

t h e a b e r d e e n WHISPER

May 2026

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ABERDEEN
HIGHLAND
GAMES

"A Celtic Experience in the Scottish Tradition"

Kilts, Cabers and Centuries of Tradition: Aberdeen Highland Games This July

The unmistakable sound of the bagpipes, the swirl of tartan and the thrill of the caber toss will once again bring Aberdeen to life when the **Aberdeen Highland Games return on Saturday 4 July**. Steeped in history and overflowing with local spirit, the Games are a proud celebration of traditions that stretch back hundreds of years.

While this event welcomes guests from all over Australia, and indeed around the world, the Committee is proud of the relationship we continue to build with our local community, reflecting the strong Scottish roots that helped shape the town's history. For more than 25 years, locals have helped to honour this heritage, ensuring they remain alive and relevant for modern audiences. The result is an event that feels both historic and heartfelt—where the past is celebrated, not preserved behind glass.

The Games are a true community celebration. Families are encouraged to come along, relax and enjoy the festivities, with food stalls, market stands and activities to entertain all ages. So mark your calendars, rug up, and bring your clan—on Saturday 4 July, Aberdeen will once again proudly celebrate history, heritage and the power of community at the Aberdeen Highland Games. Tickets will be on sale very soon – check out the website: <https://aberdeen-highlandgames.com/>



Whisper Trivia

1. What do the letters in RSVP stand for?
2. Who is the author of Jurassic Park?
3. What was the soft drink Pepsi originally introduced as?
4. On what Japanese City was the first atomic bomb dropped?
5. What alcoholic drink is mainly made from juniper berries?
6. What is the size of a newborn kangaroo?
7. What animal is known by the nickname "sea cow"?
8. Which hotel was the Singapore Sling originally invented?
9. When Captain Cook discovered the Hawaiian Islands, what did he name them?
10. Who wrote "Gullivers Travels"?



- Answers:
1. Raffles Hotel
 2. Michael Crchlong, Sandwich Island
 3. Brad's drink
 4. Htroshima
 5. Gin
 6. 2.54cm
 7. Manatees
 8. Raffles Hotel
 9. Sandwich Island
 10. Jonathan Swift

Business Directory

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Earle's Column

For a typical 25th April, the air temperature at this year's ANZAC Day was remarkably warm. In the lessening darkness of the pre-dawn, a large crowd gathered in Moray Street for the annual Dawn Service.

Commemorating that fateful day, 111 years ago, when troops of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps struggled ashore at what became Anzac Cove. Under intense Turkish defensive fire, they established a beachhead in an effort to take the strategic Gallipoli Peninsular. Hopefully, to open a second front in the already 'stalemate' of World War One. For eight months, the "ANZAC's", maintained a tenuous position until senior commanders recognised that the original objective could not be achieved. In December of 1915 Australian troops were withdrawn from Gallipoli to then be dispatched to the horrors of the western front in France and Belgium over the next three years.

The Aberdeen attendance appears to grow year on year. The numbers at both the Dawn Service and the later march and Morning Service were estimated as in the 'hundreds'. Which bodes well for the future of this most significant day in our national calendar. The flyover by a Second World War vintage warbird was a much-appreciated addition to this year's programme. The organisers of the Aberdeen commemoration would like to publicly record their appreciation of the work of Pay's Air Service of Scone in providing the aircraft. Thank you, Pay's.

IT'S ON!

The image is of a vintage railmotor that will be a principal drawcard for the "Heroes of Aberdeen" centenary commemoration of the 1926 derailment of the northbound Brisbane Limited Express about 900 metres north of Aberdeen Railway Station on the night of 10th June 1926.



The "Heroes of Aberdeen" centenary commemoration is set for Sunday 7th June, (the King's Birthday weekend) and there are two return train trips between Aberdeen and Murrurundi timetabled for that day. The first is scheduled for an 11am departure from Aberdeen, returning at 12.30pm followed by a 12.40pm departure, returning at 2.20pm. Fares on these journeys have been set at \$30.00 for adults and \$20.00 for children. This means a family of four can enjoy the hour and a half round trip for \$100.00.

This bit is important! Each train can hold approximately 100 passengers, BUT the Railmotor Historical Society, which operates the train, are predicting that they will bring about 70 passengers with them from Maitland. This means that there may only be about 130 seats available on the two trips for people travelling from Aberdeen. In other words: book early to avoid disappointment.

