

FREE

# Hills to Hawkesbury

Community News | 3rd – 17th October 2025 | Volume 42 – Issue 20  
Local Stories, Local Events, Local People and Local Businesses

## HILLS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

# Securing the future for native AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE

FIND OUT MORE ON PAGE 5



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# KNITTING FOR A CAUSE: Yarn Wrapping for Domestic Violence awareness

BY SASWATI MUKHERJEE

A colourful yarn wrapping display will soon be installed on the trees near Castle Hill Metro, created to raise awareness about Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) in The Hills community.

Led by the Zonta Club of Sydney Hills (ZCSH), the display highlights the club's continued commitment to ending DFV in the Hills. It will coincide with 16 Days of Activism, a global campaign running between 25 November to 10 December 2025.

The display will be accompanied by signage placed alongside the installation, highlighting local DFV statistics and information about support services available in the Hills LGA. The yarn-wrapped fabric, made from synthetic knitting yarn, would be made by members of the ZCSH and volunteers from other community organisations.

ZCSH is calling for volunteers to knit or crochet bright 30 cm squares. These will be joined together in two-metre strips and wrapped around the trees. Orange is the main colour for the global 16 Days of Activism, but any bright colours that stand out can also be used. If someone wants to help, please use 8 ply acrylic yarn. Finished squares could then be

dropped off at Learning in The Hills office at Balcombe Heights Estate by 30 October, 2025. The knitted squares will then be sewn together for the display.

The Hills Domestic Violence Prevention Network and Hills Community Aid are supporting Zonta in their initiative.

In November 2024, Zonta Clubs from NSW and ACT, with support from the City of Sydney Council and Places NSW, installed a yarn bombing display on the palm trees at East Circular Quay. Accompanied by signage, the creation aimed to raise awareness about DFV. This display was later moved to Darling Harbour for public viewing during International Women's Day week. Following the success of these initiatives in 2024 and early 2025, ZCSH hopes to bring the same impact to The Hills.

Acrylic yarn may also be available if needed. To request some, please email Diana at [rhondalarbalestier2@gmail.com](mailto:rhondalarbalestier2@gmail.com)



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# Norwest takes the lead in apartment living

BY SASWATI MUKHERJEE

Once popular for its business park, Norwest is now in the spotlight as the Hills District's next apartment hotspot.

Driving this growth is a high demand for affordable housing, ongoing infrastructure projects and the expansion of local employment opportunities, making Norwest a thriving urban centre. New data from Urbis released this month, identifies Norwest as a standout in Greater Western Sydney, both for liveability and investment performance.

The Urbis Norwest Market Outlook Report, predicts that Norwest, Bella Vista and Baulkham Hills will welcome 5,600 new residents by 2040, with growth driven by strong overseas migration, increased job opportunities and major infrastructure investment.

Norwest Business Park, the local economic engine, currently supports 37,500 jobs and is projected to add nearly 10,000 more by 2041, explaining the demand for housing in the area.

Interestingly, apartments now make up 53.5% of all occupied dwellings in Norwest, surpassing standalone houses (37.6%) by a big margin. This shift is in line with a broader national trend, with apartment-living now the choice of 2.5 million Australians, more than 10.3% of the population, according to the latest Census data.

In NSW, about 1.28 million people now live in apartments, owing to affordability constraints as we witness medium-density housing on the rise in Norwest.

Between 2022 and 2025 alone, the Norwest area recorded positive rental growth for apartments at 8.8% per annum, while the prices of apartments increased 2.2% per annum over the same period. Investor confidence too is back post-pandemic with steady returns.

As against that, in the past decade - Norwest house prices have soared by 77%, reaching nearly \$2 million in 2025, while apartment prices increased by 34%. This gap - now over \$1 million - is pushing more buyers toward apartments as housing constraints continue to challenge Sydneysiders.

Apartments are not only more affordable than houses in Norwest, but also 18% cheaper than apartments in Chatswood.

"We're seeing sustained demand from both owner-occupiers and investors," said Andrew Nichols, Director NSW Development at Mulpha, parent developer of Norwest Business Park. Apartments are not considered a compromise

A view of Norwest Quarter, a new development by Mulpha.

or a stepping stone into the housing market anymore. For many, they are now the first and preferred choice. It now represents a smart lifestyle and financial decision," said Nichols. The demographic has shifted significantly - from empty-nesters and young adults to families now opting to live in apartments. He added that people are moving away from time, cost and maintenance of traditional homes and are looking for smart, low-maintenance living without compromising on lifestyle, walkable neighbourhoods, access to quality schools, green spaces, and vibrant town centres.

Leading the housing transformation is Norwest Quarter, a landmark new development by Mulpha. Current plans anticipate 864 apartments across eight residential towers, with housing for more than 2,000 residents and 70% of the 3.8-hectare site reserved for open green space, 6,000m<sup>2</sup> of lifestyle amenities including cafes, restaurants, neighbourhood shops and other essential services.

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## RIVERSTONE GAS LEAK

Emergency services responded to a gas leak at a restaurant on Garfield Road, Riverstone, on 16 September. At about 9.15 am, police, Fire and Rescue NSW, and NSW Ambulance arrived on scene after reports of a gas incident.

One person died at the scene despite evacuation and resuscitation attempts. A member of the public and five police officers were taken to Blacktown Hospital in a stable condition after being exposed during the response.

Fire and Rescue NSW Superintendent Adam Dewberry said crews entered the restaurant with breathing apparatus and gas detectors, identifying dangerous levels of carbon monoxide and other toxic gases.

"We've got our firefighters who specialise in hazardous materials on scene. They're in the building... taking samples, diagnosing the air quality as they work to find out what the products [are] that's contaminating the air so we can determine where it's coming from."

An exclusion zone was established around the site, with authorities confirming there is no ongoing risk to the wider community.

Local MP Warren Kirby said he was "deeply saddened to learn of the tragic death and hospitalisations" and extended his condolences to those affected.

"My thoughts are with the family of the person who has died and with everyone affected, including first responders and their loved ones," he said.

Mr Kirby said he had sought immediate updates from NSW Health on the condition of those hospitalised. Investigations are continuing to determine the source of the leak.

## POLICE PURSUIT

A man and a teenage girl have been arrested following a police pursuit. About 11.45 am on Friday, 19 September, officers from the Raptor Squad attempted to stop a stolen blue Volkswagen Polo travelling east along Old Prospect Road, Cumberland.

When the vehicle allegedly failed to stop, a pursuit was initiated and continued onto the M4 before being terminated for safety reasons.

A short time later, the vehicle was located by PolAir travelling along Rooty Hill Road, Oakhurst, before being followed to a home on Welsted Street, South Windsor. The 36-year-old male driver and a 17-year-old female passenger entered the premises.

Hawkesbury police, with assistance from the Operations Support Group, established a

## SEVERE CRASH

A 45-year-old man was arrested after a high-speed crash in Baulkham Hills.

At about 12.17 am on 23 September, Hills Shire officers sighted a white Toyota Yaris hire vehicle travelling at high speed through the intersection of Old Northern Road and Windsor Road.

Police attempted to stop the car for a random breath test, but the driver allegedly accelerated away. Officers lost sight of the vehicle briefly due to its speed, before locating it a short time later after it had crashed head-on into a parked Toyota Hiace on Coronation Road.

The impact pushed the Hiace into another parked vehicle, a Toyota Camry. The Yaris mounted the footpath and came to rest facing a residence.

Police established a perimeter and, with assistance from the Police Dog Unit, found the driver hiding in bushes nearby. He was arrested and found to be a disqualified driver.

The man allegedly returned a positive roadside drug test for amphetamines and was also in possession of drug paraphernalia and what police allege was an offensive implement.

He was refused bail and is due to appear before Parramatta Local Court charged with driving while disqualified and driving in a dangerous manner.



perimeter. At 12.45 pm, the pair and a 30-year-old female occupant of the home were arrested when they exited the property.

The man and teenage girl were taken to Windsor Police Station, where the man was later transferred to hospital for a pre-existing medical condition and remains under police guard. The 30-year-old woman was released pending further inquiries.

Police have established a crime scene at the South Windsor home.

It will be alleged the Volkswagen Polo was stolen from a home on Callen Avenue, San Remo, during a home invasion about 6am on Tuesday, 16 September. During that incident, three women aged 27, 29 and 51 were threatened with a firearm.

## ROUSE HILL RURAL FIRE BRIGADE TO CELEBRATE 85TH ANNIVERSARY

The Rouse Hill Rural Fire Brigade is calling past and present members to join its 85th anniversary, on Saturday, 11 October 2025, celebrating its lasting years of service to the Hills community.

Formed in 1940, the brigade has grown from a small team of volunteers protecting local farmland into a modern, highly trained unit serving one of Sydney's fastest-growing regions.

Over the decades, members have responded to countless emergencies, from bushfires and floods to motor vehicle accidents, always upholding the spirit of community service and resilience.

The milestone is not only an opportunity to reflect on the brigade's proud history but also to look to the future. With the Hills District continuing to expand, Rouse Hill Brigade is investing in training, equipment and community engagement programs to meet the challenges ahead.

President and Community Engagement Coordinator Neridene Goss said the anniversary would be a chance to bring people together.

"Past and present members are warmly invited to attend the celebration and reconnect with the people who have helped shape the brigade's story," she said.

For more information about the anniversary, or to help spread the word, email neridengoss.vol@rfs.nsw.gov.au.

## GET READY WEEKEND

The NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) invited residents to participate in Get Ready Weekend on 20 to 21 September, with over 300 community events across the state. Local brigades opened stations and hosted activities at shopping centres, parks, and other venues, offering equipment displays, information stands, and practical workshops.

RFS Commissioner Trent Curtin said recent wet weather had increased vegetation growth while limiting hazard reduction, raising fire risk.

He encouraged people to speak with volunteers and take proactive steps to safeguard homes. Residents were urged to contact their local RFS brigade or council for more information.





# What's New at the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary

BY BEN DESSEN CEO & DIRECTOR

Spring is here, and life at the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary is busier than ever. As the weather warms, many of our native animals are breeding and on the move, which means people are more likely to encounter wildlife in need of assistance.

It's a timely reminder for our community to remain extra vigilant—especially when driving on local roads—as wildlife such as kangaroos, echidnas, possums, and reptiles are more active during this season.

One of the most exciting recent milestones at the sanctuary has been the release of three orphaned baby wombats that have spent the past nine months in care. These wombats thrived in our brand-new wombat rehabilitation facility, where they received the specialised pre-release support needed to prepare them for life back in the wild. This purpose-built facility, generously funded by Hills local and owner of Calabash Kennels and Cattery, Linda Meumann, has been a game-changer for our wombat rehabilitation program. Currently, we have nine young wombats in care, all receiving dedicated attention from our passionate team of volunteers.

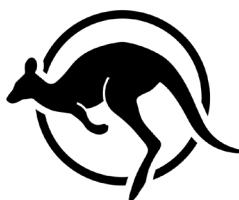
In addition to the important work with wildlife, we've also introduced new opportunities for the community to connect

with the sanctuary. Two beautifully appointed tiny homes are now available to hire, offering a unique way to experience the sanctuary's tranquil setting. Guests also have the chance to book an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour to see first-hand the work that goes into rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing native wildlife.

The Hills Wildlife Sanctuary truly is a community-built haven for animals in need, and we are incredibly grateful to the many local businesses and individuals who continue to support our vision. Every new facility and program has been made possible thanks to generous donations, sponsorships, and countless volunteer hours.

Funded entirely by the community, our sanctuary relies on ongoing corporate and philanthropic support to grow and meet the increasing demand for wildlife rescue

and care. If you or someone you know would like to get behind our mission, we would love to hear from you, with donations being 100% tax deductible. Please reach out via the contact form on our website if you or your business are interested in getting behind our mission: [www.hillswildlifesanctuary.org](http://www.hillswildlifesanctuary.org).



**HILLS  
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Cover photo of Ben and Wendy by Meagan Macintosh

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# FESTIVAL FUN from The Hills to Hawkesbury

BY SASWATI MUKHERJEE

## Savour the Flavour 2025

Savour the Flavour is back in 2025, and it's bringing in country vibes.

Brought together by Hawkesbury City Council, join in for a fun-filled evening celebrating Hawkesbury's rich food and farming heritage. Enjoy tasty food, drinks and produce from 50 market stalls, mostly local and some from surrounding areas. To top it up, there will be cooking demonstration by renowned chef Gillian Dinh and another local business. Also lined up is live music, carnival rides, giveaways, free face painting and kids' workshops. Roving entertainers including Phat Brass will mark their presence at the event too.

Adding to the fun will be an apple pie-eating contest where you can test your taste buds to take home the 2025 crown. There will also be boot scooting workshops and prizes for the best-dressed in pink.

So gather friends, family and a picnic rug and head to Richmond Oval on Saturday, 18 October, 2025 between 4-9 pm for a fun-filled evening.

Visit [savourtheflavour.com.au](http://savourtheflavour.com.au) for more details.



