After visiting the displays in and around Camden and Wollondilly, especially the many houses which have been adorned by Christmas lights, take some time to visit the city of Sydney to see this wonderful Christmas tree and other festive lights.

Photo supplied by Sydney City Council.

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.
The Higher School Certificate results are out and there are those who have done exceptionally well and congratulations to them and everyone else who and working collaboratively.

Cameron has to contend with more urbanisation while lobbying for the associated infrastructure that goes with it, and trying to keep the historic Camden town safe from modernism. Wollondilly has to also balance rural and urban to allow development without risking the area's production. It is clear that each local government area has to work for the betterment of their communities which also means the elected representatives stepping up and working collaboratively.

Remember those less fortunate - it's a selfless and appreciated kindness. For those who are willing to be home alone on Christmas Day and need someone to talk to, contact Lifeline.

Wollondilly has to also balance rural and urban - allow development without risking the area's production. It is clear that each local government area has to work for the betterment of their communities which also means the elected representatives stepping up and working collaboratively.

2016, the year that was

If you would like to send a Letter to the Editor, please keep your letter to a reasonable length, 200 words is preferred. Letters can be edited for space or legal reasons.

To the Editor, The District Reporter, PO Box 116, Camden 2570.
Action for inaction

Camden police are set to take further industrial action after the NSW government failed to respond to its calls for more officers.

The Police Association of NSW has stepped up its campaign - its members have been calling for additional officer for two-and-a-half years and have gone through all the correct channels - they are frustrated by the lack of action.

The industrial action, which started this week, includes warnings instead of infringement notices and non-reporting of statistics - which are highly favoured at this time of the year by management - it's expected to last until January 16 unless negotiations happen beforehand.

"The police will still be doing their job," Rod Sheraton from the Police Association said.

"We are open to negotiation." Mr Sheraton said the decision to take additional action wasn't taken lightly.

He said since 2012, the officers from Camden local area command (LAC) have been calling for more officers and despite the increase in population and the creation of several new suburbs within the local area command which also takes in large parts of Wollondilly - there's been inaction on the part of the NSW government and police hierarchy.

"In the last financial year 2015-2016 there's been an additional 1600 calls for assistance."

The command has 96 police and is supposed to have 97 at full operational capacity - the police association said its members want an additional 28 officers to cope with the growth and increased workload.

"It's crazy to think the state government has not increased officer numbers in line with the population growth," Mr Sheraton said.

He said despite the bureaucrats promoting Workforce Optimisation Solution for Policing (WOSP) several months ago as a plan for the reallocation of officers - nothing has eventuated from that initiative.

He added that along with resources being stretched, so are response times. "Camden police take six minutes longer to respond to a job because of distance and increased workload."

The command is vast covering Leppington to parts of the Southern Highlands.

Daniel Ryder from Camden Police and a member of the association highlighted that the community won't be impact ed by the action.

"We will drop everything at a heartbeat to respond to an emergency; we are police and want to help the community. This (industrial action) will have no adverse effect on the community." Mr Sheraton said there's been a lot of community support for the police officers and their campaign.

Camden councillors supported a notice of motion last week by Labor councillor Cindy Cagney to write to the NSW Premier, Minister for Police, Camden and Wollondilly MPs and the Commissioner of Police as well as federal MPs for Macarthur and Hume and Wollondilly Council to seek their support for more police.

Mr Sheraton was pleased with the support.

Wollondilly MP, Jai Rowell, understood the police's frustration and indicated more officers will be directed to the local command. "Out of the 329 graduating class Camden has already two new officers; they will get a lot more than two, but not before the end of this year," Mr Rowell conceded.

"I support the hard work the men and women of our police do...the government is delivering more police."

"There are unique challenges within the Camden LAC, which have been highlighted to the government; I support our local police."

Wollondilly Council has also passed a notice of motion for an increase in officer numbers - especially within the shire and will pass on its support to the police association.
Proposed Modification of Development Consent

Property: 83 Menangle Street, Picton (Lot: 13 DP: 1188967)

For the purpose of: Modification of Development Consent

Amended Plans Block C & Increase Units from 36 to 40

Applicant: Deemkies Pty Ltd

Consent Authority: Wollondilly Shire Council

An application has been received by Wollondilly Shire Council under Section 96(2) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 to modify Development Consent No. 02/144799-05 which consented to Staged 36 Residential Units & Strata Title Subdivision at 83 Menangle Street, Picton, between 8am and 4pm Monday to Friday (public holidays excluded) for 30 days commencing 22 December 2016.

Any person may make a written submission in relation to the Development Application. Written submissions received may become a public document. Submissions will be received until 4pm on 16 January 2017. Any written submission may be directed to Elliot Weston on telephone (02) 4677 9562 or email council@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au. Submissions will be received until 4pm on 16 January 2017.

Any person may make a written submission in relation to the Development Application. Written submissions received may become a public document. Submissions will be received until 4pm on 16 January 2017.

Any written submission may be inspected at the Council Office, 62-64 Menangle Street, Picton, between 8am and 4pm Monday to Friday (public holidays excluded) for a period of 15 days from 22 December 2016 to 16 January 2017.

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Tribute paid to Private Kelloway

On a non-descript Saturday as people were busily going about their business - a small number of others stopped for the morning at Mt Hunter War Memorial to remember a family member who known one really knew, but had all heard of in passing - Fred Kelloway - a 22 year-old local who was killed in France on November 29, 1916.

In a moving ceremony - Fred’s nephew and nieces well into their 80s and 90s paid tribute to a family member little talked about - but always remembered.

