



**FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER**

# BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS

COMMUNITY OWNED AND EDITED

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

## **2023 Open Gardens Ramble**

Barraba Cancer Patients Fund Raising Group (BCPFRG) are proposing to hold a day of Open Gardens in and around the township of Barraba on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2023. Hopefully the weather and watering will be kind enough to enable the 6-8 gardens participating, to look at their best on the weekend of the previously held Barrabor Festival. Whilst the Spring blossoms will have been and gone, there will be other delights to behold in each of the gardens, and the shade from the leafy trees will of course, be welcomed by all.

Garden entry will be \$5 per garden, or an 'all gardens' ticket can be purchased for \$25 at any of the gardens. They, in the Ramble will be announced closer to the time, and there will be morning and afternoon teas available at one of the lovely places. A couple of other great additions may also feature, so keep posted to read what is to be on offer.

Funds raised by BCPFRG at the Open Gardens Ramble will go towards donations the group makes to several Cancer involved organizations for research and/or cancer related equipment. These recipients will be decided at the Group's upcoming AGM.



**After your morning Garden Ramble drop into the Fuller Gallery for lunch between 12 midday and 2pm. A chance to have a relaxing sit, chat and something to sustain your ongoing afternoon 'ramble'**

**Gallery will be open from 10am to 3pm**



## **COLLEGE CHAT**

[www.ccni.nsw.edu.au](http://www.ccni.nsw.edu.au)

RTO90027

**Join us at the Barraba Campus for morning tea  
Thursday 19 October – 10am to 12pm**



We're here to help you develop the digital skills you need for work, farm, social or study.

For catering purposes please enrol on line through [www.ccni.nsw.edu.au](http://www.ccni.nsw.edu.au) or phone the Community College on 6782 1662.



## **Notice of Annual General Meeting**

Community College Northern Inland Inc. AGM will be held on Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November from 4pm at the College Campus, 47 Fitzroy Street, Barraba.

Nominations for vacant Board positions are welcome and must be received prior to the meeting. To obtain an EOI form, please contact Penny on 0407 157 542.

## **"GP for Barraba" Petition; Kevin Anderson comes to Barraba**

Our local state MP, Kevin Anderson, met with local residents in O'Meara Park last Thursday 28 September. A crowd of more than eighty locals gathered to present Mr Anderson with a petition urging him to use his position to ensure that a doctor is recruited urgently for the Barraba Hospital and Medical Centre. Lynda Boyland, who started the petition now containing over 1000 signatures, handed the document over. Mr Anderson invited the gathering to put their views about what should happen from here. A lively discussion occurred, with many good ideas canvassed; a recurring theme was - could Dr Hein (a very popular recent GP) be enticed to return?



Mr Anderson said that he was working with Federal Member Barnaby Joyce's office (support for GPs is a Commonwealth matter) and with NSW Health (who are responsible for Hospitals) to fill the positions as soon as possible. He warned though, that the old GP model (one doctor filling both roles at the medical centre and hospital), is unsustainable. In today's demanding climate, that doctor invariably "burns out" – that helps no one. A better solution must be found.

Thanks to Lynda Boyland, Julie Fenwick, Gene Robinson, Betty Nelson and others who organised the petition and meeting.



## **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Petition/Residential Dr. needed in Barraba.

I'd like to thank Julie Fenwick for putting a notice in Barraba Community News, 27th Sep. on my behalf to let Barraba community know The Hon. Kevin Anderson MP was coming to O'Meara Park Thursday 28th. to accept the petition.

Thanks to everyone in attendance, it was a good crowd and we ended with approximately 1053 signatures. Thank you to the businesses for having the petition and supporting it by collecting signatures.

Thank you to Betty Nelson and Gene Robinson who collected a few hundred signatures. Many thanks to everyone who took the time to collect signatures.

Hopefully Barraba will have a Doctor sooner rather than later.

