the way your mum works herself into a tizz over a call from Azerbaijan one week and Nigeria the next. Or how your dad has an answer to everything (despite his information being forty years out of date) and 'a guy' for all fixes (if only he could find his Rolodex).

When do we stop being our parents' child and become their parent? After all, they did pretty well on their own for decades - why do they need our intervention now? And that tendency for them to drive us up the wall ... could it be because we are entering middle age and starting to recognise some of those traits in ourselves?

"We took Mum and Dad on a little holiday to Forster a few weeks back. The



drive reminded me a lot of the content of the book - how it takes quite a few goes for them to fasten their seatbelts, and how Dad loves turning place names into song titles, like Elton John's "Dungog Breaking My Heart", for example. Mum also enjoys pointing out places of interest by tapping her fingernail against the glass of the window... seven taps for something mildly interesting, and up to twenty taps for somewhere really fascinating. It was a good trip!

"For a while, I thought it was just my parents who defrosted hunks of frozen meat on the kitchen sink all day... in forty degree heat... but the more I spoke to my friends about these kind of quirks, the more we all came to realise that a lot of parents do very similar things. It gave my parents great comfort knowing they were not alone! But the book also highlighted to Mum and Dad that they're not the only ones with meddling middle aged children like me, assuming we know what's best for them. It's generated a lot of laughs around the bingo halls that Mum and Dad frequent on the Central Coast and is really a big fat celebration of ageing and parenthood. I hope I have done them proud."

BULLDOZED (SCOTT MORRISON'S FALL AND ANTHONY ALBANESE'S RISE)



Niki Savva

Scribe 2022 RRP \$35.00

It is difficult to think of anyone better qualified than Niki Savva to write a detailed analysis of the reasons for the defeat of the Morrison government in 2022.

Many will know her from her regular appearances on ABC's *Insiders* program where she always provides well informed comment on the political issues of the day. She is one of the Canberra Press Gallery's most senior correspondents, but more importantly she spent many years working on the inside for both Peter Costello and John Howard. But she is no apologist for the Liberal Party and has always been prepared to speak openly, honestly, and fairly about the issues as she sees them.

This book is a damning critique of the personality failings and weaknesses of Scott Morrison and the way that those failings ultimately contributed to the defeat of his Liberal/National Party Government at the hands of the Albanese led Labor Party.

Savva jumps right into these issues from chapter one where she discusses the fact that Morrison had deceived the nation and many of his closest colleagues by having himself secretly sworn into five additional cabinet portfolios. Something that only came to light months after the election, and which shocked many of his colleagues who had trusted him, and even regarded him as a friend. Savva says:

Morrison's secret takeover of ministries showed a contempt of parliament, of conventions, and his ministers, including those he called his best friends, like Josh Frydenberg and Stuart Robert. They took it personally.

After the revelations, his former colleagues spat out all the M words: messianic, megalomaniacal, and plain mad.

It seems that Morrison regarded loyalty as a one-way street.

As every reader will know, Morrison presented himself as being strongly religious and Savva points out that he used religion to harvest votes in ways that no Australian leader before him had done so. He apparently believed that God had chosen him to be prime minister and that his 2019 surprise victory was in

fact a God given miracle.

As the book progresses Savva details Morrison's many personality flaws such as being careless with the truth; an unwillingness to take responsibility for his mistakes; a lack of ability to empathise; arrogance; a refusal to seek or accept advice; disloyalty to friends and colleagues and importantly, a failure to deal with many of the important issues facing the nation.

As has become clear from the results of the 2022 election, the Liberal Party lost the support of many women, particularly professional women. This came to a head when, under Parliamentary privilege, Morrison brutally and unfairly attacked Christine Holgate who was the CEO of Australia Post. Savva suggests that this was a "pivotal moment in

Morrison's downfall."

According to focus groups many people became disillusioned with the fact that Morrison was obsessed with stunts that played to the daily news cycle such as washing someone's hair, welding with his mask raised, playing the ukelele (badly), and crash tackling eight-year-old Luca Fauvette while playing soccer with kids. She quotes one voter as saying:

If Scott Morrison wants to lead the country again, why is he playing silly games like football with children.

