

the aberdeen WHISPER

Established in Aberdeen, serving communities across the Upper Hunter.

July 2026

www.facebook.com/aberdeenwhisper



ABERDEEN HIGHLAND GAMES

"A Celtic Experience in the Scottish Tradition"

Excitement Builds for Aberdeen Highland Games 2026 with Special Book Launch and Plenty of Surprises

Anticipation is reaching fever pitch across the Upper Hunter as organisers prepare to deliver one of the most memorable Games in recent history, to celebrate 25 years of the prestigious Aberdeen Highland Games

A major highlight of the day will be the **official release of a new book** celebrating the history, people and stories that have shaped the Aberdeen Highland Games over the decades. The publication captures the rich heritage of the event and the remarkable efforts of generations of volunteers who have helped build the Games into one of Australia's most respected Highland gatherings. Visitors will have the opportunity to purchase copies and take home a piece of Upper Hunter history.

Adding to the excitement, organisers have hinted at a number of special surprises throughout the day. While some details are being kept under wraps, attendees can expect memorable moments, unique displays and additional entertainment designed to delight visitors of all ages.

After the day's events are over, enjoy the traditional Ceilidh upstairs at the Muswellbrook RSL Club or simply walk to the Aberdeen Sport and Recreation Club for a buffet dinner and quintet band competition. Bookings are required so please check out aberdeenhIGHLANDgames.com

Finally, the most memorable way to end your 2026 visit to the Aberdeen Highland Games is to visit St Albans Anglican Church in Muswellbrook, at 9.30am on Sunday, 5th July. The historical "Kirkin' of the Tartan" will be held along with the regular service.

For all information and ticket purchases, please go to www.aberdeenhIGHLANDgames.com



We would like to thank the amazing Aberdeen Highland Games book committee
- Liz Birch, Vicki French & Kerry Cooke for helping put the book together

Whisper Trivia

1. What country has the most islands in the world?
2. Who invented the World Wide Web, and when?
3. Which famous American pop band was originally called 'Kara's Flowers'?
4. What is Disney's first film?
5. What was the clothing company Nike originally called?
6. Which artist painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome?
7. Until 1923, what was the Turkish city of Istanbul called?
8. What is the name of the famous dance in The Rocky Horror Picture Show?
9. What color is a polar bear's skin?
10. Who was the first woman ever inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame?
11. What are the names of Cinderella's stepsisters?



- Answers:
1. Sweden (over 220,000)
 2. Tim Berners-Lee (1990)
 3. Maroon 5 (1990)
 4. Snow White, 1937
 5. Blue Ribbon
 6. Michelangelo
 7. Constantinople
 8. The Time Warp
 9. Black
 10. Aretha Franklin
 11. Anastasia and Drizella

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Coal Shaped the Upper Hunter

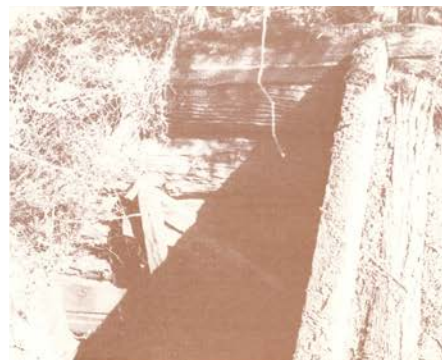
Coal has shaped the Upper Hunter for more than a century, playing a vital role in the region's economy, communities and identity.

The story began in 1797 when Lieutenant John Shortland officially discovered the Hunter River and its rich coal deposits, although local fishermen had reportedly noticed coal seams along the coastline a year earlier. Soon after, a small settlement was established at Newcastle to mine and ship coal.

Despite these early discoveries, coal mining did not reach the Muswellbrook district until the late 1800s. By 1902, coal was being extracted at Kayuga by Arthur Cox, with much of it supplying local creameries and the town gas works. The operation was later purchased by Thomas Blunt, who used the coal to fuel the boilers at his butter factory at Overton.

In 1906, the Kayuga Coal Mining Company Ltd. was formed, marking one of the district's earliest organised mining ventures.

A major turning point came in 1908 with the opening of Muswellbrook No. 1 Colliery. The coal seams were discovered during a search for water on the Common near the eastern end of King Street, leading to the establishment of the Muswellbrook Coal Company.



The industry continued to expand throughout the early 20th century. In 1923, electricity generated at the company's MEPCO power plant provided Muswellbrook with its first electric lighting. A decade later, the Muswellbrook Coal Company merged with the St Heliers Coal Company, creating what became known as No. 2 Colliery.

The development of Muswellbrook No. 3 Open Cut Mine in 1944 transformed the district. At the time, it became the largest open-cut black coal mine in Australia, producing millions of tonnes of coal from three substantial seams after removing vast quantities of overburden.

As coal production increased, so too did the need for electricity generation. Construction of the Muswellbrook Power Station began in 1957, with the £3 million facility officially opened by NSW Premier Robert Heffron in 1960. The station was fuelled by coal from nearby mines and became a major employer in the region.

