

THE TRIANGLE

COMMUNITY NEWS

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QUAAMA COBARGO BERMAGUI TILBA & LOCALITIES

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Fringe Festival in Cobargo: It Takes a Village

Thursday 26 February to Friday 27 February (morning)

Following last year's incredible success, It Takes a Village is back and is bigger and better than ever. As the start of the Cobargo Folk Festival, the Fringe Festival transforms the entire village of Cobargo with music and art.



Busking Heats

This is a first! Cobargo will host the official Cobargo Busking Championship Heats on Thursday 26 February. Founded in Cooma in 2012, the Australian National Busking Championship has become a premier showcase of street music culture, with eight regional festivals annually.

Buskers will be selected to compete for glory and fill Cobargo village with sound from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on Thursday. Winners will be announced at the Cobargo Hotel that night. You can apply to compete in the National Busking Championship on the Cobargo Folk Festival website. Applications close at midnight on Sunday 15 February. Go to the Cobargo Folk Festival website, then search for 'it takes a village' and scroll down the page to the applications for the busking competition.

Meet the Authors

From Question Time to Crime – renowned crime writers Chris Hammer (*Legacy*) and Michael Brissenden (*Dust*) will be in conversation with former ABC international correspondent Phil Williams at Well Thumbed Books on Thursday afternoon from 4.30 to 6.00 pm. Spaces are limited and bookings essential. Contact Well Thumbed Books.

Music

From 4.00 pm Thursday through Friday morning, local and regional performers will light up CoCo Lounge, Valiant Coffee, Cobargo Hotel and the School of Arts Hall.

Featured artists include the Bega Male Voice Choir, Riverbend Choir, Pete Wild, the Bega District Band, Kate Burke, Daisy Chain, Pepper and Davies and the Southern Groove, Benji and the Saltwater Sound System, Gabi Forman and the Wayward Pilgrims, and the Randy Dandy Shanties.

Art

The RSL Hall showcases Bethany Thurtell's stunning exhibition *Faces of Cobargo*. And the entire village will be transformed with atmospheric lighting, bunting and the flags sewn by Cobargo Quilters and decorated by local artists and schools.

There is even more information on the Cobargo Folk Festival website.

The Yuin Folk Club



It's been a busy time in the Triangle region. The populations of Bermagui and Tilba, in particular, swell over the summer break and don't we notice! It's a busy time for shops and eateries all over the district while locals dodge the unfamiliar traffic and wait for things to settle back down.

There is much more happening after Australia Day when most of the tourists have headed home, and we can enjoy all that's coming down the calendar.

The Cobargo Show kicks off on Friday 13 February with a weekend of rodeos, dairy cattle, competitions, races, food stalls and more. It's a great weekend for everyone, including the kids. We hope to have some photos from all the fun in our next edition.

The free, two-day, fringe program, *It Takes a Village*, commences on Thursday, 26 February and sees the festival spirit spread through the heart of Cobargo with

plenty of art and music up and down the streets including heats of the Australian National Busking Championships. The Cobargo Folk Festival follows at the Showground, starting Friday night, 27 February, with an exciting line-up of acts and plenty of dancing, jamming and art in a down-home atmosphere. It sounds like another fabulous four days of Cobargo splendour coming up.

Four Winds have announced their 2026 line-up with jazz ensemble, The Necks, kicking off what looks to be a stunning year of world-class music in arguably the most beautiful venue in the country. We're spoiled for choice!

The reminder of what else summer can bring was difficult for many with the Brassknocker fire just a few kilometres away. Anxiety levels rose and people were packing go-bags and revisiting their fire plans. The rain came just in time, with a

massive storm dumping as much as 100 millimetres on parts of the region. A house under construction in Quaama took a direct lightning strike with the tingling owner witnessing electricity snaking through the exposed sarking. Yikes! Thankfully, everyone was fine.

Now back to those fire plans. I know more than a few of us were caught short by the fire. This dress rehearsal was a perfect reminder to sit down and figure out just what you need to do to keep your property, neighbourhood and family safe.

Happy New Year to all of you from us at *The Triangle*!

We're looking forward to another year of gathering stories, showcasing events and being the voice of our region. We invite you to contribute, even if it's just a Thumb, letter or notice. We would love you to expand the conversation.

AGM President's Report 2025

Welcome to 2025's AGM report. I'm writing this at Well Thumbed Books, in between serving customers. It's a quiet day so I can gather my thoughts, surrounded by countless words contained in books. This is what *The Triangle* is – words and pictures. The magic sauce that binds our publication together is community. It's something I feel so strongly, especially when I'm sitting outside the shop, having a conversation with someone, then someone else walks by; more conversation, news is shared, things are organised. That's what *The Triangle* is – it's a running conversation with our community. That's why people love it – they want to hear the conversation and see themselves in it. Find out what they can look forward to, what they've missed out on, who died, what to make for dinner or what to grow.

And we, *The Triangle* committee, put together all these conversations, and what we have written ourselves, into a coherent, aesthetic form that follows our *Triangle* style. And, as we all know, style is not static. Case in point: *The Triangle* podcast has been a fantastic addition to the written word. This year Flick and Jacob have been the dynamic duo who have brought another dimension and mode to experiencing *The Triangle*. They have enhanced and expanded My Triangle into a deeper dive into the subject's life and thoughts.

The Triangle continues to serve the community in ways that are creative and intriguing, relevant and inspiring. May we be up to the challenge of growing and adapting to our community's changing needs, while at the same time acknowledging our own individual needs.

Linda Sang, President

A Note from the Committee

As we start 2026, *The Triangle*'s 24th year, we decided to remind contributors about the word limit for articles.

Please keep it short! *The Triangle* has a 300-word limit, except by prior arrangement. It caters for most articles that share local information or draw attention to events – which are the bulk of the contributions to *The Triangle*. Psychologists researching 'attention' have repeatedly found that readers are very selective – they decide within seconds whether they will devote the time and energy to engage with an article, so it benefits both writers and readers to keep articles short, pithy, well organised and interesting. Also, images (more than text) encourage people's curiosity.

For more complex subjects that are still likely to interest our readership, we do publish longer articles, but please discuss this with us beforehand.

There are other practical issues involved in the word limit. If there are many long articles, the numbers and sizes of accompanying photographs may be reduced to keep *The Triangle* at or below forty pages in length. If we go over the forty-page limit, the issue increases, not by one or two pages, but jumps to forty-four. Longer issues dramatically increase the costs of paper and printing (our biggest expenses) along with the price of postage. The printers also require more time for handling and printing, and the volunteers who drive the boxes of publications around the district must lug around more boxes.

Check out our Guidelines for Contributors (usually page three of each issue) and thank you for your ongoing support!

The Triangle Committee

Subscribe to *The Triangle* online!

It's free, it's in colour and you'll know as soon as the new *Triangle* comes out. Go to www.thetriangle.org.au and enter your email address into the box on the right of the page.



Thumbs UP

To the OK Shed opshop volunteers who sprang into action on Boxing Day to help find a special lost dog whose owner had just passed away. Several jumped in their cars and scoured the streets of Bermi while others shared FB posts, prayed and crossed fingers. The net was cast wide and Sox was eventually found.

To the generous reader who made a direct deposit into *The Triangle* Horizon bank account. Thank you so much!

Thumbs DOWN



A very strong Thumbs Down to those morons who have been trying to break into the Cobargo RFS building recently. Most of the specialist equipment stored in the building can't be used elsewhere and much of the equipment has been paid for by the individual RFS members. Loss or damage of any RFS equipment puts lives at risk – these volunteers put their safety on the line for our community and shouldn't have to put up with this rubbish.

To the people who broke into the Murrah Hall BBQ and stole the meat for A Song for Bob concert that was on the next day. This was very disappointing as so many people had worked hard to prepare for the charity event.



Each edition of ***The Triangle*** costs **\$3.00** to produce.
Please donate what you can.

**Social media,
Is that your jam?
Love the *Triangle*?
We need a hand!**



We are on the lookout for *Triangle* fans with social media smarts!
Please get in touch with Flick on 0452 161 673.



Guidelines for contributors

Thanks for your local stories and photos! We love them and they make *The Triangle* our very own. Just a few tips for submitting stories and photos...

1. Stories should be 300 words or less except by prior arrangement.
2. Images and graphics should be sent as attachments – not embedded into your story. Please send the original digital photo or image, uncompressed, so we have a large file to work with. Generally above 1 mb is large enough. Accepted formats include jpg, jpeg, png and pdf. Please include a caption for your photo at the bottom of the article it accompanies. Contact us for assistance.
3. Send all articles as WORD or other TEXT documents.
4. Please do not send posters or flyers! Instead, write a few paragraphs about your event and include the date, time and venue in that. And attach a photo if you have one.
5. Think about a headline for your story. Please don't leave it to us!
6. Deadline is midday on the 22nd of the month. Please email contributions@thetriangle.org.au and cc lsang333@gmail.com with any questions.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed by contributors to the newspaper are their own, to a greater or lesser degree, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial team.

Whilst striving to accurately report the news and views of the readers, this newspaper accepts no responsibility or liability for statements made or opinions expressed.

All letters to the editor must be signed and include the writer's full name and address if they are to be considered for publication.

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Central Tilba: Post Office, ABC Cheese Factory, Sweet Spot

Cobargo: Post Office, United Petrol, Cobargo General Store, The Bowerbird Op Shop, Well

Thumbed Books, Information Centre

Wallaga Lake: Merrimans Land Council

Narooma: BP station, Library, Casey's Café, **Quaama:** The Quaama Store

Deadlines:

Advertising: 5pm, 19th of each month

Articles: 12pm, 22nd of each month

Thumbs and Letters to the editor:

Contact: contributions@thetriangle.org.au

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The Triangle is a community newspaper. Its aim is to provide information and news to the people in the Triangle area - the area bounded by the three mountains (Gulaga, Mumbulla and Wandella). The committee comprises volunteers who donate their time and expertise for the benefit of our readers. *The Triangle* is financially self-sufficient through donations and advertising income. Prompt payment of accounts is appreciated. *The Triangle* is published every month except January and has a circulation of 2400 in print plus around 500 unique online visits each month.

Death Conversation Circle

Throughout 2025, the Death Conversation Café series on the Far South Coast continued to deepen and broaden community conversations about death, bringing together people of different ages, backgrounds and experiences in a shared circle of curiosity and care. Each gathering offered a welcoming, gently facilitated space to explore the personal, practical and sometimes confronting realities of dying, death and grief – without judgement, and without pretending to have all the answers.

Across the year, participants raised topics that many rarely get to talk about openly. Conversations moved from advance care planning and the need to normalise talking about death, to home-based death care, natural burial, and what actually happens to the body in the dying process and after death. People spoke about the pressure of advocating for loved ones in medical settings at times of high stress and uncertainty, the complexities of organ donation and the deep sorrow that comes with the death of non-human loved ones, including much cherished companion animals.

The series has always aimed to be accessible, low-cost and community driven, with people typically RSVPing by email,

paying a small cash contribution on the day and shaping the conversation through the questions and stories they bring. Along the way, attendees have also been put in touch with local resources. There is information about community-centred choices at end of life and conservation options at Walawaani Way near Bodalla, supporting more environmentally conscious burial.

In response to what has emerged in these circles, our name is evolving. From 2026, the Death Conversation Café will become the Death Conversation Circle, a small but meaningful change that reflects the heart of this work: gathering in a circle, as equals, to listen, speak and learn together in a safe, held environment.

The first Death Conversation Circle for 2026 will be held at the Bermagui Men's Shed, 2.00 to 4.00 pm on Sunday 15 February 2026, with a contribution of \$10 at the door to help cover venue hire, tea and coffee.

To find out more or let the hosts know you are coming, get in touch with Kerryn Davey and Dipika Mistry at thecompassionatecarecollective@gmail.com.

Kerryn Davey

Nardy House – heartfelt thanks



In our small, caring community, the generosity of local organisations often makes all the difference. One such quiet but profound act of service comes from Nardy

House, who freely lend their cooling plate to families wishing to care for their loved one at home after death.

As a death practitioner, I walk alongside individuals and families through life's final chapter – offering end-of-life doula support, home death care guidance,

and funeral or memorial planning. For those who choose to keep their person at home after death, it's important to know that in NSW this is both legal and entirely possible for up to five days. With the right resources and guidance, we can honour our loved ones in familiar surroundings, held by love and memory rather than in haste.

Cooling is a key part of this tender care. Families often use Techni-ice packs or a cooling plate – a refrigerated flat platform that keeps the body safely cooled and allows time for goodbyes to unfold naturally. Recently, I had the honour of supporting a family who cared for their beloved husband, father and grandfather at home until his final farewell. Through

gentle acts – washing, moisturising, dressing him, and grooming his eyebrows, which he was so well known for – they remained connected with him, finding healing through service and love. When we care for our own, we take an active and deeply human role in our grief and holding space for their spiritual journey onwards.

To Nardy House, thank you for your generosity in providing the cooling plate, and a special thank you to Kylie for your kindness and seamless assistance.