The book goes on to discuss the disastrous decision by Morrison to secretly head off to Hawaii during the height of the Black Summer fires and how this was emblematic of his poor judgement, as was his subse-

quent comment about not holding the hose.

Most readers who have even a passing interest in politics will be familiar with many of the events and incidents dealt with in the book such as the handling of the bushfires, the vaccine rollout, the Brittany Higgins events, the March for Justice, the allegations against Christian Porter and Alan Tudge, but what makes Savva's analysis so special is the amount of behind the scenes detail that she provides and the way she ties it all together to explain Morrison's demise.

The book analyses the successful rise of the Teal candidates and how their success was largely attributable to voters turning off Morrison because of his personality flaws, as well as his lack of action in relation to climate change and an integrity commission. It is suggested that Morrison regarded reform as being "a vanity project" and that he never had any wish to leave a legacy. He certainly got his wish in that regard.

The book concludes with a consideration of the post-election Liberal Party and its future, and the question about whether and how it can rebuild having regard to the continuing internal differences between the conservatives and the moderates.

This is a book which will appeal to the political tragic as well as the less political involved reader. However, when reading the book, I was reminded of the comment attributed to Otto von Bismarck that "the man who wishes to keep his respect for sausages and laws should not see how either is made," and I found myself naively wondering why the political game is played the way it is and wishing it could be otherwise. Some readers might feel that they are being given just too much distasteful detail.

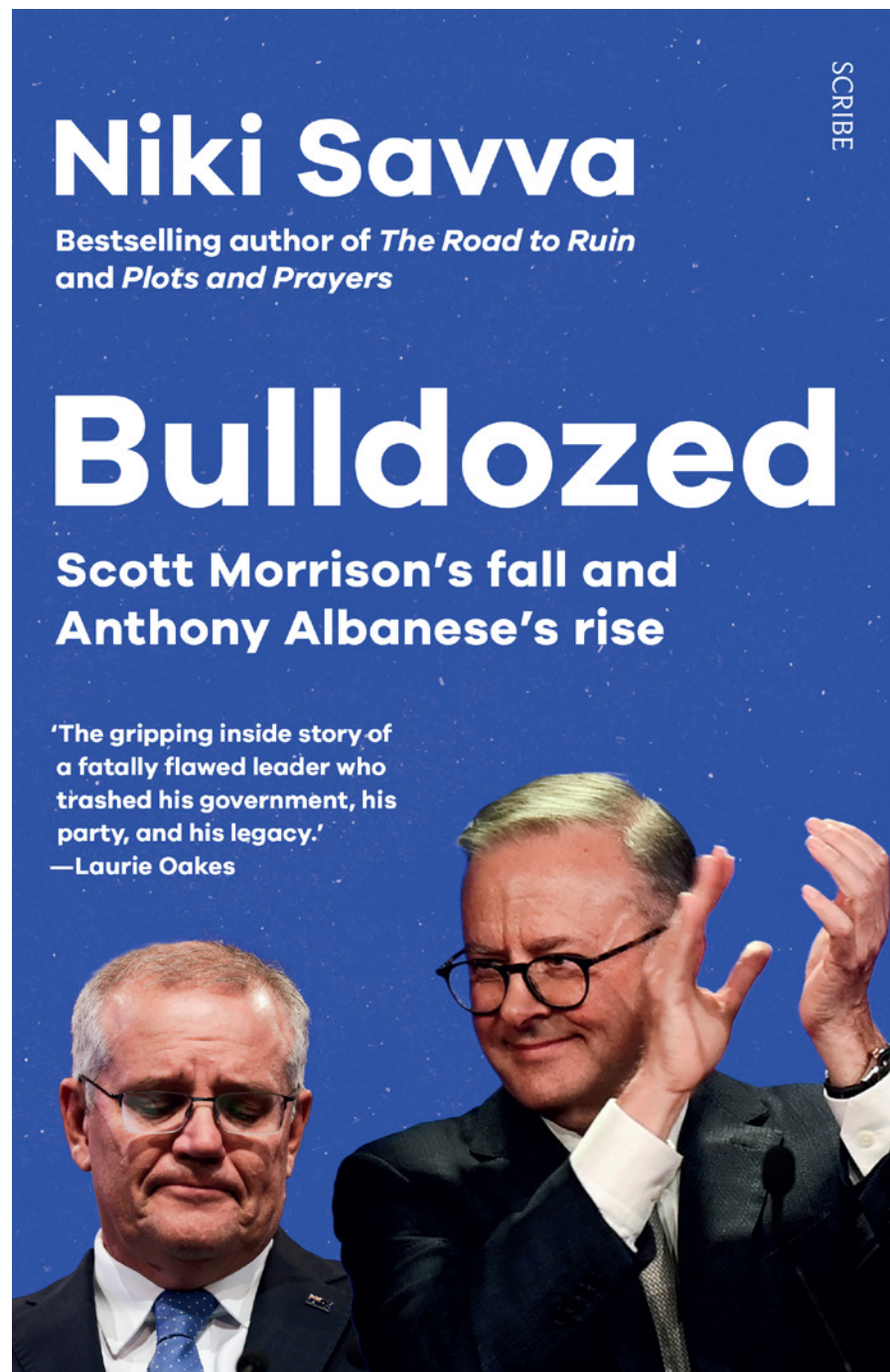
Laurie Oaks comments that:

