



# **The Mounts**

## **The Community Newsletter of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine**



**August 2016**

### **Welcome**

Extraordinary news has reached our mail box that brings great cheer in the recent bleak and windy conditions that passes for winter in our area.

Minnie and Henric Nicholas have raised the bar in the organic, grow-your-own self-sufficiency stakes to a level that was previously unimaginable. And the good news is that you too can harvest the same rich bounty as they have done in a mere ten short years.

Similar astounding correspondence has been received that the Mounts' recent traffic issues are in fact nothing new at all, and were the cause for grave concerns one hundred and thirteen years ago for man, woman and beast alike. The more things change, the more things stay the same apparently. Or, in the rather more elegant phrase of the language that Minnie has now recently affected: *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

I hope you enjoy the Winter edition of The Mounts.

**Tim Gow** Tel. 0412 133 559

e-mail: [timsgow@gmail.com](mailto:timsgow@gmail.com)

### **Community Calendar**

<b>August</b>	<b>Sun 7th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed</b>	<b>Fri 12th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Meet Queens Ave &amp; Wynnes Rocks Rd junction</b>	<b>Sun 14th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service</b>	<b>Fri 19th Bushwalking Group — Ikara Ridge, Mt Victoria</b>
<b>September</b>	<b>Sun 4th 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed</b>	<b>Fri 9th 9.00—12.00 Bush Care— Meet Queens Ave &amp; Wynnes Rocks Rd junction</b>	<b>Sun 11th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service</b>	<b>Fri 16th Bushwalking Group — Deep Pass, Newnes Plateau</b>
<b>Sat 17th 5.30 pm Mt Wilson Progress Assoc Annual Meeting</b>	<b>Sat 24th &amp; Sun 25th Spring Festival</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>Sun 2nd 9.00 am RFS Training Mt Wilson Shed</b>	<b>Sun 9th 3.00 pm Mt Wilson Church Service</b>

**Mt Wilson Spring Blossom Festival**

**24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

A wonderful weekend of art and garden activities to raise funds for the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade to extend the Mt Wilson Fire Station and to build a new Fire Station at Mt Irvine.

- Photography - Art exhibition and prize and sale of works
- Open gardens
- Art and garden activities:
- Wildflower walk, ikebana demonstration, landscape photography and landscape design
- Delicious food at the Village Hall and a sausage sizzle at the Mt Wilson Fire Station

A comprehensive traffic management plan is well advanced

You are invited to the opening cocktail party on  
Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 6.30pm in the Mt Wilson Village Hall.

Hear the winners announced & have the first opportunity to purchase works in the exhibition.

Entry \$10

Exhibition proudly supported by:



### **BOWENS CREEK FIRE TRAIL UPDATE**

Since our last report in the February 2016 newsletter, we have reported via advice to the Mounts Distribution List on the matching Election commitments made by both the Federal Coalition and the, then, Labor Candidate for Macquarie, Susan Templeman to provide \$100,000 to assist in work to have Bowens Creek Rd/ Bowens Creek Bridge and Mt Irvine Rd at Bilpin restored as a fire trail for an Emergency Vehicles Access Route.

We have also distributed the Speech made in the New South Wales Parliament on 23 June by our State Member for the Blue Mountains, Trish Doyle, calling for the route to be restored for emergency vehicles.

We are very grateful to the Federal Coalition, our new Federal Member Ms Templeman and Ms Doyle for their support to date.

Following the Election result, I have contacted Ms Templeman who has again voiced support for the route and indicated that she would pursue the matter in the new Federal Parliament.

I have also liaised with the Office of outgoing Federal Member, Louise Markus. Ms Markus' Office has passed the matter onto the Office of Minister for Defence, Marise Payne, who we have been advised will have a particular interest in relation to Western Sydney. On behalf of the RF Brigade, I have thanked Ms Markus and her Office for their support during Ms Markus' time as Member for Macquarie and, in particular, for ensuring that this issue continues to have the Federal Government's attention. I have contacted Minister Payne's Office to seek an opportunity to brief on the matter.

