

RURAL FRINGE

Journal of the Hall district



VOLUME 33 ISSUE 2

April 2026

Jindabyne High School students visit the National Sheepdog Trials

by Jenny Whittaker

The National Sheepdog Trials in Hall always bring light, colour, movement and plenty of dogs – but they also provide a valuable opportunity for school students to experience firsthand what life with sheep and working dogs is really like.

A key figure behind these visits is Edward Yeh, the School Program Coordinator for the National Sheepdog Trials. Edward is responsible for overseeing the safety and wellbeing of visiting students while ensuring they gain a broad understanding of sheepdog trialling, dog training and the skills required to produce an effective working dog.



A retired Sydney veterinarian, Edward first became interested in working dogs through his practice, where he noticed how fit and healthy they were compared to many other animals. Curious to learn more, he began attending sheepdog trials across New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, and even travelled to New Zealand. Over time he became a volunteer at the National Trials, later taking on the roles of Treasurer and Schools Coordinator, continuing to maintain and expand the program.

On the Friday of this year's Trials, I spent the day with a group of around 10 students from Jindabyne High School. All but one were girls, drawn from Years 8, 9 and 10. While only the Year 10 students were formally studying agriculture, the younger students were part of advanced science classes and showed just as much curiosity and engagement.



Many of the students lived in town but had close connections to farming through family or friends in the district, and most expressed an interest in pursuing rural or agricultural careers in the future.

The day began with a warm welcome from Edward, setting the tone for what would be an engaging and hands-on experience. Morning tea followed – scones with jam and cream – along with the presentation of sheepdog-branded shirts, which the students received with enthusiasm.

Marion Whalan, a long-time competitor who travels each year from southwest Victoria to take part in the Trials, then outlined the day's activities. Marion plays an important role in the school program, helping to ensure both the safety of the students and that they have an enjoyable and meaningful experience. Originally from Wamboin, she now makes the annual trip to Hall with a team of dogs, staying for the duration of the event.



... continues on page 5

The Grove Art & Photography Exhibition and Sale

1 Monty Place, Ngunnawal. ACT
 Sunday, 3 May 2026,
 9.30am-2.30pm.



This will include The Grove Art Group and some local artists.

We will also provide tea/coffee, scones and cakes for \$5.

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A Blue Tree for Hall?

Blue Tree Project is a mental health charity that began in 2019 and has since developed into a global movement.



It involves the painting of a large dead tree a bright blue colour. The purpose of this is to create an awareness of mental health issues which may generate conversation, enable a positive transformation of attitudes towards mental health and remind community to check in on each other. There are currently 1571 Blue Trees across Australia.

There is a process involved in identifying a suitable specimen for painting. The tree must be on public land, must be dead and there must be no wildlife habitat. For Hall there are also heritage issues which must be cleared before approval can be given.

More information on this project is available on:

<https://bluetreeproject.com.au>

<https://cityservices.act.gov.au.canberras-blue-trees>

The VHDPA Committee is seeking community feedback on Hall Village becoming a site for a Blue Tree within this project.

Please send your comments on this proposed initiative by email to: info@hall.act.au

Or by mail to:

Secretary, VHDPA, PO Box 43, Hall, ACT 2618

Hall Veterinary Surgery

Phone 6230 2223

Proudly supporting the Hall community



In preparation for the centenary of the Royal Canberra Show in 2027, volunteers from the Hall Heritage Centre hosted a group from the the Royal National Capital Agricultural Society (RNCAS) for lunch at the recent National Sheep Dog Trials.

President of the RNCAS, Toni Rolls, was accompanied by Board Member Margaret Hunter, CEO Adelina La Vita and SEO Charne Saunders.

The group was greeted by some knowledgeable historians with excellent memories of the annual Canberra Show that was held at Hall until its move to the EPIC facility in 1964.

Tony and Margaret Morris and Ralph Southwell took time off from their Trials duties to lead the visitors around, and Kingsley Southwell was able to share some very interesting history about the grounds.

An enjoyable lunch and watching the Trials allowed the RNCAS guests to appreciate the continued community and heritage links with this unique event.



Enjoying the Trials with Tony Morris



Canberra Show officials outside the old sheep pavilion.

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St Michael & All Angels Anglican Church

Corner Victoria and Loftus Streets, Hall

by Beryl Pedvin

Following the quiet contemplation of Lent, Easter celebrations in Hall will start on **Good Friday 3 April**. All are welcome to join parishioners from St Michael's, St Francis Xavier Catholic Church and Wattle Park Uniting to walk the length of Victoria Street, marking the Stations of the Cross. The walk will start at 11am at the northern end of Victoria Street (the carpark at the intersection with Barton Highway) and finish in the Remembrance Grove on the corner of Victoria and Gladstone Streets.

On **Easter Day 5 April** we will hold services at 8am and 11am at St Michael's. Residents and visitors are invited to join us at either of these services on Easter Day, and for morning tea in the garden at St Michael's after the 11am service.



