



FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER

# BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS

COMMUNITY OWNED AND EDITED

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

## Australia Day Award winners announced in Barraba

The Barraba Community came together at Barraba Golf Club to recognise and celebrate Barraba's Australia Day Award winners.

Australia Day Ambassador MR John Lee OAM, PHF, BSocSci founder of 'You Have a Friend charity' presented the awards along with Councillor Stephen Mears.

Councillor Mears said the awards were an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of winners and nominees and celebrate the thriving community spirit of Barraba.

"Our community is what it is because of the efforts of our residents. I would like to thank every individual and community group who won and or was nominated for an award," he said.

Described as extra-ordinary humans, the Barraba 2023 Citizen of the Year was awarded to Nick and Kim Peake.



*Nick and Kim Peake with Australia Day Ambassador John Lee*

When they tragically and unexpectedly lost their 4-year-old daughter (Ruby) in April 2022 they created Ruby Mae's Wish in her honour. The initiative has achieved so much in a little over a year including delivering over 50 Ruby Mae's Wish Care Packages to John Hunter Hospital for parents and carers with children from rural hospitals, donated over \$8,970

worth of equipment to the John Hunter Hospital Paediatric Intensive Care Unit, launched a website selling purple work shirts and scrubs, as well walked 60km in less than 18 hours raising \$21,790.

Frost Over Barraba were awarded the 2023 Community Event of the Year for their efforts in reinvigorating the event after a hiatus of 2 years caused by Covid19. The Frost Over Barraba Arts Festival has run for nearly 50 years and has grown into a community celebration of visual arts including paintings, pottery, sculptures, photography, textile and much more. The volunteers were commended for all their hard work in bringing the event back to life.



*Stacey Sedgwick and Mandy Cabot with Australia Day Ambassador John Lee*

The celebrations continued with music from Jarred Taylor and band at the Barraba Golf Club. The Barraba events were assisted by the Australian Government through the National Australia Day Council

## **BARRABA AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS REPORT**

### **FROM THE 'NEWS TEAM'**

This year's Awards ceremony was once again held at the Barraba Golf Club – inside in relative airconditioned comfort, thank goodness, given it was a day of extreme heat in Barraba.

The proceedings were kicked off by the Barraba Band with some Aussie tunes. MC Helen Rixon introduced the official guests - Australia Day Ambassador John Lee, and, representing Tamworth Regional Council, Councillor Stephen Mears. Mr Lee was born in Zimbabwe, immigrated to Australia in 1973 and became an Australian Citizen in 1980. He and his wife Robyn settled in the Tweed Heads area. They began to notice the numbers of marginalized persons – so in 2008 they formed a charity which they called "You have a Friend". Now they have eighty volunteers, provide over 300 meals a week, and run an Op Shop, assisting many homeless and other marginalised people.

Congratulations to Barraba's very worthy award recipients Kim and Nick Peake and the Frost Over Barraba Festival committee.

After the official proceedings were finalised, the crowd was entertained by Jarrod Taylor and his band, and food was provided by the Barraba Rotary Club. Thanks to Council's organiser, Lisa Hannaford, for a very well run ceremony (and a comfortable one inside in the air conditioning!)

### **Peake Family Community Service over 3 generations**

Muriel Crowley, Ros Peake's mum, was the first recipient of the Barraba Citizen of the Year in 1970 and was awarded a Silver platter to mark the occasion



Ros and the silver platter awarded to Mrs Crowley.

The Stuart Peake Memorial Cancer Research Trust was established to raise funds to assist research into cancer and was commenced in 2002. The driving force in the establishment of this trust were the Peake family and the late Tony Crowley and his wife Bev. Tony at the time was suffering from a similar form of cancer that Stuart suffered from.

In the early years of the Trust fundraising activities ranged from garden parties to sale of local wines. The Trust received many donations from persons associated with the Peake family and their involvement in the stud cattle industry. More recently funding has come from donations associated with the stud cattle industry with sales of semen and donations from agents and purchases of stud cattle.

Over the last few years, the trust has donated over \$35,000.00 to the Garvin Institute in Sydney which specialises in research of blood cancers and other forms of cancer. Their research also focuses on uncovering dormant cancer cells which could lead to the prevention of different forms of cancer.

