



**FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER**

# BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS

COMMUNITY OWNED AND EDITED

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023**

## **Congratulations to the winners of the Barraba Australia Day Awards announced last week.**

Julie Williams and Terry Threlfall were awarded joint 2022 Barraba Citizen of the Year for their tireless community work.

Dustin Hiscock was announced the 2022 Frank Darlington Young Achiever of the Year for his sporting achievements. North West Auto Fest was named 2022 Community Event of the Year.

Well done and thank you to all our winners and nominees who make Barraba the brilliant community it is!



*L to R: Terry Threlfall, Lynette Simpson, Estrella Hamilton, Des Brittain, Peter Squire, Ambassador Dr Tanya Silveira-Price.*

## **Great night at the Barraba Australia Day Awards**

A large and happy crowd gathered on the lawn in front of the Barraba Golf Clubhouse on a very warm evening. They were welcomed by the Barraba Band, MC Helen Rixon, and Councillor Helen Tickle. Young Xavier Darlington lead the Acknowledgement to Country.

Australia Day Ambassador Dr Tanya Silveira-Price gave an inspiring address, reflecting on the meaning of Australia Day to our First Nation peoples, and to Indian-Australians such as herself. She then presented all the nominees for

Awards with their certificates and announced the winners in the three categories.

The formal part of the evening over, the crowd then enjoyed drinks, a meal, and entertainment from the *Brothers Hollow* and *Al Buchan and the Buccaneers* as the evening cooled.



*Left – Right: Tanya Silveriera-Price, Brook Smith, Dustin Hiscock*



*North West Auto Fest representatives: L-R: Phil Denyer, Daniel Hofman, Tanya Silveira-Price, Shaun Faulkner*

## Australia Day Awards – Congratulations from Barraba P A & H Inc

Congratulations to all nominees for the Barraba Australia Day awards. Especially to our Show Society volunteers Brook Smith, Peter Squire, Des Brittain, Julie Williams & Terry Threlfall. Citizen of the year was awarded to Julie & Terry. Well done everyone and thank you for your support of the Barraba Show and community.



Photo L to R: Des Brittain, Terry Threlfall, Brook Smith, Peter Squire



Around 2 p.m. on the afternoon of January 28, the **Westpac Rescue Helicopter** was tasked by New South Wales Ambulance on a medical retrieval to Barraba Hospital to transfer an 81 year old female to Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital suffering a medical condition requiring specialist treatment. The patient was stabilised by the Helicopter Critical Care Team prior to airlifting her to Tamworth. She was in a stable condition.

### A simple way to safeguard your legacy and help save lives!

Making your will and planning for the future can be a confronting experience...but it can also bring peace of mind and confidence that your wishes and instructions will be followed, and importantly that your legacy will be honoured. The Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service (WRHS), thanks to the support of participating solicitors in our region, is holding

its annual **Wills Week** promotion, making for the perfect opportunity to update an old will or establish a new one.

"For most of us the topic of our wills and legacy are not exactly high on the list of our favourite BBQ conversations with family and friends," said Richards Jones OAM, Chief Executive Officer of the WRHS.

"That said, it doesn't detract from the importance of having a properly prepared will for not only the peace of mind of yourself and your loved ones but also for the impact you can make for your charities of choice and your community. The gift of a bequest is a deeply considered matter, but I can tell you for those who have taken steps to help the Rescue Helicopter as part of their legacy when preparing their will, we are forever grateful and deeply humbled for their heartfelt support," Mr Jones concluded.

Wills Week is an affordable way to discuss your wishes with a professional solicitor, with 100% of your booking fee being donated to your local Rescue Helicopter base.

Bookings for appointments in April are now open and will close on February 28. To book online visit [rescuehelicopter.com.au/willswillweek](http://rescuehelicopter.com.au/willswillweek) or call **1800 155 155**.

### About the Service:

The Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service was established in 1975 and through community support and fundraising it has become a critical service that operates four AW139 helicopters from three bases in Belmont, Tamworth and Lismore. The Service, in partnership with NSW Ambulance and NSW Health, delivers aeromedical search, rescue and inter-hospital transfers to care for communities from north of the Hawkesbury River through to the Queensland border and throughout the New England North West.