As we have advised previously, the work to have the route restored as a fire trail requires a joint project by the Blue Mountains City Council and the Hawkesbury City Council. We remain grateful to BMCC for its support. Having now received advice of ongoing Federal support, we will shortly be re-engaging with Hawkesbury City Council and Hawkesbury RFS District Brigades to encourage HCC to work with BMCC on a joint bid for funds to have the route restored. The promised \$100,000 will be very important in assisting the two Councils to prepare their bid and see it through the various State and Federal government processes to obtain funding.

While the promise of Federal funding to assist the bid process is very welcome, we need to continue our efforts to demonstrate to all tiers of government the importance of this emergency vehicles access route for our communities, emergency services personnel and the many thousands of visitors who come to our area each year.

So, please email or write to local MPs, relevant Ministers and the local Press. If you've written before, please write again. And when you get responses, can you let us know?

Letters and emails to Minister Payne and Ms Templeman would be particularly helpful in assisting them understand the significance of this issue and our resolve to have the infrastructure in place to allow the RFS, Police Rescue and NSW Ambulance to work in this isolated area. Contact details will be updated shortly on the community website.

Let's keep this issue moving!

**Elizabeth Montano**

On behalf of the Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine RF Brigade

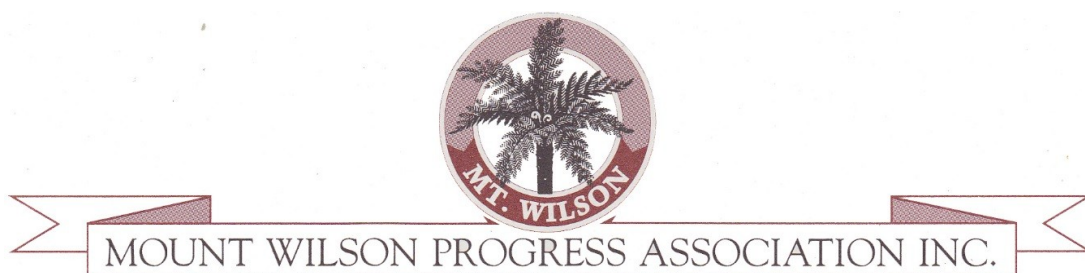
**MOUNT WILSON PROGRESS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE NEWS****Special General Meeting**

The traffic chaos and overcrowding in Mount Wilson on Anzac Day and throughout the three-day holiday weekend this year led to much discussion at a 90 minute Special General Meeting of the MWPA on 25 June. There were 42 people there addressing the issue seated in a wide circle in the Village Hall. The circle was Barry Freeman's suggestion and proved very successful allowing everyone to see each other as an extensive range of views were expressed. The focus was on the consequences for the future of about 15,500 visitors and residents coming in and leaving Mount Wilson during the Anzac long weekend.

The outcome of the meeting was to request the Blue Mountains City Council and the mountains Local Area Command Officer-in-Charge of the Police to advise the communities of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine of action the authorities can take in light of this year's overcrowding circumstances which, if the decades' long trend continues, is likely to become even more intense. No firm decisions were made about the future for fund raising events for local organisations.

The draft minutes of the Special General Meeting are available on the community's website at [http://www.mtwilson.com.au/images/stories/MWPA\\_AGM\\_Minutes/mwpa%20sgm%20250616%20minutes%20draft.pdf](http://www.mtwilson.com.au/images/stories/MWPA_AGM_Minutes/mwpa%20sgm%20250616%20minutes%20draft.pdf).

Following is the letter sent to the authorities.



16 July 2016

Mr Robert Greenwood  
General Manager  
Blue Mountains City Council  
Locked Bag 1005  
Katoomba NSW 2780

Superintendent Daryl Jobson  
OIC LOC  
Springwood Police Station  
4 Jerseywold Ave  
Springwood NSW 2777

Dear Mr Greenwood and Superintendent Jobson

As you know, the communities of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine were overwhelmed by visitors and their vehicles on the three-day Anzac holiday weekend, 23-25 April 2016. The Anzac Day Monday in Mount Wilson saw Mt Wilson Road – the one-way in / one-way out access and egress – blocked on both sides with traffic taking more than 90 minutes at times to travel from the Bells Line of Road to Mount Wilson. This was despite police being at the Bells Line/Mt Wilson Road intersection for some time and ticketing vehicles parking on the Bells Line bitumen but with no presence in Mount Wilson. The serious issues raised by this incident include:

- Public safety – the blocking of the 9 kilometre narrow Mt Wilson Road would have made it extremely difficult for emergency vehicles to enter or leave Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine. There were a number of heavily pregnant visitors noticed visiting Mount Wilson.