The industry continued its rapid expansion during the 1960s with the construction of Liddell Power Station, one of New South Wales' largest electricity generators. The project required the relocation of sections of both the New England Highway and the Great Northern Railway to accommodate its cooling water storage.

Around the same time, the Bayswater and Foybrook mines expanded, while the Howick Mine became one of the district's earliest examples of successful mine rehabilitation, pioneering restoration work that would later become standard practice across the industry.

Although the MEPCO and Muswellbrook power stations closed during the 1970s, the opening of Liddell Power Station and later the construction of Bayswater Power Station cemented the Upper Hunter's position as one of Australia's most significant coal and electricity-producing regions.

For generations, the coal industry has provided employment, supported local businesses and helped shape the communities of Muswellbrook, Aberdeen and the wider Upper Hunter. While the industry continues to evolve, its impact on the region's history remains undeniable.

pictured: Kayuga Coal Mine

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.



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St Joseph's Catholic College

SCHOOL MUSICAL BRINGS "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST" TO LIFE

St Joseph's is always busy and our students are involved in many varied activities. The school has been abuzz with excitement as students prepare for the musical Beauty and the Beast. Students have spent a lot of time preparing for this production including giving up time after school, on weekends and holidays. We thank Mach Energy who is the major sponsor of the musical. Tickets are still available by purchasing online www.trybooking.com/DLTUA.



NEW SCIENCE FACILITIES ENHANCE LEARNING

Building works have continued at the school with two newly refurbished science labs and a science prep room. The spaces look fantastic, ensuring we can provide the best possible science learning experiences for our students.

STUDENTS SHINE ON STAGE, SCREEN AND COURT

Music students performed at the Newcastle Civic Theatre in the Catholic School's annual DioSounds concert. Each secondary school in the Diocese was given a 10-minute slot to perform and showcase their musical talents on stage.

Our students and staff once again made us incredibly proud, delivering lively and engaging performances. The high level of talent across all schools was evident, and our performers certainly upheld this standard.

Our chess team has had continued success in the New South Wales Country Secondary Schools Chess Knockout. Frankie R, William B, Jack M, and Mason K performed well under pressure to defeat a very capable opposition.



The Under 14's and Opens Girls Rugby League teams have competed in several rounds of the Country Cup. They have shown great skill and sportsmanship and as a result, they have progressed through to the Northern NSW Country Cup Final to be played at Coffs Harbour next term.

Our Open Boys and Girls Basketball teams participated in the Basketball NSW All Schools Round in Tamworth. The boys gaining wins against St Mary's, Gunnedah and O'Connor Catholic College, Armidale B and a

loss against O'Connor Catholic College, Armidale A in the pool rounds.

The boys' team were overall winners beating O'Connor Catholic College, Armidale A in the Grand Final. The girls' team had wins against Manilla Central and Chatham High School, also being overall winners in



their division, beating Chatham High School in the Grand Final.

In other sports news, several students participated in the Diocesan Tennis Championships in Newcastle. Justus was the winner of the Year 7-9 Division and Adedeji placed 3rd in the Open Division.

RECONCILIATION WEEK COMMEMORATED

Recently, a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended the Upper Hunter Reconciliation Flag Raising at Scone. Year 12 student Cecelia L presented a speech on the theme "All In." Cecelia's speech thoughtfully captured the perspectives and emotions shared by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, highlighting their strong connection to Elders and community.

A WIDE RANGE OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Many other excursions have taken place including, Community Access students visiting the Muswellbrook Fire Station, careers in renewable energy, Where There's a Will student leadership summit, work experience, Experiment Fest, robotics workshop, mathematics enrichment day, equestrian, mining tour, hospital visit, youth council meetings and a history incursion, to name a few!

STAFF RECOGNISED AT EMMAUS AWARDS EVENING

At the recent Emmaus Awards evening for Catholic Schools in the Maitland/Newcastle Diocese, several of our staff were awarded for the service and dedication to their profession. We are immensely proud of our staff who were recognised:

Veronica Rolfe (Principal) – Sisters of St Joseph Award for excellence, innovation, and Faith in Leadership

Lauren Gallagher (Learning Support Coordinator) – Innovation in Teaching

John O'Brien (Teaching Staff) – Individual Long-term Contribution to the School Community

Joel Bristow (Assistant Principal) - 25 Years of Service

Dermot Shannon (Support Staff)- 25 Years of Service

Alison Tilse (Teaching Staff) - 40 Years of Service

Lesley Shipman (Teaching Staff) - 40 Years of Service.

Supplied.

Missed the Whisper? If you live in Aberdeen you should receive a copy of the Whisper but unfortunately, for whatever reason it may not get to your Letterbox. If it does happen you can collect a copy from the Aberdeen Post Office. A digital copy can also be found on the Hunter Valley Printing Website. Thank you for your understanding.

Canada Living with Wildlife

by Doctor Dirt



pictured above: Overhead Vegetated Overpass between Banff and Jasper

Recently I had the privilege of visiting Canada and Alaska. It was truly one of the greatest experiences of my life. The scenery and the people I met made it a memorable experience.

