

# RURAL FRINGE

*Journal of the Hall district*



VOLUME 31 ISSUE 2

April 2024

## 81st National Sheepdog Trials

by Jenny Whittaker

Canberra Day means the start of the annual National Sheepdog Trials. The 81st trials were held at the Hall Showgrounds over the week starting on the Canberra



*Almost in the pen!*



*Finished, good boy!*

Day holiday. And as the old saying goes, it was definitely bigger and better than ever! While the effect of good weather can never be underestimated at an outdoor event, this year was particularly pleasant, with only a couple of showers and a bit of wind for the whole week. Crowds were up on last year and most

spectators quickly got the hang of the scoring, with many ooh's and ah's in appreciation of a good competition by a trial dog. I really enjoyed watching the competition, the heart-in-the-mouth feeling of watching recalcitrant sheep hesitate at the gate to the last pen was like watching the Raiders play (who said that!). Having watched the series *Muster Dogs* on ABC-TV recently, I had a great appreciation of the amount of work that goes into training the dogs to such a high standard. The United States Ambassador to Australia, Caroline Kennedy was spotted enjoying the day and His Excellency Governor General the Honourable Sir David Hurley ACDSC (Ret'd) presented the awards on Sunday afternoon and posed for photos with all the winners.

While the trials seemed to go off without a hitch there is so much organising, co-ordinating and long hours that go towards making the event a success. For



*The catering crew.*

a very basic competition consisting of a dog trying to shepherd three sheep through a few obstacles on an unmanicured round paddock, the effort to have the competition run smoothly seems disproportionate. The volunteer crew, headed up by Hall's Jonathan Palmer, was a well oiled machine.

*... continues on page 3*



*One of many batches of scones.*



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## National Sheepdog Trials

Starting a couple of weeks out with a volunteer information morning (apparently worth attending for the scones alone), it was clear that the event was getting bigger with increased catering, Kidz Zone activities, photos on Flickr, parking marshalling, raffle and merchandising sales, marquee hire and onsite radio station attendance. The 'Dogs Dinner' held at the pavilion for the competitors (human) and Hall residents is always booked out and catered completely by volunteers. The volunteer roster gave a good indication of how many hours go into the whole event. A great innovation this year was the volunteer photography crew, comprising four snappers who all took shots that were uploaded onto Flickr.



On one of the days I attended with family members we enjoyed the terrific catering – wonderful steak sandwiches, scones, ice cream and coffee. Inside the pavilion we checked out the winner's sash and cup, felt the wool samples and talked about microns and what makes quality wool. The youngest ones in the group loved the Kids Zone, the scavenger hunt and checking out the sheep in the holding pen waiting their turn to have a run. We watched those sheep being loaded onto the truck at the end of the day and it was of great interest to the two young boys – sights, sounds and smell! One of the dogs used to move the sheep up onto the truck seemed to have one job, bark like mad! He also ran along the sheep's backs while barking and was great entertainment value.

Jonathan kept good records of attendees numbers coming through the gates, with those volunteering at the gates using 'not so high-tech' manual number clickers for counting. As a statistician in a previous life,

it's no surprise he was able to accurately report that nearly every day saw numbers up on previous years. Overall, the attendance for the week was over 5,000 people, and a record. Students came from around the district (Crookwell and Goulburn High School), buses full of tourists and aged care residents made the trek out

to see the action, and many visitors came more than once as they had thoroughly enjoyed the event.

During the week there were a couple of comical moments to show that working with animals is to venture into the unplanned and unexpected. One sheep leapt the fence of the competition oval instead of heading back to the holding pen, one dog got fed up with a sheep not moving quickly enough and gave it a nip (automatic disqualification)

and a seemingly blind sheep, which was determined not to behave, was wrangled into submission by a Hall local who could see trouble looming if he didn't intervene! And a champion dog, who had travelled all the way from Western Australia, jumped the gun literally, racing off before the starting hooter and was unable to be brought under control – he was having a blast doing what his instinct drove him to do!

And where does the entry fee money go? It goes to run the event. There are a lot of expenses: insurance, sheep transport, Portaloo hire, amenities cleaning, fencing, marquee hire, ground rental, golf carts, catering, all adding up to, as Jonathan puts it, a lot. Fortunately, with the assistance of the sponsors and some generous donors, the trials have been able to do a bit better than break even each year. Any surplus goes into a 'rainy trial' fund to ensure the event can survive a wash-out.

After such a success this year, next year will be a hard act to follow!

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# Hall and District Axemen's Club

axemen

by Steph Radovanovic

Things are in full swing for 2024 at the Hall and District Axemen's Club. Our members have been very busy competing at the many agricultural shows in the NSW region throughout the past two months, including the local two day Wood Chopping Carnival at the 2024 Royal Canberra Show in February. We are also looking at tours to Perth and/or Hobart Royal Shows later in the year!



Once again, as we do every year, we would like to thank the annual Sheep Dog Trials that are held at the Hall Showground, for allowing us to continue training whilst their event is on.

This week we will be running a Safety Procedures and Protocol Session for

all our crew, another important part of keeping our organisation and members professional, safe and informed.

We would also like to congratulate all of our members who have competed and podiomed so far this year at The Albion Park, Candelo, Jamison Hotel, Kiama, Berry, Nowra, Crookwell, Cobargo, Kangaroo Valley, Canberra, Tumut, Milton, Dalgety, Goulburn, Cooma, Mossvale, and Mitta Muster Shows, and also congratulate our newest members who have stepped up to compete for the first time over the last two months! Fantastic work everyone!

