



# BARRABA COMMUNITY NEWS

COMMUNITY OWNED AND EDITED

**FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER**

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2026**

**This Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, Daylight Saving ends. Remember to put your clocks back 1 hour**



### Senior Citz Street Stall

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 9am till sold out  
Outside the Chemist  
All donations gratefully accepted

### Ecological Burn Notice

Please be advised that Whitehaven Coal will be undertaking burn preparation and cool season Ecological Burns on the following Biodiversity Properties "Nindethana", "Rosevale", "Wirradale", and "Yarrowonga" between 30<sup>th</sup> March and 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026. For further information, please contact Whitehaven Biodiversity on 0488 407 000.

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### 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



### BARRABA RSL & RECREATIONAL CLUB LTD

Phone 67821379  
For the information of members and guests.

### **THIS WEEK**

**THURSDAY 2nd April**  
**BINGO**

First game starts at 6pm

**FRIDAY 3rd April**  
**EASTER EGG RAFFLES**  
Tickets on sale from 5.30pm  
Membership Draw \$1400

**SATURDAY 4th April**  
**Bistro open lunch only**

**SUNDAY 5th April**  
**No Raffles or Membership Draw.**  
**Bistro Closed**

**MONDAY 6th April**  
**Club Closed**

### BISTRO HOURS

Phone 0427330808

DINE IN OR TAKEAWAY

DAILY BLACKBOARD SPECIALS

PIZZAS MADE TO ORDER

**MONDAY/TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY: CLOSED**

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

**SUNDAY: 12-2PM**

# Barraba Family Doctor

8 Maude Street  
Barraba NSW 2347  
P: 02 67821 621  
F: 02 67821 956



## Practice Information Sheet

Our mission is to provide the highest standard of patient care using a holistic approach toward the diagnosis and management of illness. We are committed to promoting overall wellbeing and disease prevention to all patients within a friendly caring environment. We do not discriminate in the provision of excellent care and aim to treat all patients with dignity and respect. Our GPs are highly trained and experienced. We are committed to long-term servicing of patients from local and surrounding areas.

### Our Practice Team

General Practitioner	Dr Heinrich Strydom (MBCChB FRACGP)
Practice Nurse	Debbie Tufrey (Registered Nurse)
Practice Manager	Patricia Currell
Receptionist Team	Tanya Clarke, Kylie Kallitsis, Marchant Strydom, Lynette Simpson

### Practice Services

In addition to general medical consultations, our practice offers the following services:

<b>CloudHolter-24hr heart monitoring</b>	<b>Diabetic Care</b>	<b>Procedures &amp; Minor Surgery</b>
Travel Vaccinations	Cease Smoking Assistance	Removal of Skin Cancers/Lesions
Medical Check-ups	Skin Cancer Checks	Cryotherapy
Health Assessments	Work Cover	Joint Injections
GP Chronic Conditions Management Plans	Compulsory Third Party	Minor Ops – delegated by GP
GP Mental Health Plans	<b>Men's Health</b>	
<b>Immunisations</b> – Flu, shingles, Pneumococcal, Tetanus	Specialist referrals provided by consultation with GP	
		<b>Allied Health Services -by Referral</b>
Preventative Health Checks	<b>Geriatric Care</b>	Dietetic Services
Translating & Interpreting		Podiatry,
Services (phone)	<b>Women's Health</b>	Physiotherapy
SMS Reminders	Antenatal Care	Exercise Physiology
<b>Palliative Services</b>	Pregnancy Tests	Chiropractic Therapy
Palliative Care service provided with home visits	Cervical Screening	
<b>Public &amp; Private admissions</b> attended by the GP – providing continuity of care	<b>Home Visits</b> Provided to elderly and frail patients	



# History Notes - Crow Mountain (Written August, 1979)

Barraba's first mining boom was over 80yrs ago with the gold discovery at Crow Mountain, 12 miles from Barraba. Crowley and Hagan found gold for the first time in "The Dodger". The vein they found was very hard to keep track of because it wound in and out, so they called it "The Dodger". They could not keep track of the vein, so they sold it to McKenzie and McNair, who got £10,000 worth of gold off it.