I made several observations during the trip; it is always good to compare how other countries and cultures do things. Today's article I will concentrate on how they protect their native wildlife. They have dramatically reduced native roadkill and vehicle collisions with wildlife. For a number of years, I have been particularly interested in the precautions they have implemented in the Rocky Mountain areas along vast distances of highways, especially around Banff and Jasper. For hundreds of kilometers one travel through National Parks.

Their approach is a global pioneer in road ecology, mitigating habitat fragmentation and reducing vehicle accidents, human and native animal deaths and injuries caused by collisions. Protective measures have reduced the wildlife-vehicle collisions by over 80 percent. In the case of large animals such as deer and elk the collisions have reduced by more than 98 percent.

In the hundreds of kilometers, I travelled along the highways I could only identify that a single squirrel was killed by a vehicle along the way. There are no dead animals along the roads, totally different to Australia.

So how do they do this? Well, it is a combination of detailed implementation of various measures to suit a particular species. Before implementation they take into account the various natural animal crossing areas.

1/ Overhead Vegetated Overpasses. These are broad, naturalized bridges blanketed with native soil, shrubs, trees, groundcovers and logs. These are utilised by elk, moose, deer as well as predators such as wolves, grizzly bears. The Banff National Park Alberta where Trans-Canada Highway travels through have 48 such structures over 82 kilometers length of road. These crossings have been a major success. There are a number of cameras set up on these crossings to check the use by the various native iconic species.

2/ Tunnel underpasses. Not all animals are comfortable to use the overpasses. These are corrugated- metal structures built underneath the roadways. They range from massive multi lane viaducts to small culverts. They are favoured by black bears, cougars and smaller animals such as weasels.

3/ Micro- passages. They even construct specialized culverts designed for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals (such as beavers). Many of these species are endangered.

4/ The highway roadside is fenced with 2.7-metre-high mesh fence. The design of the fence prevents animals entering the highway area. The fences are designed to guide animals to the various types of crossings. As with all protection works it is important to monitor the use and maintain. Canada is continually reviewing to see if improvements can be made.

Australia can take note of what Canada does. There are a few sporadic measures implemented on the Hunter Express Way and areas of the Pacific Highway.

A major problem in Australia is building roads through habitat. It is not the is a native animal on the road from their perspective, it is really there is a car or a truck driving through their habitat, that has been divided by a road.

It would be true we cannot do this magnitude of protection to animals and humans (vehicles) everywhere, but we certainly can implement them in areas and take into account where new roads are considered. Many new roads in NSW and in the suburbs dividing Koala habitat endangered species.

Supplied by Steve Eccles.

Steve Eccles - steveecclesconsulting@gmail.com

Mobile: 0400 808 873



\$300 Million Feral Pig Control Plan Announced for NSW

An elected NSW Nationals and Liberals Government has announced a \$300 million biosecurity and feral animal control program aimed at improving the coordination and management of pest animals across New South Wales.

Feral pigs continue to have a significant impact on the farming sector, causing damage to water sources, fences and pasture, while also raiding agricultural crops and threatening new-born livestock. The Coalition says the new plan will help protect the state's primary industries and support environmental conservation through a more coordinated and proactive approach.

The program includes increased on-ground control efforts and improved local coordination across all land tenures, with a greater focus on having more boots on the ground in affected regions. It also proposes a trial of a targeted bounty scheme for feral pigs, alongside the use of thermal imaging and drone technology to detect and track populations more effectively.

Stronger legal requirements would also be introduced for public land managers to ensure pest animals are actively managed on public land. NSW Nationals Leader Gurmeh Singh said the plan reflects a commitment to reducing the number and impact of feral pigs across the state through practical measures and stronger investment in biosecurity.

Supplied.

State Matters with Dave Layzell MP

ENERGY UPDATE

The Australian Government's Solar Sharer Offer (SSO) initiative will be introduced from 1 July. The SSO is one of the reforms being made to the Default Market Offer (DMO) framework and made available to households in the DMO areas of NSW, South Australia and South-East Queensland.

It gives households with a smart meter access to three hours of free electricity in the middle of the day—whether they have rooftop solar or not. The Solar Sharer Offer will be optional with customers able to sign up through their energy retailer. And, the Cheaper Home Batteries Program has changed, now smaller batteries still receive the full discount, while larger batteries receive a lower discount.

The program was updated in May to better meet household needs over the long term with the rebate to also reduce more frequently over time to reflect falling battery prices and help ensure the program remains sustainable. Discover more at: www.dcceew.gov.au/energy/programs/cheaper-home-batteries

SCAMS ADVICE

Upper Hunter seniors are invited to participate in a scams awareness event to be held in Tamworth. NSW Council on the Ageing has organised Staying Safe from Scams at Wests' Diggers in Kable Avenue, Tamworth on Wednesday 26 August, 11am-12.30 pm.