Want to know more about HADAC?  
Get in touch:

email: [hallaxemen@gmail.com](mailto:hallaxemen@gmail.com)

Fb: [@The Hall and District Axemen's Club](https://www.facebook.com/TheHallandDistrictAxemenClub)

Insta: [@hallaxemen](https://www.instagram.com/hallaxemen)



# Axemen's log trimming machine

axemen

A Hall resident was curious as to what the piece of machinery (pictured) outside the Axemen's practice area was for. Shaun O'Connor explains it is a log trimming machine that was designed for competition woodchopping. Shaun goes on to say 'currently The Hall And District Axemen use wood blocks that are between 250mm and 500mm in diameter. As we are only holding demonstrations and not competitions, the blocks do not have to be the same size for all competitors.'

The trimming machine was manufactured in the 1980s and was purchased from a property



in Taradale, Victoria. We plan to modify the cutting arrangement on the trimmer to meet current safety standards and mount it on a dual axle trailer with a motor so that it can be mobile anywhere. A new custom-made trimmer would cost more than \$50,000, so we hope to redesign our trimmer at a much lower cost. We will try to seek grants and welcome sponsorships to help us achieve this.

Our wood supply is currently sufficient, and the ACT Government has shown willingness to provide assistance with poplar, which is considered a weed. By trimming the blocks to competition standard, we will be able to host competitions in Hall, as they used to do.'

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## Springfield Rural Fire Brigade

Rebecca Morrison  
President



### Dates for the diary

We'd love to see you in person at any of the following community and brigade events coming up:

**Sunday 14 April** – Avon Clearing Sale, Murrumbateman Road organised by Ray White Rural Canberra Yass. Fundraising BBQ – fill your belly while you grab a great deal.

**Monday 13 May** – Springfield RFS AGM – Patemans Lane Shed from **7pm**.

If you have any questions about the brigade or fire safety in general, please get in touch.



NSW RFS – Springfield Brigade

springfieldrfs@hotmail.com

### New electronic fire danger rating signs

Those who travel the Barton Highway would have noticed the return of the Fire Danger Rating signage just north of the border. The attentive drivers and passengers may have also noticed a couple of differences from the original signage it has replaced.



Our new Electronic Australian Fire Danger Rating Signage (e-AFDRS) brings some great efficiencies for both RFS members and the public.

Our new signs are remotely monitored and updated automatically at midnight each night with the following days information. Brigades no longer have to manually change them each day, meaning the rating you see is current and reliable.

If you do notice any issues with the sign, please contact the Yass District Office.

### Farm fire vehicle trials

In a new trial, private vehicles used for firefighting purposes, or Farm Fire Fighting Vehicles (FFFVs), can now be driven unregistered if certain conditions are met. The trial will run until 31 March and will assist rural fire fighting efforts and provide an even greater integrated relationship between farmers and the RFS.

For more information on the trial or to submit a Farm Fire Fighting Vehicle nomination form, visit the Transport for NSW website.

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## Volunteering at the shed

men's shed

by Kevin Stone

According to the Hall Men's Shed membership numbers, we are now at near or full capacity, which shows how popular the shed has become over the years.

What is even more pleasing is seeing the smiling faces, hearing the chats between members and knowing they feel comfortable and welcome every Tuesday and Thursday mornings. There's no shortage of willing volunteers, starting from our Foreman, Doug Anstess, to our catering officers Rob Durie, Eric Detheridge, Garth Chamberlain and others who help each week to keep us all well fed with the great morning teas.

But the first one for the month was something different, when the guys had a rest because we had a pizza day. The community oven was put to good use by Aaron Whittaker and Danny Clynk, amongst others, who produced many very tasty pizzas which were much appreciated by everyone. Well done fellas!

And once again a big thank you goes to other volunteers who helped out at the National Sheep Dog Trials. It's always good to see our guys get involved, whether it's being on the gates, lending a hand with the catering activities, or whatever was required.

Looking back over the years, it seems that quite a few of the men are more than willing to put their hand up to volunteer.

For example, I've been writing on and off about the men's shed for some time and looking back at an article in the December 2012 *Rural Fringe* I wrote:

We've continued to work closely with the school museum volunteers and finished several tasks to enhance the wonderful exhibitions on display. This included the refurbishment of a large display cabinet and the headmaster's chair, lining the school museum office and repairing a large table used to display exhibition items. We've also modified display cases, maintained various items, repaired slate boards and removed an inappropriate wall cabinet and sink. Next year this work will be ongoing, especially if the cakes continue to occasionally appear around morning tea time!!!

Other jobs we've done around Hall include repairing and repainting the bench seating outside the Premier Store, fixing the Hall Pavilion external doors and assembling/helping with the installation of a new large gate at the showgrounds. We've also cleaned up around our shed area and done some landscaping near the Cottage. Bench seats have been installed in a circular paved area, giving members and locals a shady place to sit.

One of our more gratifying jobs is working on desk surrounds for the Kaleen School. We're quite proud to be associated with the project as it is not only community-based, but benefits students with autism.

We've come a long way with the number of members since the shed was set up with just a handful in 2011, but it's still gratifying to know people are more than willing to help. For example, recently a friend of mine, Bec Davey, the CEO of Arthritis ACT asked if someone in the shed would be able to make some steps/stairs to help clients build up some muscle mass as part of their physio classes or learn to use crutches prior to surgery. Basically, something like the 'real thing' in a controlled setting. No sooner had I mentioned Bec's request than I had a number of willing men around me, all wanting to get involved! Not only to construct the steps to what I thought were the right dimensions, but to make sure they were architecturally correct.



An Arthritis ACT exercise physiologist giving his approval for the steps.

When I delivered the finished steps, Bec was very excited because she didn't expect to receive them so soon, but there's no stopping our guys!

Bec asked me to thank the men's shed for making not only the exact steps she was hoping for, but said they 'look fabulous and the way they've been engineered are going to last many a lifetime'.

So yes, I'm proud to be a member of the Hall Men's Shed, which has the same supportive environment for males in the Hall and district community as when the shed was established.

May we keep doing the things we do to make people's lives better.