After farewelling Rev'd Peter Malone in January, our parish awaits the appointment of a new rector. In the meantime, our assistant priest Rev'd Helen Dean continues to be a steady hand at the parish helm. Rev Helen's gentle wisdom has been an inspiration and great assistance to parishioners for many years, and now more than ever we appreciate her presence and guidance. While we wait for a new rector, Rev Helen and lay members of the parish are sharing the load of the many tasks which are involved in running Hope Ginninderra Parish.

All are welcome to join us at our regular St Michael's services each Sunday at 8am or 11am.

For more information on parish activities, please contact Beryl on **0408 488 526**.

nbn fibre upgrade – what's next for Hall?

Great news for many residents in Hall!

The survey and scoping works for nbn's full fibre upgrade is now complete. You might remember seeing our delivery partner, *Ventia*, on site last year, assessing conditions to help shape the design.



Preliminary planning and a draft design have identified some Aboriginal and historic heritage considerations. Before construction can begin, an Aboriginal Heritage consultant will review nbn's designs to ensure they meet all requirements.

Dee Kneipp

ACT Stakeholder Engagement Manager,
State Government Relations

Here's what that means for timing:

- If the design affects an Aboriginal Heritage item, a Cultural Heritage Assessment (CHA) must be undertaken. This process can take up to 180 days from ACT Heritage receiving the design.
- If the design is assessed at a high-level as not affecting an Aboriginal heritage item, ACT Heritage typically take 1-2 months to endorse this.

The start of construction will hinge on the Aboriginal Heritage consultant's findings and ACT Heritage's advice. We'll keep the Hall community updated as we progress toward construction of the new nbn full fibre network.

Before construction begins, impacted residents in Hall will receive direct mail from nbn and *Ventia* with details on what to expect and how to prepare. If you haven't already, please register your contact details with *Ventia*.

For more information on the nbn fibre upgrade program in the ACT, visit:

nbn.com.au/FibreUpgradeACT

Jindabyne High School visit the National Sheepdog Trials

... continued from page 1

Marion introduced the group to Vicky Carey, whose property at Wee Jasper supplies the Saxon Merino sheep used in the National Sheepdog Trials. Vicky, who had just stepped away from helping in the catering section, spoke about the characteristics of the Saxon breed – smaller framed sheep originally from Spain, prized for producing ultra-fine wool.

The sheep used in the Trials are part of a flock of around 7,000 on Vicky's farm. Of these, approximately 1,200 of the highest-quality wool producers are fitted with protective coats while in the paddock. These coats prevent contamination from dirt and vegetable matter, which can significantly reduce the value of the fleece. As the wool grows, the sheep are fitted with progressively larger coats made from a special material designed not to shed fibres into the wool.

Students were given the chance to handle fleece samples, comparing differences in colour and micron count – the measure used to determine wool fineness. They learnt that wool with a lower micron count is finer and more valuable, used in high-quality garments, while broader wool is suited to more durable products. From socks to suits, the range of uses depends largely on this grading.

Vicky explained how wool is tested and classed, with fleeces from sheep of similar micron counts grouped together into bales. Each sheep carries identification not only for age but also for fleece quality. Wool prices are closely tied to these measurements, and the best bales can command extraordinary prices, sometimes as high as \$59,000. Achieving '1PP' status – first paragraph, first page in a sale catalogue – is the goal for top producers, reflecting exceptional quality.

Students also learnt about the shearing process, where care is taken to keep the fleece intact and clean. Unlike standard methods of gathering wool, these premium fleeces are rolled carefully and placed into bins to preserve their best features. Lower-quality wool from the sheep's legs and neck is removed to maintain consistency within each bale. Even the shearing technique matters, with shearers rewarded for achieving longer, unbroken fleece lengths.

An important takeaway was the impact of animal welfare on wool quality. Stress caused by drought or poor handling can lead to breaks in the wool fibre, reducing its value. This highlighted the crucial role of well-trained sheepdogs, which help move stock calmly and efficiently, protecting both the animals and the farmer's income. With top working dogs selling for as much as \$54,000 – and good dogs commonly valued around \$30,000 – the students looked at those Trial dogs with a lot of respect!

The group then moved to the 'let-out' area, where sheep are held before and after their runs. Here, students experienced the sights, sounds and smells of livestock in a working environment. They were given a clear explanation of the Trial course, including the 15-minute time limit, the sequence of obstacles and the scoring system, where points are deducted for errors rather than awarded.

From there, the students watched several runs from the bleachers. They were encouraged to score one of the trials themselves, applying what they had learnt about judging. Their results were impressively close to the official scores, demonstrating both their attention and understanding. Meanwhile, Marion's lively group of 10-month-old puppies provided plenty of entertainment, exploring under the seating, greeting students

enthusiastically and reacting to the action in the arena.