Some men came in and dug a shaft on the very top of the "Dodger". They were making a fortune, but foul air got in and they had to give up on it.

Even before 1885 when mines such as "The Dodger" had attracted a thriving village of 200, in the 1860s, those who had visited Crow Mountain were able to show people their little bottles of gold.

Gold mining at Crow Mountain is centred on rocky outcrops of mostly serpentine rock. The "Wet Shaft" was first dug as a series of trenches in 1891 and named the "New Find". The party who dug the trenches didn't have much success, so it was then abandoned. Later another mining party took up the claim and sunk a deeper shaft only to find they had sunk it into an underground stream.

The once thriving town of Crow Mountain is now only an empty post office and few remains of huts, some still in good shape. Scrub has once again taken over and almost all the site of the old diggings and village have been obliterated.



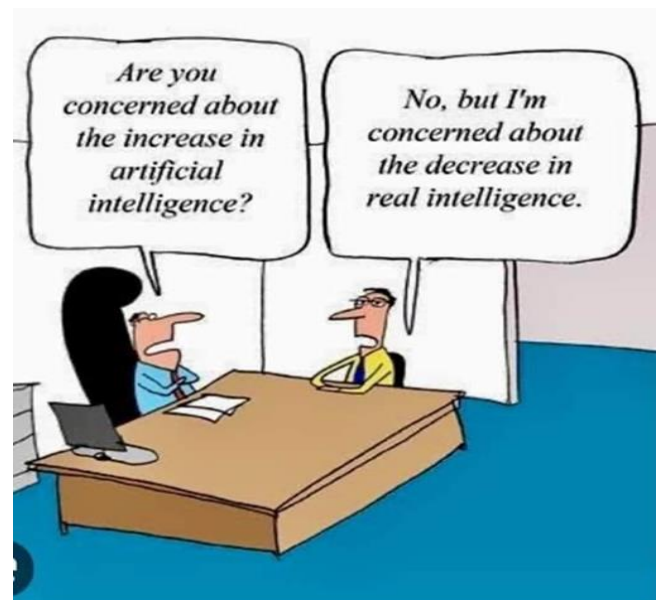
A rusty old square tank is a sign that this area was once occupied.

The descendants of Crow Mountain frequently visited this village where, if it was Sunday, church services would be held. And if it rained, nearly all the 200 people would be out next day looking for more nuggets. Or if it was fine, there would be horse races or tennis on a rough court with the residents gathering around to do a bit of gossiping.

Their ancestors would also remember the continual boom of the ore crusher ½ a mile down the creek, crushing the quartz rock for the extraction of gold drawn from shafts. This construction still stands between thick scrub with mounds of dirt around it to remind us of the history to be found. But there are still 'old timers' like Nick Brown and Wally Dwyer who are still able to call to mind the many stories of the old diggings and early mining days where they would be seen fossicking for gold. Even though they never struck it rich in gold, they have struck it rich by storing the knowledge and history of Crow Mountain.



Remains of the gold stamper at Crow Mountain.



## The Rileys celebrate their anniversary

There will be a gathering of people, friends and family on April 5<sup>th</sup> at "Windermere", Barraba to help Netty & Joe celebrate their 65<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

Netty & Joe first met on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 1958, they had never seen each other before. Netty was 15 years old, Joe was 20, they went together for 2 years and 4 months and married 14<sup>th</sup> April 1961, they have been together for 67 years. As a coincidence Joe's birthday is 19<sup>th</sup> February and Netty's 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Their marriage produced 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

Congratulations to you both.



## IN LOVING *memory*

### Tony John Chester

In loving memory of our dear  
son and brother, Tony.

Accidentally killed 4.4.1980.

Aged 19 years.

As time goes by without you,

And another year passes by,

The loss we felt when you left us,

Has never gone away.

Only we, who knew and loved you,

Know how much we lost.

But precious memories of your loving  
ways, will be with us forever.