(This book is) the gripping inside story of how Scott Morrison went from miracle man to roadkill. Savva portrays a fatally flawed leader who trashed his government, his party and his legacy.

This is well written book that every voter concerned about good government should read.

Highly recommended.

John Watts



FOLLOW UP TO THE PHOTOGRAPH IN VICTORIA STREET, TAREE, IN LAST EDITION

Hi Greg

In case no one has yet identified and dated the photo you had in *The Manning Community News*, Feb-March, I can identify what was happening.

It's the procession on 22 June 1911 along Taree's unsealed Victoria Street to mark the coronation of King George V.

Taree Civilian Band is leading the procession with school children following. I have a similar photograph, taken a few minutes after, your photograph was taken, by the same person and from the same place. Mine shows some covered wagons, a

man dressed as a baby elephant and some of the same spectators as are in your photograph.

I have been researching and writing a history of Taree town band (which includes Taree Civil-

ian Band) for some years. Because your photograph shows the band leading the parade, I would appreciate a copy of it to put into my book rather than the 'bandless' photo I currently am using. I have added my photograph to show you the difference between the two photographs.

Regards
Jim Fletcher
Failford

Former member of
Taree town band (now
Manning Valley Concert
Band).



This lovely photo, by the late Newcastle press photographer Milton Merrilees, shows shipping on the Manning River during the 1930s at the time of the construction of Martin Bridge. The larger vessel is TSS Uki, later to be used as an auxiliary minesweeper during World War 2.

www.phototimetunnel.com



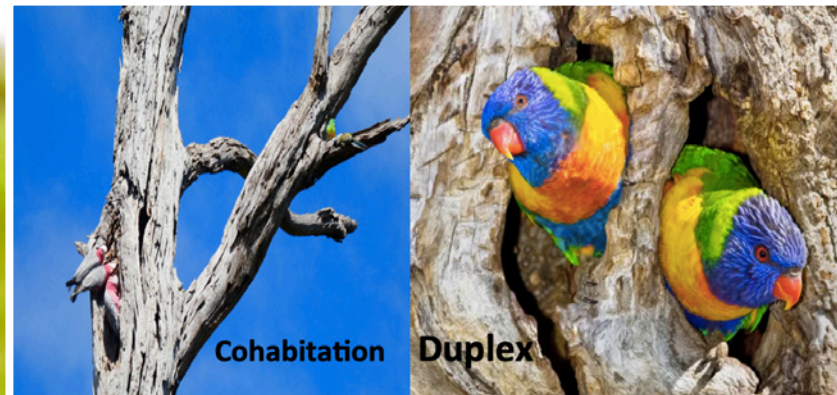
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BEST PLANTS TO BRING BIRDS TO YOUR GARDEN



Without a doubt, the addition of animal life to the garden is a welcome sight for all age groups. One group of living creatures that are always welcomed, no matter the time of year, are birds.



are equally enjoyed by many smaller birds such as Finches, small Parrots and Wrens.

GRASSES

The many species of Finches and Wrens such as Blue Wrens, Silver Eyes, Grey Fantails, Double Bar Finch or Zebra Finches are true 'workers' in the

garden as they scour for the many insects that live on plants as they successfully reduce common garden pests such as mealy bug, aphids, caterpillars and scale insects.