## Hall Village Motors

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# President's page



It is tremendous that our Hall Village is able to host the National Sheepdog Trial Championships with both human and canine competitors and the opportunity to welcome spectators including Governor-General His Excellency General David and Mrs Linda Hurley. Once again, ABC Canberra did an outside broadcast from the showground, highlighting not only the Trials but also putting a spotlight on Hall Village. Special thanks to the Hall Men's Shed and Hall Collectors' Club and their partners for their support to the Sheepdog Trials and especially the Dogs' Dinner, bringing human competitors and Hall residents together and recognising the Top Twenty (canine) Competitors. For me, the Sheepdog Trials signal the last days of summer and the coming autumn.

Last December, a reshuffle of ACT Government ministerial responsibilities saw the replacement of Chris Steel by Tara Cheyne as Minister for City Services. In early January, I asked to meet with Minister Cheyne to discuss the Hall Village priorities of comprehensive storm water drainage infrastructure and safe pedestrian and cycle access to Hall from Clarrie Hermes Drive. At the end of January, City Services Minister Tara Cheyne and Heritage Minister Rebecca Vassarotti came to Hall, together with some City Services staff, and met with Lee-Ann Brodrick and me on behalf of the Progress Association Committee.

Ministers Cheyne and Vassarotti looked at some of the effects of inadequate storm water drainage, especially along Gladstone Street, as well as the existing Centenary Trail dirt track along Victoria Street. Minister Cheyne confirmed that detailed design



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**Robert Yallop** President

for stormwater improvements at Hall Village funded in the 2024 ACT Government Budget will be contracted in late February or early March and committed that the consultants engaged for the detailed design work will consult with the Progress Association and Hall community. The City Services staff advised us that, contrary to the last advice that we received from then Minister Chris Steel, the safe pedestrian and cycle access to Hall Village is now considered a priority and work is being undertaken by City Services to identify how this can be done within the constraints of the location and terrain.

Following requests to the Progress Association, in October 2023 Yerrabi MLA Leanne Castley requested that City Services change the parking arrangements outside of the Hall Post Office to 15 minutes. Although the first attempt by City Services to change the signs resulted in 15-minute parking being posted outside the Sugar Plum Fairy Cakes store, a week later the requested 15-minute parking was moved to the Hall Post Office. Once again, thank you to Leanne Castley for her support.



In the February *Rural Fringe* there was a brief article about safety concerns at the Wallaroo Road/ Gladstone

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# president



Human handlers of the Top Twenty Dogs.

Street/ Barton Highway intersection and a request to provide your thoughts about it to the Progress Association. A limited number of comments was received and there was no clear expression of concern over the speed limit. However, some very detailed information was provided about the current layout of the intersection. A thorough review of the intersection will form part of the proposals to candidates for the 2024 ACT election.

The Progress Association Committee generally meets each month. If you have any ideas or concerns for our Hall Village and District community, please talk to me or any member of your Progress Association Committee, give me a call on **0407 012 160** or email [info@hall.act.au](mailto:info@hall.act.au).

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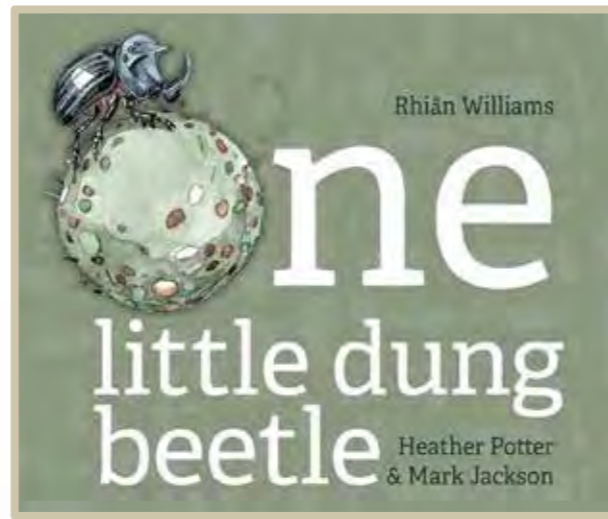


# One Little Dung Beetle

Did you know that scientists think there may be as many as 33 million beetle species in the world? In Australia there are over 500 different species of native dung beetles alone, and they are often highly selective about the dung they like to eat, with some choosing to dine only on wombat droppings, which make for a good square meal! (A joke for all the budding naturalists out there!)

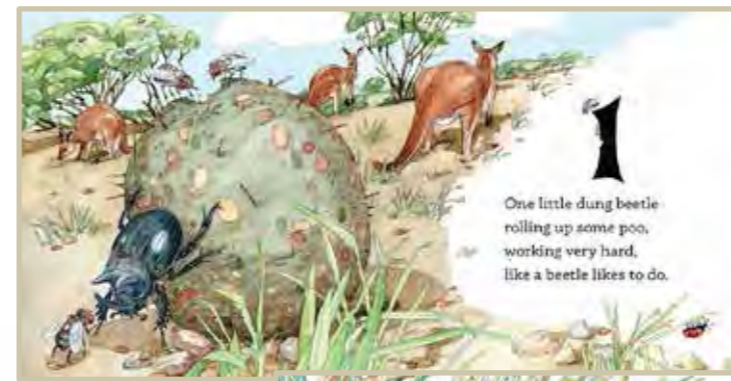
Well, it seems that local Hall district children's picture book author, Rhiân Williams, has the perfect book to help with all that beetle counting! Hot on the heels of her delightful first day of school book (and love letter to grandmothers everywhere) – *Surprise at the end of Onkaparinga Lane* – Rhiân has a new picture book, a truly beautiful counting book featuring Australian beetles.

*One Little Dung Beetle*, is gloriously illustrated by Heather Potter and Mark Jackson – the supremely talented team



behind such Australian classics as Susannah Chamber's *The Snow Wombat* and John Marsden's *The Magic Rainforest*, for which they were also invited to produce a set of special stamps for Australia Post.