Kids posing in front of Savour the Flavour photo wall.

Roaming entertainment delights at Savour the Flavour.

## Hills Food & Wine Festival

Get together to welcome spring in style with a delicious day out at Hills Food and Wine festival at Bella Vista Farm. An annual community celebration of local and regional flavours, this event brings together the best food, wine, entertainment and family fun.

Visitors can look forward to taste a selection of boutique wines, craft brews, spirits and gourmet bites from local and regional producers. Then there is live music and roving performers to ensure there is never a dull moment at the festival.

Also lined up are free cooking demonstrations by popular chefs, cocktail masterclasses and a specially designed Kids Zone to keep the little ones entertained. Sponsored by Fit Kidz, the dedicated Kids Zone will be full with free activities and rides.

The Hills Food and Wine Festival will be held at Bella Vista Farm over two days - Saturday 11 October and Sunday 12 October 2025 from 11 am to 6 pm.

Visit [hillsfoodandwinefestival.com.au](http://hillsfoodandwinefestival.com.au) for more details and book tickets.

Photos sourced from Hills Food and Wine Festival Facebook page.





  
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# 166 New Australians Call The Hills Home on National Citizenship Day

A group of 166 Hills residents celebrated National Citizenship Day by pledging their loyalty to Australia and becoming citizens during a ceremony at The Hills Shire Council chambers in September.

The special ceremony saw conferees from 22 countries become Australian citizens, joining hundreds of ceremonies nationwide that officially welcomed thousands of new Australians.

Mayor of The Hills Shire, Dr Michelle Byrne, presided over the ceremony and warmly welcomed the newest members of the vibrant Hills community.

"It's an honour to welcome 166 new citizens to The Hills Shire, each contributing to the rich and diverse character of our community," Mayor Byrne said.

"Whether you're a citizen by birth or by choice, National Citizenship Day is an opportunity for all Australians to take pride in our citizenship, celebrate our democratic values, and reflect on the responsibilities and privileges that come with being an Australian."

"With approximately 42 per cent of our local population born overseas, The Hills is a truly multicultural community, with residents from over 116 countries speaking more than 80 languages."

This year, The Hills Shire's new citizens represented a rich array of cultural backgrounds, including individuals from New Zealand, Pakistan, Iran, Colombia, and Kenya.

New citizen Laura Kirkpatrick, originally from Colombia, reflected on her journey to Australian citizenship.

"I first came to Australia at the age of 15, unsure of what to expect as I was simply following my parents' lead. After many sacrifices and visa processes later, I'm proud to be an Australian citizen," Laura said.

"I've fallen in love with this country and want to give back to the place that has given me so much."

**LAURA KIRKPATRICK** at her Citizenship Ceremony on National Citizenship Day on 17 September 2025.



**MAHAN** (right) and **NINA LAMEI** (left) at the Citizenship Ceremony on National Citizenship Day on 17 September 2025

Mahan Lamei and his two sons were among many at the ceremony, proudly celebrating their new citizenship and the start of a new chapter in their lives.

"We decided to migrate to an immigrant-friendly western country, and we were lucky to end up in this lucky country," Mahan said.

"We like the diversity of The Hills. It feels family-friendly, so good for raising our kids. Also, the topographic landscape feels close to our home city of Tehran."

To read the full interviews with Laura and Mahan, visit [www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au) and search for their names.



## Allan Drew Funerals Community Open Day

We invite you to the unveiling of the Allan Drew Memorial as we open our doors to the community.

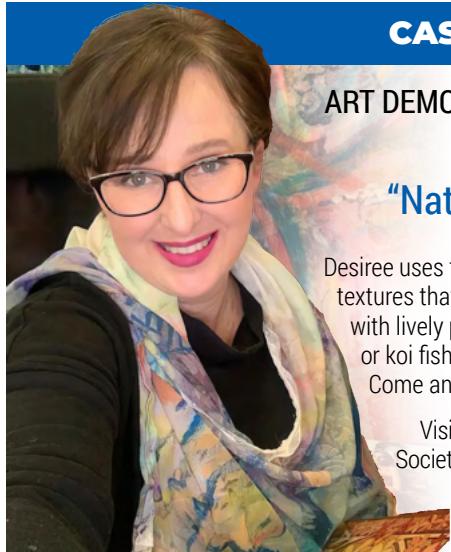
**Saturday 18 October, 10am – 1pm  
Opening of The Allan Drew Memorial at 12pm  
221 Old Northern Road, Castle Hill**

Enjoy a free coffee from the onsite van, live music, vehicle display and a guided tour of our beautiful Heritage Chapel with refreshments available throughout the day.



**Allan Drew  
Funerals**

[allandrewfunerals.com.au](http://allandrewfunerals.com.au)  
Castle Hill 9680 1344



## CASTLE HILL ART SOCIETY

ART DEMONSTRATION – 7.00pm 5th November

### DESIRÉE MARTIN – “Nature Inspired Mixed Media”

Desirée uses fabrics, leaves and other notions to create rich textures that intrigue the viewer. She embellishes the surface with lively patterns, adds an image of more realistic bird or koi fish and then sometimes seals it all in with resin. Come and see how to achieve this great effect.

Visitors are welcome to join with the Castle Hill Art Society at Castle Glen Community Centre at 7.00pm, 157 Ridgecrop Drive, Castle Hill. Enquiries call 9899 3179 or visit [www.castlehillartsociety.org.au](http://www.castlehillartsociety.org.au)



## GALSTON CWA PRESIDENT



**Meet ANNE CHARTORISKY,  
the President of the Galston branch  
of the CWA of New South Wales.**

Anne is the head of the happy band of ladies who meet every second and fourth Wednesday at the Galston Health and Community Centre. They gather to further their efforts in raising funds and creating handmade and knitted goods, plus delicious relishes and jams. They sell some at their stalls and donate to their special charities, both local and national.

With Anne to lead the meetings the members are motivated and inspired to do what they can to help the community.

Please come along on Saturday, November 8th, to their stall outside the Bendigo Bank. They will be there from 9am till 1pm with goods to sell and they look forward to meeting everyone.

For any enquiries phone Anne on 0404 228 209 or Patricia on 0412 948 787.

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# Explore Ngarra Ngurang and know Country

Over 150 community members recently gathered to celebrate the opening of Ngarra Ngurang (Place of Learning), a new Aboriginal garden at the Hawkesbury Regional Museum.

An initiative of the Hawkesbury City Council, the garden was developed in partnership with the Dharug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation, Merana Aboriginal Community Association and members of the Dharug community members. It is a space for learning, storytelling and connection - a living space that honours Aboriginal knowledge, traditional plant use and the Dharug people's deep connection to Country.

The opening ceremony featured a Welcome to Country by Dharug woman Rhiannon Wright,



Visitors at the garden.

along with her daughters Lyra and Zara Walsh. A Smoking Ceremony was led by Uncle Chris Tobin followed by a vibrant performance from the Dhangurru Nura Dance group (Merana).

The first stage in the development of the garden included design, landscaping, cultural signage, and community consultation. A range of native plants—traditionally used by the Dharug people for food, medicine, fibre, and tools—were sourced from multiple locations across the region to reflect local biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Along the front fence, a vibrant artwork by Dharug artist Leanne Watson Redpath celebrates local flora and fauna. Integrated laser-cut metal panels depict Dharug storytelling elements such as meeting places, birds, and plants—symbolizing the deep connection between sky, land and people.

"May this garden be a place of respect, reflection and shared learning for generations to come," said Les Sheather, Hawkesbury City Mayor. He hailed it as a symbol of collaboration – between many partners who shared their wisdom to make this garden a



Ribbon cutting at Ngarra Ngurang's official launch

reality. He highlighted the role of learning in bringing everyone together.

A Stage 2 development has also been planned for the garden with focus on expanding access to the site and creating a school education program aligned to the NSW curriculum. It will also include additional interpretation to deepen cultural learning experiences.

Funded by the NSW Government and Hawkesbury City Council, Ngarra Ngurang will continue to grow as a place for education, community gatherings, and quiet reflection—supporting healing and intergenerational knowledge-sharing.

Visit Ngarra Ngurang  
Open during Museum hours: 10am – 4pm,  
Monday and Wednesday to Sunday.  
Free entry, access via Baker Street entrance.

## Notice of intention to grant a licence under section 151 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

**Public consultation on the proposal to grant a licence is open until 20 October 2025.**

The proposed grant of licence is to Hunter Anzac Memorial Limited ACN 623 275 196 for the building known as Farm Manager's House, located on Memorial Drive, Scheyville National Park. The proposed licence area includes Farm Manager's House and fenced yard area (see Figure 1).

Hunter Anzac Memorial Limited has an existing occupation licence for some of the buildings and outdoor areas within Scheyville Camp Precinct and an existing licence for Long Tan Place House. The Scheyville Camp Precinct licence permits the operation of a public museum and associated community activities, and the Long Tan Place house licence permits refurbishment works and subsequent occupation as a residence for a caretaker.



Figure 1: proposed licence area

The proposed licence would enable Hunter Anzac Memorial Limited to undertake refurbishment works to Farm Manager's House before use as an office to support its museum operation.

The initial term of the proposed licence concludes on 20 February 2035 and has two option terms of five-years (potential total term of approximately 20 years).

For more information or to provide a submission, visit [environment.nsw.gov.au/](http://environment.nsw.gov.au/) consult or contact [commercial.enquiries@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:commercial.enquiries@environment.nsw.gov.au)





Artist's Impression



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RSVP is essential. Health and safety practices apply.

## THE BENEFITS OF WEARING YOUR HEARING AIDS ALL DAY

# Enhancing Your Hearing with Ear Studio's Best Practices

At Ear Studio, we are committed to delivering the highest standard of audiological care through best-practice principles. Our approach ensures that every hearing aid fitting is optimised for comfort, clarity, and effectiveness. In this article, we will explore three key benefits of wearing your hearing aids all day and how best-practice audiology plays a crucial role.

## 1. Improving Communication

Hearing is at the heart of daily communication. Whether it's engaging in conversations with family and friends, interacting with shop assistants, or receiving important advice from healthcare professionals, clear hearing enhances every interaction. Our best-practice audiology ensures that your hearing aids are fine-tuned using real-ear measurements (REM) to provide the most accurate amplification for your specific hearing loss. This precise fitting process ensures that you hear speech clearly, even in challenging environments, making communication effortless and enjoyable.

## 2. Strengthening Connections with Loved Ones

Social connections are essential for emotional well-being, and hearing loss can create barriers to meaningful interactions. When conversations

become difficult, people may withdraw from social settings, leading to feelings of isolation, frustration, and sadness. With Ear Studio's best-practice approach, we personalise your hearing solutions to fit your lifestyle, ensuring you can engage fully in conversations and events. We take the time to verify that your devices provide the best possible clarity and comfort, empowering you to stay connected and engaged with the people who matter most.

## 3. Help Maintain Cognitive Functions

The connection between hearing loss and an increased risk of dementia has been well studied in recent years. While the risk of dementia may seem far away in the future for some of us, a more immediate factor is our daily cognitive load. With an untreated hearing loss, our brain has to work much harder and uses its resources to receive information. As a result, less cognitive resources for processing and understanding are available. Should the information you receive be complex or fast, such as rapid speech, even more resources are needed. If this becomes too hard most people become stressed; they may seem impatient as they cannot keep up, they may feel embarrassed to ask for repetition, and others simply switch off.

## Why Wearing Your Hearing Aids All Day Matters

Hearing aids offer the most benefit when worn consistently. The brain needs regular exposure to sound to maintain auditory processing skills, and the longer hearing loss goes untreated, the harder it becomes to adjust. By wearing your hearing aids daily, you allow your brain to adapt to sound naturally, improving comprehension and maximising your overall outcome.

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# Hawkesbury Roundtable Discuss Flood Insurance Issues

Hawkesbury residents, businesses and government representatives met with the insurance sector recently to discuss the ongoing challenges of flood insurance in the region.

The sessions, organised by Federal Member for Macquarie Susan Templeman, brought local voices directly to Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) CEO Andrew Hall, while exploring options for improving the availability and affordability of cover.

Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services Daniel Mulino addressed the afternoon roundtable, which also included Hawkesbury Mayor Les Sheather, Council staff, NSW Reconstruction Authority, Turf NSW and other stakeholders.

Ms Templeman said home insurance had become a crisis for many families living on the flood plain. "The consequences of the last few years of flooding have changed the dynamic for home owners in parts of the Hawkesbury and Nepean, with too many people priced out of the flood insurance market," she said.

"For residents who regularly flood, insurance without flood cover has implications for their mortgages, their future sales options and their sense of security."

She said the insurance sector's message was clear: premiums could only fall if risk was reduced, which required mitigation measures supported by all levels of government.

Homeowners also expressed a desire to retrofit properties with resilient features to help reduce clean-up costs after floods, though many residents cannot afford such upgrades. Heritage properties, Ms Templeman noted, often require tailored approaches.

