

Robertson News

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Tales from the Fire Ground

Some glimpses from inside the truck at the Robertson Rural Fire Brigade

By Quentin Waters, Robertson Rural Fire Brigade Volunteer

December. As we head into summer the ever present threat of bushfire looms large on the horizon, but this year there's something different. A prolonged drought has reached its tentacles into the Highlands and our misty mountains have become a tinderbox. A fertile land and high rainfall has created a forest full of leafy ferns and towering eucalypts, but as the rain deserts us the very environment that had shielded the Highlands from the heat and fire elsewhere has become our downfall. The unmitigated growth has built up an extreme fuel load, and the thought that it will never happen to us becomes far less certain. The parched land of the west is nothing but dust after years of drought now baking under the harsh Australian sun. The heat is drawn over the forests of the Great Dividing Range by howling north-westerly winds. None can remember seeing this before. The steps have all lined up - the fuel is plentiful and the wind and temperatures are high while the monthly rainfall amounts to a pitiful few millimetres, amongst the lowest on record. The year? December 1938.

Tuesday, 26 November 2019 sees thunderstorms sweep the region, bringing the heaviest rain in months as hail pelts the town, but the storm also sees lightning bring that one missing piece to the puzzle - a spark. Half a dozen strikes in the Blue

Contd on page 8.....



Robertson Rural Fire Brigade on the fire ground
Photo supplied

Also in this edition.....

p2 23 Years of Robertson News now online
p3 FireAid 2020 Concert
p5 Calendar of Events
p7 Swimming Pool Update
p8-9 Fire Ground Stories Continued
p11 Star student Lotte
p12 Soccer and Hockey Registration

Special Liftout

**Seniors Festival Program and
Free Computer Courses Inside!!**



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Open 7 days a week

Mon-Fri 12 noon till late, Sat-Sun 10am till late

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Every Friday - Free Trivia - Joker Jackpot and Lucky Member draw from 7pm
Every Sunday - Prize Tombola - Members Draw from 6.30pm

The Club welcomes new members with social membership starting at \$13 per year. The Club is a major sponsor of Robertson's Soccer, Cricket and Hockey clubs. For further information call the Club on 4885 1306.



Peggy's Bistro

Open 12 noon—8pm

7 days per week

23 Years of Robertson News Now Online

By Jenny Kena

The first edition of the *Robertson News* (at that time called the *Robertson Newsletter*) was published in July 1997. Since that time there have been 134 editions published.

Over the last 6 months or so I have been working with Quentin Waters, former editor Barry Lee and Helen Tranter to gather all 134 editions and make them available online. Some were already electronic files, others had to be scanned. The scanning was done at the CTC from copies lent by Quentin, Helen and from the CTC files.

The project is now completed and the full set of Robertson News can be viewed on the CTC@Robertson website at <https://www.robertsonctc.org.au/robertson-news.html>

Take a look and see what was making the news over the years!



ROBERTSON NEWSLETTER

July 1997

Edition 1

MADE IN ROBERTSON

Right throughout Robertson there are pockets of talented people involved in all sorts of creative crafts.

On the weekend of July 5 and 6 some of these craftspeople will be showcasing their talents and opening their doors so both residents and visitors to Robertson can come along and see how different crafts are **MADE IN ROBERTSON**.

The original idea for **MADE IN ROBERTSON** is that of Neil Atkins from the Village Woodworks. Neil is keen to see local craftspeople who make and sell around 85% of their work in the local area, have access to a **MADE IN ROBERTSON** logo which would let buyers know they were buying a genuine product, made locally and of high quality.

Whilst this year the **MADE IN ROBERTSON** idea has been in its fledgling stages, it's hoped that by next year all the craftspeople in Robertson and surrounding areas will become involved for a weekend of **MADE IN ROBERTSON** and it will become an annual event.

Call into **The Village Woodworks**, **The Robertson Pottery** and the **Australian Puzzles and Games** shop for a fascinating insight into different crafts and their skills. All are located in Hoddle Street, Robertson and are easy to find.

The **Robertson Pottery** and **Australian Puzzles and Games** are across the road from the County Inn and Waters General Store and the Village Woodworks is 1/2km west of town.

The **Village Woodworks** will have lots to see with woodworking skills on display, demonstrations of Folk Art and Leadlighting. The Village Woodworks combines three local businesses - **Traditional Outbuildings**, **Robertson Garden Retreats & Robertson Joinery** all featuring the beauty of timber. Call in and see them on July 5 between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.

At the **Robertson Pottery** you will be able to see the Potters at work. The Robertson Pottery has a large range of beautiful handcrafted pottery and other items. They will be open from 9.30 a.m. until 5.30 p.m. on July 5 - drop in and see them.

At **Australian Puzzles & Games** discover how to solve those puzzles which seem to take adults 1/2 an hour and a 4 year old 3 minutes! If you are one of those people who takes 1/2 an hour to unravel these puzzles then the hourly puzzle solving demonstrations will be for you! Australian Puzzles & Games has a whole host of interesting items to discover - call into their shop on July 5.