Before the end of this financial year the Trust will be making a further donation of approximately \$10,000.00 to the Garvin Institute of Medical Research at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney. The goal of the trust is to continue to raise funds and to donate to research that one day may find the cure for cancer.

*(Thanks to Ros Peake and David Kelly for this information)*



Ros herself received a Barraba Shire Council Mayoral Award in 2004 in recognition for service to the community.

The family tradition of community service continues with Nick and Kim Peake forming the Ruby Mae's Wish donating equipment to the John Hunter Hospital Paediatric Intensive Care Unit.



## Bingara Australia Day Winners



**Phone: 0459 192 265**

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

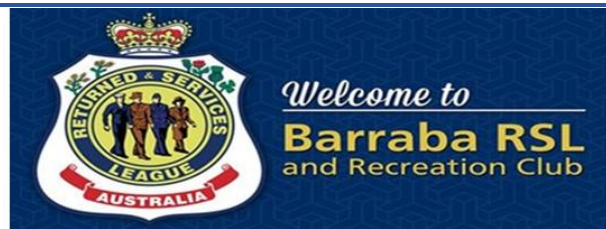
219 Mulwarree Rd, Barraba 2347

Mon to Fri 8:30am – 5.30pm

Closed from 1-2pm

**After Hours service available for emergencies only.**

Offering veterinary services within the Barraba district for small and large animals in clinic or on farm. Cat & Dog Boarding available for short or long-term stays.



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

Phone 67821379

For the information of members and guests.

### **THIS WEEK**

#### **FRIDAY 2nd February**

MEAT RAFFLES

1st Draw 6.45pm

2nd Draw 7.30pm

MEMBERSHIP DRAW \$1900

#### **Sunday 4th February**

Angler Club raffles from 1pm

Membership Draw \$1400

### **HAPPENING SOON**

**SUNDAY 18TH Feb CLUB AGM STARTING 11AM**

### **BISTRO HOURS**

**Phone 0427330808**

**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**

## **NOTICE**

After nearly 4 years producing the *Barraba Community News* every week we've had to review our advertising costs. The decision has been made that from Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 there will be a modest cost increase to advertise. We are always willing to provide a quote for your ad before you commit to the cost. There is no difference in cost for colour, font style or the addition of a picture or graphic. The cost is only related to the size of the ad.

Please contact Bronwyn at

[news@barrabacommunitynews.org.au](mailto:news@barrabacommunitynews.org.au) or 0447165008 to discuss

## **2024 Barraba Show – coming soon**

The 113<sup>th</sup> Barraba Show will be held from Friday 1 March to Sunday 3 March 2024.

This year's Show will be bigger and better than ever; all popular events are back, and there are exciting new events. On Friday evening, 1 March, a Motorbike Barrel Racing event is scheduled for the first time; lots of fun and excitement for all ages. The Sports Shear and Wool Handling competition, such a great hit with spectators when introduced last year, is back this year but expanding to both Saturday and Sunday.



The theme for the pavilion this year is 'Young at Heart'

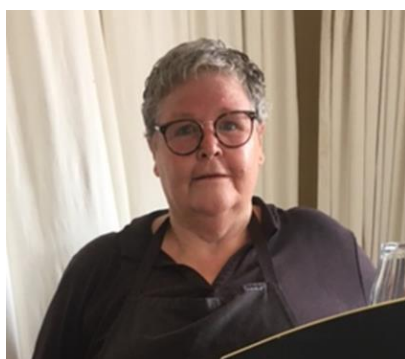
The full Show Schedule is now available on line with all the details – more information will appear in "News" over the next few weeks.

You will be reminded of the Show, as the annual Shop Window Competition gets underway soon.



**At The  
Playhouse  
Hotel**

**Open Saturday to Tuesday 6am to 12md  
Breakfast, morning tea and brunch**



**To book or  
enquire please  
phone Shelley  
on 0488192256**



**COLLEGE CHAT**

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

**Do you know about the changes to the Food Standards Code for food businesses that came into force on 8 December 2023?**

Act now to ensure compliance.

Visit [foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/safetytools](http://foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/safetytools) for more information

### **SITXFSA005 Food Handling (Level 1) - Tuesday 13 February**

The Food Handling (Level 1) Certificate is required by food handlers, which can be any person who directly handles food or food contact surfaces such as cutlery, plates and bowls. People at many levels use food safety handling skills in the workplace during the course of their daily activities. Businesses include restaurants, takeaways, cafes, mobile food vendors, caterers, bakeries, child care centres and school canteens.

