

WOLLONDILLY EXPRESS

Issue 52 - 10 November 2023

Weekly news across the Wollondilly Shire

\$2.00

Kalinya Estate

the best of its kind

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Menangle Ironman's 36-day ordeal for charity



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Menangle born and raised Layne Storrier has successfully completed 36 half-ironmans over 36 consecutive days to raise money and awareness for Cystic Fibrosis Australia.

Local kids in training for kindy

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Koala tunnels 'not fit for purpose'

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Thirty koalas have been killed by vehicles in the past year, an estimated 10 per cent of the local colony, according to the wildlife rescue group WIRES.



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Kalina Estate the best of its kind



Chris and Amanda Barnes (centre) won Gold at the 2023 NSW Tourism Awards on Wednesday night.

Bargo's luxury hotel and events venue, Kalinya Estate, won gold for Best 5-Star Accommodation at the NSW Tourism Awards on Thursday. Last year they won silver.

This qualifies them to go on to the 2023 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, to be held in Darwin next March.

Kalina Estate is owned by Amanda and Chris Barnes. Earlier this year, they won the Outstanding Tourism and Accommodation prize at the Wollondilly Local Business Awards.

"We were super excited to win first place last night in the most prestigious tourism competition in NSW," Amanda told the Express. "The NSW Tourism Awards celebrate the

absolute top tourism businesses in NSW. We were ridiculously honoured just to qualify for the finals.

"There are two stages. In the first stage, thousands and thousands of businesses from all over NSW are nominated and considered by a panel of independent judges. From those, just three businesses qualify to go to the finals in each category."

Although the judging process was hard work, she said, "I feel being part of building your business and achieving the criteria actually helps you become a better person, as well as a better business."

She said the criteria focused on "all things business" - sustainability, accessibility and even connection to country.

This wasn't the first time they had entered the awards.

"Amazingly, the first year we got through to the finals with the select few. Last year we won silver in the 5-star luxury category."

She said Mowbray Park was the only business in Wollondilly to ever get through in these awards before, winning a bronze and silver.

"This year we were blown away to be the first business from our region to have ever won the gold - first place in the 5-star luxury category - managing to beat out Elements of Byron in Byron Bay and Mount Hay Retreat in Berry.

"Each year we have pushed ourselves to be better people, to create a better business and to help build our community, to have a business that is as sustainable, accessible and as genuinely as inclusive as possible."

On the national awards to be judged in March, Amanda said, "We are looking forward to celebrating the best of tourism around Australia."



By Angela Bell



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From the EDITOR



It has certainly been a week that's stopped the nation, with the Melbourne Cup and the Reserve Bank's interest rate hike announced on Tuesday, swiftly followed by Wednesday's nationwide "technical network fault" by Optus that impacted emergency services and hit the bottom line of businesses. From corporations to micro-operators, a world of pain was created for Optus customers and those trying to contact them.

months who initiate class actions against Optus!

Congratulations to Amanda and Chris Barnes, whose luxury hotel and events venue, Kalinya Estate, won the award for Best 5-Star Accommodation at the NSW Tourism Awards this week. See page 3.

Menangle-born and raised Layne Storrier has successfully completed 36 half-ironmans over 36 consecutive days to raise money and awareness for Cystic Fibrosis Australia, raising \$45,000 so far. Emily reports on page 6.

Enjoy your week
Cristian King
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Pizza on Earth for women's network



Join WWIB in celebrating 2023

The Wollondilly Women in Business Christmas party will be a night of celebration and fun on Tuesday, 12 December, at Moses Barnes in Picton.

The WWIB network provides a range of opportunities for its members to promote and grow their businesses and build firm, personal connections.



WWIB Event Coordinator Tia Veech and Vice President Brooke Hilton

The party will be a woodfired pizza night, sponsored by RubyOnyx Marketing & Creative, and will have entertainment from musician Ric Bailey.

"It is a night to network, catch up with old and new friends you have made as a member, celebrate the year that was and basically let your hair down (because we know you deserve it!)," the event website page stated.

The event runs from 6:30pm to 10pm and partners are welcome. Tickets are \$40 and available for purchase until Tuesday, 5 December. The price includes entry to the event and woodfired pizza.

To secure a spot, go to <https://tr.ee/wvichristmas2023>
By Emily Perkins

CHRISTMAS PARTY

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Pizza Night

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Tuesday 12th December 6.30 - 10.00pm

WIB Wollondilly Women in Business

Connecting Community through Business

Home buyers hit by higher interest

The Reserve Bank of Australia decided to increase the cash rate by 25 basis points to 4.35 per cent at its meeting on Tuesday.

Justifying the rise, the Reserve Bank Governor, Michele Bullock, said, "While the economy is experiencing a period of below-trend growth, it has been stronger than expected over the first half of the year. Conditions in the labour market have eased but they remain tight. Housing prices are continuing to rise across the country."

The governor also stated, "Our analysis shows the average owner-occupier has knocked more than 2.5 standard RBA hikes off their variable rate, which is fantastic.

"What's even better is that as an average, there are likely to be thousands of borrowers who've managed to secure themselves a much bigger cut than this."

However, Zippy Financial's director and principal broker, Louisa Sanghera, said the decision did not make sense. "Many of the new or existing borrowers we speak with have absolutely no chance of refinancing, with a lot of them technically not servicing their current debt levels," she said.

Compare the Market's economic director, David Koch, said recent inflation data had forced the board into a rate rise. However, he conceded that "it still doesn't help the pain at the hip pocket".

"Another \$100 hit to minimum monthly repayments for some, and when we can least afford it," Mr Koch said. "The RBA needs to keep inflation on a tight rein, otherwise it really could bolt away in 2024.

"A tough day, but let's hope it is the last for a while now."

The national secretary of the CFMEU, Zach Smith, said, "Working families can't be the



RBA governor Michele Bullock delivered the bad news on Tuesday

only soldiers conscripted in the war against inflation. The inflation-fighting focus should be retrained on price-gouging corporations, not ordinary Australians and their communities."

If the 0.25% rate rise is passed on in full by the banks, a borrower with a \$600,000 loan could see a \$98 increase in monthly repayments.

By Angela Bell

Calling young entrepreneurs

WorkLife Picton is hosting a free workshop for young entrepreneurs

Anyone aged 15 to 17 who would like to explore a start-up, freelance or small business career is invited to attend a free workshop run by WorkLife in Picton.

