

Robertson News

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RADSPA posts public statement

On 16 September the Robertson and District Swimming Pool Association issued a public statement which was published on their website. The text of the statement is included in this edition on *page 4*.

In order to provide further information, President's Reports from the AGMs of 2017, 2018 and 2019 have also recently been added to their website. In the lead up to the 2020 AGM the RADSPA encourages people to become members (form on website) and to check the website regularly for updates www.robertsonaquaticcentre.com.

Blooming Robertson!

Spring has arrived in Robertson with the gradual appearance of the beautiful avenue of cherry blossoms on the main street. In addition, the stunning waratahs are also coming into flower both in private gardens and at the waratah garden at the Robertson Railway. The village is gradually turning into a riot of colour. It is a joyful sight!

Waratah Weekend will be held on 10-11 October at Robertson Heritage Railway Station and will include a plant sale held in conjunction with Robertson Garden Club. Find out more on *page 3*.

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The SHAC President Patsy Peacock Stepping Down at the Upcoming AGM

Patsy Peacock, founding President of The SHAC - Southern Highlands Artisans Collective - has announced she will not be re-standing at the upcoming AGM.



Patsy Peacock, outgoing SHAC President
Image supplied

“The SHAC is moving into its third year since inception and has become a powerful entity in the arts world in the region, something I’m very proud to have been

part of,” says Patsy. “I have given The SHAC my all for the past two years, but it’s now time for me to get back to some of my own personal creative projects. There is now a wide range of terrific artists and artisans with studios at The SHAC. In a short time it has become a tourist destination, a great place for learning about art and purchasing art across a wide variety of galleries, and a place to meet with some of the most amazing creative talent in the Highlands.

“A hardworking management committee and all the terrific gallery volunteers will ensure The SHAC will continue to thrive and move forward as the great

collective that it has become,” says Patsy.

Says Vice President, Gail Miller: “Patsy’s contribution to The SHAC has been enormous, and her passion and drive will be missed. We wish her well with her desire to pursue her personal projects.”

At the forthcoming **AGM on October 24 at 4pm** a new President and Committee will be elected. Anyone interested in joining The SHAC on the committee, or as a volunteer should contact Gail: gail@theshac.com.au

Art Exhibitions On Now in Robertson

The SHAC Gallery

Anne Cape—Works from the Studio—one of Australia’s premier portrait artists
Ashley Mackevicius - In a Minor Key—The SHAC’s founding photographer
Fri-Mon 10am-4pm until Monday 19 October at 74-76 Hoddle St. Find out more at www.theshac.com.au/exhibitions

Thesaurus Gallery (Arts Thesaurus)

An Exhibition featuring 3 local miniature artists—**Regina Brewster, Carol Thomson and Pam Slattery**. Fri-Mon 10am-4pm until end of November at 91 Hoddle Street.

CTC Exhibition Space

Currently showing works by **Gail Newell, Catriona Anderson, Regina Brewster, Karon Sacks and Sonia O’Shea**. Thur-Fri 10am-4pm, Sat 10am-1pm at 58-60 Hoddle Street. Find out more at www.robertsonctc.org.au

Contribution Guidelines

The submission deadline for the December 2020 edition is November 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.

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Inside page small ad 90 x 60mm **\$65**

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Further details at

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

All Aboard For Another Year at Robertson Heritage Railway Station

By Ian Wallace, President, RHRS

With Covid19 restrictions being in place, it may appear that not a lot has been happening at RHRS, but this is not the case, as some good things have been taking place behind the scenes. A highlight was the completion of repainting of our heritage-classified Robertson railway station in January. The repainting was in appropriate heritage colours and it looks a picture. We were looking forward to showing it off more to locals and to the public but, since the



Cockatoo Run arrives Robertson 3 Feb 2019 Image supplied

visit of 'The Cockatoo Run' heritage tourist train on 23 February, the running of such heritage

passenger trains has been put on hold due to Covid19. We do not know when it will be possible to resume 'Cockatoo Run' visits but, along with train-operator East Coast Heritage Rail, we hope it will be as soon as possible. We are all very keen to keep this service operating, as it brings numerous tourists to the village of Roberson to sample our hospitality. We will keep locals notified through the *Robertson News* and by posts at the Community Information Centre.