Lynda Boyland

Phone: 67821251

Email: [lyndyb1@bigpond.com](mailto:lyndyb1@bigpond.com)



**Phone: 0459 192 265**

Email: [admin@barrabaveterinaryservice.com](mailto:admin@barrabaveterinaryservice.com)

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**There will be an  
RAAF military  
display at 111 Queen  
Street, next door to  
Chemist from Friday  
6 October till  
Monday 6 November**

## **BIRTHDAY LADS**

Friends gathered for lunch at the RSL Club on Saturday 30 September to celebrate the birthdays of Ken McLean (left) and Bill Rumsby.



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

Phone 67821379

For the information of members and guests.

#### **THIS WEEK**

#### **FRIDAY 6th October**

MEAT RAFFLES

1st Draw 6.45pm

2nd Draw 7.30pm

MEMBERSHIP DRAW \$1400

Kevin Spencer from 6pm

#### **SUNDAY 8th October**

ANGLER CLUB RAFFLES FROM 1PM

MEMBERSHIP DRAW 7 DRAWS \$2000

#### **BISTRO HOURS**

Phone 0427303808

DINE IN OR TAKEAWAY

DAILY BLACKBOARD SPECIALS AVAILABLE

ALSO PIZZAS MADE TO ORDER

MONDAY: CLOSED

TUESDAY: CLOSED

WEDNESDAY: 12PM-2.00PM

THURS/FRI/SAT: LUNCH 12-2PM

DINNER FROM 6PM

SUNDAY: 12-2PM



**POSITIONS VACANT  
BARRABA RSL &  
RECREATIONAL CLUB**

HAVE THE FOLLOWING CASUAL POSITIONS VACANT

BAR ATTENDANTS

CLEANER

KITCHEN HAND/COOK

PLEASE EMAIL RESUME TO

[manager@barrabarsl.com.au](mailto:manager@barrabarsl.com.au) or drop it into the club

# BARRABA SHOW GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY 26TH OCTOBER 2023:  
6.30PM  
AT BARRABA BOWLING CLUB

Come along get involved as well as join us  
for a drink and some dinner.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

### TRANSPORT DRIVER

Provide transport  
to individuals or  
groups of older  
persons



### COMPANION INDIVIDUAL

Spend one on one time with  
a GoCo client in their home  
or out in the community



### COMPANION GROUP

Deliver fun activities  
to our clients such as  
bingo or mystery  
tours!!



### MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERY

Deliver meals to clients  
straight to their door



GET IN TOUCH AND START  
VOLUNTEERING TODAY! 6740  
2240 OR SEE JODY AT OUR  
QUEEN ST OFFICE

Hosted by the Barraba Young Women  
and NextGen Committee

## Barraba Spring Ball

NOVEMBER

SATURDAY

11  
2023

AT 6 PM

**BARRABA GOLF CLUB**  
**\$110 PER PERSON OR \$200**  
**FOR 2**

COME ALONG FOR A NIGHT OUT TO  
CELEBRATE OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND TO  
SASH OUR 2023 YOUNG WOMEN  
REPRESENTATIVE

TICKET INCLUDES A 3 COURSE MEAL  
AS WELL AS A NIGHT FILLED WITH LIVE  
ENTERTAINMENT AND AN AUCTION



## STOCK & CROP



**YOUR RURAL SHOP**

### STOCK & CROP – CHANGE TO BUSINESS HOURS

Please note that from the October  
Long Weekend onwards, Stock &  
Crop will not be open on Saturday  
mornings.

Nandewar  
Historical Society Inc

## Nandewar Historical Society Market Day

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023

8.30am – 12noon

Jams, Cakes, Pottery, Plants,  
Jewellery, bric-a-brack

## **Barraba War Memorial Swimming Pool**

As remembered and told by the late Mo Witten.

Suggestions for a swimming pool for Barraba were first recorded in 1958. Several local townspeople expressed the view that if small country towns were to survive then amenities such as baths and sporting facilities must be provided.

One interested man, Mr Stan Hancock, a member of the local Council decided, without success, to get council to back a request for funds for baths from the local government department. However, he persisted and with support from Cr Leon Punch eventually persuaded Council to apply for a grant. It was expected that some years would elapse before a grant would be forthcoming.

