

COMMUNITY NEWS

No. 984 Ph: 4374 1039 Mo: 0412 669 649 Email: enquiries@cnews1.com.au Web: cnews1.com.au 3rd April 2026

Cr Belinda Neal pushes for urgent Upgrade of Mangrove Mountain Public toilets

Councillor Belinda Neal has called for urgent action to replace aging public toilets at Mangrove Mountain, moving a motion at Tuesday nights Council meeting to allocate \$650,000 in next years budget for the reconstruction. The existing drop toilets no longer meet basic health and safety standards and are heavily used by locals, tourists and families attending the adjacent Hall and playground.

The Mangrove Mountain toilets are of a poor standard, as drop toilets and are inadequate to the present needs of the community’ said Cr Neal.

I’m also particularly concerned by reports from locals that the sewage from the toilets is leaking into the adjacent playground.

The toilets are extensively used by residents and tourists with at least 50 people per day using them and many more on weekends at events and tourists visiting.

The toilets are no longer suitable for a modern community and are smelly and unhygienic.

I am very disappointed that the coalition of the liberal party and team Central Coast Coast did not see fit to allocate the funds necessary for this basic facility in Mangrove Mountain district.

I will continue to pursue this issue on behalf of the Mangrove Mountain community until the replacement of these toilets until this can be achieved.

Background

Council manages and maintains 212 public toilets across the Central Coast LGA.

*Media Release
Thursday, 25 March 2026*

Belinda Neal

*Belinda.neal@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au
0474244106*



OUT OF FIRE DANGER PERIOD: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU BURN

With the Fire Danger Period now behind us, many landholders are looking to take advantage of cooler conditions to clean up properties, and conduct pile burns.

You Must Notify Before You Burn

Even though we are not in the Fire Danger Period you are still required to notify your intention to burn. This helps prevent unnecessary emergency responses and ensures your burn is safe and accounted for.

Before lighting up, you must:

- Notify online at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/notify
 - Provide details including location, time, and type of burn
 - Notify neighbours at least 24 hours prior
- Failing to notify can result in

area

Never leave a fire unattended and ensure it is fully extinguished before you leave.

What You Can and Can’t Burn

Only burn vegetation such as leaves, grass, and untreated timber. Do not burn:

- Household waste
- Plastics or rubber
- Treated or painted wood

Burning inappropriate materials can be harmful to your health and the environment—and may result in fines.

If in doubt—don’t burn. Seek advice from your local brigade or Central Coast RFS District office before proceeding.

*Tarryn Nester
Mangrove Mountain Brigade Captain*



fire crews being unnecessarily dispatched—and potential penalties.

Conditions Still Matter

Just because it’s outside the Fire Danger Period doesn’t mean conditions can’t become dangerous. Always look at the weather forecast for the day of your burn and the days ahead and if conditions are unfavourable, do not burn.

Be Prepared

Before you start your burn, ensure you have:

- A reliable water source (hose, pump, or water tank)
- Hand tools (rakes, shovels) to control the fire
- Cleared breaks around the burn

Do not correct a fool or he will hate you. Correct a wise man and he will appreciate you

Proverbs 9:8

STOP!

Next issue Published
17th April 2026

**** DEADLINE ****

**** 10th April ‘26 ****

Send adverts & copy by email, website or post.
Email, website, FB or phone for enquiries

Autumn Weaving and Cordage workshop

Sat, 11 Apr, 10:30am - 12:30pm
 Kariong Eco Garden
 2 Dandaloo St, Kariong NSW 2250

Rebecca Ashcroft has been interested in and practicing weaving from natural materials for many years and has learned different cultural styles.

She will share a style of cordage making and dilly bag/basket weaving that is used in many cultures around the world.



This workshop follows the sold out workshop Rebecca ran on 14 March. We hope people who missed out last time will be able to make it and previous participants are welcome to return. There is talk of starting a weaving group.

Materials we will use include:

- banana plant fibres
- bullrush fibres

While younger children are welcome and could definitely learn the cordage making, the attention and capacity for basket weaving is more for 12 + years.

Kariong EcoGarden
 kariongecogarden@gmail.com



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- Maitland Annual Feature Weaner Sale Apr 2nd – 11am
- Monthly Store Cattle Sales - Apr 18th 11am

Gloucester Saleyards

- Fortnightly Thursday Store Cattle Sales - Apr 9th & 23rd 11am

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Mangrove Mountain Poets Breakfast — A Beautiful Morning of Words, Food & Community

On Sunday, 16 March, locals and visitors came together at the Mangrove Mountain Union Church Hall for the much loved annual Poets Breakfast — a joint fundraising event hosted by the Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch CWA and the Mangrove Mountain Union Church.

The hall was filled with poetry, conversation, and the comforting aroma of a hearty country breakfast, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere enjoyed by all.

A Breakfast Made With Care

The morning began with a generous spread prepared and served by volunteers from both the CWA Evening Branch and the Union Church. Guests enjoyed a full hot breakfast including:

- sausages
- bacon
- tomatoes
- mushrooms
- eggs
- toast
- tea and coffee

The community once again showed its generosity by donating food and raffle prizes. The raffle helped raise

funds for the Mangrove Mountain Union Church, and several lucky winners went home with wonderful prizes.

In total, around 60 people attended — a fantastic turnout on a beautifully sunny Mangrove Mountain day. The church hall was thoughtfully set up for the occasion, adding to the welcoming atmosphere.