Loving you always,

So sadly missed by

Dad, Mum and Craig.

## CATHOLIC CHURCH TIMES

Barraba 1st Sunday of the month, Saturday evening

Mass 6pm. All other Sundays 9am

Holy Week Schedule: Palm/Passion Sunday, Saturday evening 28 March 6.00pm, Holy Thursday Mass 2 April, 5.30pm, Good Friday 3 April, Stations of The Cross 12.30pm, Easter Vigil Mass Saturday 4 April 5.00pm.

## Christ has risen – Alleluia!

***An Easter message by Father Damien Locke, Administrator of the Catholic Parish of Saint John, Barraba.***

Easter is one of the great moments of the Christian year. At its heart is a simple but powerful message: that life is stronger than death, that hope can rise even in the darkest of times, and that new beginnings are always possible.

For Christians, Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ—His rising to new life after suffering and death. But even beyond the walls of the church, this message speaks to something deeply human and universal. It reminds us that no matter how difficult life becomes, darkness does not have the final word.

Here in our small rural community of Barraba, we understand this in a very real and practical way. Life on the land teaches us patience and resilience. We know what it is to endure dry seasons, uncertainty, and hard work with no immediate reward. Yet we also know the quiet joy when the rains finally come, when the paddocks begin to green, and when life returns again. Easter echoes this rhythm of the land—it tells us that even after the hardest seasons, renewal is possible.

Many in our community carry their own challenges—whether it be the pressures of farming, the isolation that can come with rural life, concern for loved ones, or the everyday struggles that are often borne quietly. Easter does not ignore these realities. Instead, it offers a message of hope right in the midst of them: that we are not alone, and that even in hardship, there is the possibility of new life, strength, and purpose.

One of the great strengths of communities like ours is the way we look after one another. A helping hand, a kind word, a shared meal, or simply taking the time to check in on a neighbour—these small, everyday acts are powerful signs of hope. They remind us that even in difficult times, goodness and generosity continue to flourish.

Easter invites all of us, whatever our beliefs, to hold onto hope and to be part of that renewal in the lives of others. It encourages us to believe that better days can come, to care for those around us, and to keep looking forward with courage.

May this Easter bring a sense of peace and quiet joy to our community. And may it remind us all that even after the longest night, a new day always dawns.

### **BARRABA UNITING CHURCH NOTICES**

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2026 – Good Friday - 10.30am

5<sup>th</sup> April 2026 – Easter Sunday - 10.45am

Please note new time till the end of April.

All welcome

### **ANGLICAN CHURCH TIMES**

#### **St Laurence's Barraba**

Sunday service at 10.00am

Woodsreef 11.30am, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month

#### **Easter Services:**

Bereen - Sunday 29th March 6pm, bring a plate to share

St Laurence's - Good Friday 10am - kids talk and activities, egg hunt + hot cross buns.

Easter Sunday 10am - all ages service, free BBQ lunch to follow.

### **A Politically Incorrect Easter**

Death is one of those topics that we're not meant to talk about, isn't it? It's 'politically incorrect' because it makes us feel uncomfortable.

Yet in the Bible, it says that **death is the destiny of everyone**. But not only that, it says that after we die, we then face God's judgement.

In fact, the cause of Easter is the fact that we need saving from this death and judgement. We need saving from it because death is not how things were meant to be.

God designed us to live forever, and death is actually a sign that things have gone terribly wrong between us and God.

Which is why we have this sense that death is awful. No matter how much we tell ourselves that death is the natural end of life, we just all know deep inside us that death is not right.

No matter their age, whether someone is 8 or 80 when they die, it is a tragedy, because God has designed us to live forever.

The reason we don't live forever, the reason death is our destiny, is something that the bible calls sin. And sin is rebellion against God. Sin is that decision that says I want to live my life my way and I want to be in charge not God.

And we all make that decision. Every single being in human history has turned away from God and we all want to be the boss of our own lives.

But the bible says that decision is fatal. Because God is the one who gave us our lives, and when we use our lives to rebel against him, he takes our lives away.