The people who stood there at the Mt Hunter War Memorial learnt something of Fred’s short life and his ultimate sacrifice.

Before that ceremony, little was known about the soldier. For his immediate family who are long-gone - talking about their son and brother after the war years was too hard to bear.

The Kelloway clan settled in Mt Hunter in 1854. Fred was born 1893 and was the seventh child of Stephen and Prudence, he attend Camden School before becoming a labourer.

At age 22 on October 10, 1915 he signed up to go to war. He was posted as a private to the 19th Battalion when he left Australia’s shores for the war overseas.

Having recovered from a bout of mumps in an Auxiliary Hospital in Cairo, he was sent to rejoin his battalion at Port of Marseilles in France.

Fred and his unit were moved for operations during the Somme Offensive, attacking Germans during the Battle of Pozières. The attack was devastating.

The battalion was rotated out of action and moved north to Belgium. However, men were brought back with orders to attack the Germans across the cratered landscape that was now covered in mud from heavy rainfall.

Fred was wounded when his battalion launched an attack in Flers. He was shot in his right thigh which fractured his femur. He was transported to the military hospital in Rouen, but died of his wounds. Fred was buried in St Sever Cemetery in France.

Fred Kelloway was one of three locals from Fosters Lane, Cawdor who enlisted during World War One - they all perished.

Santa gets his call sign for big trip

Getting ready for his Australia visit Santa checks out our air traffic control tower at Melbourne Airport. Photo courtesy of Airservices Australia.

Airservices preparations for Santa’s visit to Australia on December 24, one of the busiest nights of the year for air traffic controllers are well underway.

Airservices has now allocated Santa his 2016 call sign-SLEIGH RIDER ONE-to communicate with air traffic control on Christmas Eve.

“We have used a number of initiatives including the use of tailwinds to lessen the effort for the reindeers to keep them fresh for the long trip, reducing airborne holding by making Santa the priority for the big flight and ensuring we minimise Santa’s sleigh noise by using a ‘continuous descent’ when arriving into every airport,” a spokesperson for Airservices said.

In the lead-up to Christmas, Airservices has been working closely with Santa to ensure safe and efficient passage for his sleigh and reindeer across the nation’s skies.
The Dilly Wanderer mobile mini-bus is used by Council and the WHA as a community engagement and information service. It visits towns and villages in the Shire providing information to community members and activities for children and families to participate in.

Over a short period the Dilly Wanderer has generated positive community engagement, improved health literacy and social connectedness and expanded its reach to remote areas of the Shire. Furthermore it has tailored its services to meet the health needs of the towns or villages it visits.

The Dilly Wanderer visits the towns and villages of Wollondilly each week, for a copy of the schedule visit the Resident Services section of Councils website, www.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au.

On Thursday last week I attended the round table discussion with Western and South Western Sydney Council leaders and Federal Member, Angus Taylor, to discuss:

- Maximising existing health and education facilities
- Generating opportunities for more jobs
- Creating better connections with other regions

We also talked about the need to reduce red tape and committed to taking a regional approach to deliver better outcomes for all communities. We can all see the opportunities that lie ahead and as a connected whole we will plan the Western Sydney City Deal.

In making a decision about the draft Planning Proposal and draft amendments to the Wollondilly Development Control Plan (DCP) 2016 it will be on public exhibition from Wednesday 14 December 2016 until Friday 3 February 2017.

Information relating to this proposal can be viewed at the following locations:

- Council’s website at www.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au and search for “Advertisements”;
- Appin Post Office, Shop 4 & 5, 73 Appin Rd, Appin NSW Monday to Friday between 7am - 6pm Saturday 7:30am - 1pm, Sunday 7:30am - 12.30pm (public holidays excluded);
- Council’s Customer Service Centre at 62 Menangle Street, Picton between 8am and 4pm Monday to Friday (public holidays excluded);
- Council’s Library at 42 Menangle Street, Picton between Monday to Friday 9.30am - 5pm (til 6pm on Thursday) and Saturday 9am - 12pm (public holidays excluded)

Any person may make a written submission or comment. These will be considered by the Council in making a decision about the draft Planning Proposal and must be received by 4pm on Friday 3 February 2017.

Written submissions should be addressed to the General Manager and quote reference number TRIM 6585 and may be submitted:

By Email: council@wollondilly.nsw.gov.au
By Post: Wollondilly Shire Council PO Box 21, PICTON NSW 2571
By Facsimile:(02) 4677 2339
In person: Hand delivered to Council’s offices at 62-64 Menangle Street, Picton

Telephone enquiries regarding this draft Planning Proposal should be directed to Nicole Aiken Council’s Strategic Planner at 4677 9746.

Privacy

Any submission you make is open to public scrutiny. Council is required to release written comments or submissions under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA). The Act imposes obligations on us to place submissions on Council’s website and submissions may be used in Council reports or court proceedings. In this regard, your comments should be restricted to the proposed development.
Grocery grab for Christmas

"I always wondered what it would be like running about grabbing things as fast as possible," said a slightly out of breath Dara mis Terry after finishing her hectic Grocery Grab at Khan’s Supa IGA on Saturday.

Mrs Terry was the winner of Picton Rotary Club’s Grocery Grab competition - she had three minutes race to around the aisles of the local IGA supermarket grabbing whatever possible in that time.

The tab for the grocery items was paid for by the club, which had won a hamper of groceries by Stephanie Bourke.

Both thought the tossing of a large leg of ham into the trolley could well have been replaced by sweets and flavoured beverages - "Mum didn't grab everything that I wanted," Isla said.

Accompanying Mrs Terry on her dash were her two children Isla and Finlay whose encouragement to "hurry up Mum" also raised $500 for the competition.