For more information about home death care and funeral guidance, please feel welcome to reach out to Kerryn at kerryn.davey@icloud.com.

Kerryn Davey

Join your fire brigade!

You can take up many different roles, for example, in communications, equipment maintenance, administration and catering. Just roll up and say g'day at your closest fire shed on a training night.

- **Bermagui** – 18 Bunga Street – Monday 5.00 – 6.30 pm fortnightly
- **Cobargo** – Wandella Road – Thursdays 7.00 - 9.00 pm fortnightly.
- **Quaama** – Gordon St – 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 5.00 - 7.00 pm.
- **Tilba** – Latimers Lane, Central Tilba – Monday 7.00 – 9.00 pm.

Get in touch or find us on Facebook

- **Bermi** – bermaguirfb@gmail.com 0474 201 859
- **Cobargo** – rdbcobargo@gmail.com 0412 919 708
- **Quaama** – quaama@farsouthcoastteam.org.au 0400 738 978
- **Tilba** – centraltilba@farsouthcoastteam.org.au 0448 100 974



Ginger has a life of her own



It's hard to believe that Ginger the Frog started as a whisper during one of the hardest seasons of my life. And, somehow, despite my own doubts, exhaustion after the fires and the weight of a nine-year creation, she continues to grow, evolve and nudge me forward. I've lost momentum more times than I can count. Life takes over. The to-do list gets loud. And, yet, something always brings Ginger leaping back with more clarity, urgency and magic.

She talks to me now, the puppet waiting to be stitched into being, and the theatre show keeps calling to be reborn, bigger, stronger and more impactful. Ginger isn't just a character. She's a movement. A body of work. A living energy that reminds me of what matters.

After the fires, we received funding to create two professional theatre tours and bring in the big guns – filmmakers,

educators and artists to develop beautiful digital programs for schools and home use.

If we want a world that's kinder, safer and more beautiful, it starts with our youngest citizens. Children need to take responsibility for their feelings and choices and grow up knowing how to connect deeply.

As a therapist, I see what happens when that foundation is missing. We now know the most crucial time for emotional development is from birth to seven. Ginger exists to help create better early childhood stories.

The bedtime routine bundle is loaded with free resources thanks to the grants, to help families find connection and calm.

To explore the full program which starts on 4 February and get Ginger's Bedtime Routine giveaway please go to the 'gingerthefrog' website.

Any questions? Call me on 0417 684 300.

Sarah Campbell Lambert



Great Auntie Fifi comforts Ginger

Capture the Magic of the Fungal World – enter the 2026 Fungi Feastival Photography Competition!

From Batemans Bay to Eden, the Fungi Feastival is calling all photographers, nature lovers and creative storytellers to participate in its 2026 Fungi Photography Competition, now open for entries! This exciting annual event celebrates the wonder of fungi – from delicate wild mushrooms to dramatic truffles – through the lens of passionate photographers across the region.

Running from January through May 2026, the competition unfolds in five monthly rounds open to both adult and under-18 photographers. Each round offers a fresh opportunity to showcase stunning captures of the Eurobodalla and Bega Valley fungal world, with the best entries from each month progressing to an exciting final round in June.

Whether your passion is macro shots of mushroom gills, artistic compositions of forest fungi or powerful storytelling through real-world images, this competition is a celebration of

your creativity and an invitation to share your perspective on the often-overlooked beauty beneath our feet.

The Fungi Feastival, held from 12 June to 12 July 2026 along the stunning South Coast of NSW from Batemans Bay to Eden, is a month-long celebration of all things fungal, featuring science talks, hands-on workshops, culinary experiences and more. Don't miss this chance to be part of a growing community that loves fungi for their ecological importance, artistic inspiration and sheer natural beauty.

For full competition details and to enter, visit the 'fungifeastival' website and click on the Photo Competition tab at the top of the page. You can also be inspired by last year's competition winners while you're there.

Annette Kennewell



Caitlin Brown - Waxcap, Bermagui State Forest - Ure4ea Highly Commended

Caitlin Brown, a local photographer, took this highly commended photograph of a waxcap in Bermagui State Forest for the 2025 Fungi Photography Competition



Jeanette Robben standing next to her fungi photograph that took first place in 2025 Fungi Feastival Photography Competition

End-of-life matters: when an Australian dies overseas

Welcome back to another year of *End-of-Life Matters*.

I want to start the year by outlining what to do if the unthinkable happens: someone close to us dies overseas. With the help of the government's *Smart Traveller* website, I've created a quick checklist.

When a death occurs overseas, local police or hospital officials usually notify the nearest Australian Embassy. The Embassy will confirm the death with local authorities before contacting next of kin.

Your first priority is to work with local authorities and consular officials so that you fill all legal and logistical requirements. *If, however, you find out first*, follow these steps:

Report the death

- Contact local authorities (police/hospital) where the death occurred and notify the nearest Australian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate.
- If you're overseas, call the Consular Emergency Centre and provide the deceased's full name, date of birth, passport details and travel insurance info.

Work with local authorities

- They will issue a local death certificate (this is your key legal document so keep it safe!).
- An autopsy or coronial investigation may be required, especially for unexpected deaths.
- You don't have to travel there unless you choose to, but often decisions must be made promptly. Consular staff can liaise with authorities for you if you can't be there.

Contact your travel insurer immediately

- They often have 24-hour global hotlines. They may cover costs, provide a list of local funeral directors and help with repatriation arrangements.

Arrange funeral or repatriation

- Decide whether to have a local funeral/cremation, or to bring the remains back to Australia.
- If you're bringing the person home, appoint funeral directors for both the overseas locality and Australia. Note: there are quarantine requirements for returning remains or ashes.

Handle practical matters

- Use the local death certificate (it may need a certified translation into English) for insurance claims, bank and estate matters, superannuation and government services. Keep copies of all documents, correspondence and receipts! It's important to understand that the Australian Government cannot pay for or organise funerals or repatriation; give legal advice; investigate a death; pay outstanding debts; or arrange the return of belongings. But it can explain processes, provide contact lists (funeral directors, translators), cost estimates and advice on transferring funds.

Contact me at www.rest-easy.com.au for more detailed information and/or a copy of my *Passport to Passing* e-book for overseas travel.

Shanna Provost

Never a Dull Moment



Philip Dulhunty first came to the Triangle area in 1980 when he landed his seaplane in Tilba Lake. He and his brother had come to look at Jeff and Dame Zara Bate's property for a friend. Philip fell in love with it and became determined to buy Haxstead, '... even if I had to mortgage myself down to my underpants.' While his time in Tilba, including hosting world-famous ice-skaters Torville and Dean for the Tilba Festival and his infamous plane crash on Tilba beach, are short chapters in his autobiography, the pictures are fabulous and the background and names mentioned very interesting.

After reading the book of his full and fascinating life, I agree with Philip Dulhunty's chosen title. This man was never bored, packing so much into one life.

He came home from two years in Hiroshima after World War 2 to succeed in the import business. He pioneered techniques that saw electricity poles linking and lighting up Australia. He even survived a plane hijacking in Egypt! His ring-side seat to Japanese submarines entering Sydney Harbour drove a determination to solve a great wartime mystery. Who sank *HMAS Kuttabul* in Sydney Harbour killing 21 people? It was the Yanks, he reckons, friendly fire, and couldn't have been a Japanese sub.

Philip Dulhunty's autobiography is a big book about a big life and worth reading. I enjoyed every page. It's available free to interested locals from Well Thumbed Books in Cobargo.

Flick Ruby



Keep an eye out for students

The university academic year has begun, and you will see a new wave of medical and allied health students in the Bega Valley and Eurobodalla shires. The students, coming from several universities, will be in GP clinics, community health centres and hospitals.

These placements are very important

for the learning and development of the students. They are mentored by clinicians and, through practice, develop their clinical skills with patients.

A big thank you to the local GP clinics, community health centres and hospitals for supporting the development and training of students.

Our hope is that some of these students will return to our beautiful region to pursue a medical career in a rural setting. If you encounter a student during your health consultation, say hi and ask how they are going.

Marita Reynolds

Anglican Churches of Bermagui Cobargo and Quaama

Service times in February:

Bermagui at 8.30am

1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd

Cobargo at 10.30am

1st, 8th, 15th

Quaama at 10.30am - 22nd

Contact: Vanessa Williams

Parish Administrator

0408 177 131

anglicanchurchcobargobermagui.org.au



Dr Judy Toman briefing medical students in Eurobodalla Shire
Photo: Marita Reynolds



Hear Well - Live Well

We are committed to:

1) The best possible hearing outcomes

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world a better place. We are mindful of our footprint, recycling, supporting local, refurbishing and supporting the great work of "Ears Inc" in Malawi and elsewhere". We also sponsor a child who has hearing loss through Compassion Child sponsorship.

It is a privilege to serve the community using our specialist skills and interests.

We look forward to hearing from you at Hear Well - Live Well

**Please contact Annemarie or Sophia
on 0411 839 414 for more information.**

Jenny Froud

After their children left home, Jenny and her husband Graham found themselves rattling around in a huge house. 'We decided to move and looked everywhere. Graham always wanted to be near a mountain, and I wanted to be near water. We looked at the Hunter Valley and the mountains area. Coming down here was the best thing we ever did. As soon as we saw this house, we just looked at each other and said yes, before we even came inside. That was 31 years ago.'

When Jenny and Graham started out with alpacas, they were fairly novel. 'Now there are plenty of alpaca places, but not many people knew about alpacas a few decades ago. We had a van with Kingdale Alpacas in big letters down the side. It wasn't always easy. We moved down with no farming experience, and we launched ourselves into alpacas. Having done that, we thought about opening a shop. The Bank of NSW

in Cobargo was up for sale, and I thought it would be fun to buy that. One of the kids could live upstairs and we could have an alpaca shop downstairs. A couple of weeks later, the house on the corner opposite the general store in Tilba was for sale. Graham said that'd be a good place for a shop. I thought, what have I said? Because we had no retail experience either! Still, we opened a shop, which we had for many good years. If you live in a tourist place, you've got to have your shop open seven days a week. We didn't see much of each other, because while one was doing the farm, the other was at the shop.'

Over the years about 200 alpacas have lived in Dignams Creek at Jenny's place and they've all had names. One day Christabel was having a cria (the name for a baby alpaca) which delayed opening the shop. Jenny called the general store explaining the situation and, when she finally got to open the shop, found a helpful note had been placed saying, 'Having a baby back in 10 minutes'. Another

difficult time. And all us girls, we all know what we have to do. We all work well and just quietly go about what we're doing. And if you're on the other side, as we were when Graham died, it's just such a wonderful thing to have somebody you know who has unpacked all the cups, turned on the urn and made all these good things to eat.

'We have such a nice community.

Couldn't think of a better one. It's a very tight community that has gotten closer, possibly because of the fires. It's a community that's got some strength and solidarity about it. People say yes to helping each other. They often don't let you pay, because you've helped them at another time, fed their animals, made them a hat. It all goes around and around. People genuinely mean it when they say, "If you need any help, let me know."

'I'm trying to be as independent as I can be, and my neighbours keep an eye on me. I bought a chainsaw

recently. I was having a lovely time getting rid of the revegetation. My son-in-law came over and said I shouldn't do more of that because it was too dangerous. I thought, what a spoil sport! I wasn't going to have an accident. I was just having a lovely time with it. I definitely don't underestimate how dangerous they are, but chainsaws are a lot of fun.'

Flick Ruby

Listen to an interview with Jenny on this month's *Triangle Podcast* and for some Red Cross recipes check out this month's Open Sauce.



Jenny in the early days of their alpaca farm. Photo Graham Froud

beautiful brown alpaca who sometimes escapes is called Tiramisu. The alpacas are usually named after something sweet – Praline, Honey Bun – or their colour – like Zane Gray and Nimbus. Yes, alpacas spit, but if you just treat them with respect, they usually don't. They can kick too but not often.

You can find Jenny's beautifully spun alpaca wool at the Cobargo Creators where she volunteers. She is also part of the Red Cross. 'We do fundraising efforts and cater for funerals and other events, providing sandwiches, slices, cakes, tea and coffee. It's a lovely thing to offer families at a

QUAAMA GENERAL STORE



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- Wide range of international foods, Pukka Teas, dried organic herbs.

5-7 Wallaga Lake Road, Bermagui 0455 045278

Come and explore our exceptional service and selection today!

Well, 2026 is truly here. The holiday season was a memorable one, with record numbers of visitors enjoying all that Bermagui has to offer – beautiful weather, stunning scenery, pristine beaches, great coffee, fishing, outdoor activities and the simple pleasure of relaxing with family and friends.

Mid-January also brought heat and the threat of fire to many localities. The smell of smoke or the hazy pink-grey skies were very ominous. Then overnight the weather turned to rain, much-needed rain, with 108 mm recorded over three days in my backyard. Unfortunately, the downpour was not so welcome for three shops in Wallaga Street. The Forbe Stynes real estate office, The Foundry and the Fish and Chips shop all suffered significant damage when sudden, heavy rain poured in. Roofs in two of the stores collapsed, and the businesses ended up looking more like paddling pools than retail outlets. It will be a major task to restore everything to proper working order.

