

THE APSLEY Advocate

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16 June 2021

Our Fire Captain receives Queen's Birthday Honour

Firefighter, Peter Dunn's enormous commitment to the Walcha community spanning 44 years, has been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Our Fire Captain was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM), the highest honour an Australian firefighter can receive, which was made even more special by the fact that it was announced on his late father, Edgar's birthday.

"It was definitely not something I expected," Peter said. Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner Paul Baxter congratulated Peter and commented, "A humble and modest man, Captain Dunn is widely respected in the Walcha community for dedicating his life to the fire service."

And dedication certainly describes Peter's unwavering service. Many weekends, Peter and his wife Beryl delay their own travel plans and outings to stay here in Walcha on-call in case of an emergency in our community. "The recognition of the commitment of Peter to the Fire Brigade and wider community of Walcha with awarding of the Australian Fire Service Medal is a reminder of the countless hours of volunteer work our community thrives on. The hours of training, dangerous work and disruption to his family life are embedded in this Medal. On behalf of Walcha I congratulate Peter on this great honour," Mayor Eric Noakes said.

Back in 1977 when Peter joined the fire service they were arriving at fires in a Ford Thames truck with nothing but a hose, knapsack and beaters (to beat out the fire!) Their uniform was a pair of black woollen dress pants and jacket with two rows of brass buttons which the firefighters had to keep polished. Over the jacket was a belt, also with a big brass buckle (imagine that in the heat of a fire) and a hook on each side, one to hold the axe and the other for the hose spanner.

Peter joined the fire service when there was a shortage of firefighters, with Phillip Hamel and Darrell Parsons also signing up at a similar



time. "I have really enjoyed my time in the fire brigade, and still do," Peter commented.

It has been a huge commitment for Peter and his family. "It was really hard on our wives before mobile phones as they would take the fire call-outs at home during the day. They would have to stay on the line until someone arrived at the station to take the call and our wives would have to explain to us where the fire was. Then the town siren would ring to alert other firefighters to get to the station," Peter explained.

Continued on Page 3



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around the traps



By BRUCE RUTHERFORD

One of the best snow falls in years has dumped huge falls on much of the central and northern tablelands late last week. Locally, south of town was the main beneficiary with an amazing amount of snow around the Niangala area and to the east over Brackendale and Tia. I have to say, after all the media hype the snow was a little disappointing in town with barely any snow settling on the ground. Social media sites were going ballistic with photos posted of heavy snow south of town though, and roads to the south were promptly closed for a period due to the dangerous conditions. I had reports from around Orange that the snow was as heavy as it has been for years, as was Oberon. It was an amazing event and people travelled great distances from all points to see it.

Whether it was snow or just plain old ice, there was plenty of moisture with it. I recorded about 38mm over a few days with more out towards Niangala. The ground is wet, making driving through paddocks a little more interesting. It has been a long time since I was properly bogged, but it could happen now if the concentration lapses while checking on stock. The moisture of the last week is really going to set us up for spring if we can get a few follow up falls between now and September. There are forecasts for more rain this week, although not the volume of last week.

Cattle numbers have tightened quickly this last couple of weeks with saleyard numbers significantly lower and slaughter numbers following a similar pattern. This is nothing unusual at this time of year, but the numbers through saleyards have dropped off a cliff according to the latest data on the MLA site. It is also interesting how dominant NSW and QLD are in the stats when it comes to numbers through saleyards with Victoria a distant third. Rainfall may have something to do with the most recent stats, but when compared to a year ago, the numbers through saleyards are about a third of the numbers going through at the same time last year. The stats also highlight how dramatic the drop is between the last week of May and the end of the first week of June. Numbers have halved in the week. Slaughter numbers also tell a story of decline, but that may be distorted by the recent hacking and ransom demands on JBS. The EYCI tells part of the story jumping back up to 913 c/kg this week. It will be interesting to see what happens from here, but this may highlight why feedlots have been so anxious to secure numbers over the last couple of months. If you have a look at all the live weight indicators, they are well above those of the same time last year, whereas the dressed weight indicators are much closer aligned.