A consolation prize of a shopping voucher was won by Chris Feeney. A consolation prize of a shopping voucher was been selling raffles for this competition for six weeks.

Thousands of homes and businesses across the Camden and Narellan area will soon have access to fast and reliable broadband on the NBN network. More than 21,600 homes and businesses from Camden to Cobbitty, Harrington Park to Mount Annan are expect- ed to be ready to connect to the NBN net- work by the end of April 2017. "The first areas have already gone live, with 2259 premises in Currans Hill, parts of Smeaton Grange and Catherine Field able to connect today," Federal MP for Hume Angus Taylor said.

"Switch-on for the remaining 19,365 premises are expected by the end of April. "This includes homes and businesses in Camden, Elderslie, Camden South, Mount Annan, Narellan Vale, Smeaton Grange, Camden Park, Harrington Park, Ellis Lane, Kirkham and Cobbitty."

Mr Taylor said his office is regularly con- tacted by constituents wanting "fast and reli- able broadband".

"To view the coverage maps, and be noti- fied when your home or business is ready for service, I'd encourage people to visit NBN's website here http://www.nbnco.com.au/ learns-about-the-nbn/rollout-map.html."

As at November 2016, there were 30,587 homes and businesses ready for service in Hume (including Tahmoor, Appin and Goulburn) and of these, 7462 had an active nbn connection across the fixed line, fixed wireless and satellite technologies.

NEW GREGORY HILLS CENTRE!

INTRODUCING A NEW GENERATION OF CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION

Book in for one of our SNEAK PEEK Preview nights
Contact Centre Director Katrina Baines by email kbaines@exceedgroup.net.au or phone as bellow, allowing families to secure their position for 2017.

Exceed Early Education & Care is a privately owned "super service" offering long day care, before and after school care and vacation care, a swim school, tutoring, dance, children's hairdressing services and a full physical education and sports program. We offer a range of children's services which is unprecedented in one location, all designed to support family quality time together.

We hope that by developing our very own "child focused community" that we will assist children and parents to build connections between their carers, mentors, teachers and other families.

Exceed Early Education & Care Before and After School Care and Vacation Care offers centre based care for primary aged children. Before and After School Care operates during school terms and Vacation Care operates during all school holidays, with the exception of public holidays. Dynamic and flexible programs based on the My Time Our Place National Curriculum Framework will be provided, allowing the children to choose activities and experiences they would like to participate in each day.

In addition, our program includes opportunities for a large amount of outdoor play, encouraging children to challenge themselves physically and work as part of a team as they participate in a wide range of free choice and organised sporting activities.

For enrolment information: Please visit our website www.exceedgroup.net.au and follow the links or contact our Centre Director Katrina Baines 0428 052 373

Exceed Early Education and Care
www.exceedgroup.net.au
PHONE: 0428 052 373
Address: 67-77 Lasso Rd, Gregory Hills
Deb ball committee calls it a day

For more than four decades - young ladies from around Wollondilly and even Camden have donned on beautiful white gowns and made their début into society - but The Oaks Debutante Ball Committee has called it a day and has disbanded.

From the closure of the committee, Mater Dei will receive a windfall after the committee decided to donate its remaining bank balance to the Catholic school which caters for children with an intellectual disability.

The Oaks Debutante Ball has been a popular event since it was established in 1973 - but recently it was decided to close the chapter on this part of the area’s history as like many committees have suffered over the years - the lack of “human resources” has made it difficult to continue.

Peg McEntee OAM, chair of the committee said it didn’t have the numbers anymore to plan and organise the annual event. The last ball was held in 2014.

“As some funds were still in hand it was decided to make a donation to Mater Dei to assist the school in the wonderful support they give to families with special needs,” Mrs McEntee said.

Simone Wilson from Mater Dei said the $4000 will be used to subsidy a child’s school fees.

Ms Wilson said many parents who send their children to the school also have to cope with medical expenses and this money will go towards helping at least one family with school fees for 2017.

Deb balls were a way of introducing young ladies to society, which saw young ladies dressed in white satin, lace or chiffon ball gowns and the boys in their suits - they danced.

Each of the balls was adapted to each generation, the initial idea in Wollondilly came about from a desire by some locals to host their own event rather than travel to Camden or Parramatta - it was the work of Oaks locals Wendy Rudd and Susan Duck who received great support in 1973.

Treasurer Sharon Ditton said the local balls were different from other debutante balls that were around and attracted ladies from all over Wollondilly, Camden and even Campbelltown on the rare occasion.

"Each year we chose a theme for the ball and decorated The Oaks Hall accordingly...and we usually had an opening dance or pantomime using siblings of the debutantes to perform something related to the theme - it was our way of getting everyone involved."

Part of the committee also included dancers such as Bill and Yvonne Englert who instructed the youngsters with the different dances such as the waltz.

The Oaks & District Debutante Ball Committee was made up of locals Peg McEntee, Sharon Ditton, Susan Donohoe, Lynette Keneally and Enid Roche.

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Macarthur based, South West Sydney Academy of Sport athlete, 14 year-old Ella Wooldridge is building on the region's outstanding reputation of producing high quality Triathletes. Ella is currently enjoying a real ‘purple patch’ of form and it comes as no surprise that she is gaining high acclamation for her achievements.

In recent weeks she has won the ‘Jackie Fairweather Memorial ‘Junior Sports Hotshot Award’. Ella is currently enjoying a real ‘purple patch’ of form and it comes as no surprise that she is gaining high acclamation for her achievements.