The 2020 Annual General Meeting of RHRS was held on 16 September and a new management committee was elected—President - Ian Wallace; Vice-president – Rod Visman; Secretary – Angus Webster; Treasurer – Anne Wilson; other committee

members – Peter Glass, Noel Rothwell and Tony McCoy. Outgoing President Neil Harvey was thanked for his two years of sterling service in leading the group through a sometimes challenging, but rewarding period. Neil stood down so that he and wife Marion could devote more time to personal and family matters. We wish them well.

The much-acclaimed grounds and gardens administered by RHRS volunteers are currently receiving increased attention by those volunteers as lawn-mowing and other important maintenance by Department of Corrective Services detainees ceased (hopefully temporarily) due to Covid19. Following a call for more volunteers to work on the maintenance of our grounds and gardens, a number of people have come forward and are providing valued assistance to our regular small team of gardening volunteers. Their work is starting to show as most of the waratahs and other shrubs are springing into bloom and will look great over the next few weeks. Several are already looking great, despite the drought conditions which prevailed in 2018 and 2019.

Waratah Weekend and Plant Sale

The peak of the waratah flowering season is typically celebrated on the second weekend in October, with our 'Waratah Weekend', which will be held on the weekend of 10 and 11 October. Our gardens will be open for inspection on those dates and on other dates by arrangement. In conjunction with the Robertson Garden Club, our premises will be hosting a plant sale (all locally grown and acclimatised plants at competitive prices!) within the annexe of the Fettle's Shed Gallery on Sunday 11 October, to which all are invited. Appropriate Covid19 social distancing measures will be practised. RHRS will be offering for sale waratah flower stems, waratah plants and seeds.

For further information on the plant sale, please contact: Ian Wallace on 0412 696 381 or Karen Willmott on 0403 044 828.



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RADSPA Public Statement

16 September 2020 [as published on RADSPA website]

“It has become increasingly apparent that RADSPA will not be able to secure sufficient funding to complete the desired swimming pool facility and that alternative options MUST be considered.

Prior to Collapse: In late 2017 all outstanding planning issues were resolved. Approvals, contracts and funds were in place and site development began with a mid-2018 completion date expected. Then the partially constructed building collapsed.

Since Collapse: The committee has been fully engaged in the process of firstly attempting to find a resolution that would allow the project to resume through to the position we are in today.

Our response to the immediate and ongoing public questioning has always been as follows:

“It is because we are dealing with public monies that it is imperative that any comments relating to the legal issues are made through our solicitor. Any comments we have on the matter of blame would be from a lay perspective and could jeopardise, impede or even negate aspects of the claim. We have a Solicitor, Counsel and Forensic Engineer pursuing an outcome to the claim. As you would be aware lay comments can be at the least unhelpful and at the worst totally prejudice the outcome. We would ask that any further queries be directed to our solicitor. The committee will provide full, factual and accurate details of the RAC site status as soon as the settlement procedures are complete. To do so before that time could have serious implications on the settlement timeframe and outcome.”

Further to this: Over the last weekend of August, David Thomas, Engineer and Project Manager for the RAC site, passed away. Our condolences go to his family. The legal process is continuing, with negotiations being conducted with the relevant insurers. We are hopeful that this can be concluded satisfactorily in the near future.

The Committee and Current members: On the 2/09/20 Don Ferguson, the RADSPA President, resigned. It is the intention of the current remaining RADSPA members to resign at the upcoming AGM. **The AGM will be held on Sunday, 15 November 2020 at 11am at the Robertson Bowling Club, subject to the Covid-19 restrictions in place at that time.** There will be ample community notification of the date for the AGM as has been the case every year.

It is now time for members of the Community with fresh energy to join the Committee and take RADSPA to the next stage. Anyone interested in seeking election to a position on the Committee is encouraged to do so by submitting a nomination to our Secretary, Ian Hunt, not less than seven days prior to the AGM. As per the Articles of Association only financial members are eligible to vote at the AGM and notice of any ordinary motions must be received not less than 14 days prior to the AGM.