Mr Hall outlined examples of flood insurance models from overseas, pointing out weaknesses and lessons for Australia. He also highlighted the need to learn from local cases such as Lismore buy-backs, stressing the importance of avoiding long-term negative impacts when some residents leave while others stay.

The role of state and local governments was discussed, particularly in identifying locally appropriate mitigation projects.

**Susan Templeman speaking at Flood Insurance Forum**

At the federal level, the \$1 billion Disaster Ready Fund was raised, alongside work by the NSW Reconstruction Authority, which is preparing the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley Disaster Adaptation Plan.

The NSW Government's policy to eventually lower Warragamba Dam's level was also noted.

Ms Templeman said there are no quick fixes but pledged to keep the issue on the agenda, working with Minister Mulino and the sector to address gaps in the insurance market.

She encouraged residents struggling to secure affordable cover to contact her office for support and to explore options with locally based insurers.



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## FIRE ALERT, GET READY NOW

Firefighting authorities are warning that we could be in for an early season.

Similar situations to the Californians Palisades catastrophe could happen, long before anyone imagines it's possible. Many hills homes are situated near bushland "among the gum trees".

Local company, Aussie Pumps in Norwest are doing their part to help get people prepared. The company started with the clear mission of producing products that were better than those currently available. The result was a range of self priming centrifugal fire pumps that are unique to Australia and offer significantly better performance and features.

The Aussie Fire Chief outperforms all other fire pumps. It's big 2" suction port and three way outlets generate 25% more pressure and more flow than Davey or Onga pumps.

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 CELESTINO

Disclaimer: The proposed amenity is indicative only and subject to approvals and construction and may change.

# Councillor Frank De Masi Re-Elected as Deputy Mayor of the Hills Shire

Councillor Frank De Masi has been re-elected Deputy Mayor of The Hills Shire by his fellow Councillors during an Ordinary Meeting of Council held earlier this month.

Mayor of The Hills Shire, Dr Michelle Byrne, congratulated Clr De Masi on his reappointment, acknowledging his dedication, passion, and leadership over the past year.

"Clr De Masi has worked extremely hard in his role as Deputy Mayor and his reappointment reflects the hard work and commitment he has shown in the role over the past 12 months," Mayor Byrne said.

"Frank is a proud Hills resident who has served as a Councillor since 2017. His enthusiasm for The Hills is an incredible asset in our advocacy efforts for our residents.

"He has played a key role in several Council initiatives. Notably, he led the charge against abandoned shopping trolleys, as he felt more needed to be done to keep them contained to shopping centres.

"To show how dedicated he is, on a self-funded family holiday to Singapore, he visited a waste-to-energy facility and brought back valuable insights to help inform Council's waste strategy.

"Most recently, during our Fight for a Fairer Hills Future campaign, Frank was out in front. He engaged the community and collected signatures to support our call for critical infrastructure investment."

Deputy Mayor De Masi said he was grateful for the opportunity to continue serving in the role.

"I'm incredibly thankful to my Council colleagues for their support and trust. I feel very humbled. I look forward to continuing to work alongside them to deliver for the community," Deputy Mayor De Masi said.

Clr De Masi holds a Bachelor of Business degree, majoring in Human Resource Management, and an advanced certificate in Management. He is also a Graduate of The Australian Institute of Company Directors. He will continue in the position of Deputy Mayor until 8 September 2026.



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Recipients with their ClubGRANTS awards at the presentation event.

## 18 Community Groups Awarded Grants

A total of \$290,700 has been awarded to eighteen local community groups through this year's ClubGRANTS program - double the amount disbursed in 2024. The awards were funded by Windsor RSL Club, Richmond Club, Panthers North Richmond and Windsor Leagues Club. Recipients were announced at a special presentation in Yarramundi last month.

ClubGRANTS is one of Australia's largest grant programs, providing over \$100 million annually to support charities across NSW. This year's funding supports groups in education, wellbeing, youth and safety.

RuffTRACK received \$11,469 to help fund Hunter's Walk for Hope: A Day of Remembrance, Resilience and Wellbeing. Supported by Richmond Club and Windsor RSL Club.

The Top Blokes Foundation received \$13,216 for mentoring programs at Windsor Public School, Richmond High School and Colo High School. Supported by Richmond Club.

Richmond Ex-Servicemen's Soccer Club received \$1,995 to purchase a defibrillator for Icely Park, Richmond. Supported by Richmond Club.

BY SASWATI MUKHERJEE

Hope 4 U Foundation received \$20,000 for its Future Men group program - that provides a space for men to connect and share experiences. Supported by Windsor RSL Club and Richmond Club.

Learning Links received \$14,270 to start its numeracy program for disadvantaged children at Windsor Park Public School. Supported by Windsor RSL Club and Windsor Leagues Club. An additional \$16,710 was granted to the school for a literacy program, supported by Windsor RSL Club.

The Jeremiah Project Inc received \$59,340 to support people experiencing homelessness, loneliness and financial hardship. Supported by Windsor RSL Club.

Hart Youth received \$5,910 to help organise the 2025 Hart Youth Talent Showcase. Supported by Windsor RSL Club.

Kurrajong P and C received \$5,810 for a roll-away sandpit cover at Kurrajong Public School. Supported by Panthers North Richmond and Windsor RSL Club.

The Women's Cottage was awarded \$10,000 to continue its meditation group for vulnerable

women. Supported by Richmond Club and Windsor RSL Club.

Gotcha4Life Foundation received \$20,000 for its Mentally Fit Schools Program, supported by Windsor RSL Club.

Police Citizens Youth Clubs NSW Ltd got \$4,750 for a Fit for Life Project for Hawkesbury youth. Supported by Richmond Club and Windsor RSL Club.

Raise Foundation received \$10,000 to deliver its Youth Mentoring Program at Colorado High School. Supported by Panthers North Richmond and Windsor RSL Club.

Scouts NSW Greater Western Sydney got \$2,500 to purchase sensory kits for Scout units. Supported by Windsor RSL Club.

Elizabeth Street Extended Hours Preschool Incorporated received \$6,930 for sandpit refurbishments. Supported by Panthers North Richmond and Windsor RSL Club.

Fair Fight Foundation Limited got \$20,000 for the Supertree project, which provides medical garments for children in hospital. Supported by Windsor RSL Club.

Golden Valley Children's Learning Centre got \$5,000 for playground refurbishments. Supported by Richmond Club.

Hawkesbury Community Kitchen received \$22,880 to provide meals to the homeless and disadvantaged. Supported by Richmond Club.

Finally Link Wentworth was awarded \$40,000 for its Safe Start Essentials Package, supporting individuals leaving unsafe home environments. Supported by North Richmond Panthers, Windsor RSL Club, Richmond Club and Windsor Leagues Club.

 Hawkesbury City Council

 Hawkesbury EVENTS

# Savour THE FLAVOUR HAWKESBURY

Saturday 18 October | 4pm to 9pm | Richmond Oval

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# Open Garden Weekend in Galston

The joy of gardening lies in the patience and care it requires. Every plant you tend to is a reminder of the beauty of growth, and each bloom is a small victory. Gardening becomes more than a hobby—it's a peaceful escape where you find joy in each stage of a plant's journey.

OCTOBER 17-19TH is Galston Garden Club's OPEN GARDEN WEEKEND and this year we are showcasing 8 acreage gardens from Kenthurst, Dural, Galston and Arcadia. Although they are acreage gardens they have many features which can be readily adapted to any garden environment, large and small.

Visitors will find a host of plants of all shapes and sizes, spectacular flowering shrubs,



wonderful specimen trees, water features, garden architecture and lots of ideas. It is always fascinating to see how different owners have developed their gardens to suit the topography of the land and their own tastes and interests.

Tickets will be available on the open days at the Galston Club, 21 Arcadia Road, or at any of the gardens. An inclusive ticket for \$25 per person gives entrance to all the gardens (ticket is valid for three days), OR entrance to a single garden is \$5 per person. Please Bring CASH to pay for garden entry. EFPTOS will be available at the Galston Club and at garden 4 where the plant stalls, morning and afternoon teas will be available. Children under 18 will be admitted free.

This is a charity event organised by the Club and all proceeds are distributed to charities nominated by the garden owners and various local community groups. Let all your friends know so we can make this weekend a great success.

For descriptions and details of each garden please visit our website: [galstongardenclub.com.au](http://galstongardenclub.com.au) or email: [galstongardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:galstongardenclub@gmail.com)



The Galston District Garden Club meets in the Community Centre, 37 Arcadia Road, Galston at 7.30 pm on the second Wednesday of each month, visitors are always welcome, just come in and join us. Our guest speaker for August was Ian Hook, talking about beautiful Bromeliads and in September Clinton Nesci talked on Bonsai.



## ALIVE WITH ADVICE BY LEONIE DIXON

There are so many avenues for receiving advice these days, but have you tried listening in to the shows we air at Alive that really understand the needs of our community and offer very sound advice for those problems you might experience.

**NAOMI STOCKMAN** is a Clinical Hypnotherapist, Author, Speaker and Business manager and has a wealth of knowledge about how to develop listeners' personal growth and holistic wellness. Her topics include humanity, spirituality, and life stories with interesting interviews from local people. **Lights On Radio** 12-1pm is on Fridays.

**LIZ MULHERON** is an Intuitive Life Coach & Energy Healer with over a decade of experience, specialising in assertiveness coaching, psychic insights, and energy healing. She tailors holistic therapies to her listeners' needs, aspiring to help

them with long-term transformation & personal growth. If this sounds like what you need in your life, tune in to **Healing and Guidance** 1-3pm each Monday.

We can all learn so much from personal stories, insightful conversations, and music, which is what **MARION KOO** offers her listeners on her program **Journeys** each Wednesday 9-11am. Marion aims to uncover ways to nurture your mind, soul, and spirit on the road to wholeness from inside and out. Whatever advice you need to improve your life it's available on Alive90.5.



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# Creating Confident Swimmers in the Local Community

In Australia, swimming is more than just a sport or recreational activity; it's a vital life skill.

With our lifestyle centred around beaches, pools and waterways, ensuring children and adults are confident and capable in the water is essential for their safety and wellbeing. As summer approaches, there's no better time to prioritise swimming lessons for your loved ones.

Castle Hill Swimming has been a pillar of the local community, helping generations of children and adults develop both water safety and swimming skills. Castle Hill Swimming offers programs for every stage of life, from parent-and-baby classes through to competitive squads, with specialist lessons available for adults, teenagers new to swimming, and those seeking fitness-focused training. This ensures there's a pathway for anyone looking to build confidence and skill in the water.

Castle Hill Swimming takes pride in its strong community connections. Multi-generational families participate in lessons, and long-standing staff members have been teaching swimmers for over 20 years. Remarkably, several team members began their own swimming journeys as students at the Centre before moving into teaching roles themselves.

Early learning is at the heart of the Centre's philosophy. The Parent and Baby program introduces infants to the water at a young age, offering a wide range of developmental and safety benefits. These include increased confidence around water, enhanced physical coordination, stimulation of cognitive development, improved emotional wellbeing and strengthened parent-child bonds.

Michelle Doyle, Aquatic Manager, who has been with Castle Hill Swimming for over 20 years, explains, "Swimming lessons for babies are not just an investment in safety. The skills learnt in these early years create a strong foundation for both water confidence and overall development."

In addition to the Parent and Baby Program, the Centre offers a structured 10-stage Learn to Swim Program, designed to support learners of all ages and help them progress safely and confidently with guidance from experienced instructors. Each stage is carefully tailored to the age and skill level of the participants, ensuring the best conditions to develop proper technique while incorporating essential water

safety skills at every level. Programs are developed in consultation with health and sport professionals, keeping children engaged while fostering competence and enjoyment in the pool.

As Castle Hill Swimming celebrates more than two decades of service, it remains a trusted, family-focused swim school committed to building both confidence and capability in the water. There has never been a better time for children and adults alike to gain valuable skills ahead of the busy summer season.



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# Macquarie Park now summer-ready

BY SASWATI MUKHERJEE

The renewal of the popular riverside recreation area, Macquarie Park at Freemans Reach is now complete, offering recreational facilities and amenities for visitors across age groups.

This major upgrade was funded through a joint investment of nearly \$2 million, including the NSW Government's Places to Swim program (\$839,400), Australian and NSW Government's Community Assets Program (\$600,000) under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and a \$550,000 contribution from Hawkesbury City Council.

New picnic areas adjacent to the riverbank now offer shade, seating, timber daybeds, tables, barbeques and drinking fountains. An emergency ramp has been added to ensure quicker access for SES, Ambulance and Police services. The existing picnic area has been upgraded too, with new table settings and more shade.

The playspace is now better suited to be a regional park – it now offers a new water play area, a nature play creek bed, a basket swing, a rope canoe swing spinner and nature balance play.

Keeping safety paramount, the park now has upgraded safety signage and water quality advice in place – to have fun responsibly.

Federal Member for Macquarie Susan Templeman said the investment opens up the riverbank for better community use.

"It's pretty special to have such a beautiful location to relax and play in, so close to Windsor, and I know local businesses will be pleased to see people returning after many years of flood damage. It's a great example of 'building back better' after a disaster," she said.