We were all deeply shaken by the tragic events at Bondi Beach before Christmas. One week later, Bermagui Surf Life Saving held an early morning vigil at Horseshoe Bay, joined by colleagues from the emergency services and members of the local community. The minute's silence to remember the fifteen innocent lives lost, and the strong sense of solidarity shared that morning, served as a powerful reminder of our resilience as both a community and a nation.

Late December also saw the opening of Nicole Grimm-Hewitt's exhibition at Harbourview House. Many people are already familiar with Nicole's work, having seen her regularly at local markets. She has made a concerted effort to offer her

art in a range of formats, from small, accessible pieces to larger wall-mounted works. Her growing collection features iconic local scenes, sea life and her signature rippling water effect. With her distinctive style and vibrant marine colour palette, Nicole's work is both elegant and delightfully quirky – there is truly something for everyone. The opening was very well attended and many people left with an artwork under their arm.

Bermagui's location also places it perfectly along the route of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, allowing the community to feel closely connected to the event. This year, we watched as boats battled fierce headwinds off the Bermagui headland. Some sought refuge from the conditions, while others required assistance after sustaining damage or injury overnight. Bermagui Marine Rescue provided invaluable support, helping vessels enter the harbour for repairs before retiring or battling on. As always, the sight of a Rolex green flag drew plenty of interested onlookers.

Honorbread ventured to Merimbula debuting their yummy products with a very successful self-service pop-up in the Daytrip store during January. Who knows where they will pop up next?

Search efforts were underway in late January for a missing person lost in the water at Mystery Bay. He had apparently fallen into the water and hadn't resurfaced. Unfortunately, the combined efforts of the Police, SES, Marine Rescue Narooma and Bermagui as well as the LifeSaver helicopter were unable to locate the man.

Finally, it is the closing of a chapter with the local BP service station being sold. We will miss the chats with Anne and Kayla and wish them all the best for the future.



Bondi lineup



Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race



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New Bermagui group formed to campaign for Cuttagee Bridge restoration

The campaign to restore Cuttagee Bridge has entered a new phase with a new committee, the Restoration of Cuttagee Bridge Group (RCBG), being formed. During the 2023 state election campaign, the NSW Labor Party committed \$15 million towards repairing and restoring the bridge in line with its heritage values, but Bega Valley Shire Councillors have voted to replace the existing bridge with a 12-metre-wide, two-lane concrete structure.

The convenor of the new group is Barragga Bay's Phil Coates. He said the concrete bridge would destroy the existing aesthetic of the surrounding beautiful natural environment, rich heritage, tourism and road safety qualities that the single-lane bridge provides.

RCBG wants the NSW Government to take over the project from Council, stop funding any further development work on Council's concrete bridge option and develop a genuine heritage alternative.

RCBG has nine members with professional backgrounds spanning heritage and restoration engineering, environment, road safety and communications. New members are welcome.

Phil said the project has gone from a cost of about \$11.2 million forecast in 2021-2022 to \$29.1 million. That does not include the cost of purchasing biodiversity credits.

'How can Council spend more than twice the allotted amount? It will come back to bite ratepayers,' Phil said. Transport for NSW's total financial outlay for the refurbishment of Wallaga Lake Bridge, that was completed in July 2025, was around \$13.3 million.

'The point about losing heritage has been downgraded by talk of safety, but you can have both,' Phil said. 'The debate around timber versus steel and concrete has not been discussed properly. How wide does the bridge need to be?'

He is concerned about the road safety implications of replacing a single-lane, timber-decked bridge with a two-lane concrete one and also sees potential problems with the proposed temporary bridge on the eastern side of the bridge in a sensitive dune area.

Marion Williams



Cuttagee Bridge, David Rogers photography

A new petition to improve Wallaga Lake Road for cyclists



Bike riding on the Wallaga Lake Road is clearly hazardous

Navigating between Wallaga Lake and Bermagui has become pretty daunting for cyclists and commuters. The damage to the Long Swamp track means riders are now forced onto a busy, often hazardous road with fast-moving traffic, and it exposes a big gap in our local infrastructure.

Before it fell apart, the track was a vital link for residents and tourists, offering a scenic, safe route that encouraged cycling as a healthy, eco-friendly way to get around. Its closure has pushed cyclists and families, including kids in trailers and on small bikes, onto a narrow road shared with heavy vehicles. This clearly ramps up the risk of serious accidents.

Bega Valley Shire Council itself says that active transport should be part of every journey, and it's also cheaper, healthier and more efficient than private cars, with flow-on benefits for public

health, emissions and local business. The current situation on Wallaga Lake Road does the opposite – discouraging people from riding and putting those who do so at real risk every time a car comes up behind them especially if another is coming the other way.

We are asking Council to urgently assess and repair the road edges on Wallaga Lake Road and to treat cyclist safety as a priority, not an afterthought. This would make life safer for people already riding and help promote Wallaga Lake and Bermagui as cycle-friendly destinations that support sustainable transport.

Please sign the Change.org petition to advocate for restoring a safe, reliable cycling route between Wallaga Lake and Bermagui. We should not have to wait for a tragedy before something is done.

*Extracted from Bermagui
Community Forum*

We're making a small change ... with big hopes behind it

After recently checking in with our members through a survey, Bermagui CWA is making some changes. One significant change is that we decided to shift our regular meeting day. The feedback was clear: while our current meeting time works well for some, it creates barriers for others who would love to be involved. So, in the spirit of accessibility, inclusion and keeping our branch evolving with the

community, we're trying something new!

Our first meeting for this year will be held on Tuesday 10 February at 1.00 pm, at the CWA Hall, 10 Corunna Street, Bermagui. From here on we'll be gathering on this new schedule, with a few late afternoon/early evening meetings too. We're really excited about this change and hopeful that it will make it easier for more people to come along, whether you're juggling work, family, study or simply looking for a welcoming place to connect with other residents.

The Bermagui CWA is all about community, skill-sharing, friendship and supporting one another while learning more about agriculture, the environment, cooking, craft, culture and local issues. Our meetings are relaxed, friendly and open to anyone who is curious about what we do.

If you've ever thought about coming along, here's your sign – why not do it this year? We would absolutely love to welcome some new faces, hear new ideas

and continue growing a vibrant, supportive group together.

To keep in touch or have a look at the things we get up to – you could visit us on Instagram using @bermaguiCWA.

Pop our new date in your diary, we can't wait to see you there.

*Rhiannon Simmonds
Bermagui CWA Publicity Officer*



Bermagui Dune Care is still planting and rehabilitating Setons Headland and Cuttagee Headland, increasing the biodiversity of both plants and wildlife.

Recently, an old photograph from 2012 was recovered and, when compared with an updated photo, shows wonderful growth at the Swamp car park. Planting began there about 2009, before work started on Cuttagee Headland.

The Dune Care group has had great support from Far South Coast Landcare Association and Bega Valley Shire Council. Council's Community Environment Grants have funded a contractor to remove weeds of national significance from both sites. The difference is obvious in the absence of blackberry and reduced moth vine, as well as other weeds. It is essential that the funding is continued so the weeds do not start to spread again as there is plenty of seed stored in the soil.

The group has made progress with planting where pittosporum dieback occurred, though more planting will now be delayed until after summer.

*Karen Joynes
Co-ordinator, Bermagui Dune Care
bermaguidunecare@skymesh.com.au*

Bermagui Dune Care



The 2012 photo shows early growth from planting that occurred in 2009



The car park bollards are just visible in 2026

Exactly what is U3A?



U3A – the University of the Third Age – has a simple history. It began in France in 1972 and aimed to link the older people of Toulouse with its famous university. Ten years later, Britain took up the idea and, in 1984, the first U3A in Australia began in Melbourne. The only ‘university’ involved is the University of Life. To be a member, you need only to be curious and keen to learn.

There are several U3As in the South Coast region. Bermagui’s began in November 2009, with Kerry Davies as its driving force. It quickly gathered both enthusiasm and an initial membership of fewer than 50. Membership is now 286. It has withstood covid, the fires and other challenges and grows in popularity each year. Classes are held either at the Bermagui Men’s Shed, the Bermagui Community Centre or at the home of whoever is leading a particular topic. The annual fee is \$25.

Classes are often in response to community suggestions. Tai-chi, French and Mahjong began this way and have weekly classes. Individual speakers are popular and give a one-off morning presentation. Peter Lacey, historian and founder of the South Coast History Society, gave a talk on local South Coast Women. It worked so well that it’s being repeated – with new material. Bruce Leaver, scientist and mind-explorer, gives amazingly different talks. This term it will be ‘Paektu: sacred super volcano you’ve never heard of’. Each teacher has a unique style of passing on the knowledge but all of them know that older people don’t want to be treated as students. Jeff Donovan is talking about, and playing, music from early Baroque to early Classical. And there’s Shakespeare, Demystifying Apple Technology and Café Conversation, a chat with someone fascinating – and with Café Conversation, there’s cake!

*Jan Rivers
President, U3A Bermagui & District Inc
(Thank you to Jane Sandilands for this article.)*

Play Table Tennis in Bermagui



Bermagui Table Tennis Club meets every Wednesday from 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm at the Bermagui indoor sports centre on Bunga St. Whether you’re a seasoned player or just starting out, you are very welcome to come along for drills and friendly competition in a relaxed and fun environment. Bats and balls are provided – just wear comfortable clothes and non-marking sports shoes. First night is free, and then regular fees are \$10 (\$8 for members) or \$5 concession a night.

Also, if you have a spare table tennis table collecting dust in your garage, we will gratefully accept donations to help expand our club and accommodate more players.

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Bermagui Harbour provides refuge from the storm



Unicoïn owner and skipper Peter Bremner

The 80th Rolex Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race for 2025 started as usual on Boxing Day, with a spectacular run to the heads by a fleet of 128. Given the forecast of strong southerlies for at least the following two days, it was never going to be an easy voyage for sailing vessels having to tack upwind into increasingly heavy seas. Soon, winds topping forty knots sent large waves crashing into boats, causing injury, damage and the debilitating effects of good, old-fashioned seasickness.

At the time of writing, exactly three days since the starting gun, six boats have finished, with *Master Lock Comanche* taking line honours, 88 are still racing and 34 (or just over a quarter of the fleet) retired. Of those boats, three sheltered in Bermagui Harbour (often described as the last civilised port in southern NSW) and one dropped off an injured crew member before continuing the race.

Chancellor and *Unicoïn* both came

into harbour on their own about 32 hours after the race start. *Santana* had a crewman suffering concussion after a head knock from the boom and Marine Rescue Bermagui was tasked to take three paramedics offshore to transfer the patient from *Santana* to *Bermagui 30* and bring them back to a waiting ambulance. Later that same day, *Bermagui 30* towed in *Titoki*, with a damaged sail that couldn't be lowered making entering the harbour difficult.

However, in talking to Peter Bremner, the owner and skipper of *Unicoïn*, the true challenge of facing such heavy weather and enormous seas became apparent. *Unicoïn* was 30 nautical miles east of Bermagui in gale force winds of 45 knots and rogue waves six to eight metres high, when they were hit with a monster that smashed the pulpit at the front of the boat, causing all the safety lines that run along

the sides to go slack. With the lines no longer fulfilling their essential role, the vessel was not safe to sail and had to retire. Despite nursing suspected cracked ribs from being thrown around the cabin, Peter was philosophical about the mishap, although he wistfully noted they had been leading Division 3 and, on handicap, were just behind *Master Lock Comanche*. When named *Assassin*, *Unicoïn* won the 1992 race on handicap and Peter had made many speed modifications since then to enhance its competitiveness. In the end, he was glad no one was seriously hurt and that the boat hadn't lost a mast or suffered more serious damage. Ever the racing sailor, he was already turning his thoughts to the 2026 event.

Jeff Donovan



Unicoïn undergoing repairs in Bermagui Harbort

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‘Welcome back, creeps!’ I said with feeling while pulling off leeches. As the tanks filled and the dry creek bed got moving again, I didn’t mind a few leech bites one bit. Some Diggies residents, like me, only unpacked their car stuffed with fire grab bags in order to go shop for supplies in case they were flooded in. Again, fine. Every millimetre of rain took a metre off my stress that had sometimes soared while staring at apps and listening to the scanner. We have all learned a lot since Black Summer, but it doesn’t mean we don’t freeze or panic at times, and I did both. While no one wants a chance to practice, I’d give our community an A in how we shared information and supported one another through the growth of the Brassknocker fire 19 km northwest of us in Wadbilliga National Park.

I am grateful to the neighbours who reached out to me when I said I was freaking out. It really helped! I was also grateful for how we waded into one tense moment and came out with greater clarity and more options. Kate and Sally explained why they had called in their changed view of the smoke, something they did in 2020 that gave residents an hour they wouldn’t otherwise have had to flee the fire that took out houses in Diggies. During that conversation, Ian, a Diggies member of the Cobargo Fire Brigade, confirmed the wisdom of their decision to act and reminded us of his number should we need it to get information or a second opinion. We learned and understood more. I learned to explain to some friends and relatives further afield that it was nice of them to watch the fire on the apps too, but their panic and requests for five-minute updates must stop!