And so, every single one of us will die, and what's more, the time will come for every single one of us when we will all stand before God to explain our actions. We'll all have to explain to God why we chose to ignore him. Why it is we've taken the life he's given us and shut him out of it. Which is actually quite a scary notion, isn't it?

Easter has a politically incorrect cause, it occurs because of death - that people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgement.

But it gets even worse. Because Easter celebrates an even more politically incorrect event – that the man Jesus was sacrificed, crucified on a cross.

For most of us, crucifixion isn't something we know much about, we tend not to realise how horrific it was. But it was a truly brutal way to die. It was reserved for the lowest of criminals, the scum of society. It was a death that involved being beaten, whipped, humiliated and put on display for all to see. It was a slow death that inflicted the maximum amount of pain possible.

It is one of the most shameful ideas in the world. And yet that's what Easter is all about celebrating. We're celebrating the fact a man named Jesus went through all of that.

Of all the holidays in a year, Easter is far away the most politically incorrect, yet we call the first day of Easter Good Friday.

Why is it called good? Because although the cause and event of Easter are politically incorrect, it is actually the most wonderful holiday, because the outcome of Easter is so good – for it deals with our biggest problem – death and judgement.

Have a read of why Jesus died – Hebrews 9:27-28: **Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.**

Jesus died that horrible death for a reason – to take away the sins of people. When Jesus died on that cross he bore the guilt for our rebellion, he carried our sin on his shoulders, and he took our punishment of death and judgement.

That's what the cross was all about, it was a direct swap. We had rebelled against God, but Jesus took our penalty. Jesus died our death so we will never have to stand guilty before God if we trust in him.

Our future, our destiny doesn't have to be death and judgement, our destiny can actually be salvation with Jesus, salvation from death, salvation from God's judgement, salvation for an eternal life with Jesus.

Isn't that the most incredible news?

The question is do you want to celebrate a politically incorrect Easter? Do you want to accept Jesus' death as your sacrifice? So that when Jesus comes again, he can rescue you and save you and take you to heaven for eternity?

**Matthew Hearne, Minister of Barraba Anglican.**

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**Here is an overview of outcomes from the ordinary meeting of Tamworth Regional Council held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026.**

- Councillors considered a report about the future of Ray Walsh House and possible associated costs for further investigations. The report followed a Mayoral Minute in September 2025 that instructed Council staff to determine the financial benefit for Council to undertake the removal of the asbestos contamination or reinstate the building. Councillors will conduct their own community consultation on the administrative headquarters to help inform a future decision around detailed planning, concepts and cost estimates, with options to be presented to the community at a Town Hall meeting should they choose to proceed with further investigations.
- Councillors reviewed an energy audit report outlining Council's current energy performance and identifying opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of high consuming assets and facilities, expanding onsite renewable generation and meeting Council's long-term sustainability goals. Going forward there will be a need to support asset owners in implementing recommendations prioritised by the organisation and community.
- Tamworth Regional Council Acting Executive Manager Strategy and Performance, Karen Litchfield, will attend the 2026 Canadian Association of Municipal

Administrators (CAMA) Conference and study tour of local councils in British Columbia from 22 May to 2 June 2026 after the trip was approved by Council. Each year, Local Government Professionals NSW undertakes International Scholarships to New Zealand, the United States of America, Canada, Japan and the UK. Members are invited to submit an application to participate in these opportunities and Karen was successful in this one to Canada. Costs associated with the trip will be fully paid by Local Government Professionals NSW while the focus of the study tour will be Governance. Karen will also provide a report to Council following the visit.