- The absence of any Council or police traffic control officers in the village meant there were innumerable breaches of driving, parking and pedestrian regulations creating the possibility of serious incidents.

With the availability of a recently installed traffic counter on Mt Wilson Road, we saw about 15,500 people arrive and leave over the Anzac Day weekend with the overwhelming peak on the Monday likely to have been the greatest number of people ever to have been here on one day. On the previous weekend, 16-17 April, the Mount Wilson Autumn Festival attracted about 8,000 people with most on the Festival Saturday. With the preparations made by the Mount Wilson Progress Association for parking and traffic guidance for the festival there were no significant delays, no lengthy traffic queues and no problems that would have delayed the arrival and departure of emergency authorities' vehicles had they been needed.

However, and this is the major concern of the community, there is no traffic control action a community organisation can take on occasions like the Anzac Day visitor influx and chaos. The incident, which was of course also unexpectedly replicated at many locations through the BMCC LGA, has raised these questions: What can and what will BMCC and NSW Police do to manage and keep safe the Upper Mountains, and Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine in particular, in the event of such massive increases in the number of vehicles and people in the area in the future?

At a Special General Meeting of the Mount Wilson Progress Association on 25 June attended by more than 40 residents from our small community (on a very cold night) there was a call for Council and the Police to advise the Progress Association on:

- The BMCC and Police planning actions since Anzac Day 2016 to manage future possible huge influxes of vehicles and visitors to Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine.

BMCC Director Damien Drew, City Services (Operations), Graham Peterson, Manager Survey and Traffic Design and Gary Parsons, Program Leader, Facilities and Halls met at Mount Wilson on 19 May with myself and MWPA Committee member Peter Laving to discuss the experiences of the two weekends – 16-17 and 23-25 April. Damien, Graham and Gary were very helpful explaining how Council can be approached to assist festival event organisers with approved traffic control plans and related assistance such as the pumping out of public toilet tanks, provision with all necessary rubbish bins and their early emptying, and the like.

We have a clear understanding of the necessary steps for community organisation arranged events, which, we were advised, can be extended for example with a traffic plan to cover private as well as public events for a coming period.

However, the arrival, management and public safety issues around very large numbers of vehicles and people arriving in Mount Wilson as happened on Anzac Day this year is a NSW Government and BMCC issue. If there is further information we can help with please don't hesitate to ask.

The village communities much look forward to hearing what action authorities can take in light of this year's overcrowding circumstances which, if the decades' long trend continues, is likely to become even more intense.

Regards

Richard Beattie  
President

cc Mayor Cr Mark Greenhill  
Cr Michael Begg  
Cr Don McGregor  
Cr Sarah Shrubbs  
Damien Drew, BMCC Director City Services (Operations)  
Sgt Brian Wilds, Katoomba traffic management  
David Howell, President MWMIRFB  
Judy Tribe, Chair MWVHMC  
Allen Hyde, President MIPA

### **Commonwealth grant promised for Bilpin to Bowens Creek fire trail**

The SGM was told both the Liberal and Labor candidates for the following weekend's federal election had promised a \$100,000 commitment from the federal government to kick-start work by Hawkesbury Council on an emergency vehicle route between Bilpin and Bowens Creek. The federal Major Projects Minister Paul Fletcher had announced the "funding for HCC will allow the Bowens Creek Fire Trail to be opened". The MW&MIRFB was congratulated for the great lobbying led by Elizabeth Montano that achieved the commitments. BMCC councillors Don McGregor and Sarah Shrubbs both assured the community at the MWPA General Meeting on 7 May our council will continue to maintain Bowens Creek Road down to the creek bridge, with which it has joint responsibility with HCC.

