

THE APSLEY Advocate

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26 October 2022

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Nutrien  Boulton's

Bush training rewards Blaine with a silver medal

The old saying 'Practice Makes Perfect' certainly worked for Walcha youngster Blaine Cooney who last week blitzed the competition at the NSW PSSA Athletics Championships in Homebush to bring home a silver medal and qualify for the National Athletics Championships in Brisbane next month.

At the Walcha Central School Athletics Carnival Blaine threw the discus 21 metres to secure a place in the the Regional Carnival in Tamworth. At this carnival he lobbed the discus an impressive 28 metres, qualifying for the State carnival.

So he set his mind to training hard, and in good old country style he used the septic cement top as his 'circle' to practice on for the next six weeks!

The first event last Wednesday at the State Championships was the junior boys discus where he competed against 41 others from across NSW. Blaine put in a solid performance and made it into the final eight.

As he stepped up to the plate in the finals, Blaine gave it all he had, and produced a very impressive personal best throw of 33.66 metres which earned him a place on the dais and a silver medal!

Blaine also competed in the Junior Boys Shot Put but unfortunately did not get a place.

"I had a great time in Sydney, and really enjoyed meeting new people from across NSW," he said.

So for now, Blaine is back to his training pad on top of the septic tank, giving it his all before he takes on the best throwers in Australia from 17 – 21 November in Brisbane.



Blaine proudly holding his silver medal. He is now off to the National Championships in Brisbane.



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Mayoral Column

Eric Noakes, Walcha Mayor

Last Wednesday saw the last of the eleven community and staff engagements in relation to Walcha Council's application for SRV (Special Rate Variation). With around 80 attendees and a

50 minute presentation by Professor Joseph Drew the overwhelming feedback was that, like the other venues, it was in our community's best interest to apply. On behalf of Council I would like to thank everyone who attended and participated in these forums.

Part of the messaging coming out of these meetings was that council needs to clean up its own backyard too, a process that really began 12 months ago, and will take constant vigilance to improve and maintain. I do not believe any business, be it private or public, is perfect but we must strive to be.

Following this, a conversation in the street on Friday, which was quite negative towards council I have reflected on what our council has achieved despite the financial environment we work in.

One of the longest running improvements to this town is the beautification of our street and outdoor spaces. I'm not sure when this started but the vision at the time deserves credit and is now maintained and improved by two gardeners and our urban works staff. The recognition given from visitors is endless, with our toilets being voted best in NSW on a snap poll on ABC radio 2 years ago.

Over the last 12 years, once again to a vision, 25 wooden bridges have been replaced and there are currently 5 more earmarked for future funding. These bridges will not need replacing for at least 100 years. The successful grant application of \$10.3M as part of the Thunderbolts Way Corridor Strategy has seen vast improvements to our section and any trip to Uralla soon defines the council boundary. We have been successful in obtaining a further grant of \$4.5M to fully rehabilitate, asphalt, kerb and gutter and complete drainage work on the two Derby Street approaches to town.

For two years there was free access to the pool and the recent and upcoming investment of nearly \$2M in essential rehabilitation work will make our pool compliant and safe for the next 50 years. This includes new solar heating, filtration work and leak repairs amongst other issues. Without this upgrade its future would be limited. The completion of a new gymnasium nearby offers what is a state of art complex with modern equipment, improved amenities and improves the health of our residents.

A long term vision of previous Councils to build a new, modern and efficient pre-school has been achieved and will serve families for many decades. Coupled with the Early Intervention Centre that vision is a credit to forward planning. Council's involvement in both the funding for the function centre at the show ground and the Walcha Men's Shed helped to enable these buildings to be completed and now form an integral part of our social wellbeing. Assisting in funding and delivery of upgrades to three outlying halls and a sports ground has given these facilities a boost they may never have had. This is also complemented by the community storage sheds behind the Bowling Club, a rent free facility that recognises the tireless efforts of our service clubs.

While presenting issues throughout construction, a compliant and modern million dollar truck wash bay offers another level of bio-security during times of increased risk.

To me the jewel in the crown is the construction of our \$11M off-creek storage. A long and hard "fight" over many years to fund. Probably water is a little further from our thoughts now but with the successful commissioning of this infrastructure next year the importance will certainly be recognised when dry weather returns. The pressure council is under to bring this project in on budget under current financial constraints is enormous as we have no spare cash to play with. To complement this, both the water and sewer plants have had major upgrades to make sure their operations comply with health and EPA regulations and therefore protect our community.

Any council has a social responsibility and the lighting of the levee banks, upcoming improvements with a combined valued at over \$1.5M to Lions Park, the Skate Park, Peter Fenwicke Oval and John Oxley Oval will see Walcha maintain its liveable community status.