Brassknocker is now contained. Who isn’t grateful to our mighty rural fire brigades, the volunteers who take time to train up and take their skills and knowledge into the line of fire? And who doesn’t want to marry whoever is running the Facebook account of the Far South Coast Team of the NSW RFS for the tone and content of the regular information provided?

All are warmly welcome to join the next Diggies Landcare Group event with an expert speaker on dingos on 9 February at 5.00 pm – see you at the OldNew Shed (follow the signs)!



Dignams Creek Landcare Event

9th February 5-7pm at the OldNew Shed

- Dr Kylie Caines speaking about Australian dingos, new research on their DNA, their part in ecosystems and future.
- Local Land Service to look at what was captured during the camera lending session.
- An update from Jens Birchall on the creek’s flora.

All welcome, please bring a plate and a chair.



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With the Christmas celebrations over, the main topic of conversation was ‘How dry is it?’ and ‘When do you think it will rain?’ The air was filled with tension and concern with the weather being extremely windy and some days the temperature was so intensely hot. The storms were proving to be mainly filled with massive amounts of lightning. The inevitable happened with a lightning strike causing a fire that rapidly gained traction growing from 30 hectares to 1,800 hectares very quickly. The Brassknocker fire trail fire was heading in the direction of Wandella.

We discussed what we had done last time, and we decided it worked so let’s do that again. It was an understatement

to say that to prepare and organise all that is required to protect what one owns was extremely difficult. Personally, we again moved stock to what we believed would be the best option for them and set about the process of placing sprinklers on all the buildings, machinery connected for power, machinery placed in open paddocks etc.

We did feel concern – would we be as lucky to survive such an event twice? We also faced the concept of if it did burn us out again would we have the strength of character to rebuild it all again. I was asked how can you stay so calm, and my explanation was that I know the fire is coming and I can’t stop it, I cannot change that. But I can do my best to prepare and

protect so it’s better to face that and put my energy into that instead. The wind turned the fire at a critical point and we had some relief.

The next day the helicopters collected water from two of our dams all day. The skill of the pilots was incredible to watch and we hoped the water would help go towards putting the fire out. At this point in time, we got our second break and the rain started to fall. The relief was palpable. We know a lot of people in the area felt something similar. A huge thank you to all who volunteer in the Rural Fire Service and all the machinery operators who certainly supported the needs of our community.

Cobargo community Christmas lunch

Building on the success of previous years, the Bowerbird Op Shop Community Christmas lunch on 25 December 2025 was another resounding success.

The Bowerbird Op Shop President Corrine Harris enthused, ‘The Christmas Day lunch again provided a wonderful opportunity for a range of people who would otherwise be having Christmas Day alone to get together to enjoy great company and a wonderful meal.

My thanks to those who attended and to those who helped with the food and the staging of the Cobargo School of Arts Hall. An additional shout-out to community members who were unable to attend but donated presents to give the lunch a really festive feel.’

With absolutely perfect weather, the celebrations involving more than fifty merry-makers made catching up with old friends and making new ones even easier.

Importantly for next year, if you know of anyone else who may be interested could you please pass on your positive experiences of the 2025 Christmas lunch to them?

Everyone knows the date for the 2026 event, and we look forward to an even bigger crowd joining the celebrations in 2026.

Steve Williams



Christmas fare



Happy lunchers



Hard workers

Cobargo Preschool's Community Book Fair

Cobargo Preschool is excited to welcome families and community members to its 4th Annual Book Fair, a much-loved event celebrating reading while supporting early childhood education.

The book fair will be held over two days:

Friday, 20 March, from 3.00 to 6.00 pm and

Saturday, 21 March, from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm.

Now in its fourth year, the Cobargo Preschool Book Fair has become a highlight on the local calendar. The fair will feature a wide range of fiction and non-fiction titles, including new releases, along with a fantastic selection of children's books, making it easy to find something for every reader.

Alongside the books, there will be plenty of delicious food. Warm, homemade soups will be served on Friday evening, while a BBQ and homemade cakes will be available on Saturday, adding to the welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere.

The event is a great fundraiser for the preschool, with proceeds supporting programs, resources and learning experiences for local children. It is also a valued community event, bringing people together to enjoy food, great books and friendly company.

Everyone is warmly invited to attend and support this event.

Emma Anderson



Thea Carey, Lachlan Carey and Mackenzie Anderson.

Photo by Emma Anderson

Cobargo Community Tree Sculpture Consultation Saturday 7 February

In the aftermath of the Black Summer bushfires, an idea was born to co-create a sculpture that could remind people of the spirit and solidarity that was shown in the community at that devastating time. The Cobargo Community Tree Project has supported 1500 people so far, to forge steel leaves with their name stamped in, as a lasting reminder of the importance of community and connection.

As voluntary project coordinators and blacksmithing supervisors, we have held the vision of this important project over the last six years, guiding people from throughout the community to create their own unique contribution to the sculpture. We are honoured to have been able to meet so many people and contribute to the community in this way and are excited that the project is now moving into its final stages.

It is now time to update the community on where the project is up to, present concept designs and construction details, and gain community feedback on which of three proposed sites is the

preferred location for the sculpture. Below is an artist's impression of the sculpture concept.

A community consultation day will be held at the Cobargo RSL Hall on Saturday 7 February 10.30 am to 2.30 pm. Drop in anytime during these hours to get more information, view concept drawings, share your thoughts and provide feedback on your preferred site for the sculpture.

If you can't make it on the day, all the information will be in the window at Bowerbird Op Shop. If you have not made a leaf yet for the sculpture, there will be name stamping opportunities in the coming months.

We look forward to seeing you there and sharing more about this great project.

Iain Hamilton and Philippe Ravenel



An artist's impression of the tree

Meet the Authors, with Chris Hammer and Michael Brissenden

Well Thumbed Books in conjunction with the Cobargo Folk Festival is pleased to launch a new Meet the Author writers' segment. The 2026 event, 'From Question Time to Crime', will bring crime writers, Chris Hammer and Michael Brissenden, together in conversation with former ABC journalist, Phil Williams.

This event will be followed by book signings by both Chris and Mike. This will be on Thursday 26 February, 4.30 pm to 6.00 pm. Space is limited so please register attendance by phoning: Virginia 0403 253 625 or Louise 0416 039 895, or call into the shop.

Well Thumbed Books

Another year begins ...

And how grateful we are to be living in our very special part of the country. Fires and raging thunderstorms notwithstanding, we are surrounded by wonderful people who demonstrate kindness daily. Neighbours call to check on neighbours, people greet each other in the street, and we co-operate and share so we can live this very special life here in Cobargo.

CWA Cobargo has been part of this for over eighty years. We aim to work within our community to improve conditions for women on all fronts. We work in the areas of health, education, transport and communication, and more. We also have fun along the way and enjoy our monthly meetings as we discuss everything from recipes to crafts, and problems and possible solutions. We also enjoy the support of the community. Why not join us?

We will be having our monthly Bake Stall in the main street on the first Saturday of the month. There will be a

monthly market in the CWA Garden next to the playground on the Bermagui Road every third Saturday. We hope you enjoyed Celebrate Australia at the end of January.

Did it occur to you after that event that you know someone who should be recognised as a Cobargo Citizen of the Year? Then please don't wait until next November to send in your suggestion. Simply jot down your thoughts and post to CWA, PO Box 5272, Cobargo 2550 or email cwa.cobargo@gmail.com – we'd love to hear from you at any time of the year.

Our meetings are at the CWA Cottage on the Bermagui Road at 10.00 for 10.30 am on the second Tuesday of the month. Please come along and have a cuppa – and maybe some goodies – and enjoy the company of women interested in meeting you.

Mary Williams

Publicity Officer, CWA of NSW Cobargo



Caralyn Cole and Sally Halupka at the Cobargo main street bake stall on the first Saturday of the month.

Coming soon ... a little corner of magic in Cobargo!

Tucked away behind the Cobargo District Museum is a beautiful little space where something special has been brewing.

Currently under construction, The Copper Frog will be a whimsical retail space inspired by a witch's kitchen – selling dried herbs, teas, treasures and witchy trinkets.

We are local women who grew up in the Cobargo area. We are excited to bring something new to Cobargo, while staying true to the charm of Cobargo's history, which is very dear to us.

Watch this space as we conjure something magical!

Polly McDonald and Sarah Mercieca



Monday morning saw the 'cavalry' arrive in town. Crews in utes and trucks from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Corporation of NSW came from as far afield as Taree and Wauchope to help our local NSW RFS brigades with the fire in Wadbilliga National Park. A sight for sore hearts and nervous bodies.

Louise Brown



As we settle back into more familiar routines, we have the opportunity to reflect on what has been happening both close to home and further afield during the Christmas/New Year break. Traditionally a time for family and friends, even in our modern secular society, the Christmas message of peace, hope and joy and the New Year notion of renewal resonates. Interwoven throughout this time there has been the shock and tragedy of the terrorist attack at Bondi Beach and the resultant political fallout, which highlights the importance of community cohesion and inclusiveness – aspects of community that are well understood in Triangle communities.

The expectation of warm summer weather was not met until it was – with a heatwave that brought more tragedy with the Victorian fires, along with local distress and anxiety as the large fire in Wadbilliga NP was battled. And, still, we wait for rain – as I write the forecast looks hopeful for a substantial amount! [The rain came – buckets of it!]

In many respects the world today is an uncertain place. There is significant comfort in knowing that our way of life on the Far South Coast of NSW has considerable

certainty based on good foundations. One of these certainties is the enduring effort, dedication, care and forbearance of the volunteer Rural Fire Service brigades who work tirelessly to keep us safe. Of course, we all have a role to play in this by ensuring our own preparedness, but the overall responsiveness, protection and ultimate outcome are largely due to the amazing work done by our RFS brigades. For this we are fortunate, very grateful and give thanks.

Merrimans Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)

Merrimans LALC at Wallaga Lake is part of a network of 121 LALCs across NSW, mandated through the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NSW) 1983 under the peak body the NSWALC. LALCs seek to improve, protect and foster the best interests of all Aboriginal people in their area and work in the areas of land acquisition, land use and management, Aboriginal culture and heritage, financial stewardship and community benefits schemes. Recently, I spoke with Blaen Davies who was appointed CEO of Merrimans LALC in June 2024, about the work Merrimans is doing under his leadership.

Significantly, a major event at the start of Blaen's tenure was the agreement and signing of an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Bega Valley Council and the Bega, Eden and Merrimans LALCs, known by the acronym BEM. The BEM MOU has been foundational to collaboration between the LALCs and Council since 2001. Updated in 2024, the MOU now reflects a ten-year vision with the focus on social, economic and cultural opportunities and growth, building economic independence and supporting improved health outcomes for Aboriginal people within the shire and will be reviewed annually. For Blaen in his role as CEO, strengthening this important network has provided opportunities to collaborate on seeking funding and options for the development of culturally appropriate activities and programs.

A key outcome of the collaboration between Bega, Eden and Merrimans LALCs is participation in the National Indigenous Rangers Program, funded since late 2024. As well as securing jobs for local Aboriginal people, this program is crucial for care of Country, conservation work, education and engagement with other agencies like the Rural Fire Service.

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Tilba Bites

Blaan has six permanent Rangers and plans to expand the program by engaging with elders and local knowledge holders, and developing greater connections with Local Land Services and Crown Lands in weed management and conservation. The Rangers were fully involved in tackling the recent fire in Wadbilliga National Park and worked closely with the RFS who, since the 2019/20 fires, have acknowledged the importance of cultural knowledge in fire management.

The Merrimans LALC Ranger Program has already demonstrated its significance. In October last year Merrimans LALC was awarded the NSW Resilient Australia Government Award for the first Aboriginal Cultural Incident Management Exercise '... for a hands-on exercise connecting First Nations rangers and emergency responders for real-time bushfire planning and response, ensuring cultural sites in south-east NSW are protected during emergencies.' This was followed in November by the Resilient Australia National Government Award for Australia's first Aboriginal Cultural Incident Management Exercise.

Land activation with appropriate land use activities is an important part of the work that LALCs do. Incorporated in this are Land Rights priorities – Merrimans LALC has been selected by the NSWALC to review the current Land Rights legislation and to make recommendations for its improvement.

While the overarching goal is to continue to strengthen the culture and heritage of the local Aboriginal people, Blaan plans to reinvigorate Umbarra Cultural Centre. He believes that the existing infrastructure provides a sound foundation on which to build, both for cultural activities as well as strengthening connections across the whole community. There are also plans to re-establish the Land Council office that is currently in temporary offices.

Blaan has an ongoing interest in renewable energy that has already delivered

upgraded solar panels to all the Wallaga Lake houses. The next step is to secure funding for household battery storage to ensure energy security. In addition, solar panels with battery storage will be installed at the Community Hall in March through a project partnership with SHASA.