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Ladies cuts \$10 were \$13

Colours - lasts 18 washes - \$20 were \$35

Connie works Monday, Friday, Saturday

Di works Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Shop 8, Robertson Village Centre

Phone 851 515

Front page of the Robertson Newsletter July 1997. There continues to be throughout Robertson "pockets of talented people involved in all sorts of creative crafts"!

Contribution Guidelines

The submission deadline for the April 2020 edition is March 15 2020.

Please submit all articles and event notices to editor@robertsonctc.org.au.

All submissions, advertising and payments must be received by this date to ensure inclusion. Any material received after this date will be held over for the next issue.

Submissions may be modified at the editor's discretion.

Disclaimer: This newsletter is an independent publication under the auspices of the Robertson CTC. The ideas presented are not necessarily those of the editors or the Robertson CTC. Statements and opinions presented in the publication are made in good faith and the editor and CTC@Robertson do not take any responsibility for those statements and opinions, any inferences drawn from them or actions and charges that may result from them. The editor reserves the right to not print any item that is defamatory to any person or organisation or that is anonymously sent.

All of the production and distribution of the Robertson News is done by volunteers.

CTC@Robertson is managed by the Robertson Shed Inc. PO Box 3069, Robertson NSW 2577. Ph: 02 4885 2665 info@robertsonctc.org.au

Advertise in Robertson News

Advertising Rates (per bi-monthly edition)

Front page banner 190 x 60mm \$200

Back page banner 190 x 60mm \$165

Inside page banner 190 x 60mm \$130

Inside page small ad 90 x 60mm \$65

Full page (4 x banner price) and half page ads (2 x banner price) also available.

Discounts for multiple prepaid bookings.

All advertising enquiries to advertising@robertsonctc.org.au

Further details at

www.robertson.nsw.au/advertise-with-us.html

Part of the Crowd enjoying the FireAid 2020 Concert - photo by Captured by Martin, used with permission



FireAid Concert an event to remember!

FireAid 2020 aimed to bring families and community together to enjoy a stunning line-up of the best musicians and singers Australia has to offer, all in the cause of raising money to help the victims and the heroes of the current catastrophic bushfires.

The concert was held on the afternoon and evening of Friday 24 January at Bong Bong Racecourse and attracted a crowd of around 6,000. It was a joyful, happy, community event and great fun! It was a huge effort by many people, organisations and businesses including members of the Robertson community and a big thank you is offered to them here.

The event would not have happened without John Waters who had the idea sitting at his kitchen table.

I was sitting at my kitchen table on Christmas Eve, contemplating the footage we had all been seeing for some time. The loss and devastation and the personal suffering caused by an unprecedented scale of bushfires that were devouring whole portions of Australia - I felt that I had to do something. Every single one of us wants to do something; but I realised I had the power of public recognition, I had a lot of friends in the music and entertainment industry (with a lot more of that power than me) and the idea of FireAid2020 'The Concert' was born.

The other two key people in making it happen and gathering support were Zoe Waters and Brooke Munro.

The organisers provided the following list of some of the amazing supporters of the event who donated services or contributed in other ways -

Bong Bong Picnic Race Club (who provided the concert venue free of charge for this family friendly event), Wingecarribee Shire Council (who were super helpful), the Local Police, Southern Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Silhouette Sound and Luminous Entertainment (staging, big screen and lighting), Oxley College (100 volunteers), Action Hire (Shane Wellings who gave it more than his all), Leo Sayer (who supported John all along), Easy Signs and Cabra Print (signage and poster printing). Back stage catering was provided by Lucinda's Pantry, Pecora Dairy, Mammias Country Kitchen, Bakers Delight and Bridget Cosyn. And there were many more including Julia Zemiro and all the performers!

Beautiful original artwork by Reg Mombassa was auctioned along with a handmade guitar by Bundanoon local Andy Thomson, T Guitars, the guitar alone made \$5000! Free tickets were given to every volunteer fire fighter and person/family that lost their homes. The website is still open for donations at www.fireaid2020.com/donate

All funds raised by FireAid2020 will be going to support relief agencies and be distributed to the Southern Highlands, reaching the newly homeless, heroic RFS brigades and all those most in need. The final amount will be announced very soon!

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Start Getting Ready for the Robertson Show!



Famous Potato Race at the Robertson Show—photo from Robertson Show Facebook

This year's Robertson Show will take place on Friday 13 and Saturday 14 March. This annual agricultural show is renowned for its old school country charm with plenty of entertainment, competitions and old fashioned fun for all the family to get involved in. We're talking egg throwing, pumpkin rolling, hay stacking and wheel barrow racing kinda fun!

See our amazing local livestock displays including cattle showing, poultry, horses, dogs and more. Enjoy the rides, the baking displays, craft, gardening, photography and art exhibits.



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Robertson Show is famously renowned for the Australian Championship Potato Races which began in 1969. Competitors carry a sack of potatoes over 400 metres. Men carry a 50 kilogram bag and women carry 12.5kg of spuds. Later in the day strap in for the drama and destruction of the Demolition Derby, followed by a beautiful fireworks show to top off the day!

Visit www.robertsonshow.org.au for further information.