Bookings are now open at: <https://www.123tix.com.au/events/52713/aberdeen-to-murrurundi-and-return>

Finally, the Upper Hunter Shire Council 'Delivery Plan, Operational Plan', (DPOP) will be on public exhibition from Friday 1st May until Friday 29th May. On Monday 11th May the Aberdeen Community Advisory Committee will meet to consider, amongst other things, the DPOP as it applies to our town and surrounding area. The fuel 'crisis' precipitated by the current Middle East conflict will have some effect on funds available for operational works over the next 12 months. The DPOP will then be formally approved at the ordinary council meeting on 29th June.

Supplied by Earle Shields.

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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7 June 2026 | 10am - 3pm

Harrison Oval, Jefferson Park Aberdeen

Look forward to markets, delicious food stalls, heritage train rides with the Rail Motor Society from Aberdeen to Murrurundi, plus merchandise to take home



Bookings for the heritage railmotor are now open
Scan QR Code to get your tickets!



Stay Up To Date! Like & Follow Us on Facebook — **Aberdeen Rail Disaster 1926**

Athletics

End of an Era as Aberdeen Athletics Celebrates Season Success

Aberdeen Athletics Centre Inc marked the close of another successful season with its Presentation Night held on Friday, 27 March at the Aberdeen Sport & Rec Club auditorium. The evening celebrated the achievements of athletes across all age groups, with club awards based on attendance and participation — a reflection of the club's strong commitment to involvement, effort and community spirit.

At the Blue Level, awards went to 6's Hugh Flaherty; 8's Ella McElroy and Henry Hermon; and 12's Charlie McElroy. Red Level recipients included Tot Frankie Fisher; 6's Maddison Grech; 7's Anna Egan, Charlotte Grech and Finley Taverner; and 9's Cooper Wright and Charlie Wright. In the Green Level, 7's Lachlan Simmons; 8's Lily Casben and Lillian Murray-Mell; 9's Ivy Simmons; 10's Issy Casben; and 15's Archie Sellers-Bentley were recognised. Gold Level honours went to Tots George Bennett and Oliver McElroy; 6's Bonnie Brochtrup; 7's Savannah Wright; 8's Isla Bennett; 12's Imogen Falzon; and 15's Grace Partridge.

Ella McElroy was awarded for 100% Attendance and Participation — a standout achievement reflecting dedication across the entire season. Grace Partridge and Archie Sellers-Bentley were also recognised for their representation at Zone, Region and State level, highlighting the strength of talent within the club. A series of special awards, sponsored by Max and Denise Bell, further acknowledged the values that define Aberdeen Athletics. Sportsmanship awards were presented to Hugh Flaherty, Henry Hermon, Cooper Wright, Charlie Wright and Charlie McElroy. Encouragement awards went to Frankie Fisher, Finley Taverner, Maddison Grech, Anna Egan, Charlette Grech, Lachlan Simmons and Ivy Simmons.

Representative honours were also awarded to Issy Casben and Penny Brochtrup (Zone), Lily Casben and Imogen Falzon (Zone and Region), and Ruby Brochtrup (Region).

The evening also marked an important transition for the club, with Max and Denise Bell announcing they will step down from committee roles following the 2025/2026 season. Involvement since the club's inception in 1991/1992 has seen them contribute across 35 seasons and support 3,221 registrations, with many athletes progressing to Zone, Region and State representation.

The Bells thanked athletes and families for their long-standing support, describing their time with Aberdeen Athletics as an incredible journey. With an upcoming Annual General Meeting, the club now looks ahead, hoping to welcome a new committee to continue its proud legacy.

Supplied by Denise Bell & Max Bell



Sports

Future Tigers Shine on Big Stage

Former Aberdeen Tigers juniors Theo Ballard, Daesjarn Coyle and Eamon Gleeson have played a key role in the Newcastle Knights' 22-0 Grand Final win over the Sydney Roosters.

All three were part of last year's Tigers Under 16s side and are now continuing their development in the UNE Harold Matthews Cup system, progressing strongly through the junior representative ranks. The club congratulates the boys on their achievement and is proud to see them succeeding at the next level.

Supplied.

Sports

Aberdeen/Muswellbrook Women Bowlers Roll to Regional Pennant Victory

The Aberdeen/Muswellbrook composite women's bowling team has delivered a standout performance on the greens, claiming victory in the 4th Division of the Regional Pennants competition.

In a season marked by consistency, teamwork and determination, the side proved a formidable force, earning the top honour and securing their place in the upcoming state play-offs. The team will now travel to Wollongong in August, where they will compete against the best clubs from across New South Wales.

The achievement is a proud moment for both Aberdeen and Muswellbrook, highlighting the strength of the combined team and the dedication of its players. Their success reflects not only skill on the green, but also the camaraderie and commitment that underpinned their campaign.