### **SITXFSA006 Food Safety Supervisor – 13 & 14 February (2 days)**

The role of a Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) is to prevent individuals from becoming ill from food poisoning as a result of incorrect handling and preparation of food. Statistics show that incorrect food handling practices in retail food businesses account for more than 1/3 of foodborne illness outbreaks in NSW, costing the community hundreds of millions of dollars each year in healthcare and lost revenue.

### **SITHFAB025 Prepare and serve espresso coffee – 15 February**

If you enjoy coffee and the café vibe and could picture yourself working with a variety of people in a practical, hands-on role, then learning to prepare and serve an amazing espresso coffee and other hot beverages could be a great pathway into an exciting hospitality career!

For more information please phone the Community college on 6782 1662 or enrol on line through our website [www.ccni.nsw.edu.au](http://www.ccni.nsw.edu.au)

*The third instalment from Ron Hiscock - this week he tells us about the cars he serviced at Roy Collins and Sons.*

## **Barraba residents and their cars**

Ron Hiscock speaks of very happy times in the 1960s and 1970s servicing cars at Roy Collins' Garage. He feels he gained himself a reputation of being very thorough; that meant that he had many returning customers who insisted that only he could service their car.

One of his regular customers was Nellie Williams from "Roxton". Not only did she insist that Ron service her car, but she stayed with her car while it was done. Others were content to hand over the keys, then relax and have a cuppa, or head to the shops, while Ron got the job done. Not Miss Williams; she insisted she stay in the driver's seat of her much valued Plymouth. She drove onto the hoist guided by Ron; then up she went, staying put up in the air, while Ron inspected and greased and tightened underneath, before lowering her and the Plymouth down to earth. After Ron had finished and the bonnet closed, off she drove, satisfied that she had kept an eye on the whole job.

In contrast, Ron remembers Guy Williams (Nellie's brother) one day announcing his arrival at the garage with a loud blast on the horn of his Nash. Ron went out; Guy asked him to jump in and they drove back to the property, explaining while they drove that he was too busy to be hanging around town while Ron serviced the Nash. His plan was for Ron to then drive the Nash back to the Garage, service it, and then come and pick him up in the afternoon when completed. No hurry, he said!

Another brother, Gordon Williams, also had a Nash, a pale green Nash, Ron recalls. Those local Nash owners, which included Lou Southwell (bright green Nash), seemed to be in some sort of competition, regularly upgrading to the latest model. Ron was quite pleased to be chosen to service Lou Southwell's car – on Christmas Eve, Lou, to show his appreciation for the good job Ron did, would pull up outside Collins' garage, pick up Ron, drive him the short distance to the Victoria Hotel, with great flourish pull up right outside the bar door, take Ron inside, and shout him a "few" beers loudly proclaiming what a good job Ron did.



The Nash, pictured above, an imported American car, disappeared, merging with Rambler during the 1950s, then later being taken over by Hudson. The Bucknells owned a Hudson – terrible vehicle to work on, Ron said.

For many years, Joey Wong, the Chinese market gardener, delivered his vegetables to the households of Barraba with a horse drawn wagon. Business was good and the horse was getting older. One day Mr Wong pulled up outside Roy Collins garage, saying "I think I'll get a small truck." When asked what type of truck he wanted, he replied "Don't know, but you will have to teach me to drive it!"

There were two wooden benches facing one another just inside the workshop door in Collins' Garage – designed for customers to wait while their cars were attended to. In the sixties, Ron told me this area became the local "seat of knowledge" – locals such as Percy Smith, George Rumsby, and others would often gather there, solving the problems of the world – rarely they had a car to be serviced.

*Many thanks to Julie Williams and Terry Threlfall for providing the History Notes over the last couple of months – Margaret Currell says she will resume her notes next week.*

You asked for stories about early transport, and here's one from my late mother-in-law.

Her family lived in the Riverina in the 1920s when cars were still a novelty on the back roads. Her father and a neighbour were leaning on the gate and yarning when they fell silent to watch a car go putt-putting past. Then to their astonishment, a motor bike followed close behind.

"Well, blow me down!", her father exclaimed, "who'd a thought a thing like that would have a foal!".

Margaret Hurle,  
Manilla.





Ross Campbell Motors circa 1982 odd I think. There are fortunately a number of cars in this photo that might allow the car nuts to narrow the possible date down a bit.