Options for the RAC Site: It will be necessary to continue arrangements for site security, insurance cover and the lease obligations until the future of RADSPA is decided. The Committee has concluded that there are three main possibilities for the RAC site:

OPTION 1: Attempt to complete the original plan – the cost of constructing a suitable building has increased substantially and there is now no realistic prospect of being able to obtain sufficient public and private funding. We have explored funding opportunities extensively and a similar response has been received from every provider.

OPTION 2: Abandon the project totally and rehabilitate the site – this is the least preferred option as it would be a waste of the site potential and exhaust non community raised funds.

OPTION 3: Develop the site into a Community Sports Facility and Emergency Refuge. The potential is to develop a facility that will benefit a host of community and sporting organisations. There have been encouraging signs of support for this option from possible funding providers.

In response to the outcome of the AGM:

If NO committee is elected: RADSPA is an incorporated association. Under its constitution RADSPA must have seven committee members, being the office bearers and three committee members. If less than seven community members are nominated and elected to the Committee it will be necessary to ask the Secretary under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (the Act), being the Commissioner for Fair Trading or the secretary of the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, to appoint an administrator to wind up the Association.

The RADSPA Constitution makes no provision for winding up and this would be governed by the Act. Generally, government provided funds would be returned to the provider and community raised funds applied to another group or association with similar purpose. In this case the similar purpose would probably be provision of facilities for the Robertson community. The Act prohibits distribution of any assets to members of the Association.

This would likely result in option 2 being adopted and involve surrender of the site lease to the Bowling Club.

If a NEW Committee is elected: This would enable all options to be considered. The outgoing committee has concluded that option 1 is not a viable alternative and would prefer to avoid option 2.

If option 3 is considered and adopted, the outgoing committee recommends changing the name of the Robertson and District Swimming Pool Association Inc to the Robertson and District Sports Public Association Inc. This has been canvassed with Fair Trading and is a process completed by forms advising Change of Name and Objects. Under option 3 the Memorandum of Understanding between RADSPA and The Robertson Bowling Club would provide the basis for formalising the new direction of the project. With the approval of the Bowling Club, the Association would encourage individuals, community groups and sporting organisations to participate in the process of developing the RAC site.”

Further information, check the website or contact RADSPA Secretary Ian Hunt
radspasecretary@bigpond.com 0458813434

Council Connections

by Larry Whipper

Hampden Park Bridge

Just an update on the Hampden Park Bridge. I have been told that the bridge has been fabricated and that all environmental and crown land approvals have come back to council. The project looks to be on track for completion in November 2020.



The good news is that it looks like the bridge work is ahead of schedule. *Image—Robertson Commons Facebook*

Robertson Swimming Pool

Firstly I would like to clarify that Council are in no way associated or responsible for this project. There has been some coverage of this matter in Facebook and printed media recently and a number of valid concerns raised. I support the community's requests to be provided with details about the current and ongoing status of the project. I would also like to clarify in the event there is any confusion, that Council have never been involved in this project.

Please remember If you ever require any assistance or advocacy on Council matters, please feel free to contact me.

Larry.Whipper@wsc.nsw.gov.au mobile: 0407932922.

Full details of other Council agenda items and minutes can be found on Council's website at www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/2020-council-meeting-agendas-and-minutes

Celebrate Business Month by Getting Savvy on Social!

Thur 22 Oct@Robertson Hotel 6.30-9pm. Presented by Robertson Business Chamber.

Join us for an informative evening that will empower and inspire you to fire up your business's social media presence and effectiveness. Our energetic and inspiring keynote speaker Si Harris of the Regional Entrepreneur Academy will provide the answers in his presentation "Social Media Marketing at a Glance".

For the second part of the evening, two social media savvy local business owners will join Si Harris on stage to participate in a lively discussion panel where they will share their tips, tricks and most successful strategies with you. We will be diving into their social media pages to get a real time view of their style, activities and audience insights. This session will encourage audience participation so get your questions ready!

The event will be hosted by the iconic, elegant and always welcoming Robertson Hotel.