Federal Minister for Emergency Management, Kristy McBain said the renewal of Macquarie Park marks a significant milestone on the region's path to recovery. He acknowledged the State Government's and

Council's effort in delivering positive outcomes for the community.

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Paul Scully said the upgrades have provided a space to the Hawkesbury community to cool off this summer – with additional shade and an interactive kids splash park.

Minister for Regional NSW Tara Moriarty said Macquarie Park is now a major visitor attraction rebuilt to better withstand future flooding along the Hawkesbury River.

"I'm pleased that the Australian and NSW Governments have been able to support Hawkesbury City Council to deliver a park and community space that brings people together, supports tourism, boosts preparedness, and is more resilient to future natural disasters," said Ms Moriarty.

Hawkesbury City Mayor Les Sheather said the works have breathed new life into the popular park.

"Whether you are looking for an active family day out, a place to exercise or relax in the sun with friends, Macquarie Park is now one of Hawkesbury's premier destinations," said Mayor Sheather.

Presently, major upgrades are underway across Hawkesbury's parks and sports fields to support active, healthy living for the community.

The upgrades were part of Macquarie Park Masterplan and Plan of Management, developed from community feedback in 2020 and adopted by Council in August 2023.

Council will host the official opening of this space on Sunday, 9 November 2025 from 9 am to 12 noon, where visitors can enjoy donuts, coffee, ice cream and kids can enjoy various activities too.



New play equipment at Macquarie Park

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# The Hills Shire Council News

## Fox Baiting Notice

Cats and dogs (including on leash) must not enter Ted Horwood Reserve, Eric Mobbs Reserve, or Excelsior Reserve from Monday 13 October to Friday 28 November while the fox baiting program is being undertaken. Please restrain all domestic pets at this time – in the event of accidental poisoning, please seek veterinary assistance. Dogs on lead can return to these reserves on Saturday, 29 November.

For further information please contact The Hills Shire Council on 9843 0555 or Local Landcare Services on 0438 073 749.



**Did you know:** Foxes kill about 300 million native mammals, birds, and reptiles each year. The aim of this program is to protect native wildlife from fox predation.

## Plan Your Path to Bushfire Safety

Bushfire season is quickly approaching, and it's more important than ever to understand your risks and take proactive steps to protect your home and loved ones.

Council has partnered with the NSW Rural Fire Service to deliver the Four Weeks to Fire Ready Challenge – a simple, practical way to get prepared, one week at a time.

Four weeks to fire ready challenge:

**Week 1: 29 Sep – 5 Oct** Discuss what to do if a bushfire threatens your home

**Week 2: 6 – 12 Oct** Prepare your home and get it ready for bushfire season

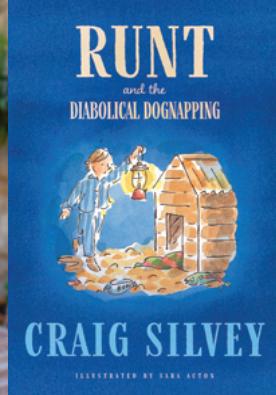
**Week 3: 13 – 19 Oct** Know the bushfire alert levels

**Week 4: 20 – 26 Oct** Stay up to date with all bushfire information

These steps will fuel your confidence and equip you with the tools needed to stay safe this fire season.

To sign up to the challenge, visit Council's website and search for 'Four Weeks to Fire Ready.'

## Catch Craig Silvey for a Barking Good Time!



Join bestselling author Craig Silvey as he discusses the return of Australia's favourite dog in his brand-new book, *Runt and the Diabolical Dognapping*. This exciting sequel to the award-winning *Runt* is packed with mischief, heart, and tail-wagging fun – a literary treat for readers of all ages!

Tickets are \$14.10pp. The talk is perfect for children in Year 2 and above.

**When:** 4pm to 5pm on Wednesday, 29 October

**Where:** Pioneer Theatre, Castle Hill

Scan the QR code for more details.



## Targeted Weed Control Underway Across the Shire

Over the next few weeks, Council crews will be out spraying parks, reserves, and sports fields to control broadleaf weeds like bindiis. Please keep an eye out for signs and operators in greens spaces and be sure to follow the instructions to keep your pets and yourselves safe.





## Have Your Say: Proposed Upgrades at Fred Caterson Reserve Fields 1, 2 & 3

Council is seeking your feedback on proposed upgrades to the playground, amenities building, pathways, and car park at Fred Caterson Reserve Fields 1, 2 & 3. The upgrades aim to improve accessibility and make these well-loved community spaces even more enjoyable and functional for everyone.

Some highlights of the proposed project include:

- New children's playground
- Refresh of the amenities building
- Repaved forecourt
- Additional pathways
- Car park line marking and pavement repairs
- Improved perimeter drainage for Fields 2 and 3
- A new shade structure, spectator seating, and gathering spaces.

These improvements are made possible thanks to the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants (WSIG) Program.

Have your say before 5pm on October 6 by scanning the QR code.



## Council Meetings

Tuesday, 14 October 2025 at 7pm..

For more information, visit [www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au) and search for 'Meeting Agendas and Minutes.'

## The Hills Gets Down to Business this October

This Small Business Month, Council is offering a range of sessions and workshops to help small businesses grow, innovate, and thrive. All sessions will be held at The Hills Shire Council, 3 Columbia Court, Norwest.

### Smart Marketing with AI: Simplify Your Social Strategy Workshop

1:30pm – 4pm on Thursday, 16 October

### Digital Business Advisor

Multiple 60-minute sessions available on Monday, 27 October

### Business Help Desk

Book a session any time at your convenience

For more information visit [www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au) and search 'Business'.



**Are you enjoying  
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**THE HILLS**  
Sydney's Garden Shire

# LIBRARY NEWS

## Hills Shire Library Events

Book Hills library activities online via Eventbrite:  
[eventbrite.com/o/the-hills-shire-library-service-231647259](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/the-hills-shire-library-service-231647259)



### Draw Your Feelings Workshops with Kirrili Lonergan

K-2 Session: Tuesday, 7 October 2025 | 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM AEDT

K-6 Session: Tuesday, 7 October 2025 | 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM AEDT

Castle Hill Library, 14 Pennant St, Castle Hill NSW 2154

Let your child's imagination and feelings come to life through art! In these fun and interactive workshops, children will learn how to draw their feelings with guidance from illustrator Kirrili.

Sensitive-friendly accommodations include:

- Smaller group size
- Parent/carer attendance (no ticket required for adults)
- Space to move about the room
- Ability to come and go during the session

Cost: \$14.10 per child. Bookings essential online.

### HSC Study on Sundays – Vinegar Hill Library

Sunday 12, 19 and 26 October 2025 | Entry between 9:30–9:45 am only  
Vinegar Hill Memorial Library, HSC Study on Sundays – Castle Hill Library

Vinegar Hill Memorial Library will be open exclusively for HSC students on Sunday mornings for 3 weeks. Get some serious study done!

Castle Hill Library will be open exclusively for HSC students on Sunday mornings for 3 weeks. Get some serious study done!

Additional information:

- Student ID to be shown at front door
- Computers, wifi, photocopying, printing and staff assistance will be available
- No re-entry
- The library will open to the general public from 1 pm as usual
- Places are limited – cancel your booking if unable to attend

Free | For students sitting the HSC in 2025 | Bookings essential online.

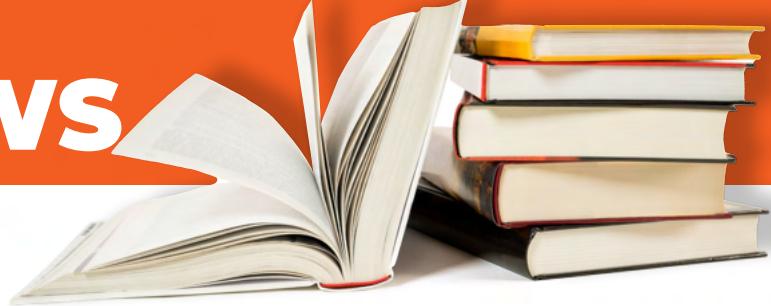
### Urban Gardens

Thu, 23 Oct 2025 | Time: 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM AEDT  
Castle Hill Library

Join Urban Gardens for an informative plant swap session. Come along to meet fellow gardeners, bring a pest-free plant or two from your own garden to swap, and tips on how to make it flourish!

All attendees will also take home a free seedling provided by Bidjiwong Community Nursery!

Free | Bookings essential online | For Adults



## Hawkesbury Library Events

For bookings online, visit [hawkesburylibrary.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/hawkesburylibrary.eventbrite.com).

### • LEARN HOW RESEARCHING LAND CAN EXPAND YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

Wednesday 8 October 2025 | Time: 10:00 – 11:15 am

Hawkesbury Central Library, Windsor & online via Zoom (hybrid event)

Are you interested in using land records in NSW to support your family history research? Many records are available online for free through the Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV).

Join Hawkesbury Library Service and guest speaker Jeff Madsen at the next Hawkesbury Family History Group meeting as he explains what the HLRV is, how to navigate and search it, and the benefits it offers your research. Jeff's background in GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and historical geography brings valuable insights for family historians.

Bookings: Required for Zoom attendance only. Visit [hawkesburylibrary.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/hawkesburylibrary.eventbrite.com) or phone 4560 4460.

### • MOVIE SCREENING – DOG MAN (G)

Friday 10 October 2025 | Time: 2:00 – 3:30 pm

Hawkesbury Central Library, 300 George Street, Windsor

Enjoy a new release DVD in a relaxed atmosphere—bring your own snacks and drinks!

**Dog Man (G, 85 mins)** – Part dog, part man, all hero! When a faithful police dog and his human partner are injured on the job, a life-saving surgery fuses them together. Now Dog Man must stop the villain Petey the Cat.

Free event – bookings essential. All welcome. Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult. For group bookings of more than 7, please phone 02 4560 4460

### • SPOOKTACULAR HALLOWEEN ADVENTURE

Friday 24 October 2025 | 6:00 – 7:00 pm AEDT

Hawkesbury Central Library, 300 George Street, Windsor

Calling all witches, wizards, ghosts and little monsters! Come along for a family-friendly Halloween adventure filled with fun, friendly frights and festive surprises.

Come dressed in your best costume and enjoy creepy crafts, spooky games and treats the whole family will love. Perfect for children aged 2–8 and their grown-ups who enjoy a little Halloween magic.

Tickets: Required for children only. Children under 10 must be accompanied at all times.

### • CONNECT AND LEARN – DIGITAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS

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## Minns Government Ignores Box Hill

Recently in Parliament we debated an important issue that impacts The Hills Shire Local Government Area (LGA) including Box Hill. The Fight for a Fairer Hills Future petition, launched by The Hills Shire Council attracted over 20,000 signatures and came up for debate. The petition called for the NSW Labor Government to inject funding for infrastructure projects in one of the fastest-growing areas in the state - Box Hill.

I had the honour of speaking on the petition along with my Liberal Parliamentary colleagues Mark Hodges MP, Member for Castle Hill and Ray Williams MP, Member for Kellyville, as we fought for better infrastructure that our communities deserve. The Hills Shire LGA is

already doing its fair share of heavy lifting when it comes to housing and sadly the supporting infrastructure is not keeping pace with that growth. The Minns Government put their hand up to be elected with the promise to address any shortfalls, but they have not stood up for the good people of Box Hill, where there is an infrastructure deficit of \$207 million.

Our families in Box Hill are missing signalised traffic intersections, roundabouts, bridges, road widening and shared paths. How can Premier Minns ignore the needs of such a deserving community while he finds the funds for Labor seats? It's time this



government did some heavy lifting. Please know that I will continue to advocate so that we get our fair share of the cake.

## Cheaper Home Batteries For Our Community

Imagine how much energy is needed to toast 420,000 slices of bread, display 42,000 hours of Netflix, or fully charge nearly 900,000 iPhones? Well, this is how much energy has already been installed here in Greenway through the cheaper home batteries scheme.

Labor went to the election with a promise to make home batteries more affordable for Western Sydney households, and we are delivering on that commitment. On July 1 our Cheaper Home Batteries program commenced and has since delivered over 50,000 installations across the country, including over 4,200 in Western Sydney.

The Cheaper Home Batteries program reduces the cost of a typical home battery installation by around 30% – a saving of roughly \$4,000. For households with existing rooftop

solar, that delivers savings of up to \$1,100 a year on power bills, while families installing new solar and battery systems can save up to \$2,300 a year.

Locals in our community care about Australia's clean energy future, but they also want to cut their power bills and reduce their reliance on the grid. This program delivers both, and it's been fantastic to see the strong uptake in our area. In fact, the highest take-up of cheaper home batteries isn't in inner cities, but in our outer suburbs and regional areas. This is no surprise, with 10 times more solar rooftop panels in Blacktown than Bondi.