Team members Lorena Croft, Lorraine Baker, Val Adams, Julie Copland, Pam Watson and Karen Borham were present to receive the Pennant flag and medals, alongside team manager Sue Lawrence. Also part of the winning squad are Pam Douglas, Kay Collins and Chris Cavanaugh, who were unable to attend the presentation. Collins and Cavanaugh proudly represented Muswellbrook in the composite side.

With momentum on their side and confidence high, the team now sets its sights on the state stage, where they will look to continue their impressive run against some of the toughest competition in New South Wales.

The entire community will no doubt be cheering them on as they take this exciting next step.

Supplied.

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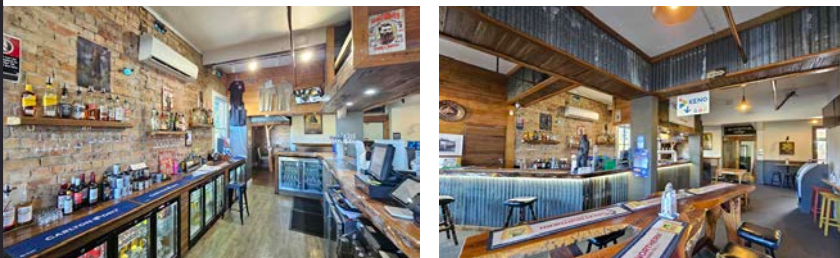
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HOTEL, BOARDING HOUSE, BOUTIQUE ACCOMMODATION

Situated on the Main Road, Kelly's Top Pub will be the first Hotel on the Highway from Sydney when the Singleton and Muswellbrook Bypasses are completed. The Hotel has been fully updated with a large bar area at the front, a modern commercial kitchen with 2 dining areas and a covered Alfresco area at the rear. The Glycol System and Fire System have both been upgraded to new standard. There are men's and lady's toilet facilities downstairs. Upstairs are 12 rooms all with aircons and 2 shared bathrooms accessed from the back veranda. The managers Quarters has a kitchen, bathroom, lounge, and bedroom. The property offers plenty of options, you could continue to run it as a Hotel or convert it to a boarding house/boutique accommodation with the ability to have a further 4 bedrooms downstairs and a disabled bathroom giving you 16 rooms in total while still retaining the kitchen and bar area to run as a restaurant or eat in dining. Short term accommodation is very keenly sort and this building offers you the opportunity to take advantage of the demand in the area.



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State Matters with Dave Layzell MP

SERVICE SCHEDULE

Service NSW will return to Stroud this Friday, 24 April, when the mobile service centre stops in Cowper Street between 8.30am and 12.30pm.

The next visit to the Upper Hunter Electorate is scheduled for June when Service NSW stops in Mayne Street Murrurundi on Tuesday, 16 June, 9am-3pm.

Upper Hunter Shire Council, Liverpool Street Scone, hosts the mobile service centre on Wednesday and Thursday, 17-18 June, 9am-3pm both days. Stroud receives a further visit on Friday, 26 June, 8.30am-12.30pm.

INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

Nominations are now being received for the Rotary NSW Inspirational Women's Awards. The Awards acknowledge and celebrate community service performed by women through their vocations, selfless gifts of their skills, and their time, in various activities and endeavours.

The Awards have three categories covering Urban, Rural and Health, which are further divided into Young Inspirational Woman of the Year 18-30 years of age, Inspirational Woman of the Year 30+ years of age and Inspirational Health Worker.

The Inspirational Women Awards are open to all non-Rotarian women and recognise the work done by the 'quiet achievers' whose commitment, dedication, perseverance, and proactivity improves the lives of others.

Members of the public are encouraged to submit online nominations by 1 June with further information available from: <https://riwa.awardsplatform.com>

'JABS' ENCOURAGED

Lung Foundation Australia (LFA) is putting its support behind World Immunisation Week, Friday April 24-Thursday April 30.

LFA eager to remind the community that vaccines help protect against respiratory infection. Sometimes people think that immunisation and vaccination mean the same thing, but they are different.

Vaccination is when you get a vaccine, often given as an injection, whilst immunisation describes what happens in your body after vaccination when your body learns to fight off disease and becomes protected.

The Lung Foundation believes lung health should be taken more seriously to help protect the gift of breath, so that more Australians can breathe easier and live well.

A vaccine-preventable disease is an illness that a vaccine can stop you from getting or make it much less serious if you do get it.

Respiratory infections that vaccines protect



against include COVID-19, Influenza, Pneumonia, Whooping cough and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus).