Fundraiser for Native Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation



TRIVIA WITH PORTIA TURBO - FUNDRAISER

Robertson Public House
7pm - 89 Hoddle St, Robertson

**Saturday 7
March at 7pm at
the Robertson
Public House.
Tickets \$45
including dinner.**

Every day our beautiful native animals are injured and orphaned on our roads and with the ongoing bushfires we are seeing even more

of these beautiful creatures needing our care. Funds raised will be used for animal care, food and upgrading of facilities, in particular the construction of a new Koala and Wombat care facility which, with the recent and ongoing fires has become a priority. Native Wildlife Rescue (NWR) is operated and managed by Kerstin Schweth & (Woody) Richard Woodman and is associated with Wildlife Rescue South Coast Inc.

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Robertson Events Calendar

February 2020

Tues 4	Robertson Business Chamber Meeting Tuesday 6pm see page 12	CTC@Robertson
Wed 5&12 Sun 9&16	Soccer Registration 4pm-6pm see page 12	Hampden Park
Sun 9	Robertson Markets 9-2 (2nd Sunday of the month) mob: 0408 238 575 Pat	School of Arts
Thur 13	Seniors Festival—Try Out a Musical Instrument 10-12 see Liftout Bookings Essential	CTC@Robertson
Thur 13	Seniors Festival –iPad and Tablets Group 2pm-3.30pm see Liftout	CTC@Robertson
Fri 14	Old Time Dance 8pm-11pm see page 12	School of Arts
Fri 14	REPS Talk 7.30pm see page 10	Robertson Community Centre
Fri 14	Seniors Festival—IT Talk—Do I need an iPad or Tablet? 10.30-11.30am see Liftout	CTC@Robertson
Sun 16	Seniors Festival—Chamber & Jazz Concert 2pm-4pm see Liftout Bookings Essential	CTC@Robertson
Tues 18	Seniors Festival—Guitar Making Demo 10.30-12.30pm see Liftout Bookings Essential	CTC@Robertson/Men's Shed
Wed 19	Seniors Festival—Book Talk and Songsters 4-6.30pm see Liftout Bookings Essential	CTC@Robertson
Thur 20	Seniors Festival –iPad and Tablets Group 2pm-3.30pm see Liftout	CTC@Robertson
Fri 21	Seniors Festival—IT Talk—Avoiding scams/staying safe 10.30-11.30am see Liftout	CTC@Robertson
Sun 23	Hockey Registration 5pm see page 12	Burrawang Turf
Fri 28	Social Dance 7pm-11pm see page 12	School of Arts
Sat 29	Robertson Accommodation Forum 2pm see page 6	School of Arts

March 2020

Sun 1	Sunday afternoon Cinema 2.30pm see page 10	CTC@Robertson
Tues 3	Robertson Business Chamber Meeting 6pm	CTC@Robertson
Fri 6	Free Computer Class Beginners Essential Computer Skills 10am-1pm See Liftout	CTC@Robertson
Sat 7	Fundraiser for Native Wildlife Rescue 7pm see page 4	Robertson Public House
Sun 8	Robertson Markets 9-2 (2nd Sunday of the month) mob: 0408 238 575 Pat	School of Arts
Fri 13	Free Computer Class Internet and Email 10am-1pm See Liftout	CTC@Robertson
Fri 13	Old Time Dance 8pm-11pm see page 12	School of Arts
Fri 13, Sat 14	Robertson Show see page 4	Robertson Showground
Sun 15	Deadline for April Edition of Robertson News	CTC@Robertson
Fri 20	Free Computer Class Email and Documents 10am-1pm See Liftout	CTC@Robertson
Fri 27	Free Computer Class Essential Computer Skills 10am-1pm See Liftout	CTC@Robertson
Fri 27	Social Dance 7pm-11pm see page 12	School of Arts

Regular Events

Every Mon, Wed, Thur during school terms	Yoga—Mondays 6.30pm to 7.45pm, Wednesday 9.15am to 10.30 am, Thursdays 5.45pm-7pm 0407 771 828 and email to jenniferrobinson108@gmail.com	Robertson Community Centre
Every Mon	Social Carpet Bowls at 11am	Robertson Bowling Club
1st Mon	Robertson Garden Club 1.30pm Marion Tyree mob 0401425565	Robertson Community Centre
Every 2nd Tues	Robertson Community & Seniors Group 11:30am for 12 start. Contact Vinnie Shepherd (after 6pm) 4886 4344	TBC—contact Vinnie
2nd Tues of month	Robertson Men's Shed 10am-3pm ph 0467 316 070	CTC@Robertson
1st & 3rd Tues	Robertson History Group 10am-1pm Contact Helen Tranter ph 48851394	Fettlers Shed Robertson Railway
Every Tues	Social tennis 1-3pm All Welcome	Robertson Tennis Court
Every Week	Mindfulness Meditation 3.30pm-4.30pm Contact Fiona Brown 0409 036 188	The Robertson Doctor
Every Wed	Robertson Songsters 4.30pm Contact Karen Wilmott mob 0403 044 828	CTC@Robertson
Every Wed	Robertson Knitting Group 10.30-12.30	The Cool Room Emporium
Every Thurs	iPad and Tablets group 1.30pm—3pm	CTC@Robertson
Every last Thur	Robertson Men's Shed 10am-3pm ph 0467 316 070	CTC@Robertson
Every Fri	Free Trivia/Joker Jackpot/Prize Tombola	Robertson Bowling Club
Every Fri school term	Youth Ministry for Years 7-12 6.30-8.30pm	St Johns Robertson
Every Sat	Crop Swap 9.30 am	Robertson Bowling Club
Every Sun & Thur	Robertson Railway Modellers Group 1pm-4.30pm Neil 0457 355 970	The Fettlers Shed
1st Sun, 4th Sun	Traditional Service at 8am every 1st and 4th Sundays of the month	St Johns Robertson
Every Sun	Family Service – 10am every Sunday	St Johns Robertson
1st, 3rd, 5th Sun 2nd, 4th Sun	Catholic Service 8am, Catholic Service 5pm	St Peter's Burrawang