Walcha students inspired by the gift of service

When two Walcha youngsters enthusiastically volunteered to be part of The Armidale School's 22nd Christian service trip to St Christopher's Orphanage in Fiji last month, they didn't realise the adventure would be so profound.

"We helped out at the home with jobs such as painting, gardening and fixing things. The most challenging thing for me was seeing a lot of poverty and stray dogs, and not being able to really do anything to help (solve the problem)," said Claudia Kirton.

"I feel like I really developed as a person as I became more aware of how fortunate we are in Australia and how we really shouldn't need money to be happy, as the Fijian people are so, so happy and yet they all have so little," Claudia said. "It also made me appreciate how lucky I am to have a family that loves me and a roof to live under."

For Toby Crawford, the reward came in seeing the joy in others. "I was part of a group that fixed 14 broken pushbikes. It was really rewarding to see all of the St Christopher's children riding on the bikes after we repaired them; we even had to teach a few of the kids how to ride them."

Claudia and Toby were among 23 Year 8 students who took part in the trip to the Orphanage, continuing a relationship now into its third decade. Having installed a solar hot water system some years ago, the TAS contingent this year also raised funds for and constructed a giant trampoline for the Orphanage's children which was made possible by Sportspower Armidale.

The highlight for most was the time spent with their Orphanage buddies, aged from nine months to 17 years.

The humility and reward of service for those less fortunate was evident for all the students who took part, according



to co-ordinator Ms Fiona Taber. "The students come away with a sense of gratitude for what they have in their own lives but their sense of humility at the life-long service of the Sisters to the Orphanage is also very real."



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Further entries are invited.

For more information please contact:

Mat Larkings 0427 002 427 Simon Newton 0467 660 320 Miles Archdale 0428 660 326

3n Derby Street Walcha. Phone 6777 2044



WHAT YOU CAN'T HEAR WON'T HURT YOU – OR WILL IT ?

Wind turbines not only generate electricity but also noise *annoyance* and 'silent' infrasound, a common phenomenon occurring with wind, storms, earthquakes, and ocean waves and many animals including elephants and whales use infrasound as a means to communicate.

Thousands of people around the world have lived near wind farms for many years. They have found the noise annoying and quite loud at times, but it hasn't until recently made them feel ill or caused prolonged sleep deprivation. These problems are a result of re-powering. That's when small wind turbines are replaced with bigger, more efficient models and now those same people are complaining to government. The standard response from government is that the infrasound is drowned out by the background noise (below 75 db) over a distance of 700 metres or so.

The BGR, a scientific research organisation which advises the German Government has **found that infrasound peak signals are generated over a distance of 20 klm**. Far in excess of the background noise projection of 700 meters usually nominated by government bodies. So how can this huge difference be explained? In acoustics, an averaged reading is normally recorded and this protocol is what government and wind farm proponents have been relying on until fairly recently. **This would appear to be a deliberate ploy to ignore the infrasound peak signals.** This is significant here in Australia. Unembellished data is now being called upon by the regulatory authorities. Thus, a 'flattened' acoustical graph can no longer provide wind farm proponents or government with the argument that infrasound from wind farms is swallowed up by background noise.

Infrasound resonates up to 25db higher inside houses, thereby an outdoor reading of 80db may be 100db inside a nearby living room and why complaints are more often about indoor disturbance instead of outdoor. This could explain why the resident neighbours of the Bald Hills wind farm, who had disturbed sleep hundreds of times after the wind farm began operation would seek relief by sleeping in their cars at the local beach. Fortunately for them the Victorian Supreme Court this year awarded in their favour, albeit after they had abandoned their homes. Many people living near wind farms get sick, so sick that they abandon (as in, shut the door and leave) their homes.

"What you can't hear, won't hurt you". There is no scientific evidence to support this statement, but there is a colossal amount of scientific evidence indicating otherwise. A research team at Mainz University Medical Centre conducted experiments on the exposure of heart tissue to infrasound. They said "whether we hear it or not, every form of energy has physical effects and infrasound is particularly dangerous, because we don't hear it. They concluded their research with the following footnote: As medical researchers, it is strongly recommended that infrasound levels generated by wind farms do not approach pathological levels. **It is the recommendation of this research group to set the level of infrasound no higher than 80 db as the maximally tolerated limit for chronic exposure.**

Insomnia, heart problems, VAD, stress, fear, depression, and fright-flight response are some of the disease symptoms that can be caused by infrasound. Doctors believe that between 10 and 30% of people react to it. And that means it could impact on thousands of people in Regional Australia alone, not to mention the tens of thousands of farm animals and native fauna. A correlation of stress in humans and livestock would seem to be a reasonable hypothesis and particularly when it comes to potential production losses due to tough eating, dark cutting meat. Nevertheless the mass experiment with industrial wind farms continues unabated.