Ella is also very prominent at the recent region's Zone Athletics Carnival at the Campbelltown Sports Stadium, winning four races, running three personal bests, setting two zone records and running a National qualifier for the 1500m. This would be considered an excellent weekend's work, for any budding young athlete.

To cap off this impressive list of recent achievement's Ella was also awarded the prestigous Campbelltown Catholic Clubs 'Junior Sports Hotshot Award'.

Training with the SWSAS triathlon squad under the guidance of head coach Guy Creber is really agreeing with Ella.

The athlete just loves her sport and the Wooldridge's are a highly motivated family and the SWSAS squad is as dedicated as any squad you will ever come across.

She added that the academy atmosphere is supportive and also competitive, and the progress of its athletes across the whole squad is testimony to the environment provided.

Ella will need to keep at the on top of her form, as she has two younger sisters snapping at her heels.

Ella is with her in SWSAS and Mia who is only 10 and described as a 'little dynamite' is already showing excellent potential.

Erin is with her in SWSAS and Mia who is only 10 and described as a 'little dynamite' is already showing excellent potential.

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Ella is with her in SWSAS and Mia who is only 10 and described as a 'little dynamite' is already showing excellent potential.

The academy's sport's manager James Watson said 'you will often hear athletes talk of 'sacrifices and hard work', but not here, these girls are dedicated, they get up early and put in big sessions, nevertheless they don't see it as hard work, but fun and an opportunity to excel'.
Debt protection and insurance for self-managed super funds

With a number of changes being made to the investment rules for self-managed super funds, allowing investments in a wider range of assets including property assets, many self-managed super funds have a large percentage of assets tied up in a single investment - leading to lack of liquidity.

Appropriate insurance coverage becomes especially important when SMSFs look at property investment and have debt. Often investors overlook the need for insurance cover when they establish a SMSF and they may not be aware that any existing cover they have with an industry fund or retail offering may not be adequate.

The unexpected payout of a member's benefits (due to a member's death or total and permanent disability) could leave the SMSF facing a liquidity crisis. Without appropriate insurance in place, assets such as property within the SMSF may need to be sold to pay out member benefits. This could have a number of devastating effects including:

- Property assets are sold under pressure to pay back loans which may result in low realisation values and, potential loss of income from property leases.
- Total and permanent disability of a member results in access of 100% of superannuation benefit as a lump sum which effectively wipes out the fund, as well as Delays in payment to beneficiaries due to time to liquidate assets.

There has been further changes relating to purchasing of insurances associated with SMSFs, meaning you may need to investigate an appropriate risk strategy as part of your SMSF. Some things to note, especially prior to July 2014 include:

- Some insurance policies may not be tax deductible when owned by a SMSF, as opposed to personal ownership. Changes are in place for “own occupation” TPD insurance where benefits are paid if the insured is not able to work in a similar occupation to their current job; Could self-insurance be a more appropriate option due to age or illnness? Do changes to rules to do with artwork and collectables affect your fund? These funds will need Insurance for these assets to comply with the changes, and, Property insurance should also be a consideration for SMSFs investing in property.

If you want more information about debt protection and insurance for your self-managed super fun, contact Grabowski Financial Planning.

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Who is a millionaire?

by John Jones

At a time when many have received information as to how the January 1 changes to Centrelink Age Pension calculations will affect them, it may be of some comfort to put things into a bit of perspective.

The Loss?
The reality is that bringing the Age Pension benefits back to a rate they were prior to when Treasurer Peter Costello halved the tapering rate in 2007. This resulted in increasing the upper asset test threshold, for a married home-owning couple, from approximately $531K to $839K, an increase of $308K. The current readjustment decreases the upper threshold from approximately $1.2m to $823K. A decrease of $328K

For the pensioners affected, this could be seen as a loss of future income, or looking at the larger picture, about nine years of extra income. Is the glass half full or half empty?

Either way, the result will be that a substantial number of current pensioners, may lose their entitlements (except the Commonwealth Health Care Card), or have their benefits reduced. Most likely this will result in those effected to drawing on their saving to maintain their desired lifestyles. This will in turn reduce their assets. If so, sooner or later they will be able to fall back on the safety net of the aged pension, once again.

The Gain?
The full single aged pension in Australia, with all entitlements, is currently worth $867 per fortnight. This equates to $22,542 per annum.

This is paid by the Australian Government, so it is a guaranteed ‘return’ for the recipient.

To use a very simple point of comparison, the current annual return on a 12-month term deposit with the NAB is 2.4%. A client would need a deposit worth almost $840,000 to generate a guaranteed return of $22,542 per year.

Therefore, one way to look at it is that the existence of the aged pension constitutes a safety net for every Australian aged over 65 - and that safety net is worth up to $3 million in terms of its ability generate a guaranteed, inflation adjusted return. For this reason, when we meet people on a full or aged pension we often observe that they have become a bit too conservative a bit too soon with any money they do have to invest.

While the logic is understandable (people on a pension have not got much to lose), the reality is that a person on a pension can consider adopting a less conservative investment strategy than they might otherwise think. This is especially the case given that the pension is protected. Early this year the government announced the investor to take the longer term timeframe on their investments that they might otherwise think they need to avoid.

If you receive, or may be eligible for, any type of Centrelink benefit, it is essential that you investigate all the legal ways to maximise your Centrelink benefits. Centrelink is a complex beast, and so it would be our pleasure to meet you, or someone you know, to discuss how Centrelink might be managed to your best advantage.

Source: More information re this and other issues will soon be available at abetterlife.net.au

John Jones CFP AR: 244993 is an authorised representative of Dover Financial Advisers Pty Ltd ABN 54 139 535 651 AFSL 307248. This is general information only and may not be suitable to you. Before acting on anything in this article it is recommended that you seek personal financial advice.