Poetry Shared and Celebrated

With breakfast plates cleared and spirits high, guests settled in for the poetry readings. Participants took turns sharing original pieces and selected favourites, offering a delightful mix of thoughtful reflections, humour, and heartfelt moments. The audience was warm and appreciative — a true celebration of community creativity.

After the readings, guests were treated to homemade sweets and traditional scones with jam and cream, along with another cuppa, continuing the relaxed and friendly feel of the morning.

A Special Moment: The Return of a Treasured Bible

One of the standout moments of the event was the meaningful return of a historic Bible to the Union Church. Originally donated by the FitzSimons family in 1992, the Bible had been away during a period of uncertainty about the church's future. Its presentation back to the church during the Poets Breakfast was a touching

reminder of the area's heritage and the community's enduring connection to the Union Church.



A Morning to Remember

The event concluded with more conversation, laughter, and the shared enjoyment of poetry among friends and neighbours. The many comments and smiles throughout the hall reflected just how much the morning was appreciated.

A heartfelt thank you to all volunteers and contributors whose hard work made the Poets Breakfast another wonderful success.

The Mangrove Mountain community once again showed the strength of its spirit — and its love of good food, good company, and good poetry.

*Kirra Thorogood
Branch Publicity and International Officer
CWA Mangrove Mountain Evening
Email: publishmmeb@gmail.com*

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New \$9m Centre for Australian Horticultural Market Access officially unveiled on Central Coast

The Minns Labor Government has unveiled the new \$9 million state-of-the-art Centre for Australian Horticultural Market Access (CAHMA) in Ourimbah on the State's Central Coast designed to strengthen the Government's primary industries research capabilities.

The work comes on top of some \$60 million invested by the Minns Government in modernising the State's R&D capacity.

The new centre is an essential hub for research and development and will help develop major projects designed to strengthen the State's \$3.5 billion horticulture sector which includes exports valued at \$432 million in 2024-25.

It includes state-of-the-art DNA-based tools to quickly identify foodborne germs, increased laboratory capacity to support food safety R&D programs and sorting technology to detect quarantine pests and diseases and improve fruit quality.

The Centre will help protect and grow NSW regional industries and markets across key horticultural industries including citrus, berries, avocados, melons and vegetables.



Left to Right: Johnathon Davey (CEO of Melons Australia), Minister Tara Moriarty (Minister for Agriculture), Sukhvinder Pal (SP) Singh (Senior Research Scientist, DPIRD and Director of Central Coast Primary Industries Centre)

It will also enhance capacity to support supply chain efficiencies, fruit quality and food safety.

The installation of new state-of-the-art research facilities and equipment includes:

- Technology to detect quarantine pests and diseases and improve fruit

quality and to reduce chemical use and improve sustainability of NSW horticultural exports

- High pressure washing facility to remove surface pests and contaminants
- Advanced controlled-atmosphere technologies and fumigation equipment to improve market access

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Left to Right: Minister Tara Moriarty (Minister for Agriculture), Liesl Tesch (Member for Gosford), David Mehan (Member for The Entrance)

outcomes

- Upgraded and new cool rooms and fumigation facilities to scale-up research to semi-commercial equivalence
- A new biosafety level 2 laboratory for containment of human pathogens with automated diagnostic workflows enhancing food safety surveillance

The \$9 million project was funded from the World Class Food and Fibre Stage 2 Program from the Restart NSW Fund and was completed in July 2025.

Minister for Agriculture and Regional New South Wales Tara Moriarty said:

“For more than 130 years, NSW Government research has helped the sustainable growth of our agriculture farming, fisheries and forestry industries.

“We are investing in research infrastructure and activities to drive industry growth, the sustainable

development of our natural resources, and to support innovation so that industry can manage the risks and take advantage of opportunities for the next century.

“Market access and fruit quality remain a crucial issue for the horticulture industry to continue to grow and maintain markets.

“This facility will be an essential hub for research and development to support projects critical to building domestic and export markets for NSW’s and Australia’s horticultural produce.”

Minister for the Central Coast, David Harris said:

“The opening of this state-of-the-art research facility is a major boost for our community and will help build a better future for our region by further enhancing our renown as a food producing, manufacturing and R&D hub.

“It strengthens our local fruit and vegetable producers to grow their

businesses and grow jobs, and ensures the Central Coast continues to get its fair share of investment in

Local State MP for The Entrance, David Mehan said:

“This new landmark Centre, is a huge win for our region, strengthening our horticulture sector, and ensuring local growers have access to world-class science, right here, in their very own backyard.

“NSW produces some of the best fresh produce in the world, and this centre will help our local growers, continue to deliver that on the world stage.”

NSW DPIRD Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Biosecurity Rachel Connell said:

“The new Centre for Australian Horticultural Market Access will allow NSW DPIRD researchers greater capacity to contribute to the increased productivity, profitability and sustainability of the NSW horticulture sector.

“The facility will allow NSW DPIRD research scientists to expand on the important work of maintaining and improving market access and ensuring fruit and vegetables are at their optimal quality and safe for domestic and export markets.”

*Media Release from the Offices of
Tara Moriarty
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Regional New South Wales
Minister for Western New South Wales*

*The Hon David Harris MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty
Minister for Gaming and Racing
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APRIL FALLS CAMPAIGN

April Falls Month is an annual campaign to raise awareness about the impact of falls and to promote the latest best practice fall prevention strategies.

This year, the Let's Talk About Falls – Staying Safe Starts with a Chat campaign aims to break the stigma around talking about falls to help Australians access appropriate care and begin early interventions. Talking about falls isn't about taking away independence; it's about protecting it. Falls don't just happen. When you notice signs that an older person may be at risk, such as holding onto furniture when walking or showing possible indicators of a recent fall like bruising, start the conversation. A simple chat can help people make small, practical changes or receive the support needed to keep them independent, safe and steady on their feet.