Learn more: <https://lungfoundation.com.au/protect-your-lungs/immunisation>

VAPE DISPOSAL

Most households have three kerbside bins but which one is the correct bin for vape disposal? The correct answer is none of the kerbside bins, however, residents of Branxton and the Cessnock Council area can dispose of vapes free at the next Household Chemical Cleanout this Sunday, 3 May, at the Cessnock Council Works Depot, 9am-3.30pm.

The Household Chemical Cleanouts run in partnership between Councils and the NSW EPA are also being held for Singleton on Sunday, May 10, Muswellbrook on Saturday, May 30 and Maitland on Sunday, June 21.

Items accepted include batteries, fluoro lights, fire extinguishers, gas bottles, garden chemicals, pool chemicals, household cleaners, hobby chemicals, paint, poisons, motor oils, fluids and fuels.

For the location of your local Community Recycling Centre and Household Chemical Cleanouts, go to: www.epa.nsw.gov.au/Your-environment/Recycling-and-reuse/household-recycling-overview/find-crccs-or-hcco

HOOKED AT SCHOOL

Upper Hunter Electorate schools are being urged to register to join either the Get Hooked Junior Schools Program or the Fish for Life High School Program.

From this Term, Get Hooked registered schools can book in their class to join live 45-min virtual e-incursions to learn fishing rules and how to fish responsibly, safely, and sustainably.

There are three lessons to choose from which cover NSW fishing rules, knot tying and fish handling, gear techniques and basic skills as well as fishing safely and responsibly.

Teachers who book may be eligible to receive

a practical fishing workshop or a fishing pack for their class.

To register your school for the NSW Government Get Hooked Schools Program, cast for: <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/.../fishing-workshops/get-hooked>

SCHOLARSHIP OPENS SOON

One of Australia's most significant scholarships for young painters will soon open applications for this year.

The winner of the Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship receives \$50,000 and a three-month residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

Five additional recipients each receive \$10,000 and a two-week residency at Shark Island Kangaroo Valley.

The Brett Whiteley Studio, administered by the Art Gallery of NSW, awards the annual scholarship to talented artists aged 20-30 with an established body of work.

To be considered for selection, an applicant must comply with all entry instructions and conditions, with more information at: www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/about-us/opportunities-for-artists/brett-whiteley-travelling-art-scholarship/

Supplied.

Contact:

94 John Street Singleton 2330
upperhunter@parliament.nsw.gov.au
6543 1065

Shape Upper Hunter's Future!

Upper Hunter Shire Council is inviting residents to help shape the region's future, with feedback now open on the Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan for 2026-2027. The draft outlines Council's planned priorities, services and projects for the year ahead and can be viewed online, at Council offices, and at local libraries across the Shire.

Community consultation sessions will also be held at 5pm on:

- 11 May – Aberdeen Library
- 13 May – Murrurundi Library
- 18 May – Scone Administration Building (Barry Rose Room)
- 20 May – Merriwa Meeting Room

Residents are encouraged to attend, ask questions and provide feedback directly to Council staff and councillors. Submissions close 4.30pm, Friday 29 May 2026. For more information or to make a submission, visit www.upperhunter.nsw.gov.au

Supplied.

Wind Erosion the Damage

by Doctor Dirt

Unfortunately, we have all the symptoms of entering a severe drought. In fact, it appears we are already well into drought conditions. The weather patterns and long-range forecasts do not suggest relief, and we are coming into winter.

In my past two articles I have covered stock water requirement and water runoff erosion. In this issue I will cover an additional emerging problem wind base erosion. Part One: will outline what damage wind erosion causes. Part Two will cover preventative measures to reduce wind erosion.

Impacts of wind erosion include:

- Removing and exporting vital fertile topsoil from property owners. Soil degradation and loss of fertility of properties. Exposed topsoil is predominantly finer soil particles and is vulnerable to wind erosion. Topsoil is usually the highest part of the soil profile that is nutrient rich soil particles that are high in organic matter and microorganisms. Reducing nutrient and organic matter results in the reduction in soil biology and microbial numbers and activities.
- Removal of topsoil increases the exposure of silt and clay particles, reducing soil ability to hold water and nutrients of soils causer.
- The physical sand blasting effects through mobilisation of soils damages young seedlings. It often leads to the burial of crops and pastures. The coating of plants with soil material reduces plant photosynthesis.
- Infrastructural damage to vehicles, machinery, roads and fences.
- Wind erosion contributes to formation of Scalds (Claypans) stripping friable topsoil leaving dense subsoils exposed. Leading to bare hard setting hard pans and surface crusting of the soils.
- Dust storms reduce visibility and the airborne particles can damage the eyes of people and animals. Abrasion of humans and animals' skin and exposed areas. Along with bare ground surfaces contributes contamination of wool fleeces.



