

the aberdeen WHISPER

February 2025

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Australia Day Awards 2025



UPPER HUNTER SHIRE

ABERDEEN

Solar Hearing

A public meeting will be held in Muswellbrook on Wednesday 12 February on the proposed Muswellbrook Solar Farm. The decision on planning approval has been referred to the NSW Independent Planning Commission after the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure received more than 50 unique submissions objecting to the proposal to be located east of Muswellbrook. The 135 megawatt (MW) solar farm, including a battery storage facility and associated infrastructure, will be accessed from Muscle Creek Road.

Speakers must register for the public meeting at the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music by 12pm Tuesday 4 February with written submissions accepted until Wednesday 19 February at 5pm. Further information about the project and the public meeting are available at: www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/cases/2024/12/muswellbrook-solar-farm

Supplied.



SCONE

more on page 5

Whisper Trivia

1. What song did The Wiggles cover for Triple J's Hottest 100 in 2021?
2. What is Australia's oldest chocolate bar?
3. Which Australian National Heritage-listed site is reputedly the world's largest war memorial?
4. What do you call a group of platypuses?
5. Which Australian batsman has the highest average in Test cricket, and what is his average?
6. What is the name of the train that runs between Sydney and Perth?
7. What proportion of Australia is desert?
8. Which flower gives Australia our Green and Gold identity?



- Answers:
1. Tame Impala's
 2. One third
 3. The Indian
 4. Golden Wattie
 5. Road
 6. 1920s
 7. Great Ocean Road
 8. Don Bradman -99.94

Council Notes: December

Upper Hunter Shire Council held its final Ordinary Meeting for the year, addressing a range of community priorities and infrastructure updates. Key decisions and highlights include:

PROGRESS ON THE AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Significant steps were taken in advancing the Airport Development Project. Council has committed to using local suppliers and Council labour to complete the Bellman Hangar for the restoration of aircraft works, ensuring economic benefits flow back into the community. This project continues to support growth and innovation within the Shire.

IMPROVING WATER QUALITY IN CASSILIS

Council resolved to investigate the feasibility of alternative bore water sources to improve the water supply for Cassilis. Staff will assess the current bores, explore water quality from nearby private bores, and consider the potential for a new bore installation. A detailed report outlining options, costs, and recommendations will be presented to Council in the coming months.

RETURN AND EARN FACILITIES EXPANSION

Council resolved to lobby TOMRA, the network operator for Return and Earn, to establish facilities in Murrurundi and Aberdeen. These facilities, if established, will make it easier for residents to participate in waste reduction and resource recovery initiatives.

Advisory Committee Announced

The appointees to the Upper Hunter Shire Council's Aberdeen Advisory Committee have been announced.

They include: Katherine Brooks, Lauren Cavanough, Maria Clarke, Jeanette Fitzsimmons, Helen Irving, Kathryn Jones, Chloe Konispoliatis, Shane Lloyd, Sue Milton, and Daph Tanner. Council representatives will be Cr Alison McPhee, Cr A Williamson and Cr E Shield.

The committee has the power to make recommendations but not to make decisions. The recommendations assist Council in making decisions on complex matters. The committee met on Monday evening, February 10. A report of the meeting will be in the March edition of the Whisper.

Supplied.

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Aberdeen Library

Opening Hours - Monday: closed, Tuesday: 10.00am – 2.30pm, Wednesday: 2.00pm – 6.00pm, Thursday: closed, Friday: 11.30am – 1.00pm & 2.00pm – 5.30pm

Weekly Activities

Storytime: Tuesdays 10.15am – 10.45am

Story and craft activities for preschool aged children.

Tech Help: Tuesdays 1pm – 2pm

Come along for a variety of tech help sessions covering help with devices, setting up/using email accounts, internet basics and word document basics. Please call the library for further details.

Coding: Wednesdays 5pm – 6pm

Coding for junior members using Scratch and Python.

Fortnightly Activities

Family History Research: Fridays 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Help is available to get you started on your journey to Family History Research.

Bookings are essential for all activities to ensure they remain COVID safe.

Happy to hear from you

If you know someone in your community that has an interesting story to tell, who's doing some interesting things - we'd love to hear about it. Chances are if you think it's interesting - others will too - and we're always open to ideas for stories, or features here.



the aberdeen
WHISPER



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Advertisements and Editorial - publications@huntervalleyprinting.com.au
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“It was a dark and stormy night...” by Earle Shields

It almost seems like ‘ancient history’, but since there’s been no other opportunity so far this year, Happy New Year! May 2025 be all that you desire it to be and a little bit more on top!