Some signs you can look out for include:

- Unsteadiness
- Signs of feeling unwell or bruising
- Holding onto furniture while moving about
- Confusion

Fall-related statistics for people over 65 in NSW:

- 37% of injury-related deaths caused

Let's Talk About Falls

Staying Safe Starts with a Chat



Unsteady on your feet



Feeling unwell or signs of injury



Using furniture to walk



Often confused




- by falls
- 30% of over 65s fall each year
- 23% reduction in falls with regular exercise

The issue of falls

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths in Australia. Each year, around 200,000 falls are severe enough to require hospitalisation.

In 2016, the annual estimated recurrent health service expenditure on falls was about \$3.9 billion nationally. This is expected to increase markedly with the number of people aged 65 years and over projected to nearly double by 2042. Effective fall

prevention programs are required in order to reduce falls and injurious fall rates to lessen the burden on the health system.

Risk factors for falls

While falls can occur throughout life they become more common and consequential as people age. In Australia, 30% of adults aged 65 and over will experience at least one fall a year. During the normal ageing process, changes such as poor vision and reduced muscle mass and bone strength increase the risk of older people experiencing a fall.

Fall risk is multifactorial and linked

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Full Day: 7:00am – 6:00pm

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- Morning 7:00am – 12:30pm (includes breakfast and morning tea)
- Afternoon 12:30pm – 6:00pm (includes lunch and afternoon tea)

💰 Fees:

Full Day: \$110 per day

Half Day: \$60 per session

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9 Williams Rd, Kulnura
02 03 2026

to changes in physical and sensory function, the use of certain medications and medical conditions. The good news is many of these risk factors are modifiable.

Falls can be prevented

Exercise has been shown to reduce the number of falls over time by around 23%. High challenge balance exercises of sufficient dose can increase the effect of exercise, to up to 40%. Multicomponent and multifactorial interventions that include education,

home safety modifications, foot health, strength and balance exercises, vision screenings and medication reviews have also been shown to be effective at reducing falls.

The NSW Fall Prevention and Health Ageing Network works collaboratively with healthcare and community providers to provide the latest evidence and best practice information for falls and fall-related injury within the broader scope of healthy ageing. The Network also aims to disseminate this

research into the community through our conferences and workshops.

For more information go to:

<https://fallsnetwork.neura.edu.au/>

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Return of Gifted Bible to Union Church

On Sunday 15th March 2026, the large format Bible which had been on the Union Church pulpit for almost 30 years was returned. The Bible came to the Union Church in 1992 as a gift by the FitzSimons Family to honour the death of their father, Peter McCloy FitzSimons. Peter had a very long and regular involvement with the Mangrove Mountain Union Church since the late 1940's, when as newlyweds, he and wife Helen, established a Citrus farm and family at Peats Ridge.

In 2022, when the Union Church was in the hands of a Liquidator, the Bible was removed from the pulpit and the building for safe keeping. With the fate of the Union Church as a place of worship in doubt, members of the FitzSimons family acted to retrieve the Bible from its uncertain future. For more than 2 years from 2021, the Mountains Community waged a successful campaign to regain custody and control of the Union Church. The Community's goal was achieved in September 2023.

With the return of regular worship services to the Church (there are now 4 Christian groups meeting at the

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property), several community groups using the Hall, and a Men's Shed being established, the future of the Mangrove Mountain Union Church is looking bright. So, for members of the FitzSimons Family, it seemed an appropriate time to return the Gifted Bible to its rightful place in the Union Church. Our picture shows Trish and Cathy (daughters of Peter McCloy FitzSimons) re-presenting the Gifted Bible to Ron Collins, President of the current Union Church Trust Group.

Robert Meggs for the Mangrove Mountain Union Church Trust Group

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Services and Wreath laying ceremonies will be held at both Palmdale and Greenway.

Palmdale Lawn Cemetery & Memorial Park

57 Palmdale Road,
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Commencing at 9am,
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**Palmdale phone:
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4369 2013**



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Learning from the Land: Aboriginal Culture Guides Students into Sustainable Futures



Recently, Central Mangrove Public School students had the opportunity to participate in an excursion with Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre (EEC) at Brisbane Water National Park.

The day began with a walk along the Girrakool Loop Track, where students explored an important Aboriginal rock engraving site and deepened their understanding of local Indigenous history and culture.

Students also visited the Bulgandry Aboriginal Art Site near Kariong. Guided by Aboriginal educators, they learned about the significance and stories behind the rock art, as well as the importance of respecting Indigenous sites.

This excursion highlighted traditional Aboriginal approaches to farming and sustainability, encouraging students to consider how these practices have shaped care for Country over thousands



of years.

Building on these experiences, students will visit local Mountains farms next term to explore modern farming methods, sustainability, and the journey from farm to fork. This learning will culminate in an exciting restaurant experience, where students will design recipes then cook and serve them to parents at our Central Mangrove restaurant. More on this to come!

*Amy Ball, Principal
Central Mangrove Public School
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Peaceful, private and effortlessly inviting, Cedar Tree Farm offers the flexibility to be whatever you need it to be- a cherished weekend escape, a thriving Airbnb opportunity, or a forever home immersed in nature, with the space and infrastructure to support it all.



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POETS BREAKFAST

On the 15th March CWA Evening Branch and The Union Church Trust jointly hosted a very well supported event thanks to the Friends and Families of other CWA branches and local Community members.