Photograph of a Recent Wind Erosion Occurrence in NSW

- During severe windstorms events create traffic hazards by reducing the visibility to drivers.
- Accentuates health issues to lungs and increases asthma episodes. The Upper and Mid Hunter have very high levels of asthma and breathing related health problems throughout our community.
- Dust settling on water bodies reduces water quality adding sedimentation and pollution. The increase in sediment and organic matter will contribute to increasing the risk of algae blooms and algal species such as Bluegreen Algae are toxic.
- Visual impacts can reduce land values and land profitability and reduction in landuse options.

We all have seen the dust storms coming to our area from Central Australia. This wind erosion contributes to expanding desertification in Central Australia. In severe events soil is known to be transported as far as New Zealand's mainland. Wind erosion is not restricted to desert areas in the current drought conditions it becomes a very big issues across Australia including the Hunter Valley. I will cover land management and preventative measures landholders can implement to limit the impact of wind erosion in the June issues.

Supplied by Steve Eccles.

Steve Eccles - steveecclesconsulting@gmail.com
Mobile: 0400 808 873



Events

Countdown On As Scone Horse Festival Gallops Into Action

Scone is set to come alive as the 2026 Warburton Estate Agents Scone Horse Festival returns from 8–17 May, with final preparations well underway across the Upper Hunter.

Festival President Jason Hill said excitement is building as the community prepares for one of its biggest celebrations yet. "You can feel the buzz everywhere. There's pride, energy and a strong sense of community as we head into the final days," he said. "This year's theme, Breeding Brilliance, reflects our region's pursuit of excellence – from champion horses to a thriving, connected community." Now in its 46th year, the festival continues to celebrate Scone's rich equine heritage, having grown from its beginnings in 1980 into a major regional event. With cost-of-living pressures in mind, this year's program features a strong line-up of free, family-friendly events, many centred around White Park and Kelly Street. "We want people to be able to come along, bring the family and enjoy a full day of entertainment and community spirit without spending a cent," Mr Hill said. "That's something we're incredibly proud of and grateful to

our volunteers and sponsors for making possible."

A major highlight will be Saturday 9 May, featuring a full day of free events including the festival parade, farrier competition, equine extravaganza, markets and exhibitions. The festival will conclude on Sunday 17 May with a free afternoon at Lake Glenbawn, including live music, food stalls, family entertainment and a fireworks finale. Alongside the free program, several ticketed events are also on offer, including high teas, stud tours, luncheons and racing celebrations, many of which are expected to book out.

Recognised as the Horse Capital of Australia, Scone is home to more than half of the nation's Thoroughbred racehorses. The festival showcases the vital role of the equine industry while celebrating the people and community behind it. For more information and the full program, visit sconehorsefestival.com.au or follow the Scone Horse Festival online.

Supplied.

Sports

Tigers Show Grit and Class in Strong Round 3 Showing

by Jacob Dallah

Aberdeen Tigers delivered an impressive all-round performance in Round 3, with three grades securing wins and the club's women's side showing strong determination in a tough outing. Across the day, the Tigers displayed resilience, teamwork and individual brilliance, highlighting the depth and spirit within the club.

UNDER 18S – TIGERS 32 DEF SOUTH NEWCASTLE 6

A cold and scrappy start at Learmonth Park saw both sides struggle to settle, but once Aberdeen found their rhythm, they quickly took control of the contest. Jack Bullen opened the scoring with a clever dart from dummy half, before Jack Clark finished off a sharp backline movement out wide. The Tigers continued to build momentum, with fullback Xavier Day slicing through the defence to set up Bronx Geerin, while Brodie Duggan added another just before halftime to give Aberdeen a commanding 22-0 lead at the break.

Defensively, the Tigers remained resolute in the second half. Dwayne Gill's intercept shut down a promising South Newcastle attack, while a long-range effort involving Harry Foot and Jagged Hasselman further extended the lead. Bailey Chick capped off a strong individual performance with a late try and conversion, sealing a convincing 32-6 victory.

WOMEN'S TACKLE – TIGERS 8 DEF BY MUSWELLBROOK 24

The Tigers' women's side faced a tough challenge against Muswellbrook, showing early promise with strong intent and pressure. However, the Rams capitalised on field position to take control of the first half.

Aberdeen fought back through Isla Johnston, who crossed just before halftime to keep her side within reach. Zali Walling's powerful try early in the second half brought the margin back to six points and reignited the contest.

Despite their determination and defensive effort, a series of late penalties allowed Muswellbrook to pull away, with the Tigers going down 24-8 in a hard-fought match.