The 6MW wind turbines which are 2 to 3 times bigger than the ones currently in operation, that are proposed for the New England REZ are new generation and no one really knows exactly what amplitude of infrasound they will be emitting. **But modelling, probability and common sense would suggest that a 6MW turbine will exceed the critical amplitude threshold of 80 db chronic exposure of infrasound over 20klms**, which could present as a health problem to any human or animal living within a 20 klm distance of a 6MW wind turbine. My understanding is that this would encompass many villages and townships across the REZ.

With knowledge comes responsibility and the time has come to take a more active position against this futile violation of Regional Australia.

There are sensible alternatives to this potential travesty.

Ian McDonald, Walcha Grazier and Conservationist.

Thank you from Camper Trailer Group

On behalf of the Australian Camper Trailers Group we would like to thank the Walcha community for the help in organising the week of activities for our recent 16th national meet at the Walcha Showground.

The list is too long to name all the individuals, businesses, Clubs, Associations and Showground Trust, including the Council and Mayor.

\$5,030 was presented to Carolyn Salter of the Walcha Support Group which was the sum of the auction night, trivia night, gold coin entry and personal donations from members. Carolyn was speechless at such generosity and thanked the group for the support.

Walcha Central School principal Amanda Cooper was present to receive \$611, the proceeds of a raffle plus personal donations from members which was donated to the school breakfast club.

From feedback by members it is estimated 80 camper trailers injected around \$40,000 into the local community over the week.

Thank you to the Walcha community for the friendliness shown to members when they were in town. The full report of the national meet can be seen on the past events page on the group's website www.campertrailers.org

Rob & Carol Sanderson

Thank you Marta

We would like to say a very belated thank you to Marta, Adam and Bec from Martas' Kitchen for all the wonderful meals they supplied us for our Christmas, birthday, special occasions and just for the heck of it days when we wanted to have some delicious food to go with good company. You are very much missed. We wish you good health and happiness in your new ventures in life. Lots of love.

Suzie, Tracey, Jenny & Maureen

Community Survey: Winterbourne Wind Project

We'd like to thank everyone who dropped by the community stall on Friday and Saturday to have a chat and fill in the survey regarding the Winterbourne Wind Project. We really appreciated hearing everyone's point of view and learnt a lot talking to the community. We certainly got the impression that people would like to have access to a lot more information about the project. We have many surveys filled in so far which is great, but we would like a lot more. Please take the time to fill in the survey in this week's Advocate so we can gauge the community sentiment around the program.

We want EVERYONE'S opinion. The survey will run until 4 November, so please return your surveys without delay. If you need another survey form;

- Go to www.voiceforwalcha.com
- Email us at us@voiceforwalcha.com

There was a lot of interest in the modelling and images that we have been able create showing what the project will look like from people's homes. We had an expert do this modelling, using accurate dimensions and locations of turbines. The model was created using google earth terrain overlaid with a satellite image. Onto this was placed the 119 models of the turbines. It does not take into account surface structures such as trees and buildings but apart from this, it is true to scale.

As a group, Voice for Walcha would like to reiterate that we are not anti-renewables as we are sometimes labelled. We appreciate the important role renewable energy is going to play in our energy supply. We do have serious concerns about the disproportionate size and number of the projects around Walcha, the impacts of construction, (traffic, rental pressure etc) and what this is going to do to our future. We are not using fear tactics, but we are using facts. Some of the information we present is confronting but it is all well researched and documented. We have found information presented by the Winterbourne Wind Project developers has been very limited and promotional. It does not describe the impacts Walcha residents should expect if this development goes ahead. This is understandable, as they have an agenda of promoting the project.

We want everybody to know that these projects are going to have significant and irreversible impacts on our community. **It will affect you** – challenge us to prove it. Please get in touch with us if you would like to be involved or want more information.

Voice for Walcha

Town & Country Luncheon



President Bec Whillock of Walcha's Town & Country with Keynote Speaker Keli McDonald, CEO of National Women's Rural Coalition.



The Town and Country Club luncheon is back, and was enjoyed by 150 ladies last Saturday. Although it couldn't be held in a beautiful garden due to the weather, everyone thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of catching up whilst raising money for local charities.

Keynote speaker Keli McDonald, CEO of National Women's Rural Coalition discussed women's health, feminism and domestic violence. Seventeen different stall holders pedalled their wares and Little Coco's Gourmet Catering provided delicious food at the Showground Function Centre.



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New face at Visitor Information Centre



We would like to introduce the community to Corinne Annetts, who is the new Walcha Council Tourism Officer and will be working from the Walcha Visitor Information Centre on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Corinne has been working part time at Uralla Shire Council as Tourism Officer and Customer Service Officer from 2019 to 2022.