Scams are becoming more sophisticated and more frequent, targeting people in increasingly convincing ways. The session will outline current scam tactics, emerging risks, and practical steps you can take to stay safe online.

Following the formal session, there will be information stalls with helpful resources and an opportunity to connect with other seniors. Tickets are free by registering at: <https://events.humanitix.com/staying-safe-from-scams-tamworth/tickets>

RETURN TIME

Farmers and land managers are being encouraged to set aside time to complete their annual Land and Stock Return. The survey helps Local Land Services (LLS) and partner agencies support productive, profitable and sustainable farming across the state.

Information gathered helps the LLS to respond faster and more accurately to biosecurity and emergency events, safeguard domestic and international market access and for contributors to keep their property and livestock records up to date. The online portal will open on Tuesday, 30 June, and stay online until 31 August for correspondents to complete their return.

The easiest way to participate is to check in at: <https://nsw.gov.au/alr>

SERVICE ALSO HERE!

Service NSW is in the Upper Hunter this week



with Murrurundi the location on Tuesday, 16 June, 9am-3pm.

Upper Hunter Shire Council, Scone hosts the Service mobile centre Wednesday, 17 June, and Thursday, 18 June, 9am to 3pm both days. For the diary, Paterson has Service NSW at John Tucker Park on Tuesday, 30 June, 8.30-11.30am then the mobile service centre relocates to Grey Street, Clarence Town, 12.30-3.30pm.

Mobile Service Centres offer similar services to the physical Service NSW sites including Driver licence, photo card applications and renewals, applications for birth, death and marriage certificates and the Savings Finder rebates and vouchers program. Check the Service NSW website for more details: www.service.nsw.gov.au/mobile-service-centres

AP GRANTS

Australia Post's Community Grants program is now open with grants up to \$10,000 available. The program supports community initiatives across Australia that strengthen social connection and promote positive mental wellbeing.

Australia Post is this year again offering an additional \$250,000 in grant funding to support projects that enhance mental wellbeing and build resilience in disaster-impacted communities. Applicants can apply for grants up to \$10,000, with organisations unsuccessful in obtaining the full grant then able to be considered for a smaller grant of up to \$4,000.

Applications from locally-led and locally-delivered projects must be submitted by 6 July, with more details at: <https://auspost.com.au/about-us/supporting-communities/grants/community-grants-program>

NEW SERVICES

Upper Hunter electorate communities will benefit from NSW TrainLink's roll out of new regional coach services from the beginning of July.

A new route (Route 351 & 352) will operate

Monday to Friday between Tamworth and Muswellbrook, providing a new day-return link to and from Newcastle via the rail interchange at Muswellbrook.

The Broadmeadow-Taree (Route 135 and 136) increases in frequency from Monday to Friday to daily. The new services have been informed by extensive community feedback including from regular customers and operators, as well as input from the NSW Bus Taskforce. Discover more at: <https://transportnsw.info/regional-travel>

WEED WATCH

Following recent rain, the NSW Government wants rural communities to be on the lookout for new Parthenium weed growth.

With bare ground and warm soil temperatures, conditions are ideal for germination, and Parthenium can flower within three weeks, making early detection critical. Biosecurity officers are on high alert, with high-risk areas including the Hunter, North and Mid Coast, Central West and North-West NSW. If you spot a suspected plant take a photo, record the location, do not touch or disturb it because Parthenium can cause serious health issues for people and livestock.

Report sightings to your local council biosecurity officer: <https://hunterregionalweeds.net.au/index.php/weed-officer-contact> or call the NSW Biosecurity Helpline: 1800 680 244. Learn what to look for, at: <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weed/PartheniumWeed>

KIDS FREE!

All young people aged from 2 to 17 years in NSW are now eligible for the free nasal spray influenza vaccine after the state government expanded the eligibility criteria.

It is available for a limited time at GPs, Aboriginal Medical Services and community pharmacies until all stocks are exhausted. Free influenza vaccine injections are available under the National Immunisation Program in 2026 for children aged six months to under five years, pregnant women, Aboriginal people aged six months and over, people aged 65 years and over and people with certain medical conditions.

The community is reminded a few simple steps can protect against respiratory illness including staying home if unwell, wearing a mask if you need to go out, avoid crowded indoor spaces where possible, and consider a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) before visiting people at higher risk of severe illness.

For more information or to book your 'flu vaccination, visit: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/respiratory/Pages/default.aspx>

Supplied.

Contact:

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

June Rally Day Highlights

We held our June Rally Day recently on a cool winter's day, and the smiles on the kids' faces say it all. They took part in troop drill, jumping, and flat work, with a few even braving a quick paddle in the river, along with plenty of fun games throughout the day.

A big welcome to our new members, and it was wonderful to see so many of our riders attend.

Thank you to our instructors Libby, Rachael, Christine, and Marcia for their time and guidance.

Our next Rally Day will be held on the second Sunday in July.

Supplied by Amy Croft.



Always Good Enough With Kate



Hello readers,

I'm the new face behind this little corner of the paper—armed with a laptop and lots of love for this wonderful community we call home.