RESERVE GRADE – TIGERS 34 DEF MUSWELLBROOK 18

Reserve Grade produced one of the standout performances of the day, fighting back from a first-half deficit to claim a strong win. Lachlan Marco opened the scoring, but Muswellbrook responded to take a 16-6 lead after capitalising on errors and a sin bin. A crucial turning point came just before halftime, when Kyle Robertson intercepted the ball and sprinted 70 metres to score, shifting momentum back to the Tigers.

Aberdeen carried that energy into the second half, with Brae Miller-Freebairn levelling the scores before Robertson crossed again in a brilliant display of speed. Further tries to Jayden Harshman and Braeden Van Vliet sealed a well-earned 34-18 victory.

FIRST GRADE – TIGERS 28 DEF MUSWELLBROOK 22

First Grade delivered a gritty and determined performance, overcoming early setbacks to secure a hard-fought win. Muswellbrook took an early 10-0 lead, but Aberdeen responded through Tommy Dixon and Uiti Baker to edge ahead 12-10 at halftime.

The second half presented significant challenges, including a serious injury to Jacob Cordina and a period where the Tigers were reduced to 11 players. Despite this, Aberdeen showed remarkable resilience. Richard Graham levelled the scores before Baker added his second try, with Tyla Fear's accurate goal-kicking proving crucial.

A strong run from Matty Hay set up Mitchell Galvin for a key try, giving the Tigers breathing space. Muswellbrook mounted a late comeback, but determined defence ensured Aberdeen held on for a 28-22 win.

UPPER HUNTER BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM PROPOSAL



Community Information Drop-In Sessions

Tuesday, 9 June 2026 - 2pm-4pm and 5pm-7pm

Wednesday, 10 June 2026: 10am-12pm and 5pm-7pm

Aberdeen Bowling Club, Jefferson Park, New England Hwy

Come along to our Community Drop-In Sessions to learn more about our proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Aberdeen, ahead of our application lodgement.

The sessions will include:

- Final project design
- Environmental and technical study outcomes
- Planning process next steps
- Q&A with the project team

Light refreshments will be available



Scan to fill in survey

For more information:

visit: www.nhcleanenergy.com

email: info@northharbourpl.com

UHSC April Council Meeting

Upper Hunter Shire Council met on Tuesday night to consider a range of matters including advisory committees, strategic planning, infrastructure delivery and future projects across the Shire.

Rebecca Magnus and Robert Tindall were appointed to the Goulburn River Solar Farm Community Enhancement Advisory Committee, following a public expression of interest process. The committee will play a role in guiding future community enhancement funding linked to the project, with all applicants to be advised of the outcome.

Council also considered the Draft Delivery Program 2026/27 to 2029/30 and Operational Plan 2026/27, which outline key priorities, services and projects for the coming years. The budget was noted as balanced, with a continued focus on improving road infrastructure and strengthening Council's financial position. Community feedback will be sought during the public exhibition period, with presentations also planned through Community Advisory Committee meetings.

Updates were provided on a range of infrastructure and operational matters, including water and sewer services, capital works programs, the Cassilis Footbridge project, Cassilis Sewerage System works, and rural roads. Council also received briefings on ongoing works delivery

and project planning across multiple service areas, reflecting continued investment in essential infrastructure across the Shire.

Council approved \$10,000 from Dartbrook Coal Voluntary Planning Agreement funds for the Aberdeen Rail Disaster Centenary Commemoration, to be held on Sunday 7 June 2026. Council also resolved to commission independent reviews of Environmental Impact Statements for major Renewable Energy Zone projects, with a focus on traffic impacts and ensuring social, environmental and economic factors are properly considered. These decisions reflect Council's ongoing role in balancing community commemoration, growth, and development oversight.

Further discussion was held around governance matters, including new Model Public Forum Rules issued by the Office of Local Government and their impact on Council's meeting practices. Proposed changes to committee structures were considered but deferred for further review.

Confidential items included commercial cleaning services, a property development opportunity, and expressions of interest for the Score Regional Saleyards. Council noted the expressions and resolved to continue operating the saleyards on a week-to-week basis while remaining open to future proposals. Full details are available via the Upper Hunter Shire Council website, with the meeting also available to view on Council's YouTube channel.

Supplied.

Clubs & Community

Aberdeen Pony Club Gallops Through a Month of Success and Spirit

Aberdeen Pony Club has enjoyed an action-packed and highly successful month, showcasing the talent, dedication, and community spirit of its riders and families.

The month began with the club's much-anticipated annual Pony Camp, held at the picturesque Rossgole and generously hosted by the Bragg family. Riders were treated to an unforgettable week of learning and fun, with activities ranging from polocrosse and mechanical cow work to time trials, jumping, flatwork, whip cracking, and pack horse sessions. The camp concluded with a memorable crack-of-dawn trail ride for senior riders, capping off what many described as an incredible experience. The club extends its sincere thanks to all instructors who contributed their time and expertise to developing the skills and confidence of the young riders.