AuctionsPlus results last week also highlight how tight cattle numbers are with 14,000 cattle offered in sales last week. Those numbers may have been double that a couple of months ago, but were around 20,000 just a fortnight ago. Buyers have refocussed on breeding stock with females selling extremely well and selected lines are very hard to buy. Light cattle also are receiving plenty of attention, highlighted by a line of light steers in Armidale last week, weighing 185kg LW and selling for \$1515. It may be a lot of fun selling cattle at the moment, but it is hard to get back in when you do!

What usually happens after I rant and rave about something, is that whatever I have ranted and raved about goes away. Last week I had a crack at the NBN and poor internet service I was receiving and I have to say for some obscure reason it has improved this week. It may have fixed itself, or a blackout may have reset something, but it is better than it has been for weeks. However, it does not change my view that Governments have made a complete mess of our internet services and wasted a lot of money by not doing it properly in the first place. I have no doubt, that what we have is second best because the political landscape at the time would not allow any government to spend the sort of money required to build a bullet proof service right across the nation. I wonder what has changed, that suddenly the more they can spend, the better, and they get plenty of pats on the back for doing so. While you polities are at it spending like drunken sailors, any chance you can do something to fix this mess once and for all? It would probably pay far greater long term dividends than a lot of projects that are going around at the moment.

Peter awarded highest honour as a firefighter

Continued from Front Page

Times have certainly changed with everything now electronic. The truck is now equipped with thermal imaging equipment to detect heat in a fire; their radios have wifi and they are able to communicate with each other through headsets attached to their helmets.

Peter has also been called further afield having travelled to Sydney in the 1996 hailstorms to assist in tarping roofs, and the 2017 North Coast floods where they were washing out shops and dwellings, and assisting with hazardous materials.

Peter was appointed as Walcha's Fire Captain in 1980 and he has recruited and trained many new firefighters during his distinguished career. "He has attended countless emergency incidents and sadly, due to the remoteness of the town, has often been first on the scene only to discover the people involved are known to him," Commissioner Baxter said.

Peter is widely respected by his peers in FRNSW, and his dedication and commitment to our safety throughout his long volunteer career has been outstanding, with Peter receiving many phone calls on Monday from his peers right through to the Fire Commissioner to congratulate him on receiving the highest honour within FRNSW.

Peter will be presented with his Australian Fire Service Medal at a ceremony at Government House in Sydney later this year.



It's snow time

While we were faced with several bitterly cold days and road closures last week, for some it was the first time they had seen snow, and what a fall it was.

Little Lilah Dark, pictured below, didn't miss out, building a snowman complete with a carrot nose, zucchini eyes, hat and scarf when her family visited a friend's property.

Many residents also took the opportunity to venture south of town where the heaviest falls were, taking in the sights, throwing snow balls and make a snowman or two. Derby and Fitzroy streets were also buzzing, with the snow attracting tourists to our town, keeping local businesses on their toes.



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out and about

It's time to have your say on wind projects in Walcha

By Mayor Eric Noakes

For those that have followed the path of renewable energy projects around Walcha you would be aware that the most developed project at this point is the Winterbourne Wind Project. This project is sited to the east and north of Walcha and if it gains consent will see approximately 110 towers in an area covering 22,000 hectares and be situated within 10kms of the Walcha township. Should this project be approved and constructed, many of these towers will be visible from homes in the higher parts of Walcha and surrounding areas. These towers are approximately 250 metres high or around 86 storeys (Sydney Tower is 309 metres to the top of the spire). It has the ability to power up to 375,000 houses. Currently this project is in the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) stage which follows the initial Scoping Report stage. The EIS is prepared in accordance with the Planning Secretary's Environment Assessment Requirements (SEARs). This is the first project of what could possibly be a number of similar project proposals to follow in our LGA.

Public engagement and community input into these projects is paramount to a smooth, transparent and compliant path which then may lead to the approval of the development application. This public engagement must take into account all views expressed by the community both for and against. Very rarely do projects of this scale and magnitude not cause some concern and division within a community and all indications are that the development of renewable energy projects around Walcha will be no different.