She also operates and runs her own business at Salisbury Plains, Sunhill Dairy Goats, along with husband Richard where they have a commercial dairy and manufacture goat cheeses and skin care products. She has lived in the area for 18 years and is the Events Coordinator for the Uralla Business Chamber and coordinates the Uralla Business Chamber Awards and the newly established High Country Markets.

Corinne has a passion for tourism and agritourism and will be working closely with Lisa Kirton for Walcha Tourism at the Visitor Information Centre.

We would also like to also take this opportunity to thank Susie Crawford for her

contribution to tourism in Walcha over many years and acknowledge the service, knowledge and assistance that she provided to visitors, businesses and the community from the Visitor Information Centre over 13 years.

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- ✓ Learn pasture assessment methods
- ✓ Use and evaluate climate forecasts for managing pastures and livestock
- ✓ Simplify decision making about feed budgets and livestock numbers

New drop off point for charity recycling

From Suzie Harrison

There is a new drop off point in Walcha for the recycling that I collect for different charities.

Dan from Walcha Energy (next to White Leaf Dental) has kindly agreed to be the new collection point for me now that Martas' Kitchen has ceased trading. He will have a container in store for you to place bread tags (only the plastic ones), milk bottle tops, ring pulls and tea bag tags. You can also drop these at the Walcha Bowling club or the canteen at the Central School. You can also still collect tea bag strings and take them to the Craft Shop.

If you don't want to be bothered cashing in your cans and bottles and would like to ring me on 0418 691 244, I can collect them and the money goes to the Walcha Support Group.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Marta and Adam for being the collection point for all the years that they did and wish them all the best for retirement for Marta, and Adam's next venture. Thank you.



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry



Future
Drought
Fund



This project received funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund

CLOSING DATE FOR THIS SURVEY IS
FRIDAY 4TH NOVEMBER

How can you return this survey?



Post ...
Survey Return
PO Box 230, Walcha 2354



Email ... your answers to
us@voiceforwalcha.com
(please number your answers
to match the survey)



Phone ... **0475 410 859**
to relay your responses **OR**
send a photo of your survey



Need more information?

Voice for Walcha provides a wealth of information about the
renewable energy projects proposed for our area.

us@voiceforwalcha.com | **voiceforwalcha.com**



Your opinion is *very important*

Have your say about the proposed **Winterbourne Wind Farm**

Whether you support the proposed wind farm developments
in our area, are opposed to them (or are somewhere
in-between), it's crucial that your opinion is heard.

Who is conducting this survey?

Voice of Walcha - this is a community group which wants any
renewable energy projects in our area to be responsible and
proportionate in terms of the impact on our environment, township,
lifestyle and freedom of movement.

What will happen with the results?

The results of this survey will be forwarded to Walcha Council so
that council is able to pass on an accurate summary of the
community's feelings to the state government.

Will the community get feedback?

Yes. The results of this survey will be published in the Advocate.

Is your name and address needed?

Yes, please. It is essential that we have your name and address to
verify that this is a legitimate survey. Any public release **will not**
contain personal information. Thank you for assisting with this.

Is there a deadline to reply?

Yes. Time is crucial. We need your survey back no later than
Friday, 4TH NOVEMBER. Thank you!

Turn over to complete survey >

Have your say ...

CLOSING DATE FOR
THIS SURVEY IS
FRIDAY 4TH NOVEMBER

Please note ...

There are numerous wind turbine projects proposed for our district. This survey is **focussing on the Winterbourne Wind Farm** (119 wind turbines), scheduled to begin next year, with a construction period of 2-3 years.

1. Do you have any concerns about the construction and ongoing existence of the proposed Winterbourne Wind Farm?

Please tick one

- ☐ Yes, I have concerns and I **OBJECT** to the Winterbourne Wind Farm project
- ☐ I am neutral but am submitting a **COMMENT** (below)
- ☐ I have no concerns, I **SUPPORT** the plan for this wind farm
- ☐ I don't know enough about the projects

Further comment

.....

.....

2. Do you feel that Winterbourne Wind, the developer of this proposed wind farm, has provided enough information to enable you to understand the impact of this project?

Please tick one

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Further comment

.....

.....

3. How/when did you first hear about the project?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Is there anything else you'd like to say about the proposed Winterbourne Wind Farm?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Do you identify as of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to answer

Your name & address, please. As mentioned, this is essential to validating the survey results. Thanks.

Name

Address

Please feel welcome to provide your email if you'd like to receive updates on the Voice of Walcha campaign

Email

*Details on reverse side on ways to submit your survey.
Thank you for taking the time to express your opinion.*

Mayoral Column

Continued from page 2

All of this coupled with nearly two kilometres of new footpaths for better pedestrian access around town. Most of this is targeted grant funding and may not be of importance to everyone, but to attract and retain young families they are vital.