These smaller birds usually stay low to the ground and they flit from plant to plant in search of a tasty morsel. Along with the smaller flowering shrubs, it is vitally important that the likes of garden worthy grass species are stitched in amongst the shrubbery. Species such as Fountain grass (*Pennisetum* sp) and the many varied species of Matt Rush (*Lomandra* sp) should be planted in and around the centre of gardens or around ponds where they can grow to not only provide a soft and gentle appearance to the landscape, but can often provide important nesting opportunities and hiding places for small birds such as finches and provide a nutritious food source over the winter period in the form of seed or insect life. Even the likes of the much loved Grass Trees (*Xanthorrhoea*) with their incredible architectural presence are highly favoured by many smaller birds that argue to take their place on the tall vertical flower spikes that occur between spring and late summer.

Other clumping or 'lily' type flowers highly favoured by birds are the dramatic Spear-lily (*Doryanthes excelsa* and *D. Palmeri*) with their eye-catching scarlet headed flower spikes to nearly four metres in height, and the many varied forms of Flax Lily (*Dianella*) that enjoy growing as thickets under tall trees

and look perfect when contrasted with bold foliated plants and produce small (edible) purple berries.

GROUND COVERS

Ground cover plants such as Grevillea 'Poorinda Royal mantle', Fan Flower (*Scaevola*), and groundcover Acacias will not only help to control weeds, but will attract many insect species that small birds love to feed on.

Birds are true opportunists and although the plants mentioned are all one hundred percent native species, don't feel discouraged if you have a garden based on exotic species of plants. Birds of all species and groups will soon recognise that if any plant can provide a food source in the way of nectar-filled flowers or an abundance of insects, a safe place to nest without threat or simply rest, then they will be quick to utilise them.

WATER BATHS FOR BIRDS.

On hot summer days it is vital that bird baths are regularly topped up with a fresh source of water for birds to not only drink, but to bath. It's always a delight to observe birds taking a dip on hot days and believe me - word gets around very quickly in the bird world!

Remember to place your bird bath in a quiet corner of the garden where there is not too much foot traffic from humans or pets as they will quickly regard this as being unsafe.

No matter the species that visit, birds of all kinds bring so much joy and happiness to any size garden and their presence is something we should all feel privileged to have and observe if only for a short time. Ensuring your garden spaces are a welcoming and safe haven for them is something we not only do for our private enjoyment, but to uphold and strengthen our natural ecologies and teaches the love and respect of nature to the next generation of gardeners, our children.

Wingham Nursery & Florist
Find us on Facebook
02 655 34570

We are blessed to have a rich assortment of birdlife in this country that have the opportunity to visit our gardens. However with constant development of new homes, and smaller outdoor areas it is becoming increasingly more of a battle to keep birdlife in and around our suburbs as they move in search of better options to feed and breed.

Regardless of the rich diversity of birdlife, only very few have managed to adjust and assimilate to life in the big cities. By taking a closer look at ways of encouraging birdlife back into our gardens, greater opportunities would benefit us all.

Not all birds travel at the same level. Some are high flyers, others take a more average route within the garden at head height, yet some are secretive and prefer to be low foragers or even down at ground level. By understanding that different species will interact in our gardens in different ways you can then begin to search for plant species to easily accommodate their needs.

HIGH FLYERS

Planting one or two nice trees such as Eucalypt (if space permits) or Native Frangipani (*Hymenosporum flavum*) or many of the Lillypilly species (*Syzygium* sp) will allow high perching options for the likes of Parrots, Kookaburras, Tawny Frog Mouths and some migrating birds. From a high vantage point they often feel safe

and can observe their surroundings with ease and quickly spot predator or aggressive species or sometimes in the case of the Tawny Frog Mouths or Owls, a tasty food option.

MEDIUM SIZE SHRUBS

Graduating plantings in height is the key when it comes to attracting the widest array of birdlife. Scaling things down a little to five metres and under you could consider planting the likes of Little Bottlebrush (*Callistemon* sp) or Lemon Myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*). Both are highly loved by many birds and are seen as 'safe havens' with their dense canopy where smaller birds can duck for cover if danger approaches or to escape annoying species such as the Noisy Miner in their large family groups. These species of smaller trees are wonderful for attracting the likes of medium to small sized birds into the garden where dense foliage is a welcomed option on hot summer days.