Along with the Pilot and Aircrew Officer, every prehospital emergency response mission launches with a dedicated NSW Ambulance Critical Care Paramedic, NSW Health Doctor and depending on the needs of each patient the team may include specialist nursing professionals.

The Community, Business Partners and the NSW Government through NSW Ambulance and NSW Health, provide the funds to ensure the Westpac Rescue Helicopter continues to save lives across Northern NSW.

### We're live on the web

Now you can get the local news  
updated more frequently by going to

[www.barrabacommunitynews.org.au](http://www.barrabacommunitynews.org.au)





#### **BARRABA RSL & RECREATIONAL CLUB LTD**

Phone: 67821379

For the information of members and guests

**The club will resume trading on a Monday from the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

#### **THIS WEEK:**

**THURSDAY: 11AM-**

MULTISCREEN DRAW-SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**FRIDAY: 11AM-**

MEAT/VEG RAFFLES 6PM

PLUS BONUS PRIZE DRAW AFTER THE RAFFLES

MEMBERSHIP DRAW \$2,000 (3 draws)

COURTESY CAR AVAILABLE FROM 5.30PM

**SATURDAY: 10AM-**

**SUNDAY: CLUB CLOSED DUE TO POWER OUTAGE**

**MONDAY: CLOSED**

**TUESDAY: 11AM-5.30PM**

BINGO 11AM

**WEDNESDAY: 11AM-5.30PM**

**HAPPY HOUR: 11am-1pm Wed & Fri**

**BISTRO HOURS**

Phone 0427330808

**From Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February our hours will change**

CLOSED MON/TUES/WED

**THURS/FRI/SAT: LUNCH 12-2PM DINNER 6-8.00PM**

**SUNDAY: CLOSED DUE TO POWER OUTAGE**



## **POSITION VACANT**

### **BARRABA RSL & RECREATIONAL CLUB LTD**

#### **BAR ATTENDANT/ KITCHEN HAND**

#### **Casual Position**

- Must be willing to work weekends and nights
- Must be able to perform both Bar & Kitchen Duties
- Award wages paid
- Must be available to work weekends and nights
- Must be 18yrs & over to apply

We are looking for a casual Bar Attendant/ Kitchen Hand

- Successful applicants must have:
- Current RSA & RCG Certificates
- Food handling Certificates

Knowledge of Keno, TAB, and Gaming Machines are an advantage but not essential

- The successful applicant must be willing to obtain /Complete
- Keno, TAB, AML/CTF training

If you are interested in this job, please email your resume to [manager@barrabarsl.com.au](mailto:manager@barrabarsl.com.au) or drop into the club.

Applications close on Tuesday 28th February 2023



The **Lions Club of Barraba** are seeking a new cook to provide meals on a fortnightly basis for their members during meetings.

You will be able to choose your menu fortnightly and utilise the Golf Clubs kitchen. For more information and queries please contact Lions President Ron Bridges on 0428 821 036



### **MedCIRC Barraba Surgery Closure dates.**

The surgery will be closed for the following dates:

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February through to Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February inclusive and will re-open Tuesday 21st February at 9.00am.**

If you require scripts, please phone the surgery on 67821621 to make an appointment prior to the closure.

Opening Hours 9.00am - 1.00pm / 2.00pm - 5.30pm

Surgery will be closed for lunch between 1.00pm - 2.00pm.

Phones will not be answered during this hour.

In case of an emergency between 1.00pm - 2.00pm please call 000 or contact Barraba Hospital on 67822500



## History Notes

As we are now in February it is time to welcome back the markets. Our first market of the year will be held on Saturday week, 11<sup>th</sup> February. There will be an advertisement in this publication but I remind everyone that we have a new market co-ordinator, who has drawn up an advertising sheet which you may also see around town during the next week. All the usual stalls will be present with, we hope, a couple of different ones. Come along and have a BBQ, a coffee, buy a book or a piece of pottery and enjoy a chat with your fellow residents. This week we have had a request for information about The Corner Store with reference to one of its owners. We have a few lists of owners and some ideas of the times they were there – the list will be at the markets if anyone can help put it into order.