So, a Baths committee was formed to raise money to assist in construction. Sometime in the future, however, much to the surprise of Council, the Shire Clerk, Charles Swinbourne requested a special meeting of Council to advise the CD within one week, if Barraba would accept a grant for the pool. Again, thinking that it was years away, the grant was accepted. Then, when it was available, some time later, the Council, in a close vote, rejected the Grant. Some hard feelings were created in the Town and District and much discussion took place. Feelings ran high and tempers flared. Letters for and against were published in "The Chronicle". The Local (Council) was accused of bias.

But Stan Hancock and his committee would not lie down and eventually won. A Ladies Baths Auxiliary was led by Kath White in money raising. Housie was conducted in the old Odd-Fellows Hall every Saturday night. A Queen Competition raised nearly 6000 pounds. Offers of voluntary help poured in, money was promised. Several bodies, including the RSL, the Barraba Bowling Club pledged support and members of Council staff also gave support.

Councils decision was reversed and a Grant accepted. Land on the corner of Queen and Savoy Street was purchased. Peter Horniman – Shire Engineer – with Baths Committee Members, gave up weekends to travel and inspect other swimming pools. Then Peter designed and planned the Baths. The size of the Baths was debated at length and taking into account the size of the town and the money available, the right decision was made. A tremendous amount of voluntary labour helped to keep costs down and enabled the whole project to be completed in good time and virtually debt free.

Construction started when Kath White - President of The Ladies Baths Auxiliary, drove John Patterson's Caterpillar Bulldozer to turn the first sod. Kath had never driven a car, let alone a 14-ton monster, but she received a standing ovation when she successfully performed the ceremony.

The Baths were officially opened by the Hon. P. N. Ryan MLA on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1964 with a large gathering witnessing the ceremony. The crowd was estimated at 2000 people. After the unveiling of the plaque, a short, impressive ceremony, dedicating the Baths as a War Memorial was conducted by Major General I. Dougherty, NSW Director of Civil Defence. The party then moved inside the complex where a stone drinking fountain was unveiled by Patty Graham (from St Joseph's School) and Allan Smith (representing Barraba Central School) to honour the Chairman of the Baths committee, Mr Stan Hancock, and to express the thanks of all the children of Barraba for his untiring efforts in making this wonderful facility a reality.

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## **MANILLA COMMUNITY CELEBRATING HERITAGE LISTING OF THEIR VIADUCT**

Member for Manilla and Shadow Minister for Heritage Kevin Anderson is celebrating the Manilla Viaduct's listing of the NSW Heritage register.

"The Manilla Viaduct is an iconic piece of our rail history and the community have been fighting to ensure its preservation for some time and to repurpose the viaduct to become an iconic walkway around the town," Mr Anderson said. "The viaduct and rail bridge, opened in 1908, was an integral part of the extension of the rail line to Barraba in the 1900s, which allowed for further expansion of wheat growing operations in our region. I'm so pleased that the Minister has agreed with the community and signed off on the 500-metre-long structure being listed on the NSW Heritage Register."

"This means the structure has further protections under NSW law and opens opportunities for funding into the future. As soon as the announcement was made, I was in contact with the community to discuss next steps in our campaign to see the viaduct transformed into an iconic walkway over the town. We're staying on this campaign because I know that the viaduct is already a draw for tourists and there is huge opportunity to take advantage of the unique structure and draw tourists to the region. There's still work to do, and I look forward to working with the community to again raise our plans for the viaduct with the government."



## History Notes

Society members are facing a busy month and will need assistance with the markets and the Street stall later in the month. There will be two markets - the first on voting day and the second, to be more of a book fair, will be the following weekend. There may be more than books at the bookfair but the first market day will be our usual monthly market. Barbeques as usual.

The Tuesday between the markets will be the Annual General Meeting of the Society, open to everyone with an interest in our history. This meeting will mark 58 years since the Nandewar Historical Society was formed.

The fourth and final event for October will be the street stall to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> October - members assistance stocking the stall will be appreciated.