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Financial...
Festive foods are a no-no for pets

It may be hard to resist a pleading face, but it could save your pet's life. Christmas food is among some of the most dangerous for animals to consume. So before you drop a titbit under the table, think about what it could do to your pet's health.

Many common Christmas foods contain ingredients that can do serious internal damage or even be fatal to animals. Grapes, chocolate and onion are just a few of the things that can cause your poor pooch intense pain, or make your beloved cat vomit.

"Pet owners could find themselves spending Christmas at a veterinary emergency hospital if their animal overindulges in festive foods," RSPCA NSW Chief Veterinarian Christina Zhu said.

"Don't share human food and drinks with your pets at Christmas, as what does not affect you may be toxic to your pet."

Festive foods to keep away from your pets:
- Alcohol - Can cause intoxicated lack of coordination, poor breathing, and even coma and death
- Avocado - Can cause diarrhoea, heart congestion and vomiting in dogs
- Chocolate - For dogs, can cause diarrhoea, an elevated heart rate, seizures and vomiting
- Coffee - Can be fatal to dogs, and cause seizures, heart problems and vomiting
- Fruit cake - Currants, grapes and raisins - all common ingredients in a fruit cake - are toxic to a dog's kidneys. Eating these can make your four-legged friend lethargic, and cause increased thirst and vomiting. Fruit cake also often contains alcohol, which can also be toxic.
- Macadamia nuts - Can cause severe abdominal pain, the inability to walk and an increased heart rate
- Onion - Can cause your pet's red blood cells to burst, leading to anaemia
- Pork or ham - Can cause intense pain, pancreatitis and shock

All the visitors over the festive period also mean a lot of handbags lying around. These can be a serious danger for persistent pets, as many contain sugarless chewing gum and pain medication. Chewing gum commonly contains xylitol. This is poisonous to dogs, causing lethargy, liver failure, seizures, vomiting and weakness. Paracetamol may be your lifesaver if you have overindulged over the festive period. However, for pets, it can be fatal, particularly for cats. Warning signs that your feline friend has managed to help himself are grey-blue gums and salvation.

If your pet eats anything they shouldn't have, or displays any of the side effects listed above, take them to your local veterinarian as quickly as possible.

Pet of the Week

Bronson

Bronson is a six month old moggy who is cute as a button. He is a little shy and has probably been staying for quite a while before making his way into Wollondilly Animal Shelter. He is slowly warming to stuff and starting to come out of his shell with the people he knows. His adoption price is $190 and this includes microchipping, vaccination, desexing and lifetime registration. Give me a second chance at a better life and he will be a perfect companion. There's also a litter of kittens available for adoption now. To find out more about Bronson or the kittens call the shelter on 4677 1100. Adopt an animal and make a difference.

Vet Chat

Chocolates are toxic to dogs

Dr Steven Ferguson

While it may be tempting to make the dog part of the Christmas festivities feeding them a chocolate treat is a big no-no, actually it can be fatal.

As the holiday season draws closer, it is important to remember that there are some human treats that are just not safe for our furry companions to enjoy.

One such treat is chocolate. Some dogs may like the taste of chocolate, or may just be in the habit of indiscriminately eating everything in their path.

Either way, chocolate can be very toxic to dogs so make sure you keep it out of reach of your furry friends.

If you have boxes of chocolate wrapped under the Christmas tree you may come home to find a very sick dog surrounded by chocolate wrappers.

The theobromine component of chocolate (found in the cocoa bean used to make the chocolate) affects the cardiovascular and central nervous system of dogs. This leads to symptoms such as restlessness, fast heart rate, seizures, tremors, vomiting and diarrhoea. These signs typically appear around one - four hours after the dog has eaten the chocolate.

The cocoa content of the chocolate is important in assessing how toxic it is to your dog. The type of chocolate the dog has eaten may assist in this assessment. For example, baking chocolate contains more cocoa than dark chocolate; dark chocolate contains more cocoa than milk chocolate; and milk chocolate contains more cocoa than white chocolate.

Just 100mg/kg of theobromine is toxic to dogs. This is present in approximately 20g of dark chocolate (about two squares of Lindt dark chocolate). Various brands of chocolate will have differing values so this is just an approximation, so it is important that no matter how little you think your dog may have eaten, you contact your vet.

If your dog has eaten chocolate it may need immediate treatment including induced vomiting (to remove the toxic substance from the body), prevention of further absorption into the body (by administration of substances such as activated charcoal), monitoring and supportive care until the toxic chocolate makes it way out of the dogs body.

It is important that we keep our dogs happy and healthy over the holiday period and that means keeping the chocolate out of an inquisitive canine's way.
By Magnolia Bonnet

Nature's Christmas bells

No snow, no reindeer, no sleighbells, no 4 o'clock twilight and cozy firesides, but it is nevertheless still the Christmas season. The first Europeans must have been a little out of sorts at this time of year.

Not to worry, as always Mother Nature came up with abundant floral consolation for Christmas decoration. There was the NSW Christmas bush Ceratopetalum gummiferum, with its beautiful sprays of tiny white flowers and red star shaped sepals. Bunches of Christmas bush are a charming decoration, a little understated perhaps, in the general garishness of tinsel time.

In earlier times, the settlers gathered another native plant for decoration. Long-lasting as a cut flower, it can last for twelve days in a vase if picked when the first flower bud is just starting to split. The flowers were abundant in December, so it is no surprise that the Blundortha grandiflora soon earned the name Christmas bells. The tubular, red with yellow tipped flowers hung in clusters of six or seven on stems above grassy clumps.