At the outset it should be understood that Walcha Council, as with other councils in similar situations, do not have the decision making power, or in other words are not the determining body for the "go ahead" for this project. For a project of this magnitude, known as State Significant Development, the determination of the DA on whether or not the project will be approved is in the hands of the Minister for the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. This said, council can still put a submission into the project which would reflect the direction and feelings of the community. I will also note that submissions can be made by any member of the community and I would encourage members of the community to have their say to ensure the entire community's views are represented.

Council's submission will also include other issues that are in the hands of council, including a road dilapidation report, water usage both for concrete manufacturing and dust suppression and the possibility of social impacts. You can be assured that council will not trade off detrimental impacts to our roads, waste facilities or a secure water supply for residents to develop any project.

Two wind turbine proponents have offices in town, Walcha Energy at 13W Fitzroy Street and Vestas (Winterbourne Wind) in the Fitzroy Street entrance of the Nutrien building. Information in regards to all projects within the LGA being developed by these proponents is available there and the scale and visual impacts can be viewed on maps and montages.

I believe all residents who have a vision for Walcha into the future should familiarise themselves with these projects, their benefits, their impacts and disadvantages. As residents I believe we should be able to help shape the future of our area, and after the determination of the project it will be too late to say we wanted it to happen, or didn't want it to happen and we did not take the opportunity to have our input.

Projects like these usually include a Community Fund component, where a financial contribution is made to the community. It should also be understood that this is to the community and not to council and a body is formed to delegate these funds amongst those that apply. Councils quite often administer these funds but do not have the power or delegation to determine who benefits.

Another part of the process is the appointment of a Community Consultative Committee. This committee has an independent chair appointed by the Minister and gives an avenue for the community to access the project proponent and have questions and issues addressed.

The minutes of these meetings, along with the appointed members of this committee can be viewed on the Vestas Winterbourne Wind website under Project Documents. As I have written before I sit on that committee and am happy to take any item or concerns to their meetings.

In the words of Molly Meldrum, "do yourself a favour" and engage in the path of renewable projects in our Local Government Area. These are massive projects, both from a financial and visual impact position. They will have positive and negative impacts on our community for at least the next 25 years. There is a lot of information out there on both sides and it is our responsibility to sort through this and gain an informed position.

Walcha Central School Garden Club buzz



Walcha Central School's Garden Club, the Dunghutti Diggers, has been successful in receiving a Woolworths Junior Landcare Grant. The club is very excited, with plans to add a Kiwi Fruit vine and Apple trees to the garden to increase the range of fruit they can grow and eat at school.

As a part of the grant, a birdbath will be installed to provide water for the bees and more native plants will be planted in nearby gardens. Students and teachers are looking forward to working on and learning from this project.

Pictured, left to right: Veja-Lee Petuha, Brett Gardiner, Dustin Wellings, Mark Grayling, Mrs Jennifer Grayling, Eli Wellings, Isabelle Saxby, Olivia Mulligan and Francesca Nivison.

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Jen Kealey resigns from Vestas

Jen Kealey has been working with Vestas in the role of Community Engagement Officer for the Winterbourne Wind Farm since February. It is with regret that we announce that Jen has resigned from the role, effective last week. Vestas will seek to fill this position soon. Until this position is filled the Walcha office will not be staffed. All enquiries can be directed to the Project Manager Doug Landfear M: 0436 927 806 E: info@winterbournewindfarm.com.au

letters to the editor



Thank you everyone

Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to the Tennis Club's Biggest Morning Tea. Thank you everyone who cooked, donated a raffle prize, made up the plates for delivery, those that delivered the plates and those that helped at the clubhouse. A huge thank you to everyone who made a donation. Walcha is full of wonderfully generous people.

The final tally is an absolutely amazing \$5,250. We have come so far, from our humble beginnings where we raised a few hundred dollars each year until now. According to the records Kate at the Cancer Council found we started in 2004 and we have raised over \$37,000. Everyone involved please accept this as my personal thanks.