The youth event, Startup Spark, will be presented by Wollondilly's Creative Entrepreneurs.

"Are you a young person who

has a big idea for a business? Are you a creative looking at a freelance career? Or would you like to know what it takes to be your own boss?" an event advertisement asked.

WorkLife's founder, Kate Dezarnaulds, said, "The team at WorkLife would love to host you for an afternoon of pizza and presentations on start-up

careers by a handful of Picton's most entrepreneurial, brave, crazy and creative small business people."

Local business owners who will share their experiences include Greg Smith from YamazYou, Patrick Nellestein of River Road Creative Academy, Ms Dezarnaulds and Rachel Walton from The GF Cookie.

Also in attendance will be business coach Joe Doyle and Sarina Russo Entrepreneurs to advise on flexible pathways to free entrepreneurship training through their self-employment assistance program.

"Come along for this inspiring, fun and creative afternoon of brainstorming, sharing and connecting."

The event is on Friday, 24 November, from 4pm to 6pm at WorkLife Picton (26 Menangle Street).

To register, go to <https://events.humanitix.com/startup-spark-worklife-youth-workshop>

By Emily Perkins

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Wollondilly 5-day weather forecast

Saturday



A partly cloudy day today with north-easterly winds 25-35km/h.

Temperatures will reach to 29-34C.

Sunday



A possible shower is expected, most likely in the afternoon and evening. The chance of a thunderstorm. Light south-westerly winds will turn south-easterly during the day.

Daytime temperatures will sit between 29-34C.

Monday



A cloudy day is predicted with a slight chance of a shower and the chance of a thunderstorm. Light south-easterly winds will turn easterly in the day.

Warm temperatures will span 20-25C.

Tuesday



A cloudy day is on the cards with a medium chance of showers and light north-easterly winds.

Temperatures will heat to 24-29C.

Wednesday



Another cloudy day is forecast with a high chance of showers. Light easterly winds shifting south-easterly during the morning.

Temperatures ranging between 17-22C.



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SCAN ME

Ironman's 36-day ordeal for charity



Layne with his support crew

Menangle-born and raised Layne Storrier has successfully completed 36 half-ironmans over 36 consecutive days to raise money and awareness for Cystic Fibrosis Australia.

CF is a genetic disorder that affects the lungs and digestive system and significantly shortens life expectancy.

Layne's challenge, Breaking Barriers for Cystic Fibrosis, saw him swim 68.4 kilometres, run 3,240km and cycle 759.6km. So far, he has raised \$45,000.

Layne told the Express that it "feels awesome ... as it had been such a huge build-up to the event and also such a long time during it".

"There were never any moments of doubt," he said. "I was always going to get done what I said I was going to do, but there were certainly some tough stages."

He said the easiest part of the challenge was the swim, "which is ironic, as I normally don't like swimming"; and the cycling and running were equally as hard, depending on the day.

Layne said it was great to get

out there and raise awareness for charities: "You can set yourself a goal you find tough and also change some lives along the way, so I see it as a win-win."

"The support I received was awesome. It is amazing how many people have reached out to me - both with CF and without CF - so it's nice to know all the hard work has made a difference."

His mother, Allana Storrier, said she was "super proud" of Layne's achievement.

"I am also in awe of the way that he handled all the stress on his body - not once did he complain or whinge," she said. "There were days when he was totally exhausted, but he still managed to treat all his support crew with the utmost respect, and always took light of every situation thrown at him."

Ms Storrier said there were many times when Layne spent a lot of his energy supporting others to help them complete legs with him when they had turned up to support him.

"Layne is an inspiration to many and really did the cystic fibrosis community proud by

sharing their personal stories to promote awareness."

Each day Layne would make a lights just flickered video dedicated to someone with CF.

The chief executive officer of CF Australia, Jo Armstrong, said, "Layne has completed what seemed to be an impossible challenge. Amid the immense physical and mental toll, Layne committed every day to someone in the cystic fibrosis community."



CEO of CF Australia Jo Armstrong

Ms Armstrong said that people with CF suffered their whole lives, and Layne had ensured they were seen every day.



Layne said the support he received was "awesome"

She said that the funds raised would get better outcomes and support for more people with CF to have longer and healthier lives.

"As a small charity, we rely on the support and generosity of people in the community to make our work possible, and Layne has been an invaluable support to us and

raised the spirits of us all, as he made possible something that seemed impossible.

"A huge thank you to Layne and everyone who supported him for such an incredible outcome."

To donate to his cause, go to <https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.au/breaking-barriers-for-cf/#>

By Emily Perkins



Koala tunnels 'not fit for purpose'

A koala log bridge

Thirty koalas have been killed by vehicles in the past year, an estimated 10 per cent of the local colony, according to the wildlife rescue group WIRES.

With an increased fatality rate expected as large local housing developments come to the region, Transport for NSW (TfNSW) has proposed building koala tunnels to protect the animals.

However, tunnels have been deemed "not fit for purpose" by WIRES.

Walker Corporation has approval to rezone for 12,900 new

homes in Appin, and Lendlease is seeking approval to build 3,300 homes in Gilead. Work is already under way on the 1,700-home Figtree Hill estate.

TfNSW has proposed a wildlife underpass be built at the intersection of Appin and Brian roads.

The underpass would be 2.4 metres by 36 metres and include refuge poles at the entrances, an elevated timber log through the tunnel to aid movement and a vegetated fauna path.

The WIRES research and policy officer, Dr Colin Salter,

told the Express that "We need to stop koalas getting on to the road, and the major thing to do that is to have crossings."

However, he said the TfNSW proposal was "not fit for purpose, doesn't factor in the needs of wildlife, or reflect community expectations."

Dr Salter said a single round pipe going under the road was a poor design. "It should be a box culvert, at the minimum, like what is proposed at the other end of Appin Road."

However, he said, a double box culvert was necessary to support the local population.



A raised roadway is the "best outcome" for koala crossings

"Whereas an open-to-the-sky raised roadway or a vegetated overpass is preferred, anything less than a double box culvert would have a significant and ongoing impact on the local koala population and other wildlife."

A TfNSW spokesperson said, "Transport for NSW is working

through the complexities and conflicting views from stakeholders regarding proposed measures, including koala fencing, grids and underpasses designed to minimise koala strikes along Appin Road and preserve local koala populations."

WIRES also said that an additional crossing should be built at a hotspot for koala strikes between Buelah and Brian roads.