This week I have been checking on the big fire in Barraba which burnt the shops from Treloars building to the Babes in the Bush Shop beside the vacant block. Apparently, it was a spectacular fire fanned by a strong wind. The story was that it happened in 1918 in the middle of the night and was so hot that it cracked the glass in the windows of the shops across the street. The Witten diaries were consulted but no mention of a fire in town in the 1918 and 1919 volumes. After consulting a few people and someone looking up the internet and finding a fire in Barraba in 1921, I found the 1921 diary and found on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1921, "big fire in town Barraba" thus that 1918 date is probably incorrect. Another surprise was the lack of diary information.

The Witten family were apparently very busy up in the granite with a rabbit plague and several bush fires. They were also adding to their settlement with new sheds and a new cottage and I suppose they were too busy to make further remarks about a town fire some hours away from their home.

At the time of the fire and several other fires in town there was no water supply and no fire brigade so there was little that anyone could do but watch their businesses burn. It was after the Royal Hotel burnt to the ground that action was taken and in the following years a fire brigade was formed.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Barraba Community News

### Vinnies reforming St Johns Conference

The St Vincent de Paul Society has had a proud and long history of directly supporting the Barraba community through our St John's Conference. This conference's primary responsibility is to provide financial assistance to people with regards to requests for food, clothing, household goods, energy bills and other household expenses. A secondary role is to provide pastoral care for people in the community with home visits and support.

After over seventy years of supporting the Barraba community St John's Conference unfortunately closed in 2008, however we are keen to reform the St John's Conference to enable us to directly help the community once again.

The St John's Conference will be part of the network of twenty-eight conferences with an incredible footprint across the region. In 2022/23 these operations collectively helped 1,365 people with over \$280,000 of financial assistance.

Currently anyone from Barraba seeking assistance needs to call or visit our Tamworth site. Reforming the St John's conference would allow local people seeking assistance to have the convenience of seeing someone in Barraba rather than having to travel to Tamworth.

Anyone interested in being part of helping the Barraba community through St John's Conference are encouraged to discuss this with our Tamworth Regional Council President – Jann Browne on 0418 464 330.

Regards

Phil Donnan, Regional Director, St Vincent de Paul Society,  
0491 056 886

Go fund me page for Elizabeth  
Ervin

<https://gofund.me/741c39b3>

Phone: 0452461445

Email: [shell.sarkis@bigpond.com](mailto:shell.sarkis@bigpond.com)

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR



I'm Nakita, the Volunteer Coordinator for a new service that we are now providing at Oxley Community Transport. The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS) is a government-funded program that aims to provide friendship and companionship to older people. The program has been running for decades throughout Australia, and we (Oxley Community Transport) have been able to provide this service since July 1.

I am currently trying to spread the word about this program and recruit volunteers. As you can imagine, there are many lonely and isolated older persons who would love to have someone to spend time with them. Volunteers are matched to care recipients based on their hobbies and interests. The pair then spend at least an hour per fortnight together doing an activity that they both enjoy. This can be having a chat, going for a stroll, painting, or even watching a movie. Volunteers are not expected to perform nursing duties or housework – they're simply there to be a friend! Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older unless with a parent or guardian and willing to undergo a background check (paid for by Oxley Community Transport).

The ACVVS is available to anyone receiving a Home Care Package or on an approved waiting list for one. It is completely free. I've attached a few documents about the ACVVS and I would be grateful for any help you could offer with helping to build this program. I look forward to offering the service to Barraba residents and connecting with volunteers.

If you're interested in covering this story in the Barraba Community News, I would be more than happy to discuss it further including our growth in Tamworth and Armidale.

Kind Regards,

**Nakita Somerville**  
ACVVS Coordinator  
PO Box 3437 WEST  
TAMWORTH NSW 2340  
PH: 0417 215 410

### CATHOLIC CHURCH TIMES

Barraba 1st Saturday evening Mass 5pm  
2nd 3rd 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday 9am  
Upper Horton 11am on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday  
Weekday Mass Wednesday 10am

### BARRABA UNITING CHURCH NOTICES

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2023  
**Service time 8.45am.**  
All welcome

### ANGLICAN CHURCH TIMES

**St Laurence's Barraba**  
Sunday service at 10.00am  
Woodsreef 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month at  
11.30am



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## Golf Notes.