In the first half of 2025, rooftop solar accounted for 12.8% of Australia's electricity generation – up from just 6% in 2020 – and

our Government is working to expand access to cheaper and cleaner energy. We're investing \$100 million through the Solar Banks program to provide shared solar systems for over 25,000 apartments and rental properties. We're also delivering upgrades to more than 100,000 social housing properties, including solar, batteries, and energy-efficiency improvements, lowering power bills for those who need it most.

Programs like these show that transitioning to clean energy doesn't just protect our environment, it strengthens communities, helps household budgets, and empowers Australians to take control of their energy future. I am proud that our community in North West Sydney is leading the way, proving that sustainability and affordability can go hand in hand.

As your Federal Member for Greenway,  
**I'm here to help.**

**The Hon. Michelle Rowland MP**

PO Box 8525, Blacktown NSW 2148  
(02) 9671 4780  
Level 1, Suite 101C, 130 Main Street, Blacktown

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) @mrowlandmp  
Michelle.Rowland.MP@aph.gov.au  
michellerowland.com.au

Authorised by Michelle Rowland MP, Australian Labor Party, Blacktown NSW 2148



# 2026 NSW Women of the Year Awards

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

Nominations are now open for the **2026 NSW Women of the Year Awards** in the Castle Hill electorate. This is your opportunity to recognise a local woman who goes above and beyond to strengthen our community through leadership, service, or quiet dedication.

Eligible nominees must be:

- Aged 18 or over
- A resident of the Castle Hill Electorate (including Annangrove, Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill, Dural, Glenhaven, Glenorie, Kenthurst, Middle Dural, and West Pennant Hills)

Each nominee will receive:

- A framed certificate signed by the Premier, Minister for Women, and local MP Mark Hodges
- An invitation to the NSW Women of the Year Awards Ceremony in Sydney on **Thursday, 5 March 2026**
- Inclusion in the NSW Honour Roll, with potential consideration for the Hidden Treasures Honour Roll (for rural women who volunteer)



Nominations close Friday, 31 October 2025. Nominate online now and help celebrate the outstanding contributions of women across Castle Hill.

*Authorised by Mark Hodges MP. Funded using parliamentary entitlements.*



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**Mark Hodges MP**  
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[Suite 1A, 19-21 Terminus St Castle Hill 2154](#)

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SCAN ME

# PETS OF THE WEEK

**AT A GLANCE**

NAME: PABLO  
BREED: American Staffordshire Terrier  
SEX: Male  
AGE: 4 Yrs, 5 Mos and 3 Wks  
PRICE: \$49

**The Hawkesbury Companion Animal Shelter (CAS)**

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or visit the new webpage  
<https://hawkesburycas.com.au/>



**MEET PABLO**, a lively and spirited companion who will brighten any household with his infectious energy! This powerhouse of enthusiasm is a charming adventurer, always ready to seize the day with his playful antics and zest for life. Staff at the Hawkesbury Companion Animal Shelter (CAS) say Pablo is looking for a home that can keep up with his vibrant personality. With his strong build and dynamic energy, Pablo will flourish in a setting with secure, robust fencing to ensure his safety while he enjoys his time outdoors. He would make an ideal companion for an active family who appreciates his strength and energy, providing him with the exercise and playtime that he thrives on. While Pablo is not compatible with feline companions, he is eager to form strong bonds with his human family. His spirited nature requires understanding and guidance, making him best suited for a home familiar with the needs of such an energetic pup. Staff say that in exchange for the love and attention you provide, Pablo offers an abundance of affection and loyalty. If you're ready for an adventure and excited to welcome a dog with a zest for life into your family, Pablo is ready to be your new best friend!

**MEET CHERRY**, a friendly and lovely dog who's ready to bring a delightful mix of charm and tranquillity into your life. Staff at the Hawkesbury Companion Animal Shelter (CAS) say with Cherry's endearing personality, she is a perfect match for anyone seeking a companion who strikes the right balance between playfulness and calm. Cherry is known for being quietly friendly, greeting both familiar faces and new friends with a wagging tail. Whether it's a gentle stroll around the block or a relaxing afternoon in the garden, this playful pup cherishes every moment spent with their human companions. Staff say Cherry thrives in a variety of settings, making her adaptable to many different lifestyles. Whether it is a bustling family home or a tranquil household, Cherry's sweet demeanour will fit right in. Their quiet nature makes her a wonderful companion for anyone seeking the comfort and affection that only a dog can offer. If you're ready to open your heart and home to a dog who is as lovely as they are playful, consider Cherry as your new best friend.

**AT A GLANCE**

NAME: CHERRY  
BREED: Staffy  
SEX: Female  
AGE: 2 Yrs, 3 Mos and 3 Wks  
PRICE: \$49



*Disclaimer:\*\*All prices include microchipping, lifetime council registration, desexing and 1st Vaccination. Hawkesbury Council's Rehoming Organisation Number is: R251000145.*

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**CONTACT US** [sydneyanimalhospitals.com.au](http://sydneyanimalhospitals.com.au)

# Springle Robotics Brings a touch of the future to the Hills

BY LANCE ZAFE

Robots are no longer confined to science fiction or factory floors. In the Hills, they are beginning to appear in cafés, libraries and aged care centres.

Behind the move is Springle Robotics, a local startup founded by Hills resident Shyuni Shyamsunder. The company is exploring how service robots can support staff, reduce repetitive work, and create playful moments that spark community connection.

"I've always been fascinated by innovation, and I believe the future workforce won't just be people, it will be people and robots working together," Shyamsunder said. "Rather than fear that shift, we need to embrace it."

Springle's robots are designed with personality in mind. Each has its own name, quirks and style, far from being faceless machines. One of their



signature models, Kikato, is described as a "senior hospitality delivery and branding expert."

Kikato is cheerful, polite, and ready to deliver meals and drinks without complaint. Other robots can sing, dance or play music, adding unexpected charm to their daily tasks.

In aged care centres, the robots can deliver essentials or meals, freeing up staff to spend more time with residents. In libraries, they can move and organise books. In restaurants, they run orders from kitchen to table. And in shopping centres, they can host interactive campaigns or guide visitors.

The Hills Shire Council has been closely involved in the startup's journey. After Shyamsunder shared her vision with councillors and staff, the Council's Economic Development and Innovation team helped connect Springle with businesses across the area.

That support has led to pilots in local venues and early conversations about where robots might add value next. According to Shyamsunder, the initial response is often curiosity mixed with hesitation. But that quickly changes once staff and customers see the robots in action.



## Springle Robotics

"What we've seen consistently is this: once businesses actually use a robot, their hesitation turns into excitement," she said. "Staff often go from 'Will this really work?' to 'When can we get another one?' very quickly."

For the founder, the goal isn't to replace people but to ease their workload.

"Our robots are designed to support, not replace. They take care of repetitive tasks so staff can focus on what really matters – customer service, human connection, and adding value."

Looking ahead, Shyamsunder sees robots becoming part of everyday life across the Hills, from schools and supermarkets to aged care and hospitality.

"Our vision is simple but powerful: to use technology to serve people and strengthen our community, starting right here at home," she said.

They are inviting businesses to reach out for a two-week trial, with no cost except the robot transport via [spranglerobotics.com.au](http://spranglerobotics.com.au).

## ABORIGINAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Navin Officer Heritage Consultants Pty Ltd has been commissioned by Aurecon to undertake a cultural heritage assessment for the Baulkham Hills Battery Energy Storage System Project (SSD-80854710).

The project is being developed through a State Significant Development planning assessment framework, which requires an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report to be completed as part of the Environmental Impact Statement for the project assessment and prior to construction. Therefore, we are implementing the *Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010*. This requires us to ascertain, from reasonable sources, the names of Aboriginal people who may hold cultural knowledge relevant to determining the significance of Aboriginal objects or places relative to the area.

We invite Aboriginal people who hold cultural knowledge relevant to determining the cultural significance of objects and places in the investigation area, to register an interest in a process of community consultation.

The purpose of this consultation is to assist the proponent and government authorities in the preparation and assessment of legislative requirements, permits and approvals.

Please forward expressions of interest to:

The Secretary  
Navin Officer Heritage Consultants  
4/71 Leichhardt Street, Kingston ACT 2604

The closing date for this registration of interest is  
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# BIRD OBSERVATION

One of the most engaging activities that can be undertaken in bushland or wetland environments is to observe those birds which frequent that immediate locality. Experienced bushwalkers keep a particular eye out for any birds they may encounter along the way.

However, there are dedicated people whose main focus when out in bushland is to concentrate solely on the birdlife around them.

For these enthusiastic people, "discovering" a new bird that they have not seen before can be a very satisfying experience.

There are a number of strategies that can be adopted for others who may find bird watching an interesting pastime.

In order to "get up close and personal" with small birds who occupy the undergrowth as well as the canopy, a powerful pair of binoculars would be essential. A comprehensive field guide is also very useful when helping to identify most birds. Appropriate clothing and footwear for the bird watcher is also advisable.

Australian Wood Duck family



Aspects to consider when attempting to determine the type of any bird being observed, is to consider its size and colour, the shape of its head and beak, the colour and length of its legs, as well as any call that can be heard.

Being as inconspicuous as possible is advantageous, as birds, especially small ones, are very wary of unusual movement nearby. Being quiet and patient lessens any disturbance that may interrupt the process of observing the interesting habits of the bird being watched.

For further information about bird identification and observation techniques, particularly for those considering involvement in this worthwhile activity, it is suggested that the reader enter the following web address into their browser :<http://online.fliphml5.com/awdd/wxbt/>

This year the "Aussie Backyard Bird Count" will be held during Bird Week from Monday October 20 to Sunday October 26. For more information enter this web address into your browser <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au>



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# Australian Kung Fu Tai Chi Festival debuts in Castle Hill

BY LANCE ZAFE

Castle Hill played host to a celebration of martial arts and culture with the inaugural Australian Kung Fu Tai Chi Festival. Held at Arthur Whitling Park on 20 September, the all-day event ran from 10 am to 6 pm and brought together masters, students, families and community leaders.

The festival was hosted by the Australian Chinese Wushu (Kungfu) Culture Association Inc (ACWCA Inc), led by Master Daniel Wang, President of the association and Shifu of Kung Fu Republic.

The goals of the day were to showcase Chinese Kung Fu and Tai Chi, celebrate traditional culture, and encourage community connection.

VIPs included the Hon Mark Hodges MP for Castle Hill, Hills Shire Mayor Dr Michelle Byrne, Deputy Mayor Clr Frank De Masi, and Taoist Master Yan. A congratulatory letter was also received from the Beijing Hunyuan Tai Chi Development Centre.



Australia Tai Chi Castle Hill

The program featured a Dragon and Lion Dance, official speeches, group photos, and a range of performances. Master William Lo (Tai Chi World Champion, Vice President of ACWCA Inc, and founder of Blacktown Tai Chi) led the Dragon Dance and joined in group demonstrations.

These included Tai Yi Style Tai Chi, Tai Yi Style Qigong, and children's Praying Mantis Kung Fu, performed by students from Kung Fu Republic, Blacktown Tai Chi and Sydney Elite Chinese School Granville.

Kung Fu Republic students also performed solo items, including Damien Turner's Meteor Hammer and John Dinallo's Iron Rings display. Other groups took to the stage too, among them Shaolin Temple Australia, Tai Chi Association of Australia and the Australia Tai Chi Institute.

For Master Lo, the festival held deep personal meaning.

"For me personally, it meant the world, as we finally have a day to specifically celebrate our martial arts traditions," he said.



Master Lo leading Kung Fu Republic's performance of Tai Yi style Tai Chi

"The most memorable moment was our group photo, where masters of many different styles stood side by side in unity and friendship."

He also stressed the importance of community support: "Having leaders present solidifies our sense of unity and a shared goal of enriching the community."

Local youth Mick, who attended with friends, said the event exceeded expectations.

"It was so good to see so many like-minded people practising Taiji and martial arts and being able to talk to each other about them," he said.

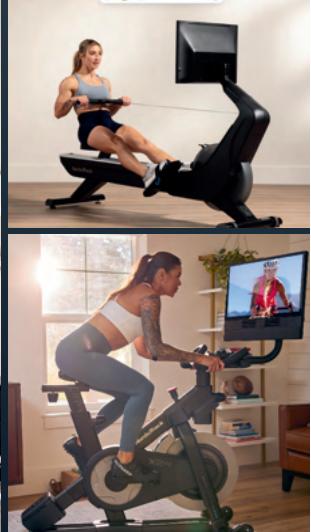
"It really helps build the local Hills community bringing diverse members from Taiji players to dancers and singers together in such a welcoming atmosphere."

Organisers declared 20 September as Australia Kung Fu Tai Chi Festival Day and hope to see it become an annual cultural tradition. Looking ahead, Master Lo envisions more groups, students and workshops, with the celebration eventually spreading across every state in Australia.

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# SUNDAY DRIVE

It's Spring and it's Sunday. So much to do and see, open gardens, festivals and fetes and even open house at some of Sydney's historical properties. My diary is filling up with invitations to see and experience a wealth of beauty around this great city of ours. Well that is what is happening at our place this week.