Jenny Hoy

Census work available

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is currently recruiting 20,000 Census Field Officers with applications closing soon.

With Census being held on Tuesday 10, Field Officers are required around the Walcha area. Those interested in taking on this role need to be available during the months of July and August.

Field Officers play a crucial role assisting the ABS at a local level by delivering Census instructions and forms to households that have not yet responded. The ABS like to recruit locally to ensure Field Officers are familiar with the local area.

If you are interested in becoming a Field Officer in the Walcha area for Census 2021, you can submit your online application at www.censusjobs.adecco.com.au

Who Do You Think You Are?

SBS will be showing an episode of 'Who Do You Think You Are' on 20th July featuring Channel 10 news reader Chris Bath.

Chris Bath is related to the Bath family who were early pioneers in the Walcha district. "My understanding is that they filmed some of the episode in Walcha," Jenny Lister said.



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Big win for Kentucky at Eisteddfod

Students at Kentucky School proved they have many talents when they performed in three different sections at the Armidale Eisteddfod last Wednesday, winning the Marimba and Recorder sections, as well as coming second in the choir.

They returned home with the Armidale Small Schools Trophy for their outstanding effort. What made this achievement even more remarkable is that the whole school from Kindergarten to Year 6, a total of 33 children, performed.

The choir sang two songs, *Raining on the Rock* and *Riding Round on Golf Balls*, followed by two songs on the recorder and two songs on the marimbas.

School Principal, Fiona Uren congratulated the students winning the trophy with it being a very memorable day for all involved.



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Years 3-6 St Patrick's Choir



K-2 St Patrick's Choir



St Patrick's students receive high praise at Eisteddfod

Last Tuesday St Patrick's School students treated the audience at the Armidale Eisteddfod with an outstanding performance by their choirs.

The Kindergarten to Year 2 Choir sang 'Seasons Go Round' and 'The Silly Postman' with some fabulous movements and facial expressions to entertain the audience. The judges commented on their beautiful voices and how many words they had to remember.

The second group from Years 3-6 sang 'Fire Fire' and 'Flooding Rain' with such passion. Adjudicator comments were: "You all sang with sensitivity and lots of energy. The body percussion was excellent."

School Principal Belinda Burton congratulated the whole school community for their support of the students. "Our school had the majority of guests in the audience which was a wonderful support for the students as they performed. I was also congratulated by one of the organisers on our children's behaviour and manners. I have to say that I am extremely proud of our children and all that they do," Belinda said.

The students were prepared for the Eisteddfod by Mrs Mackson from the New England Conservatorium of Music during their Mini Mistrel lessons at school.

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thumbs



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- 👍 To the Walcha Council for removing the dangerous branches from the dead tree near the Woolbrook cemetery.

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Tennis

Round 6 of the Eskimo Comp was played out on Tuesday 1 June. Top players on the night with a max score of 18 were Jen Hoy (floating for Mel Clark) and Trev Gibson. Well done to those players.

Round 7 of the Eskimo Comp was played out on Tuesday 8 June. Top players on the night scoring 18 from a possible 18 were: Nick Buckland, Graeme Wall and Dennis Wall (playing for Trev Gibson). Well done to those players. Tuesday 15 June will be the final round of the comp. Good luck to all players.

The next Club meeting will be held on Monday 12 July at 6.30pm. All members are welcome to attend. See you all at the net soon.

Darts

Firstly, the Walcha Dart Club would like to express its sincere condolences to the Cross family on the passing of one of our long time patrons, I.J. You will be sorely missed mate.

At the Bowling Club the Apsley Arrows defeated BC 10/1. High scorers for the Apsley, V Costigan 117, 123, C Watts 135, 100 x 5, T Baumer 125, Tu 105 and N Dark 100 and 116, while Dal Evans scored 115 for the BC. At the Commercial, Commercials defeated Rednecks 8/3. Top scorers for the Comicals were C Brown 100, M Stackman 120 and Guff 100 x 3. For the Rednecks, B Green 100 x 2, 119, S Eveleigh 100 and Daniel L 100 and 114.