I can remember Walter Flynn and then Jim Conway in the second half of the 1960's but were there a couple of other owners in between? Perhaps someone can remember.

To finish off this week I have a Barraba & Manilla News, March, 1898 extract in front of me. This was the time when the local Church of England (Anglican) churches faced boundary changes. Parson Brown who was in charge of the Barraba/Bingara parish stated that the Bingara section of the parish were unanimous that it could not carry on without Barraba. He was so desperate about the cutting up of his parish that he sent a telegram to C.G. Williams protesting the move.

Sadly, for both Barraba and Bingara, the Archdeacon of Tamworth, Rev. Julian Lewis decided that Barraba should join Manilla, and Bingara should be paid a grant of 25 pounds per annum to assist in the maintenance of the work of the church there.

The following couple of years proved to be very hard for both local parishes. The Rev Brown sadly died 3 months later (some said from a broken heart) and both parishes struggled to survive. Eventually Barraba managed to separate from Manilla and went ahead from there with a new church. Unfortunately, it was some years before Bingara recovered with support from its residents.

## Barraba Museum Market Day

Saturday February 11<sup>th</sup> 9am to 12 noon

Come and browse in our Museum

See our historical school photo collection

Share your family history or we may be able to answer your queries

Sit awhile and enjoy our music

BBQ and Coffee

Browse our stalls selling, home-made jams, pickles, relishes, cakes & biscuits, greeting cards, plants, pottery, giftware, farm fresh honey, macramé, jewellery, books, clothing and crafts

Visit the Historical Society Stall for local history books, s/h books, raffle

## The Dog and Small Pet Show



Our very popular pet show is on again at the 2023 Barraba Show. Bring along your small pet; entries are open to all young people up to senior high school. It is not just dogs; there is a class for cats, and one for other small pets. There is a chance to dress up – there is a prize for the *Best Pet and Owner dressed alike* – and a race to see who is the fastest eating dog biscuits! The full details can be found on the Show website – go to [www.barrabashow.com.au](http://www.barrabashow.com.au) and see the *Dogs and Small Pets* Schedule.

All animals must be on a lead, or in a cage or pen. All entries for the dog classes (and all dogs that come onto the Showground) must be fully vaccinated and have a current vaccination certificate. The local Vet will be on hand prior to the start of events to check certificates.

Judging will be about 1.30 pm on Sunday 5 March behind the Grandstand. Come along – there are heaps of ribbons, certificates, and prizes to be won – it is always great fun.



### Barraba Branch of the United Hospital Auxiliaries

General Meeting Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023

10.00am at The Day Centre, Barraba Hospital

*New members are most welcome.*

We Fundraise for the hospital to provide additional equipment and services for the benefit of patients' comfort.



### **Congratulations to the Manilla community's Australia Day Award**

Former Tamworth Regional Councillor and active member of nine Manilla community groups, Jim Maxwell, was named Citizen of the Year. Elle Jarman and Albert Griffiths shared the honour of Young Citizen of the Year.

Rosie Ferguson was recognised as Manilla Achiever of the Year. The Manilla Men's Shed Open Day was announced 2022 Community Event of the Year.

Well done and thank you - all winners and nominees help give Manilla it's great community spirit!

### **Anyone who has been impacted by Robodebt is urged to make a submission before the closing date of 3 February 2023.**

The Commission has received 641 submissions to date. Every submission assists the Commission in fully understanding the impacts of Robodebt.

There are a number of ways to make a submission:

- Online at <https://robodebt.royalcommission.gov.au/share-your-story>
- Phone 1800 317 022 to make your submission over the phone
- Email [RRC.enquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:RRC.enquiries@royalcommission.gov.au) or
- Post to GPO Box 546, Brisbane QLD 4001 (postmarked by 3 February)

We can also receive submissions via video or audio recording. Email [RRC.enquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:RRC.enquiries@royalcommission.gov.au) and ask for instructions on how to record and securely upload your video or audio submission or for assistance to make a video recording. For more information about the Royal Commission visit <https://robodebt.royalcommission.gov.au/>

### **APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR 2023 REGIONAL SENIORS TRAVEL CARD 🚗🚗**



Our region's seniors can now apply for their \$250 regional seniors travel card for 2023!