Actually as I am writing this it is not yet Sunday, but Saturday and my mind has wandered back (as it often tends to do now) to years past. I am recalling the days when the roads were less busy on weekends, shops were closed on Sundays and even Saturday afternoons, when there were less people around and everyone seemed to know everyone else in the neighbourhood. Back in the day when people would go for a "Sunday drive" often to outlying rural areas or to the beach, when dad would load the family into the family car (remember when there was usually only one car in the household?) and off we would go.

Dad would often ensure that the fuel tank in the car had sufficient fuel for the trip because many service stations were not open on Sundays. The Esky and picnic tables or blankets would be loaded into the boot of the car. There would be sandwiches or salads prepared by mum, some soft drink and maybe some beer in the Esky. The family including the dog would pile inside the car after deciding on a location to head for.

I am generalising in these recollections. Actually the dog did not join us in these drives back in the late 1950's or early '60s. Different families may have different memories of such drives. As a child we would be taken to such exotic places as Bobbin Head or Coal & Candle Creek at Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park. We would look for a vacant picnic hut or table if we could otherwise it would be "get out the table or blanket from the boot of the car". You would kick a soccer ball around, dangle a fishing line in the river or creek, or just go for a little walk.

Some family outings for some families I knew at the time would go as far as the nearest country pub that was open on a Sunday (pubs generally in Sydney were closed on Sundays). Country pubs were open for bona-fide travellers so that many pubs on what was then just outside the fringe of Sydney's metropolitan area were very popular. The Cross Roads Hotel, just outside Liverpool or the Log Cabin at Penrith and the pub at Brooklyn are some that come to mind as being popular with Sydney's Sunday drivers.

As I got older and obtained my own car I often took Sunday drives along country roads to places such as Cobbitty, Camden, Campbelltown and Appin. Later Sunday drives after marriage would include visits to garden nurseries along what was then countrified Old Northern Rd at Castle Hill, Dural and Galston or perhaps a drive out to Windsor or the Blue Mountains.

Mostly now though my Sunday drives are just as often on a weekday avoiding the weekend traffic of mums and dads taking their kids to sporting events or out shopping now that stores are open seven days a week

**DON'T FORGET TO CONTRIBUTE YOUR MEMORIES AND ALSO ANY OLD PHOTOGRAPHS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE PUBLISHED IN THIS MAGAZINE'S "AS WE WERE" SECTION. NOW WHAT ABOUT YOUR MEMORIES OR YOUR STORY.**

You can write about childhood memories of where you may have grown up or moving into the area. Tell us about your school days. Where you worked, played or went on holidays; your first car; that first date, getting married or maybe the history of your family, group or organisation in the district. This page is about memories so tell us yours..

If you have some great memories, or perhaps you belong to a local community organisation and would like to share your organisation's history or story with us then feel free to share your memories or experiences by writing to 17 Rose St., Baulkham Hills NSW 2153 or email to ivorjones@hillstoHawkesbury.com.au You can also share memories on any of my Facebook memories groups including Hills District Memories which you will find at www.facebook.com/groups/Hills.memories/ or Hawkesbury Happenings & Memories which you will find at www.facebook.com/groups/Hawkesmemories/

## Full-Time and Part-Time Administration Positions

We are an accounting firm located in Riverstone & Windsor looking for two enthusiastic individuals to fill full-time and part-time administration roles.

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Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

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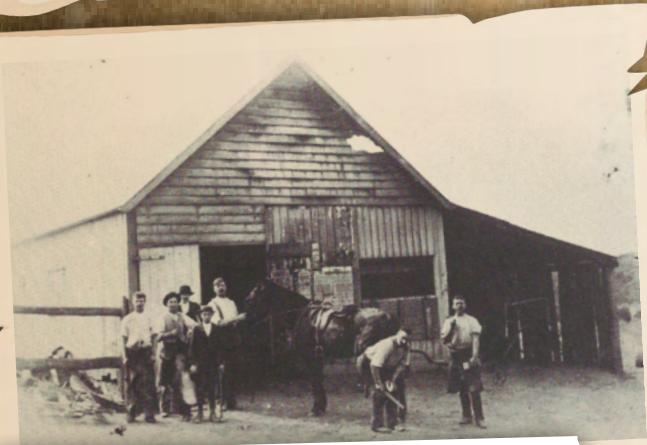
## BAULKHAM HILLS SNAPSHOTS



Hills Bowling Club, Baulkham Hills Dec. 19 1936



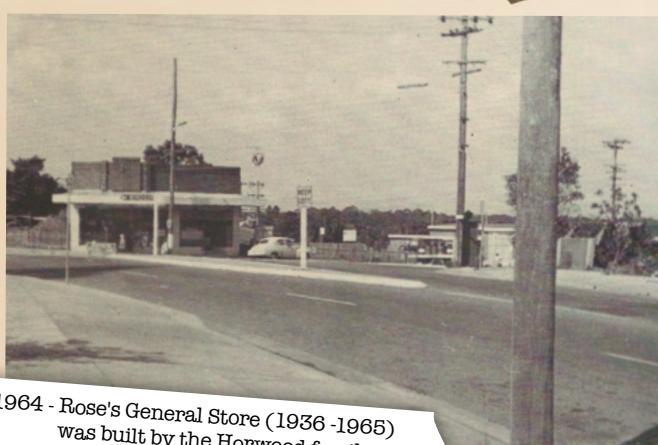
Hills District Bowling Club, Baulkham Hills c1957



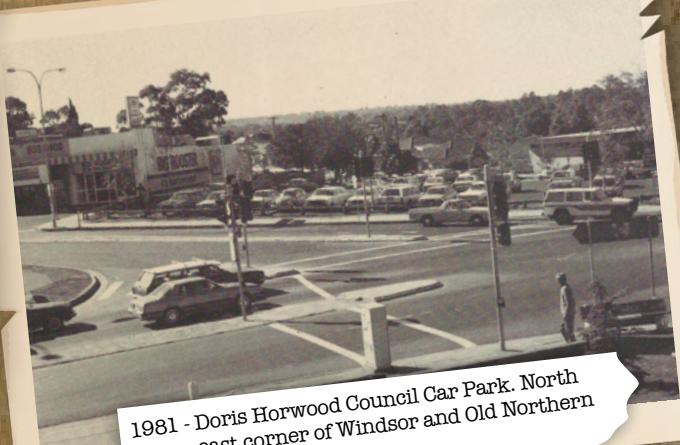
1894 - Daniel Horwood's Blacksmith Shop (1893 - 1932).  
North east corner of Windsor and  
Old Northern Roads.



1960 - Doris Horwood's home (1900 - 1975),  
behind Horwoods Blacksmith Shop.  
North east side of Old Northern Road.



1964 - Rose's General Store (1936 -1965)  
was built by the Horwood family.  
North east corner of Windsor and  
Old Northern Roads.



1981 - Doris Horwood Council Car Park, North  
east corner of Windsor and Old Northern  
Roads.

All photos courtesy of the Hills District Historical Society. The photos shown in the Baulkham Hills Snapshots are all of the North east corner of Windsor & Old Northern Rds, Baulkham Hills at various stages in time.

# Racing Ace Paige Raddatz To Make F4 debut in India

BY LAWRENCE MACHADO

Eight-time Australian Ladies Karting champion Paige Raddatz is ready to take on international competitors and underline her champion pedigree overseas. Backed by her determination, skills and experience, she is keen to reach the highest levels of the motor racing.

Winner of countless junior and senior Australian titles, Paige faces her biggest challenge in her debut Formula 4 race at Coimbatore, India, on October 5.

Paige, 21, is seizing this huge opportunity to showcase her talent in the entry level of the F1 Championships.

The highly-skilled and motivated Marayla local has been surging through the ranks of the Australian Karting Championships. The first female to win the Rotax Pro Tour in Australia, Paige is now chomping at the bit to stamp her class internationally.

Having stepped into her first kart on her seventh birthday, Paige is fully focussed on motor racing. "My main motivation is to win and



Paige Raddatz has won the Australian Ladies Karting title eight times.

I love the adrenalin you get from being in the kart or car," Paige said. "My dad raced cars when I was growing up, but I am now the only one in my family that races.

"My biggest challenge in F4 would be adjusting to India's heat during the first F4 race. I will have two more races in 2025 and five rounds in Australia in 2026."

An Ambassador for the FIA Girls on Track program, Paige's main goal is to secure a spot in the prestigious F1 Academy 2027, the all-female competition established in 2023. Paige also has her eyes set on a possible wildcard entry for the 2026 season, which would be a massive achievement for her.

The former Galston High School student is also fundraising to pay towards the high cost of competing in motor racing here and overseas.

Paige admits her career is "stressful to say the least" and works hard to secure the budget needed to compete. She says sponsorship is vital to making her dream a reality, and is actively seeking supporters in the community to join her journey.

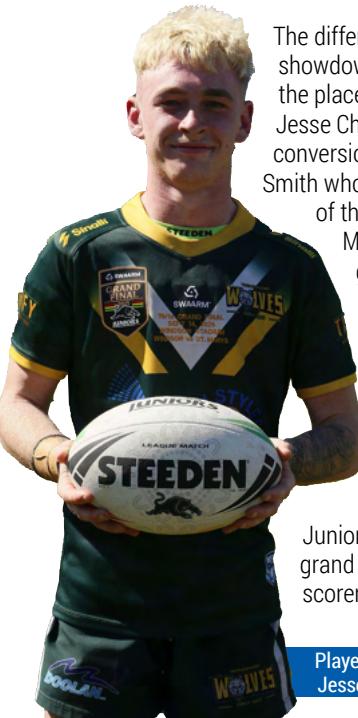
"Winning has always been my main priority," Paige said. "Motorsport has been a huge part of my life since I was little, and I want to prove that with enough motivation, you can break barriers and chase big dreams."

You can follow Paige's journey at Instagram: @Paige\_Raddatz, TikTok: @Paigeraddatz17, and Facebook: Paige Raddatz Motorsport. Her fundraising link via the Australian Sports Foundation: <https://ASF.org.au/campaigns/paige-raddatz>

## Windsor Wolves Bask In Glory

BY LAWRENCE MACHADO

Windsor Wolves Junior Rugby Club outmuscled minor premiers St Marys 34-24 in their exciting 2025 Don Feltis Cup Under 19 Division 1 U19/1 grand final in Windsor. The U19/1 were one of the four Wolves side crowned champions during the weekend finals at Windsor Leagues Club Sports Complex.



The difference in the U19/1 showdown came down to the placekicking of hooker Jesse Charman (four conversions) and Jared Smith who converted five of the six tries with St Marys only able to goal two of their five tries.

Player of the Match Jesse also scored one try to keep Windsor Wolves ahead in the Panthers Junior Rugby League grand final. The other scorers were Joshua

Patrick, Jayden Busfield, Noah Denmeade, Jack Dickinson and Samuel Sherlock.

The Wolves were coached splendidly by Col Murphy, with able backing from his team, including trainers Barrie Jones, Corey Henderson and Jake Wallace. Kylie Murphy was the team manager.

"We kicked off preseason back in November with all four senior teams training together as one big group," Col Murphy said. "That created a bond among the boys and built a strong club culture, and the results showed, with all four senior teams making the grand finals."

Windsor Wolves has plenty to celebrate this season, with four titles from 11 grand finalists. They sealed premierships in the U13/2, U17's, U19's Div 1 and Open Men's Reserve Grade.

The Wolves have 52 teams, with 818 players, making them the third largest in the Penrith competition, with rapid growth in the female sections too.

Meanwhile, Penrith District, including Wolves sides, won bagging rights after



Battle of the West U19's Winners Wolves

12 teams won titles compared to nine by Parramatta JRL in the Battle of The West grand final winners. It was worked off at Kellyville Park on September 20 and 21.

Windsor Wolves U19 coach Col Murphy savoured another big win when he coached the U21 Panthers Junior reps to a 36-18 win over their Parramatta Junior counterparts.

"We are a family-friendly club, and although we are the third largest club, we strive to never feel like a corporate organisation," a Windsor Wolves official said. "We want every family to feel welcome, and our phones are always on to take your call."

Windsor Wolves have an impressive retention rate of 81 %, compared to the average for NSWRL national average of 75 % for rugby league registrations.

The Panthers Junior Rugby League is regarded as the largest in the world with more than 580 teams across various age groups, starting from four years.

Player of the Match  
Jesse Charman

# RAMSEY, BREEN STAR AT POWERBOAT SPECTACULAR AT WINDSOR

## Huge Crowds Lap Up Speedsters On The Hawkesbury

BY LAWRENCE MACHADO

Victorian ace Tate Ramsey steered *Lay It On* to the coveted A Final Barry Chesser Fury Trophy for the second time and the leadership of the National Drivers Championship capping an awesome display at the 2025 Windsor Spectacular on Sunday, September 14.

What is even more special is that the boat is actually owned by Barry's best friend, Brett Layton and his wife Margaret, who is a large driving force behind the powerboat race. Ramsey was followed home by Brent Lewis (*Decision*), and Connor Patterson (*Turn It Up*) in the Chesser Trophy at the Governor Phillip Park.