Never one to rest, Blaan has also gained a scholarship through the University of Wollongong and the Australian National Centre for Ocean Research and Security to undertake a PhD in Djiringanj Governance and Business in relation to Estuary and Ocean Resources. This undertaking will take three to four years and will provide opportunities to integrate the Ranger Program in estuary and ocean conservation, which is important as Merrimans is a land and sea LALC.



Aboriginal rangers

Yuin Nation Birriga Bunaan

As the sun shone and a large flock of water birds flew overhead, Djiringanj Yuin elder Uncle Warren Ngaree Foster, welcomed Yuin Nation people and everyone else to the fifth Birriga Bunaan on Saturday, 17 January at the Tilba Oval. Birriga Bunaan means 'big corroboree' or 'big dance' and, in his welcome, Uncle Warren said this annual cultural ceremony is a time for healing the people and for healing country through song and dance. It is also a time to share cultural knowledge and to celebrate Country and 'returning home' at the feet of Gulaga.

Weather did not permit the opening smoking ceremony at Mystery Bay the night before. Instead, the smoking ceremony was performed as the women and children, then men, ochred up and in traditional dress, filed onto the oval to gather in a ceremonial circle. Cultural dances and songs to the sound of clap sticks echoed across the oval as the men, women and children danced.

A smaller event than usual due to the wet weather in the days before, this gathering of Yuin people and other Aboriginal people was joined by non-Aboriginal people in solidarity. The invitation to people to attend with an open heart and positive spirit is part of the healing purpose of this special cultural event.



Birriga Bunaan, smoking ceremony

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SHASA at the forefront

On 30 December, an email arrived in my inbox from SHASA President, Kathryn Maxwell, wishing members a happy new year and thanking them for their contributions toward the SHASA goals of positive climate action and a more resilient community in 2025. It went on to list SHASA's exciting projects/activities for 2026, as follows (note what's first):

- Completing building works for the Tilba Halls.
- Implementing the Haven Disaster Ready Fund Project – infrastructure upgrades to five havens; satellite communications for all twelve havens; training, operational and communications support.
- Working with the Eurobodalla Shire Council (ESC) on the feasibility of a solar farm and batteries at the Bodalla sewerage works.
- Undertaking Tilba Microgrid feasibility work.
- Installing solar, batteries and an all-electric kitchen at the ESC Dr McKay Centre in Moruya.
- Running two Electric Vehicle Expos at Markets.
- Producing six SHASA Spark

Newsletters, and regular Facebook and website updates.

- Running the Weekly Repair Café.
- Running the Weekly Moruya Food Program.
- Installing solar panels and batteries on the Merrimans LALC and Narooma Arts Centre.
- Completing the SHASA Community Facilities Resilience Strategy to be used to secure grant funding for solar panels, batteries and more for over 20 community facilities across the Eurobodalla.
- Running bi-monthly Euro BEV (Battery Electric Vehicle) lunches.
- Participating in a monthly Eurobodalla Community Support Network – a chance to meet up with a diverse range of stakeholders and learn more about key issues in the community.
- Encouraging Council to switch to electric vehicles for their fleet and facilitate more EV fast chargers.

By any measure this list is impressive and is an indication of the significant work that has preceded it – something of which SHASA and, in particular, President Kathryn Maxwell and the executive team should be very proud. It is also a tribute

to what community can do when it bands together.

Particularly relevant to the heatwave conditions in mid-January is the significant development of a network of heatwave havens across the Eurobodalla. This SHASA initiative utilises existing community infrastructure, such as church halls and CWA premises, with funding through government grants in partnership with each owner organisation. There are nine already completed with several more in the pipeline. Each has had solar panels with battery storage installed, aircon with HEPA filters and, in some cases, generator backup. Upgrades have included LED lighting and insulation and some also have kitchen and shower facilities. Further disaster-ready funding will be directed to training and support, operational management and communications, including satellite internet access.

Several of the Batemans Bay and Moruya heatwave havens were accessed during the January heatwave for the first time with good press coverage. SHASA has also taken the opportunity to review the operations over the three-day heatwave with useful feedback and immediate follow up to support the operation of these

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important havens. SHASA's foresight with this work is to be commended as more unprecedented extreme weather events will occur. Importantly, these havens raise awareness of the potential health risks associated with extreme temperatures and bushfires, especially to vulnerable people. Well done, SHASA. The community meeting room at the Central Tilba Small Hall will be a designated heat haven.

For full information about the havens with their contact details go to the SHASA website and scroll to the Be Prepared heading. SHASA always welcomes volunteers and information about how to get involved is also on the website.



CWA Moruya heatwave haven

Halls update

As February starts, the completion of the upgrade and renovation to Central Tilba's Halls is keenly anticipated by the community and all involved. December/January is well known as a quiet time for builders and allied trades so not a great deal happened over the Christmas break. For the Project Steering Committee and the Halls Committee getting to the end of the project involves careful financial management. Faced with increased material costs and unavailable tradespeople completion has been delayed until possibly March.

The most pressing issue is the shortfall in funds to achieve an Occupation Certificate. Since September last year major fundraising has assisted, and the Halls Committee is very grateful to all those who have donated. A no-interest repayable loan has been received from Eurobodalla Shire Council and the Committee has applied for a substantial amount through ClubsNSW Infrastructure funding – a decision on this should be known by March. Further applications will be made as funding rounds are announced. The Steering Committee has also met with State Member Michael Holland and Federal Member Kristy McBain to advise them of the current situation and seek their input.

The long and the short of it is that more money is required. The Project Steering Committee is currently reviewing all options to at least complete enough work

to allow occupation and the granting of an Occupation Certificate. Fundraising is continuing and tax-deductible donations can be made through SHASA or directly to the Halls Committee. The Halls Committee is also running a raffle locally that will be drawn in March. Community support for this project is well known and the generous donations so far indicate just how valued the Halls are. Please consider how you can help so our Halls are open as soon as possible.



The rear of the Hall is looking good

Open Sanctuary at Tilba in 2026

In an uncertain world with many complex challenges, Open Sanctuary is a place of contemplation, silence and hopeful intent, that holds, at its core, care for all people and the natural world. Here is the program for 2026 with diary dates.

- Dadirri Days, held on the fourth Friday of each month, starting on 27 February, from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm. Led by Linda Chapman this quiet day is based on sessions of silent meditation starting at 10.30 am with space for contemplative walking, journalling or sitting at the foot of Gulaga. Morning tea is provided, BYO lunch.

Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call contemplation. It is inner deep listening and quiet, still awareness.

Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM

- Tuesday Discussion and Meditation – each Tuesday, 10.00 am to noon. Led by Terry Cassells.
- Sunday Sanctus – a time of sacred music, readings and silence, music led by Kim Edgar. 11.00 am on the following Sundays – 15 February, 10 May, 9 August and 8 November.

- Saturday Reflections – led by Linda Chapman, 10.00 am to 1.00 pm. Saturday 4 April – Community of Love. Drawing on Benedictine wisdom and the monastic way of life, this reflective day encourages us to live in such a way that we become a community grounded in love. Saturday 11 July – Ordinary People as Mystics and Monks. How might we ordinary people develop a contemplative stance in a troubled world? The way of monasticism offers a framework for our spiritual practice that can be deeply transformative. This reflection is based principally on the Benedictine way of life.
- Retreat and Council of All Beings with Dr Susan Murphy, writer and founder of Zen Open Circle in Sydney – 2 and 3 May. Further details to be announced.
- A Council of All Beings is a ritual developed by Joanna Macy and John Seed inspired by the principles of Deep Ecology that fosters a closer connection between humans and the rest of the natural world.

All are welcome at Open Sanctuary – search the 'Open Sanctuary Tilba Tilba' website.



Open Sanctuary members Kate, Stuart, Lyndall, David and Linda



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Soft Plastics Recycling

Central Tilba got its own white recycling bin in late 2024. This was provided by Eurobodalla Shire Council on the understanding that the community takes responsibility for collection and transfer to the soft plastics deposit area at the Brou Waste Facility. Council then sends the soft plastics to a recycling business in Melbourne.

Overall, this community collection system has been working well and, based on the amount deposited, it is valued. During holiday times it does become more challenging with more contamination by unacceptable items. At these times the bin must be sorted as any contamination means the whole lot is rejected.

To make the process work more smoothly, here are some requests:

Please make sure you know what is acceptable and what is not.

Bundle your recycling in a larger acceptable soft plastics bag and tie it up before you drop it off.

If you see any items that are clearly unacceptable when you are dropping off, please remove to the adjacent general waste bin.

Please note that this soft plastics

recycling is for households only – businesses should make their own arrangements according to their needs.

Thanks to everyone who is supporting this service and making use of it. Council's website has useful information about the soft plastics recycling and what can and can't be collected – search Eurobodalla Shire Council soft plastics recycling.



The white bin at Central Tilba

Tilba Central Makers Emporium

Phil Shorten's journey to open the doors of the Makers Emporium is nearly at its destination. As I write, the necessary fire upgrades and security requirements are being finalised and the finishing touches are being done to the building. With the Grand Opening planned for a yet to be announced date in March, the next few weeks will see the fitout completed, stock brought in and displays prepared.

Art exhibitions showcasing local artists are planned with the first exhibition scheduled for April.

A brand and marketing specialist has guided the development of the Makers Emporium brand with the tagline 'authentic lives here' that encapsulates the Emporium philosophy of locally made for local consumption.

Michael Hodgson who handcrafted and painted the Tilba highway signs to the north and south of the villages has done the shop signage. Inspired by the existing shop signage in Central Tilba, he has hand crafted the Emporium signs using traditional methods and a steady hand.

Adam Kesper from Raven Wood



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Guitars and Andy and Amy Read from Tilbawoods are busy preparing their stock and displays, ready for the much-anticipated opening.

Phil deserves hearty congratulations for his perseverance and commitment in keeping his vision alive.



Michael Hodgson working on the signage

Tilba CWA

Santa and his helper received a very excited welcome at the Little Yuin Aboriginal Preschool Christmas party on 8 December. Tilba CWA provided sausages and bread, coleslaw and lolly bags, with assistance from Bermagui Woolies. Parents, grandparents, staff and friends enjoyed a fun, relaxing few hours. Also in December, Tilba CWA provided knitted koalas for the Little Yuin children graduating to primary school this year. Knitting of the popular koalas was coordinated by Nola Ezzy. To round off a busy month, Tilba CWA organised catering for the Central Tilba Rural Fire Service Christmas party at the RFS shed. Tilba CWA is seeking new members, contact Eva Mosler-Teichmann 0488 910 456.

Ed Southorn



Santa and his helper at Little Yuin Preschool

A Very Tilba Christmas

Walking into Bate Street, Central Tilba, on Saturday 6 December at 5.00 pm was like going to a mini festival. Food on Scroggy's corner, people spilling out the doors, a tight crowd at the bar and in the vintage shop. Emerging into the street, the sound of music from Bev and Stew's verandah. People wandering in and out of the shops, open for late night trading. And everyone smiling and laughing and obviously having a good time. A resounding success by all accounts with everyone in agreement for a repeat in 2026.

Joanne Major, Tilba District Chamber of Commerce President, passes on her thanks to everyone involved – volunteers, musicians, shops and especially Ingrid and Grant from Tilba Farm Christmas Trees for their donation of the tree, as well as all those who came to make it a memorable event. Fittingly, the evening finished with the lighting of the tree and the enthusiastic singing of 'The 12 Days of Tilba Christmas' (written by Andy and Muzz) and accompanied by Andy on guitar.



Lighting the tree

Music in the streets

It's a beautiful feeling driving into Bate St, Central Tilba, and hearing music echo along the street.

Saturday at the markets or Sunday at the pub, Open Mic on a Wednesday or String Sessions on a Thursday. Or even Marianno (Muzz) cleaning the pub and needing the soundtrack a little louder this morning.

Bate Street is better with a melody.

That's why, back in December, when a bunch of local musicians said they were going to sing a few Christmas Carols on a Friday afternoon outside The Drom, a crowd eagerly gathered. Mrs Claus (Jess Hone) perched upon her Morris Minor with lollies and popcorn for the village. I worked

with Beverly Long, Shanna Provost, Stewie Long, John Atkins and Marianno Reggiani to set up a drum kit and amps in the street, donned a few Christmas hats and began to belt out all the classics.

Rudolph. Silver Bells. Jingle Bell Rock. 12 Days of Tilba Christmas – a new local favourite penned by Muzz and me – had the whole crowd singing along about local characters and businesses.

The loose and carefree nature of the event was a beautiful throwback to simpler times. Kids sharing lollies, locals draped over the front balcony, all singing together. The community connection was strong and, as is often the case, music was the catalyst.

Andy Read



Mrs Claus and the crowd at the Drom

SOAPI set to raise eyebrows with bold 2026 production

SOAPI is no stranger to challenging its audience, and its next major production, scheduled to take to the Cobargo stage in May 2026, looks set to do just that. Known for combining entertainment with thoughtful social commentary, the local theatre group continues its tradition of tackling issues that invite conversation – even when those conversations are uncomfortable.