ReadPlus, an Australian service specifically developed to review books and films for teachers, librarians and early childhood educators, has said: '*One Little Dung Beetle* is a superb picture book that will be a treat to read and share with young readers. The striking green cover has immediate appeal and the gorgeous endpapers showcase brightly coloured beetles – complete with interesting facts – from all over the world.'



The review also says 'Every verse is accompanied by a stunning full page illustration with delightful detail and colourful design. One very clever inclusion on each page are the various creatures nibbling the same number of holes in the chosen number. This is a fabulous book, full of rhyme and striking illustrations. A wonderful addition to a home, school or public library.'

*One Little Dung Beetle* features many different kinds of beetles including Christmas beetles, feather horned beetles, diving beetles and of course the one little dung beetle that starts it all off. Many of the beetles can be found



in the backyards and grassy areas around Hall, guaranteeing magical adventures for that budding entomologist or nature observer. And who knew we have an Australian dung beetle that looks just like a mini Triceratops dinosaur!?!'

*One Little Dung Beetle* is Rhiân's fourth picture book. It's published by Wild Dog Books and is available at good bookshops everywhere, including Hall's own bookshop in Kingston – The Book Cow.

And Rhiân is always happy to sign a copy for you. Just email her via her website: [rhianwilliamsauthor.com.au](http://rhianwilliamsauthor.com.au)

*Editor's note:* Just in case you are scratching your head over the 'dad' joke for naturalists. Wombats do cube shaped poos – hence the 'square meal'!

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## Wallaroo Rural Fire Brigade

The weather continues to keep us on our toes this summer, culminating (so far!) in high fuel loads, as well as high moisture levels, and thankfully, low fire risk.

Thankfully, our brigade has responded to very few local incidents this fire season. Unfortunately not all states have avoided severe fire activity this season and a crew from our brigade went to Victoria in February to fight the Ballarat fire.



# fire safety

by Shona Boyle

In order to ensure we are ready, we continue to prepare ourselves and our equipment to respond to incidents wherever needed. This includes familiarising ourselves with our new *Wallaroo 1*.

This replaces our old *Cat 1* and gives us a bigger, newer asset with which to protect the community. We hope you had a chance to check out *Wallaroo 1* and meet some of the team at the recent Belconnen Bunning Family Fun Night on Thursday 21 March.

If not, we are looking forward to a number of other opportunities to meet with Wallaroo and surrounding communities over the course of this year:

- Belconnen Bunnings BBQ: **Saturday 20 April**
- Community Dinner: **Saturday 7 September**
- Murrumbateman Field Days: **17-20 October**
- Santa run: **Saturday 21 December**



We are very excited to be re-establishing some old habits of community engagement this year. More information on the community dinner and Santa run to come!

And of course, please also feel free to come by the station during training (first and third Wednesdays of every month) or reach out to our Brigade Executive or the Southern Tablelands Zone if you have questions at any time throughout the year (listed below).

# fire safety



### Brigade contacts

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

Captain: <b>Neil Shepherd</b>	<b>0418 628 095</b>	<a href="mailto:nshepherd@shepelectrical.com.au">nshepherd@shepelectrical.com.au</a>
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## Hall/Wallaroo vineyards harvest update

by Allan & Christine Pankhurst

The local vineyards around Hall/Wallaroo are in full swing with their harvest. This year's vintage is three weeks earlier than normal and around six weeks earlier than the very late 2023 vintage. A mild winter is the reason, providing a very early budburst and then warm conditions throughout the growing season which kept the pace going.

Most vineyards are reporting a great crop – better yields than the last few challenging years, and premium quality. Vineyards have worked hard to keep the crop disease free and what we are seeing is beautifully ripe, clean fruit being produced. It's a real satisfaction to get to the point of harvest with such a good crop.

Amongst the local vineyards, varieties already picked include Chardonnay, Riesling, Arneis (that exciting new Italian variety), Tempranillo, Cabernet Franc and some Shiraz. Next to come will include the rest of the Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese and Marsanne. 'They are all looking so good, we just need patience to ensure we pick them just at the right time to capture their varietal flavours as well as the best levels of sugar and acid,' says Allan Pankhurst of Pankhurst Wines. It is estimated that harvest will finish during March, whereas normally it would continue into April.

The recent warm days and cool nights we have experienced are ideal for premium cool climate wine production. The cool nights assist in retaining acid levels within the grapes and provide for a better acid to sugar balance in the grapes at picking time. The resulting wines are elegant and flavoursome, while still showing intense depth of character. This is one of the defining features of the Canberra Region wine industry, which has been growing for over 50 years. Plantings for the region



were undertaken initially in the early 1970s by a few CSIRO researchers with a great interest in wines. These were at Murrumbateman and Lake George. Since then the industry has expanded substantially with over 45 wine labels available.

Our very local industry is located just west of Hall, in the Wallaroo area and was established in 1986 with the planting of three vineyards that year. There are now five sizeable vineyards and four cellar doors open each weekend. It contributes substantially to the local and regional economy, producing and processing an estimated more than 500 tonnes of grapes this year.

Support local and visit these wineries to enjoy great wines, lovely views and welcoming local people.



The Pankhurst vineyard netted and protected from birds.

## Autumn in the garden

gardening by Lisa Walmsley

It's been a great summer – not predicted by our weather folk – and wasn't that a blessing?

However, with awesome seasons comes an incredible array of bugs. You may have noticed borers are in many trees, greenhouse thrips are busy sucking the life out of *Viburnum Odoratissimum* and *Viburnum Tinus* and sooty mould is busy infecting citrus and eucalypts.

Most of us in this part of the world love autumn. It is milder, cooler, less windy and generally more pleasant to be outside.

It's the best time of the year to plant; the soil is still warm and plants have some time to settle before it gets too cold.