These cards have proven to be hugely popular in our region with almost 10,000 local seniors claiming their card last year.

For more information and to apply, visit <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/regionalseniorstravel>





## Electricity network maintenance

### POWER OUTAGE SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2023

Essential Energy will be working in conjunction an authorised contractor to complete major maintenance on the high voltage electricity network that supplies power to the townships of Barraba, Manilla and the surrounding areas to ensure the ongoing reliability of the local power supply.

Acting Operations Manager Northern Tablelands, Ben Lock, said the combined projects involve the replacement of five high voltage power poles at various locations across the area along with various other network components that have reached end of life.

"These areas are serviced by one main powerline and electricity can't be re-routed from an alternative source, so it's vital that maintenance is completed to ensure the power network remains in peak condition," Ben said.

To enable the work to be completed safely, a planned power outage has been scheduled for **Sunday, 5 February 2023, between 8am and 4pm**. More than 3,600 homes and businesses will be affected by the outage and have been notified in advance, including those in Upper Horton, Upper Manilla, Moore Creek and surrounds.

"On this occasion, given the area and the number of customers affected, it has been possible to schedule the works in conjunction with the authorised contractor to reduce the number of planned power outages affecting customers. The outage has also been scheduled for a Sunday to further reduce the overall inconvenience on the wider community," Ben said

Traffic control will be in place at various locations during the works and residents are asked to follow all directions and detours.

"Significant planning has been undertaken, including bringing in crews from Armidale, Barraba, Inverell and Walcha to assist our Tamworth crews complete the maintenance work during the planned outage," Ben said.

The scheduled works are reliant on suitable weather conditions and may be postponed if the conditions are unfavourable or any unforeseen circumstances arise.

"We appreciate that planned power outages may cause inconvenience for some customers however they are necessary to ensure a safe and reliable power supply and to also allow communities to grow," Ben said.

## BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS

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Printed on site at the Community College. Free publication by email or collection from local Barraba main street businesses.

### St Laurence's Barraba

Sunday service at 9.00am

Woodsreef: 2nd Sundays 11am

### Uniting Church Notice

From Sunday 5th February 2023 all services return to 8.45am. All welcome

### CATHOLIC CHURCH NOTES

Barraba 1st & 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, 6pm Saturday evening

2nd 3rd & 4th Sunday 9am

Upper Horton 3rd Sunday 11am

Weekday Mass Wednesday 10am

### Snippets from St Laurence's

It is always good to welcome Bishop Rod, but especially this last weekend when he came to install Matthew Hearne as Curate in Charge of the Anglican Parish of Barraba. Apparently, he is not officially our vicar until he has some experience in the job.

The news of a power outage next Sunday has reminded me of the Sunday mornings in the early '70's when PCCC was doing regular updating of the system. Each Sunday Bruce McDonald would organise a generator so that our church had lights, but it didn't supply enough power to run the organ as well, so our organist, only a 12 or 13 year old, had to pump away on the "pedal organ," an old harmonium that had been stored in the vestry after the closure of Hawkins Creek church. Without fail, just before the service started, he would thump out, "Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning."

This week think about these words from Paul's letter to Philippians, chapter 4, verses 6 and 7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Beth

## Smart water meters coming to the Tamworth region



Tamworth Regional Council's latest investment to enhance water sustainability across the local community involves the installation of new smart water meters.

The rollout begins early March in Manilla and Barraba and be installed throughout the region until late 2023. In total, over 21,000 mechanical water meters will either be replaced with new smart water meters or fitted with add on tags through a \$6.5M investment by Council.

Smart water meters measure water usage and are fitted with low powered radio transmitters to provide accurate near real-time water usage readings, improving the accuracy of water bills, help to detect possible leaks, promote better water management and improve customer service.

Council currently uses a fleet of mechanical water meters which rely on manual readers to capture consumption data. This approach is manually intensive and relatively inefficient. Tamworth Region Mayor, Russell Webb said that Council is investing in water security for the region.