Earlier, the group had spent time with these young dogs, learning about the early stages of training. While the puppies were full of energy, Marion demonstrated basic techniques and explained how handlers establish leadership and control. Training a reliable working dog, she noted, typically takes around three years of consistent effort.

The arena was later opened to allow students and visitors to walk the course, offering a new perspective on its scale and complexity. Marion explained each stage in detail, from the starting point to the final pen, including the challenges of the bridge and other obstacles. Standing on the bridge, students remarked on its height and gained insight into why sheep can sometimes hesitate at that point.

After a break for lunch, the students had the opportunity to put their learning into practice. In a small pen, they took turns acting as handlers, working with trained dogs to move sheep under Marion's guidance. While clearly a skill that takes time to master, the students quickly discovered how instinctive the dogs could be and how subtle cues could influence the movement of the sheep.

It was a fitting end to a full and engaging day. The visit combined practical experience with expert insight, giving students a deeper understanding of sheep farming, wool production and the skill involved in training working dogs. For many, it brought classroom learning to life and offered a glimpse into a possible future in agriculture.

After a great day watching and learning all about sheepdogs, trails, sheep, wool, training, the race, bridge and the pen, it was time for the students to head home to Jindabyne on the bus. Maddy, one of the students spoke on their behalf to thank Edward, Marion and all the volunteers who made for a really enjoyable day.



Walking the course.



Some of the crowd at the pizza afternoon.

I always feel that autumn has begun when the National Sheep Dog Trial Championships return to Hall. Hall Village is always pleased to welcome competitors, spectators and visitors at the Sheep Dog Trial. Members of the Hall Men's Shed and others provide significant volunteer assistance on the entry gates and several Hall locals are members of the Sheep Dog Trial Committee. And the annual Dogs' Dinner brings human competitors and Hall residents together.

It was very pleasing to see that Tony Morris was recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) on Australia Day for his service to the community of Canberra. Tony's service includes The Royal Canberra Show Society as Steward (Jams, Spreads and Preserves, Horticultural Section) for 37 years and volunteer since the 1970s, volunteer with the National Sheepdog Trials since 1978, Steward at the Queanbeyan Show since 2000, New South Wales Rural Youth Organisation President and Life Member of the State Management Committee and Hall Club Organiser for 37 years, ACT Justice of The Peace since 1978, volunteer with Hartley Life Care and markets volunteer since 1987, and former Volunteer fire fighter with Hall Bush Fire Brigade. We know that Margaret has been equally involved in these endeavours.

Tony has been a member of the Village of Hall and District Progress Association for over 60 years, a committee member and former Vice-President. Together with Margaret, Tony managed the Hall Pavilion for many, many years. Tony is also an active member of the Hall Heritage Centre. Congratulations Tony on much deserved recognition.

On Saturday 7 February, some 60 adults and children enjoyed pizza and soft drinks at the Pizza Picnic hosted by the Progress Association. It was especially good to see some new residents taking the opportunity to meet Hall neighbours. Very special thanks to Aaron, Dennis, Fred and Jonathan for their expert efforts at the pizza oven. With the encouragement that we received, the Progress Association Committee will arrange a similar event later in the year.

ACT Government Budget Submission

The Progress Association Committee was invited by ACT Treasury to make a submission for the financial year 2026-2027 ACT Budget. The submission by the Progress Association Committee is focused in three major areas:

- **Stormwater drainage in Hall Village**
The ACT Government-contracted consultants have completed the detailed sketch design and received input and feedback from residents and stakeholders in Hall Village. The Progress Association is requesting that the funding required for construction of the agreed design of the storm water drainage infrastructure is included in the 2026-2027 ACT budget.
- **Cycle and pedestrian path from Gladstone Street Hall to Clarrie Hermes Drive**
It is 12 months since the Commonwealth announced funding to the ACT Government

for the new community path between Hall Village and Gold Creek. The Progress Association is requesting that the preferred design option be discussed with the Progress Association and Hall community without delay and, once agreed with the Hall community, construction be completed as a priority.

• **Comprehensive assessment of the safety of the intersection of the Barton Highway with Gladstone Street and Wallaroo Road, Hall**

It is 46 years since the Barton Highway bypass of Hall Village was opened in 1980. The population of Yass district has approximately trebled in the last 46 years and the number of people commuting from Yass and surrounds to Canberra for work or study has far outstripped the growth in population. The Progress Association is requesting that the funding required for a comprehensive assessment by the ACT Government of the safety of the intersection of the Barton Highway with Gladstone Street and Wallaroo Road. The assessment should consider the current alignment and safe line of sight to traffic in all directions as well as the appropriate speed limit on this section of the Barton Highway.

Increased police presence around Hall Village and District

Following a request to the ACT Chief Police Officer in December, ACT Policing has increased regular patrols through Hall Village as well as Road Policing patrols linked to patrols on the Barton Highway. Similarly, the Officer-In-Charge of the Yass Sector of Hume Police District will attend a meeting of the Progress Association to



Fred Reid cooks and with John Starr watching on.

provide an overview of policing arrangements and capabilities in Wallaroo, Spring Range and Nanima and discuss concerns raised by residents.