Sunday ensured a good closure of our official 2023 golf season competition. Eleven year old Josh Anderson partnered with his Grandmum, Lyn Groth, to card an excellent plus 14 to win the John Hartley and Tim Bucknell 4BBB v Par trophy. It's a special win as Lyn, when a young girl, was enjoying her sub junior golf and now 50 years on her grandson is sharing the same enjoyment with his family. Congratulations Josh and we hope you continue enjoying your golf.

Runners up on Sunday with Plus 9 on a countback were Kevin Kelaher and Rob Sweeney from Gary Allen and Rodger Fisher with Peter Simpson and Sam Knight carding plus 8. NTPs went to Kevin Kelaher on the 3rd and Lyn Groth on the 18th.

Friday 6th October is the start of our Twilight Competition. Can you please start letting Ian know of your teams.

### **DPI – Tamworth Agricultural Institute Open**

**Day 6 October @ 10:00 am - 2:00 pm**

Tamworth Agricultural Institute is celebrating 75 years of Research & Development.

Join us for a day of discovery, fun and innovation where you can explore cutting edge research. Join in our tours, speak to industry experts at our info hub, family fun in the kids' corner or simply enjoy the institute's beautiful landscape.

When: Friday 06 October 2023

Time: 10am – 2pm

Location: 4 Marsden Park Road, Calala

Activities on the day included petting zoo, jumping castle, colouring in competition, machinery display, interactive hands-on displays, informative educational talks, tours, vendor info hub, food and much more. This day is perfect to bring the whole family for a fun filled educational day.



## **AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

**Your chance to recognise Community Champions**



Who are the unsung heroes who make a real difference in your community? It's now time to give them the recognition they deserve by nominating them for a local Australia Day award.

Tamworth Regional Council has opened nominations for Australia Day Awards at Tamworth, Manilla, Barraba and Nundle. The Awards recognise individuals and groups who are making a significant positive impact in their community.

Tamworth Region Mayor Russell Webb encourages residents to nominate community members who go above and beyond to help others.

"The Awards are a great way of recognising the efforts of individuals or groups that are making a real difference in our community," he said.

Barraba, Manilla, Nundle and Tamworth will host special Australia Day celebrations coordinated by Council and

local Australia Day committees with awards presented at these events to recognise achievements leading up to and throughout 2023.

Barraba is seeking nominations for Citizen of the Year, Frank Darlington Young Citizen of the Year (for Barraba residents aged 23 years and under) and Community Event of the Year. Manilla will award a Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year (20 years and under), Community Event of the Year and Achiever of the Year.

Nomination forms and terms and conditions for the awards can be found on Council's website <http://www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/australiaday> or visit your local Council branch for assistance.

Nominations close on Wednesday 15 November, 2023. Awards will be presented as part of local Australia Day celebrations around the region in January 2024.

### **Here is an overview of the Ordinary Meeting of Tamworth Regional Council 26<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

To help Council meet its obligations to manage flood risk, a Tamworth City Wide Floodplain Risk Management Plan has been adopted by Council. The plan considers riverine flooding on the floodplain and overland flow in the Tamworth city area, and recommends the adoption of an updated flood planning area. Areas of priority in the plan include updated development controls, flood education programs, and infrastructure to allow local stormwater runoff to be pumped over the city levees during floods. It was noted community engagement with affected property owners attracted significant interest, and as a result the number of properties included in the proposed Flood Planning area was reduced.

Councillors approved variations to the 2023/2024 budget, which included the withdrawal of NSW Government grant funds for the completion of Rangari Road. The variations also included the recognition of heritage grant funds to prune trees located on King George Avenue.

Recognising the importance of preserving local history, Councillors thanked members the Nundle History and Heritage Research Section 355 committee following its decision to dissolve. The Committee's research material will be included in the Nundle Local Studies section of the Nundle Branch Library. This material is an important resource and captures the gold rush days and early pioneers of the local community.