Games this week: Apsley v Magnificent 7 and New England Rednecks v BC. The Commercial has the week off.

Bowls

The John Oxley Triples were played on the weekend. Sixteen teams competed, with a local team taking out first prize: G Bird, S Goodwin and K Goodwin with four wins and 41 ends.

Runners-up were Wauchope: B Loan, G Bridge and M Radcliffe with four wins and 40 Ends. Third position went to Comboyne/Walcha: E Holley, A McGuffog and G Brooker, four Wins and 36 ends, while Glen Innes took out fourth: D Stokes, B Ovard and I Pringle with three wins and 37 ends.

On Monday there was a Mixed Pairs competition: winners E Hunt and B Goodwin, two wins and 21 ends. Second position P & D Makeham, two wins and 20 ends and 45 shots. Third position went to E & B Brooker, two wins and 20 end and 43 shots.

A big thank you to all the bowlers that travelled to compete and support the club. Also a big thank you to Noel and Allan for running another successful carnival.

Draw for this weekend: Sunday, Pairs Semi Final – G Bird and S Goodwin v N and B Goodwin.

Ladies Bowls

There were no bowls played last Thursday due to the inclement weather. This Thursday 17 June there are no championship games set down, but Social Bowls will be on. Also this Thursday is our monthly to start at 1.00pm.

At the 19th

A Two Person Ambrose competition was played with trophies donated by Nutrien Boulton's last Sunday, where Michael Stackman teamed up with Jack O'Hara to win the event with a 65^{1/4} nett.

Runners-up were Ross King and Lachie Fletcher just half a shot back on 65^{3/4} but had to survive a countback with Angus and Pip Monie who carded the same score.

The remaining sweepstake prizes went to Ruth and Lee Fletcher 66^{1/4}, Will Brennan and Miles Archdale 67^{3/4}. Sharpest shooter at the third pin was Michael Stackman.

This Sunday is a Stroke Medal round for a prize supplied by Neil Dark.

Co-Patron, life member and former President I. J. Cross left this world last Thursday and will be sadly missed. Condolences to all his family members and his many friends. I.J. and his wife Colleen spent countless hours both playing and carrying out voluntary duties at the Walcha Golf Club, something they thoroughly enjoyed.

I. J. will be farewelled at the Presbyterian Church today, Wednesday, from 11.00am.

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To apply, simply view Positions Vacant on Council's website. Further information may be obtained by contacting Council's Director Environment and Development Lacey Latham on 02 6774 2500.

Applications close 5pm Friday 25 June 2021.

Public Notices



WALCHA COUNCIL

Draft 2021 – 2022 Operational Plan including Budget

The Council, at its Ordinary Meeting held on 26 May 2021, approved a DRAFT 2021 – 2022 Budget & Operational Plan. The draft Budget and Operational Plan will be on public exhibition for a period of 28 days as per the Local Government Act 1993 Section 405(3). Copies of the Plan are available at the Council Chambers, Hamilton Street, Walcha and on its website: www.walcha.nsw.gov.au until 5.00pm Wednesday 23 June 2021. During this time written submissions on the draft Budget and Operational Plan will be received by Council.

Chris Weber, Interim General Manager
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Walcha Support Group Inc. Thurs 24 June, 1.00pm WCCC rooms Middle St. All welcome.

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DEADLINE MONDAY 4.30PM.

Editor: Anthea Macpherson. Advertising and Sport: Rosalie Gibson, Megan Scrivener and Sue Jackson.

church notices



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1.00pm – Social Bowls

Friday 18

2.00pm – BINGO

6.00pm – Bistro

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Butter Chicken with rice

Flathead Popcorn and salad

Regular menu plus delicious desserts

7.00pm – FREE BINGO

8.00pm – Meat and Veg Raffles

followed by Members Draw

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6.00pm – Bistro open

Sunday 20

12pm – Bistro open

1.00pm – Meat & Veg Raffles

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