In saying this Council understands the importance of our road infrastructure. Current conditions do not make road maintenance easy but it also cannot be used to deflect from what has been some previous questionable decisions. I assure you that lessons learnt have been addressed by current management, and with supply from local quarries we should see improvements in this area. Despite this we have also managed to seal sections of Kangaroo Flat and Brackendale Roads that were often impassable. Funding has been secured for upgrade works on Glen Morrison Road, Nundle Forest Way, Walsh Street, Middle Street, Aerodrome Road and Aberbaldie Road, to be delivered over the next 2 years. Council are also waiting to hear the outcome of millions of dollars of additional road improvement funding already applied for, and future road infrastructure grant opportunities are being sought all the time.

Local Government is tasked with delivering some "not so pretty stuff", infrastructure that is essential but rarely seen, sewer and water pipes and plants, clean and safe water, culverts, storm water drainage all form part of essential delivery that while not seen need constant and expensive maintenance.

The point of this column is my reflection on the achievements of Walcha Council over the long term. Constantly working in a challenging financial and regulated environment I believe that over that time our council has actually excelled to deliver what it has, and while we should never shy away from constructive and informed criticism some credit should be given to management, staff and councillors who have strived to give us what we have. Mark Twain said, "If you have no will to change it, you have no right to criticise it."



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Greig Meyer is a Certified Financial Planner and principal of PKF Wealth based in Tamworth and Walcha. For more information or to make an appointment contact one of our friendly staff now.

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Greig Meyer is an Authorised Representative of PKF Wealth TMW Pty Ltd

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COVID 19 Update



By Dr Adrian Allen

The last twelve months have seen a lot of change with Covid. Where we are now, how might things change in 2023 and how can we be best prepared?

Is the pandemic over? Well, yes and no. Psychologically it is. We are all tired of it and to a large extent it feels behind us. Politically it is over, as the government has stopped isolation and mandatory reporting. From a

medical perspective it is not over because it continues to spread across continents, new variants are occurring and substantial numbers of people are still getting infected.

In Australia, we have seen the crest of the BA5 Covid wave (June to September) and are now in a downward trend. It was the worst wave we have seen here with most hospitalisation and death (5,400 and in mostly those over 70 years). Covid is now on track to be the third most common cause of death in Australia. The 'effective reproduction number' is now edging towards one. More than one means the wave will resume an upward trend. Whether that happens in the next little while with the relaxing of rules or whether it happens in several months is unknown. What is certain is there will be another wave of Covid. When and how bad is hard to predict. Each of you can expect to get Covid and those that have had it can expect to be infected again. Covid will be with us for decades, but it may recede into the background as our immunity increases and it may mutate in such a way that it doesn't make us as sick.

THE VARIANTS

There are a good few of them. The ones that have impacted us most in Australia have been the original Wuhan (ancestral) virus in 2020, Delta which started in May 2021 and Omicron over the last twelve months.

The BA1 subvariant of Omicron hit us last Christmas, BA3 about March, BA4 and more so BA5 over winter.

The coming winter in the northern hemisphere will be a difficult one for them. The numbers are starting to near double every week. In the USA, currently BA5 is the most common Covid virus, causing 68% of infections.

Antigenic drift, caused by mutations within the virus, leads to new variants (antigenic shift is larger) which have different characteristics. The drift that is happening is very rapid. What takes the influenza virus two years is taking the Covid virus three months. At the moment the drift is occurring within the known BA subvariants. Will there be a drift to BA6 or 7, or will completely new variants emerge? Don't know. There are many new ones and no single one as yet looks the next dominant. A couple of important ones emerging at present are:

1. BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 (sublineage of BA5), which in the USA one month ago accounted for <1% of cases now make up more than 16.6%. It doubled in the last week and is expected to become the dominant variant in the next month in Europe. Particular attention is being paid to these as they appear to be able to stop protection from Evusheld, an antibody drug given to immunocompromised people.
2. BA.2.75.2, called the Centaurus omicron subvariant, is also more immune evasive. Reported in 47 countries, it is increasing quickly, particularly in India.

Some of the subvariants are showing 'convergent evolution', meaning the mutations have similar properties, which are now showing increased immune evasion. However, antiviral therapies remain effective against these subvariants.

The (sub)variant type that causes the next wave in Australia will be the one that arrives when our community's immunity is waning from prior infection and vaccination and that which is most transmissible and has the most powerful immune evasion. The immunity in our community is now beginning to fall, as the majority of vaccination was over by June. Boosters give good protection for 4-6 months and some protection after 6 months.

Continued page 8 >

COVID 19 Update *Continued from page 7*

ANTIVIRAL TREATMENTS

Remdesivir, Dexamethasone, Oxygen and mechanical ventilation are only used in the hospital setting, so will not be discussed.