Many thanks to the cooks and servers for efficiently feeding a booked-out event and the dishwashers who helped pack up after.

The Poets young and older didn't disappoint with their original or well-loved classic verses.

The Trustee for the Mangrove Mountain Union Church 1914 Trust.



Peats Ridge & Districts CWA

Now in our 81st year and still going strong, we'd love to say a big hello and a warm welcome to everyone reading this!

We're very grateful to the Mangrove Mountain Country Fair Committee for their generous grant, which has allowed us to purchase a new printer for the branch, along with extra jars and lids for our jam and preserve making. These are the goodies we love sharing with you at the markets! The printer has also been a wonderful help to our hardworking secretary - something we truly appreciate.

Our branch regularly hosts events open to the public, along with some special get-togethers just for members. Most recently, we enjoyed a lovely Sunday afternoon jam workshop. Seventeen ladies came together to listen, learn, taste, and share tips on making jams and relishes. We



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were lucky to have Karen Boskos demonstrate her skills—Karen has won ribbons for her beautiful jams and preserves! From start to finish, it was a fun and rewarding afternoon, creating delicious treats to share.

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Mountain Markets on 5th April - we'd love you to stop by and say hello!

Our member outings are always friendly, relaxed, and full of interest. In the past, we've enjoyed trips to the Avoca Beach Theatre for their French Festival, and we're already looking forward to this year's films.

If you have a look at our Facebook page you'll see the wonderful cooking and handicraft competition that we participated in at the Central Coast Leagues Club this month, with some success.

The annual CWA State Conference

is coming up in May, with four ladies from our branch attending the four-day event. Last year's conference in Wagga welcomed over 700 women from across the state, and this year's gathering in Forster is expected to be just as wonderful.

We hold our general meetings once a month on the third Monday at 11:30am at Kulnura Hall, and everyone is very welcome. Come along, say hello, and join us for a cuppa—the jug is always on!

Donna Hobday
President, Peats Ridge & Districts CWA



MANGROVE MOUNTAIN

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WHAT'S ON WEEKLY

MONDAY

HAPPY HOUR 4-6pm

TUESDAY

BINGO from 11am - Pizza night
HAPPY HOUR 4-6pm

WEDNESDAY

Schnitzels

THURSDAY

POKER 630pm Steak night
MEMBERS BADGE DRAW 730pm

FRIDAY

HAPPY HOUR 4-6pm, COCKTAIL HOUR 6-7pm
MUSICAL BINGO 630pm every fortnight
MEAT RAFFLE drawn at 730pm
Ribs & wings

SATURDAY

POOL COMP from 630pm. Entry fee \$5

SUNDAY

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Find Us On Facebook & Instagram - 18 Hallards Road, Central Mangrove, 2250 - 02 4373 1129 - www.mmmclub.com.au

Final call for Central Coast performers as “From Gosford With Love” applications close this week

Central Coast performers are being urged to act fast, with the final days to apply for Round 2 of From Gosford With Love—a career-changing professional development program designed to launch local work onto national stages.

Delivered by FunHaus Factory in partnership with Central Coast Council, the 12-month initiative supports artists to present tour-ready work while gaining the tools, resources and industry experience needed to build sustainable creative careers.

Applications for Round 2 close this Thursday 9 April 2026, with successful applicants to be programmed across FunHaus Factory’s 2026–2027

season.

The program’s inaugural round saw an overwhelming response, attracting a large and highly competitive pool of applicants from across the region. Selected artists represented a dynamic cross-section of the Coast’s creative scene, spanning theatre, live music, comedy, cabaret, club nights and musical theatre—highlighting both the depth of local talent and the demand for pathways beyond the region.

Creative Director Glitta Supernova says the response confirms what many in the industry already know—regional artists are ready, but often under-supported.

“The level of interest in Round 1 was incredible. It showed us just how much bold, original work is being created on the Central Coast—and how vital it is to have programs that help artists take that next step. This is about giving creatives the backing they need to move from local stages to wider audiences.”

From Gosford With Love is designed to remove the common barriers faced by regional artists, providing comprehensive support across production, marketing and audience development. Participants receive access to professional staging, technical crews, promotional photography and video assets, as well as mentorship.

Across the year-long program, artists

present their work in a fully equipped venue while developing industry-standard materials—from tech specs to media kits—positioning them for opportunities beyond the Central Coast.

The initiative not only supports individual artists but strengthens the region’s cultural ecosystem, building skills, confidence and visibility for locally made work while reinforcing Gosford as a growing hub for contemporary performance.

With only days remaining, artists, musicians and performers based on the Central Coast with tour-ready or near-ready work are strongly encouraged to apply.

Applications close: Thursday 9 April 2026

Apply online: <https://funhausfactory.org.au/opportunities/>

*Glitta Supernova
Creative Director*





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STEM ADVENTURES: EXPLORING, CODING, AND CREATING OUR FUTURE!



Learning at Central Mangrove PS

These robotics are on loan from the NSW Department of Education's eT4L program.

Microbits

Microbits, small pocket-sized computers that bring coding and hardware interaction to life, have also captured students' imaginations. Featuring LED lights, buttons, sensors, and Bluetooth, Microbits allow learners to create everything from robots to games and musical instruments.



SPIKE Lego Robotics

SPIKE Lego Robotics combines the creativity of Lego building with powerful coding tools. Students build robots using colourful Lego pieces and program them using a simple, icon-based coding language, which helps develop engineering skills, logical thinking, and teamwork.