Blue Tree for mental health awareness

As you will see on page 2, the Progress Association Committee is seeking feedback on the possibility of Hall Village becoming a site for a Blue Tree for mental health awareness. Please send your comments on this proposed initiative by email to info@hall.act.au or by mail to : **VHDPA, PO Box 43, Hall, ACT 2618**

The Progress Association Committee generally meets each month. If you have any ideas or concerns for our Hall Village and District community, please talk to me or any member of your Progress Association Committee or email info@hall.act.au.

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Springfield Rural Fire Brigade

Rebecca Morrison President



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Maintaining your smoke alarm ensures it's in working order for when you need it the most.

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- **Every six months** – vacuum dust off your smoke alarms every six months. Keeping your smoke alarm free of particles to help reduce false alarms and ensure smoke can easily reach the internal sensor.
- **Every year** – replace lead or alkaline batteries every 12 months.
- **Every 10 years** – replace all smoke alarms with the new 10-year lithium powered smoke alarms. They only need to be changed every 10 years, or earlier if specified by the manufacturer.

Springfield Brigade AGM – Monday 11 May

The Springfield Brigade Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on **Monday 11 May at 7pm** at the Rex Connor Shed, Patemans Lane.



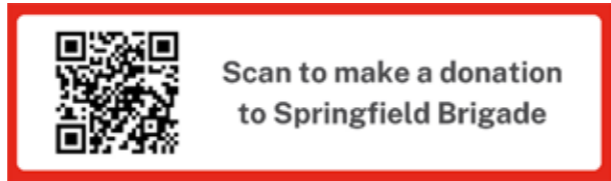
We encourage all members to attend as we review the past year and plan for the future. Nominations are open for all committee positions, and we welcome members who would like to take on a role and support our brigade's ongoing operations.

For more fire safety advice or information about our brigade, visit rfs.nsw.gov.au or contact us directly.



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Crafty Crew craft group turns **1**

What a wonderful year of creativity, companionship and cooked delights!

Just over 12 months ago, Hall Village resident Sandy Newberry, had an idea to co-ordinate a group of like-minded people, to get together regularly and craft items and share ideas, knowledge and supplies. So began the *Crafty Crew* which meets weekly at the Cottage. Sandy says that the group shares ideas and techniques for creating crafted items with more knowledgeable members teaching others. It is also a place to swap supplies or leave excess patterns, fabric, wool and hardware for others to use. One of the added benefits of the weekly get togethers is the camaraderie between members and the friendships made. It's their very own mental health improver and support system.

While currently comprised of all women the group is open to anyone who would like to come along. Some people are village locals but quite a few are from surrounding rural areas and also the local suburbs. Everyone is welcome. The group operates between 1pm and 4.30pm every Tuesday at the Cottage next to the tennis courts at the old Hall Primary School site. Most members bring a hand craft item to work on but some people come along for just a catch up chat, cuppa and piece of cake. Gluten free options are usually available.

A couple of group members have been successful with their creations at the recent Royal Canberra Show. Ann Toet taking out *Champion - Special Challenge* with her hand woven jacket, *Champion - Dyeing* with a hand dyed lacey scarf, and *Second - Spinning, Dyeing and Weaving* with a fun water bottle cover. Ann brought her weaving loom to the craft group and it was of great interest to everyone.

Catherine Karabin was so enamoured with it she took up weaving and has taken out her own prize at the Royal Canberra Show – a *Highly Commended - Spinning, Dyeing and Weaving*, with an orange and cream scarf.



Ann with her two prize winning entries.



Sandy's cable knit rug (yet to be finished).



Catherine with her Canberra Show prize winning entry.



Suzanne's scarf which is a work in progress.



Crocheted puffin toy.



Sandra working on her baby blanket.

Margaret keeping the preemie babies in booties.



Sue McCarthy whipped up these baby jumpers.

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heritage happenings

Heritage in a Suitcase

by Mardi Troth

When the COVID-19 pandemic gained momentum in 2021 and ACT school students began home-schooling, the education program at the Hall Heritage Centre stopped operating. The program at that time was based on Year 2 students coming to the campus for a morning excursion to experience what life was like before electricity arrived, play old-fashioned games and investigate how technology can change the way people live.

The program was very successful, so the participating volunteers were saddened by these events. Not to be defeated, a team set about creating a new program called *Heritage in a Suitcase*. Over several months classroom activities based on old domestic technology were developed, appropriate artefacts were gathered up from the centre's collection (dial phone, transistor radio, meat safe, manual table mincer, stove top kettle etc) and placed in old suitcases.

ACT primary schools were notified of the resources and the program was offered to schools for a nominal fee of \$50 per week, for teachers to use within their own classrooms. The program was an instant success and a second set was established in 2024, making bookings more accessible.