I hope to share lots of stories from our community that may not normally attract attention, because people are too shy to share their news or don't feel important enough. Every one of us has a story to tell, and I hope you will share them with me.

I've lived here for 30 years now, and have raised three wonderful children with my late police officer husband, Steve.

I find myself on lots of local committees and consultative groups, which has given me a terrific opportunity to realise how much we can achieve, and what wonderful people we have in our midst.

Just last week I was given the chance to go underground at the Dartbrook Coal Mine in my role as Aberdeen community representative on the Consultative committee. Regardless of any opinions about the mine itself, the excellence being maintained by the caretaker staff is nothing short of superb - their integrity and professionalism in ensuring safety and maintenance of the workings of the mine underground is quite incredible.

Please join me each month. After all, in a small town, we're all part of the story—and I'm looking forward to telling yours. Please feel free to email me - brookaquatics@gmail.com or text 0408 080 436.

Just remember - we're all good enough!

Supplied by Mrs Kate Jones

Athletics

Local Athlete Earns NSW Country Rugby Selection

Aberdeen's rugby community has another reason to celebrate, with local athlete Ruby McGregor earning selection in the NSW Country Rugby Union Under 16 Girls representative team.

Ruby was named in the prestigious squad following outstanding performances at the recent NSW Country Rugby Union State Championships, where the state's best young players competed for representative honours.

Her selection is a testament to the hard work, commitment and dedication she has shown throughout the season, and is a proud achievement for both Ruby and the Aberdeen sporting community.

The announcement was welcomed by Aberdeen Athletics Centre, which congratulated Ruby on her achievement, recognising the significant milestone in her rugby journey.

Representing NSW Country is a tremendous honour and provides Ruby with the opportunity to test herself against some of the best young rugby players in Australia while continuing her development at the representative level.

Congratulations to Ruby on this outstanding achievement. Everyone at The Aberdeen Whisper wishes her every success as she proudly represents both NSW Country and the Aberdeen community.

Supplied.

Accessible Healthcare Helping Locals Stay Healthy This Winter

As winter settles across the Upper Hunter, local health professionals are reminding residents not to ignore lingering coughs, fevers and chest infections, as early treatment can often prevent more serious illness.

It's a familiar story for many country families. What starts as "just a cold" can quickly develop into pneumonia or another serious respiratory infection if left untreated. Busy schedules and the belief that symptoms will pass often mean people delay seeing a doctor until they're much sicker. Aberdeen Surgery is encouraging residents to see a GP early, particularly during the colder months when respiratory illnesses are more common.

The clinic provides treatment for winter coughs, influenza, sinus and chest infections, asthma flare-ups, and chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. Family healthcare, preventive health checks and ongoing care are also available.

Aberdeen Surgery continues to offer 100 per cent bulk-billed consultations for all Medicare card holders, regardless of age. While many practices have introduced gap fees, the clinic remains committed to providing accessible healthcare for the local community.

The practice says removing the cost barrier encourages people to seek treatment earlier, helping prevent illness from becoming more serious and reducing hospital admissions. With same-week appointments often available and walk-ins welcome, residents are encouraged not to wait until symptoms worsen before booking an appointment.

For more information or to book, contact Aberdeen Surgery on (02) 6543 8424 or visit 1 Segenhoe Street, Aberdeen.

Supplied.

Tigers Split Results Against Scone in Tough Round 9 Clash

by Jacob Dallah

The Aberdeen Tigers claimed an impressive Under 18s victory but were unable to match the strength of the Scone Thoroughbreds in Reserve Grade and First Grade during Round 9 at McKinnon Oval.

UNDER 18S

Aberdeen's Under 18s produced one of their most complete performances of the season, defeating Scone 18-6 with a disciplined display built on strong defence and well-executed attack.

The Tigers controlled much of the opening half after gaining early field position, with Bailey Chick's kicking game proving a constant weapon. His perfectly placed cross-field kick found Bronx Geerin, who soared above the defence to score the opening try in the corner.

Persistent pressure and repeat sets kept Scone pinned in their own half before Preston Bateman crossed on the left edge to extend the lead to 10-0. Just before halftime, Chick again delivered a pinpoint cross-field kick for Geerin to claim his second try, sending Aberdeen into the break with a deserved 14-0 advantage.

Scone threatened early in the second half, but Geerin produced a crucial try-saving tackle before the Tigers regained control. Bateman grabbed his second four-pointer shortly afterwards to stretch the lead to 18-0.

The Thoroughbreds eventually crossed through their hooker, but Aberdeen's defence remained resolute for the remainder of the match, shutting down any hopes of a comeback to secure a well-earned 18-6 victory.

RESERVE GRADE

Reserve Grade proved a much tougher afternoon for the Tigers, with Scone taking control through strong field position and clinical finishing to record a 30-12 win.

After an even opening, the Thoroughbreds broke the deadlock through their second-rower before adding further tries through their hooker and another well-worked attacking movement to establish an 18-0 lead. Continued errors and penalties allowed Scone to dominate

possession, with a late first-half try giving the visitors a commanding 24-0 halftime advantage.