Unfortunately, for many of us the year hasn’t started all that well following the ‘cyclonic’ storm that hit Aberdeen on the evening of 15th January. ‘Fierce’ seems an inadequate description! At my place, the rain was being blown in horizontally and was streaming in under doors and windows. In the darkness, there was plenty of indication that it was wreaking havoc as trees and tree branches came down, fencing disintegrated, and plenty of pet dogs sought shelter from the relentless thunder and lightning.

Some Aberdeen residents suffered very substantial loss with, (at least), two homes completely losing their roofs. On the 16th, as I journeyed around town there was plenty of evidence of other damage from falling trees and branches as well as from airborne debris. Both my neighbour and I had garden sheds that were completely destroyed, and I lost about 8 to 10 panels out of my colour bond boundary fencing. At one point, during a lull in the tempest, I went out to check how much rain had fallen according to my rain gauge. Given how much had streamed in under doors and windows, I was in disbelief, (and remain so), that only 10mm had fallen!



Because it was horizontal, only some rain had managed to get into the rain gauge. By the next morning the gauge was measuring 19mm.

But it was both during the night and the next day that Aberdeen displayed its true colours and that remarkable Australian trait of helping each other out. The State Emergency Service, (SES), and Ausgrid crews were out most of the night making homes and streets safe. Neighbours pitched in to help each other and complete strangers offered accommodation, and goods to those who had suffered loss. WELL-DONE ABERDEEN! And Upper Hunter Shire Council needs to be congratulated for a very prompt response with several crews attending to damaged trees and facilities as well as waiving the fees usually payable at the Aberdeen Waste Facility. Although it took some time, eventually disaster funding was extended from higher levels of government to the Upper Hunter Shire. If you were not insured for loss you may qualify for some assistance through that mechanism. Call the Shire, 6540 1100 if you want further information.

THE ‘MYSTERY’ OF THE POOL FUNDS

During the August/September local government election campaign a few residents of Aberdeen asked me about some funds that were allegedly collected many years ago in a ‘grass-roots’ campaign to get a public swimming pool in Aberdeen. Having only been a resident for seven years, it was all news to me. The collected funds, apparently were represented by a five-figure number, (on the left-hand side of any decimal point!). Since then, it has been mentioned again.

On the basis that there may be substance attached to this ‘rumour’, which when spoken about, carries negative connotations, I think it is worthwhile to put in some investigation to see if some ‘flesh’ can be attached to the ‘bones’! *(continued on page 6)*

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Plastics

by Doctor Dirt



Doctor Dirt

Steve Eccles
Steve Eccles Consulting
steveecclesconsulting@gmail.com
0400 808 873

Happy New Year I hope all is well for you and your families. This installment I am talking rubbish. I think it could be argued that some people think I always talk rubbish, well at least I research in detail before presenting the information.

This topic will be over a number of articles. I will start with plastics pollution, this is on a disastrous momentous scale they make to the environment, especially to oceans and seas, land and ecosystems – in fact everywhere. I will examine environmental and health issue going through the damage animals and to us humans. Additional episodes on this subject will cover, what can be done and what is being undertaken, by Nations, Local Government, Individuals, Companies and even touching on Clean up Australia day. I will provide the science and research on the alternative biodegradable grown plastics and substitutes. It would be correct mostly plastics “the oil-based byproducts” are no longer required. Plastics was only developed in 1907

I will also in future articles cover damaging products being produced and released to our earth. Probably cannot cover all of them, there are far too many.

This installment is to outline the magnitude of the problem. Plastic waste infest land, soils, sediments, oceans, waterways, animals throughout the ecosystems and humans. Discarded plastic pollution is found on Mount Everest in fact all major mountain ranges to the depths of the ocean floors.