Future Proofing Robertson

By Michael Breen

Along with the tragedies, the loss and suffering of the current bushfires there is an opportunity. An opportunity of hope for better planned towns, roads, villages and houses. Here Robertson is our focus. But those plans will be blueprints for a different future, for a better informed future. That imagined future needs to be planned with deeper understanding of how different the future of the world and environment will be. Just imagine how much is involved. The location of towns, design and costs of buildings, water supplies, vegetation, access roads, helicopter and plane access, communication and warning systems, emergency services, the training and funding of the Rural Fire Service and how they are structured and managed. And no one size fits all areas.

The resources of older residents who know Robertson and of experts in building, town planning, health and management need to be combined.; not forgetting the talents of the youth of our town. Planning requires patience and respect. It may also require the abandonment of some older ways. An essential foundation for futureproofing will be what local people want. How will they blend all the varying hopes, wishes, desires, budgets, dreams? There's an old Irish story that a stranger asks a local for direction and the response is, 'If you were going there I wouldn't start from here.' Here and now is where we start. Where are we? Where do we want to go?

Robertson has so far escaped the horrors of bushfire in the town. But other aspects of the future of the community need consideration. Current bushfires and preparing for the elderly are both challenges the world is facing in proportions never known before. The common ground is caring for the vulnerable. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has heard heartrending accounts of suffering, cruelty, profiteering, and inadequacy in the sector. At the same time there are some

creative and compassionate examples of what *can* work better.

The three challenges of nursing homes are boredom, loneliness and helplessness. Nursing homes were meant to clear the hospitals of infirm patients. Where they succeed is where they provide the closest sense of being 'at home'. The longer people can stay at home the better. If Robertson people are to have a more humane, comfortable and affordable options of staying longer in their homes they need to have satisfactory housing. Let's not forget young people and single women over the age of fifty who need accommodation. The coming forum on Robertson Accommodation will help address these needs by building a guiding picture of what is wanted here for residents, and their relatives, for government, builders and newcomers. How? By having an inclusive, structured discussion with the Council Strategic Planner, the State Regional Planning Department and an internationally respected neighbourhood planner. This will give us a valuable record of the responses of the people of Robertson.

We look forward to an inclusive, lively and constructive event. Seriously consider coming along and contributing. **Saturday February 29 at 2pm at the Robertson School of Arts. Refreshments and a gold coin donation for expenses.**

Inquiries: Michael D. Breen 48852180

Congratulations to Noeline Brown OAM

Australia Day honours have just been announced and Mount Murray resident Noeline Brown has been awarded a medal in the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division for service to the performing arts as an actor and entertainer. Noeline's community contribution includes being the Ambassador for Ageing from 2008-2014 and an Ambassador for the Actors Benevolent Fund. Noeline's other awards include an Actors Equity Lifetime Achievement Award, Equality Foundation 2017. Noeline is also a regular contributor to local community events.



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'Health is the greatest possession' Lao Tzu

Update from the Robertson & District Swimming Pool Association

By Don Ferguson, RADSPA President

Following is the annual report of the RADSPA delivered at the AGM on Sunday 8 December 2019.

“Thank you for your attendance at the 36th AGM of the Robertson & District Swimming Pool Assoc. This past 12 months have been spent with endless administration duties following the devastating building collapse in May 2018. The reports of forensic structural engineer Peter Allsopp laid the basis for claims against the participants in the project, as well as detailed plans for the demolition and a building plan for future development. Working with appointed solicitors Haille Paine, Safe Work NSW and demolition contractors has been a slow and at times frustrating period for the small yet determined and committed Committee members.

After ten months waiting for insurance assessors to approve the demolition and removal of the building and insulation, finally the work has been completed. All charges resulting in the project, the building incident and ongoing costs have formed the basis of the claim RADSPA has made to our insurer and to the designer/project managers solicitors representing their insurance company. Progress with claims is slow yet legally deliberate and while we are confident of a positive result all matters are still pending. At no time have RADSPA sought the matter to be determined in Court. It is unaffordable.

We continue to pay charges for the security fencing around the site as our insurance covering Public Liability and damage to the completed works is mandatory. All public are advised not to enter this site. It is private property and an offence to enter. This

matter is yet to be adhered to by residents.