"Council is continuing with its efforts to increase water security for our community with new smart water meters. One of the biggest advantages to the smart meters is their near real-time usage readings and accuracy which helps to detect leaks. Smart meters can help us save many mega litres of water each year through leak detection. Many other Councils have already upgraded to smart water meters because of these positive benefits. An online water portal will provide residents of the Tamworth region with easily accessible data to monitor water consumption and alerts for high consumption and leaks. Smart water meters will also

help Council make faster and more informed water distribution decisions, improving the entire water network."

The water portal will be available to residents of the Tamworth region from June/July 2023 onwards. The new meters also display usage readings on the devices themselves too.

Residents should expect water supply to be interrupted for only 10 to 20 minutes when the new meters are installed. Installers will knock on the door to confirm with the resident if it is ok to change the meter at that time.

Tamworth region residents are required to clear the area around their water meters including the removal of any covers or debris prior to their installation dates. Residents who own dogs or have meters behind locked gates can contact Data Right on 07 4968 3173 to arrange a suitable time for installation.

To find out more about smart water meters and the rollout schedule please visit [www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/smart-water-meters](http://www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/smart-water-meters) or call Council customer service on (02) 6767 5555.

## Visit aims to broaden Sister City links with Sannohe

Tamworth Region Mayor Russell Webb and the Mayor of Sannohe Town Council Kasuhiko Matsuo have today committed to exploring ways to broaden the Sister Cities relationship between their communities.

"Both councils have today reaffirmed their commitment to continue to develop this unique relationship," said Cr Webb. "While the protocol establishes guidelines for civic visits, Mayor Kasuhiko Matsuo and I are keen to discuss opportunities for how we can broaden our Sister City links through building citizen to citizen connections through cultural, business and educational exchanges."

Sannohe is one of the Tamworth region's longest Sister City relationships, dating back to 1983 when the then Tamworth City Council started hosting an annual visit by the Sakura Princesses during the Tamworth Country Music Festival. The relationship was formalised in 2001.

Cr Webb acknowledged local resident Bill Forrest and his son Allan who played an instrumental role in building links with Sannohe. Bill was a Rotarian and Allan took part in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program.

Sannohe Rotarian and former councillor Katsuyoshi Sakamoto is among the current group of visitors. He has visited Tamworth five times.

## The government wants to change Australia's referendum laws. How will this affect the Voice to Parliament?

*Paul Kildea, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law & Justice, UNSW Sydney*

Last week, the Albanese government took another important step towards the referendum on a Voice to Parliament. It introduced a bill to make changes to our referendum process, including new arrangements for public education and campaign finance.

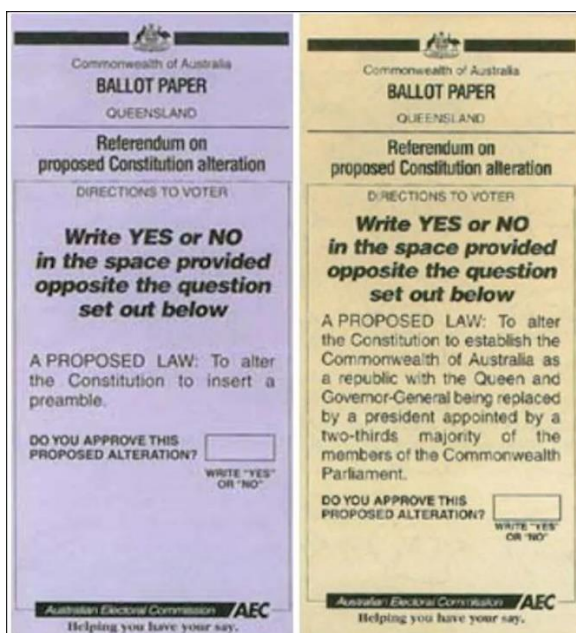
Getting the referendum process right is essential if the Voice vote is to be fair and informed. So, what changes has the government proposed, and will they help to achieve that?

### Modernising our outdated referendum rules

It is more than 20 years since Australia held its last referendum in 1999. That is the longest period in our history without a vote on constitutional change. So much time has passed that only Australians over 40 have any experience voting in a referendum.