- Councillors reviewed an update on Council deliverables outlined in Our Progress Report, July – December 2025. The Report tracks the Delivery Program actions at six-month intervals and at the conclusion of the reporting period, 85% of the recorded actions were reported as Achieved or On Track, and 15% were identified as Monitor. The report is part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, a NSW Government legislative requirement.
  - Councillors reviewed three business papers seeking assistance in supporting community initiatives. Councillors agreed to subsidise the fees associated with the hire of Council facilities and services to the amount of \$20,000 and \$3441 for NAIDOC Week and Youth Week, respectively. These events each provide important opportunities for connection and celebration. Councillors also agreed to approve \$56,393.33 in donations to several local community groups as part of Council's Annual Donations Program.
  - Council has received and noted the findings from the 2025 Tamworth Regional Waste Audit. The audit was physically conducted in October and November 2025 to gain insight and data regarding waste streams disposed within Council's collection systems.
  - In closed council, Councillors reviewed a proposal to sell the old athletics track at the southern entrance to Tamworth city. Councillors agreed to sell and allow a developer to activate the site, which will return a profit to Council following subdivision costs. Discussions with the successful developer have been underway for some years with Councillors satisfied the proposed development now has the right balance of retail space and will deliver much needed accommodation options for visitors to the city.
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## Skywalk project climbs towards completion

The Skywalk project has reached a significant construction milestone, with the installation of the bridge across Scenic Road and the stairs up to Scenic Road from the boardwalk below taking place over the past two weeks.

The bridge represents a key step in connecting sections of the Skywalk boardwalk above and below Scenic Road, allowing safe passage for users over Scenic Road, while also creating another incredible vantage point overlooking the surrounding landscape from the bridge lookout.

Residents and visitors who are less mobile or who use a wheelchair or pram will be able to access the bridge from the top of Skywalk, via the Oxley Scenic Lookout.

The bridge installation has required a full road, Lookout and walking trail closure between Sunday and Friday each week since 8 March to allow a safe working environment for contractors as they complete final assembly and place the bridge and lower stairs in position.

Tamworth Regional Council Project Engineer, Lachlan Mackiewicz, said reaching this stage of the project reflects extensive planning and coordination between Council and FORGE, the head contractor delivering the project.

“Getting to this milestone has involved a significant amount of work in the planning and design stages to ensure the structure can be safely delivered and integrated into the surrounding landscape,” he said. “Projects of this scale require careful coordination between Council’s project team, the head contractor, sub-contractors and other Council Departments to make sure this installation goes as smoothly as possible.”

The bridge and stairs have been fabricated off site and transported to site where final assembly is completed and carefully lifted into place by the crane.

FORGE Head of Construction, Robert Antonios, said this installation is the culmination of months of meticulous, coordinated design, ensuring every stage from fabrication to final placement is executed seamlessly.

“Reaching this significant milestone is a testament to FORGE’s disciplined approach and the collaborative spirit of everyone involved, allowing us to deliver both precisely and safely, and pleasingly, just ahead of schedule,” he said. “I want to extend a sincere thank you to the project teams at Tamworth Regional Council and the dedicated FORGE design and construction teams for their tireless and uncompromising efforts in achieving this special milestone.”

Tamworth Region Deputy Mayor, Jeff Budd, said the project will provide a unique space for the community to connect while also strengthening the region’s appeal as a visitor destination. “The Skywalk will offer something truly special for our community and for those visiting the region,” Cr Budd said. “It will be a place where families and friends can spend time together, where sporting groups can incorporate the steps into their training, and where people can simply enjoy getting outdoors and being active in nature. While the Skywalk itself will be free to access, we know that visitors who come to experience it will also support local businesses while they’re here, which provides a valuable boost for our regional economy.”

The Skywalk project is made possible thanks to \$14.3M in funding from the NSW State Government.

Scenic Road will return to usual opening hours from 6pm Friday 27 March.

## WASTE COLLECTION



Our current weekly average is 10.89 kg per household in the red-lid garbage bin - just under the state average of 11 kg per week.

A good result, but there’s still room to improve. Audits show some recyclable items are ending up in general waste.

Small changes can make a big difference in reducing your 10.89 kg of general waste each week:

- **Empty and rinse recyclables** - There were multiple recyclable food containers in the red bin that could have been recycled if emptied. A quick rinse ensures more items are recycled instead of ending up in landfill.