The event was a huge success despite fears of dangerous conditions after the Warragamba Dam spilled on the eve of the racing. Brilliant weather and a massive crowd, including families with picnic mats and chairs, made it a spectacular event. The event attracted 93 competitions from South Australia, Victoria and NSW.

The Chesser family and National Drivers Championship worked together with the Upper



Crowds enjoyed the racing on the Hawkesbury.  
Picture Roshan Machado



The Geoff Bollins Yamato Challenge race.  
Picture Trent Duvall (Smiley Photos)

did a fine job of getting the event underway on Saturday after the Warragamba dam spill.

"With the team working hard, we were able to acquire booms from the council to place across the river to reduce the amount of debris coming onto the course," James said.

"We managed to get boats on the water by Saturday midday thanks to the volunteers who were out in boats to pick up debris and keep the course clear."

From the first Junior National Drivers Championship to the close battles across every class, the Hawkesbury was alive with speed, sound and atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the UHPBC 2024/25 End-of-Season Presentation Night is on Saturday, October 11, at the Bligh Park Hotel at 5pm. Tickets are on sale now: <https://www.trybooking.com/DDJMP>



Action from the Windsor Spectacular.  
Pictures Roshan Machado

# Whistle Blower Adam A Class Young Act

BY LAWRENCE MACHADO

**At an age when most teenagers his age are playing sports without worrying about the pressures of knowing all the rules, Adam Allouche dares to be different.**

Adam is one of the brightest young referees in the Parramatta District Rugby League, having already bagged three prestigious awards, including Junior Of The Year in 2024.

Aged just 16, the Hills local underlined his growing presence among the referees by being the youngest-ever touch judge to officiate at the recent Parramatta district number one game in Kellyville.

Adam, who attends Parramatta High School, is in his third year of refereeing, having played for Wenty Magpies for a few seasons.

"I stopped playing league because I wanted to try something different and see the other perspectives of the game," Adam said. "When I first started refereeing, I used to make a lot of mistakes, but I am more experienced now,

thanks to the feedback from the coaches after the games.

"I love the challenge, and I do have the best seat in the house! There is always pressure from the players and pressure from the crowd."

Adam says the threat of abuse is always there but the Parramatta District Rugby League Referees Association prepares the officials in safety protocols.

"I cop some abuse every now and then, but they know their boundaries," Adam said. "My job is to focus on the game and shut off the noise."

In 2022, Adam was named Rookie Of The Year, and in 2023, was awarded the Junior Touch Judge Of The Year. In addition, he has been a member of the PRDLRA Emerging Squad since 2023.



Ethan Murray, Director of Officiating at the PRDLRA, said: "Since first taking up the whistle, Adam has worked tirelessly to improve his craft, earning the respect of coaches, peers, and senior referees.

"His historic appointment (for the number one game) proves that with hard work and commitment, age is no barrier to achieving greatness. Adam's appointment is a story of perseverance and dedication."

# PUZZLE

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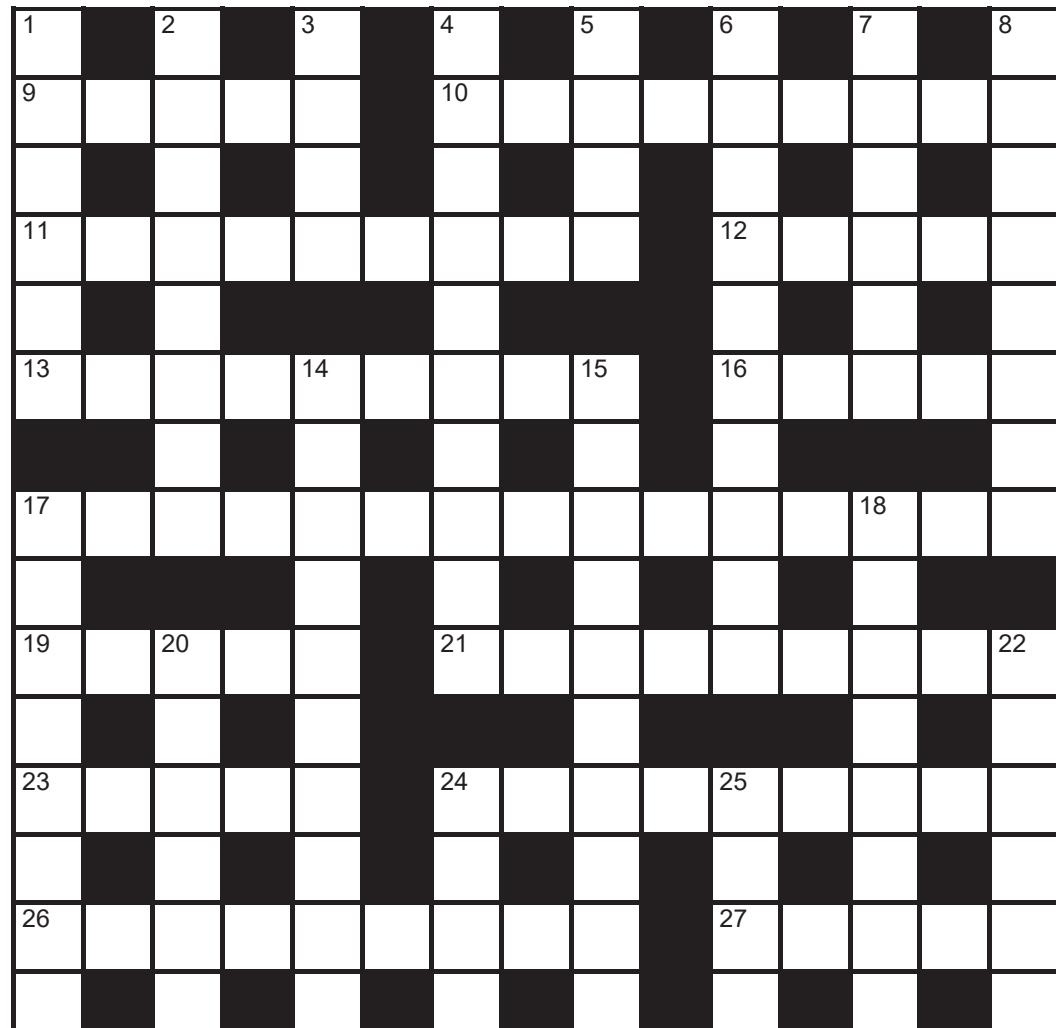
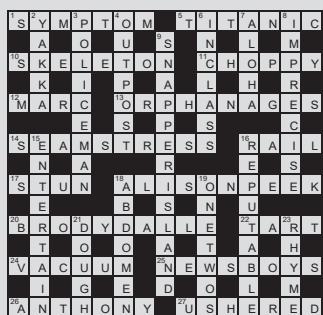
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advertise@hillstohawkesbury.com.au

*Answers from last issue*



### Across

- 9. Peers
- 10. It's normal to be hammered - priests don't like it
- 11. Paroo River feature internationally important as a wetland
- 12. Sound
- 13. Interplanetary transport

- 16. Coward
- 17. Darwin garden sight
- 19. Diving kit
- 21. Cease operations
- 23. It's nicknamed the "Capital of Latin America"
- 24. Type of pea
- 26. Recall past experiences
- 27. Not concealed

### Down

- 1. Skiers' challenges
- 2. In all honesty
- 3. Barbecue cooler
- 4. Feeling the pain of others
- 5. Superficially, it's all bark and no bite
- 6. Champion surfer/shaper, father of Noa
- 7. Allocate
- 8. Place for waiting
- 14. Side views on blueprints
- 15. Illustrious people
- 17. Fine, soft goat's wool
- 18. Assistants
- 20. Say! Rum manoeuvres for some soldiers
- 22. Natural state?
- 24. One burned but was not consumed
- 25. Board flaw

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# WORD SEARCH FISH

A 15x15 grid of letters in a black sans-serif font, enclosed in a thin black border. The letters are arranged in a seemingly random pattern. Some words can be found horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

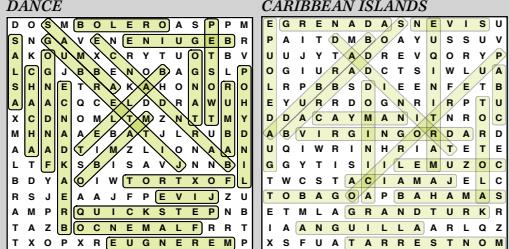
Numbers in the grid (1-26) correspond to each of the letters of the alphabet from A-Z in some order. Solve the puzzle and fill in the letters in the key provided as you find them. Three letters are provided to give you a start.

# CODEWORD

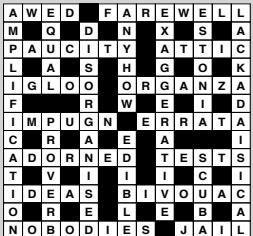
8	12	5	9		17	14	21	14	2	1	13	9
13		14		19		9		9		9		5
17	1	9	22	13	24	9		10	14	25	18	18
18		24		6		13		17		13		15
15	13	13		24		9		17	13	16	12	24
9				13	15	9	1	13		13		14
24		3		16				24		8		15
16		14		19	14	7	13	16				13
14	11	1	16	13		1		12		14	23	18
24		26		12		9		21		8		1
12	21	12	15	23		12	24	14	6	12	21	9
20		24		25		18		6		13		6
13	4	13	21	24	12	15	23		2	1	14	10
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
U	Q											
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Answers from last issue

WORD SEARCH



CODEWORD



BANDFISH	HADDOCK
BARRACUDA	HAGFISH
BASS	LAMPREY
BIGEYE	MACKEREL
BLEAK	MONKFISH
CARP	PERCH
CATFISH	SALMON
FLOUNDER	SWORDFISH
GROUPER	TENCH
GUPPY	TROUT

# SUDOKU

**Rating:** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every  $3 \times 3$  box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

								4
9				6		1		7
7			4		1		3	
8	7	6			3	5		
4	1		6	8	2		9	3
		2	5			6	1	8
	5		3		4			9
6		3		7				1
2								
							9	5
			9	4				
		2			1	8		
	4		1					3
9			2		6			7
7				3		2		
		5	7			1		
				8	9			
3	8							

5	9	4	2	6	3	7	8	1
8	6	2	1	7	5	4	9	3
7	3	1	4	8	9	2	5	6
4	8	6	5	9	2	1	3	7
3	1	7	6	4	8	9	2	5
9	2	5	3	1	7	8	6	4
2	5	9	7	3	4	6	1	8
6	7	8	9	5	1	3	4	2
1	4	3	8	2	6	5	7	9

9	5	8	4	2	6	7	3	1
1	7	6	9	3	8	4	5	2
3	4	2	5	1	7	8	9	6
6	8	1	3	5	9	2	7	4
4	9	3	8	7	2	6	1	5
5	2	7	1	6	4	9	8	3
8	1	4	6	9	5	3	2	7
2	3	9	7	4	1	5	6	8
7	6	5	2	8	3	1	4	9

# COMMUNITY groups

To include your group on this page please email:  
[contribute@hillstohawkesbury.com.au](mailto:contribute@hillstohawkesbury.com.au)

## 2nd Castle Hill Rovers

www.gwsrovers.com.au

## Annangrove Environment Centre

02 9654 3571 (Thurs) | 02 9843 0533 (Wed-Fri)

grolan@thehills.nsw.gov.au

## Arcadian Quilters

Meet in Galston Community Health Centre 1st and 3rd Wed mornings, evening group 2nd and 4th Mon. New members welcome

Carole | 9894 7749

## Bonsai Society of Australia

Club meetings 1st Tues of the month 7.30pm; West Pennant Hills Community Centre, 42 Hill rd West Pennant Hills.

Ingrid | 0409 963 438

## Castle Hill Art Society

Art practice for artists of all ages. Mthly workshops by well-known artists 9899 3179 (ans. machine)

www.castlehillartsociety.org.au

## Castle Hill Probus Club Inc.

General Meetings 3rd Tuesday of the month at 10am at Cherrybrook Community Centre..

Helen | 0403 751 934

enquiries@probuscastlehill.org.au

## Castle Hill Senior Citizens Club Inc.

Over 55's welcome Cnr McMullen Ave & Old Northern Rd, Castle Hill (opp. new Metro station)

9680 3958

castlehillseniors@gmail.com

## Christian Over 50s Social Group

Carol | 0412201005

## Computer Pals for Seniors – The Hills

Welcomes seniors for low-cost peer-to-peer courses, discussion groups, and one-on-one training on digital phones, tablets, and laptops. Make friends and learn to love technology – new discussion grp. on Artificial Intelligence.

Bernard Lee | 0427 137 131

cphills.org.au

## Cumberland Bird Observers Club

3 outings/mth to observe birds in their nat. environ. Meetings Castle Hill 3rd Tues of mth. New members welcome.