Originally Clifton Motors in the 1930s & 40s this building is still largely the same except for the addition of the red brick frontage.

Prior to it's position here Clifton's were originally across the street in the Goldman Building next to the current Vinnies.

Posted by Brian Coote.

## Letter to the editor

Hey, Vic.

You left Dad off that poem about the bullockies.

Sorry, but I have no idea where the brand is. Last I heard of it was in the loft in the shed in Alice Street.

Mary Grocott



## Bingara NSW SES stalwart awarded Emergency Service Medals for decades of volunteer service

Tamworth Unit and Bingara Unit member Geoff Hanson was awarded Emergency Service Medal (ESMs) in this year's Australia Day Honours List for commitment to volunteer service with the NSW SES over several decades. NSW SES Commissioner Carlene York APM congratulated Geoff and thanked him for his ongoing service to the community, both locally and intrastate.

"Geoff is inspirational for his peers in orange, and we are proud of the service and skills they're able to offer as NSW SES volunteers," Commissioner York said. "These awards recognise Geoff's selflessness, and the tenacity he upholds through volunteering to assist his community in times of need. Mr Hanson brings a wealth of knowledge to his role with the NSW SES, and has lengthy experience in flood response, land search, vertical rescue, road crash rescue and storm capability.

"I don't do it to get my name and picture in the paper - it is the last thing from my mind. I do it because I have a skillset and I'm happy to help people out on a bad day," Mr Hanson said.



With 27 years of service, Mr Hanson dedicated his longevity with the service to the people he's met through the NSW SES, and the passion he has for helping others. "Look at these mates I've got; I've had experiences with them I never would have done outside of SES," he said. "You learn things you might need one day that might save your life or those around you."

For emergency help in floods and storms, call the NSW SES on 132 500. In life threatening situations, call Triple Zero (000) immediately.



## COST-OF-LIVING SHOCKER FOR LOCAL FAMILIES

More than \$2 million has been ripped out of the local economy thanks to the Minns Labor Government's decision to slash the former government's Back to School Vouchers. The vouchers, which were hugely popular in the Tamworth electorate, gave parents three \$50 vouchers per child to help with the cost of school supplies, uniforms, and technology.

Member for Tamworth Kevin Anderson said 40420 vouchers were used in our region last year, equalling more than \$2 million in value. "The cost of going back to school can be significant for local families, particularly at a time when the cost of living remains so high," Mr Anderson said.

"Between the cost of books, uniforms, stationary, and a new pair of shoes, families can expect to pay hundreds of dollars to get their kids ready for the return of the school year. The former government's Back to School vouchers were a much needed helping hand for our families, providing \$150 per child towards the cost of essential school items. The Labor Government has now cut the vouchers, with no plans to replace them with any meaningful cost of living measures, meaning our families will be forced to pay more at the start of Term 1. This cut is on top of the Labor government's decision to cut Active Kids, Creative Kids, First Lap Vouchers, and the Regional Seniors Travel Card. The Labor government is continuing to cut back on cost-of-living measures at a time when families in our region can least afford it. We need the Labor government to urgently reconsider this decision so that parents can begin buying school supplies without having to make cuts elsewhere in the household budget."

### BARRABA UNITING CHURCH NOTICES

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February Service Time 10:45AM.  
Please Note Time Change. 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

### CATHOLIC CHURCH TIMES

Barraba 1st Saturday evening Mass 6pm  
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

## PROGRAZE PROFITABLE SUSTAINABLE GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Would you like to gain a better understanding of how to achieve a more profitable and sustainable grazing system on your property? Producers can do this through PROGRAZE™, a recognised, industry-led training course based on understanding the interaction between pastures and grazing livestock. Participants develop skills in pasture and animal assessment that improve the productivity and sustainability of grazing systems. We encourage land managers to enrol in this practical and hands-on course which is presented via a series of 8 half-day workshops.

### WHAT IS PROGRAZE™?

PROGRAZE™ is a recognised, industry-leading training course based on scientifically proven principles of pasture & livestock production. A key focus is the development of skills in pasture & animal assessment that will improve the productivity & sustainability of grazing systems.

PROGRAZE™ was developed by NSW Department of Primary Industries, with funding from Meat and Livestock Australia, and is delivered by Local Land Services. The course gives producers an understanding of pasture-livestock interaction. This enables producers to make tactical grazing decisions that can manipulate pasture composition, control weeds and meet livestock production targets even in tough times.