Paxlovid:

- This is now the oral medication of choice. Tablets are taken twice a day for five days.
- It must be started within 5 days of symptom onset
- The earlier it is started more effective it is, as it stops viral replication
- It gives an 88% reduction in hospitalisation in unvaccinated people and recent studies out of Israel (in NEJM) and Hong Kong (in the Lancet) report a similar figure for those with some immunity (previously infected or vaccinated). This was for those over 65 years. No benefit was shown for those under this age. Paxlovid was also shown to decrease all-cause mortality and in-hospital disease progression for those that do go to hospital.
- It can not be used in everyone, as there are a number of drug interactions and is contraindicated for those with reasonably severe kidney or liver problems, pregnancy and breastfeeding
- It's not uncommon to get a metallic taste whilst using it
- PBS rules for prescribing it at present are
 - A positive RAT or PCR test
 - Anyone 70 years or older
 - Anyone 50 yrs or older with risk factors (essentially any chronic disease)
 - Any First Nations person older than 30 yrs with risk factors
- Paxlovid Rebound: becoming unwell again after finishing the course. This also occurs with Covid infection in some people, so it is not known if this is something associated with the Paxlovid drug or would have happened in any case. Rebound illness is never as serious and has not resulted in hospitalisation

Molnupiravir:

- Now considered second line choice, it is used when Paxlovid is contraindicated
- The recent U.K. Panoramic trial suggests that for vaccinated people, it does not decrease hospitalisation and death rates but it does decrease time to recovery. Just to confuse things, I note there was a high proportion of people in this study under 65 years. The results of this trial are currently under review by Australian National Covid-19 Evidence Taskforce
- The earlier MOVE-OUT trial involved unvaccinated people and did show reduction in hospitalisation and death rates.

VACCINATION

The schedule at present:

0 – 6 months:	No vaccination. Protection through maternal antibodies with breastfeeding
6 mo. – 5 years:	Only for those with serious chronic illness. Pfizer vaccine x 2. No booster
5 – 12 years:	Recommended for all. Pfizer vaccine x 2. No booster
12 – 16 years:	Pfizer x 2 + Booster for those with serious chronic illness.
Over 16 years:	Pfizer x 2. (Moderna can be used for those over 18 years) + Booster for all

Second Booster: recommended for all over 50 years and all over 16 years that have a serious chronic illness.

Any booster is given no earlier than 3 months after infection or a previous Covid vaccination.

It is very important to understand that for those groups for whom it is recommended, it is the booster (particularly the first booster) that gives the most protection. The evidence is clear that it gives an 85% reduction in severe disease leading to hospitalisation and admission to ICU. This holds out well to about 6 months post vaccination. The

main aim of the vaccine is not to stop you getting infected (and indeed it only does that for a few weeks after vaccination), it is to stop you getting seriously unwell when you do get infected. And you will get infected, likely more than once, it is only a matter of time.

Bivalent Vaccines are the new second generation vaccines. They are only to be used as boosters, not for primary immunisation. A Moderna vaccine, consisting of a 50/50 combination of the ancestral Wuhan virus and the more recent Omicron BA1 subvariant, is now available in Australia.

Both Pfizer and Moderna have a vaccine combining Wuhan and the BA5 subvariant. The USA is using this. The UK is using the same as in Australia. Results, not surprisingly, show increased neutralising antibodies formed against the particular subvariant used in the vaccine. However, they do provide some protection against the other subvariants. There is no consensus around the world as we do not know what the next wave of Covid will be. Will it be a descendant of BA1 or BA2 or BA5 or something else? Nonetheless they will engender a broader and more durable response by our immune system.

ATAGI has not currently given direction for when to get the next booster over what is currently recommended. It will likely be when we get the next wave. They probably hope to make it a once-a-year booster, administered at the same time as the flu needle. Will the rate of mutation allow this? Only time will tell.

TESTING

PCR testing remains the gold standard. A positive RAT test is reliable but a negative RAT is unreliable. There is a new test due to come onto the market in November. It is called the 'EasyNAT Covid-19 RNA Test'. It is similar to the PCR test but is not nearly as amplified, so not as good as the PCR but better than the RAT. It will cost about \$55 and can be done at home. At this stage, I'm not sure where it will fit in.

SUMMARISING

What to do in the future if you think you have a Covid infection and want to consider treatment.