Dr Salter said an elevated roadway crossing would be the best outcome. "It's much more natural, there's light, other animals can see their way through."

He said Brisbane City Council installed a new design last year - a koala bridge. It has a steel frame with timber over it. "That's an interesting and innovative design that is a lot quicker."

Dr Salter said it wouldn't replace a full crossing but might be an interim solution, be-

cause it only takes six to eight weeks to build.

"They're still evaluating its effectiveness," he said. "Enabling safe movement for koalas across their habitat between the Georges and Nepean rivers is fundamental to the survival of the local population."

By Emily Perkins



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Australia Day cooks required



Community groups or charities who would like to organise the official Australia Day barbecue for Wollondilly Shire Council are urged to submit expressions of interest. The Australia Day Community barbecue and coffee and tea station will be held between the hours of 8am and noon on 26 January 2024

at Picton Botanic Gardens. The chosen groups will be asked to provide bacon and egg rolls for breakfast and a sausage sizzle afterwards, along with vegetable patties on rolls, coffee and tea, and lamingtons. Expressions of Interest close on Friday, 24 November 2023, and details are available at <http://bit.ly/3PQDzu4>

RFS brigade turns 70



The Alpine and Aylmerton Rural Fire Brigade celebrated their 70th anniversary on Sunday

The Alpine and Aylmerton Rural Fire Brigade celebrated its 70th year last Sunday at Growwild Wildflower Farm with close to 100 attendees. Seven National Medals, three Long Service Medals and three life memberships were presented. The Long Service medal recipients were Bruce Kerlake (for 61 years), Alan Kerlake (for 69) and Mark Cupitt (for 42). Those who attended included representatives of the Rural Fire Service head office and Southern Highlands team, Judy Hannan MP and Wingecarribee Council's Administrator, Viv May. The brigade's secretary, Rick Hanna, told the Express the event was very successful, reflective, uplifting and had a "warm vibe". "It was a nice afternoon and great for a whole lot of people who had been involved or associated with the brigade for a number of years, people who even moved away from the area came back to celebrate," Mr Hanna said.

He has been with the brigade for 19 years and said that over the weekend it was referred to a lot as a family. "It is. Everyone is very supportive of each other, whether it's in firefighting or outside of firefighting." The brigade was formed in 1953 with nine members. Membership cost two shillings (20c) and their equipment included a rake, two knapsacks and a 400-gallon tank (for use on a private vehicle). To activate the brigade's response in the early days, Alan Kerlake (current senior deputy) was a runner on a pushbike. After alerting members, he would then go to the fire on his bike with a knapsack. Mr Cupitt was the last pushbike messenger, although at times he was known to use his motorbike. Now, the Alpine and Aylmerton brigade has 49 members, 26 of whom actively respond to a range of incidents including backing up for Fire and Rescue and attending bush and grass fires, vehicle accidents, structure fires, flood relief and wind damage.

Their membership ranges from ages 12 to 83. Since its establishment there have been only four captains: Len Kerlake, Gordon McFarlane, Alan Kerlake and Mark Cupitt. The current brigade captain of 20 years, Mr Cupitt, said it was a testament to the camaraderie, close friendships and working well together. "We are a very close brigade and it's like a family - you make friends for life," he said. The brigade has experienced a lot in its 70 years, including the 2002 Braemar fires, when 75 per cent of brigade area was burnt; the 2019-20 Green Watle Creek fire (heavily involved in and out of area); placing second in an event at the 2018 RFS State Championships; and deploying two members to Canada for assistance. It also runs junior programs and the Duke of Edinburgh Award and will be launching a book on the brigade's history next year. "If anyone is thinking of volunteering time to a service, we are always looking for members ... it's something people can get a lot of satisfaction out of, giving some time to help the community they live in," Mr Cupitt said. "A cup of tea from somebody or a hug at the end when you've saved their house or done something good for them - that's priceless." To get involved, go to <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/> or contact the brigade through their Facebook page.

By Emily Perkins

Long debate over infrastructure needs

Wollondilly Shire Council debated for almost an hour about a notice of motion regarding local public utility infrastructure at its recent ordinary meeting. At the meeting, on 24 October, Councillor Paul Rogers put forward the motion that asked for the council to define what "satisfaction" looked like for them in relation to public infrastructure and have it clearly available to the Appin and Wilton development proponents.



Cr Paul Rogers

"We all know that currently we have sewage silos and heavy trucks from Wilton because, apparently, that was satisfactory at some point in time at this council," Cr Rogers said. He asked the councillors whether they now found this satisfactory for current and future residents. Cr Rogers referenced a case study from the Land and Environment Court regarding a provision of services. He read,

"Conditions should be clear and unambiguous, as they importantly provide direction to certifiers. "If a condition is open to a number of interpretations and its precise intent is unclear, there is uncertainty in that, unintentionally, the certifier might sign off on something different of which the consent authority thought they had approved." He said precision in conditions was important, especially due to the conditions required for large and complex proposals. "We need to ensure the word 'satisfied' is defined with objective, deliverable infrastructure that meets the expectations of the communities we represent." Cr Beverley Spearpoint also called for a benchmark: "How long are we going to wait for the state government to put proper infrastructure in when you're doing new developments." Cr Blair Briggs spoke against the motion and said, "I actually agree with the sentiment ... but I feel that there's a pathway we need to go down to get to the point where an informed decision can be made ..." He said that to some degree he saw it as "inferring" that people within the council did not already consider these matters regularly. "Furthermore, those same very people are in contact with those

agencies that have responsibility for delivering utilities infrastructure." Cr Briggs said that for them to come up with a set of standards was a "little bit subjective" and that they had little deep engineering knowledge.



Cr Blair Briggs

Cr Judy Hannan was for the motion and said she was concerned that if infrastructure was delayed long enough, home-owner warranties could expire before services were available, and if the infrastructure did not work for them "that will not fall on the hands of the developer, rather the homeowner".

"We all know that currently we have sewage silos and heavy trucks from Wilton."