The \$20 ticket price for this event includes your Robertson Business Chamber membership for the next 12 months.

Online bookings and further information
www.businessmonth.nsw.gov.au/activity/get-savvy-on-social/

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Taste and See

By Graham Thomas, Minister, Robertson/Burrawang Anglican Church

I've been dabbling in a bit of cooking lately. Now most of you may well think that is a fairly unremarkable statement, but not for me. I have successfully lived most of my life without having to cook, sure I can barbeque but to actually make a meal in the kitchen that tastes pretty good and is healthy and ticks any other boxes, well, that's something very new for me. And for the record, over all those years, I've been in charge of washing up :-).

So last night I cooked my first red curry and I don't want to boast about it, but I will... gee it actually tasted really good! The last curry I cooked was a green curry and it was dismal (far too spicy) failure. My daughter had a friend around that night. Within minutes everyone around the table was coughing, crying with noses running from the abundance of chili, suffice to say, my daughter's friend has not since returned!

What I've learnt is not only should you get the ingredients right but you must taste as you go. Taste and see, experience it. Rookie error with that green curry, the red curry however was entirely different.

A verse in the Bible I love has a similar lesson, actually it's an invitation. It's from Psalm 34

⁸ Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

I like it because of the confidence the writer has in God. It's almost like the writer says, "give God a try, you won't be disappointed, he won't come up short!" And the good thing is, unlike cooking, we don't need to add more flavour to God so he tastes better, he's good and perfect just as he is!

So, there's God's invitation to you today. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

A good place to start is reading one of the four biographies of Jesus in the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John). You can find them here <https://www.biblegateway.com/>. Another option is to simply pop into one of our services at Robertson Anglican, see the details below. We're open, we're COVID safe,

social distanced and we'd love to meet you.

SERVICE DETAILS—Robertson/Burrawang Anglican Church

Currently we are meeting in person at 8am (1st and 4th Sunday of the month), 10am weekly, 6pm weekly and at 4.30pm on the 3rd Sunday of each month at St David's Burrawang. We are following strict COVID safety measures and social distancing requirements. If you'd like to follow our Bible Talks online, subscribe to Robertson Burrawang Anglican Church on YouTube. robertsonanglican.org.au 4885 1210 (office) office@robertsonanglican.org.au or go to <https://www.facebook.com/robertsonanglican/>

Engagement Announcement

Congratulations to Isabella Fisk of Robertson and Daniel Higgins, of Earlwood who recently announced their engagement.

Book Mass at St Peter's Burrawang

Mass is now being held at St Peter's Burrawang at the following times -

Sunday: 8am & 8.45am (1st, 3rd & 5th Sunday of the month) and 5pm & 5.45pm (2nd & 4th Sunday of the month).

Bookings can be made by using one of the following options:

* Ringing the Parish Office on Ph 4868 1931—either speak to the secretary or leave a message.

* Email the Parish Office mossvale@dow.org.au An email response will be sent acknowledging receipt of the booking.

* Texting or calling the Parish Mobile 0423 722 627

* Online bookings via the Parish website at www.stpaulsmossvale.org.au

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A Bird's Eye View of the Changing Face of Robertson

Thank you to Allan Stiles for submitting this series of photos showing a most interesting view of Robertson village over time. These are also currently on display at the CTC@Robertson. Contact Allan for more information about the origin of the images.



Robertson 1949



Robertson 1984



Robertson 1992



Robertson 1993—Looking East—Image Allan Stiles & Bob McInnes



Robertson 1993-Looking West— Image Allan Stiles & Bob McInnes



(And for comparison) Robertson 2020 - Image—Google Earth

Housing Strategy Response

Tim Hewitt, President, Robertson Business Chamber

The Robertson Business Chamber would like to respond to some of the issues and opinions regarding future housing in Robertson published in the Robertson News in April and July. As well as much commentary on social media.

Over the course of the year the Chamber has worked closely with the 'Robertson Aged Friendly Futures Group' (RAFFG), a group of mostly older residents with an interest in issues affecting the ability of older people to age in place to promote discussion around ideas on how Robertson might cater for an ageing population, and how housing options could be widened in the future. At the same time Wingecarribee Shire Council was considering both its Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) Local Housing Strategy, (LHS). (Both since endorsed).