Youth Councillors were praised for their work in the community when the minutes of Tamworth Regional Youth Council's August meeting were adopted. Councillors

acknowledged the important work of Youth Council and thanked the Youth Councillors whose two year term has now expired. For more information, see the full reports at [www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/businesspapers](http://www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/businesspapers)



## **Community College Northern Inland Inc**

### **Trainee Administration Assistant**

In this position you will assist the Barraba Campus Coordinator by providing day-to-day administration functions to the CCNI Campus. You will provide excellent customer service as the first point of contact for students and visitors and respond to all forms of correspondence to ensure the smooth running of the Campus. The position includes the handling of confidential information. The position is part-time, 19.5 hours per week.

#### **Essential criteria**

- Ability and willingness to complete Certificate III in Business, with a genuine interest in working in a business environment.
- Basic skills in Microsoft 365 or similar cloud system including Word, Outlook and Excel.
- Basic skills in email and file management.
- Attention to detail and mature work ethic.
- An interest in the training sector as a career.
- Ability to understand third party software and apps such as student management systems and social media platforms.
- Experience working in a team.
- Experience working in a confidential environment and ability to use good judgement.
- Commitment to excellence in customer service.
- Current Working with Children Check and willingness to obtain a National Police Clearance Check.

#### **Desirable criteria**

- Current car driver's licence.
- Car with comprehensive insurance.

#### **Ready to apply?**

Submit your application, including cover letter, current resumé, and responses to the essential criteria via email to [hr@communitycollegeninland.nsw.edu.au](mailto:hr@communitycollegeninland.nsw.edu.au) Applications without a cover letter and essential criteria responses will not be considered.

**Applications close Sunday 15 October, 2023 at 5pm.**



### **Snake season has arrived**

Please take extra caution and watch out for snakes in your local area.

To discourage snakes from entering your property, ensure your garden is well maintained, clear of rubbish, and keep your grass short.

If you see a snake:

Do not approach it, attempt to kill it or try to capture it.

Keep your distance, stay calm and advise others that there is a snake close by and to be aware.

### **From "Living with Wildlife" TRC website: Information on what to do if you see a snake**

Snakes are native to the region so be aware and try to discourage them from living near your home.

Residents must be aware of the potential danger of snakes, particularly in the warmer months. Snakes are most active in warm weather and are often found in bushy areas. To discourage snakes from entering your property, ensure your garden is well maintained, clear of rubbish, and keep your grass short.

### **What do I do if I see a snake?**

- do not approach it, attempt to kill it or try to capture it - leave it alone.
- keep your distance, stay calm and advise others that there is a snake close by and to be aware.
- if the snake poses a risk to a person(s) safety or is aggressive, you should contact the following for assistance; Wires (1300 131 554) National Parks and Wildlife 1300 072 757 (13000 PARKS) Fire Rescue NSW - 000 (Fire and Rescue teams have trained personnel to handle and remove snakes. However, they may/may not have someone on duty who can attend, so should not be your first point of call).
- Tamworth Regional Council staff are not trained or authorised to handle or dispose of snakes.

### **What if myself or someone else thinks they have been bitten by a snake?**

1. Call 000 for an ambulance.
2. Do not wash the venom off skin or clothing –this may be used to identify the type of snake.
3. Stay calm and lie down.
4. A first aider should apply a pressure bandage firmly from the fingers (if bitten on arm) or toes (if on leg) upwards along the limb.
5. Immobilise the limb with a splint.
6. Write down the time of the bite and when the bandage was applied.
7. Mark the location of the bite on the skin with a pen or take a photograph of the site.
8. First aider should always stay with the person until the ambulance arrives.

[Click here for more information from St John Ambulance on Snake Bites \(PDF 203.8KB\)](#)

All native snakes in NSW are protected under the [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974](#).

### **BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS**

COMMUNITY OWNED AND EDITED

**Published by Community College Northern Inland Inc.**

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

### **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)

## **It's warming up and mozzies are coming. Here's how to mosquito-proof your backyard**

*Cameron Webb is a Friend of The Conversation. Clinical Associate Professor and Principal Hospital Scientist, University of Sydney*

The weather is warming up and that means more time in the backyard. It also means more mosquitoes. Here are five ways you can mosquito-proof your backyard that don't rely on spraying insecticides.