This native plant is protected now. So of course there is no more gathering without a permit. But don’t be confused, as there is another flower also called Christmas bells.

This particular Christmas bells is another clump forming plant, but a tuberous perennial this time. It has umbels brown spotted red tubular flowers with green tips - Alostomia pulchella. Commonly called New Zealand Christmas Bells, but before you all go off about how New Zealanders are always getting claimed as Australian, I have to tell you that this plant is actually a native of Brazil.

So decorate to your heart's content, no sleigh bells, but plenty of Christmas bells. No tinsel in sight - don’t get me started on tinsel and landfill.

Whichever type of floral decoration you choose, native or otherwise, the beautiful thing about decorating with these Christmas bells is that they are the decoration that keeps on giving, they are entirely compostable.

Nature's own Christmas bells.

Here’s an extra recipe for the New Year that doesn’t require any cooking, refrigerating or even eating, but a bit of thought and a big smile.

Recipe for a Happy New Year

Ingredients: 1 cup love 3 cups of peace ½ cup of harmony 4 tablespoons of kindness 2 tablespoons of empathy 100 grams of sharing

1 kilogram of helping
Season to taste with Faith

Method:
1. Put love, peace, harmony and sharing in a large bowl and mix well
2. Add kindness, empathy and helping and blend lightly with other ingredients
3. Place in a warm heart and allow to rise naturally
4. Season with faith before serving a large slice to everyone you meet

This is a simple mixture lasts well for 12 months and with practice, it keeps getting better for an entire lifetime.

Wishing you and yours, happiness, health, prosperity and contentment for 2017, from Eva Campbell, president of Camden CWA.

Festive Fare

No snow, no reindeer, no sleighbells, no 4 o'clock twilight and cozy firesides, but it is nevertheless still the Christmas season.

Served with mixed greens or in a lettuce cup, this is an easy and civil way to use leftover Christmas meats.

It's tasty, crunchy and a bit of a detox. For a fruiter salad substitute diced mango for the yellow capsicum.

Ingredients:
- 500 grams cooked meat (either ham, turkey or chicken)
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 4 shallots, chopped
- ½ red capsicum, diced
- ½ yellow capsicum, diced
- 1 large avocado, diced
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ cup walnuts, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste.

Method:
1. Toss diced avocado in the lemon juice.
2. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Gently stir through dressing before serving.

To make a light dressing heat ½ cup of mayonnaise with 2-3 tablespoons of milk until smooth.

Macarthur Country Meats

If you are on holidays or just about to start that long awaited break - don't forget to borrow something from Camden Library Services. Pamela Seckin has put together a list of titles sure to satisfy all tastes.

Australia’s Favourite Recipes by Leila McKinnon

This cook book is filled with recipes from everyday families, and collated by TV personality Leila McKinnon. Each dish is introduced with an anecdote from the family who contributed the recipe, describing the dish and why it is special to them. A great read if you’re planning a Christmas feast for family and friends.

The Artful Year by Jean Van’t Hul

Have fun over the Christmas period through making art and craft. This book provides family-friendly activities to celebrate not only Christmas but all occasions throughout the year. Arts and crafts are described through step-by-step instructions, and the book is easily divided into four sections: summer, autumn, winter and spring.

Christmas on Primrose Hill By Karen Swan

A romantic story set in London at Christmas time, so when she unexpectedly finds fame, she attracts the attention of Jamie, a famous musician. A romantic story set in London at Christmas time. This novel is a fresh take on a classic genre fiction. Nettie is comfortable in her own world, so when she unexpectedly finds fame, she attracts the attention of Jamie, a famous musician.

Camden Valley Tiles

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Christmas on Primrose Hill By Karen Swan

A romantic story set in London at Christmas time, so when she unexpectedly finds fame, she attracts the attention of Jamie, a famous musician.
COBBITTY $730,000 TO $780,000

PRESENTING THIS MODERN 4 BEDROOM HOME INCLUDING MASTER BEDROOM WITH EN-SUITE AND WALK-IN ROBE, 3 MORE BEDROOMS WITH BUILT-IN ROBES. LARGE KITCHEN WITH WALK-IN PANTRY AND 5 BURNER GAS COOK TOP. OPEN-PLAN DINING AND LOUNGE LEADING TO UNDERCOVER AFFRICO DINING AREA, MEDIA ROOM, STUDY, DUCTED AIR-CONDITIONING PLUS DOUBLE ELECTRIC GARAGE WITH INTERNAL ACCESS, LARGE BACKYARD AND GARDEN SHED.

HARRINGTON PARK $770,000 TO $810,000

4 BEDROOM HOME IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO SHOPS, SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT
- Combined lounge and dining and meals area off the kitchen with large spacious family room
- Three bedrooms have built-in robes, the main bedroom has a walk-in robe and en-suite
- In-ground, salt water pool
- Large pergola and double garage on an approx. 750sq.m block

DOUGLAS PARK

4 3 1 READY-MADE INVESTMENT
Opportunity to purchase this single storey rendered home set on an approx. 1220sq.m block of land. 3 bedrooms with built-in wardrobes, 2 bathrooms, ample living space, modern kitchen, ducted air, undercover entertainment area, double carport, 2 garden sheds plus workshop shed. Also features a separate granny flat (subject to council approval) with lounge room, bedroom, kitchen, dining, air con, laundry and court-yard.