After only a brief pause to regroup, several riders travelled to compete at the prestigious Sydney Royal. Aberdeen Pony Club was proudly represented in team sporting events by Lexie, Molly, and Emity. Emity, riding with the Area 2 team, celebrated an outstanding achievement, helping secure their fourth consecutive win. Meanwhile, Molly and Lexie competed strongly with Area 4, finishing an impressive fifth in a highly competitive field. Adding to the club's success, Alice Norton delivered an exceptional individual performance, earning numerous ribbons along with a Reserve Champion title.

The momentum continued just days later as riders headed to Gresford for the State Championships. Despite dry, dusty conditions and chilly nights, the weekend was filled with camaraderie and strong competition among the Zone 7 pony club community. Aberdeen was once again proudly represented by Molly, Lexie, Sophie, and Emity, all of whom demonstrated remarkable skill and determination.

Highlights from the championships included Sophie placing 10th overall in sporting, while Lexie achieved placings in both draft and sporting events, notably riding a substitute horse after her own was injured. Molly impressed in the campdraft with several strong runs, narrowly missing placings in other events. Emity capped off a stellar weekend with an outstanding series of results, earning Reserve Champion titles in sporting, campdraft, and the challenge events.

Following a whirlwind month of competition and achievement, Aberdeen Pony Club members are now enjoying a well-earned rest before preparing for the upcoming Horse Week parade. Families are encouraged to register their interest promptly as preparations begin.

With continued enthusiasm and a strong sense of community, Aberdeen Pony Club remains a shining example of grassroots sporting excellence.

Supplied by Amy Croft.



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Dave Layzell MP
MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER



Authorised by Dave Layzell MP,
94 John Street,
Singleton NSW 2330
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The Latest on Vets Golf

COUNTBACKS GALORE IN THRILLING VETS DAY AT MUSWELLBROOK

It was a day like no other for the Vets at Muswellbrook on Tuesday, April 28, with an incredibly tight competition producing a flurry of countbacks across the field of 36 players.

In a remarkable display of consistency, no fewer than five players finished tied on 36 points, keeping Captain Mick McCormick busy with the scorecards. After the countbacks were finalised, Lyn Banks emerged as the day's winner with 36 points, edging out John Belfield in second and Judy Collison in third. Paul Constable finished fourth, with Mick McCormick himself placing fifth — all on 36 points after countbacks.

Gary Leake claimed sixth place with 35 points on a countback, just ahead of Joan Shaw in seventh, also on 35. It was also a welcome sight to have Les Cuttriss back on the course, adding to the day's strong turnout and great atmosphere.

Ball winners included Garry Carter, Dave Taylor and Glenn Googe with 34 points, while Graham Turvey finished with 33. On 32 points were Les Cuttriss, President Lindsay Hodge, Stephen McGhie and Gav Myers. Nearest the Pin honours were shared among several players, with Mick McCormick taking out the 5th, June Jukes the 8th, and Les Cuttriss the 11th. Dave Bramley had a standout performance, claiming both the 14th with a superb second shot for a birdie two, and the 17th.

The Bradman's Trophy, generously donated by Gary Leake and associates, was won by Red Palmer. The club also extends its usual sincere thanks to Beryl in the Pro Shop for her excellent work in processing the scorecards.

MITCHELL SHINES IN STRONG FIELD AT SCONE STABLEFORD EVENT

A field of 31 players enjoyed a picturesque autumn day at Scone Golf Club for the regular Stableford competition, with great conditions setting the stage for some impressive scoring.

The day ran smoothly thanks to the efforts of dedicated club volunteers. Mick McCormick and Bob Minch organised the prize money, Ross Banks coordinated the playing groups, and President Lindsay Hodge ensured all scorecards were expertly tabulated. Adding to the positive atmosphere was the welcome return of Red Palmer, with fellow players pleased to see him back on the course.

Terry Mitchell produced an outstanding round to claim a clear victory with 41 points. Daryl Dutton secured second place on 36 points following a countback, edging out Bob Lawman in third, also on 36. Andrew Thrift finished fourth with 35 points on a countback, just ahead of Sid Collison in fifth with 35, while June Jukes rounded out the top six with a solid 34 points.

Consistent performances were rewarded further down the field, with balls going to Lyn Banks, Captain Mick McCormick and Joan Shaw on 33 points. Dave Perfrement finished with 32, while Des Partridge, Mick Reynolds, Mark Middleton and Chris Lambley each recorded 31 points. The Bradman's Trophy, generously donated by Gary Leake and associates, was awarded to Dave Bradshaw.