### **1. Get rid of water**

Mosquitoes need water to complete their life cycles. They need blood – but water and warmth are just as important. Getting rid of water around your backyard will go a long way to keeping mosquitoes away. Water trapped in blocked roof gutters, drains and tarpaulin covering boats and trailers can be a great home for mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes can exploit the tiniest of water sources too. It may just be the upturned lid of a discarded plastic drink bottle. If it traps water, mosquitoes will find it and lay eggs in it. Flush out your bird bath once a week to disrupt the mosquito's life cycle. If you have a pond, installing a fountain will discourage mosquitoes. If you can't keep water clean and circulating, consider filling it with sand and gravel to create an interesting garden bed for succulents or other plants. Mosquitoes will avoid clean and chlorinated swimming pools but will quickly move into "green pools". If you're not using your pool, consider converting it to a "pond" so that fish can help keep mosquito numbers down.



*Mozzies love fountains and ponds. A/Prof Cameron Webb (NSW Health Pathology)*

### **2. Screen up – windows, doors and rainwater tanks**

If you can't get rid of permanent water, at least stop mosquitoes getting to it (or you).

Ensure rainwater and septic tanks have screens to stop mosquitoes entering. Screen windows and doors to stop mosquitoes entering the home. There are plenty of flexible screening options for windows, doors and balconies.

If you live in a mosquito-prone area, creating a screened outdoor area (such as a pergola, courtyard, or balcony) will give you the opportunity to spend time outdoors without being hassled by mozzies.



*Screening windows and doors keeps mosquitoes out. A/Prof Cameron Webb (NSW Health Pathology)*

### **3. Choose your garden plants carefully**

Some plants contain essential oils and other chemicals that, when extracted and concentrated, provide protection against biting mosquitoes. But there isn't a lot of evidence that the whole plant will keep mosquitoes away from your garden. Some types of plants are even marketed as "moszie blockers" or "mosquito repelling". But there isn't any evidence of effectiveness. In fact, some of these plants, such as melaleucas, also happen to be associated with hot spots of mosquito breeding in coastal Australia. The plants to avoid around the home are those that help mosquitoes breed, such as bromeliads, which trap water.



*Water provides opportunities for mosquitoes to breed. A/Prof Cameron Webb (NSW Health Pathology)*

#### 4. Encourage the animals that eat mosquitoes

Mosquitoes are food for a range of animals including birds, bats, fish, frogs, lizards, insects, spiders and dragonflies. But don't expect them to eat enough to keep all mosquitoes away.

Bats are often promoted as a good "biological control" options but studies have shown mosquitoes are more likely to be a snack food for small bats, not an irresistible staple of their diet.

For garden ponds, frogs will eat a few adult mosquitoes but tadpoles of Australian frogs generally don't eat many mosquito "wigglers".

Australian native fish will readily eat mosquitoes and may be useful for backyard ponds.

But not all fish are good. While "mosquitofish" (aka "plague minnow") is distributed overseas to assist in mosquito control, it's a disaster for local wildlife and, along with other exotic fish species, should not be released into local waterways.

Healthier habitats promote fewer mosquitoes so the best thing you can do is create habitats for the animals that eat mosquitoes.

#### 5. Avoid traps and other gadgets

There are lots of devices purported to catch, kill, or repel mosquitoes from your garden. Some may catch a mosquito or two but they're not very effective in knocking out big numbers.

"Bug zappers" with bright lights will collect lots of flying insects. It's just that mosquitoes make up a very small proportion of collections. Electrocuting devices, again, don't seem to attract a lot of mosquitoes. Devices that emit high frequency sounds won't help either.

The best devices are typically those that are baited with carbon dioxide. These are a mainstay of state and territory mosquito and arbovirus surveillance programs. For a mosquito, the CO<sub>2</sub> tricks them into thinking the trap is a warm-blooded animal. The only problem is these can be expensive to run and don't seem quite as effective for mosquito control unless used in large numbers.

#### Yes, you'll still need repellent

Perhaps the best way to avoid mosquito bites is to pick an insect repellent recommended by health authorities and apply it to ensure all exposed areas of skin are covered. These products are safe, affordable and effective.

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