COUNCILLOR PAUL ROGERS

Cr Hannan said she had areas in which this was liable to happen. The deputy mayor, Matthew



Cr Judy Hannan

Deeth, and mayor, Matt Gould, were "on the fence". Cr Deeth said he agreed with the intent but called for a report to be brought before the council first and for a workshop to be held. He was concerned about "implementing a policy response without fleshing out what the implications might be". Although Cr Gould had his reservations, he said if the intent was achieved it would be a "huge win". After back-and-forth discussions, Cr Hannan said, "We're actually just going around in circles and delaying the inevitable so that these guys can

The motion was amended in the end and carried unanimously: "That council conduct a workshop as soon as possible and report (no later than April 2024) to consider the following: As soon as practical, develop a policy statement in relation to public utility infrastructure as defined in the Appin and Wilton precinct plans. That the policy statement clearly articulates the minimum requirements for council, as the consent authority, being satisfied that essential public utility infrastructure is available to grant development consent. That councillors be presented with existing standard policies, that the process involved in prosecuting these standards and examples be provided. "From this process, strength and weaknesses can be identified and appropriate responses created to fill in any unique identified gaps."

By Emily Perkins



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The Tahmoor Family Medical Practice offers "excellence in healthcare" with warmth and a personal touch as well as bulk-billing.

A practice spokesperson said they had an exceptional team of dedicated physicians with a passion for compassionate care and a commitment to the local community's health.

"They are here to serve you and your family," the spokesperson said.

Doctor Ayesha Riaz has extensive medical knowledge and brings a holistic approach to patient care. "Her dedication to keeping you and your loved ones healthy is unwavering."

Doctor Mohamed Elafifi was described as a trusted partner in wellness, focusing on comprehensive healthcare and disease prevention. "He's committed to ensuring you lead a healthy, active life."



Dr Mohamed Affifi

Doctor Safia Jaffer specialises in paediatric care, ensuring the wellbeing of children. "Her expertise and compassion make her a go-to choice for families." Doctor Ayaz Jamil has broad

experience in various fields of medicine, which ensures that patients receive well-rounded care. "His approach is patient-centred, addressing your unique needs."

Tahmoor Family Medical Practice stands out for its comprehensive services: from routine check-ups to specialised care.

"Our team offers a wide range of medical services, ensuring all your healthcare needs are met under one roof," the spokesperson said.

The "superior healthcare" includes women's and men's health, immunisations, travel medicine, pathology, acute and chronic condition management, minor skin procedures, early intervention, antenatal care and paediatric health.

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The spokesperson said the practice also understood people's busy schedules, "so we offer flexible appointment timings to accommodate your lifestyle".

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Tahmoor Family Medical Practice is open Monday to Friday (8.30am to 6pm) and Saturday and Sunday (9am to 2pm).

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By Emily Perkins

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Senate focuses on menopause

A Senate inquiry into the impact of menopause is due to report in September 2024.

The terms of reference cover issues relating to perimenopause and menopause, including awareness, economic cost, physical impacts, mental and emotional wellbeing, care-giving responsibilities, government policies and programs, and cultural and societal factors

Jayashri Kulkarni, a profes-

sor of psychiatry and director of the HER Centre at Monash University, said, "Depression and anxiety caused by hormone changes during the menopause transition are under recognised and treated poorly. As a result, many women suffer for years."

"This Senate Inquiry will hopefully assist in raising awareness and developing new approaches for women's mental health issues especially related to menopause."



Log a frog – there’s an app for that



It's FrogID Week and citizen scientists are invited to help the Australian Museum reach its goal of having a million frog calls recorded.

FrogID was created in 2017 by Dr Jodi Rowley of the Australian Museum and its director and chief executive officer, Kim McKay.

Dr Rowley is the museum's curator of amphibian and reptile conservation biology

and a passionate frog enthusiast. She regularly posts to her 11,600 X (formerly Twitter) followers, gives presentations, and raises awareness about the 250 native frog species in Australia.

Her enthusiasm has seen the FrogID initiative become a flagship program for the museum. The initiative has won several awards, inspired an ARIA-nominated

album and even sparked the interest of top tech gurus.

The data gathered has helped scientists and policymakers understand the impact of major climate events, such as the Black Summer bushfires, on frog populations.

Dr Rowley's idea is simple. She wants people to record the calls of frogs so that she and her team of researchers better understand the

state of the frog populations. "FrogID shows Australians at their best – coming together to help save one of our most threatened native animals," said John Graham, the responsible NSW minister. "Dr Rowley has inspired so many people to care about frogs ... It's a true Australian success story."

Dr Rowley confirmed that five new frog species had been identified from people's recordings and the team had discovered some fascinating facts. Without FrogID, researchers may not have discovered that some frogs breed differently in metropolitan areas than in regional areas, that around 40 per cent of all frogs live near farm dams and that some frogs actually have accents. "We've mapped frogs across

record any frog calls they hear. The app has built-in GPS, which makes it easy for scientists to identify a frog's location. The recordings are then sent to the research team to identify the frog from its call.

The research team is working with tech partners to enhance the platform further. These partners include volunteers from Southern Highlander Mike Cannon-Brookes's company Atlassian, who have been working on artificial intelligence to improve the identification processes. Atlassian employees are given five paid days of leave a year "to volunteer for causes they care about". The FrogID initiative is one of them.

FrogID's chief scientist, Professor Kris Helgen, encour-

'Some frogs actually have accents.'

much of the country," Dr Rowley said. "We are still keen to have help gathering calls, particularly from the Kimberley across to the Top End, from Sydney down to the South Coast, the far south-western point of WA, and remote parts of South Australia, to name a few.

"We're still looking for the missing peppered tree frog [on the New England tablelands] and a rare sub-species of the giant burrowing frog [on the South Coast] too."

Participants are invited to download the FrogID app to their phones and go outside and

ages everyone to download the app and participate.

"Every recording helps, and it's a powerful way to get families and kids engaged with conservation efforts," Professor Helgen said.

This year, participants can go in the running for the Top Frogger award, for the person who submits the most verified frog calls during FrogID Week, which ends this Sunday. The winner will receive a prize valued at \$235.

The app is free and can be downloaded from any app store. To find out more about FrogID, visit frogid.net.au

By Peach Robb.