Presumably Councillors would have been aware of the preparation of these documents well before they were made public, and as such would have had a considerable timeframe in which to inform and alert their communities as to the ramifications therein. The Draft Local Housing Strategy first came before council for consideration in December 2019. Council voted to defer voting for six months to allow time for a public exhibition and a community consultation process.

The Chamber is not aware of any efforts made by any Councillor to engage with the residents of Robertson, either by way of public meeting, or local media (eg Robertson News!) regarding the Local Housing Strategy, or issues of Robertson future at all, until Clr Whipper's opinion piece in this journal in April 2020.

Meanwhile in February the Robertson Aged Friendly Futures Group sponsored a public forum on Local Housing featuring a world renowned town planner, as well as the chief strategic planner from WSC. All WSC councillors were invited to attend, but only one (Clr Scandrett) saw fit to attend. This meeting was reported on in Robertson news in April 2020. The Chamber and RAFFG then published and distributed a document which summarised information presented at the housing forum in an effort to promote discussion more widely and to also encourage residents to make submissions to Council regarding the Housing Strategy. The Chamber also took the opportunity for a phone meeting with Council planners, again, an opportunity for community input afforded to all.

In general, both the Chamber and Aged Friendly Futures Group supported the concepts within the Council Housing Strategy, especially regarding strategies to allow older folks to 'age in place' as well as increasing housing options for smaller and more varied households to live in Robertson, with the economic and employment opportunities that would flow from a modest (and arguably inevitable) increase in the local population.

These goals are in line with those in the South Eastern NSW Regional Plan indicating that all levels of Government are singing from the same song sheet, so to speak.

Council planners identified a 'New Living Area' for Robertson in the LHS, (as they did for all other shire towns) which forms part of the broader housing strategy which also includes 'infill' development to increase housing *within* existing town boundaries. The Chamber and RAFFG both made written submissions as part of the consultation process, as did over 30 others from Robertson.

At its June 24th meeting, the Draft Local Housing Strategy came before Council and both the Chamber and RAFF Group took the opportunity to address that council meeting, an

opportunity open to any interested party. It appeared that no Councillor had read full submissions, relying instead on a tabulated summary prepared by Council staff.

At that WSC meeting, an amendment was proposed to rephrase/rename the 'New Living Area' identified for Robertson in the LHS, as a '*Potential Long Term Living Area-subject to future consultation with the community*' however before this was voted on Clr Whipper made a 'last minute attempt' (his words) to have the identified land area removed from the LHS altogether. This amendment was not supported by a majority of councillors and voted down. Following discussion among councillors regarding the level of community consultation already made, the amendment was modified with the removal of the reference to '*future community consultation*', with a majority of councillors supporting the 'amended amendment'.

Clr Whipper did not support the amendment and for better or worse, Robertson ended up with a renamed *potential long term future living area*, something not afforded to any other town or village in the shire. In short, a relatively large number of community members took the opportunity to comment on the housing strategy as it applied to Robertson, and Council made a decision, with a minor amendment.

It is disappointing that while offering much rhetoric about 'interest groups' 'speculators', 'developers' and 'the games people play' commentators rarely if ever offer any alternative vision for the future of Robertson, other than for nothing to change, ie we like it just the way it is. While Clr Whipper does not appear to support the work of WSC planning department and paints a rather gloomy picture for Robertson if council planning is implemented, nor does he offer any suggestions for a brighter future (and he is not alone in this!)

The Robertson Business Chamber has a vision of a better Robertson where older citizens and smaller households can find suitable housing, where they can procure most of their needs locally without frequent travel to larger centres. The Chamber believes this would encourage development of a sustainable local economy and more local jobs.

Research and international experience supports this proposition. The Aged Friendly Group have a similar vision where older people don't have to leave as they become less independent and can 'age in place' and easily access services they need.

The Business Chamber is very keen to engage further with the wider community regarding the future of Robertson, and along with the RAFFG is planning a community forum in the New Year (pending the bloody virus of course!)