OAKDALE

OFFERS ABOVE $1,699,000
- Double brick home on approx. 58.12 acres (approx. 23.52 Ha)
- Approx. 36 square 4 bedroom home with ensuite to main and walk-in robe
- Bedrooms 2 and 3 both have walk-in robes
- Large formal lounge, family room, separate dining
- Remote control double garage
- In-ground saltwater swimming pool
- Approx. 12m x 7m shed, 3 phase power

CAWDOR

CHARMING COTTAGE ON MORE THAN HALF AN ACRE!!
Located only minutes from Camden lies this original 3 bedroom cottage set on a level approx. 2592sq.m block. Loaded with character featuring solid timber flooring, formal living, formal dining and double garage. Established trees and shrubs create a secluded setting and the large private garden also has a dam. Rare opportunity so close to Camden with easy access to M5.

ELLIS LANE

7 BEDROOM RESIDENCE WITH 2 STREET FRONTAGES ON APPROX. 1 ACRE
United Realty are proud to offer to the market, this stunning property situated in prestigious Ellis Lane. Sitting on approx. 1 acre (approx. 4072 sq. m) of land with 2 street frontages is this lovely 4 bedroom home with a brand new 1 bedroom studio with bathroom and a brand new 2 bedroom home (awaiting your completion) and pool.

ROSSMORE

APPROX. 5.36 ACRES (2.17 HA) IN SOUTH-WEST GROWTH AREA!!
Fantastic corner position approx. 6km to the new Leppington Railway Station and future shopping precinct. Local infrastructure projects include major road upgrades, proposed rail extension to Narellan with a Rossmore station and much more. Enjoy a healthy rental income from the existing 3 bedroom home that boasts cathedral ceilings, ducted air, combustion fireplace and detached garage.

COBBITTY 220A COBBITTY ROAD

HALF ACRE BLOCK RENOVATED BY SELLING HOUSES AUSTRALIA
Hitting the market early 2017 is this half acre block (approx. 2000 sq.m) recently renovated by Selling Houses Australia. Located close to major development, shopping centres and surrounded by quality homes. Keep an eye out for this property ideally positioned in the historic and sought-after Cobbitty with a beautiful rural outlook.

Contact Agent

Photo identification must be shown to the agent by all parties prior to inspections.
All care has been taken in providing accurate information in this advertisement however prospect buyers are to rely on their own inquiries.

Monday, December 19, 2016    The District Reporter 13
Gentle exercise, why not try Tai Chi — a meditative, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and glad-hours, seven days a week on 4684 1656. Contact the relevant group or just having fun. Contact the relevant individuals, organisations or service clubs about times and dates of these events for 2017.

District Diary is open to all non-profit community groups or just having fun. Contact the relevant group or just having fun. Contact the relevant individuals, organisations or service clubs about times and dates of these events for 2017.

WIREs Alert If you see an injured or dead native animal call WIREs Wollondilly 24 hours, seven days on 4654 1656.

Baha’i Quote "In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory, of bountiful, of exultation, of gladness unto him. Happy the man that cleaveth unto it, and woe betide the heedless." For details on the Baha’i visit http://www.bahai.org.au.

Christmass Stall Camden Hospital Auxiliary will hold stalls on Sundays 22 and 23 on Argyle Street, Camden. There will be lots of Christmas gifts - crafts, raffle tickets. All funds raised go towards purchasing equipment for the Camden Hospital Auxiliary. Call Helen 4655 9114 or Pauline 4647 2123.

Trefoil Guild Were you ever a member of the Girl Guides? If so, to keep in touch with guiding and all that it does for the girls of today, become a Trefoil member. The guild meets at the Camden Guide Hall, on the fourth Thursday of the month at 2. Contact Judy on 4655 8792 or Joan on 4646 1041 for more information.

Tai Chi If you are over 50 and looking for gentle exercise, why not try tai chi — a meditative, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and glad-hours, seven days a week on 4684 1656. Call Raelene on 0448770329.

Spin and Weave Macarthur Spinners and Weavers meet every Friday 9.30am at CWA rooms, Cawdor Road, Camden. Beginners are made very welcome. Contact Kaeline on 4651 2697.

Third Age Learning Macarthur U3A, Third Age Of Learning — go along and join a friendly group of people — it's stress free, there's lots of laughs and interesting discussions. There's a variety of low cost classes for people over 50 — retired/semi-retired. Classes are at Cawdor and Campbelltown Uniting Church halls. For more information — Hobbies, Drama, Computers, Discussion Group and Books and Writers — more details from Judy — 4655 3260 or macarthuru3a.org. Other details call Margaret 4658 1510 or Sandra 4625 4700.

Time for Bridge Macarthur Collegians Bridge Club meets Tuesdays 7.30pm; Thursdays 10.30am; Saturday 1pm at Campbelltown Catholic Church. Call Tony on 4696 9267.

Hospital Auxiliary Camden Hospital Auxiliary meets on the third Wednesday of the month in the Heritage Auditorium at 10.30am. New members welcome. Call Helen and Keith 4655 9114 for details.

Fine Fibres Tahmoor Fibre Group meets in the Heritage Auditorium at 10.30am every second Tuesday 11am — 3pm. Spinning, Felting and Weaving etc. Beginners very welcome and always within the group. Contact Terri 0429 468 420.

Transport Service South West Community Transport (SWCT) provides transport services to the frail aged, individuals with disability and their carers. SWCT is able to assist with appointments, shopping, cemetery visits and social outings. For details call 100 138 794.

Women's Support Women's Support Network meets at Turning Point Community Connections every Thursday at 10am and concentrates on how to support homeless young girls. For details call 100 on 138 794.