When schools began operating typically after the pandemic, the students returned to our on-campus activities and bookings for the suitcase resources continued. So, we had a very effective and popular two-pronged approach to the education program.

Sadly, facilitating the program last year became problematic. It had become too successful and with a fall in volunteer numbers at the centre, we couldn't service all the requests from schools to participate in our on-campus program. The education team decided to limit the number of visits by Year 1 students, but increase the number of *Heritage in a Suitcase* resources so Year 1 teachers could still participate, but in their own classrooms.

Generating these sets of resources takes time and money. Time we have, money we don't. However, when the Rotary Club of Hall heard of our predicament they offered a very substantial sponsorship which has allowed volunteers to begin setting up the two new sets of resources.



Many items have been sourced, but here are some we cannot locate. Do you have any of these things hiding in the shed, cupboards, under the bed? Donations are of course always welcome, although now we can offer a nominal amount for your treasures.

Please contact: **Mardie Troth** via email if you can assist: mardie_troth@yahoo.com



Wallaroo Rural Fire Brigade

fire safety

by Shona Boyle

We are very glad to be at the end of another very busy fire season around the nation, including in our own region. We have attended 21 call-outs since November 2025, including 15 grass and bushfire responses, three motor vehicle accidents, one truck fire, and a structure fire. A number of these call-outs were in the Wallaroo area, including a running grass fire on Johnston Rd, a shed fire on Wallaroo Rd, a motor vehicle accident on Namina Rd, and a grass fire on Parkwood Rd. We have also sent members to assist in fighting the fires in Victoria.



While the weather is cooling, fire risk remains as warm temperatures and decent fuel loads persist into Autumn. Please continue to be careful using vehicles and machinery around long, dry grass and carefully monitor weather conditions prior to lighting any fires for recreational or agricultural purposes. We continue to monitor local conditions to understand the fire risk to our community. If you have any questions or concerns, we are always happy to support you to assess your property for hazards and ways to make your property safer. Please reach out to one of our executive (contact details opposite), or pop into training.

Our breathing apparatus (BA) capability has also been called upon a number of times over the course of this fire season. With the enhanced breathing protection BA provides, our brigade was able to support other local brigades in managing the lithium battery truck fire near Yass in December, and the shed fire on Wallaroo Rd on New Year's Eve.

As we move into cooler weather, we encourage you to identify areas of your property that need upkeep or an uplift before the next fire season.



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fire safety

Brigade contacts

If you have any questions about fire safety, preparedness, RFS membership or Wallaroo Brigade activities, please feel free to reach out to our Brigade Executive or the Southern Tablelands Zone.

Captain: Neil Shepherd	0418 628 095	nshepherd@shepelectrical.com.au
Senior Deputy Captain: Chris Ellison	0432 942 088	wallaroo.nswrfs@gmail.com
President: Amy Goldstraw	0410 763 936	amy.goldstraw@gmail.com
Secretary: Shona Jenkin	0400 902 408	wallaroo.nswrfs@gmail.com
Treasurer: Peter Vincent	0415 630 560	tyndarah@bigpond.net.au
Yass Fire Control Centre:	02 6266 3100	southerntablelandszone@rfs.nsw.gov.au

Training

Our brigade trains on the first and third Wednesday of every month from 6:30pm. We use this time to reinforce critical foundational skills – pumping; command, control and communications; and property protection – as well as more complex scenario-based training. We also conduct area familiarisation to ensure we are able to respond as quickly and effectively as possible to incidents in our area. When we can, we look to train with neighbouring brigades from both the NSW and ACT RFS to better understand our collective capabilities and how to best work together in crisis.



To deliver these improvements, we aim to raise approximately \$400,000 through a combination of government assistance and grant programs, RFS funding, local fundraising, and community donations. We view these upgrades as a critical part of our duty of care – protecting the health and safety of our members remains our highest priority. These improvements will continue to be the focus of our fundraising efforts over the coming year.

Upcoming events

It was so fabulous to get around Wallaroo with Santa at the end of last year. We are looking forward to more opportunities to engage with our community – both in Wallaroo and surrounding regions – through community engagement and fundraising activities this year.

- Bunnings Belconnen Easter Family night
..... **26 March**
- Bunnings BBQ **11 July**
- Wallaroo Community Dinner TBC
- Murrumbateman Field Days . . . **17-18 October**
- Santa run **19 December**

Our Facebook page (NSW RFS – Wallaroo Rural Fire Brigade) is also a great place to keep up to date with incidents, events and community announcements!



Endless Beauty in Hall has a new owner

Although *Endless Beauty* in the main street of Hall Village has been open for many years, it has recently been bought by Jorja Greenwood. It is next door to the *Shearing Shed* hair salon and they share many clients. The previous owner, Simone, hasn't gone far; she is now working for Jorja at the salon part-time.

Jorja is the granddaughter of two village residents so is known to many of us here in Hall. She completed her Diploma of Beauty and apprenticeship several years ago, then started working at the salon one day a week. Jorja then went on to working full time and on her own while Simone was on maternity leave. An opportunity came up to take over the lease so Jorja has recently become the owner of the business, which she is thrilled about.