During the year we have been in constant contact with our three grant providers. Grant funds paid to date are not being considered as refundable.

Strongly supported by Wendy Tuckerman our State Member for Goulburn and her staff the need for funding to complete the Centre project has been presented to the NSW Premier on RADSPA's behalf. It was well received. Currently no grant funds are available in our asking range or category. We have been encouraged to apply when NSW Sports funding is made available in 2020. National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) now under the Commonwealth Dept. of Interior and Regional Development has confirmed a continuance of our grant once finance is available. Currently RADSPA have a balance to claim up to \$240,000. There are no plans for the Federal Government to commit to a grant funding scheme in this current budget. Similarly the Veolia Mulwaree Trust are supporting the continuance of the project.

The Committee will seek a revision of its outdated Articles of Association.

I must commend your Committee for its continual efforts and support. Our sincere thanks in particular to Treasurer Sharon Turner for her competent book keeping and diligence. Sharon's records of total Income & Expenditure has been essential in mounting our claims. It has provided an accurate statement of transactions during this difficult period. We have lost the services of Vice President Gary Susans from the Committee due to his departure from Kangaloon. His experience and business acumen will be missed. The Committee also recognises the support and counsel of Stephen (Ossie) Austin. Many others have added support to the project.

This project is still very much alive and your Committee have the vision to construct and operate the Robertson Aquatic Centre. We will continue to monitor RADSPA's insurance claims and potential grant schemes to ensure community funds are protected and the approved development can progress.”

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jenniferrobinson108@gmail.com

Mountains and another in the Budawangs will eventually become the mammoth blazes of the Green Wattle Creek Fire and the Currowan Fire, marching unrelenting across the dry landscape. The rest is history, but these are some glimpses from inside the truck at the Robertson Rural Fire Brigade.

What have I gotten myself into? - Bargo, Thursday, 19 December 2019

When Robertson Pumper slowly crested the top of the Old South Road the enormity of the situation hit Senior Deputy Captain Jon Bracht and fellow firefighter Dr. David Brown like a ton of bricks. An ominous black plume of smoke filled the expansive skies towards Sydney dwarfing the army of volunteers below. It was chaos when they arrived in Bargo. Gale force winds drove the fire from containment lines in Balmoral and into Bargo, where crews couldn't keep up with the rapidly changing conditions. Upon arriving at the retirement village, Robertson was immediately retasked when it became clear the fire was passing further to the north. Street after street was being defended by firetrucks, and yet the fire was still racing away in front. After determining the flank at Wellers Road was well resourced, Robertson moved further into the path of the fire at Yarran Road, but the street was already ablaze when they arrived. The police car further down the street was barely visible through the thick black smoke and the backyard shed at the property they would defend was alight. As David stepped out of the truck, he was confronted with intense winds driving a hail of red-hot embers horizontally across the street. Skies dark with black smoke held an apocalyptic orange glow. Though it felt like there wasn't enough oxygen in the air, the two were able to save the house, caravan, and a second shed through the worst of it. But the day was far from over. They continued to chase the fire from street to street through Bargo and Tahmoor, ever changing as the winds shifted. At Arina Road they were saved by the southerly change, but new threats emerged at Kiah Ridge where Robertson joined the Sutherland Strike Team unsuccessfully trying to prevent the fire jumping the road into the campsite. Further down Bargo River Road, Robertson would then defend Tahmoor Rural Services' site where they religiously protected sheds full of gas cylinders and fuel drums. After a welcome feed generously put on at Picton the guys joined the lineup in Couridjah to finally bring the fire's advance to a halt in the early hours of Friday. This was David's first major fire he'd attended, and was it a big one! His baptism of fire.

Protecting the protector - Hill Top, Saturday, 21 December 2019

Near catastrophic conditions were forecast for the northern villages on the 21st, but you'd never know it looking out the windscreen as Robertson Pumper and Burrawang 2 drove into Hill Top early that

morning. An inversion overnight had trapped the smoke down low, in places so thick it was like driving through Robertson fog! I think it was the smell that gave it away though... As the sun rose and the smoke lifted later in the morning, it revealed a Herculean task ahead - houses on ridge lines, set among tinder-dry eucalypts, and those were the tidy ones. Robertson Pumper, crewed by Captain Brendhan Waters, David Brown, Quentin Waters, and joined by Burrawang members Peter Marshall and Chris Trotter, was tasked to a street at the northern end of Hill Top. We set-up to protect a house located at the end of a cul-de-sac road out on the ridge. Surrounded by bush on all sides, Robertson rolled out hose lines, tapped the hydrant, and waited for the fire. As the temperatures soared past 40 degrees and the winds picked up, the fire could be glimpsed crowning over the ridge next to us, as well another dark plume rising behind us. It was about to get serious. Once again the sky darkened under an orange cloud and the sound of choppers filled the air. A pair of American Black Hawks was soon dropping buckets in a constant circle above us while the fire raced up the gullies below us into the front yard. A gum would crown here and then another over there, but the front was slowed with the assistance from above. However, a call over the radio alerted us to a new threat. Canyonleigh 1 had just seen a spot fire ignite below the road in behind us. With more fire racing up the ridge behind us towards Robertson Pumper, we were about to be cut off. Having been alerted to the escalating situation in Hill Top, Burrawang 2 was redeployed from Colo Vale Sector, but they were still too far away. Quick thinking, Brendhan used our own truck's capabilities to defend it. Like a typical Category 1 appliance, a Category 11 Pumper is a bushfire fighting truck with a high ground clearance, four wheel drive, and carrying capacity of 3,000 litres of water, but is designed for urban interface fighting common for calls in our village of Robertson. Specifically, a Pumper has a pumping capacity far exceeding most other RFS trucks. Supplied with town water from the hydrant, we set up the portable ground monitor, ramped up the pump pressure, and effectively made it rain. It wasn't long before Burrawang 2 arrived and Captain Colin Munro's crew made short work mopping up the spot fire below the ridge.