- **Recycle right** - Double-check what goes in each bin, recyclables often end up in the red bin by mistake. Cardboard is a common recyclable still making its way into the red bin.
- **Drop off Items** - Some items were items that could or should be a 'drop off' item at one of Council's waste management facilities. Household batteries should never go in ANY bin!
- **Sign up to the Curby Program (opt-in)** - Soft plastics make up a large portion of household waste. Curby provides an easy way to recycle soft plastics from home. Find out more at [www.curbyit.com/](http://www.curbyit.com/)

Thank you for helping reduce waste in our community.

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## TAMWORTH REGIONAL GALLERY

**Autumn School Holiday Workshops. Tuesday 7 April - Thursday 16 April. Esther Halliday Studio**

**Session 1: 10am - 11:20am:** most suitable for infants & lower primary aged students - \$25

**Session 2: 12pm - 2pm:** most suitable for upper primary & high school aged students - \$30

Up to 15 participants per session.

### STOP MOTION ANIMATION WITH TESS READING



Join Tess Reading, an experienced animator and filmmaker, for a fun and engaging introduction to stop motion animation, where kids can learn the fundamentals of storytelling and animation using items and tools found in the average home.

Students will learn how to develop their own characters and stories, whilst learning the fundamentals of stop motion animation.

**Students are required to bring their own device, mobile phone or tablet, with the Stop Motion Studio App installed, and free memory space for 300+ images.**

This workshop will be delivered on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April and Tuesday 14 April. Students can come on either day, or both!

*Completed animations will be projected as part of Fitzroy St Plaza Projection Public Art Program in April 2026.*

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### **OTHER WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE DURING SCHOOL HOLIDAYS – SEE GALLERY WEBSITE**

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## QUESTACON SCIENCE CIRCUS

Join the Questacon Science Circus for a free pop-up science centre experience like no other!

Come along to test your reflexes, challenge your balance, and discover how everyday forces shape the world around us. With over 30 hands-on exhibits and spectacular science shows to spark curiosity, the Science Circus pop-up is a fantastic STEM experience for the whole family!



Saturday 18 April, 1 - 5:30 pm

Sunday 19 April, 9 am – 3 pm

Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) Greg Norman Dr, Hillvue NSW 2340

### **Things to know**

- This is a FREE event, but bookings are essential.
  - Suitable for all ages and families. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult at all times.
  - Contact [ScienceCircus@Questacon.edu.au](mailto:ScienceCircus@Questacon.edu.au) or 0466 922 801 for enquiries.
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## From Barraba Friends Facebook site

### BRIAN COOTE POSTS...

Garry Smith, who grew up here in Barraba has donated some photos to the Historical Museum. All except one of these photos are of the major 1964 flood and most have captions written on them.

Sincere thanks to Garry for sharing these pictures.



**Brian Coote writes ...**The last photo shared by Garry Smith that I found particularly interesting.

This is of a fire in the bagged wheat stack up at the railway. Probably caused by spontaneous combustion of too wet grain.

There are so few good photos of these stacks and they were such a major focus point of summer in Barraba, with the killing work of the "lumpers" stacking the bags off the bag elevator in the blazing sun and 40+ degree heat.

Garry is not sure what year this fire was.



## Mike Artis comments on this photo –

The large wheat stacks on the southern end of Barraba in late 50s/60s were right over the rail track from the now Silo. The stacks were a big part of our lives when we were kids. The stacks were managed by our father Jim Artis who had the Barraba licence for the company called Farmers and Graziers known as F & G . F&G were an Australian wide co operative that bought and marketed grain, wool, and livestock products. F and G had large wool stores buildings right on Circular Quay and that is where our city born father become a wool classer.

During WW2 Dad was stationed up in Darwin where he met Barraba's Don Parson and that friendship was the link that initially brought Dad up to Barraba. He started wool classing up in this area and from there the opportunity came up to take on the F&G licence. Part of that was managing the large bag wheat stack which unfortunately I don't know how many bags it was but it was massive. During wheat season the trucks would be lined up at times back to the corner store. The wheat bag samples were conducted at the rail weigh station before trucks come down to the stack for unloading. The wheat lumpers were tough men catching the bags off the elevators being stacked to precision as the stack grew. They generally had a hessian shoulder pad, hat and tennis shoes as they walked up and around on the stack. It was hot work in November / December. Our family have wonderful memories of the stories of the wheat stack and the lumpers who over the years did create some mischief at the pubs.