The Chamber looks forward to being part of an inclusive Robertson which retains, if not improves its character and amenity for all, provides for the majority of a residents daily needs, and supports a thriving local economy.

Further Information—Robertson Business Chamber
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'Health is the greatest possession' Lao Tzu

The Story of Jo

By Michael Breen



Jo Blackmore image supplied

Robertson resident, Jo Blackmore was born in Nimbin in Northern NSW. The place name seems to have come from the Nimbinjee people. They believe their spirits protect the area. Jo's parents who valued education for their children moved to Lismore for schooling. Her parents thought that her siblings would succeed, whereas they considered Jo less bright. Jo did succeed and realised the importance of convincing students that they could succeed.

Separated from her husband, Jo had to find employment. As a single parent with two little children she went to the University of New England and qualified as a teacher. From postings in Coraki and Nowra Jo taught, counselled and was school principal in several NSW schools.

In 1987 she was told of an advertisement for a school in Ceylon now Sri Lanka. She took the job and when she saw the deprived conditions around the school she came back to Australia to source supplies for the needy, the hospital and village school. This enraged the militant J.V.P. (Peoples' Liberation Front). They thought that Jo was working for the government whom they violently opposed. Jo got word that the J.V.P were out to kill her. Friends and supporters organised an escape. Jo was covered with cardboard boxes in the back of a truck and smuggled down a mountain to safety.

In Singapore Jo taught at the interlingua School of Languages. She also visited the gaol where she counselled tough criminals and drug addicts. This was during the strict regime of Lee Kuan Yew, the first Prime Minister of Singapore.

In Kenya Jo worked in a school owned by Gujarati Indians. 'I loved the Kenyan National Parks.' While teaching in Taiwan Jo had the misfortune to be caught in the most terrifying earthquake in modern times there. Two and a half thousand died. The trauma of that event was imprinted on Jo's psyche. 'That finished me completely'. said Jo. 'When I was a principal teachers would send their students to me when there was a problem. 'You tell me your side of the story' I would invite the children. Then I would listen to them. Eventually, I would suggest they shake hands. 'Now I want you to go out into the playground and look after the other children for me.'

Back in Australia Jo turned down offers of principals' jobs. 'I preferred being in the classroom with children rather than being principal. 'My attitude was, How can I make them happy?' In south west Sydney there were lots of children from disadvantaged families.' 'There were children called 'slow learners'. They were the ones I wanted to help.'

Jo recently turned 93. What is her secret, her formula? On the same day as Jo's 93rd Julia Gillard was on the Q & A segment on ABC television. Julia Gillard was Australia's first woman prime minister. A young girl asked Julia for advice on how to be successful. The girl said she was stubborn.

'Stubborn is good' said Julia. Stubborn for Julia Gillard and Jo Blackmore is stick-at-it-ness, not pig-headed closed minded stubbornness. Another way of describing the quality is attaining results by creative problem solving and courageous commitment.

There are now a lot of former school children now adults in different countries especially in South East Asia and Australia who are thankful for Jo's leading them. And many others who wish they had had someone like Jo when they were at school.

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When Food or Toys Are Not Rewarding



By Lisa Wright

About eighteen months ago, I found myself at my front door, my two Shelties were offering a lovely sit, waiting to be released to go outside. My Koolie x Kelpie puppy, Tom, who was about five months old at the time, stood there blankly staring at my front door. So I asked him to sit again, told the Shelties how great they were, and Tom continued to stare at the door and then came the moment that has changed how I think about rewarding my dog forever.

I offered him food. He blinked.

I asked for the sit - he blinked and continued to stare at the door.

My heart sank, I knew in that moment, he couldn't sit, he couldn't take food, and so with nothing else in my tool kit, I was in limbo.