We're never going to put this out! There's fire everywhere! - Bundanoon, Saturday, 4 January 2020

From Sunday, 22 December Robertson brigade turned its primary focus to the Currowan Fire burning to the south of us, in anticipation that the uncontrollable blaze sparked more than a hundred kilometres away would soon be in the Highlands. This was borne out on the night of 4 January with terrifying speed. During the day fierce north-westerly winds drove the bushfire from the back of Tallowa Dam across the Shoalhaven River towards Tapitalee and North Nowra in 40+ degrees and even creating

its own weather with a pyrocumulonimbus cloud forming above it. At 7.30pm, however, an intense southerly buster swept up the coast, and what had been a narrow 3km fire front heading towards Nowra suddenly became a 15km front when the northern flank exploded into Kangaroo Valley.

Racing at unthinkable speed, the inferno travelled 21 km in 2 1/2 hours. Reports of spot fires in Meryla were minutes later fully fledged crown fires that left nothing behind but blackened trunks, and it wasn't long before the emergency call came from Bundanoon. Robertson brigade was paged at 10.14pm, with Captain Brendhan Waters, Senior Deputy Jon Bracht, firefighters Ian Field, David Brown, Quentin Waters, and brand new member Denis Wann responding in Robertson Pumper. We were dispatched to Yuille and Evelyn Avenues, which we were later to find out was the epicentre of the impact on Bundanoon. Just past the back bridge into Exeter the blackness gave way to flames as we drove right into the bushfire. Both sides of the road and railway line were alight, and as veteran firefighter Ian Field succinctly noted - there was fire *everywhere*. Pulling into Yuille Avenue we jumped out of the truck and got straight to work putting the wet stuff on the red stuff. Brendhan established command, but backup trucks were diverted towards the rapidly progressing fire front behind us, with just Hill Top 1 getting through to join the team initially. Both Yuille and Evelyn were heavily impacted by the blaze, with a count of 4 homes lost eventually established in the early hours of the morning. 60 foot pines were glowing towers scattered like Roman candles in the night, and firewood stacks like glowing coals of a steam engine. Going door-to-door Robertson checked on each property they could get to, doing what they could. One house was being ably defended by the residents, while another was deserted but was brilliantly signposted pointing us to their tank and sprinkler system. With petrol in the pump, we started it and moved on to the next. At one property the drain grate in front of the shed had caught alight when we arrived, and the plastic pot plants each side had melted away, leaving clumps of dirt and funny little plants just sitting there otherwise untouched. Other homes were not so lucky. In the middle of the burning rubble a kitchen sink was found lying on the ground - the water still running. By 4am we were gaining the upper hand, and were able to send Hill Top 1, Balmoral 9, and Menangle 9 home, as these guys had been soldiering on all day Saturday before Bundanoon even happened. We were then retasked to Ben Nevis Circuit and continued the fight over there into the morning.

These are just some of the stories from the fire line



On the fire ground—photo supplied

this season. Group Captain Russell Moore, and Carrington Falls captain and national parks employee Sam Demouth have even more extraordinary tales to tell from the 2019/2020 campaign. We were lucky this year to have been spared the brunt of the inferno through the fickleness of the winds. But when the rains return and the “filmy veil of greenness thickens as we gaze” remember this. Remind your children and your grandchildren of experiences learnt the hard way, often generations apart and beyond living memory, that they not be consigned to dusty history books and government reports sitting in the archives. For as Stretton poignantly summarised in the opening lines of his Royal Commission’s report into the 1939 Victorian Bushfires -

“Men who had lived their lives in the bush went their ways in the shadow of dread expectancy. But though they felt the imminence of danger they could not tell that it was to be far greater than they could imagine. They had not lived long enough.” - 1939.

Please contact me
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issue

Reach my office on
4297 2285

STEPHEN JONES MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WHITLAM

Authorised by S Jones, ALP, Shellharbour

Do You Remember Carrington Falls Running Dry?



Paul Robinson sent in these photos he took during Christmas showing the beautiful Carrington Falls completely dry with no water flowing at all, just some deeper pools still retaining water.

He wondered if anyone remembers this happening before?

Send a message to info@robertsonctc.org.au if you have any experience or knowledge you can share.