Nearest the Pin honours were claimed by Dave Bramley on the 4th, Mick McCormick on the 8th, Mick Reynolds on the 13th, and Andrew Thrift on the 17th. With strong competition and a great sense of camaraderie, it was another successful day for Scone Golf Club members.

FUTURE GAMES:

- May 5 at Aberdeen, Stroke and Putting
- May 12 at Denman Stb
- May 19 Stb at Scone, book-in with Ross Banks
- May 26 Stb at MBK for the Ossie Miles Trophy, book-in with the proshop.

New members welcome. Shotgun start by 9.00am.

Supplied.



left: Terry Mitchell won the Stb event at Scone with 41 points. He is congratulated by President Lindsay Hodge.



right: Vets treasurer Bob Minch congratulates Judy Collison on coming 3rd with 36 points at MbK on Tuesday April 28. Other players had gone home early.



Term 2 | 2026 Calendar

Children's Mobile Playgroup ~ 0-6 years of age

		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
May	WEEK 3	4 Hebden Hall	5 Aberdeen Public School	6 Jerrys Plain School of Arts Hall	7 Merriwa St Josephs School	8 Wingen Hall
	WEEK 4	11 McCullys Gap Hall	12 Denman St Josephs Hall	13 Gundy Linga Longa Inn	14 Murrurundi Public School	15 Cassillis Public School
	WEEK 5	18 Hebden Hall	19 Aberdeen Public School	20 Jerrys Plain School of Arts Hall	21 Merriwa St Josephs School	22 Wingen Hall
	WEEK 6	25 McCullys Gap Hall	26 Denman St Josephs Hall	27 Gundy Linga Longa Inn	28 Murrurundi Public School	29 Cassillis Public School

Don't forget to bring your **SUNHAT, DRINK BOTTLE (WATER), MORNING TEA, SUNSCREEN** and wear **ENCLOSED SHOES!**









9:30am ~ 12 noon

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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.

Cellarbrations

JUST SOME OF OUR SPECIALS COMMENCING
MONDAY 4TH MAY TILL SUNDAY 17TH MAY 2026:

POETS COUNTRY CRISP 30PK CANS	\$ 55.00
TOOHEYS NEW/ULTRA STUBBIES & CANS	\$ 55.00 – LOYALTY \$ 53.00
GREAT NORTHERN SUPER CRISP STUBBIES & 24 CANS	\$ 57.00
XXXX GOLD 30PK CANS	\$ 59.00 – LOYALTY \$ 57.00
COOPERS PALE ALE STUBBIES & CANS	\$ 62.00
HAHN SUPER DRY 3.5 30PK CANS	\$ 62.00 – LOYALTY \$ 60.00
HAHN SUPER DRY 4.6% 30PK CANS	\$ 66.00
VB 30PK CANS	\$ 70.00
STRONGBOW CIDER CARTONS	\$ 59.00
BUNDY CAMPFIRE 6% RANGE 4PKS	\$ 27.00 OR 2 4PKS FOR \$50.00
WOODSTOCK RSV 12% 4PKS	\$ 28.00 4PK
BROOKVALE 4% RANGE 6PKS	\$ 29.00 6PK
SUNTORY -196 10PKS	\$ 47.00 – LOYALTY \$ 43.00
HARD RATED 4.5% 10PKS	\$ 48.00
WILD TURKEY & COLA 4.8% 10PKS	\$ 50.00
JACK DANIELS DOUBLE JACK 10PKS	\$ 70.00
MOLLYS IRISH CREAM 1LTR	\$ 39.00
ABSOLUT VODKA & FLAVOURS 700ML	\$ 52.00 – LOYALTY \$ 50.00
J/WALKER RED LBL 700ML	\$ 52.00 – LOYALTY \$ 50.00
JACK DANIEL BLACK LBL 700ML	\$ 62.00
HARDYS VR 1LTR VARIETIES	\$ 10.00 EA OR 2 FOR \$ 18.00
HOUGHTON CLASSIC VARIETIES	\$ 12.00 EA OR 2 FOR \$ 22.00
DE BORTOLI BLUE PINOT GRIS & ROSE' ROSE'	\$ 15.00 EA
BROWN BROS MOSCATO VARIETIES	\$ 17.00 EA OR 2 FOR \$ 32.00 – LOYALTY 2 FOR \$ 30.00
PEPPERJACK VARIETIES	\$ 20.00

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POETS COUNTRY LAGER 30PK CANS	\$ 61.00
BUFFALO TRACE BOURBON 700ML	\$ 62.00
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