Aberdeen responded with greater intensity after the break and finally got on the scoreboard when Jack Bullen darted over from dummy-half, with Tyla Fear adding the conversion.

Although Scone answered with another converted try to restore their buffer, the Tigers continued to fight until fulltime. Jack Albury crossed late in the contest and Fear again converted, but Scone held firm to claim the 30-12 victory.

FIRST GRADE

First Grade began as a physical and hard-fought contest before Scone gradually took control to claim a 40-12 victory.

The Thoroughbreds opened the scoring after capitalising on good field position, but Aberdeen responded through Ethan Sams, who finished brilliantly in the corner to level the scores at 4-4.

Late first-half errors proved costly for the Tigers, with Scone crossing twice before halftime to take a 14-4 lead into the sheds.

Aberdeen started the second half positively but couldn't convert early opportunities into points. Scone punished several mistakes to extend their advantage before a Tigers sin bin midway through the half allowed the visitors to further increase their lead.

To their credit, Aberdeen never stopped competing. Matty Hay crashed over to reward the home side's persistence before Billy Mitchell showed great determination to ground a grubber kick just before it rolled dead, reducing the margin to 30-12.

However, Scone finished strongly with two late tries, sealing a 40-12 victory.

Despite the mixed results, Aberdeen's Under 18s delivered an outstanding team performance, while the senior grades showed plenty of determination despite facing a quality Scone outfit.

Supplied.

Calling Local Artists!!

The Aberdeen Whisper is excited to launch a new monthly feature celebrating the talented artists and creatives who call the Upper Hunter home.

We're inviting painters, illustrators, photographers, printmakers, digital artists, sculptors, ceramicists, textile artists and makers of all kinds to share their work with our community.

Each month, we'll shine a spotlight on one local artist, featuring a selection of their artwork alongside their story. Readers will have the opportunity to learn about the artist's creative journey, what inspires their work, and where they can view or purchase their creations.

Our goal is simple—to celebrate local creativity and provide a platform for artists to connect with the wider community. We believe every artist has a story worth sharing, and we'd love to help tell it.

There is no cost to be featured. While this is an editorial feature rather than a paid commission, we hope it offers valuable exposure and helps introduce local artists to new audiences across the Upper Hunter.

If you'd like to be considered for an upcoming edition, we'd love to hear from you. Simply send us a short introduction about yourself, a few examples of your work, and links to your website or social media (if you have them).

Let's celebrate the creativity that makes our region such a vibrant place to live.

To express your interest, contact The Aberdeen Whisper by email at aberdeenwhisper@hunternvalleyprinting.com.au or through our instagram @aberdeenwhisper. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you and letting your work shine!

TransCare^{Hunter Ltd}

TransCare is your local aged care and community transport service provider and we are here to help you.

TransCare's services include domestic assistance, home maintenance and repairs, meal delivery, social support and community engagement, equipment and products, and our transport services.

Our regular door-to-door bus service connects our major centres and our cars provide a safe passage to out of town medical appointments.

6545 3113
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.

Aberdeen Public School

SRC STUDENTS DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS AT GRIP CONFERENCE

SRC students recently attended the GRIP Leadership Conference in Newcastle, where they took part in a range of activities designed to strengthen their leadership capabilities. The program highlighted the importance of integrity, taking ownership of opportunities, and working collaboratively to achieve shared goals.

The event also provided a valuable opportunity for students to connect with peers from other schools, broadening their networks and learning from different perspectives.



RECONCILIATION WEEK RECOGNISED WITH MEANINGFUL CEREMONY

Aboriginal students proudly represented the school at the Reconciliation Week flag-raising ceremony held at the Upper Hunter Shire Council building, marking this important national week of reflection and learning.

Student Lincoln A. spoke confidently about what reconciliation means to him, sharing a thoughtful personal perspective with those in attendance.

Students also performed Guda, a song about a koala written by Miss B in Gamilaraay language, before joining together with guests for morning tea in a spirit of community and respect.

GENEROUS DONATIONS SUPPORT SCHOOL SPORTING CULTURE

The school community has extended heartfelt thanks to several families for their generous donations of new sporting shields for the Champion Houses.

- The Irving and Hasselmann families donated the Cross Country shield
- The French, Dent, and Enosa families donated the Athletics shield
- The Milton and Dallah families donated the Swimming shield
- The Donnelly and Cox families contributed the Overall Sport House Champion cup

Special thanks also go to Mr Easton for installing and displaying the new shields in the school hall. The awards have quickly become a source of pride, inspiring students as they see their achievements recognised.

HOUSE CHAMPIONS ANNOUNCED ACROSS SPORTING CARNIVALS

Congratulations are extended to all House teams for their outstanding performances throughout the sporting calendar.

- Segenhoe – 2026 Swimming House Champions
- Hunter – 2026 Athletics House Champions
- Hunter and Rossgole – 2026 Cross Country House Champions

Excitement is now building as students look ahead to the race for the

Overall House Champion Cup later in the year.