Jorja



Simone

Jorja enjoys the interaction she has with her clients and enjoys chatting with them while doing their treatments. She calls the services she offers 'traditional beauty' treatments. The salon has a lovely atmosphere, feels relaxing and calm, and smells great! There is a tanning room, massage room, nail table, foot spa for pedicures and lots of products for sale.

Services provided include:

- Full body tanning
- Waxing
- Facials
- Eyelash and brow tinting
- Pedicures and manicures
- Nail cutting (great for those hard to reach toenails!)
- Massage

The salon hours are:

Tuesday	9am to 6pm
Wednesday	9am to 6pm
Thursday	9am to 6.30pm
Friday	9am to 5pm
Saturday	8am to 2.30pm



The parking is free too!

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The irony when you keep talking about it

by **Robyn Monteleone**
 clinical hypnotherapist



As humans, we are wired to connect with each other. And talking about our problems is one of the ways we connect. Talking about problems and stressors is one of the first ways we 'help' or offer to help when something happens. And for a time; talking can be really useful.

Talking helps us to download, deconstruct and can help us begin to make sense of what has happened.

Until it doesn't. After a time, there comes a point where talking about a problem doesn't make it any easier. Talking simply keeps us in that loop. Talking about 'it' simply brings up the emotions, so perhaps we stop talking about it in an effort to not feel it. If we distract ourselves enough, perhaps it will all go away.

When we are at the point where talking about a problem simply keeps bringing up all those emotions and it doesn't feel like anything is changing; that's when it's time to start exploring other options for healing and processing.

When it feels like you're looping, it's because the brain is stuck in a loop. The brain is stuck in a stress loop, keeping the emotions at the forefront because the stressor hasn't been processed. The brain is on high alert and hasn't processed that the stressor happened in the past and is keeping it current as a safety mechanism. And this can keep happening for years, unless the body and brain are given a way out of the loop. The brain needs a way to file the

stressor away into the past, find lessons, make meaning and find a way out of the fog into the possibility of a future without the stressor constantly being a problem.

Some people are able to use the hurt energy as fuel to write their story, create artworks, put their energy into getting fit or helping others. Others drink alcohol, shut down, stay angry, become depressed, have emotional outbursts over seemingly small things and find themselves feeling alone and broken.

Help beyond talking can create enormous shifts, in short amounts of time. And one way of getting that help is through hypnotherapy. Hypnotherapy is a science backed, empowering modality that works with our own inner coding. We code our experiences by what we see, hear, feel, smell and taste. How we code is also filtered by our upbringing, cultural background, beliefs and life experiences. In hypnotherapy we can work together to update the coding attached to stressors so the body and brain can realise the problematic memories and events that are in the past. Enabling the brain to get out of the loop, to be able to focus on the present and to imagine a brighter future. If you'd like to explore further, you can find out more here: robyn.com.au. Download the free audio to find yourself feeling calm and confident in 10 minutes.

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Capital Country Woodchopping



by Steph Radovanovic

Gosh what a busy year it has been and we have only just started! Since January our axemen, axewomen and juniors have competed at Pambula Show, Albion Park Show, Candelo Show, Kiama Show, Berry Show, Nowra Show, Gundagai Show, Moss Vale Show, Kangaroo Valley Show, Gunning Show, Cobargo Show, Newcastle Show, Tumut Show, Milton Show, Goulburn Show and of course our very own prestigious event, the Royal Canberra Show, which encompassed three huge days of national and international competition.

This year's Royal Canberra Show was especially exciting as Capital Country Woodchopping held the inaugural Women's Tri Series Relay Races, with NSW, QLD and the South Island of New Zealand all competing. This phenomenal event, which was created, developed and put into fruition thanks to our mighty brains trust Shauno (although we all helped out too!) was an Australian first for a Women's Series Relay Race, of which all three teams brought strong line ups of amazing women, including multiple World Champion Axewomen and World Champion Sawyers. It was an incredible display of skills, strength, power, grit and camaraderie and one of the highest calibre Women's Woodchopping Events ever to be held in Canberra!

All three relays over each of the three days placed the same results. A huge congratulations to the Queensland ladies who dominated all three races, and huge congratulations to the NSW team which was only a few seconds behind to place second. A very special mention goes out to the South Island New Zealand team which was stacked with young girls who have not been chopping for that long, yet performed phenomenally well given their youth and lack of competition experience. They all competed with loads of guts and grace against some extremely tough competitors. These young Kiwi girls will be a force to be reckoned with in a few years!

Congratulations to all the placegetters across all the ACT/NSW district shows so far this year! It has been awesome to see strong numbers of competitors across the region, including 27 entries in the Ladies Underhand (three heats) and nine entries in the Junior Underhand at the Canberra Show, with a staggering 84 competitors all up. It's safe to say that this circa 1890 sport of woodchopping is not waning by any means.