### Jobs to consider for autumn

Start a new garden, whether it's a new bed or a whole new garden, autumn is the perfect time. Prep your soil, do any essential structural construction such as edges, steppers, walls, steps etc then do any or all your planting – irrigation and mulch.

If you are not starting a new garden, autumn is a great time to give your garden a boost. The heat of summer can be very taxing on our soils and the biology that inhabits it. Sometimes your irrigation isn't adequate, or blockages have developed – if a good soak is required – get out your manual

sprinklers (I love rosette sprinklers or button sprinkler). Turn it on for about 10 minutes then move it to the next spot - any longer and you may get run off, which is wasted.

Manure can be added at this time, sprinkled around between the plants then mulch. For beds that need extra help with soil improvement or new beds, I like to use a leguminous mulch such as lucerne hay, otherwise a good forest litter works well.

Trim, weed and feed; you do not want your plants to go to bed for the winter, hungry or thirsty. Make sure your plants shut down well watered and fertilised. By fertilised, I mean, manure or a natural fertiliser. All your production plants, including fruit trees, need a good feed or a few big handfuls of manure around the drip line of the tree. Cherries and apricots also need to be summer pruned. Many plants look scruffy and tired after winter, giving anything that's summer worn a light trim is beneficial to the plant. All your veggie beds can also have the same treatment.

Dead head and lightly prune your roses – they love it, and tend to produce a lovely autumn flush.

Planting bulbs as they are super easy, set and forget plants (except for tulips). Plant en masse for the best aesthetic and in-between seasons they will multiply underground and produce many more flowers each year. If your pots need a smarten up, bulbs also look great in pots. Pack them in tight for best affect and plant something small on top such as alyssum or violas.

Get your winter veggies in; your winter vegetables really like to go into warmer soil to get a good start. So if you don't already have your cabbage, broccoli's, Brussel sprouts, garlic etc in, put them in now.

Enjoy your garden; this of course is critical. What's the point of all the hard work if you are not loving it? Don't forget to stop and smell the roses.



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# Lyall L. Gillespie Exhibition

The Hall Heritage Centre holds the personal collection of well-known local historian and author Lyall L. Gillespie (1919-2006). The centre has an exhibition of the life and times of Lyall opening on 14 April, with a display of his works and artifacts.

The Gillespie family has had a long association with the district, starting with John and Mary Gillespie who emigrated on the *Lascar* in 1841. John was initially employed by William Klensendorff, but by 1852 he had purchased land and built a stone cottage and other structures, known as 'Horse Park', becoming the first free selection of land in the Ginninderra district. John and Mary Ann had six children, including James.

James Gillespie (1844-1926), Lyall's grandfather, married Isabella Hay Jones in 1882 and they had four children, including William 'Bill'. In 1862 James had purchased land and built a cottage - 'Elm Grove' - and also wrote articles and poetry for local newspapers under the nom de plume 'The Wizard'.

William 'Bill' married Lilian Anne Reid and their first son was Lyall Leslie Gillespie, born in 1919 at Nurse Johnson's Hospital, Queanbeyan.

Bill was a shearer and station manager. The family lived at 'Cooee' cottage, 39 Victoria Street, Hall, then Queanbeyan and Wells Station. They returned to 'Fairy Bower' at 4 Loftus Street when Lyall was seven. In the early 1930s, Bill ran his wife's 150-acre 'Reidsdale' property at Spring Flat.

Lyall attended the Hall one-teacher school from 1926 and later got his leaving certificate from Telopea Park

opens  
April 14

by Peter Browning

High School. He then joined the Public Service and commenced work in the Stores Department, studying accountancy by correspondence.



In 1941 Lyall married Norma Joan Bogg. At the outbreak of the WW2 Lyall was not released to join up, so continued in the Public Service until Japan entered the war and he then joined the RAAF.

He was trained in radar and radio communications and was posted to North-Western Australia in 1943 to set up a radar station. He was also posted to Yanchep, DeGrey River, New Guinea and to the

Admiralty Islands. During these postings he mixed with the local indigenous peoples and took a great interest in their cultures and formed many friendships.

After the war Lyall returned to the Public Service and worked in a number of departments until 1960, when he became the Assistant Administrator of the Northern Territory. He returned to Canberra in 1963 to the

Department of the Interior where he helped oversee the work of surveying parties in Arnhem Land, work which eventually led to the establishment of Kakadu National Park.

His last position in the Public Service was as Canberra City Manager until 1982. He was awarded the Imperial Service Order for his 45 year public service.

Lyall was an acknowledged expert in local history and was the author of a number of books on the region,



Cooee' cottage.

including:

- *Aborigines of the Canberra Region, 1984*
- *Canberra 1820-1913, 1991*
- *Ginninderra: Forerunner to Canberra, Campbell, 1992*
- *Early education and schools in the Canberra region, 1999*
- *Early Verse of the Canberra Region 1994*
- *The Southwell Family - Pioneers of The Canberra District 1838-1988*
- *A Pictorial History of the Read/Reid Family in Australia, 1849-1979, Canberra, 1979*

He was also a keen gardener and won a number of awards at the Canberra Show for his flowers.



Lyall on his motorbike.

Lyall passed away in 2006. In 2015, Lyall's son Neil followed his wishes to have his lifetime collections curated and kept together, choosing the Hall Heritage Centre for this purpose. The material covered everything from a library, images, diaries and records to rare Aboriginal art and artefacts, agricultural and sport implements, early radios and specimens from geology, numismatics, malacology and philately.

The donation recognised Lyall's connection to Hall, as probably the most remarkable alumnus of the village's one-teacher school. To this day, his historical notes and writing help settler descendants and historians of Canberra, and his early collections of well-curated local Aboriginal stone artefacts have become a resource for the Ngunnawal and Ngambri descendants of their original manufacturers to teach students, colleagues and visitors.

Curated by Ken Heffernan and his team of volunteers, this exhibition presents, for the first time, items reflecting the great diversity of Lyall's work and interests. It includes his contribution to early Aboriginal and European history, early education and early verse of the Canberra region as well as a wide range of collecting interests.