REPS Receives Some Good News

By Peter Glass, President

Robertson Environment Protection Society has been successful in getting a grant of \$5,000 from federal MP Stephen



Frigate Bird, Galapagos Islands Photo supplied

Jones towards our project of reprinting our *Guide to The Yarra Brush* book. This book was printed in black and white by REPS in 1990. The new one will be in colour and is being co-ordinated by Dr. Catherine Coutts. Our book still remains the seminal publication on Robertson's unique Yarra Brush.

The first REPS talk for 2020 will be on **Friday 14 February at 7.30pm** at the Community Centre in Caalong Street. Dr Lyndy Scott will be giving a presentation on her trip to the Galapagos Islands. All welcome.

Sunday Afternoon Cinema at the CTC@Robertson starts on 1 March

Bea has selected 6 great films for this year's program. All films are at 2.30pm with the café opening at 2pm for tea/coffee and cake. Tickets \$10 and bookings can be made ph 48852665 info@robertsonctc.org.au

Put these dates in your diary—1 March, 19 April, 21 June, 16 August, 18 October, 22 November

The first film for 2020 will be **Kodachrome** (USA 2017) directed by Mark Raso and starring Ed Harris, Jason Sudeikis and Elizabeth Olsen. *A Touching, hilarious, and contemplative gem of a film..*



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Robertson Community Technology Centre

by Karen Mewes CTC@Robertson Manager

2020—Seniors Festival— February 13th—19th

See separate lift out for the Seniors Festival program of free music events and free technology workshops. The music events are supported by the NSW Government.

Free Classes. Following the Seniors Festival the CTC will be running 4 weeks of Free Computer classes and then free mobile phone / iPad / tablet classes for people on low income, thanks to Clubs NSW — see lift out for details.

Thanks to a grant from Community Underwriting the CTC has been able to purchase a new first aid kit and a chair trolley. This will make moving the chairs for the cinema so much easier and safer.



CTC President, Jenny Kena, testing out the new chair trolley

Congratulations are in order for one of our local seniors and a regular customer of the CTC.

Lotte Smith has attended many classes at the CTC over several years and is a regular at the Thursday iPad group.

Lotte also attends the Moss Vale TAFE campus 3 days per week where she is currently in her 2nd year of a Business and Technology course and in

her 3rd year of a Certificate 3 in Spoken and Written English.

She has deservedly been recognised by TAFE NSW receiving a nomination for TAFE Student of the Year but will have to wait till February to find out if successful.

Just to be nominated is quite an achievement. She has also received a certificate 2 in Writing and Spelling for her work in 2019.



"Star Student" Lotte Smith receives her TAFE certificate from Mayor Duncan Gair

Lotte has been a Robertson resident since moving here 5 years ago following the death of her husband, Lotte lives with her family. Prior to this Lotte resided in Dapto for 40 years where she worked as Manager of the legendary Dapto Hotel. Lotte moved to Australia from Germany in 1964.

To cap off her already busy life, Lotte attends a gym 3 days per week, has a private sewing lesson 1 day per week, attends the CTC iPad group every Thursday afternoon and has 1:1 tutoring with CTC Manager Karen Mewes every Saturday.

One of Lotte's most recent and extremely important challenges has been the need to undertake a mandatory senior's driving test and in true Lotte style has passed and maintained her full driver's license.

An inspiration to all who know her, congratulations Lotte and keep up the good work.

**The CTC is OPEN: Thurs & Fri 10am - 4pm,
Sat 10am - 1pm.**

**58-60 Hoddle Street, Robertson
Phone: 4885 2665**

Email: info@robertsonctc.org.au

Website: www.robertsonctc.org.au

Follow the CTC on Facebook to keep up to date with events and courses.

www.facebook.com/CTCRobertson

Register for Soccer and Hockey in 2020!

All ages welcome—girls, boys, women & men.
Robertson-Burrawang Rovers Soccer Club

registration days start on Wednesday 5 February at Hampden Park

Robertson 4pm-6pm and continue on Sunday 9 February, Wednesday 12 February and Sunday 16 February. From children turning 5 in 2020 right through to senior 'veterans' they have teams to suit everyone and a very reasonable fee structure. Their juniors are provided with club socks and free uniform item at no extra cost and the [Active Kids](#) vouchers can be used.

The Club prides itself on being a family club offering the best in sport. [Like their Facebook page](#) for more information or contact Kate van Eimeren on 0432 690 451.

Robertson Hockey Club has their Registration Afternoon on Sunday 23 February from 5pm at the Burrawang Turf registering everyone from 4 years old to 104 years old! This includes 1st, 2nd, 3rd Grade Men and Women.



A sausage sizzle will be provided—BYO drinks, chairs, footy, hockey sticks etc. Further information call Tash on 0419 273 458 or

robertsonhockey@outlook.com

Put These Dance Dates in Your Diary!

Dances are held at the Robertson School of Arts twice a month on a Friday night.