Wollondilly artists reach Fisher's Ghost finals



Ashley Hume, "Dual Conversations: Chromatic Conversations"



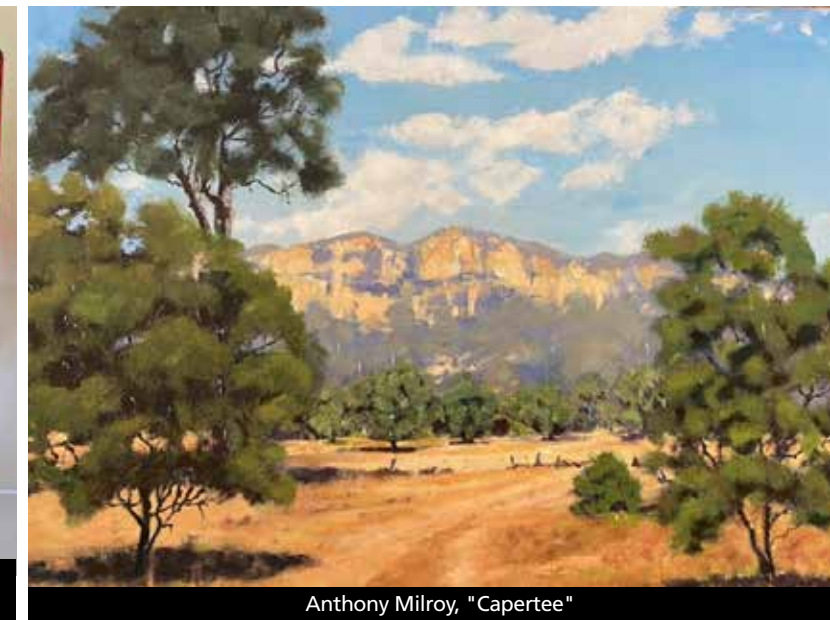
Sharon Moroney, "Once Were Wild"



Shelley McLean, "This Present Moment"



Dianna Hickey, "Colour Your World"



Anthony Milroy, "Capertee"



Freya Jobbins, "A Few Small Nips"



Rosa Daniela Diaz, "Blood is Thicker than Water"

Twelve Wollondilly artists have been named as finalists in the Fisher's Ghost Art Award and their works will be exhibited at the Campbelltown Arts Centre until Friday, 8 December.

One artist is a finalist in the open section, six in the contemporary section, and five in the traditional section.

Now in its 61st year, the art award is as part of the annual Festival of Fisher's Ghost, which finishes on Sunday, and celebrates Australia's "most famous ghost".

In the open section, Wilton's Virginia Fantini is a finalist for her piece "Fibras Mia", made of wool, cotton, sari silk, linen, chiffon and wood.

In the contemporary section, local finalists are Lakesland's Freya Jobbins for "A Few Small Nips", Wilton's Julie Brockenshire for "Freedom", and Bargo's Laila Campbell for "Thuraya Rosalie Soft-Paw and Jasper Jones".

Also in the contemporary section are Picton's Jagath Dheersekara for "Bush will grow in the lounge room", Picton's Rosa Daniela Diaz for "Blood is thicker than water", and Wilton's Dianna Hickey for "Colour Your World".

In the traditional section, Tahmoor's Ally Francis Reynolds was named for "Embrace", Picton's Ashley Hume for "Dual Conversations: Chromatic Conversations", and Tahmoor's Shelley McLean for "This Present Moment".

Also in the traditional section, Wilton's Anthony Milroy was named for "Capertee",

and Silverdale's Sharon Moroney was named for "Once were wild".

Freya Jobbins told the Wollondilly Express that her assemblage, referencing Frida Kahlo's painting of the same name, commented on victimising and was inspired by the "56 women who have been murdered this year in Australia by partners or ex-partners".

"The knife is the favoured weapon used by offenders when it comes to femicides here in Australia," she said. "In this work the knife is hanging down the centre of the stand with a heart under a glass cloche."

This is Freya's 18th year as a finalist in the award since entering in 2004.

Dianna Hickey's work, which took around three weeks to complete, shows the lampshades she has been making as a distraction from COVID for the last three years.

"The gorgeous fabrics look amazing, and this one is especially beautiful. Adding the handmade fused-glass drops remind me of antique lamps with hanging crystals," she said.

"I've been a finalist in the FGAA almost each year for the last 11 years for my handmade fused glass, and the last two years I've included a handmade shade. And each time it is very special. I feel rewarded and recognised for doing something I love."

Rosa Daniela's work honours her mother and is part of a large body of work completed as part of her master of con-

temporary art practice at ANU. "It's a map of Uruguay with my mum's birthplace stitched on it, using my mother's aged dressmakers' pattern paper, reflecting on our relationship and her dementia diagnosis and time spent caring for her," she said. "It references the importance of care, repair and healing."

Laila Campbell's work was inspired by her cats and painted over the course of a month. She used lead pencil, acrylic ink, coloured pencil, oil pastel and house paint, and her artistic process was flexible and intuitive.

while still trying to portray fragility.

"I probably spent more than 25 hours thinking about how I would approach it."

Ashley Hume's work is about connection to native animals. She says this represents a spirit that cannot be defined. Using hyperrealist drawing techniques, Ashley aimed to showcase how the lorikeets "whimsically interact with our natural world".

"I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to share my work alongside incredibly talented artists in an arts centre that

some who unfortunately lack respect for it."

Anthony Milroy's painting was inspired by the Capertee Valley, which he says is an area of outstanding natural beauty.

"This painting was created over a six-month period. The genesis of the painting was a photograph I'd taken near Glen Davis in Capertee Valley, a popular spot for painters and photographers," he said.

Winners of the Fisher's Ghost Art Award were announced at an opening event last Friday. The open category winner was Paddington artist, Angela Tia-tia, with "The Dark Current", a video on a loop.

The contemporary winner was Todd Fuller's "No use crying over ripped lace", and traditional winner was Simon Nicholls for "The Last Civic Video Night Padstow".

The Macarthur Award was given to Maryanne Wick for "Cruel, Clever, Cat", and the Aboriginal Art Award was given to Dennis Golding for "Back Home From Home".

The "Macability" award was given to Jess MacNeil for "Among the eternal resonance of murmur and flare – over and under and between and through – pulsed soft whispers from the future to the past".

Prizes were also awarded to primary and secondary students.

For more information about the Fisher's Ghost festival visit <https://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/About-Campbelltown/Events-in-Campbelltown/Fishers-Ghost>

By Sky Carrall

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To screen or not to screen

Screens are one of those incredibly infuriating topics on the parent/carer spectrum that everyone has an opinion about. When I say everyone, I mean absolutely everyone. For some reason, other humans genuinely think it's their place to have a say about where and when people's children should be allowed to engage with screen time. Not just teachers and family, but everyone from other parents to complete strangers. What is blood-boiling, is simply how any of those people think they have any right to decide how and when your child is exposed.