It is estimated that over 100 million marine animals, turtles’ fish and sea birds and other animals die every year due to plastics. The large mammals the death toll exceeds 300 thousand every year. They death toll also includes bats, platypus, birds and other animals: especially when plastics flow into rivers and lakes or directly

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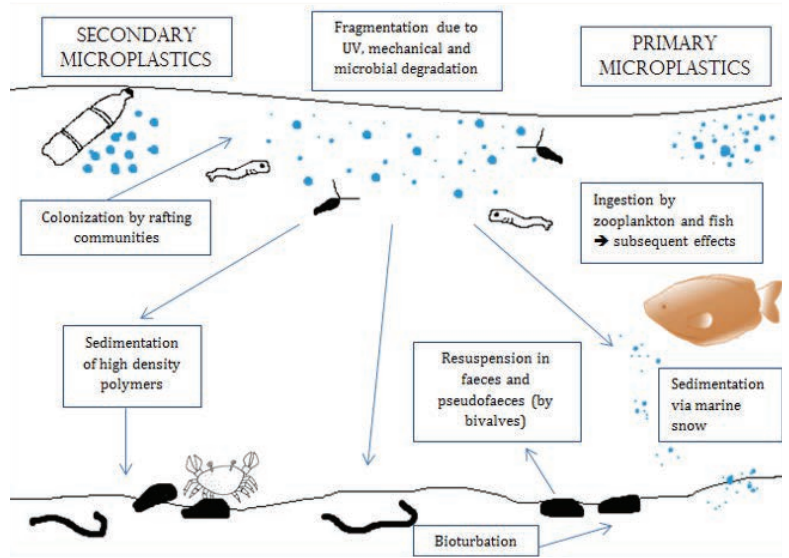
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www.transcare.org.au

A big thank you to the Warrior Disability Service staff, parents and participants for delivering your Whisper. The service offers people with disabilities choices through group activities, one-to-one support, and in-home support. NDIS registered. Sally Pereira is the Director of Participant Services. The office is situated at Shop 12 Brook Street Plaza, Muswellbrook, 0432 680 936.

thrown in or near them. Nearly 100 percent of sea turtles, 59 percent of whales, 36 percent of seals and 90 percent of sea birds have been found with ingested plastics. albatross species 98 percent of birds have indigested plastics. For every 3 to 4 pieces sea birds accidentally pick up of plastic, they get entangled and die. Animals such as turtles, whale cannot differentiate between clover plastic bags and food sources such as jellyfish, the result maybe form accumulated events is death from plastic ingestion.



Discarded plastic nets are known as ghost nets, this is a major source but not the only source of aquatic animals’ entanglements. It is estimated that there are 705 thousand tonnes of discarded nets to waterways and oceans. Plastic nets account for 20 percent of ocean and river pollution. Famous Steve Blackshall (who I attended his talk in Sydney a few weeks ago) apart from the Deadly 60 TV Nature Series he has does other Nature Specials including a Series on Whales, one experience was a dead sperm whale washed up on the beach had 90 kilograms of plastics in its stomach.

There are classified 500 dead zones in our world rivers, seas and oceans. This is the size of Great Britian these areas are basically environmentally dead due to plastics. By the year 2050 it is estimated that the plastics in the waterways and oceans will outweigh the weight of fish in the oceans. It is estimated 4 billion plastic microfibers per square kilometer are present in the oceans and 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic in the oceans and 269 thousand tonnes floating in the ocean surface. We only see part of the issues when washed up on the beaches. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch a floating entangled mess covers an area of 1.6 million kilometers.

Plastics can entangle, lacerate, cause starvation, drowning, suffocate and prevent animals from diving. Plastics are a major damage to the environment highlighted in the plight of the oceans but damage online and waterways. The magnitude of microplastics to the environment, animals and humans is a very series health risk. Over 8 million tonnes are large plastics travel or deposited into the oceans every year. Plastics often are containers or chemicals on occasions that are toxic or contain poisons. We have all seen discarded plastic containers that still have poison labels on them and some plastic have toxic compounds.



An exhibit at the Mote Marine Laboratory that displays plastic bags in the ocean that look similar to jellyfish



State Matters with Dave Layzell MP

COUNCIL MEETING CODE

The NSW government has released draft amendments to the Model Meeting Code for the way council meetings are conducted.

The changes aim to simplify the Model Meeting Code and ensure councillors are making decisions in the full view of the communities they are elected to represent.

All councils are required to adopt a code of meeting practice based on the Model Meeting Code issued by the Office of Local Government. The reforms aim to ensure greater transparency, increase community confidence in council decision making and remove the general manager's involvement in council politics.