We have also seen some growth within our own club this year, with a new junior starting at training, and two of our existing juniors (aged 10 and 12) competing for the first time. Congratulations lads!



As this edition goes to air, many of our axemen and axewomen are dialling in their final weeks of competition preparation for the biggest woodchopping event in the world, the Sydney Royal Easter Show, or as it is often called the *Wimbledon of Woodchopping*. This year the SRES will be held from 2-12 April 2026, and will see competitors from across the world, all competing together to challenge multiple World Championships.

Another very exciting progression this year is the inclusion of an ACT (Capital Country Woodchopping) team in the Men's Team Relay Race at Sydney Royal. The race will consist of a Butchers Block – Underhand, Standing Block – Underhand – Double Handed Saw – Standing Block – Tree Felling. This will be the very first time that ACT/CCW has been represented and we are super excited! Best of luck to our Men's Team: Shaun, Austin, Tom, Sam, Frank, Brad & Evan.



CCW would like to wish all our members who are competing in Sydney this year the very best of luck. It's an amazing experience to cut in the special, purpose-built gladiator style woodchopping arena, in front of thousands of spectators, and the noise and atmosphere



axemen



is electric and truly unique. The Sydney Show is also infamous for having the hardest wood you will ever cut, which seems fitting for such a prestigious event.

On the local scene, we have Cooma Show, Lithgow Show, Luddenham Show, Bombala Show, Camden Show, Yass Show, Hawkesbury Show and Bathurst Show coming up over March, April and early May. Be sure to come and say *Hi* if you are in the area! Let's hope this beautiful sunny autumn weather continues.

Bags of dry kindling wood remain for sale at *Canberra Stockfeed* at 1 Victoria St Hall. They are \$15 a bag and are a great way for us to recycle and re-purpose our cut wood and for you to start stocking up on firewood before winter.

The wood pile at our club grounds is also still available if you would rather choose and collect your own. Simply scan the QR code that is on the large sign beside the wood pile to access bank details to transfer a monetary donation. We are a non-for-profit organisation and funds we generate go directly back to the maintenance and upkeep of our equipment and grounds, which assists our members, and is greatly appreciated.

We are always very grateful for our show sponsors, as well as always looking out for more. We have many options available. Please contact Shaun O'Connor for further details.

Now is the time to stock up some snuggly CCW winter hoodies and beanies! Our line of CCW merchandise is available for purchase, for our members, supporters and the public. Orders generally take under a week to arrive.



Check the website; there is a great selection of singlets, long sleeve and short sleeve training shirts, polo's, hoodies, jackets, caps, hats, beanies and more. All the items are good quality material and cuts.

Check out the O'Neills Club Hub:
www.oneills.com/au_en/shop-by-team/other/capital-country-woodchopping.html

As always, please drop us a line if you would like to know more or have a try!

email: info@capitalchopping.com.au

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Hobart journey

by Kevin Stone



My lovely daughter Nikki surprised me a couple of months ago by presenting me with this poem. She cleverly wrote it with a little help from her friend 'Chatty' (aka Chat GPT) and arranged a four-day visit to Hobart for the two of us to commemorate 10 years since her Mum and my darling wife Sue passed away.



Hobart was chosen because Nikki knew it was one of our very favourite holiday destinations and quite honestly, I couldn't have come up with a better idea.

And we enjoyed every single moment, including a very special one when we shared a glass of champagne! Or two! Just like Sue would have expected and wanted.

For Dad - Love Always Nikki

*Dad, I planned a journey wrapped in quiet grace,
A surprise of southern skies and salt-kissed place.
To mark ten years since Mum slipped into light,
Not gone from us—just further from our sight.
We'll wander through Salamanca's cobbled rows,
Where laughter hums and time moves soft and slow.
Stalls blooming bright with stories, craft, and song,
Reminding us that life still carries on.
At Puddleduck Winery, we'll raise a glass,
To love that stays though years continue past.
Vines rooted deep, like memories we hold,
Growing stronger as the days unfold.
We'll breathe in Hobart's air, so crisp, so kind,
Let mountain, sea, and sky unburden minds.
And soak up all of Sullivan's Cove,
Where echoes of the past and present rove.
At Constitution Dock, boats rock and rest,
Like hearts that've known both ache and tenderness.
We'll stand together, silent, side by side,
With Mum in every ripple of the morning tide.
This trip's not just a place we've all been before,
It's love remembered, forever more.*



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Tucking the garden in for winter

by Lisa Walmsley

Autumn is the perfect time to nurture the soil beneath your garden beds. A little care now helps protect nutrients, support soil life, and set the stage for a thriving spring.

As the garden begins to slow and the air takes on that familiar autumn crispness, many gardeners turn their attention to clearing beds and cutting plants back. But beneath the fading leaves and the last harvests of the season lies something far more important – the soil that will support next year's garden.