Come to the opening at **11am** on **14 April**, or drop in on a Thursday morning or Sunday afternoon, to see the exhibition which will be in place for the next year.

## ACT Heritage Festival event

The ACT Heritage Festival is an annual event that the Hall Heritage Centre has been participating in for many years, showcasing local history. This year's offering will celebrate the work of Lyall Gillespie.

In 2020 Lyall Gillespie was honoured as one of the ACT Honour Walk recipients. The tribute read: 'one of Canberra's most prolific historians and archival researchers' with a 'passion for bringing the city's early history to life'.

Dr Ros Russell, who knew Lyall personally and worked with him professionally, has agreed to launch our exhibition and will be giving the opening address. In 2019, with a Community Heritage Grant from the National Library of Australia, Dr Russell completed a significance assessment of the Gillespie Collection.



Lyall Gillespie is one of the Hall School's most distinguished alumni and our exhibition will feature many artefacts, documents, photographs, books and memorabilia that he so devotedly documented and cherished.

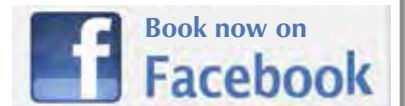
You are invited to join us at the launch. Refreshments will be served after the opening address.



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# The many benefits of good neighbours

by Kevin Stone

Recently a good friend and her young daughter rang my doorbell and gave me some figs. I love figs! They live in the next street, and although the family of four had just returned from a busy but happy time down the coast, they thought of me and did that 'neighbourly' and kind gesture.

So as I was enjoying a fig, or two, the next morning, I started thinking about my neighbours, in my local area and ones my family have met over the years and in the many places we've lived in.

I remember my Mum telling me years ago she wrote our address in pencil because we moved so many times, from Adelaide (three times), Melbourne, Millicent (SA), Canberra (backward and forward a number of times), Port Moresby (PNG), Perth (twice), Shell Cove (NSW coast) and finally settled in Canberra. Did I say 'settled'?!

Anyway, we seemed to collect many, many neighbours along the way, and we had great times and have wonderful memories of times spent together.

During our younger years when we were establishing gardens, neighbours would lend a hand and work side by side, with of course the occasional beverage and sausage sizzle thrown in. They were fun days, all scratching to financially make ends meet with our first homes and young bubs.

Although we moved around the country, many of the neighbours became much more than that and ended up being our friends. In fact, some of them are still friends after several years!

But getting back to my latest neighbours. Next month I'll be in our current home for 13 years! Unheard of for us and Mum would be amazed! I'm so fortunate to probably have the best neighbourhood I've had the opportunity to live in. Now, that's saying something, because it's home number 15 (I thought it was 14, but I checked), plus a few rentals we lived in prior to our first home.



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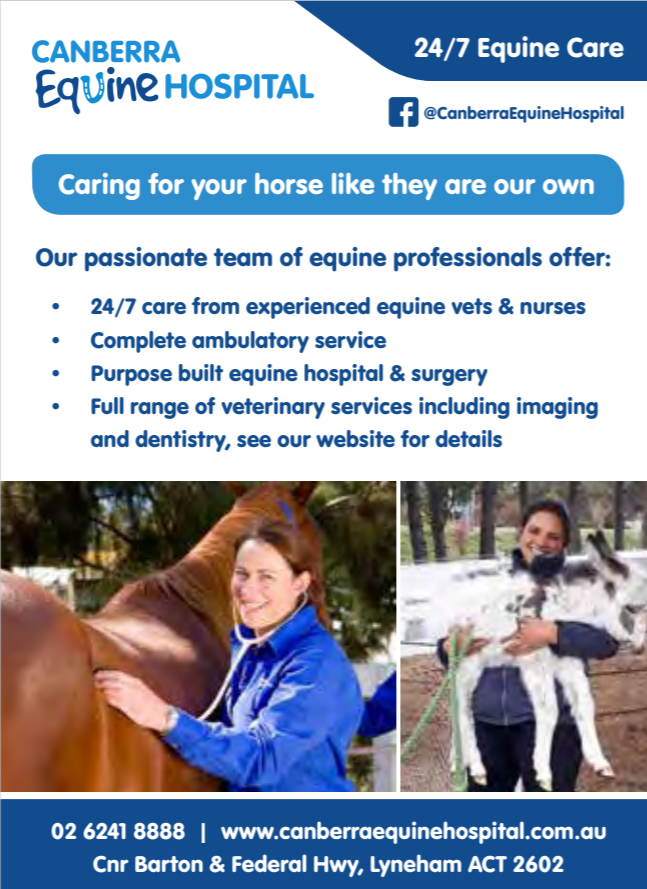
We hit it off with many of the neighbours very soon after we moved in, being invited to street Christmas parties and other events that brought us together. Not everyone would go along, because some chose to keep more or less to themselves, but that's fine and their privacy has always been respected. But when I'm out walking my little dog, or in the front garden, by far the majority of people in my area, including the young ones out playing or on their way to school, give a friendly wave.

The neighbours really showed their support for me on two very special occasions, during the pandemic and one more recent when I developed sciatica/arthritis. It was all very foreign to me as I've been quite fit all my life and found that for quite a while I had difficulty walking, let alone any type of gardening.

So what happened? Neighbours!

Without asking, I had my wonderful, friendly, caring, sharing neighbours/friends not only mowing my lawn, but weeding the gravel, walking my dog and bringing food! Some have even checked to make sure I'm okay if they don't see me out walking, so I've made a point of going past their house on our daily excursions.

I'll always be grateful for the neighbours and friends I have the privilege to share my life with. So many have made the cloudiest days sunny and as I wrote in the June 2023 Fringe, 'fill our tea cup with those little things which make us smile, feel warm and happy'.