### **Annual General Meeting**

The AGM for the Mount Wilson Progress Association will be held in the Village Hall at 5.30 pm on Saturday, 17 September 2016. With Richard Beattie and Peter Laving not standing for re-election among the positions to be filled will be those of the president and at least one new committee member. All other members of the current Committee have indicated their willingness to stand for re-election. If anyone would like to ask about the roles of the Committee please don't hesitate to email or call Richard – [landrbeattie@bigpond.com](mailto:landrbeattie@bigpond.com), 4756 2070, 9252 6440 or 0900 190 909. A nomination form for membership of the Committee was included with the Notice of AGM sent to members. Nomination forms must be completed and returned to the Secretary by Saturday, 3 September, 2016:

The Secretary, Mount Wilson Progress Association Inc,  
Trelm 5-7 Hay Lane, Mount Wilson, NSW 2786.

Signed and scanned printed forms may also be emailed to [secretarymwpa@gmail.com](mailto:secretarymwpa@gmail.com). The positions to be filled for the Committee for the year 2016/2017 are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and four Ordinary Committee members.

### **A thoughtful gesture**

The Australian National University Mountaineering Club has made a donation of \$240 to the MWPA for the upkeep of Cathedral Reserve. Rob, the treasurer of the club, said they would like to make a donation towards the upkeep of the reserve. "We have used the camp site a number of times for canyoning trips and feel we would like to donate to the site's maintenance," he wrote.

### **Editor of *The Mounts* – Tim Gow to retire**

Since 2010 the communities of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine have been extremely fortunate to have had in Tim Gow an extraordinarily proficient, reliable and enthusiastic editor of our newsletter *The Mounts*. With six issues a year and each as many as 20 pages, Tim will have edited, designed, produced and distributed 38 issues or around 600 pages of local information with his final issue in December. Tim and his wife Kim have now completed building their new home in Leura after they and Tim's family lived for many years at *Sefton Cottage* in Mount Wilson. With their integration with their new community it has come time for Tim to hand over the editorship of *The Mounts*. Anyone who would like to be considered for the role is most welcome to contact Tim and/or me to inquire about the volunteer work. Tim's contact details: [timsgow@gmail.com](mailto:timsgow@gmail.com), 0412 133 559.

On behalf of the communities of Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine I offer my heartiest congratulations and thanks to Tim for the fantastic job he has done for all of us.

### **Richard Beattie**

President



### Truffles at Mt Irvine

Pictured below are Tasmanian perigord black truffles recently gathered from our copse of about 100 hazelnuts and oaks (or, grandly, the *truffiere*).



They were unearthed by a truffle dog which kept his nose to the ground for about four hours on a freezing Sunday. Sizes varied from marble to golf ball to medium potato and weighed in all about four kilograms. The seedling trees, impregnated with truffle spores, were from Tasmania. They were planted over ten years ago and have yielded splendid crops of hazelnuts but never before such an astonishing haul of truffles.

A friend anticipating a meal with one of these truffles sent the following :

Niki Segnit in *The Flavour of Truffles* tells us "Truffle and cooked cauliflower have a flavour overlap. David Rosengarten suggests enhancing the subtle truffle notes already present in a cauliflower risotto by shaving over truffle before serving. He describes the flavour of truffle as a combination of cheese, garlic, cauliflower and sex. Like sleeping with the green grocer, in other words".

**Minny and Henric Nicholas**

### 2016 Federal Election Result

Congratulations to Susan Templeman (Australian Labour Party) who won the Federal seat of Macquarie from Louise Markus (Liberal) .

As documented by the Australian Electoral Commission, the Two Candidate Preferred margin in Macquarie was 4,055 votes to Ms Templeman (52.22% to 47.78%).

For the record, 64 people voted at the Mt Wilson Village Hall: 31 (51.67%) for Ms Markus, 18 (30.0%) for Ms Templeman, 1 (1.67%) for the Animal Justice Party and 10 (16.67%) for The Greens.

Amongst the other parties that fielded a candidate for Macquarie, no votes were recorded at the Mt Wilson Village Hall for Shooters, Fishers and Farmers, Australian Liberty Alliance, Derryn Hinch's Justice Party, Liberal Democrats or Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group).

There were 4 (6.25%) informal votes.

# Traffic Chaos in The Mounts

Mt Wilson,  
3rd March 1903

Mark Foy Esq  
Medlow

Dear Sir,

The undersigned are residents of Mount Wilson and heard that you visited this locality in first instant with two motor cars.