One of the effects of this long gap is that the laws governing the referendum process have become stale. Unlike election laws, they have not always been updated to reflect changes in voting and campaigning. And some aspects – like the design of the referendum pamphlet – have barely changed in over a century.

With a Voice referendum on the horizon, it was clear a big update was needed. A major parliamentary inquiry said as much in December 2021 when it called Australia's Referendum Act "outdated and not suitable for a referendum in contemporary Australia".



The federal government proposes to modernise the law in several areas. The arrangements for postal voting, authorisation of advertisements and ballot scrutiny would all be brought into line with election laws.

But the more noteworthy changes concern public education and campaign finance. These are the most sensitive areas covered by the bill and will attract the most debate in the months ahead.

### Scrapping the pamphlet

In a surprise move, the government wants to drop the official Yes/No pamphlet for the Voice referendum.

For over a century, the usual practice has been for governments to mail voters a pamphlet that contains official Yes and No arguments authorised by members of parliament.

The Bill suspends this practice for any referendum held during this parliamentary term. The government says the circulation of a hard-copy pamphlet is outdated in the digital age and that MPs can make their case in other ways, including via television and social media.

The pamphlet has never lived up to its promise as an educative tool. It is designed to persuade, not inform. Past pamphlets have often contained exaggerated or misleading claims that seem designed to confuse or frighten voters. In 1974, for example, the No campaign said "democracy could not survive" a change to how electorates were drawn. At its worst, the pamphlet can serve to spread misinformation rather than counter it.

All the same, many voters will want an accessible source of official information, both on the proposal and the arguments for and against change, to help them make up their own mind. A hard-copy pamphlet can serve that purpose, even in a digital age.

Rather than ditching the pamphlet, the parliament should reform it. It should be revised to include a clear, factual explanation of the proposal, just like similar pamphlets in Ireland, California and New South Wales. The arguments for and against should be shorter, calmer and more considered. And if we can't trust politicians to formulate quality Yes and No cases, we should give that task to public servants or an independent body.

### Civics education

The government says it wants to focus its public education efforts on a civics campaign that will provide voters with information about "Australia's constitution, the referendum process, and factual information about the referendum



proposal". The bill temporarily lifts a block on government spending to allow that to happen.

This move is promising, and there is a precedent for it – the Howard government funded a neutral education program for the republic referendum.

But the government has not provided any detail on how the campaign would run. Careful design is crucial if it is to be trusted and effective.

Here the government should heed the recommendation of the 2021 parliamentary inquiry and establish an independent referendum panel to advise on, or even run, the civics campaign. A 2009 inquiry suggested the same.

To ensure public confidence in the body, its membership could be appointed by the prime minister in consultation with other parliamentary leaders. Ideally, the members would come from diverse backgrounds. The inquiry recommended a panel comprising "constitutional law and public communication experts, representatives from the AEC and/or other government agencies, and community representatives".

It was disappointing that last week's announcement made no mention of this idea. The creation of a well-designed, independent body to oversee public education could make a huge difference to voters looking for accessible, balanced and reliable information on the Voice.

### **No public funding for the Yes and No campaigns**

The government has said it won't provide public funding to the Yes and No campaigns. Both sides will instead have to rely on private fundraising to pay for advertising and other campaign activities.

This approach has been the norm over Australia's referendum history. Howard allocated public money to the Yes and No sides in 1999, but that remains a one-off.

### **Transparency and accountability in campaign finance**

The bill makes long-overdue changes to the rules on referendum campaign finance.

Labor wants campaigners to publicly report donations and expenditure that exceed the disclosure threshold (which is currently set at \$15,200). It would also restrict foreign influence by banning foreign donations over \$100.

These changes bring referendum laws into line with ordinary election laws – for better and worse. They will help to improve accountability and transparency. But they replicate the failings of election laws and fall well short of best practice.

The disclosure threshold is too high, ensuring some large donations will remain anonymous. And Australians will have to wait until after the referendum to find out who gave money to the Yes and No campaigns.

A better approach would be to set a lower threshold and require real-time disclosure, as occurs in some states.