What I knew deep down, is that in that moment, food is not a reward for Tom. Nothing in his working dog brain beats being able to fly at high speed across the yard to go and count our chickens, or smell if the fox has been by, or run a lap with Clooney, who is his racing buddy. I know, because I tried, I offered all kinds of amazing food rewards, and in that moment, those foods were not rewarding. The definition of reinforcement is "the action or process of reinforcing or strengthening." So if my dog is not increasing the desired behaviour, then I guess we can say food is not a reinforcer in this scenario. (*Training Tip: Reward = Reinforcement*)

And in a world of amazing things, food and toys are just two reinforcers and there is a world of rewards we can offer if we just harness the distractions. How we do this has to be strategic. Reinforcement is only reinforcement if it is of great value to the learner. We tend to look at food more often than not because we can measure it out, and apply it to a biological need of the dog and it often works well. It makes sense to us, dogs like food right? However, with Tom, this doesn't apply.

I had fellow trainers suggest I wasn't reinforcing my dog for sitting because I wasn't offering food. But what I

would now ask is: 'if my dog doesn't find it (toy/food) reinforcing in this scenario, what would you suggest I use as a reinforcer?', because we need to start having this discussion as trainers as opposed to insisting our dogs take what we offer and be excited about it. That is like me expecting you to be 110% excited about me offering you a Mars Bar when you only really wanted to go for a walk and smell the evening air. We need to be mindful of our dogs.

We also have to remember our relationship is key to making reinforcement work. If you and I don't know each other, me giving you a big bear hug might be a big punishment, yet if we know each other and are great friends, the same hug might be hugely reinforcing. So we have to know our dog.

What did I do? Firstly, we realised that Tom had a lot of reinforcement for the 'Lie Down' cue. He has associated this with herding training and this has been paired with his love of watching the sheep. So we realised this was more reinforcing for him than a sit. We then moved back from the door. If Tom wasn't able to lie down near the door, we moved back from the door and asked for a simpler task like a nose touch, where he targets my hand with his nose. Guess what? That worked! We have now been able to move, over time, to be closer to the door and get the lie down. No food or toys were used, the reinforcement is on the other side of the door, the door opens and wondrous things are out there.

Ultimately, we began asking for the sit a long way back from the door, and then moved towards a sit being cued closer to the door. It sounds so simple doesn't it? But for many of us, we get a bit stuck asking for what we expect our dogs to want and we miss the opportunities to see what the dog finds rewarding. In a short space of time, through using the outside yard as the reinforcement, Tom has learnt he can get the door to open by sitting calmly. Tom offers a sit at the door. Amazing.

As someone who was first doing obedience classes as a nine year old kid, this was a light bulb moment where I was thinking, how come we don't know this? I think we don't know these things because dogs are really forgiving. I think we have a lot to learn from people who have trained exotic animals as they have learnt to really focus on what is the reinforcer for the individual and the room for generalisation is a lot less. If you upset an elephant then you are going to know about it! Our dogs are far more forgiving. And I'm so thankful for that.

Happy Training!

VEGETABLE GARDENER



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anytime.

Robertson Community Technology Centre

by Karen Mewes CTC@Robertson Manager

It's been great to have the CTC open again and see some of our old friends, not so old friends and welcome new people.

The CTC volunteers are doing a terrific job of sticking to our CovidSafe plan with record keeping, distancing, using masks where needed and all the extra cleaning. At least we know our new kitchen and flooring will stay sparkingly clean!

Thanks to Karen Willmot for running a face mask making workshop which was a lot of fun and everyone completed their mask. If there is interest it might be possible to run a second one.

Karon (Kaz) is keeping the art gallery going with monthly exhibitions from local artists and its good to see several sales since we have reopened.

Sadly we can't set a date yet when we will restart the cinema or group computer classes but keep an eye on our Facebook page, website and the Robertson e-news for future announcements.

Computer, iPad/tablet and mobile phone assistance can still be given by our volunteers or, if more involved assistance required, via video call and remote logon.

With our major renovations completed we can offer not only WiFi, computers and business equipment for public use (with limited numbers) but we also have a private office space available, so if you are working remotely and need a quiet space with fast WiFi and office facilities give us a call. There is even barista coffee available on CTC days.



Successful face mask making at the CTC

Great to see the Men's Shed building progressing behind the CTC. Please be aware that from October 5 the driveway and parking (including the disabled parking bay) at the back of the CTC will be closed for earthworks and landscaping work or up to a month. Parking is available on the street but please call us if you need assistance.