We take this liberty, on behalf of the residents of Mt Irvine as well as our own, of pointing out to you that our roads are so narrow for the most part, vehicles can neither get into the bush nor turn them - that our horses are unused to motors and that hitherto ladies have not hesitated to drive without male assistance.

We feel sure you do not wish to cause either inconvenience or accident, but we regard the use of motors in these parts with so much apprehension that while there is a possibility of meeting these we would avoid travelling unless compelled to do so.

We would therefore ask any of you this favour to give us timely warning when you propose to come with motors on this side of Bell and suggest that you might send notice to the postmasters at Bell and Mt Wilson stating the day and the hours of this day on which you might be expected.

We are Dear Sir,

Yours truly

(signed)

Jesse Gregson                      *Yengo*                      Mt Wilson

James D Cox                      *Balangra*                      Mt Wilson

R J Slocum (?)

E K Brown    Mt Irvine

?? Cox

W K Brown

H B Morley

Chas Scrivener

Handwritten signatures and names of the residents mentioned in the letter, including Jesse Gregson, James D Cox, R J Slocum, E K Brown, W K Brown, H B Morley, and Chas Scrivener, along with their respective locations (Mt Wilson, Mt Irvine).



Ross Kelly has sent this recently received 1903 letter from a group of concerned residents of The Mounts. The letter was sent to Mark Foy, owner of the then recently built Hydro Majestic at Medlow Bath.

In summary, traffic chaos is not a new phenomena.

In the 113 years since this letter was written, it is fair to say that our concern for unchaperoned resident drivers of the female persuasion still remains undiminished.

Many thanks to Ross for so bravely transcribing the letter. The complete list of signatories remains somewhat illegible - can anyone help out here?

*Belle  
Mount*

Mount Wilson 3 March 1903

Mark Foy Esq  
Medlow

Dear Sir

The undersigned are residents of Mount Wilson and heard that you visited this locality on 1st instant with two motor cars.

We take the liberty on behalf of the residents of Mt Irvine as well as our own of pointing out to you that our roads are so narrow that for the most part vehicles can neither get into the bush nor turn on them that our houses are mixed to motors and that both to ladies have not hesitated to drive without male assistance.

We feel sure you do not wish to incur either inconvenience or accident but we regard the use of motors in these parts with so much apprehension that while there is any probability of meeting them we would avoid travelling unless compelled to do so.

We would therefore ask of you the favor to give us timely warning when you propose to come with motors on the side of Belle and Warragabal that you might send notices to the postmasters at Belle & Mt Wilson stating the day and the hours of the day on which you may be expected.

We are Dear Sir  
Yours truly  
James Pearson Esq, Mount Wilson  
James D. Ox Belangera Mount Wilson  
R. J. Hall E. J. Brown Mt Irvine  
B. J. Brown Chas. Brown

## Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine Rural Fire Brigade

### **Brigade AGM**

The Brigade held its AGM on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2016. David Howell opened the meeting and welcomed the 10 invited guests, including Louise Markus, the then Member for Macquarie, Trish Doyle, MLA for Blue Mountains, Councillors Don McGregor, Sarah Shrubbs and Michael Begg, and the 42 residents present at the meeting. David also thanked Barry Freeman who was standing down from the Executive this year. Barry has given outstanding service to the brigade including five years as Captain and, fortunately, will still continue as a Deputy.

RFS District Manager, David Jones, spoke of the commitment to humanity that motivates volunteers to contribute to the community and reported on developments in RFS and staff changes at District Office.

Ron Gavin, NSW Ambulance, thanked the Community First Responders for taking the 'scariness' out of calls to Mt Wilson/Mt Irvine as the CFRs are able to indicate precise directions and knowledge of the problem.

Captain, Beth Raines, reported that the brigade had been involved in 37 incidents this year (15 Motor Vehicle accidents, 7 CFR Calls, 4 fires or respond to smoke - Hordern Road Fire and Mt Tomah Fire, 4 searches or search and rescues, 2 storm/snow damage, 2 Hazard Reductions, 2 Tasmanian Deployments – Vic Zhukov and 1 Toban Patrolling).