The new work, *Life Drawing 301*, explores the theme of body dysmorphia through the setting of a life-drawing class. As such, the production includes nudity and frank depictions of the human form. This is not presented for shock value, nor is it sexualised. Rather, it serves as a deliberate artistic device to question how ideas of ‘normal’ and ‘attractive’ are shaped – particularly in an era dominated by social media and carefully curated, often unrealistic, body images.

Playwright Graeme Freedman draws on a long artistic tradition. Over the centuries, from classical sculpture to Renaissance painting, the human body – its curves, proportions and imperfections – has been central to art. Freedman’s argument is simple but powerful: there is nothing shameful about real bodies, and much to be gained from confronting the myths we absorb about them.

It is a message that resonates strongly with younger audiences, particularly teenagers and people in their twenties, who are navigating identity, self-image and social pressure in an increasingly visual digital world. While the subject matter may cause some viewers to squirm, it also offers an opportunity for reflection and discussion well beyond the theatre doors.

The production also demands courage from its cast.

Performing on stage with this level of physical exposure, whether in body stockings or minimal costume, requires trust, professionalism and confidence. SOAPI acknowledges and applauds the bravery of those actors stepping into these roles.

Regional theatre groups like SOAPI are always looking for new talent and interested performers are encouraged to contact SOAPI via their Facebook page.

Donna Portland



SOAPI life model and actor playing Willy in signature pose.
Photo credit: Robyn Freedman, director.



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The 2026 Cobargo Folk Festival, 27 February to 1 March, is a celebration proving that in a world often driven by profit and cynicism, choosing to gather, trust each other and share stories is our own form of resistance.

What a line up!

Crest of Crows – the next chapter of the legendary Pigram Brothers story. Led by siblings Naomi and Bart Pigram, alongside bassist Stefanie Pigram and Perth drummer Tayla Valenti, this powerhouse collective brings saltwater sounds from idyllic Broome. Folk, country and rock infused with generations of music-making and cultural fire, they honour the past while forging a bold new chapter.

Djinjинуurun Yangamung, Sparkling Stars Sing – ancient Yuin stories explode into contemporary life through song, dance and stunning digital projections by local artist Scott Baker. Curated by Uncle Warren Foster and featuring Mudjingaal Yangamba, The Wallaga Dhaans, Nathan Lygon and special guests, this is cultural celebration at its most innovative and essential. Traditional Yuin voices meet cutting-edge visual artistry. Unmissable.

El Pony Pisador (Barcelona) – The Prancing Pony brings tavern culture chaos. Think Flogging Molly meets Catalan heritage in an eclectic mash-up of world folk traditions, pirate songs,



Svavar Knútur

and fantasy tales played on instruments you've never seen before.

Hazara Sounds (Adelaide) – leading Afghan musicians present the haunting, distinctive music of the Hazara people. A Central Asian sound built around the two-string tanpura rarely heard outside Afghanistan. Joined by Keith Preston and Josh Bennett, this is music with soul and centuries of story.

Svavar Knútur (Iceland) – we met this Icelandic storyteller two years ago and decided we had to bring him to Cobargo. Singing in Icelandic and English, Svavar's tales of his heritage and the human condition are so perfectly crafted you'll laugh and cry in the same breath.

Worlds Collide (Western Sydney) – a cross-cultural explosion featuring seven cultures creating bold, contemporary Australian music. Exciting, fresh and you'll be dancing.

Windborne (US) – mesmerising singers with deep roots in traditions of

vocal harmony, with a unique artistic approach that brings old songs into the present.

Northern Resonance (Sweden) – this Scandinavian string trio shapes folk music into new soundscapes using traditional Scandi instruments. New direction folk!

Laura Targett Band (NSW) – contemporary brilliance featuring Laura on fiddle, Greg Sheehan on percussion, Tom Botting on double bass and Oscar Eager on trumpet and piano. This is music you need to hear live.

This year's festival also features country music stars **Felicity Urquhart** and **Josh Cunningham**, **Charlie Castle** and the **Boys in the Well** taking Aussie bluegrass by storm, singer songwriters **Jordie Lane** and **Pirritu**, and Yuin singing sensation, **Kyarna**, plus many, many more.

Keeping it Real

Thanks to continuing support from NSW and Federal Governments through Destination NSW and Revive Live funding, we can keep tickets affordable while paying performers properly. The Yuin Folk Club has also secured multi-year Create NSW funding for 2026-27, enabling year-round community programs.

This is folk music as it should be – alive, generous and real.

More info, tickets and busking applications on the Cobargo Folk Festival 2026 website.

Yuin Folk Club

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ANDY BAYLOR AND THE HARD TRAVELLIN'
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What's on at Four Winds?

There is music in nature for everyone at Four Winds throughout 2026, with classical, First Nations, contemporary, jazz and folk to choose from. See page 14 for the full exciting year-long program!

The Necks are returning on Sunday 8 February at 2.00 pm in the first Windsong concert of the year. Prepare for an unforgettable afternoon of immersive sound with one of Australia's most revered musical ensembles touring their twentieth album, *Disquiet*. The Necks are masters of longform improvisation, weaving hypnotic and unfolding soundscapes that defy genre and invite deep listening. Their 2025 concert at Four Winds sold out, so get your tickets soon!

Join **Brieley Cutting and Doretta Balkizas** for Lyrical Masterpieces on Sunday 21 February at 2.00 pm. This intimate recital of French and German classics brings together some of the most stunning and expressive works ever written.



The Necks. Photo: David Rogers

There will be music for violin and piano by Debussy, Boulanger, Messian, Sutherland and Brahms. This concert offers a relaxed and welcoming way to experience classical music at its most expressive. Enjoy food and bar from 12.30 pm.

Bleak Squad is playing Friday 6 March at 7.00 pm in the only South Coast stop on their first national tour. Bleak Squad is a new Melbourne four-piece band comprising true Australian art-rock royalty, featuring Adalita (Magic Dirt), Mick Harvey (Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds, PJ Harvey, The Birthday Party), Mick Turner (Dirty Three, Mess Esque) and Marty Brown (Art of Fighting). This unlikely quartet unites for the first time on Bleak Squad's brooding, noir-rock debut LP, *Strange Love*. Food and bar open from 5.30 pm, setting the tone for a lively night under the stars in one of Australia's most beautiful cultural spaces.

Flick Ruby

Bermagui Country Club art and craft exhibition 2026

The exhibition ran from 8 to 11 January in the auditorium and, after an approximately ten-year break, was very successful. There were many visitors, good sales and great feedback especially about the Bermagui Preschool entries that were painted on boards supplied by Narooma Men's Shed.

Can Assist was the beneficiary of profits after expenses.

My thanks go to everyone who supported this exhibition, the volunteers who sat during the exhibition and Jill for our spinning demonstration.



Preschool entries in art and craft exhibition

Special thanks go out to John, Lewis, Lyn, Sue and Trish for the preparation and facelift of stands and supports for the exhibition, Lyn and Kathy for helping with displaying the works and the Country Club for their support.

The exhibition was very diverse, showcasing some of the artists and craftspeople from our area and, hopefully, will be the spark for future exhibitions.

See you all in 2027.

Helen Morris

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Mark your diaries for a book launch

Local writer, Jen Severn, has a new book out in March – a novel called *Garnet* about a small country town peopled with eccentric, lovable, difficult, ordinary and extraordinary characters – and a few evil developers for good measure. This short novel (an early manuscript was shortlisted in the Viva La Novella Prize in 2022) packs the emotional punch of a much larger book. It is quiet but intricate – a series of interlocking stories and characters that, woven together, create a vivid portrait of small-town life.

Those who have read Jen's previous book, a memoir called *Long Road to Dry River*, will be familiar with her observational acuity and clean, poetic writing style. When asked about the change from non-fiction to fiction, Jen says, 'I've really enjoyed the freedom of writing fiction. I loved it that sometimes I thought I knew where a story was going,

and then a character would say something or do something totally unexpected, and I'd think, wow, take it away!'

As I read the novel, I wondered what it was about a small town that provides such a fertile setting for fiction. 'I moved from Melbourne to Quaaama in 1998 – the year of the ABC TV series *Seachange*,' Jen says. 'I'd been wondering what it was about *Seachange* that had us all hooked, but it didn't take me long to work it out. In a small town, everyone's the star of their own life and plays bit parts in everyone else's lives. Everyone knows everyone's business. And some people like that ... and some people don't,' she laughs. 'It's endlessly fascinating.'

Garnet will be launched at the Cobargo RSL Hall, 45 Princes Highway, Cobargo, on Saturday 14 March at 10.30 am. Jen will be in conversation with Heather O'Connor, one of the founding

members of our favourite second-hand bookshop, Well Thumbed Books. And the women of Well Thumbed Books will be putting on one of their iconic morning teas. All welcome!

Tash Roberts



Shop7 ArtSpace Gallery February 2026

Shop7 ArtSpace Gallery supports the visual arts community by making space available in which guest artists can exhibit. This month we welcome artists who collaborate. We begin with Rock, Wind and Fire, an exhibition of works on paper by Narelle Perroux, Roz Bannon and Ivana Gattegno, inspired by the Far South Coast of NSW and showing until 11 February.

Immediately following 'Rock Wind and Fire' is an exhibition of works by Di and Roz Dibley, who are creative sisters well known for their paintings and collages, and also lovely jewellery and

textiles such as necklaces, earrings and bags. Di and Roz Dibley's exhibition runs from 12 February to 5 March.

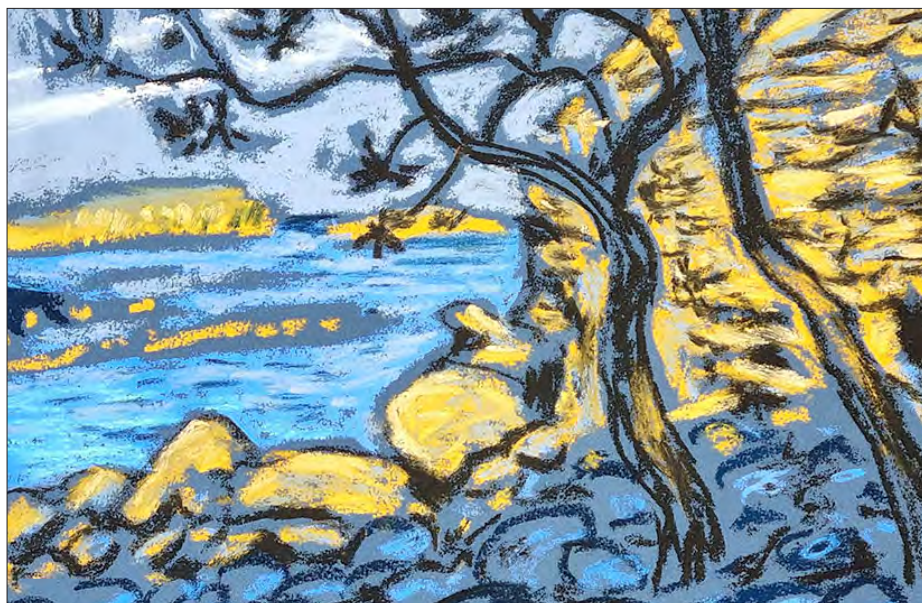
Alongside these exhibitions are sculptures, paintings, ceramics, prints, photographs, textiles, woodwork and cards by the Shop7 ArtSpace members. There are also glass sculptures, jewelry, prints and artist books by invited artists.

Shop7 ArtSpace Gallery is on the upper deck at the Bermagui Wharf. Open 10.30 am to 3.00 pm.

Lyndal Jenkins



Di and Roz Dibley, textiles



Very Late Afternoon, Rocky Bay, pastel, Narelle Perroux

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Supporting our community



A new art landscape

Nicole Grimm-Hewitt's December exhibition 'Art in the dining room' at Harbourview House in Bermagui showed her new works inspired by a recent trip to South Australia. The new watercolour series focuses on the red dirt of the Flinders Ranges, the vibrant colours of the crops and the Eyre Peninsula coastline. It was on this trip she discovered a new way of exploring these landscapes through her work. Her new medium? Watercolour. With a small pad of watercolour paper and a travel tin of paints, she made a series of landscape studies. 'It was a discovery of a new style, using a different part of my brain.'

Upon returning from her trip, the smaller studies became larger paintings, recreated using rich and vibrant French watercolours. Landscapes of different crops became linear bands of colour, ended only by the flowing shape of distant mountains, some lined with tiny shapes of trees. Seashores and oceans became a palette of blues bounded by stripes of sand.

This exhibition showed the qualities of the works as they might be seen at home. The exhibition was well attended and most of the original works found new homes. Nicole has returned to her studio in Bermagui to prepare for a new exhibition at Easter. Her studio/gallery is open by appointment via email at nicole@grimmhewitt.com.au or call 0425 299 257 or search for 'grimm-hewitt art' on the web.