Autumn is one of the best times of year to care for your soil. The work you do now may not be immediately visible, but it will quietly pay dividends when spring arrives. By protecting and feeding the soil through winter, you preserve the nutrients and microscopic life that plants rely on to grow strong and healthy.

I often think of autumn soil care as giving the garden a winter coat. The goal is to keep the soil warm, nourished, and protected while the garden rests, so that when the weather warms again the soil is already alive and ready to support new growth.

Before adding anything, it's worth taking a closer look at what you already have. Testing your soil can reveal a lot about its condition. While I sometimes examine soil under a microscope to see what life is present, even a simple pH test can provide useful clues. Your plants themselves can also tell a story. Healthy, vigorous growth usually points to balanced soil, while yellowing leaves or stunted plants may indicate the soil needs attention.

One of the simplest ways to improve soil is by adding organic matter. Compost is often the easiest and most valuable addition. It acts almost like a multivitamin for the garden – improving soil structure, encouraging beneficial microbes, and gradually supplying nutrients that plants can access as they grow.

If you don't make your own compost, most landscaping yards will have some available. But if you have the space, creating your own is one of the most satisfying ways to build healthy soil. Autumn, in particular, offers one of the garden's greatest resources – fallen leaves.

Deciduous leaves can be gathered and stored in a wire basket or piled on a pallet where they slowly break down over time. Eventually they transform into leaf mould – a soft, dark, crumbly material prized by gardeners for its ability to improve soil structure and moisture retention.

The end of the growing season also leaves behind plenty of plant material that can be returned to the earth. Old vegetable plants, corn stalks and garden trimmings all contain nutrients that can be recycled

back into the soil. Chop larger material into smaller pieces and mix them through the top layer, or bury them in a shallow trench where they will gradually decompose.

When adding fresh plant material – often referred to as 'greens' – it's important to balance it with 'browns' such as dried leaves, straw, or even torn cardboard. This balance

helps maintain healthy decomposition, preventing unpleasant smells and allowing materials to break down evenly.

Another practice gaining popularity is planting cover crops. Instead of leaving beds bare through winter, certain plants can be sown to protect and rebuild the soil. Their roots loosen compacted ground, improve soil structure, and create channels that allow water to penetrate more easily. When the next season approaches, the cover crop can be cut down and returned to the soil, feeding the next round of vegetables or flowers.

At this time of year I also like to give the soil a biological boost by adding worm castings or applying a brew of compost tea or extract. These additions encourage the tiny organisms that play such an important role in maintaining healthy soil.

Once the soil has been enriched, the final step is mulch. A generous layer helps insulate the soil, retain moisture, and protect the delicate ecosystem living below the surface through the colder months.

Taking the time to recharge your soil in autumn sets the stage for a thriving garden when spring returns. Much of the magic of gardening happens out of sight, and the quiet work happening beneath the soil now will shape the success of the seasons ahead.

And before you fully tuck the garden in for winter, keep an eye on soil moisture. Even while the garden rests, you don't want your beds heading into winter dry and thirsty.

*The work you do on your soil
in autumn may not be visible
right away, but it quietly
shapes the success of the
seasons to come.*

Do meat ants eat termites?

by Lisa Walmsley

Most of us have grown up stomping on ants' nests or running over them on our bikes hoping we didn't pick up any ants on our way that were going to munch on us later. More recently, I have been giving my dogs bones to chew on, but the meat ants are so bad that they swarm the bone and remove all the meat in a day, leaving the dogs very unhappy and hungry. It wasn't until I was much older that I learnt to love ants' nests because our local echidnas feast on them and I love that.



Meat ants' nest.

Some years ago, I was chatting with a turbine install guy about some of the interesting things about his job. Amongst many things he mentioned that as part of his installs he had witnessed meat ants in termite mounds. So I had to investigate further.

As it turns out, meat ants are well known to predate on termites. Meat ants are super aggressive foragers and love to attack termite mounds to catch them and eat them. In fact, this is part of their diet along with other insects and protein.

Meat ants actively hunt for termites. They are aggressive, opportunistic predators that spend a lot of time patrolling well known paths to forage, while exploiting breaches in termite mounds and tunnels. It is thought that they can use vibration detection to find termites in wood.

It is also thought that termites can detect meat ants through vibration and will attempt to stay quiet – however, the termites' trails lead ants to pinpoint active areas.

Meat ants congregate in large, busy colonies with well defined foraging paths and while out hunting on trees and the ground they will come across termites.

Meat ants strategically wait for a termite mound to be damaged, then they invade the mound hunting for termite workers and soldiers. Meat ants will swarm a compromised mound and overpower the termites when they find them. Ants have the ability to recruit other ants to the nest to assist in the downfall of the colony. However, they rarely wipe out an entire established colony as termites are very quick to repair damage and defend their mound.

It is suggested that meat ants will not completely eliminate termites but they definitely can control them.

So next time you want to do a wheelie over an ants' nest, consider why they are there and what their likely food source is.

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