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# Brown snakes could be a farmer's best friend

Rick Shine

Professor in Evolutionary Biology, Macquarie University

Many Australians who work outdoors – especially farmers and graziers – attempt to kill every snake they encounter, especially those thought to be venomous. In fact, research in one part of rural Australia found 38% of respondents tried to kill snakes wherever possible.

This attitude is misguided and dangerous. Despite their fearsome reputation, venomous Australian snakes pose little risk to human health. And snakes are hugely beneficial on farms by consuming pests such as rodents.

New research by myself and colleagues estimated the magnitude of that benefit. We found adult eastern brown snakes can collectively remove thousands of mice per square kilometre of farmland each year, which substantially increases farm productivity.

Our study suggests the benefits of snake populations on agricultural land far outweigh the potential costs, and farmers should tolerate rather than kill them.

## A persecuted serpent

Brown snakes are the most common deadly snake species found in disturbed agricultural habitats in the southern half of Australia.

The snakes are fast-moving and active during the day. Brown snakes are generally persecuted in rural areas because the danger of fatal snake bites is seen to outweigh their benefits as pest controllers.

It's true that brown snakes are the most common cause of fatal snake bite in Australia. But the bites are rarely fatal. Statistics show snakes of any species kill fewer than three people per year in Australia, on average.

Around 3,000 snake bite cases are reported annually – a high proportion of which occur when a snake retaliates to being attacked by a person.

Australian snakes, including brown snakes, generally retreat rather than attack, even when provoked. Eastern brown snakes, in particular, tend to dwell in places where they are unlikely to be encountered by people.

## An upside to venomous snakes

The most obvious benefit of maintaining brown snake populations is to reduce rodent numbers. Introduced species of rats and mice are a major cost to Australian agriculture. In extreme cases, mice can destroy most or all of a crop.

We wanted to calculate the number of rodents removed from Australian farmland by brown snakes.

First, we drew on work I had done in the 1980s, which involved dissecting museum specimens to find out what proportion of brown snake diets consisted of rodents.

We then estimated the number of prey consumed each year by brown snakes. This was based on the feeding rates of captive snakes, data from commercially farmed pythons in farms in Thailand and Vietnam, and studies on a species of North American snake which is similar to brown snakes.

To estimate the abundance of brown snakes on farms, we consulted previous research on brown snake abundance, and rates of capture from fieldwork involving red-bellied black snakes. We also obtained data from the Atlas of Living Australia, an online compendium of information about the continent's plants and animals.

Based on the combined data, we found a square kilometre of farmland can contain 100 adult eastern brown snakes, even where rates of encounters between people and those snakes are low. If each adult brown snake consumes around 100 wild mice each year – which is likely an underestimate – together this must equate to about 10,000 mice per square kilometre. Each mouse removed by a brown snake may eat several kilograms of grain crops over its life.

## Give snakes a chance

Agricultural productivity gains are not the only benefits of tolerating brown snakes on farmland.

It would also allow a reduction in the use of chemical methods for rodent control, which can be expensive and ineffective. The chemicals can also threaten the health of humans, livestock, scavenging wildlife and pets.

Tolerating brown snakes might also reduce the incidence of snake bite. Most snake bites are inflicted when people are trying to catch or kill the reptile.

What's more, one study suggests snakes that are long-term residents of an area are less agitated by close encounters with people and know the location of nearby safe havens, and so pose relatively little threat. Culling snakes may create an influx of new animals unfamiliar with the location and not used to humans.

The obvious rebuttal is that killing snakes reduces the incidence of future snake bite, by reducing overall snake numbers. However, data suggests this is not necessarily the case. For example, one study in Indonesia showed reticulated pythons remained abundant despite millions of individuals being removed over decades.

Maintaining viable populations of snakes has an ecological benefit. Removing high-level predators destabilises food webs and disrupts the way ecosystems function.

Finally, conserving snakes has merit in its own right. Many species of snakes are in decline, including in Australia, and should be protected.

Our findings suggest the need for a more balanced view of the costs and benefits of snakes, including brown snakes. Tolerating them may bring benefits that outweigh the already low chance of life-threatening snake bite.



# Community Fire Units

fire safety

A Community Fire Unit (CFU) is a team of local residents who live close to bush land areas across the ACT. These local volunteers are trained and equipped by ACT Fire & Rescue to safeguard their homes during a bushfire until the fire services arrive.

CFU volunteers utilise basic firefighting equipment (pumps, hoses and protective clothing) to prepare the areas surrounding their properties and prevent a bushfire from spreading from adjoining bushland to their houses and backyards.

A typical CFU team consists of eight to 30 members and has a designated area encompassing 50 to 80 homes.

The focus is on bushfire education, prevention and preparation, covering areas such as:

- bushfire behaviour
- safe housekeeping and gardening practices
- planning and preparation for bushfires
- operating fire-fighting equipment
- mop up operations.

CFU members are a part of ACT Fire & Rescue and take direction from ACTF&R officers but they are not fire-fighters.

The ACT CFU program began in late 2003. Following a successful trial of eight units, the program has now expanded to 50 CFUs in high risk bushfire areas. There are around 850 volunteer members across the 50 units.

The local CFU in Hall is made up of mostly Hall residents. Training was held recently as part of a regular regime to enable the group to retain current accreditation.



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# CFU training



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Helen at the CFU trailer



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The Rural Fringe acknowledges the Ngunawal, Ngunawal and Ngambri peoples who are the traditional custodians of the land of Hall Village and District and acknowledges their continuing relation to their ancestral lands. We pay our respect to the Elders of the First Nations past, present and future.

### The Rural Fringe – ISSN: 1329-3893

The Rural Fringe is a community newspaper published in 660 copies every second month by the Village of Hall and District Progress Association Inc (VHDP) and distributed free to mailboxes of the 2618 postcode. It is also available online at [www.hall.act.au](http://www.hall.act.au) This publication is funded by the advertisements so readers are encouraged to support the businesses advertised.