LOW LYING

Stepping down even further, planting the likes of any of the many forms of Coastal Rosemary (*Westringia* sp), *Philotheca*, or dwarf Grevillea cultivars such as 'Peaches and Cream', 'Ned Kelly' or 'Coconut Ice' is wonderful for encouraging many members of the Honeyeater family as they relish the sweet nectar. Many members of the myrtaceae family such as Bottlebrush (*Callistemon* sp) and smaller Paperbark (*melaleuca* sp) or Tea tree (*Leptospermum* sp)



ANTIQUES AND COLLECTABLES

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

A lesson I have learned over many years is that when you see something you love - grab it quick, you may never see another. You never regret those quality interesting purchases.

Sorry to hear of MP, Steve Bromhead's passing. Although not fully agreeing with his political party he always, to me, came across as a person who cared about our area and tried to do his best for the Myall Lakes electorate. Our thoughts go to his family through this difficult time.

In hard times small business needs your support. They are the heart of local communities and can only survive if we support them. Are the big supermarkets and franchises looking after you in hard times? The butchers, bakers, fruit and veggies, newsagents, cafes, restaurants and even antique shops..... all those shops in our local CBD's need your continued patronage. Share yourself and your finances around so that these local hard working owners and families survive. They are at the heart of a thriving community.

A reminder of our local antique and collectable shops that you may wish to visit & support. In Taree, Clancy's near the Hospital, Barry at Isadora's Antiques in Victoria Street who always has a great variety, Col in Commerce Street near Taree West Newsagency. In Wingham Sue at Delinquent Funk, Isabella Street right next to the chemist and Rex at Antiques and Old Wares right next to the Newsagents in Isabella Street, in the old McCullough's Produce store.

A very popular, collectable glassware is the Mary Gregory-



Mary Gregory Glassware

ry (1856–1908) style. She was an American artist known for her decoration of glass products at the [Boston and Sandwich Glass Company](#) in [Cape Cod, Massachusetts](#). Gregory worked for Boston and Sandwich from 1880 to 1884. She painted lamps and plaques of landscape scenes during her years in Boston. Mary Gregory was born in Providence, Rhode Island to John Gregory and Hannah A. Gregory. Her mother was a school teacher in [Sandwich, Massachusetts](#) and Mary worked as a teacher as well from 1876 to 1879, but soon abandoned teaching to work for the [Boston and](#)

[Sandwich Glass Company](#) as a glass decorator, beginning in January 1880. She was particularly well known for her paintings of [Victorian-era children](#), and such artwork has been referred to as Mary Gregory since the 1920s.

This art glass style most likely originated from [Bohemia, England, or Italy](#). Despite this, many glass art enthusiasts continue to refer to such pieces as Mary Gregory. Glassware in the style of Mary Gregory continued after her tenure at the Boston and Sandwich glass factory from 1880 to 1884.

The distinguishing features of Mary Gregory glass are "stylised

white enamel painting usually of a child in an outdoor setting, playing with such things as butterfly nets, bubbles, fishing rods, or hoops. The trees and foliage often have a typical "feathered" style, the figure is oddly old-fashioned in its proportions, and the enamel is fired onto the glass.

The Westmoreland Glass Company of Grapeville, Pennsylvania began marketing their glasswork as Mary Gregory in the 1920s. They would create glass paintings of Victorian Era children in profile, and say it was done in the style of Mary Gregory. Many pieces of Mary Gregory show up as Cranberry plates, tumbler sets, goblets, glasses and so on.

Gregory's sister, and possibly others she had trained, used a white enamel paint with ground glass as a paint mixture. To bind the paint to the glass, they fired it after application. It was fused with the piece in this manner so the painting became part of the glass. Similar artwork was made by literally dozens of glass houses, and some, such as Fenton, continue to this day.

The most valuable of the Mary Gregory pieces are those dating to the 1880's.