Jane Sandilands



Nicole Grimm-Hewitt in front of her Octopus paintings



Nicole's new collection of framed watercolour landscapes



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Resonance on show at Bermagui's Mane & Tales

Mane & Tales in Bermagui, a hair salon operated by artist and hair stylist Elise Idiens, is more than a hair salon – it is also a working art gallery. The dual role reflects her creative passions that sit comfortably at the intersection of art and hair. With an approach

that treats hair as a sculptural form, Idiens applies an artist's eye for shape and balance, while her photography documents the people and communities of rural and regional Australia.

The space has become a place for artists and visitors alike to share stories, engage in conversation, and experience beauty in an intimate and considered setting.

Currently on display at Mane & Tales is *Resonance*, an exhibition by artist Dr Jennifer Taylor. Taylor holds a PhD focused on the representation of landscape and history through art. Her academic research, combined with a lifelong connection to the land, informs landscapes that explore the enduring impacts of colonisation, environmental change and cultural continuity.

Heavily influenced by her time working in Arnernte Country, this exhibition brings together landscapes of Wadawurrung Country and local Yuin Country. *Resonance* invites viewers to reflect on the layered histories, stories, spirit and ever-changing moods of the land and its people.

An artist talk with Dr Jennifer Taylor will be held at Mane & Tales from 10.30 am to 12.00 pm on 1 February.

Deb Worgan



Dr Jennifer Taylor

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Spiral Gallery, Bega. Creatures in Gallery 1

Featuring works by Ivana Gattegno, Joy Georgeson and Anneke Paijmans, *Creatures* is a collaborative exhibition by three artists. They have spent time together in the landscape, particularly at Aragunnu on the South Coast. Mostly looking, observing, scribbling and immersing themselves in the immediate environment of trees, water, earth and the creatures that inhabit these elemental places.

Each has worked their original sketches and observations into large-scale works on paper (Ivana Gattegno), large ceramic and outdoor sculptures (Joy Georgeson) and small pewter, glass and ceramic sculptures (Anneke Paijmans).

The artists will assemble their works in an interesting and thoughtful exhibition to be opened by Bill Insch, painter, sculptor and ceramicist, well known in Bega Valley for his quirky art and stimulating points of view.



Cuttlefish by Anneke Paijmans

The exhibition runs from 13 February to 11 March 2026.

The opening is on Friday, 13 February, 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm. Join us for drinks and snacks, catering will be by Sharon Cornthwaite, foodie extraordinaire. All welcome.

Sarah Buick



Lyrebirds by Ivana Gattegno

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Works on paper at the Lazy Lizard Gallery

We are three local women artists showcasing our works in the Lazy Lizard Sideroom in February. We, Helen Morris, Patto and me, Doris Hoyne, decided to exhibit together as we share a common interest – a love for the natural world, a connection that manifests itself in the choice of our motifs, themes and the use of natural materials.

Helen Morris's work shows some of the many aspects of nature. She is passionate about the flora and fauna of our region, using printmaking, painting and drawing as her media. Her work is characterised by her observational skills and love for minute details. And she retains the beauty she sees in all her subjects, that are often very small.

My work investigates two related themes, that of landscape and nature. In my prints, I depict the subjects that surround me – hills, trees and skies. I often use close ups, revealing flowers, leaves, grasses, sticks, pebbles, etc. I also revel in strong colours, such as vivid blues and greens, as I wish to project the image of nature's capacity to fight and live, speaking to us of optimism and possibility.

Patto's love of mixed media, fibre and paper allows her to experiment with many concepts to create her unique jewellery, sculptures and wall art. Her pieces are very popular and sought after.

Doris Hoyne



Flowers Taking a Walk, collagraph print, chine collé, Doris Hoyne 2025

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Fly, Wild Swans

Jung Chang
Harper Collins
RRP \$ 35.00

This is the long-awaited sequel to *Wild Swans*, published in 1991 to worldwide acclaim. *Wild Swans* told the story of three generations of Chinese women, Chang's grandmother, her mother and herself and interwove the modern history of China into these very personal memoirs. This was the first insight that most of the West had into the cruelty, terror and insanity of China under Mao through a personal family story. It became the most popular, nonfiction book in history,



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selling 15 million copies and translated into 40 languages. It was and is banned in China.

A sequel to this important and loved book is a big ask. *Fly, Wild Swans* was published late in 2025 and returns to the story of the Chang family, beginning where *Wild Swans* ended in 1978.

The first two chapters retell some parts of *Wild Swans* with added details to reorientate earlier readers and to inform new readers. Chang then begins the account of her life outside China, beginning with her arrival in London as a heavily supervised and watched university student, dressed in a Mao suit and feeling as if she had '... landed on Mars'. We follow her adaptation to the West, her visits to China and her family, the responses to her book's success and its impact on family and friends.

Again, Chang successfully interweaves her and her family's personal lives, achievements and problems with China's. As China opens up under Deng Xiaoping and private ownership, money-making and prosperity become the new normal, Chang is able to travel freely in China. Previously fearful, old CCP

officials and former Red Guards feel free to open up to Chang as she conducts hundreds of interviews while she prepares to write a biography of Mao. Many new and once secret stories are told. Chang's stories of marriage, cancer and family relationships continue in a personal and intimate way. This gift of telling history through the personal is Chang's gift to the reader.

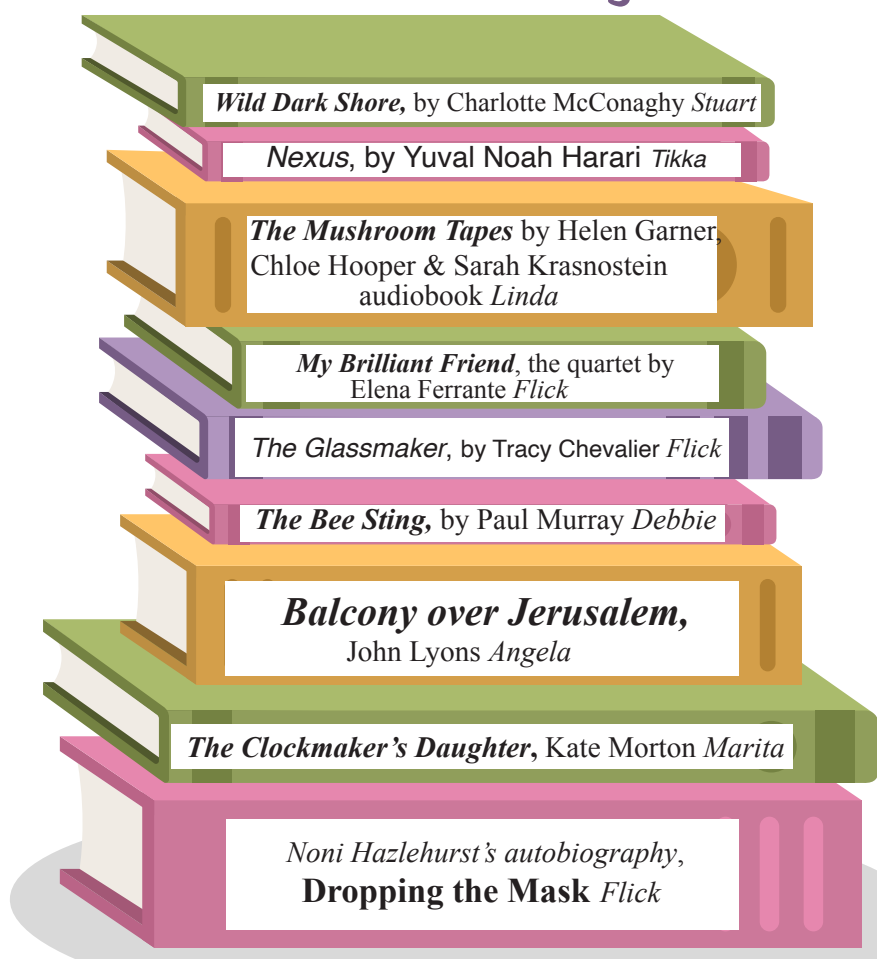
Chairman Xi's rise to power in 2012 has a direct impact on Chang. It was increasingly difficult for her to obtain a visa to travel to China to visit her beloved and aging mother. Her last visit was in 2018, the year Xi announced himself as permanent leader and she felt '... the ghost of Mao hovering'.

To Chang's great grief she could not visit her dying mother. Her mother died in 2024 with her last words by telephone to her daughter were, 'Don't come back for this'.

I don't think this sequel is as affecting as the first, but we know so much more about China now. Still, I devoured it in two sittings.

It is primarily a love letter to her mother, a strong, extremely wise and brave woman.

What we're reading



The other type of water

As summer ends, gardeners become very aware of how much water they have used just to keep plants alive. At this time of year, water is usually seen purely as a necessity, applied carefully and often anxiously. Yet water plays another role in gardens that is equally important.

Since people first shaped land into gardens rather than fields, water has been held, channeled and reflected for reasons far beyond plant survival. Beyond its essential role for plants, water also shapes space, engages the senses and supports ecology. It influences how a garden feels, functions and connects with other living creatures.



Bird bath with floating solar fountain

A water feature, whether a pond, basin, bowl or small fountain, transforms the experience of a space. It reflects light and sky, slows movement through the garden and provides a focal point that plants alone often cannot match. Even still water brings depth and stillness. Moving water adds gentle sound and softens hard edges. Simply watching or listening to water has a calming, therapeutic effect.

Aquatic gardens are layered environments. Plants grow at different depths, submerged, floating and emergent, each helping to keep the water clear and healthy while creating habitat. Birds drink and bathe. Frogs breed. Lizards and insects use the edges. Fish, when present, help

control mosquitoes. Size is not critical. Even a single sealed pot with aquatic plants can introduce reflection, movement and wildlife into a small space.

Of course, permanent water brings responsibilities, especially with regards to young children. In New South Wales, the Swimming Pools Act 1992 and Regulation 2018 define a swimming pool as any structure or excavation deeper than 300 mm intended for swimming, wading



Cascading pond with plant

or paddling. A pond designed solely as an ornamental feature or fishpond is, therefore, not legally required to have a child-resistant barrier fence. Still, risks can be reduced by using mesh covers just below the surface, or by using raised containers or sealed above-ground pots instead of open excavations.

In this light, water becomes more than something poured onto the garden to sustain our plants. It becomes a true design element, like pathways or borders, permanent rather than temporary, held rather than consumed, valued for form as much as function. This is the other type of water.

Meanwhile, around the towns we have seen some pretty special agapanthus displays over summer, but don't forget to deadhead the spent flowers now to stop seed spread. The bougainvillea are stunning at this time of year and to keep

this dry-tolerant, scrambling, thorny devil tamed, prune it back after flowering and chop back any aggressive rogue shoots as they appear. A final shout out to all the hibiscus currently flowering. These three plants alone brighten up any late summer garden.

Ironically the warmest month in the veggie garden is the time to start planning for the coldest months, so get sowing seeds of broccoli, Brussels sprouts, celery, cauliflower, cabbage and leeks. Round out the soup season garden with some root vegetables such as beetroot, carrots, parsnips and turnips, and keep the leafy greens coming with lettuce, rocket, silver beet and kale.

Finally, if you have any comments, gardening questions or plant or pest identification problems, please send them through to gardening@thetriangle.org.au and I will endeavour to help.

Happy growing.



Bougainvillea and agapanthus

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wish to book our services. We support our local farmers by assisting Bega Red Cross working in the saleyards canteen providing morning tea and lunch on Tuesdays and for the stores sale on Thursdays.

Kathy Rix, Cobargo Red Cross.



White chocolate and peanut butter slice

150 gms butter
2 tablespoons honey
200 gms Granita biscuits, crushed
1 can sweetened condensed milk
200 gms peanut butter
1 cup salted peanuts
200 gms white chocolate melts
5-6 tablespoons pouring cream

For the base:

Melt 100 g of butter with honey. Stir biscuit crumbs into mixture. Line a 28 cm x 18 cm slice tray with baking paper. Press crumb mixture evenly into slice tin. Place in the fridge to set.

Slowly melt the remaining butter with the condensed milk for about 10 mins until bubbly hot and a golden colour. It will have thickened, so it comes away from the side of the pan when stirred. Stir continuously because it can stick and burn easily. Add a generous pinch of salt. Stir in peanut butter and cook until it has melted evenly through the fudgy sauce. Continue to stir. Spread caramel evenly over base. Sprinkle peanuts evenly over caramel. Press down into caramel slightly.

Melt chocolate in microwave or double saucepan. Stir in enough cream to make it loose enough to spread. Do this one tablespoon at a time. Pour over peanuts so slice is covered. Leave in fridge to set for a day. This allows the layers to bond and the caramel to soften slightly. Cut into small squares.

Ros Grover



Cherry ripe slice

For the base:

150 gms cophia
1 can sweetened condensed milk
A few drops of red colouring
1 packet Milk Coffee biscuits
240 gms coconut
1 packet glacé cherries, diced

Crush biscuits and mix in coconut and diced glacé cherries. Melt cophia over low heat and when melted mix in condensed milk and red colouring until combined. Pour into dry ingredients and mix thoroughly. Press into greased lamington tin.