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## Private health reform 'gap' leaves patients paying the price

The cost-of-living pain for Australians is about to get worse, with private health insurance premiums rising on Wednesday — many of them well above the 4.41 per cent increase approved by the government.

With fuel prices climbing and household budgets stretched, families are being forced to make tough decisions as more health costs are shifted onto patients least able to absorb them. The AMA warns that without meaningful reform, Australians will continue to pay the price for a private health system weighed down by outdated policy settings, inconsistent rebates, and a public hospital network under significant strain.

AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen will today address health leaders at the AFR Health Summit, urging the sector to work together on practical reforms that improve affordability for patients and support long term sustainability.

“We have seen what happens when the system is not in balance,” Dr McMullen said. “Our public hospitals are already overwhelmed, and governments cannot keep up with demand for public specialist appointments and essential surgery, forcing more Australians to rely on the private system for timely care. Patients are being squeezed from every direction, and the system simply isn't keeping up. We need to stop patching around the edges and start addressing the structural issues that are driving up costs and limiting access.”

To support a national conversation on reform, the AMA is releasing *The Gaps* that create gaps — a new online resource outlining the policy failures and structural inconsistencies that drive up out of pocket costs.

“It's clear that just blaming providers — whether insurers, doctors or hospitals — doesn't bring costs down or ensure sustainability,” Dr McMullen said. “But there are straightforward policy changes that could make a real difference.”

The AMA has identified several immediate reform opportunities for government, including:

- increasing the known gap limit, which has been frozen at \$500 and never indexed
- fixing the 'no gap' cliff, which leaves patients exposed to sudden out of pocket costs
- reducing confusing and inconsistent rebates across the market
- establishing a Private Health System Authority to drive long term reform and transparency.

Broader opportunities include expanding hospital in the home, revising product tiers, and reviewing private health financial incentives — recommendations outlined in the AMA's *Prescription for Private Health*.

Dr McMullen said the government must also address the widening gap created by the long Medicare freeze and use the new National Health Reform Agreement to tackle excessive public hospital outpatient wait times. “Without action, Medicare becomes a promise unfulfilled,” Dr McMullen said.

The gaps that create gaps resource, alongside the AMA's *Informed Financial Consent* guide, helps patients navigate the system and shows how targeted reform can improve affordability and access. “If we want change, if we want improvement, then we need real policy reform,” Dr McMullen said. “In this economy, it is clear health costs are not going down. Sustainability for providers and access for patients are both at risk unless government acts.”

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From The Conversation

## **4 expert tips for family mealtimes without the drama.**

*Nick Fuller, Clinical Trials Director, Department of Endocrinology, RPA Hospital, University of Sydney*



When you have young children, it can be tempting to feed them early, then sit down to a separate meal once they're in bed.

But setting a routine where you eat as a family, for even a couple of nights a week, can lay the foundations for healthy eating habits, positive relationships with food and social skills that extend into adulthood. Here's why – and how you can make family mealtimes with young children more manageable.

### **Reducing fussiness**

Preschool-aged children who regularly eat with their families eat more fruit and vegetables and are less likely to develop fussy eating habits.

One reason is children learn through observation. When parents and older siblings eat and enjoy a wide variety of foods, children are more likely to try and accept those foods themselves.

Allowing children to touch, explore and play with food in their first year supports sensory development and confidence with eating. It can be messy – much of the food will end up on faces, hands or the floor – but this exploration is a normal and valuable part of learning to eat.

Family meals provide repeated, low-pressure opportunities for children to become familiar with a variety of foods. Over time, this exposure can increase acceptance of foods that they initially refuse.

### **Tuning into hunger cues**

Regular family meals create predictable eating routines. And eating at the table, rather than in front of screens, helps children pay attention to hunger and fullness cues, reducing the likelihood of overeating. Children who share family meals at least three times a week are more likely to eat nutrient-dense foods, maintain a healthy weight, and are less likely to have disordered eating.