In my view, a lot of this has to do with irresponsible reporting and "journalism". We have young writers who are so pre-occupied with sensationalising everything (this is the fault of their editors demanding this tactic). Instead of looking at all angles, we see writers pull out the most dramatic, or scary facts and manipulate the story to cause the greatest impact. As we all know, this method is not just in the space of children and parenting, it is often seen across the board.

This disappointing fear-mongering only serves to create chaos and minimise one's ability to trust and understand what a reliable source actually is. The fact is, we don't all have time to read every peer-reviewed research paper about every given topic (and I loathe the entitled suggestion that this is the solution). If we're honest, even peer-reviewed research

papers bring with them certain biases, whether it be the language choice or even the statistics the researcher chooses to publish. As any parent or carer who has faced an unexpected parenting issue, you can find content to support or confirm any bias. It falls on us to look for reports that counter our initial instincts just to attempt a balanced view.

In my opinion, the more we, as content providers, talk about our own biases and how they could inform our reporting, the more content consumers can access a more balanced perspective.

One such area where there are biases swirling around in constant opposition is this issue of screens.

On the one hand, there are researchers who talk about the risks of screens. This changes depending on the age of the child, whether the child is gaming or passively consuming, or even the size or brightness of the screen. Not to mention, the time of day or the specific type of content including the level of colour.

Reading Eggs are often prescribed to kids in early primary education to help them get a handle on their literacy and numeracy skills in a fun and interactive way. Other games may follow a fantasy storyline but are in turn teaching the users basic (or sometimes more advanced) problem-solving, coding or lateral thinking. Even passive content like movies and TV shows have inadvertent learning advantages.

Similarly when it comes to the time or place that kids are consuming. For some families, heading out to a restaurant and letting the little ones have a smidge of downtime on their screens is exactly what everyone needs. That child may have sensory issues, may have just finished sport, may simply just need a minute to unwind. Those families do not need external parties throwing in their two cents, especially when the child has headphones on and is disturbing no one.

I remember when I had trouble breastfeeding and the paediatrician said to me that there are three priorities with the baby. Number one is weight gain, number two is mental health and number three is how you feed the baby. He was very clear that if either of the first two are compromised, the third must change. I think that a similar approach can be taken with screens. The mental health of the family unit should always take precedence over some rules or advice that worked for someone else. If that is in jeopardy, you change



it up to suit your family unit. In our household, screen usage very much depends on what else is going on. We workshop each situation and need as it comes and if the boys need a break from screens (including school stuff), then we take a break. The most important thing I do though, is ignore the advice of those who have no idea how our unit runs and what might support our family to thrive.

My Week ... Biggest Mama Battles ...

- The shoelace on Mr 5's school shoe has ripped so now, not only are the shoes somewhat snug as mentioned a few weeks ago, one of the laces is super awkward to tie, leaving him reliant on the help of an adult to keep it tied
- The boys' interest level in their bedtime listening has changed a little recently where one story sends one off to sleep, it keeps the other enthralled and awake and vice versa, so we are madly trying to find some sleepy content to send them both out
- Accidentally sent Mr 5 into school on sports day with Mr 9's old (but still too large) sport shorts instead of Mr 5's

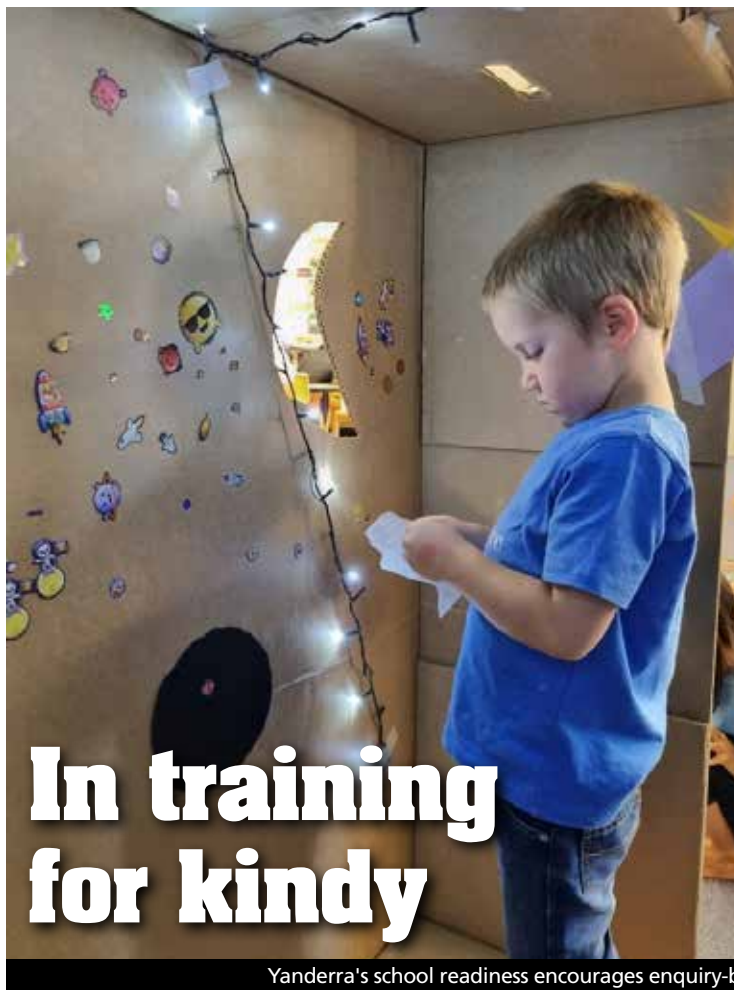
and didn't realise until we got to school - let's just say, it's lucky there was a draw-string

Mumming wins ...

- In a last-minute decision, I decided to take the boys to meet a friend for a bit fo trick or treating and the boys were beside themselves thrilled (despite their lack of complete costume, Mr 5 wore a dinosaur costume with a tiger mask) - I somehow managed to limit their sugar consumption and now have a little bucket of sweets to live in the cupboard for the next year
- Dropped the boys at the bus on Friday morning, to see them race to the same seat and happily sit next to one another and start nattering (as opposed to squabbling)
- Watching a very cute pair of boys participate in their school play with enormous enthusiasm

Try this at home ...

If you can be bothered to manage the mess - having a face paint afternoon can be loads of fun. There are some fun tutorials online and the kids feel like they've had a real adventure - plus it can be a great skill to have at a party.