PROGRAZE™ has been successfully delivered to producers across the grazing industry since 1994 providing participants with the fundamental skills and knowledge to successfully manage livestock systems.

PROGRAZE™ is designed to help sheep and cattle producers:

- Develop practical pasture and livestock assessment, plant identification and ground cover assessment skills.
- To use these skills to improve the profitability and sustainability of grazing systems on their farms.

### WHAT IS COVERED IN A PROGRAZE COURSE?

PROGRAZE™ workshops offer hands on learning and skill development with practical on-farm, in paddock learning.

### PROGRAZE™ will help you to:

- visually assess pasture
- understand how pasture quality & quantity impact animal production

- match pastures to livestock requirements
- fat score livestock
- use grazing management to improve productivity & sustainability of pastures
- use grazing management to help control worms.

Participants are also shown how to use fodder budgeting to optimise the use of pastures and crops as well as the role of pasture assessment to make supplementary feeding decisions. These skills combined with well researched pasture and livestock benchmarks lead to informed grazing decisions where producers can be proactive in knowing how stock will perform on pasture. These tools are the key to improving the productivity and profitability of grazing systems.

### HOW LONG DOES THE PROGRAZE™ COURSE TAKE?

The PROGRAZE™ Profitable and Sustainable Grazing Management courses consist of 8 x ½ day workshops. Workshops are generally held 4 - 6 weeks apart allowing participants to see the impact of seasons on key pasture and livestock decision making. Each workshop is hands-on, conducted on group member's farms with a strong focus on in-paddock activities and discussion. This framework provides landholders with many opportunities to ask questions regarding their individual experiences.

### HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR A PROGRAZE™ WORKSHOP?

LLS will run small-group, local PROGRAZE™ courses in your area based on demand. This is to ensure grazing systems are similar for each group while reducing travel time. Groups will require a minimum of 8 producers.

You can register your interest via the EOI forms below. The course is charged per farm business where two or more members may participate. Upon registering your interest, please consider the option to host one of the sessions on your property.

For more information, contact: George Truman on 0427 505 040 or via email [george.truman@lls.nsw.gov.au](mailto:george.truman@lls.nsw.gov.au)

The course will be run in the Tamworth region over a period of 6-8 months. Cost is \$300 per business (valued at \$1500 but is subsidised by North West Local Land Services). This includes a PROGRAZE manual, training costs and 2 feed tests.

More information is available at

<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/help-and-advice/growing,-grazing-and-land/pastures/prograze-sustainable-grazing-management>



## COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION



Join your local **Aged Care Advocate** to find out about Seniors Rights Service: who we are and what we do, how seniors can access aged care services and how to resolve concerns with in-home and residential aged care services.

**Place: 50 Fitzroy St Barraba**

**Date: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March**

**Time: 10am**

**Seniors Rights Service** is a community organisation dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of older people. Free, independent and confidential.

Your rights. Your voice.

02 9281 3600

[SeniorsRightsService.org.au](http://SeniorsRightsService.org.au)

[info@SeniorsRightsService.org.au](mailto:info@SeniorsRightsService.org.au)

When complete, the investment will expand the reach of the existing NBN Fixed Wireless footprint by up to 50%, as well as enabling two new high speed fixed wireless plans – Fixed Wireless Home Fast and Fixed Wireless Superfast\*. The additional capacity and reach available on the upgraded network will also enable approximately 120,000 existing Sky Muster satellite-only premises to access NBN Fixed Wireless for the first time.

The tower upgrades will mean some planned outages that may impact homes and businesses and their ability to use their NBN service while the work is underway. NBN will take all reasonable efforts to minimise service interruptions; however, there are occasions where towers will need to be taken offline.

The upgrade work is scheduled to begin in Barraba and Barraba Fossickers Way in the coming weeks. The tower works will not impact NBN fixed line or NBN Sky Muster satellite services. Impacted homes and businesses should be notified of any outages via their retail service provider.

Tom O’Dea, head of NBN Local NSW, said: “There is increasing demand for faster internet from homes and business across Australia and we are continuing to invest in the NBN network to stay ahead of demand.