Makey Makeys

Makey Makey is an inventive invention kit that turns everyday objects—like fruits or drawings—into touchpads and controllers. By connecting these objects to a computer, students can create unique interactive projects, blending creativity with basic electronics and programming.



250,000 Cheaper Home Batteries are Powering the Suburbs, Rural and Regional Australia

Over a quarter of a million households, small businesses and community organisations have now installed a bill busting battery under the Albanese Government's Cheaper Home Batteries program, with around half of those installing new or upgraded solar systems at the same time.

Batteries help households store the cheaper, cleaner energy they generate during the day, and use it at night. That means less reliance on peak prices, a more reliable grid and

putting downward pressure on prices for everyone.

New postcode-level data shows the clean energy upgrade is being led by the outer suburbs and by rural and regional communities, not the inner-city. Around 77 per cent of uptake has occurred in these regional and outer-suburban areas.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen and Dr Gordon Reid MP, Member for Robertson, said the results reflect what households are telling them right across the country; people want to cut their power bills, get more value from their solar, and take control of their energy use.

The data shows strongest uptake across family suburbs, outer metro growth areas, and towns and regions where households are already leading the way on rooftop solar.

Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen said "This is what the clean energy transformation looks like when it is working for Australians. It is practical, it is household-focused, and it is being led by the suburbs and the regions.

"Cheaper Home Batteries are helping families cut power bills and get more value from their solar. The postcode

data makes it clear, this is not an inner-city story, it is a national story.

"The Coalition want to slow down cheaper renewables and keep people stuck with higher bills. Labor is getting on with the job, cleaner, cheaper, reliable energy for every community."

Dr Gordon Reid MP, Member for Robertson said "In Robertson, 1784 families and local businesses are embracing energy upgrades that save them money and make their homes and businesses more energy efficient.

"These results show our community is getting on with it, taking up batteries and backing a cleaner energy future that is made from Australia's abundant renewable resources.

"People here don't want slogans. They want bills that are easier to pay, and a plan that delivers. That is exactly what this program is doing."

*Joint Media Release
The Hon Chris Bowen MP
Minister for Climate Change and Energy
Member for McMahon*

*Dr Gordon Reid MP
Member for Robertson*

Top Suburbs in Robertson:

POSTCODE	SUBURBS	CHEAPER HOME BATTERIES
2250	Wyoming, Narara, Kariong, Gosford, Lisarow, Erina, East Gosford, Springfield (Central Coast - NSW), North Gosford	642
2251	Kincumber, Green Point (Central Coast - NSW), Avoca Beach, Saratoga, Copacabana, Davistown, Bensville, Macmasters Beach, Kincumber South	419
2257	Umina Beach, Ettalong Beach, Empire Bay, Booker Bay, St Huberts Island, Killcare Heights, Daleys Point, Killcare, Pretty Beach (Central Coast - NSW)	381
2260	Terrigal, Wamberal, Forresters Beach, North Avoca, Erina Heights	173
2256	Woy Woy, Blackwall (NSW), Koolewong, Pearl Beach, Horsfield Bay, Woy Woy Bay, Phegans Bay, Patonga, Little Wobby	158
2083	Brooklyn (NSW), Mooney Mooney, Dangar Island, Bar Point, Cheero Point, Milsons Passage, Cogra Bay	6
2775	Spencer, Wisemans Ferry, Lower Macdonald, Gunderman, St Albans (NSW), Loughtondale, Leets Vale, Webbs Creek, Central Macdonald	4

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Vodafone has Bush Blindspot

RRRCC says Vodafone campaign misses the mark on regional Australia

The Rural, Regional and Remote Communications Coalition (RRRCC) says Vodafone Australia's latest 'comeback' advertising campaign, featuring comedian Ali Wong, has missed the mark, describing it as dismissive of the people, industries and communities beyond major cities, and those who rely on and travel through these regions.

The Coalition said any campaign that suggests there is "nothing out here" reflects a metro-centric view of Australia and ignores the reality of life in rural and remote communities, where reliable communications are not a luxury, but an essential service.

Rural and remote Australians are not a fringe audience to be laughed off. Nearly one in three Australians live outside major cities, including around 1.9 per cent in Remote and Very Remote areas, and they make an outsized contribution to the nation's prosperity.

Rural Australia is publicly credited with generating around 70 to 80 per cent of export income, nearly half of tourism income, and producing around 90 per cent of Australia's food. Yet these same communities continue to face poorer access to essential services, including communications and health care, and markedly worse health outcomes than their city counterparts.

However, there is growing frustration in the Bush that Australian telecommunications providers continue to present mobile coverage as near universal, while the lived experience in rural and remote Australia tells a very different story.

While Vodafone's campaign speaks to increased competition, many rural

and remote Australians have no mobile coverage at all or rely on a single mobile carrier, with limited competition continuing to affect service quality, pricing and consumer experience outside metropolitan areas. Vodafone Australia claims its network covers 98.5 per cent of the population, but that remaining percentage represents hundreds of thousands of Australians living and working in some of the most remote and challenging parts of the country, the very areas where the campaign suggests 'there is nothing'.

It also implies these areas are adequately covered by another carrier, when in reality many communities face patchy mobile service or no coverage at all. By landmass, more than 60 per cent of Australia remains without mobile coverage.

RRRCC Secretariat Ms Danica Leys from the Country Women's Association of NSW said the ad was particularly disappointing because it mocked the very places and people who are the backbone of this country.

"There are families, workers, businesses and entire communities in rural and remote Australia who rely on connectivity every single day," Ms Leys said.