SPELLING BEE CHAMPIONS CELEBRATED

The school also congratulates its recent Spelling Bee winners:

- Annabel K. – Junior School Champion
- Hayden P. – Junior School Runner-Up
- Jake M. – Senior School Champion
- Jack W. – Senior School Runner-Up



Their dedication and hard work in literacy were proudly recognised across the school community.

Supplied.

Upper Hunter Powerline Inspections

HELICOPTER PATROLS TO SUPPORT NETWORK SAFETY AND RELIABILITY

Transgrid will be conducting helicopter patrols of major electricity transmission lines across the Upper Hunter region this week and next as part of its routine inspection program.

The aerial inspections will take place from Thursday, 18 June, through to Wednesday, 24 June, weather permitting. These patrols allow Transgrid linespersons to visually assess the condition of transmission towers and powerlines from the air, helping to identify any potential safety risks and ensure the ongoing reliability of the network.

COMMUNITIES MAY NOTICE LOW-FLYING HELICOPTERS

Residents in the Singleton, Muswellbrook, Denman, Sandy Hollow, Merriwa, Kerrabee and Bylong areas may notice helicopters operating overhead or in nearby areas during the inspection period. Transgrid advises that these inspections are a standard part of its maintenance program and are essential for identifying issues early and carrying out any necessary repairs.

ONGOING COMMITMENT TO SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE

Helicopter inspections are routinely carried out across the transmission network to support safe and efficient electricity supply. By identifying maintenance needs early, Transgrid aims to minimise disruptions and maintain a reliable service for the community.

An interactive map detailing the patrol areas is available at: www.transgrid.com.au/community/network-inspections-and-maintenance-near-you/

Supplied.

COST OF LIVING ASSISTANCE



Dave Layzell MP
MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

The NSW Government has programs to assist with cost of living expenses.

Call Service NSW on 13 77 88 or visit your local Service Centre.

Check the Savings Finder:
www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/savings-finder



Authorised by Dave Layzell MP,
94 John Street,
Singleton NSW 2330
Funded using Parliamentary entitlements.



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For further information, including BLAST times and location, visit our website:
www.machenergy.com.au or email: info@machenergy.com.au

Sports

The Latest on Vets Golf

STRONG FIELD AT SCONE VETERANS GOLF EVENT

A total of 38 players took part in the Scone Stableford Veterans golf event held on Monday, 16 June. The club extended its thanks to Gary Leake for stepping in for Captain Mick McCormick, who was away for the first time. Gary was supported by Ross Banks in finalising playing groups and compiling results.

The day's winner was Judy Collison with an impressive 44 points. Steve McGhie finished second on 36, followed by Christine Smith in third on 34. Mick Curry placed fourth on 32, with Gary Taylor fifth, Will Coward sixth, and Lyn Banks seventh on 31 (countback).

Balls were awarded to Dave Taylor, Garry Carter, Steve Nowland, Andy Medway, Glen Standring, Howie Lane, Kerry McLennon, Bob Lawman, Hilton Carrigan, Reg Davidson, Gary Leake and Graham Newton.

Nearest the Pin winners were Lyn Banks (4th), Will Coward (8th), Glen Standring (13th) and Andy Medway (17th). The Bradman's Trophy, kindly donated by Gary Leake and associates, was once again won by Pauline Carrigan.

MURRURUNDI GOLF CLUB HOSTS COMPETITIVE SAND GREENS EVENT

Eighteen keen golfers gathered at Murrurundi Golf Club on Tuesday, 23 June for an unusual and well-received format featuring Stroke and Putting on the sand greens. The club extended thanks to Dave Bramley for tabulating the scorecards and to Christine Smith for providing a delicious soup enjoyed by all present. Captain Mick McCormick was also acknowledged for organising the playing groups in his usual efficient manner.

The day's winner was Mark Middleton with a net 64, followed by Red Palmer on 68 in second place. Howie Lane finished third on 70 (countback), with Bruce Robinson fourth, also on 70 (countback). Special mention was made of Red Palmer, who had long requested a Stroke and Putting event on sand greens. His wish was granted on the day, with Palmer also winning the putting competition with 24 putts.

Balls were awarded to James Street (70), Dave Bramley and Alan Flanagan (71), Bob Lawman (72), Graham Newton (73), Steve McGhie (74 countback), and Sid Collison (74). The best scratch score of the day went to Dave Bramley with 83 off the stick. The Bradman's Trophy was won by Garv Myers, supplied by Gary Leake and associates.

FUTURE GAMES

- 7 July at Aberdeen (Stableford for the G. T. Smith Trophy)
- 14 July at Denman (Stableford)
- 21 July at Scone (Stableford).

Players are reminded to book in with the Pro Shop or Lindsay Hodge where required.

New members are welcome, with a shotgun start at 9.00am.

Supplied.



pictured on the left: Judy Collison is congratulated by President Lindsay Hodge on winning the Stb event with 44 points, in a field of 38 players pictured on the right: Mark Middleton won the stroke and putting event at Murrurundi with net 64. He is congratulated by tournament director Bruce Robinson..