We are excited to have begun work upgrading the NBN Fixed Wireless network in Barraba and Barraba Fossickers Way, which will be a game changer for up to a million households and businesses across Australia. These tower works are critical to the delivery of our program but will mean some planned outages that may affect homes and businesses and their ability to use their NBN service while the work is underway. After the tower works are completed, we expect that faster download speeds during the busy period will become available across the NBN Fixed Wireless network. We encourage people to check the NBN website and watch out for communication from their retail service provider about how the planned outages may impact them.”

To get the benefits of the upgrades, homes and businesses may also need to update the NBN device at their premises. NBN will contact those impacted directly. Not all devices will need to be replaced.

For more information and to register for updates, customers are encouraged to visit our blog for an update on NBN’s Fixed Wireless and Satellite Upgrade Program: [www.NBNco.com.au/blog/the-NBN-project/delivering-abetter-broadband-experience-for-the-bush](http://www.NBNco.com.au/blog/the-NBN-project/delivering-abetter-broadband-experience-for-the-bush)



### **Work is underway in Barraba and Barraba Fossickers Way to upgrade the NBN Fixed Wireless network**

Work has continued on upgrades to the NBN® Fixed Wireless network in Barraba and Barraba Fossickers Way, which will benefit households and businesses across Australia, including Tamworth, providing access to faster speeds\* and extending the coverage of the NBN Fixed Wireless network.

The \$750 million investment in the NBN Fixed Wireless and NBN Sky Muster satellite network – \$480 million from the Australian Government and \$270 million from NBN – is on track to be completed by around December 2024.

## 2024 Hats Off To Country - new dates, new events

The organisers of the Hats Off To Country, mid-year country music festival, have revealed a new event will celebrate traditional Australian country music at the three-day event which will run Friday, 19 July to Sunday 21 July 2024.

***Hats Off To The Bush - a celebration of Bush Ballads and Verse***, will be held on Saturday 20 July in the Tamworth Town Hall and will feature Dean Perrett, Jeff Brown and Glenn Jones with more artists yet to be announced. Rod Coe, from Slim Dusty's Travelling Country Band will lead the backing band, with Peter Simpson and Dianne Lindsay to host the event after both being awarded the Order of Australia medal for service to the Australian country music industry last year.

The annual *Hats Off To The Bush* is a celebration of the Bush Ballad and Verse genre following the success of the annual *Back To The Bush Spectacular*, held in Toyota Park during the Tamworth Country Music Festival since January 2017.

Tamworth Regional Council Manager Events, Barry Harley said the strong interest in traditional country artists brought an opportunity to focus on Australasian country music heritage and rhyming verse as a part of the mid-year event.

"The Back To The Bush Spectacular is now one of the biggest nights held in the park having attracted over 8000 fans to the 2023 outdoor event" Mr Harley said.

"The January event attracts traditional singers and songwriters and has also included many contemporary artists like Troy Cassar-Daley, John Williamson and Anne Kirkpatrick, whose roots reach back into traditional music and we're excited to bring that to Hats Off To Country in July."

In addition to the new event, Shannon Noll will be in concert on Friday, 19 July and the annual Tamworth Songwriters' Association will take residency in a number of venues and the CMAA will present The Junior Academy Graduation on the same day to kick off the mid-year celebrations.

Both the inaugural *Hats Off To The Bush Concert* and Shannon Noll concert will be staged at the historic Tamworth Town Hall, the original home of the Golden Guitar Awards, with tickets on sale now through [entertainmentvenues.com.au](https://entertainmentvenues.com.au).

More information will be added to the official website [hatsofftocountry.com.au](https://hatsofftocountry.com.au) regularly with a full program anticipated for May.

From The Conversation

## As Aussie as vanilla slice: how the delicate European dessert became the snot block of Aussie bakeries

*Garritt C Van Dyk, Lecturer, University of Newcastle*

In 1998, Victorian premier Jeff Kennett visited a town in regional Victoria and said he had discovered, in his opinion, the best vanilla slice in Australia at the local bakery. He was so inspired by his slice experience that he established a new competition to determine, conclusively, Australia's best vanilla slice. The inaugural "Great Australian Vanilla Slice Triumph" was held in Ouyen, Victoria on October 23 that year.

Kennett's press release promoting the event declared this "important Australian culinary delicacy has tantalised Australians since white settlement" and "the pursuit of the best vanilla slice and the best vanilla slice baker in Australia should be of great national interest".