#### Contributions

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to contribute to this publication, particularly local community groups, however it is at the discretion of the Editor as to whether submitted articles are published or not.

These deadlines ensure publication by the 10th of every second month.

- February issue deadline is 10 January
- April issue deadline is 10 March
- June issue deadline is 10 May
- August issue deadline is 10 July
- October issue deadline is 10 September
- December issue deadline is 10 November

It is the policy of the VHDP that articles which are dominantly about the profit making activity of any group or individual can only be accepted for publication if the same issue carrying the article has a paying advertisement of similar size.

Contributions to: [ruralfringe@hotmail.com](mailto:ruralfringe@hotmail.com)  
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small (three sixteenth page)	\$30	colour	\$45

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# out & about



*Eastern Spinebill*



*photos: Paul Porteous*

*The elusive Koel (or Storm Bird) which calls all night!  
Both male and female are in town from their northern migration.*



*Female Koel*



*Male Koel*





# RURAL FRINGE

Journal of the Hall district



VOLUME 31 ISSUE 2

April 2024



20 YEARS  
OF SUPPORTING  
THE COMMUNITY  
2004-2024

Rotary  
Club of Hall



## FAST FACTS



- Rotary Club of Hall's Capital Region Farmers Market was founded in March 2004.
- In the last 20 years, the club has contributed close to \$4,000,000 to community service projects from income from the markets.
- The club has focused much of its support on community well-being through the funding of youth development, emergency relief and educational projects.

**\$4m in Community Support**



On Saturday, March 16, 2024, the Rotary Club of Hall held its 20th anniversary weekly Farmers Market at EPIC.

The 'Millennium Drought' started in 1996 and is considered one of the worst droughts since European settlement. It was also a catalyst for the Capital Region Farmers Market.



The Rotary Club of Hall established the market to give producers a place to sell their produce directly to the customer whilst ensuring Canberra's had a place where they could buy genuine fresh produce.



## Money isn't a true measure of contribution

Financial outlay is one method of measuring performance, but there is no way of knowing the true impact the club has made to the lives of people locally and around the world.

For example, in 2022 the club funded the construction of an earthquake-resistant school in the mountains of Nepal. How do you measure the lasting value and impact a school will have on this remote community?



HallRotary.org.au



# Youth Focus

“Our youth are not just the future; they are the driving force of change.”

The club has a strong focus on supporting our youth through scholarships and training opportunities. Students from Yanco Agricultural High School, Charles Sturt University, and the GO Foundation, among others, currently receive scholarships.

Go Foundation scholarships help to empower Indigenous Australian youth with the ability to change their own lives.



## Life changing ”

Apart from providing a myriad of life-changing educational opportunities, the club has a well-deserved reputation for its ability to rapidly respond to disasters.

Particularly in response to those in need in rural and regional communities where our farmers' market stallholders come from.

The Rotary Club of Hall is known for its quick response, whether providing immediate disaster relief or providing support for local emergency services such as the Wallaroo, Hall and District Bush Fire Brigades.



During the most recent drought, working with the Rural Financial Counselling Service, the club provided \$65,000 in cash that went directly to affected farmers.

More recently, using the same method, the club provided \$20,000 to families affected by the flash floods in Eugowra NSW.



The club also contributes to global Rotary projects such as the eradication of polio, life-changing cleft palate operations and the ongoing fight to eradicate malaria from those parts of the world where it is most prevalent.





# Local & Global



If you're a resident or visitor to the Hall village, you may be aware of the Rotary club's support for projects like 'Bee-Friendly Hall' and the construction of the Hall cenotaph that is used for Remembrance Day and Anzac memorial services.

But the club's work extends throughout the region to remote communities where our farmers' market stallholders come from, as well as other states and communities in our region of the world.



## Life-Saving Surgery in The Solomon Islands

With a population of 700,000, the Solomon Islands do not have a paediatric surgeon. In 2023, the club funded a specialist paediatric surgical team from Canberra to the Solomon Islands.

In just nine days, the team operated on 28 children, saving lives and performing life-changing surgeries that will greatly impact the island community.

This is just one recent example of many projects funded from income generated by the Capital Region Farmers' Market.



*From Remembrance Day ceremonies at the Cenotaph to caring for our environment, the club is deeply committed to local community wellbeing.*



*In a small village near Balibo in Timor Leste, the school is the hub of the community. In 2022, the Rotary Club of Hall made a significant impact on the small community by funding the construction of a school building and ablution block. It serves as both a school and the sole gathering spot for the community.*







# WORKING TOGETHER

There are 16 Rotary clubs in Canberra and over 46,000 worldwide. Rotary is an organisation of over 1.4 million volunteers that work together to improve the lives of those in need and make the world a safer and healthier place for us all.

Whilst most of the club's projects are focused on Australia and the Pacific Region, there are times when disaster strikes and clubs join forces to help those in need.

When women and children fled Ukraine to Poland, the Rotary Club of Warsaw asked for support. Together with the Rotary Club of Canberra, Hall sent funds to help the Rotary Club of Warsaw to supply refugees with food, papers and shelter.

## OUR 3 MARKET GOALS

The club established the market with three goals in mind:

1. To give farmers a place to sell their produce for a fair price
2. To give Canberrans a place where they could buy genuine fresh produce (ie., not produce kept in cold storage for weeks and advertised as 'farm fresh' at the supermarket).
3. To raise funds the club could use to help fund life-changing projects locally, nationally and internationally.



### Like to become to be a Stallholder?

The Capital Region Farmers Market is always seeking interest from genuine growers who wish to sell their own produce directly. Enquiries should be directed to [market.manager@crfm.com.au](mailto:market.manager@crfm.com.au)



Like to get involved?  
Contact the club via our website:  
<https://HallRotary.org>

*2023-2024 President  
Andrew Giumelli*