### **The dangers of last-minute rule changes**

Australia's referendum laws need an overhaul. The government's bill is a step in the right direction, although it falls short in important areas. It has been referred to the electoral matters committee and will be debated in the new year.

It is unclear if the major parties will reach consensus on all aspects of the bill. The decision to axe the pamphlet has already proved contentious. The Liberal opposition has said that suspending the pamphlet is "worrying" and "puts a successful referendum at risk".

Unfortunately, conversations about the referendum process are much harder on the eve of a vote. Rule changes, even when well-intentioned, are more likely to be viewed as strategic or self-interested.

Given our long referendum hiatus, it is a shame parliament has waited until now to seriously consider these process reforms.

However, there is now a short window for parliamentarians to work seriously and cooperatively towards a framework that will ensure a fair and informed vote on the Voice to Parliament.

### **EMERGENCY SERVICES CONTACT LIST**

Ambulance	000
Fire	000
Police	67900360
VRA	000
Barraba Police Station	67821003
Barraba Fire Brigade	67821179
Barraba Health Service (Hospital)	67822500
Barraba Medical Centre (GP)	67821621
Barraba Vet Service	0459 192 265
Essential Energy	132080
Beyond Blue	1300224636
Lifeline	131114
NRMA	131122
SES Barraba	132500
Tamworth Regional Council	
Emergency Number	1300733625
Council Office	67821105

### ***Brian Coote's interesting photo on the Historical Society page***

This is a customer's photo I copied quickly on Polaroid intending no doubt to write something on the back.

I'm pretty sure this pic has been taken in Alice St looking south as that is the Methodist church in Edward St in the background.

Is that the Reading house behind the wagons?

This must have been a family moving house and my apologies for not recording any info on this moment of history. Hopefully one of you will recognise this image and tell us more about it.

Posted by Brian Coote.



### **Birdsong isn't just competition for mates or territory. Zebra finches sing to bond.**

*Simon Griffith, Professor of Avian Behavioural Ecology, Macquarie University*

*Hugo Loning, PhD candidate in Behavioural Ecology, Wageningen University*

When you hear beautiful birdsong, such as the warbling of the Australasian magpie, you might believe it's a sign of intense competition for territory or showing off to attract a mate.

After all, that's the way birdsong is often thought of – a way for male birds to compete with each other. A prettier version of nature red in tooth and claw, as Tennyson put it. There's some truth to it – in many species, even the most beautiful song by a male in another's territory will invite attack.

But birdsong isn't one dimensional. In some species, birdsong is much less about competition and much more about social cooperation. Our study of highly social Zebra finches found the song of the males boosts social cohesion in local populations. It even helps these tiny birds to

coordinate their nest building, mating and reproduction when there's about to be abundant food for their young.

So, when you hear a melodious song, enjoy it. Nature isn't just about competition. More and more, we're learning cooperation is there too. In some species, birdsong promotes harmony at a species level – and boost bonding between a male and his partner.



*Flocks of zebra finches roam the interior, looking for seeds and water. Shutterstock*

### **What did we find?**

Zebra finches travel in large flocks through Australia's arid interior, looking for seeds. They're highly social, and are known as a bird species able to learn new songs.

Zebra finches are one of Australia's most-studied birds, because they're easy to keep in captivity. But to discover how they act in the wild, we had to go remote to a study area near Broken Hill.

To capture their song, we installed more than 20 microphones and recorded them from dawn to dusk every four days over a whole year.

We chose this species because the males sing their own individually distinctive songs – and they do it relatively quietly, compared to the loudspeaker bugling of, say, a currawong.

That's important. When birds sing softly, it's a sign the song isn't a warning about territory. Zebra finch songs can be heard only by birds within a few metres, and they're often sung when birds perch together in the same bush. So why do they do it? When each male sings their own unmistakable songs, it lets others in the group figure out who is singing – and gauge how many males are close by.

### **Song for social bonding**

On our recordings, we heard zebra finches every day – even though it was in 2019, when one of the worst droughts in the last 100 years made conditions very poor. No finches even attempted to breed.