"To imply these areas do not matter, or are somehow not worth investing in, is disrespectful and deeply out of touch.

"For people in the city, poor connectivity can be frustrating. For people in the Bush, poor connectivity can affect safety, education, health care, business operations and emergency response."

The RRRCC said the issue was not corporate competition, but the message used to make the point.

RRRCC Chair Mrs Wendy Hick said rural and remote Australians were tired of being treated as an afterthought in the national telecommunications debate.

"This is not about whether companies compete hard on price or market share. It is about whether rural and remote

Australians are treated with basic respect," Mrs Hick said.

"Celebrating service for the 98 per cent while ridiculing the remaining Australians is not clever. It is exclusionary.

"In an era when businesses speak so often about inclusion and social responsibility, this kind of messaging is a serious misstep."

The Coalition said communications infrastructure in the Bush underpins far more than convenience, supporting agriculture, freight, aviation, health, education, tourism, emergency management and the daily functioning of remote communities.

The RRRCC is calling on the Australian Government to move beyond consultation and into action, strengthening oversight, delivering targeted investment and progressing reform. In the absence of clear direction, industry is increasingly shaping the narrative around coverage, performance and investment, with real consequences for rural and remote Australians and First Nations communities.

Mapping the Digital Gap RMIT University Professor Lyndon Ormond-Parker said the Vodafone campaign failed to recognise the reality for many First Nations communities.

"Across thousands of rural and remote First Nations communities, the digital divide remains very real and access to reliable connectivity is still a challenge," Professor Ormond-Parker said.

"Saying there is 'nothing out here' ignores these communities, including the 59 per cent of First Nations people living in regional and remote Australia. Messaging like this risks reinforcing the perception that these communities are not valued when it comes to essential telecommunications services."

Ms Susi Tegen, RRRCC member and CEO of the National Rural Health Alliance, said rural and remote Australia was not a punchline.

"Rural and remote Australia feeds

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the nation, helps power the nation and protects the nation,” Ms Tegen said.

“From precision agriculture and drone technology to remote health services, logistics and schooling, people in these areas are using technology at a very high level, often in some of the most challenging operating environments in the country.

“Yet many rural and remote Australians still struggle to reliably access emergency services like triple zero, which is fundamental to health and safety. What they need from telecommunications companies is not mockery. They need investment, reliability and respect.”

The RRRCC said it would welcome advertising that reflected the value, contribution and modern reality of rural and remote Australia, rather than leaning on stereotypes.

Northern Territory business owner Jay Mohr-Bell said Vodafone should reconsider the message its campaign sends.

“Australia works best when we see ourselves as one connected country,” Mr Mohr-Bell said.

“Good telecommunications policy and good corporate citizenship should be about bringing Australia together, not reinforcing a divide between the cities and the communities beyond them.

“We would urge Vodafone to reflect on this campaign and on how it chooses to speak about the people who live outside metropolitan Australia.”

About the RRRCC

The Rural, Regional and Remote Communications Coalition is an alliance of 21 organisations advocating for better telecommunications outcomes for people living and working in rural, regional and remote Australia

*National Rural Health Alliance
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REGULAR ACTIVITIES & MEETINGS

RURAL FIRE SERVICES

Bucketty RFS	Weekend Training General Meeting Contact	3rd Sat, 9am-12 pm 4 meetings per year bucketty@lowerhunterffrfs.com.au 4998 8130
Calga-Mt. White RFS	General meeting Training Information & updates Contact	3rd Mon of the month, 7.30pm all welcome Every Monday 6.30 except public holidays Facebook.com/calga/mtwhiteruralfirebrigade/ Captain.calgamwhite@ccrfs.org.au - Zack Winslade.
Kulnura VBFB at Greta Rd Station	General meeting Training	1st Wednesday of the month, 7.30pm 3rd Wednesday of the month 7.00pm
Mangrove Mountain RFS Bloodtree Rd	General Meeting Training / Maintenance	Last Wednesday of the month, 7 pm, All Wednesday's except last of month, 7 pm
Spencer RFS	General Meeting Training Maintenance	2nd Monday of the month Meeting 6.30pm 3rd Monday 6:30pm 4th Monday 6:30pm E: captain-Spencer-vol@rfs.nsw.gov.au 0415 668953. 4778 Wisemans Ferry Rd
Somersby RFS	General Meeting Training/Maintenance	First Wed of the month 7.30pm at the Station Every Wed night 7.30 at the Station (except before Wed general meeting)
Yarralong RFS		Information: www.facebook.com/ YarralongRuralFireBrigade/ Phone contact: 0494 344 030 Email: volunteer@yarralongrfs.org.au