Some of the key changes have been recommended by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

Community submissions will be accepted until Friday 28 February - learn more and provide feedback at: <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/governance/model-code-of-meeting-practice/reforms-to-the-model-code-of-meeting-practice/>

FARM SECURITY

The NSW Police Force Rural Crime Prevention Team is urging people in rural and regional areas to build good crime prevention habits in 2025.

Make it a habit to park vehicles and farm equipment out of sight, or near CCTV if possible, take the keys out of vehicles and equipment and store them in a safe place (not on or under



the vehicle).

To build safer communities, put these numbers into your mobile telephone, 131444 for the Police Assistance Line to report suspicious activity and 1800 333 000 for Crime Stoppers to provide confidential information.

All firearm holders are reminded to ensure their firearms are locked and secured in gun safes that are bolted or fixed to the property, comply with legislation and to keep your gun safe key on you and not hidden at your property. Do not advertise you have firearms on social media, open discussions in public places or showing your firearms to others.

Further information on safe firearm storage is available at: www.police.nsw.gov.au/online_services/firearms/safe_storage

ATTENTION MOBILE USERS!

If you receive a text message from this mobile telephone number - +61 444 444 444 - it is an official alert from the NSW Police Force to seek your assistance - NOT a scam.

The NSW Police Force uses geo-targeting to help locate vulnerable missing persons by sending emergency alerts to mobiles in the area where the person went missing.

The message will always come from the same mobile number and always include a link to an image of the missing person.

If you have any information on a missing person, contact Triple Zero (000) or Crime Stoppers NSW 1800 333 000 or <https://nsw.crimestoppers.com.au>.

To find out more about NSW Police geo-targeting go to: www.police.nsw.gov.au/safety_and_prevention/policing_in_the_community/geo_targeting_sms_system

Supplied.

Contact:

upperhunter@parliament.nsw.gov.au;

Phone number: 6543 1065;

Postal address:

P.O. Box 493, Muswellbrook 2333.

Australia Day Awards 2025 *(continued from page 1)*



Young Citizen of the Year: Archie Constable



Local Champion of the Year: Cassilis Public School P&C



Local Champion of the Year: Montana Rando



Sustainability in Business: Merriwa Newspress



Sporting Achievement Award: Rihanna Hunt

MERRIWA

MURRURUNDI

“It was a dark and stormy night...”

by Earle Shields (continued from page 3)

The next meeting of the Aberdeen Community Advisory Committee, (CAC), will have it on its agenda. If nothing of substance emerges, then it will be consigned to the proverbial ‘trash bin of history’! If, by any chance you do recall something of substance regarding this mystery, please give me a call, (0419 681 175).

THE ABERDEEN INVESTMENT FUND

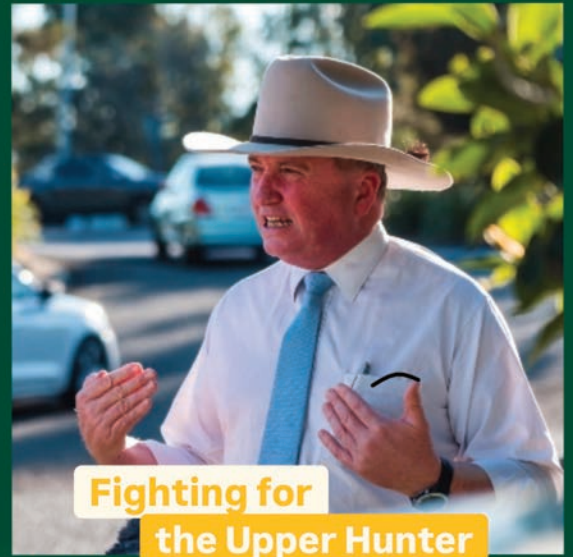
This may surprise you! The Upper Hunter Shire Council has negotiated two Voluntary Planning Agreements, (VPA’s) with Dartbrook Coal and MACH Energy, (Mount Pleasant Coal Mine). These are statutory agreements under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979). Each of the companies above, have already made substantial contributions to the fund, (and will continue to do so!). Currently, there is in excess of \$300,000 in the fund. These funds are to be used in, and only in, Aberdeen (and district) for some community purpose. This might include some infrastructure development, a community programme (or programmes) or possibly an environmental purpose.

The guidelines are very general so some creative thinking might suggest an idea that could be adopted. The Aberdeen CAC will, initially, consider this at their February meeting. There is a second committee, the Aberdeen Investment Committee, which is tasked with the job of finding a project or projects that will use the funds.