- If under 70 yrs of age and you do not have a chronic illness, then stay at home if you can for a few days, take Paracetamol or Nurofen and rest up. Seek medical help if you start getting short of breath
- Over 70 yrs of age OR you are over 50 yrs and suffer a chronic illness OR you are a First Nations person over 30 yrs with a chronic illness, then do a RAT. If it is negative, call the surgery and we will arrange a PCR test. We continue to provide PCR testing at the surgery.
- Remember, the earlier the treatment starts, the more effective it is

If you are in a high-risk category (as defined above), the three things that have been proven to minimise your risk are:

- 1) Masks: continue to wear masks when indoors where others are about**
- 2) Vaccines: keep up to date with what is recommended by ATAGI**
- 3) Antivirals: take antiviral medication and start it as early as is feasible**

LASTLY

I'm very pleased to say Dr Deng Abiem has taken over Walcha General Practice as of last month. He is now the practice principal and is running the show. Walcha is fortunate to have him. I will continue to work every week on a part time basis. Dr Ali Jones is also committed to Walcha, enjoying the practice and is very busy. Again, we are fortunate to have her. So, we are in a strong position going forward.

What's the Goss

With A.J. CROSS



When I joined the Walcha Council on the 17th March 1980 little did I think that my employment with the organisation would span more than 42^{1/2} years including 39 seasons as Pool Manager. After exhausting all my entitled leave I finally finished up last Monday and would like to thank the decision makers at the time for giving me my initial opportunity. A big thank you to General Managers Rob Callaghan and Johnny O'Hara, who I regarded as bloody good friends, for their support throughout the majority of my employment with Council.

...

On the subject of the pool which is scheduled to open this Saturday at 10am, anyone who intends taking a dip that day may need a wetsuit because at the time of going to print the water was circulating at a brisk 16° celsius. The question I would like to ask is "Why is the pool being opened in October instead of the usual mid November, bearing in mind the cost of treating and heating the water along with paying out wages as well?" Let's hope the weather warms up sooner rather than later.

...

Congratulations to several local junior Rugby League players who have been rewarded for their efforts throughout their 2022 seasons with varying awards. Troy Hawkins received Kootingal Roosters U/18's Most Valuable Player award, Tyler Bloomfield picked up the Players Player prize for the same team while Chaden Hawkins played for the Kooty U/15's.

...

Up at Armidale Tom Bullen received the Rams U/16's Best and Fairest, his brother Jock took home the Rams U/14's Best and Fairest along with the joint Club Dally Ram award for 2022. Jaxon Marsters was judged to be joint most improved player in the Rams U/14's. Good on ya guys.

...

Heard a bit of a whisper some of these guys along with a few other very talented athletes from Walcha Central are joining forces to make up a touch footy team this season. Look out A Grade!

...

Walcha Touch administrator Sonia Ussher has announced the local competition will kick off Thursday 3 November at John Oxley Sportsground. Intending teams are required to nominate a delegate who will be responsible for making sure every team member is registered and financial. All registrations and payment of fees must be completed on the 'Mysideline Touch Football' site or through the link on the Walcha Touch Facebook page. Anyone looking for a team can contact the Walcha Touch site or Sonia Ussher on 0438 531 100.

...

Bad luck to the New England Veterans Cricket Over 60's team that won all three of their round robin games at the NSW championships at Penrith only to be belted in the final by Western Wildfires who posted a score of 9/182 before dismissing N.E. for 53.

...

Dropping 13 catches in the final didn't help New England who named North Haven all rounder Steph Sweeney as their Player of the Match after he top scored with 10 runs and captured two wickets in the competition decider. During the tournament Craig Stoddart scored an unbeaten 40, Bill Duncan racked up a 32 while Wayne Boyd and Stephen Haslem also played for N.E.

...

Following the championships Steph and Bill were selected for the NSW Number 2's while former grazier Craig Stoddart was named captain of the NSW Number 4's to play in the National Championships in Geelong next month.

...

Unfortunately the Over 70's NSW Championships set down for Coffs Harbour earlier in the week were cancelled due to the wet weather leaving Peter Boyd, Rob Blomfield, Bob Jex and Rohan Chandler without a game.

...

Finally, last but not least, Happy Birthday to my oldest daughter Rachael who celebrates the date of her birth this Saturday. Hope you have a great day Rach.

sport



Wednesday Golf

Golf was out for us on Wednesday due to yet another rain event, but our three medal finalists, Cheryl McDonald, Sue Partridge and Pauline Carter bravely headed to Tenterfield to play the NEDGA final in atrocious conditions. It obviously didn't deter our C Grade medalist, Pauline, who came in the winner in her Division. Our congratulations to Pauline and best of luck to her when she heads to Sydney on 30th November to play in the final at Stone Cutters Ridge.

On Wednesday 12th, we played the second round of the Secretary's Eclectic for Janie Fenwicke's trophy and our winner with a nett score of 72 was Sally McCormack. Sweepstakes went to Sue Partridge 76, Bob Koppman 77, Simone Sweeney 78, Donna Martin 79, and Lorraine Walshe 79. No players reached either of the pins on 3 or 16.