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL

Central Coast Plateau Chamber of Commerce Coastlink Friendship Group	First Tuesday each month 7.00PM MMMC Wed 9.30am-2pm at the Health Centre, Nurses Rd, Central Mangrove
Country Women's Association (Somersby)	Second Wed of each month, at Somersby Hall Wiseman's Ferry Road, Somersby, contact Sue, 43721280 or 0407768000.
Country Women's Association (Peats Ridge & District)	Third Monday of the month at the Kulnura Hall. Any enquiries please contact Christine 0419 400 163.
Country Women's Association (Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch)	2nd & 4th Tues of the month, 4-8pm at Mangrove Mtn Union Church, 2154 Wisemans Ferry Rd, MMtn. General meeting 6pm 2nd Tues. Ph Judy 0458 655850
Gosford North Inner Wheel club	2nd Wed each month 11am at Phillip House in Kariong. Contact: Glenis Ph: 0400 486 760
Kulnura & District Garden Club	Second Monday, 9.30 for 10am start. Jacqui Maxwell 0455364262 kulnuradge@gmail.com
Kulnura Tuesday Tennis	Tue 9.30am-12.30pm, Kulnura Tennis Courts. Enquiries: Alison Palmer 0427731548.
Ladies of the Valley Afternoon Tea	1st Tues, 1pm to 2.30 at Angels Sussurri Cafe Yarralong. Margaret Dale 0411104770
Mangrove Mountain & Districts Community Group	1st Thurs of the Month, excl Jan. 7.30pm, Mangrove Mtn Hall. Contact: mepccinc@gmail.com, 0412669649
Mangrove Emergency Planning & Communications Committee	
Mangrove Mountain Country Fair Committee Meeting	3rd Thu of mth except Jan, 7pm, at Union Church Hall. Pres - Steve 0455 155 075 www.mountaindistrictsassociation.com.au secretary@mountaindistrictsassociation.com.au
Mountain Districts Association (MDA)	
Mountain District Football Club Meeting	Second Tuesday of the Month 6.30pm at the Mangrove Memorial Club
Probus - West Gosford	2nd Thu. Ph Elaine Burrows 0412988353
River Cares for the Lower Hawkesbury River District	President Marlee Maxwell Email rivercaresinc@gmail.com
Rotary Club Meeting	Friday 7.15am at Phillip House. 43404529
Spencer Community Progress Group Inc	President Brad Maisey, Community Meetings, 0436482201, spencercpg2@gmail.com Articles to: spencercpg2@gmail.com
Spencer Sheilas Community Social Club	Last Friday of the month. Eve Leeming - 4377 1116 and/or cedriceve@bigpond.com
Wisemans Ferry Community Men's Shed	Tues & Sat, 9am-5pm. Contact: Alan Hunt 4566 4626 or Adrian Acheson 0448 833 781

SPIRITUAL

Anglican Service - Mountain Districts	Every Sun 8am at Peats Ridge Scout Hall, Sunday School during school terms
Mangrove Mountain Union Church Trust	Committee Meeting 3rd Monday, 7.30pm at the Mangrove Mountain Union Church Hall
Mountain Districts Christian Church	Services 9.30am 2nd & 4th Sundays. Bible Study 4.30pm 1st & 3rd Mondays. Mangrove Mountain Union Church
St Barnabas Christian Service Yarralong	Every Sunday, 9.30am. (Easter & (Christmas Carols dates to be advised)

(cont'd next page)

LIVESTOCK MARKET REPORT



Maitland Liveweight Cattle Sale 23rd March 2026

580 cattle yarded this week at
Maitland. 460 Trade/ 120 export.

- Restocker Heifers up to 250kg made
294 c/kg to 470 c/kg
- 250kg-300kg made 373 c/kg to 450
c/kg
- 300kg to 380kg made 407 c/kg to
445 c/kg
- Restocker steers up to 250kg made
429 c/kg to 490 c/kg
- 250kg-300kg made 441 c/kg to 485
c/kg
- 300kg-380kg made 422 c/kg to 475
c/kg
- Yearling Steers to Feed made 457 c/
kg to 465 c/kg
- Yearling Heifers to Feed made 350
c/kg to 350 c/kg
- Cows made 331 c/kg to 380 c/kg
- Bulls 339 c/kg to 350 c/kg

Maitland Liveweight Cattle Sale 16th March 2026

580 cattle yarded this week at
Maitland. 502 Trade/ 78 export.

- Restocker Heifers up to 250kg made
335c/kg to 400 c/kg
- 250kg-300kg made 382 c/kg to 425
c/kg
- 300kg to 380kg made 351 c/kg to
490 c/kg
- Restocker steers up to 250kg made
437 c/kg to 540 c/kg
- 250kg-300kg made 443 c/kg to 495
c/kg
- 300kg-380kg made 432 c/kg to 502
c/kg
- Yearling Steers to Feed made 427 c/
kg to 462 c/kg
- Yearling Heifers to Feed made 348
c/kg to 400 c/kg
- Cows made 377 c/kg to 408 c/kg
- Bulls 333 c/kg to 340 c/kg

A friendly reminder that we are often
in the area seeing clients and looking
at their livestock and if you would like
us to call in be sure to give us a call.

Grant-Funded Pie Warmer Boosts CWA Fundraising Efforts

Mangrove Mountain Evening Branch of the CWA is delighted to share some heart warming news—quite literally! Thanks to the generous grant from the Mangrove Mountain Districts Country Fair Committee, our branch has been able to purchase a brand new pie warmer to support our ongoing fundraising efforts at the Mangrove Mountain Farmers and Artisans Market.

This wonderful addition means our much loved sausage rolls and baked goods will be served perfectly warmed, helping us continue to deliver quality (and comfort!) to our local community and market visitors.

The pie warmer will have a permanent home in the Hall Kitchen, where it will be available not only for CWA use but also to support broader community activities, events, and future fundraising initiatives. It's an asset that will keep giving back for years to come.

A heartfelt thank you to the Mangrove Mountain Districts Country Fair Committee for their support—thank you, thank you, thank you!

Your generosity helps us continue the work we love, supporting our community one warm sausage roll at a time.