Drop in and say hello at Antiques and Old Wares in Wingham. I am happy to help, if I can, answering questions on antiques and old wares. If you have items that you are not sure of, I may be able to help with information, appraisals and/or sales. I love the history and stories of old and interesting treasures. **Phone Rex – 0427 880 546.**

Take care and stay safe!

LOST IN THE LONG GRASS – OR THE MYSTERY OF THE ENDANGERED MALE YELLOW SLASHER

Everyone is complaining about the overgrown grasses and weeds throughout the electorate.

It's not only a bad look, it's a disastrous situation for bushfire season.

One neighbour has grass in the next door land adjoining her fence up to her armpits. It's close to a koala corridor but she's noticing the koalas can't get through to their trees and are crossing the road to find other trees and, sadly, have been hit by cars.

Roundabouts welcoming visitors to the area are scruffy, weedy, and in some cases, block vision. (The roundabouts not the visitors.)

The rare sighting of the endangered yellow topped Council Employee with slashing implement generally takes off if approached. However one was cornered and tweeted that they'd all fled the

nest for far horizons but a couple were still in situ waiting to have the means to do the job.

'No money, no money, no funds, no money,' they chirp.

Well, we all suspect where the feed has gone. And it ain't birdseed.



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HERE COME THE MONSTERS!

Giant mudcrabs crawling through the mangrove forests and rumbling down the port from the upper reaches of the Karuah River and Tilligerry Creek.



Joey Trinkler with a monster Karuah crab

More common west of Soldiers Point the muddy is much sought after and can be caught by setting a crab trap in the shallows among the mangroves. North Arm Cove, Carrington, Swan Bay and Little Swan Bay all hold excellent numbers of mud crabs.

Mud crabs, muddies, mangrove crabs, black crabs or pungas – they are all the same crab and Port Stephens is the home for the biggest mud crabs I have ever seen.

The laws around crabbing in Port Stephens differ from others in the state. For the last seven years, the witches hat method of catching crabs has been banned to protect our turtle population, with fantastic results. Crab traps cannot have an entry wider than 32 cm. This law is also designed the turtles. Since the local laws were put in place I have not heard of a single turtle that has drowned as a result of crab trap entanglement.

Rules do apply when setting crab traps. Ask your local Bait and Tackle store operator for all the details.

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.

THIS IS NOT A CAMP GROUND!

Wingham Riverside Reserve, once a charming spot for locals and visitors to picnic, stroll along the waters' edge, park their cars before visiting The Wingham Brush, fish and launch boats, has become an unwelcoming messy camping site.

Thanks to a bright idea of the Wingham Advancement Group, who continue to encourage overnight stopovers by caravans and motorhomes.

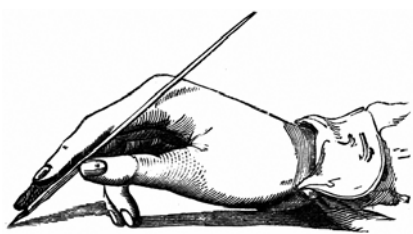
As everyone predicted, it soon became a messy, cluttered camping area where now people very much overstay their welcome. Council has done an heroic job putting the place back in order after the two catastrophic floods, but don't have the resources or the rangers to deal with the problem. It seems all well and good to set aside an area for *fully self-contained recreational vehicles for one night only*, but there's no practical way to enforce it. People who stay at the Wingham Showground, which is set up for campers, go into town to shop for supplies and spend money in local

shops just the same as people free camping at the Riverside Park, which is still recovering from flood damage.

Our towns are still recovering (or not) from storm and flood damage, and an overstretched council suffering a lack of funds generally. Last thing we need is to encourage campers who stay as long as they like, pitch tents wherever they like, and leave trash behind, throwing unmentionables into the Brush and lagoon. It's not fair to us, and it's not fair to Council. It's not what the people wanted when they were consulted for the Plan of Management; Wingham people didn't want overnight stays here because they knew this would happen. Shame WAG, Shame.

DM





YOUR SAY

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

CATS, BIRDS REPTILES SMALL MAMMALS – A Disastrous Mix!

This is a topic that raises a lot of heat from the proponents for both sides but one thing is clear, cats and small mammals and reptiles do not mix. Ever since the arrival of the English in 1788, cats have proliferated throughout the landscape.