Sally McCormack was the winner over the 2 weeks of play with 65 nett.

The Ladies Sandgreen Championships were on the agenda at Werris Creek over the weekend, but were cancelled due to the ongoing rain, and they have been rescheduled for the 26th/27th November.

Today, we are playing stableford for the Patrons trophy.

Bowls

Draw for this weekend:

Saturday 1:00 start

Triples Semi final D. Bird, S&K. Goodwin v G. Bird, G. Carter & R. Kerr.

Ladies Bowls

The second round of the Ivy Makeham Memorial Trophy was played last week with once again two very close games which ended with the same score. Esther Hunt defeated Veronica Jamieson 15 -14 and Margaret Tickle defeated Jan Cross 15 -14. Congratulations to the winners who will now play in the final tomorrow, with Veronica being marker.

The Nundle Triples Bowls Carnival is coming up next month. Information and nomination form is on the board.

Our Christmas Party is Thursday 15 December. There will be mixed triples bowls competition played in the morning. Nomination form is on the board. We are hoping the men will join us on this day.

District Bowls meeting will be held in Walcha on Monday 5 December at the Walcha Bowling Club.

Tennis

Round 2 of the Spring Comp was played out on Tues 18th Oct.

Millman: D Wall, N Buckland, R Mathews and T Tape defeated Ebdon: D Sweeney, P O'Brien, T Pendlebury and M Luchich in a close one 29 to 24.

Bolt: B Hoy, D Clarke, M Ireland and P Tape defeated Nadal: E Blomfield, M Alison, A Barillaro and A Marsh 35 to 17.

Barty: M Palmer, C Bruce, G Wall and J Jones defeated Laver: D A Locke, T Whillock, A Pendlebury and P Palmer 34 to 18.

The next Club meeting will be held on Mon 14th Nov at 6.30pm. See you all at the net soon.

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Employment with Presbyterian Aged Care is subject to satisfactory background checks which include a National Police Check and reference checks. To be successful in these roles you must hold valid working rights in Australia.

If you would like to join our wonderful team, please contact Julie Blake (Facility Manager) or speak to our office staff for a full job description.

Phone: 02 6777 4400

Email: jblake@pcnsw.org.au

Public Notices

DR GENEVIEVE FREER
Phone 6777 2068 0429 668 583

Walcha Rugby League AGM on Sunday 30 October, 4.00pm at the Walcha Bowling Club. Please come along.

Walcha Touch Football season begins on Thursday 3rd November 2022. Gather your teams together. Anyone looking for a team, please contact us via the Walcha Touch Facebook page or Sonia Ussher on 0438531100. All registrations and payment of fees must be completed on My Sideline. Link to be shared on Facebook page. Teams are to nominate a delegate who is responsible for making sure everyone on their team is registered and financial.

Walcha Touch Football Committee

CORRECTION

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Thank You

We would sincerely like to thank Glenys, Neil and all our wonderful friends and neighbours for the well wishes and gifts at the Eastgate BBQ. We will miss everyone and Walcha. Thank you Carol and Jack Munro.

Meetings

Walcha Garden Club meeting Friday 4 Nov at Rob and Katrina Blomfield's garden, 'Eagle Ridge', 370 Table Top Road, Walcha. Cars to depart McHattan Park at 9.30am. BYO chair, lunch and mug. Enquiries: D Lisle 0429 799 083, M Cawley 0428 876 769.



- 👉 To Natalie Clifford for organising a most enjoyable pizza and pasta evening at the Walcha Road Hotel to raise funds for Woolbrook Public School.
- 👉 To the workers who maintain the Walcha Beam cemetery. Well done, it looks lovely.
- 👉 To Dr Genevieve Freer for going above and beyond to ensure our son had the medical attention he required. Your concern, assistance and time is greatly appreciated, thank you.
- 👉 To the Walcha Taphouse – a lovely venue, delicious food, great service and atmosphere.
- 👉 To Tamika at IGA for her happy, friendly service at the checkout.
- 👉 To the Voice for Walcha for their modelling and images showing us the visual impact these turbines will have from our home.
- 👉 To all Year 12 students from Walcha who have studied hard and are currently doing their HSC. We wish you all the best.
- 👉 To the thumbs down about CCTV cameras. They become a spying medium like in the cities. We need more activities for the youth. That would be a better solution.
- 👉 To the Letter to the Editor, referring to Walcha as a "Dying town with declining population". I have never seen more thriving businesses, occupied shop fronts and opportunities to eat, drink and shop in Walcha as now.

Contributions will be received in person, by phone or email and must be accompanied by your name and contact details. They will be printed at the discretion of the editor.



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For info call Graham Barnes 6777 2539
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6.00pm Bistro

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