The competition became an annual event, hosted at Ouyen until 2001, when the honour was passed to nearby Merbein and has continued.

After some COVID-related cancellations, the contest was on again in 2023. Judges advise entrants on the Triumph website that they are looking for "a custard with a creamy smooth texture and a balance of vanilla taste with a crisp crunchy pastry topped with a smooth and shiny glaze fondant". North End Bakehouse in Shepparton, Victoria took first place this year, fulfilling baker Matt Aylett's career-long quest for top honours.

Proclaimed as a national icon, the vanilla slice is a familiar sight in Australian bakeries – but where did this pastry come from?

### Slices from around the world

Across Europe and the United States there are many versions of the vanilla slice, with the earliest mention found in a 1651 French cookbook as a *gâteau* with *frangipane*.

The French version is called a *mille-feuille*, translated as "one thousand leaves" of pastry created by repeatedly folding a thin sheet of butter wrapped inside a dough covering. In the oven, the butter melts and its water content creates steam, separating the dough to make countless crunchy layers.



*A mille-feuille is a much more delicate affair.*

Unlike the Aussie slice with its thick layer of custard, the mille-feuille has three sheets of puff pastry and only a centimetre of crème pâtissière in between. In America, the same three-layer design is called a Napoleon, a corruption of Napoletana, referencing the origin of another version from Naples. In Poland, there is the kremowka; in the Netherlands, the tompouce; in Serbia, the krempita; in Croatia the kremšnite; and then the caramel-covered version, the Hungarian Szegedinertorte.



*In Poland, you can have a kremowka.*

With similar versions across the globe, it is impossible to trace the genealogy of the Australian treat, but the combination of crunch and cream clearly has universal appeal.

### **A rose by any other name**

Replacing the plain English name (vanilla slice, custard block) with an irreverent and outrageous moniker (“snot block” or “phlegm sandwich”) is standard practice in Australia, where informality and a lack of pretence are hallmarks of the vernacular.

The Macquarie Dictionary blog suggests that “snot block” is a regionalism that originated in central Victoria, with less frequently cited variants in other states, including “snot brick”, “phlegm cake” and “pus pie”.



*Is this a 'snot brick' or a 'phlegm pie'?*

Has the original delicate nature of the pastry followed the slide into slang from the French mille-feuille to snot block? The slice has grown in size over time, now with so much filling it can be difficult to eat gracefully. Extra skill is also required of the baker, tasked with making a custard-filled tower with the structural stability to stand on its own.

### **The baker's slice?**

Consulting the archives of Australian Women's Weekly provided tips and tricks offered to help home bakers “make your custard set”. For a dainty portion, with an extra layer of puff pastry, this is not a challenge. Traditional pastry cream is not expected to be sliced like a jelly – it is a filling for cream puffs and eclairs.

The taller the slice, however, the more thickening power is required, usually in the form of cornstarch, gelatine or pudding mix. This is a delicate balancing act, however, as too much thickener produces a filling with the consistency of a bouncy ball, and too little will result in an uncontrollable blob.



*So Aussie they can even be decorated for your footy team.*

Cooking the custard just enough to maximise the thickening power of the cornstarch but not scramble the eggs is also a tricky business, requiring either a keen eye or a thermometer and constant supervision.

This may account for the staying power of the vanilla slice in the bakery, especially in its new high-rise evolution. Only the most daring of home cooks would tackle such a temperamental recipe, only to have guests say “Oh, you made snot block!”

Imported from Europe, the vanilla slice has been fully assimilated into Australian food culture, an identifiable icon. A sure measure of its acceptance as a genuine element of Aussie culture is its unpretentious alias – snot block. You know you really belong when you finally get a nickname.

I've decided my 2024 will start February 1st. January is definitely a free trial month.



**NORTHWEST TENNIS ACADEMY**

# Barraba Term 1 Tennis Coaching

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**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**



**Temporary change to Barraba waste facility**

Barraba residents are advised of changes at the Barraba waste facility this weekend due to a fire at the facility. Tamworth Regional Council has advised only household general and recycling waste is able to be accepted at the Barraba waste facility this weekend.

Opening hours for Barraba remain the same:

- Friday 8.30am - 11.30am
- Saturday 8.30am - 11.30am • Sunday 1pm - 4pm

Council apologises for any inconvenience, and will update the community as soon as possible.

**BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS**

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