Kirra Thorogood
Branch Publicity and International Officer
CWA Mangrove Mountain Evening
Email: publishmmeb@gmail.com

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REGULAR ACTIVITIES & MEETINGS (cont'd)

Catholic Service - Central Mangrove	Saturdays 5pm St. Dionysios Greek Orthodox Church, 21 Nurses Rd, Central Mangrove, Contact Nai Hereford 0405 558 669
- Spencer	Holy Trinity Church, 1st Sat 4pm, Phone 0412 201 851 as times may change.
- Wollombi	2nd & 5th Sunday of the month, 4.30pm Mass at St Michael the Archangel, Wollombi.
- Yarramalong	1st Sunday each month, 11.00am St. Barnabas All welcome. Enq 0428 438577
Divine Retreat Centre	Daily Holy Mass 8.00am to 8.30 am Last Sun, 9am-4pm, One Day Retreat. 160 Hensons Road, Somersby Ph 0243721598
Serbian Orthodox	2nd & 4th Sun. of the month. 10 am, followed by luncheon, tea, coffee, cakes (cost \$20). 1184 Peats Ridge Rd, Peats Ridge
Kariong Community Baptist Church	Sundays @ 9.30am Church & Kid's Program, Kariong Neighbourhood Centre, 10 Langford Drive, Kariong. Email: pastor@kariongchurch.org ; Web: kariongchurch.org 10am every Saturday, Mangrove Mountain Union Church.
Restitution Ministries Independent SDA Church	
YOUTH	
Junior Girl Guides 5-10	Kooree Guide Cabin, 5.00pm – 6.30pm Mondays in school term,
Girl Guides 10-15	Kooree Guide Cabin, 6.00pm-7.30pm Mondays in school term, Contact 0417451764 for further information
Scouts, Cubs & Venturers Peats Ridge Scout Hall	Cubs meet 6.30pm – 8.30pm Wednesdays Scouts meet 7.00pm – 9.00pm Tuesdays Venturers meet 7.00pm – 9.00pm Mondays Contact 0460 696 941
HISTORICAL	
Brisbane Waters Historical Society	25-27 Henry Kendall St., West Gosford, Ph: 4325 2270. www.henrykendallcottage.org.au Last Sat of month. All welcome, contact Jan Kofron 0405321478. jankofron@optusnet.com.au
Dharug & Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society Inc.	2nd Sat of the month, 10.00am for 10.30, Point Clare Hall (except Jan & Dec). Contact Margaret 0409467710 or Gavin 0406645842.
First Fleeters Central Coast Chapter	3rd Fri of month 7.30pm Pearl Beach. Peggy 0411754577 pbaboriginalhistory@gmail.com Sun to Thurs, 10am-2pm, other times by appt. 43521886 or info@alisonhomestead.com.au . website: www.alisonhomestead.com.au
The Pearl Beach Aboriginal History Group	
Wyong District Museum & Historical Society	Meetings held every three months. Central Coast, Newcastle, Sydney. Ring 0447723956 or 0448390077 for details.
ACTIVITY/HOBBY	
Carnival Glass Club	Meeting dates: ccjuniormotorcycleclub.org.au , FB: "Central Coast Junior Motorcycle Club Official". David Smith 0412 506 503
Central Coast Junior Motorcycle Club Inc.	1st & 3rd Thurs of month, 6:45pm to 8:45pm at Doyalson-Wyee RSL. Debbie 0421216952 2nd Sat of the month Somersby Hall (10am to 2pm) cost \$5 per person Carmen 0434071305 Third Sun 2pm, Angels Sussurri Yarramalong. Contact Kerry Watson 0404059167
Coastal Communicators Toastmasters	
Saturday Craft Group/Spining and bobbin lace	
Yarn group (knit, crochet etc)	
HALL BOOKINGS	
Kulnura Hall	Contact Central Coast Council.
Mangrove Mountain Hall	Hall bookings Ryan Howard 0405416289
Mangrove Mountain Union Church & Hall	Church & Hall bookings 0412669649 mmucsecretary@outlook.com
Somersby Hall and Mountain Districts Culture and Heritage Centre	Hall bookings: 0413 359 655 or AH 4373 1488
Yarramalong school of Arts / Hall	enquiries@yarramalonghall.org.au https://yarramalonghall.org.au

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Government for All Australians

I was amazed to see a sign in the Coast News that democracy may just be going to break through again, a member of the capitalist [privatise at all cost] party actually advocating for the less affluent in society.

I wonder is this an abberation or are the Lib's actually intending to address the ever widening gap between the extremely rich and those who aren't, ARE THEY REALLY LISTENING?

Page 4 of the Coast News reads "libs issue warning on campsite privatisation". For many the opportunity to enjoy a holiday and still afford the basics is the opportunity to go affordable camping!

Privatisation always ultimately leads to higher costs, the rich get even richer, at the expense of the rest, greed takes over. Oh yes I know that the government can claim to balance the budget, but at the expense of "selling the family jewels"!

Just look at the past "privatisation" - electricity, telecom, child care, etc. None of them ultimately helped to narrow the gap, rather the reverse, and hasn't ultimately helped the budget.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

CAR WASHER / DETAILER wanted to clean limousines and buses as needed in Somersby. Suit retiree or someone in between work. Contact Greg P: 0414 682 306 or E: lionlimos1@gmail.com

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What with the cost of all the enquiries, financial cost and social cost to community, this policy of privatisation has been very expensive indeed. Government always ends up subsidising the system which had been less costly in public hands.

I wonder, would a sensible reformed tax policy where all government charges were a % of income rather than a set amount would be fairer for everyone.

The more affluent would still end up with more but would carry a fairer share of the costs.

Am I dreaming or is this a sign that the upper house, or at least some of them, intend to do what the constitution intended, ie. protect the people from the idiosyncracies of party politics?

Clara Jones

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