Council

UHSC Meeting Recap

DELIVERY PROGRAM AND OPERATIONAL PLAN ADOPTED

Council adopted the Delivery Program 2026 to 2029 and Operational Plan 2026 to 2027 following public exhibition.

The plans outline Council's priorities, projects and services for the coming financial year and include the annual budget, capital works program, revenue policy and fees and charges.

Together they provide the framework for delivering local infrastructure, maintaining essential services and progressing key community priorities across the Upper Hunter.

Following an amendment moved during the meeting, Council also resolved to reduce the landing fee for aircraft over 20,000 kilograms from \$5,950 to \$1,320 (including GST).

RATES AND ANNUAL CHARGES CONFIRMED

Council resolved to make the rates and annual charges for the 2026 to 2027 financial year, providing the revenue required to deliver core services including roads, waste, water, sewer and community facilities.

COUNCILLOR FEES DETERMINED

Council resolved to maintain the Mayor and Councillor annual fees at their current levels for the 2026 to 2027 financial year.

LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN ENDORSED FOR EXHIBITION

Council endorsed the draft Long Term Financial Plan 2026 to 2036 for public exhibition.

The plan provides a ten-year financial outlook and supports Council's ongoing financial sustainability by identifying projected income, expenditure and capital investment required to continue delivering services and infrastructure.

SEWER DEVELOPER CHARGES

Council approved a reduction in sewerage developer charges for a residential subdivision on Gundy Road to offset the cost of works in kind completed by the developer.

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN ADOPTED

Council adopted the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026 to 2030, reaffirming its commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible Upper Hunter.

The Plan provides a framework for improving access to Council facilities, services, information and employment opportunities while supporting greater community participation for people living with disability.

STAFF RECOGNISED FOR 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

Council congratulated Zachary Acres and David Gilroy on reaching 20 years of service with Upper Hunter Shire Council.

Both employees were recognised for their longstanding commitment and significant contribution to delivering essential services and maintaining community infrastructure across the Shire.

For more details on other matters discussed, please refer to the meeting agenda available on the Upper Hunter Shire Council website, or head to our YouTube channel to watch the meeting.

Supplied.



Cellarbrations

JUST SOME OF OUR SPECIALS COMMENCING
MONDAY 29TH JUNE TILL SUNDAY 12TH JULY 2026

POETS COUNTRY CRISP 30PK CANS	\$ 55.00
GREAT NORTHERN SUPER CRISP STUBBIES & 24 CANS	\$ 56.00
XXXX GOLD 30PK CANS	\$ 58.00 – LOYALTY \$ 56.00
HAHN SUPER DRY 3.5 30PK CANS	\$ 60.00 – LOYALTY \$ 58.00
ASAHI SUPER DRY 24 STUBBIES	\$ 62.00 – LOYALTY \$ 60.00
COOPERS PALE ALE STUBBIES & CANS	\$ 62.00 – LOYALTY \$ 60.00
VB 30PK CANS	\$ 69.00
STRONGBOW CIDER CARTONS	\$ 59.00
CRUISER DBL 4PKS	\$ 25.00 OR 2 FOR \$48.00
JACK DANIELS 4PKS	\$ 28.00
CANADIAN CLUB 10PKS	\$ 48.00 – LOYALTY \$ 46.00
HARD RATED 10PKS	\$ 48.00 – LOYALTY \$ 46.00
JIM BEAM 10PKS	\$ 48.00 – LOYALTY \$46.00
WILD TURKEY 10PKS	\$ 50.00
BUNDY OP 10PKS	\$ 55.00
J/DANIELS DBL JACK & COLA 10PKS	\$ 69.00
FRIS VODKA 700ML	\$ 42.00
CAPTAIN MORGAN 700ML	\$ 49.00
BUNDY UP RUM 700ML	\$ 50.00
WILD TURKEY 81 PROOF 40.5% 700ML	\$ 55.00
JACK DANIELS BLACK LBL 700ML	\$ 58.00 – LOYALTY \$ 55.00
GRANTS SCOTCH 1LTR	\$ 66.00
SMIRNOFF VODKA RED 1LTR	\$ 66.00
CANADIAN CLUB 1LTR	\$ 70.00
W/BLASS RED LBL VARITIES	\$ 9.00 EA OR 2 FOR \$ 16.00
YALUMBA Y VARITIES	\$ 12.00 EA OR 2 FOR \$ 22.00
MATUA VALLEY S/BLANC	\$ 16.00 EA OR 2 \$30.00 – LOYALTY 2 FOR \$ 28.00
JACOBS CK DBL BARRELL VARITIES	\$ 18.00
DE BORTOLI S/HILL VARITIES	\$ 6.00 EA OR 2 FOR \$ 10.00
HARDYS VR 1LTR VARITIES	\$ 10.00
WINESMITH TRAD 2LTR CASK	\$ 11.00 EA OR 2 FOR \$ 20.00
BERRI 5LTR CASKS	\$ 23.00

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