### **Learning social skills**

A relaxed, supportive mealtime helps children develop positive attitudes to food and encourages exploration without pressure.

Family mealtimes are opportunities to slow down and connect. Studies link regular shared meals with improved communication, greater family closeness and stronger self-esteem in children.

Mealtimes also play an important role in teaching table manners, and self-regulation of their emotions and the amount of food they're eating. Observational research suggests everyday family meals are a key setting in which children learn how to sit, use cutlery and engage appropriately at the table, helping them learn broader expectations about interaction and self-control that extend beyond eating.

### **4 ways to make meal times manageable**

Having young children at the dinner table can be challenging. Here are four tips to make them more manageable:

#### **1. Be realistic**

Modern life's demands make it unrealistic for everyone to be around the table for every meal. So, set a target that works for your family, such as having three family dinners weekly. If someone works nights, make breakfast your shared meal. But put devices away so everyone's focused on eating and connecting.

#### **2. Don't create separate meals**

It's tempting to make different meals for toddlers, but this creates unnecessary work and can establish fussy eating.

When families eat together, meals are more likely to be home-cooked and nutritionally balanced. They tend to involve planning and preparing one dish for everyone, rather than relying on convenience or "fast" food.

Children are more open to trying new foods when there's something familiar on their plate. Try tweaking family favourites by swapping ingredients, such as using lentils instead of beef in bolognese or roasting carrots to make "orange chippies". Grating veggies into sauces also expands kids' diets without overwhelming them.

#### **3. Abandon rules that have never worked**

Many of us remember being required to finish everything on our plate or be denied dessert unless we ate our vegetables. While well-intentioned, these coercive food practices can teach children to eat in response to external pressures rather than internal hunger and fullness cues.

Coercive food practices among parents are associated with poorer self-regulation of eating and emotional overeating in young children.

Over the long term, studies link these experiences in childhood with less intuitive eating and more disordered eating behaviours in adulthood. So, these old-school rules can have lasting effects. Simply offer the family meal and allow them to dictate how much they eat.

#### 4. Involve your child and make food fun

Including children in preparation and serving gets them interested in and used to family mealtime routines. Ask them to pick healthy recipes and complete child-appropriate tasks such as washing veggies. When they're old enough, ask them to set the table. Younger children often respond well when healthy foods are presented in playful, engaging ways. Try offering a mix of colours, textures and shapes to keep their interest. Switching up the setting can help too – even a simple picnic in the backyard or local park can make mealtimes feel fresh, special and fun.

#### GOLF NOTES SUNDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

A beautiful Sunday afternoon greeted our golfers who came out to contest two separate events. Our main event for the day saw five teams play a Mixed Foursomes Championship for the L&V Bridges Memorial trophy.

Carding a very impressive 79 off the stick and, for a third year running, brother/sister pairing of P. York & A. Koopman won the day with I. Cabot & L. Simpson runner-up on 83. The Lions Club best nett trophy winners were N & K Smith with 68.125.

Twelve players contested an Individual Stableford for the W&G Simpson trophy. B. Simpson won on a countback from C. Ruttley with 37 points to take home his own trophy. Balls going to J. Neale 36, B. Benson 35 and S. Faint 34. All the nearest to the pins went off this week B. Benson-3rd, C. Ruttley-6th, L. Simpson-12th, J. Austin-16th, J. Neale-18th.

On Sunday the Club held its AGM with a fair turnout of members. After delivering his final Presidents report Will Sedgwick stepped down from his role after 9 years. Will has been a great leader for our club with numerous buildings being erected during his tenure for golf cart and course machinery storage as well as major renovations to the Club House and the Club thanks him for his time. Liam Johnston was elected unopposed as the new President, Ian Cabot Vice President and Amanda Koopman was re-elected Treasurer/Secretary.

Next week, the 5<sup>th</sup>, is Easter so a few may be away but if you're around we will play an individual Stableford for G. Allen's trophy.



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