So, if you have an idea about how to use those funds, please send me an email to cr.shields@upperhunter.gov.nsw.au with details of your suggestion. (Please don’t phone me because I will require detail which is best put in writing.)

Supplied.

Barnaby JOYCE MP



Fighting for
the Upper Hunter

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Authorised by Barnaby Joyce MP, The Nationals, Tamworth, NSW



02 6761 3080



barnaby.joyce.mp@aph.gov.au

Dave Layzell MP

MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP APPLY NOW

The NSW Government’s Community Building Partnership program provides \$450,000 to the Upper Hunter Electorate for projects that deliver positive social, environmental and recreational outcomes.

Applications close Friday 21 February 2025 at 5pm

For more information:

www.nsw.gov.au/projects/community-building-partnership



Authorised by Dave Layzell MP,
20 Bridge Street,
Muswellbrook NSW 2333
Funded using Parliamentary
entitlements.

The Latest on Vets Golf

FIRST GAME OF THE YEAR

Cloudy and wet weather prevailed for the Vet's first game of 2025, so there were a few drop-outs at MbK for the Stfd event.

Paul Constable won the day with 39 points from Dave Perfrement second 36, and Gary Leake was third with 35. Balls went to Dean Fullbrook 34, Dave Taylor 33, Glenn Googe 32 and Bob Lawman 31. The Bradman's trophy, kindly donated by Gary Morley was won by President Paul Gorman.

Nearest the Pins: 5th Captain Mick McCormick 8th Paul Constable 11th Glenn Googe 14th (2nd shot) Dean Fullbrook 17th Bruce Robinson.

THE HOT DAY DID NOT STOP THEM

There were 25 starting players for the Vets' Stfd event at Denman Golf Club on a warm morning and then a VERY warm finishing. Local star with a couple of birdies, Graham Schilg, won the day with 42 points from the very consistent Dave Taylor second 39, Graham Newton third 36, Andy Medway fourth 35 C/B and Gary Gray 5th 35.

Thank you to Captain Mic Mac and Treasurer Bob Minch for the efficient way the event ran, and to Greg Squires for the course maintenance. Balls went to 6 players all on 34: Glen Standing, Glenn Googe, Bruce Robinson, Gary Leake, Sid Collison and Terry Mitchell. Nearest the Pins: - 3rd (2nd shot) Graham Schilg (a great shot out of the rough), 5th Andy Medway, 12th Gary Leake (only one on the green), 14th Bruce Robinson.

FUTURE GAMES

- Feb 4 at MbK Stfd
- Feb 11 at Denman Stfd (medal round)
- Feb 18, Stfd at Murrurundi
- Feb 25, S&P at Aberdeen

New members welcome. Shotgun start by 8.00am

Supplied.



Aberdeen & Scone Lions Club Raffle Winners

1ST PRIZE

Winner: Peter Bowen – \$500 JBS Meat Pack

2ND PRIZE

Winner: Steve Z – \$200 Chop Shop Butchers Voucher

3RD PRIZE

Winner: Phil Gough – \$200 Petes Pizza Voucher

4TH PRIZE

Winner: Brad Kellet – \$200 Cellarbrations Bottleshop Voucher Aberdeen

5TH PRIZE

Winner: Louise Boyle – \$200 BP Fuel Card



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XXXX GOLD 30PK CANS	\$ 55.00 – LOYALTY \$ 53.00
BETTER BEER MIDDY 30PK CANS	\$ 59.00 – LOYALTY \$ 57.00
COORS STUBBIES & CANS	\$ 58.00
MILLER CHILL STUBBIES	\$ 58.00
CARLTON DRY STUBBIES & CANS	\$ 61.00
STONE & WOOD 16PK CANS	\$ 64.00
GREAT NORTHERN ORIGINAL LAGER 30PK CANS	\$ 71.00
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WOODSTOCK RSV 12% 4PKS	\$ 29.00
JACK DANIELS DOUBLE JACK 4PKS	\$ 34.00
WOODSTOCK 4.8% 10PKS	\$ 45.00
HARD RATED 10PK CANS - NEW LEMON LIME SF	\$ 47.00
CANADIAN CLUB & JIM BEAM 10PKS	\$ 49.00 – \$ 47.00 LOYALTY
J/DANIELS 10PKS	\$ 58.00
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