Peter | 0412 770 757 or Cathy 9809 5668

www.cboc.org.au

## CWA of NSW – Castle Hill Branch

2nd Tues/mth at the CWA Hall, 2 Annangrove Road, Kenthurst (off Angus Rd) 10am. Craft mornings 1st & 3rd Tues/mth 10-12.

Maureen | 0410 582 723

castlehillcwa@gmail.com

## CWA of NSW – Galston Branch

Meet 2nd Wed/mth. Galston Community Health Centre, Cnr The Glade & 17 Arcadia Rd, Galston. 10am then bus. meeting and BYO lunch. Craft day 4th Wed/mth.

Jann | 0439 222 217 or Patricia | 0412 948 787

## CWA of NSW - Toongabbie Branch.

Mthly meetings 1st Tues/mth. 1st Toongabbie Scout Hall, 99 Hungabee Road, Toongabbie, 10am. Craft mornings for members 1st and 3rd Tues of mth from 10-12.

ToongabbieCWA@gmail.com

## Dural and District Prostate Cancer Support Grp

We meet on the 3rd Mon of every month 7.00pm for 7.15pm at the Blue Gum Centre, Glenhaven Green, 607 Old Northern Road, Glenhaven

Graham | 8677 7896 or 042421062

## Dural Country Club Bowls

04 2131 5074

## Dural Men's Shed

04 0247 8498

www.duralmensshed.org

## East Kurrajong School of Arts

1st Tues each month 10am to 1pm. Bring along any sort of craft activity, pencil's or brushes to practice your drawing or painting with Ruth. Gold coin donation for morning tea.

Ann | 02 4576 5031

## Embroiderers' Guild NSW Inc Hawkesbury Grp

For anyone who loves to stitch or would love to learn. Meetings: 3rd Tues 10am-2pm, 4th Tues 6-10pm Stan Stevens Studio, Deerubbin Centre 300 George St. Windsor (Windsor Library level).

Catherine Delaney | 041334049

codelaney1@vtown.com.au

## Friends of Hills Library

Meets 2nd Thursday of the month at Castle Hill Library. New members welcome.

Lesley Nelson, President - 0478 000 925

## Friends of the Hawkesbury art community & Regional Gallery Inc. (FOHacaRG Inc)

Meets 1st Thurs of Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct, Dec. Margaret | 4577 4440.

## Girl Guides Australia

Great programs for girls 6-18. They meet once a week in groups relevant to their age run by trained Leaders and Unit Helpers.

Margo | 0417 657 433.

## Glenwood Men's Shed

Jim | 0438 701 275

## Hawkesbury Artists & Artisans Trail

02 4567 7400

www.haat.com.au

Leanne@mellowcrest.com

## Hawkesbury Camera Club

Club meets at 7.30pm on the first 3 Wed of the mo at the Richmond Club, Francis Street, Richmond. Facebook Hawkesbury Camera Club.

www.hawkesburycameroclub.com.au

## Hawkesbury District Agricultural Assn

4577 3591 (BH)

www.hawkesburyshow.com.au

## Hawkesbury Historical Society

Meets 4ths Thurs of Feb, Apr & Oct at 7.30pm and 4th Saturday in Jun & Aug at 2pm.

secretaryhawkesburyhistory@gmail.com

## Hawkesbury Nepean Chapter of the 1st Fleeters

Meets on 2nd Saturday of Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct.

Pamela Hempel | 0407 660 579

www.fffhc.com

## Hawkesbury West Probus Club

Meets at 10:15am on the first Monday of each month at Panthers North Richmond.

Membership Officer Fay | 0414 341 253

hawkwest.probus@gmail.com

## Hawkesbury Woodcraft Cooperative Ltd

9.30am to 2pm Wed. & Sat.

www.hawkesburywoodcraft.org.au

Graham | 02 4576 1517

## Hills District Historical Society Inc.

Meets at 7pm 4th Mon of each month. Museum located at Bldg 10, Balcombe Heights Estate, 92 Seven Hills Rd, Baulkham Hills and opens on the 1st and 3rd Sat of each month 12.00pm to 4pm.

Secretary Pam Wilson | 0474 204 080

pam.wilson52@gmail.com

## Hills District Women's Bowling Club

Jenner Street, Baulkham Hills | 9639 2733

www.thehillswomensbowls.com.au

## Hills Harmony Chorus

Barbershop style 4 part harmony All Singers welcome 7:30pm @ Kellyville Anglican Church, 45 Presidents Rd. Kellyville.

info@hillsharmony.com.au

## Hills Older Men's Network INC

Meets fortnightly on the first and 3rd Mondays of the month, 10am to 12.30pm at Castle Hill. The group is aimed at retired men over the age of 55

Robert | 0425 233 783

HillsOMNI1@gmail.com

## Hills Shire Symphony Orchestra

Welcomes new players and gig enquiries. Rehearsals Wednesday evenings.

Chris | 0405 994 605

info@hillsshiresymphonyorchestra.org.au

www.hillsshiresymphonyorchestra.org.au

## Hills Toastmasters

Meets every 2nd Tues, 7pm. Restore Church: 47 Britannia Rd, Castle Hill. New members welcomed

Terry | 0488 089 951

## Hills/Toongabbie Music Club

Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays 7.30pm Northmead Scouts Hall 17 Whitehaven Northmead. Beginners to professionals all welcome.

Allen | 0439 831 531

allendavsguitar@gmail.com

## Hornsby Kuring-gai Parkinson's Assoc'n Inc.

A support group of 30+ yrs. We have members who come weekly and find it beneficial for their condition.

Michael Parkin | 0491 009557

Parkinson's Choir, www.parkypeople.org .

## Kurrajong Hand Spun Craft

Come and learn a beautiful old craft at North Richmond Community Centre. Friendly group just bring yourself. Thursdays at noon.

Margaret | 0403 819 165

## Ladies Probus Club of Baulkham Hills

Baulkham Hills Sports Club on Renown Rd, Baulkham Hills meets on the 2nd Wed of the mo at 10am and welcomes enquiries about our club.

Suzanne Dennis | 96390324 (home)

0412424593 (mobile)

## Learning in the Hills

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www.hca.org.au/learning-in-the-hills/

## Lions Club of Richmond Inc.

Geoff | 0412 969 651

## Lions Club of West Pennant Hills - Cherrybrook

westpennantlions.secretary@lions.sydney

Raj | 0429 440 746

## Lions Club of Windsor Inc

Pam | 0413 395 145

## Macquarie Towns Garden Club

The Club meets at 2 pm on the 1st Thurs of the month, in the Tebbutt Room of Hawkesbury Central Library at Windsor. macquarietowntsgardenclub.wordpress.com

## National Seniors Australia (Hills Branch)

Meets on the 1st Thurs of every month at Baulkham Hills Sports Club Renown Rd at 9.30am for 10am. New members welcomed.

May | 0414 634 572

maybruce@bigpond.com

## North Rocks View Club

Meetings 2nd Thurs each month at 10.30 am. The Vikings Club, 35 Quarry Rd, Dundas Valley. Pam | 047 420 4080 or Margaret | 9872 1405

## North Rocks Sunrise Rotary Club

We are a breakfast Club and meet every Friday morning at 7.15am. The Rotary Motto is Service Above Self. If you want to meet like-minded people pls join us.

www.northrostratory.org.au

## Pennant Hills Garden Club

Meets 4th Wed at 9.30am at Pennant Hills Community Centre. Inquire or just come along to a meeting.

pennanthillsgardenclub@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Baulkham Hills

Meets 1st Thurs each month 1.30pm Baulkham Hills Sports Club, 11 Renown Rd Visitors welcome. Activities every Thurs.

Peter | 0407 013 411

probus56830@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Carlingford North Rocks

Meets at the Vikings Sports Club every 3rd Mon of the month at 10.30am. Membership is open to recently retired and semi-retired members.

Ken | 0408 963 060

thebunts2@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Cherrybrook Combined

A mixed gender club of retirees and semi retirees. Meetings on 1st Thurs of each month at the Cherrybrook Community & Cultural Centre.

Ross | 0411 104 863

rossfitpatrick@cloud.com

www.probussouthpacific.org/microsites/cherrybrook>Welcome

## Probus Club of Glenhaven

Meets 10 am on 2nd Tuesday of each month at Castle Hill Bowling Club.

secretary.glenhaven.probus@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Glenorie

Meets every 4th Wed at 11am at Glenorie RSL Club. New members are welcome.

Wendy | 96531022

wendylireneblack@yahoo.com.au

## Probus Club of Hawkesbury Combined

Meets at Richmond Club 3rd Monday in the month at 10.30 am

hawkesburyprobus.com.au

membership.hcpc@gmail.com

## Probus Club of the Hills Inc

Mixed club meets at the Galston Club 21-25 Arcadia Road, Galston on the 2nd Wed of each month at 10.30 am.

Ken | 9629 6459

## Probus Club of Kellyville Castle Hill Mixed Club

Meets mthly 10am 2nd Thurs of month at Baulkham Hills Sports Club

Ian Sandercock | 0419 567 608

patiansandercock@bigpond.com

## Probus Club of Kellyville Combined

Mts 2nd Mon/mth 10am-12pm, Glenhaven Community Centre, 76 Glenhaven Rd, Glenhaven

Veronica | 0408 025 577 or Susan | 0400 039 308

## Probus Club of Pennant Hills Mens

John | 9487 1385

## Probus Club of Pennant Hills Combined

Meets at Hotel Pennant Hills every 3rd Monday of the month at 10am.

Lorene | 0429 396594

## Probus Club of Pitt Town

Meets at 10.00am on the 2nd Tues of the month at Pitt Town and District Sports Club, 139 Old Pitt Town Rd. New members welcome.

Denise Fairfax | 0435 447 414

## Probus Club of Rouse Hill

Mts 4th Fri of mth 09.30am The Fiddler Commercial Road, Rouse Hill NSW 2155.

Visitors welcome and membership is open.

Secretary | 0413336005

probusrousehill@gmail.com

## Probus Club of Round Corner (Dural)

Meets on the 2nd Tues of the month at Windsor RSL Club at 6.30pm. New members welcome.

Les Mison | 0421 821 1990

## Winston Hills Joey Scouts

9862 8482 | hsara@optusnet.com.au

## Wisemans Ferry Community Men's Shed Inc

Meeting Tues and Sat 9am - 5pm

Alan Hunt | 4566 4626 or 0428 784 425

Adrian Acheson | 0448 833 781

## YMCA NSW Community Visitors Scheme

9633 8209 or 0402 255 193

## Zonta Club of Sydney Hills

0414 641 408 | www.zontadistrict24.org

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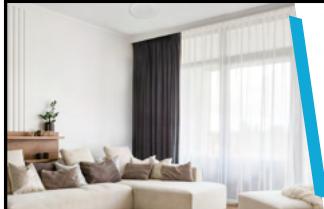
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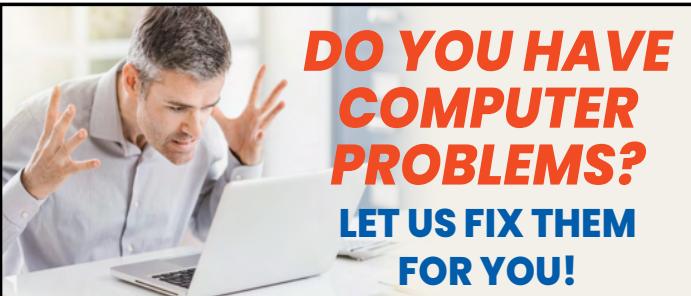
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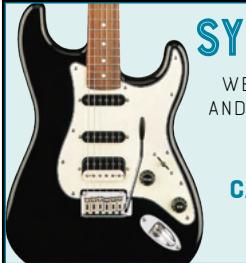


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**GISELA HORMER**

EDITORIAL CO-ORDINATOR

contribute@  
[hillstohawkesbury.com.au](http://hillstohawkesbury.com.au)



**LANCE ZAFE**

CONTRIBUTOR

news@  
[hillstohawkesbury.com.au](http://hillstohawkesbury.com.au)



**SASWATI MUKHERJEE**

CONTRIBUTOR

sash@  
[hillstohawkesbury.com.au](http://hillstohawkesbury.com.au)

The Hills to Hawkesbury Community News has been serving this area for nearly 40 years. Its name may have changed over the decades but the commitment to providing a free service to the community is still at the heart of what this hyper local fortnightly publication does.

Established in 1982 it has evolved into a community news magazine with a big digital footprint. Our aim is to inform, inspire and connect our community. It is a family-owned small business. Our team is local and love what they do.

Please follow us on Facebook [@hillstohawkesbury](https://www.facebook.com/hillstohawkesbury). Printed copies are available at local shopping centres and other outlets. For a full list of drop off points for the Hills to Hawkesbury Community News, visit our website [www.hillstohawkesbury.com.au](http://www.hillstohawkesbury.com.au) or click on the QR code.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



'We acknowledge the traditional Owners and Custodians of the land of the Dharug and Darkinjung People on which we work and pay our respects to Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging'. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the land's first storytellers.'

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