Old Time Dances 8pm-11pm

Great Music, Dancing, Home Made Supper
 Fundraiser for School of Arts

February 14, March 13, April 10, May 8, June 19, July 17, August 14, September 11, October 9, November 6, December 18

Contact Noel 4885 1532

Social Dancing 7pm-11pm

Free Workshop at 6.30pm

\$6 includes tea & coffee, bring a plate

February 28, March 27, April 24, May 29, June 26, No July Dance, August 28, September 25, October 30, November 27, No December

Dance. Contact Warren & Debby on 0457 337 970

Robertson Business Chamber Meeting

The first meeting for 2020 is on Tuesday Feb 4 at 6pm at the CTC@Robertson.

When you run a small business it can be hard to allocate the time and funds to review your business strategy and expand your own business management skills, so we want to make it easy for you. **This month our guest is Simon Harris, a speaker and coach specialising in regionally based small business.** Si is an engaging speaker and he will be sure to leave you with a few valuable insights and tips that you can immediately apply to the benefit of your business.

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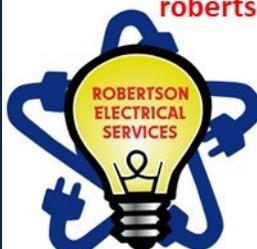


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Celebrate a Love of Music at Robertson CTC



<p>Try It</p> 	<p>Always wanted to play or used to play? This will be a relaxed fun morning. No pressure, and strange sounds on instruments are all part of the fun!</p> <p>Give music a go by trying out various instruments and chat to the teachers about learning, relearning or joining in as an older person.</p> <p>Instruments available to try: guitar, ukulele, violin, viola, drums, clarinet, flute, saxophone, piano and trombone. Find out about local groups you can join or listen to and meet teachers. Music is so good for the mind and wellbeing; if you go to one event this Seniors Festival this should be it.</p>	<p>Thurs 13 Feb 10am-12 Incl morning tea</p>
<p>Hear It Free concert</p>	<p>Classical and Jazz concert featuring top young musicians from the Sydney and Wollongong Conservatoriums of Music.</p>	<p>Sun 16 Feb 2pm-4pm Incl afternoon tea</p>
<p>Make It</p>	<p>Graeme Sessions demonstrates making guitars. Plus performances and BBQ. Presented by Robertson Men's Shed.</p>	<p>Tues 18 Feb 10:30am-12:30pm BBQ lunch</p>
<p>Learn About It The Song Remains the Same</p>	<p>Join Andrew Ford & Anni Heino for a musical journey through their new book on the history of song. Featuring the Robertson Songsters.</p>	<p>Wed 19 Feb 4pm-6:30pm Drinks & nibbles</p>
<p>All events free for seniors & carers</p>		
<p>Where</p>	<p>Robertson CTC, 58-60 Hoddle St, Robertson Opposite Robertson Farm Machinery</p>	<p>Transport available on request.</p>

Bookings for all events is essential.
Phone: 4885 2665,
Email: info@robertsonctc.org.au
Online: www.trybooking.com/BHHGO



The CTC would like to thank the NSW Government for supporting the Seniors Festival.

Free Technology Classes & Workshops

Robertson CTC 58-60 Hoddle Street Robertson

Should I get a tablet or iPad? - Seniors Festival Free Presentation

How do I choose and what would I use it for? Step by step through the choices to hopefully narrow it down.

When: Friday 14th Feb

Time: 10:30am – 11:30am

IPads and Tablets Group – Seniors Festival 2 Free workshops

Learn some tricks and tips for your iPad or tablet. For the 2 weeks of the Seniors Festival our regular Thursday iPad / tablet group will be free. (Usually \$5 to join and \$5 each week you attend).

When: Thursday 13th Feb and Thursday 20th Feb

Time: 2pm to 3:30pm

Scams, Passwords and Computer Security - Seniors Festival Free Talk.

Worried about scams? Do you have problems remembering passwords? Ever had a call or email that you weren't sure if it was a scam or not? Tips on spotting and dealing with scams plus creating and storing strong passwords.

When: Friday 21st Feb

Time: 10:30am – 11:30pm

Booking for Above Seniors Festival Sessions

Call 4885 2665 – please leave a short message with your phone number

Email: karenmewes@robertsonctc.org.au

Book online www.trybooking.com/BHHHC

FREE Computer Classes at CTC@Robertson

Funded by Clubs NSW—Free for Seniors, people on low income or otherwise disadvantaged
All classes are taught by a qualified and experienced trainer. .

Bookings for classes below: Ph 4885 2665 or email: karenmewes@robertsonctc.org.au

Friday 6 March	10:00am - 1:00pm	Beginners - Essential computer skills. Pt 1 Get started or gain confidence using a computer and searching the internet.
Friday 13 March	10:00am -1:00pm	Essential computer skills. Pt 2 Internet and Email –Safe internet searching and online shopping tips. Privacy and Security. Intro to Email
Friday 20 March	10:00am - 1:00pm	Essential computer skills. Pt 3 - Email and Documents. Take your email skills further, attachments, printing, scanning and uploading.
Friday 27 March	10:00am - 1:00pm	Essential computer skills. Pt 4—Negotiating Government and useful websites and groups (job seeking and support sites). Online forms, printing from internet.

After Easter the CTC will be running similar free classes on mobile phones and iPads / Tablets. Call 02 4885 2665 to register your interest.