*Researcher checking one of the acoustic recording stations during a sandstorm at the height of the drought in February 2019. Simon Griffith*

But then the climate cycle shifted from drought to rains and flood. Water drove grass growth – and that meant seeds were coming. The finches sensed this and began mating.

As the drought broke, we heard the males sing more, peaking around the time the female birds laid their eggs. This suggests zebra finch song is part of an ongoing “discussion” between a female and her partner, which helps synchronise their activity. Song is likely to be related to how birds feel. When food is abundant birds feel better and sing more. When individual finches hear lots of singing in the area they

know others are also enjoying the conditions and it gives greater confidence in the decision to start breeding.

So, if zebra finch males don't sing to claim territory, are they doing it to show off to prospective mates? Nope. In these remarkable birds, the males tend to sing after they've found a partner. They sing to her while perching next to her on a branch, and they will sing regularly – even daily – over the years of their relationship.



*A pair of zebra finches (the female is on the left) Simon Griffith*

The females of most singing species sing too. Female zebra finches, however, don't sing.

We believe the serenading of the female zebra finch by her partner may play a similar social function to the commonplace song duets you can hear from Australian songbirds in suburbs or in the bush.

For instance, magpie-lark couples will sing a duet while doing a kind of dance, making distinctive, synchronised wing spreading, shoulder raising and body flicking movements.

These duets help to strengthen the pair's bond and help them coordinate their behaviour. These synchronised songs and visual displays also show the strength of their partnership, which can make territory intruders think twice. For zebra finches, it may be the male's constant song is enough to keep the pair well bonded.

Australia is rightly famous for its birds, from raucous cockatoos to melodious songbirds. After all, birdsong evolved here first and spread to the rest of the world.

Now we know the zebra finch uses song as social bonding, we can look for this in other species around the world. We expect many other gregarious species will use song in ways more complex than marking territory or drawing in mates.

Birdsong is the animal sound we most regularly encounter – it's part of the background of our lives. But for birds, it's far beyond a pretty melody. It's fundamental to how they live and who they are as a species.



## FUEL TAX CREDIT CHANGES

Businesses, including primary producers, that are eligible to claim the fuel tax credit need to be aware that since the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 the rate that you claim has changed.

From that date the rates are as follows:

Fuels for off Road Use  
46.0 CENTS PER LITRE

Fuel for on road use  
18.80 CENTS PER LITRE

If you are claiming the Tax credit in your December BAS then you will need to apply the above rates.

These rates will be effective for fuel purchased up to the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

If you have already lodged your December BAS and have not applied the above rates you will need to lodge an amended BAS with the Australian Taxation Office.

Note that the rate will change again before the March quarter BAS is due.

This update has been provided by D J Kelly & Co Chartered Accountants and if we can assist please contact us at [kelly@djkelly.com.au](mailto:kelly@djkelly.com.au) or on 02 67821403.

## Your friendly local professional

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[wardsplumbing@bigpond.com](mailto:wardsplumbing@bigpond.com)

## Barraba 6 day Forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology



**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> Feb**

**Summary** Min 16 Max 30

**Possible shower**

Chance of any rain: 40%



**Thursday 2 Feb**

**Summary** Min 17 Max 33

**Mostly sunny**

Chance of rain: 20%



**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb**

**Summary** Min 16 Max 33

**Sunny**

Chance of any rain: 5%



**Saturday 4 Feb**

**Summary** Min 12 Max 30

**Sunny**

Chance of any rain: 0%



**Sunday 5 Feb**

**Summary** Min 12 Max 33

**Sunny**

Chance of rain: 5%



**Monday 6 Feb**

**Summary** Min 15 Max 33

**Partly Cloudy**

Chance of any rain: 20%



### **Regional Dam Levels from Water NSW**

Chaffey 100.0%

Copeton 89.0%

Keepit 93.0%

Split Rock 100.0%

Over the next few weeks *Barraba Community News* will be edited by Terry Threlfall. If you need to contact 'News' please phone Terry on 0400 216 365 or the usual email [news@barrabacommunitynews.org.au](mailto:news@barrabacommunitynews.org.au) or call into the Community College and Tanya can help you.