In training for kindy

Yanderra's school readiness encourages enquiry-based learning

A successful school-readiness program, Yallaroos, is helping incoming students at Yanderra Public School be ready for kindergarten in 2024.

The program is run by school staff in collaboration with two of the parents, Katie Cook and Jade Moore. The principal, Marian Denner, says the two parents have created a "connected community atmosphere" with the Yallaroos program.

Now in its second year, the program is preparing five girls and five boys for enrolment in kindergarten next year. They attend school on Wednesday afternoons throughout terms

three and four for 16 weeks. Yallaroos explore inquiry-based learning through play activities, sharing and listening to stories, playing collaborative games and interacting with their future classmates.

"The program gives the opportunity for little ones who don't go to preschool to be in the school environment with the other children they will learn with," Ms Denner said. "It also really helps parents knowing their child is safe, and helps them see learning is fun for the students."

Used with permission from the local Indigenous community, the name "Yallaroos" refers to beliefs about connec-



Parents and Yallaroos interacting



Yallaroos school-readiness program

By Sky Carrall

It's time to write to Santa



With only 47 days to Christmas, Australia Post is calling on children to post their letters to Santa before 1 December.

Santa told Australia Post, "It's time to grab a piece of paper, ask your parents for a Christmas stamp and get your letters to a post box. My friends at Australia Post delivered more than 170,000 letters to me last year, and I want to respond to everyone before we leave the North Pole at Christmas time."

Handy tips are available on the Santa Mail page of Australia Post's website (www.auspost.com.au/santamail) to help parents and children create and send the many letters on their journey to the North Pole.

Santa encourages children of any age to send letters. They should be addressed to Santa, North Pole, 9999 and have a 65 cent "Christmas-card only"

stamp affixed to the front of the envelope, and a name and return address on the back so Santa knows where to send a reply.

Parents and children who have low vision can receive a large-text reply from Santa by sending their letters to Santa Mail (large text), North Pole, 9999. All Santa Mail letters can be placed in any red street posting box or dropped off at a post office.

NEW STAMPS

Australia Post is also launching its annual Christmas stamp collection for 2023, with five designs that add an Aussie flare to the Christmas story, including the Southern Cross and native flower motifs.

The collection features two traditional designs with images of the Three Wise Men and Mary and Baby Jesus by Dani Poor. There are also three

secular stamps, designed by Jo Muré, that feature a Christmas tree, Christmas decorations and the Santa Mail stamp.

Christmas card stamps are 65c each for domestic posting and \$3 for to send internationally.

The new collection will also include a first-day cover, stamp pack, minisheet, maxi-cards as well as booklet of 20 x 65c packs. They are on sale now at participating post offices, via mail order on 1800 331 794 and online while stocks last. For more information visit auspost.com.au/stamps or australiapostcollectables.com.au

To give Christmas parcels the best chance of arriving on time, parcels should be sent by Monday, 18 December, for most destinations within Australia; or, if sending via Express Post, by Thursday, 21 December.



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Wheels deal for monarchists



A Range Rover formerly owned by Queen Elizabeth II is going under the hammer, after nearly 20 years and over 100,000 miles. The 2004 Range Rover L322 is for sale at Iconic Auctioneers, who describe the vehicle as of Epsom green and sand-hide colour with a front grille modified to include covert lights. The car has clocked up

109,000 miles (about 175,000 kilometres) and has a comprehensive service history, including specific locations for each completed service.

Iconic Auctioneers notes in its auction listing that the car is in "excellent condition" and is one that "will stand out from the crowd".

Additions to the automatic transmission vehicle include dual rear-window switches and rear grab-handles to assist with entry and exit. It also has the required switch pack, front and rear seat covers, a dog guard, a load space mat, side steps and mud flaps.

The royal ride, which Her Majesty reportedly drove herself, is up for auction this Saturday and is expected to sell for between 52,000 and 63,500 US dollars.

Those interested in the vehicle can bid in the room, by phone online or via commission, according to Iconic Auctioneers.

Although this auction is unique, it is not the first time the royals have sold their vehicles. In 2020, Prince William and Kate Middleton sold their 2013 Range Rover Vogue SE to a dealer before Bonhams MPH May Auction listed the vehicle for sale in 2021.

Photo/Samir Hussein/WireImage / Getty Images.

PEUGEOT E-PARTNER REVIEW



Peugeot e-Partner adds an electric option for urban van operators.

Peugeot Partner is the smallest of the French carmaker's commercial van range. There are three grades - City, Pro and Premium - with the choice of short and long wheelbases in Pro and Premium.

The range also includes the e-Partner, the first fully-electric Peugeot to arrive Downunder.

Our test vehicle, the fully-electric e-Partner Pro LWB is priced at \$59,990 plus on-road costs.

Petrol versions range from \$32,990 for the SWB City to \$43,490 for the LWB Premium.

STYLING

Partner is a neat and attractive vehicle, the side features scalloped inserts above both wheel arches and parallel cladding at the bottom of the doors.

Although the two Premium variants come with 16-inch alloy wheels, the e-Part-

ner Pro gets 16-inch steel. LWB Premium and e-Partner are 4.75 metres long, just over 2.10 metres wide with mirrors open and stand just under 1.90 metres high.

Turning circle is 11.4 metres. With the batteries in e-Partner located under the floor load volume is 3.9 cubic metres and it can carry a 735 kg of payload.

INTERIOR

Partner City and e-Partner come with two bucket seats. Pro and Premium petrol variants get three.

All have the Peugeot i-Cockpit dashboard design which has been progressively added to the company's passenger vehicles with each upgrade.

The small, chunky steering wheel might look a bit out of place in a commercial vehicle but it feels nice and it sits below the level of the instrument cluster.

Access to the storage area is through sliding doors on both sides or rear barn doors which can be locked in at 90-degrees or opened to a full 180-degrees. The interior can cater for a 1.2-metre square pallet.

Maximum payload in the short wheelbase model is 808kg and 1000kg in the LWB.

ENGINES/

The petrol Partner models have a 1.2-litre Euro-6 compliant three-cylinder PureTech turbo-petrol engine.

It generates 81kW in the Partner City and 96kW in the other variants, with 230Nm of torque in both tunes.

Power is transmitted to the front wheels through an eight-speed automatic transmission with a six-speed manual for City.

e-Partner is powered by a single electric motor linked to a 50kWh lithium-ion battery that produces 100kW of power and 260Nm of torque and delivers a WLTP range of 238km.