Hone Your Tones Camden Toastmasters meets on the second and fourth Monday of every month at the Recreation Centre of Carrington Aged Care Facility. Toastmasters give you the skills and confidence you need to effectively express yourself in any situation. Whether you are a professional, student, stay-at-home parent or retiree, Toastmasters is the opportunity for arollable way of gaining great communication skills. Visitors welcome. Contact club president Leonie for more information on 4646 1327 or visit our website www.camdentoastmasters.org.au.

Wellness Walkers Camden Wellness Walkers will inspire you to a healthier lifestyle. The group meets Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 7.30am 20 Broughtong St Camden. It’s a great way to make friends, enjoy an hour's walk followed by a herbal tea or delicous organic coffee. The group is accredited with the National Heart Foundation. If you have a health concern that is holding you back it can provide a bulk billed health check for walking clearance. Contact Marilyn on 4655 4666 or email marilynr@cbahcelehealthy.com.au.

Scrabble Enthusiasts Word enthusiasts enjoy a regular game of Scrabble every Monday afternoon at the Community Health Centre, Harper Close Tahmoor from 4pm to 7pm. Call Dena for details 4683 0681.

Red Cross Camden Red Cross meets the first Wednesday of the month at the CWA hall 9.30am-1.30pm. Contact Judy on 4684 2318 or email jw799@gpodem.com.au.

Al-Anon family Tmahor Al-Anon family group meets to help families and friends of alcoholics. Its purpose is to offer hope and friendship and a better understanding of the effects of someone else's drinking on themselves. It meets every Thursday at 7pm at the Community Health Centre, 15 Harper Close, Tahmoor.

Menangle Men Menangle Mens Shed meets every Thursday at 10.30 am at the Menangle Store over a cup of coffee or tea in a friendly and informal atmosphere, all welcome. For details, call Warren de Montematos on 0410 689 474 or Graham Noyes on 04 338 810.

Classifieds

Advertising Ph: (02) 4655 1234 or email: sales@tdr.com.au

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Monday, December 19, 2016 - The District Reporter
The impressive bridge is named after one of the Camden district's first land grantees John Macarthur and their pastoral holding of Camden Park, which the family still occupy. There are many descendants of the Macarthur family in the Camden district. The naming of the bridge also coincided with the establishment of the Macarthur Growth Centre at Campbelltown by the Askin Liberal Government in 1973 and support from the new Whitlam federal government for the Macarthur Growth Region. These were originally part of the 1968 Sydney Region Outline Plan from which the 1973 New Cities Structure Plan for Campbelltown, Camden and Appin appeared. These were exciting plans that were developed at the time with the provision of extensive infrastructure across the new growth centre. Some of the infrastructure eventuated and many parts did not. The New Cities Plan turned into a developers’ dream and hastened Sydney’s urban sprawl into the southern reaches of the Cumberland Plan. The Macarthur Region is one of those legacies.

The Macarthur bridge guaranteed flood free access from the Burragorang coalfields to the Main Southern Railway at Glenlee for American shipping magnate Daniel Ludwig’s Glenlee Washery at Spring Farm. The flooding by the Nepean River along Druitt Lane and over the Macarthur Bridge to the Sydney basin in the early 1970s. The flooding by the Nepean River along Druitt Lane and over the Macarthur Bridge to the Sydney basin in the early 1970s. and the issue turned into one of the first environmental dis-putes in the Sydney basin in the early 1970s.

The high level Macarthur Bridge allowed the diversion of coal trucks from the Burragorang Valley coalfields away from Camden’s main street passing across the low-level Cowpasture Bridge from 1973. Coal trucks then travelled along Druitt Lane and over the Macarthur Bridge to the Glenlee Washery at Spring Farm. The flooding by the Nepean River of the road access to the township of Camden at the low-level Cowpasture Bridge has been a perennial problem since the town’s foundation in 1840.

Specifications - Macarthur Bridge has a 26-span, 3380 feet (approximately 1.12 km) long concrete structure that carries the Camden Bypass across the Nepean River and its flood plain. The bridge was built between 1971 and 1973, originally to carry Hume Highway traffic, on a flood-free alignment around Camden.

Macarthur Bridge Northern Approaches from Camden

The Camden Bypass is the former Hume Highway alignment between the localities of Cross Roads and Camden. It is marked as State Route 89. The proper route is from the CrossRoads, skirting Camden via the Camden Bypass and ending at Remembrance Drive, another part of the former Hume Highway near Camden South.

The Camden Bypass was in turn bypassed in December 1980 when the section of what was then called the South Western Freeway (route F5) from Campbelltown to Yerrinbool was opened.

It has grown in importance as a major arterial road linking the Hume Motorway, Westlink M7 and M5 South Western Motorway interchange at Prestons, near Liverpool, with Camden.

The official plaque of Macarthur Bridge states:

The bridge was designed by the staff of the Department of Main Roads and is the longest structure built by the Department since its inception in 1925. Length (Overall) 3380 feet comprising 26 spans each of 130 feet long. Width between kerbs 30 feet with one footway 5 feet wide. Piled foundations (max 90 feet deep) were constructed by the Department's Bridge construction organisation. Piers and superstructure by contact by John Holland (Constructions) Pty Ltd. Total cost of bridge £2,600,000.

RJS Thomas Commissioner for Main Roads, AF Schmids Assistant Commissioner for Main Roads, GV Fawker Engineer-in-Chief, FC Cook Engineer (Bridges), Department of Main Roads, New South Wales Open to traffic on 26 March 1973.

The Camden Historical Society meets for lively discussions and guest speakers on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm at the Camden Museum on John Street Camden. Interested persons and new members are most welcome.

For further information call John on 4665 9210.