People valued cats to keep down pests such as rats and mice, and farmers deliberately underfed their cats so that they caught their own food to supplement, and cats were seldom neutered.

Now we are faced with the extinction of many of our small native birds and reptiles. Australia has the

distinction of having the highest extinction rate of its endemic species compared with the rest of the world. There are other causes other than cats but I'm afraid cats play a very large part in the mass slaughter. Living in urban areas we can't do much about the situation in the bush but we can help in our own back yards.

Cat owners are up in arms when any restriction is proposed to limit the free access of their pets to wander at will beyond their owner's premises. The measures proposed by various authorities, such as keeping cats in at night, neutering or wearing bells, are frequently ignored and very ineffective. Midcoast Council has no rules other than the above suggestions.

Cat lovers have accused me of hating cats. This is not the case. I come from a family in England that always kept cats and we had two when I lived in London. Then on

coming to live in central Sydney in the 1980s, my young son wanted a cat so we had one; it was 14 years old when I came to live in Gloucester but within a year was dead due to age. However, living here in a small country town I would never again have a cat. My garden is alive with birds and skinks, butterflies and frogs.

I have studied birds and been involved in scientific programs that survey bird populations in various parts of this continent and seen at first hand what is happening. The introduced feral cat and fox are the two worst and most proficient killers of our native creatures and domestic cats still kill. We have to face the fact that cats cannot be allowed to wander freely and breeding must be limited to responsible groups. Councils need to take steps to encourage and support cat owners in properly caring for and limiting their pet cats'

movements. The present suggestion to keep them in at night does not work – cats hunt day and night, birds sleep at night and forage by day. Cats have never become domesticated like dogs and retain all the natural instincts of their species. Even when well fed they kill and often leave the subject of their skill on the owner's doorstep.

If you are a cat owner, please keep your cat within your premises. Build it a cat run if you have a garden. Most cats kill, even lovely furry friendly (to us) cats, but to avoid losing the small birds that visit our gardens, bring delight to so many, and help reduce insects that bite us or destroy our veggies and flowers, we have to face the facts. Cats kill. Please keep your cat within your home.

**Penny Drake-Brockman
Gloucester**

WINGHAM HERITAGE TABLE LOOKING FOR A FAMILY HOME!



**PLEASE CALL
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TO ENQUIRE**

A lovely gentleman is downsizing to move into smaller quarters and would like a home for this sentimental table (looks to be cedar) made by well known furniture maker Mr Duff in Wingham in 1940. All offers considered. The seller will throw in the chairs as well.

Please contact us at editor@manningcommuntynews.com

LEARNING FOR LIFE: COURSES FOR OLDER ADULTS



DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR U3A?

Our Manning Valley U3A offers activities for people retired and semi-retired (over the age of 45) and has many interesting courses running in Taree, mainly at the Uniting Church complex.

Next in person enrolments will take place at Manning United Church on Tuesday 18th April 2023 from 10am to 12pm. Followed by our AGM at 1.30pm. Online enrolments will open from Tuesday 18th April to

Wednesday 26th April 2023 on the website.

Term 2 for 2023 starts on Monday 1st May running thru to Friday 30th June.

With new topics regularly introduced, and some 'tried and true' sessions that have been running weekly for years, there is something for everyone. Courses can be weekly through the term, or for just a few sessions.

Our regular groups include

Philosophy, Balance and Bones (exercise specifically designed for seniors), singing, Social

Craft, ukulele, languages (currently French and Italian), walking group, and table games (Mahjong and Scrabble). The movie afternoons have been very popular.

The course 'Everyone Has a Story', in abeyance for some years, has also been re-started, with accounts of the lives and passions from a range of very interesting people.

Another popular course is Time Traveller, which combines history

and travel stories, and in 2023 will be about the Spanish area of Catalunya.

Proposed Term 2 2023 new courses include Bridge, Pickle ball, Collage art, Formation Dancing, Drawing with coloured pencils, Behind the news, Line Dancing.

Something for everyone! The membership cost for 2023 is \$20.

Courses range in cost from free to \$20 for the term of classes.

For more information please go to the website www.manningvalley.u3anet.org.au or ring Eileen on 0439 000 347.



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If you have a story idea please contact us.

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Publisher and Editor DI MORRISSEY

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