While that range is relatively low when compared with passenger EVs, e-Partner is unlikely to spend much time outside of urban areas and so will never be far away from charging infrastructure.

SAFETY

Standard safety features across the entire Partner range include six airbags, electronic stability control, ABS brakes with electronic brakeforce distribution with brake assist, hill start assist, programmable cruise control, speed limiter, rear parking sensors and 180-degree reversing camera. Variants above the entry-level

City add automatic emergency braking, forward collision warning, lane departure warning, lane keep assist, speed sign recognition, tyre pressure warning and a high level third brake light at the top of the rear door.

Partner Premium and e-Partner add advanced driver attention alert and speed limit recommendation.

e-Partner also gets an Acoustic Vehicle Alert System that generates an artificial sound when travelling at low speed to alert pedestrians.

INFOTAINMENT

Display is through an 8.0-inch colour touchscreen (5.0-inch in City) mounted at the centre top of the dashboard.

All models above City get built-in satellite navigation, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity, DAB digital radio and voice recognition.

The screen in the e-Partner also displays an 'electric' menu where you can view live energy flows, consumption statistics and the ability to schedule a delayed charge.

DRIVING

The e-Partner is an enjoyable vehicle to drive, more like an SUV than a van and with the normal EV benefits of sharp acceleration and smooth, silent running.

Visibility to the front 180-degrees is excellent with large windscreen, side windows and mirrors.

To rear it's a different story, with no windows either on the side or rear of the vehicle.

The rear vision camera does have a wide span but caution is

needed when reversing. There are three driving modes in e-Partner: Eco providing 60kW and 190Nm, Normal (80kW/210Nm) and Power (100kW/260Nm) with that last mode ideal for transporting heavy loads.

e-Partner comes a Mode 3 public station charging cable but, oddly, not the usual domestic cable which needs to be purchased separately.

Indicative charging times are about 7.5 hours from 0-100-percent via a 7.4kW Wallbox, or around 30 minutes with a rapid charge from 0-80-percent capacity via a 100kW DC charger.

With the battery fully charged the range showed at 282km, quite a bit above the WLTP range of 238 km.

At motorway speed it dropped quite dramatically, however, 4km for each kilometre travelled - but then levelled out on short trips.

SUMMING UP

Load-carrying is obviously the e-Partner's number-one priority, but it offers comfort and refinement.

It's neat, functional and easy to drive with good cabin and load space.

Above the entry-level City variant there's a good level of safety equipment.

RATINGS

Looks: 8/10
Performance: 8/10
Safety: 7/10
Thirst: 7/10
Practicality: 8/10
Comfort: 8/10
Tech: 8/10
Value: 7/10

By Alistair Kennedy

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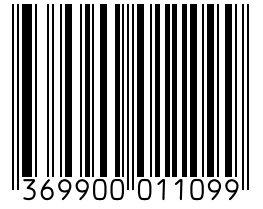
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SPORT

ISSN 2653-6676



Menangle races a sure bet to beat men's cancer



Club Menangle trackside. Photography by Brett Atkins

Throughout this month, Club Menangle is running a fundraising and awareness campaign in support of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia.

The club is collaborating with Harness Racing NSW and Allied Express for the second year in a row to support the cause.

This month it is donating \$400 for each win by a horse

carrying saddlecloth No. 4 at on the Menangle track, and the drivers of those horses will wear Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia silks.

Club Menangle's chief executive officer, Bruce Christison, said club was proud to support the foundation. "We are looking forward to another successful campaign and hopefully improving on our final tally of

eight wins from the previous year," he said.

The foundation's chief executive, Anne Savage, said the races at Club Menangle would raise "vital funds and awareness for the one in five men in the local community who will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime".

"We're tremendously proud to partner with Club Menan-

gle to drive home our message about early detection and support," she said. "The proceeds from the day will make a very big difference to men and families in the region."

On Saturday, 25 November, the club will host a Racing for Prostate Cancer dinner, now in its second year. Attendees will enjoy a three-course set menu, live harness racing and guest

speakers.

These will include Channel 7's Michelle Bishop, and David Wilkinson, the president of Nepean Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support. Topics will include "personal experiences and the importance of early detection".

Tickets for the dinner are \$85. A portion of each ticket sold will be donated to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia.

Approximately 25,000 Australian men are newly diagnosed with prostate cancer each year, with more than 3,700 dying from the disease each year. However, prostate cancer has one of the highest rates of survival of any cancer, with 95 per cent of men likely to survive five years or more.

To purchase tickets for the Racing for Prostate Cancer dinner, visit <https://www.clubmenangle.com.au/events/racing-for-prostate-cancer-fundraiser/>

By Sky Carrall



Local netball represented in



South West Sydney team

Wollondilly Netball Association under 17s representative team for 2023

The Wollondilly Netball Association will be represented in the 2024 South West Sydney Academy of Sport (SWSAS) netball team next year.

Fifteen-year-old Chloe Hoogenboom, a former Wollondilly representative player, was selected for the team among 27 other netballers from Liverpool, Campbelltown and Camden.

Wollondilly Netball Association's vice-president, Kaylene Scrimgeour, says Kaylene says Chloe is an "exceptional player". She said the Wollondilly Netball Association had had representatives in SWSAS teams in the past, as well as umpires selected for the umpire course.

Chloe played for Saint Anthony's Netball Club in 2022, Bargo Netball Club in this year and played as a representative for Wollondilly throughout the 2023 season.

Although Chloe was only 15 during this year's season, she played in the under-17s representative team.

"It is unusual for a 15-year-old to play up in the under-17s

rep team. Unfortunately, the Wollondilly Netball Association did not have an under-15s team for 2023 and Chloe's netball skills allowed her to move up to the under-17s," Kaylene said.

As part of the SWSAS representative netball team, Chloe will undergo an athlete high-performance pathway program where she will develop tactical skills and improve technical ability.

She will also get to play in the Netball NSW metro competitions and have a chance to be selected for NSW and national squad selections for under-17s teams.

Kaylene says she encourages more young netballers to get involved with the sport. She says the Wollondilly Netball Association is currently seeking players to use their skills to represent the local district, particularly within the under 15's age group.

To register for the Wollondilly Netball Association visit: <https://www.wollondillyna.nsw.communitynetball.com.au/>

By Sky Carrall