For the top:

100 gms cophia
1 cup powdered drinking chocolate
Melt cophia over low heat and stir into sifted drinking chocolate. Pour over base, place in fridge and cut when set.

Kathy Rix



Lemon slice

For the base:

1 cup self-raising flour
1 cup desiccated coconut
½ cup sugar
125 gms butter, melted

Mix together and press into a lined lamington tin

Bake for 15 mins at 160 °C until slightly brown.

Lemon filling:

½ cup sugar
½ cup lemon juice
2 level tablespoons custard powder
1 cup water
15 gms butter

Thicken the first four ingredients over medium heat and then add butter before spreading over the cooked base.

For the top:

2 cups milk
½ cup sugar
4 level tablespoons of cornflour
1 teaspoon vanilla
Coconut to sprinkle on top

On stove top use some of the milk to blend cornflour to a paste. Bring remainder of the milk to a simmer, add to the paste with sugar and vanilla. If it's not thick enough, return to the saucepan to thicken, and stir to avoid lumps.

Pour the topping over the lemon slice and sprinkle with coconut when cool.

Margaret Jessop

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Bermagui: All Saints - every Sunday 8.30am
Cobargo: Christ Church -
1st, 2nd, 3rd Sundays 10.30am
Quaama: Quaama School of Arts Hall -
4th Sunday 10.30am
Ph: Vanessa Williams 0408 177 131

ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE

Far South Coast Branch promotes the welfare of companion animals and responsible pet ownership. Call 0400 372 609

BERMAGUI BAPTIST CHURCH

West Street, Bermagui. All Welcome.
Family Service Sundays 10.00am - 12pm

BERMAGUI CROQUET CLUB

Every Sunday morning at 10am
behind the Bermagui Country Club.
Beginners and new members welcome.
Contact Bermagui Country Club on 6493 4340

BERMAGUI CWA

Meet first Friday of each month (except Jan)
CWA Hall, 10 Corunna St, Bermagui
Contact: Amanda Greedy 0413 613 773
cwa.bermagui@gmail.com

BERMAGUI DUNE CARE

Meets on the 3rd Sunday of each month
Contact: bermaguidunecare@skymesh.com.au

BERMAGUI GARDEN GROUP

1st Tuesday every Month 10am until 12 noon,
venues vary. Phone Christine 0400 301 040

BERMAGUI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Museum Open Tuesdays & Thursdays
10am - 2pm. Researchers & helpers welcome.
Contact bermaguimuseum@gmail.com

BERMAGUI & DISTRICT LIONS CLUB

New members welcome. Meet 1st Thurs
each month at Cobargo Hotel & 3rd Thurs at
Bermagui Country Club at 12 for 12.30pm
Enquiries: Geoff 0407 164 466

THE BERMAGUI MARKET

Last Sunday of the month. Coordinated by the
Bermagui Red Cross. Gary Stevens, 6493 6581.

BERMAGUI MEN'S SHED

Meets Tues, Thurs & Sat from 10am @
new shed adjacent to the council depot on
Bermagui Tathra Rd. All men are welcome.
Contact Ian Bailey 0409 691 458

BERMAGUI PROBUS

Meets at 10am to 12pm on the 2nd Monday of
each month at the Men's Shed meeting room.
Bermagui Tathra Rd. Contact Lorraine Courtis
email lcou6446@bigpond.net.au

BERMAGUI SENIORS' SOCIAL CLUB

Meets the 1st Wed, 11.30am at the Bermagui
Country Club, with social luncheons to follow.
New members are most welcome.
Enquiries: bermaguiseniors@gmail.com

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Weekend Mass times.
Bermagui - Sun 7:30am Cobargo - Sat 5pm

COBARGO AND DISTRICT ENERGY TRANSITION GROUP INC (CaDET)

Email - renewablecobargo@gmail.com
www.renewablecobargo.com

COBARGO CREATORS

Established in 2012, a volunteer-run, not-for-profit art collective. Manages the Cobargo Creators Art Gallery. New members and volunteers always welcome! Committee meets monthly. email: mail@cobargocreators.org

COBARGO CWA

Meets in the CWA Rooms, 5 Bermagui St
2nd Tues of the month, 10.30am.
cwa.cobargo@gmail.com
Cottage Hire 6493 6428 or 0429 933 686

COBARGO DISTRICT MUSEUM

The Cobargo Museum: researching local history, old photos & information.
New members welcome.
Contacts: Vicky Hoyer 0422 377 278
Bev Holland 0408 280 024

COBARGO PRESCHOOL

Child centred, play based preschool
education for 3-5 year olds.
Mon - Thurs during school terms
0455 043 489 cobargopreschool@gmail.com
www.cobargopreschool.com.au

COBARGO QUAAMA BUSINESS RECOVERY GROUP INC (CQBRG)

New Members Welcome!
Enquiries: CQBRG Secretary Ph: 0418 361 781
e: cqbrgroup@gmail.com www.cqbr.org.au

COBARGO RSL HALL

Hall bookings and inquiries:
Graham Churchill
0409 638 323 / cobargorsl@gmail.com

COBARGO & DISTRICT RED CROSS

For meeting dates or catering enquiries
phone Kathy Rix 0488 048 701

COBARGO SCHOOL OF ARTS

Hall bookings and inquiries:
Don 0432 508 518 / cobargohall@gmail.com

1ST COBARGO SCOUT GROUP

Children 6 - 18yrs. Meetings 6.30pm to 8pm in
school term Cobargo Showground dining hall.
Contact Graham Parr on 0429 936 795.

COBARGO SHOWGROUND

Contact: Mike Nicholas m: 0414 012 287
e: miknik62@hotmail.com for bookings

COBARGO SHOW MEETING

Monthly 2nd Wednesday, 7.00 pm - Cobargo
Showground dining hall. Contact Naomi 0417
456 354 secretarycobargoshow@yahoo.com.au

COBARGO TOURIST & BUSINESS ASSOC

Meets every 2nd Tuesdays, 6pm @ the CWA
cottage. Contact: Janet Doolin 0409 033 828

DIGNAMS CREEK COMMUNITY GROUP

Meets randomly. Contact Nick van Stek, Pres.
0439 361 118 or Felicity Ruby, Sec. 0452 161 673

KAMALASHILA TIBETAN BUDDHIST CENTRE

Every Sunday
Sunday guided meditation 10am - 11am
Self-guided meditation 10am - 11am
By donations. Everyone is welcome.
9000 Princes Highway, Tilba

MACKILLOP FAMILY SERVICES

Empowering children and families.
Become a foster carer today.
Contact: 1300 791 677

**MOBILE TOY LIBRARY
& PARENTING RESOURCE SERVICE**
All parents of children 0-6 welcome to join.
Enquiries: 6496 1918

OPEN SANCTUARY AT TILBA TILBA

Meditations, discussions,
guest speakers & special events.
opensanctuarytilba.org and on facebook.
Contact: Linda Chapman 0422 273 021

QUAAMA / COBARGO QUILTERS

Meets Mondays 10am-3.00pm in the CWA
Cottage, Bermagui Road, Cobargo. Anyone
welcome who does patchwork, quilting, or any
other fibre or needlecraft. Contact Lorraine
James 0459 022 368 or Leanne Tett 0408 627 103

QUAAMA MEN'S SHED

Meets Weds from 10am, 20 Bermagui Street
John Preston (President) 0429 179 184
Ron Higgins on 0408 788 528.
All men are welcome.

QUAAMA SCHOOL OF ARTS

Hall bookings and inquiries:
Call 0490 902 616
quaamahallbookings@gmail.com

SOAPI COMMUNITY THEATRE

School of Arts Players Inc (SOAPI) writes,
produces and performs theatre in the region.
10 years to adult. No experience necessary.
Facebook @SOAPitheatre or call
Robyn Freedman 0410 525 968

TILBA CWA

Meeting 2nd Thursday of the month, 10.30am
Tilba small hall, Bate Street, Central Tilba
Contact: Teresa Stubbings 0417 418 447

TILBA MARKET

Home grown, Hand made,
Grow it, Make it, Sew it, Bake it.
Saturdays 9am to 1pm, Bate St, Central Tilba
Stall booking essential. Phone 0490 130 478.

TRIANGLE TOOL LIBRARY

Behind the Cobargo Co-op
Open 9am-12pm on Tues, Fri and Sat
www.triangletoollibrary.org.au
Lynn 0411 432 533 or Nacre 0419 425 208

U3A BERMAGUI

Lifelong Learning Opportunities
For a full list of courses and timetable
visit: u3abermagui.com.au

UNITING CHURCH SERVICES

Narooma - Sundays at 9am, 134 Wagonga St.
Cobargo - 2nd Sunday at 11.00am.
4th Sun Prayer & Praise (ecumenical) at 11am.
38 Bermagui Road, Cobargo
Phone Di: 4476 2024 mtdromedary.uca.org.au

THE YUIN FOLK CLUB

The Yuin Folk Club organises the annual
Cobargo Folk Festival and hosts folk music
concerts throughout the year.
Details at www.cobargofolkfestival.com
Ph. Secretary Chris Walters 0476 787 480,
Treasurer Peter Shears 0439 738 377 or email
info@cobargofolkfestival.com

For the fridge door

FEBRUARY	WHAT	WHERE	TIME
Sun 1 Artist's talk, then all Feb to 6 March	Resonance, by Dr Jennifer Taylor, expresses landscape and history through art. Oil on board pg. 33	Mane & Tales, Wallaga St, Bermagui	Talk 10.30-12pm Tues-Sat 9am to 5pm
All February	Works on Paper, Helen Morris, Patto & Doris Hoyne pg. 35	Sideroom, Lazy Lizard Gallery, Cobargo	Tues-F 10-3pm Sat 10-1pm
Sat 7	Cobargo community Tree Sculpture consultation pg. 17	Cobargo RSL Hall	10.30am to 2.30pm
Sun 8	The Necks, revered jazz ensemble & masters of improvisation pg. 30	Windsong Pavilion, Four Winds, Barragga Bay	Food & bar 12.30 Start 2pm
Mon 9	Dignams Creek Landcare event, Dr Kylie Caines speaking about dingoes, plus other items pg. 15	The OldNew shed Dignams Creek, follow the signs	5pm to 7pm
Until Weds 11	Rock, Wind & Fire, Narelle Perroux, Roz Bannon & Ivana Gattegno pg. 31	Shop7ArtSpace, upstairs at the Bermagui Wharf	Thurs-Tues 10.30 to 3pm
Thurs 12 till Thurs 5 March	Di & Roz Dibley, exhibition of creative works in mixed media including textile works pg. 31	Shop7ArtSpace, upstairs at the Bermagui Wharf	Thurs-Tues 10.30 to 3pm
Fri 13 till Sun 15	Cobargo Show, pastoral and horticultural country show, activities, displays, fun fair	Cobargo Showgrounds	Facebook or online for program times
Fri 13 to Weds 11 March	Creatures, Ivana Gattegno, Joy Georgeson and Anneke Paijmans, inspired by nature. Opening Fri pg. 34	Spiral Gallery, Bega Church St	Opening 4-6pm M-F 10am-4pm Sat 10am-2pm
Sun 15	Death Conversation Circle, listen, speak & learn in a safe space pg. 4	Bermagui Men's Shed, Tathra Bermagui Rd	2pm to 4pm
Sat 21	Brieley Cutting, pianist, & Doretta Balkizas, violinist, play a program of French & German classics pg. 30	Windsong Pavilion, Four Winds, Barragga Bay	Food & bar 12.30 Start 2pm
Thurs 26	Part of Cobargo Folk Festival's It Takes a Village program: Meet the Authors - Chris Hammer and Michael Brissenden pg. 1 and pg. 17	Well Thumbed Books, Cobargo. Bookings essential.	4.30pm to 6pm
Fri 27	Dadirra Days: held on the 4th Friday of the month in silent meditation pg. 24	Open Sanctuary, Tilba Tilba	10am to 1pm
Fri 27 to 1 March	Cobargo Folk Festival - celebration of music, stories, dance and culture with food, stalls and demonstrations pg. 28	Cobargo Showgrounds	Full program online

U3A Bermagui & District Inc



U3A offers classes taught by local members for members. Membership is available to the whole community. We offer face to face classes in a range of subject areas. Please check our website for the latest program updates.

**Term 4 Class Enrolment is Online
Open from Monday 2 February 2026**

Visit u3abermagui.com.au

Or Search "U3A Bermagui"

Course enquiries: Elizabeth Johnson on 0499 818 454

An overview of courses on offer for this term ... Apple Technology, Breath and Mindfulness, Bush Bugs and Birds, Conversation Café with Dan Bakker, Early Baroque Guitar, Film and Lunch, French Language, Gentle Yoga, Local South Coast Women, Mahjong, Paektu: Sacred Super Volcano You've Never Heard Of, Shakespeare's King Lear, Tai Chi, Talk with Local Author Julie Janson, The Lymphatic System, Windows Technology