QR Code Scanning. If you are out and about you might see the option to scan a QR code on entry rather than giving your name and phone number. If you have the NSW Services app on your phone this is a quick and easy option. If you need help to set this up or would just like to see it demonstrated the CTC will run through it on Thursday 22nd October between 1:30pm and 3pm no charge but call to reserve a spot as numbers are limited, social distancing will be observed and masks available.

Office Space Available at the CTC



Robertson CTC
Open
Thur & Fri 10am-4pm,
Sat 10am-1pm.
58-60 Hoddle Street,
Robertson
Phone: 4885 2665
Email:
info@robertsonctc.org.au
Website:
www.robertsonctc.org.au
Facebook:
[www.facebook.com/
CTCRobertson](https://www.facebook.com/CTCRobertson)

Robertson Community Op Shop

by Karen Wilmott

The idea of starting an op shop here in the village, arose out of discussion in Robertson Futures Group Inc about social participation and respect and social inclusion. These are two of the World Health Organisation's 8 Domains for an Age-friendly Community. Our increasing awareness of the need to reduce waste also inspires this venture. At our first official meeting on 12 September, we decided we will be known as "the Burrow" and have formed a committee to proceed with incorporation as a not for profit organisation. The Objects of the Association were summarised as: Assist the local community by providing a source of affordable clothing and small household items following the principles of re-using, re-cycling and re-purposing in order to reduce waste; Profits made from the sale of donated items will be made available to support local community organisations and community projects by means of small grants at advertised intervals; Provide a space for community members of all ages to connect socially.

Robertson Farm Machinery has been very generous in their support and is allowing us to use the old office building as our HQ. Some repairs and re-fitting have been needed and an enthusiastic band of volunteers has been working hard to make the old building a welcoming space. As yet we cannot confirm our opening date but the flags will be out just as soon as possible! You are all welcome to inspect our progress at Wednesday morning working bees and volunteers to tackle the many different tasks of cleaning and painting, sorting and selling will be received with open arms – at a Covid-safe distance!
For further information contact: Karen Wilmott 040 044 828 or Paris Dennett 0422 070 572.

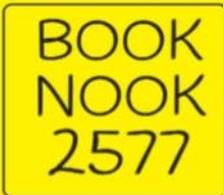
New Yarra Brush Guide Book Edition

For the past 27 years the original edition (1993) of the *Guide to the Yarra Brush* has been a valuable reference booklet on the unique Robertson rainforest remnants with descriptions and photographs of trees, shrubs, vines and map. A dedicated team of members from The Robertson Environment Protection Society (REPS) are in the process of producing an upgraded, enhanced edition in full colour for release hopefully by March 2021. The importance of this book is magnified by the recognition that these rainforest remnants are now recognised as being critically endangered by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments and the need to create widespread awareness of this precious resource. Botanical artist, Dr Cathryn Coutts, is the project coordinator and illustrator for this new edition. She has been making art works about the rainforest plants for several years, and had an exhibition in the Robertson CTC in 2018, called 'Glimpses in a Rainforest'. For the new book she is producing 81 drawings of trees, shrubs, vines, ferns and common weeds.

Reading While Enjoying a Glass of Wine Recommended

This is the advice of John Baker—former hotelier and rock'n'roll promoter and now a local—who has just published a book with Nick Place about their quest to chase down a mythical cellar that may or may not have belonged to two of the most famous men in Russian history. *Stalin's Wine Cellar* tells the story of their trip to Georgia on a myth busting exercise involving a colourful cast of characters, including a gun-toting, mafia-style man with no regard for road rules. They spent four memorable days in Tbilisi, concluding the wine was, in fact, legitimate (thanks in part to a dropped hundred year old bottle of wine). That was only the beginning of the adventure...there were plenty more bottles of wine, legal minefields, international negotiations and broken bottles to come...

Stalin's Wine Cellar is published by Penguin Random House Australia. Find out more at www.penguin.com.au/books/stalins-wine-cellar-9781760893132



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