We have 4 newly trained firefighters (Bruce Kerridge, Will Kerridge, Dion Morrison and Keith Ralston) and training continues successfully for the entire brigade under the guidance of Peter Church, West 3, and Graham Tribe, Training Officer.

The brigade has commissioned from Land & Property Information, Bathurst, a topographic map showing Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine at the centre (not split over 2 maps) and including details of fire trails, canyon routes, walking trails and hand tool lines (all correctly named) not available on the current topographic maps. Treasurer, Susie Hope, reported on the very healthy and well organised state of affairs of our accounts.

The following members had been nominated unopposed prior to the meeting and were confirmed in their positions:

<b>President*</b>	David Howell
<b>Vice President*</b>	Henric Nicholas
<b>Treasurer*</b>	Susie Hope
<b>Secretary*</b>	Judy Tribe
<b>Captain*</b>	Beth Raines
<b>Senior Deputy Captain*</b>	Peter Raines
<b>Deputy Captains</b>	Barry Freeman, David Howell, Peter Dempsey
<b>Training*</b>	Graham Tribe
<b>Community Engagement*</b>	Kathleen Oakes
<b>Catering*</b>	Lesley Wilson
<b>Committee Member*</b>	Elizabeth Montano
<b>Equipment*</b>	Stephen Dean
<b>Fire Trails</b>	Peter Dempsey, Vic Zhukov

Those marked \* will form the Executive Committee

In General Business, Elizabeth Montano reported on progress with Bowens Creek Emergency Access Route and thanked Councillor Don McGregor for his help with gaining support from Blue Mountains City Council. More work is required to gain support of Hawkesbury City Council and Hawkesbury District RFS (although Hawkesbury brigades have expressed support).

The land issue for Mt Wilson Station extension has been resolved and plans were on display at the meeting. The cost is estimated at \$300,000. Site and land consolidation will still need to be resolved for the Mt Irvine Station replacement.

The major brigade fundraiser for the year will be the Spring Blossom Festival to be held on 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Funds raised will go towards completion of the Mt Wilson Station extension and the new Mt Irvine Station. Don McGregor informed the meeting that the Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs) for Mt Wilson and Bell have been signed off, subject to RFS approval. Mt Irvine is more complicated because part is on land with threatened species.

The meeting closed and those present joined the Executive for wine and cheese.

### ***Bushfire Preparation 'Nudge' Campaign***

Each September the RFS holds 'Get Ready' weekend to remind those living in bushfire prone areas that the bushfire season is approaching and they need to be ready. We usually hold an event, such as workshops or property inspections, but the Council elections are on the same day (10<sup>th</sup> September) and they are not using the Village Hall for polling. As we do not know who will be here, our event for this year has had to go digital (hard copy to those without internet).

We all know that having a Bushfire Survival Plan is the only sensible, indeed essential, thing to do when living in a bushfire area. The problem is that in our busy lives it is always difficult to prioritise investment of our precious time in activities where the benefits are not immediate but rare or delayed. Just remember all those New Year resolutions about dieting, flossing and exercise!

To make preparing for bushfire as easy as possible we are going to break it down into 4 steps and over the next 4 weeks send you a weekly reminder, or 'nudge', to complete that week's tasks.

The 4 steps are:

- **Prepare** your property for the bushfire season
- **Discuss** your options for leaving **and** staying and what to do when bushfire threatens
- **Know** the bushfire alerts and how to recognise bushfire weather
- **Keep** key contacts and bushfire information sources handy

Obviously, Step 1 takes the most effort and a little more than a week and, indeed, is something we all must do all year round. That week's step will just be a reminder that bushfire season starts 1 October 2016. The other 3 steps do not require you actually being at Mt Wilson or Mt Irvine. They do not require you to leave home or even leave the comfort of your chair. They can easily be completed over a nice cup of tea and a homemade slice or while investigating a new wine and an interesting cheese. What could be easier? *[Ed: Mount Irvine folk could always rustle up a cauliflower and truffle risotto to ease the planning burden]*

If you have any questions, comments or would like to share photos of you and your family deep in bushfire preparation, send them to me or share them on our community Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MtWilsonMtIrvine>.

**Kathleen Oakes**

**Community Engagement Officer**

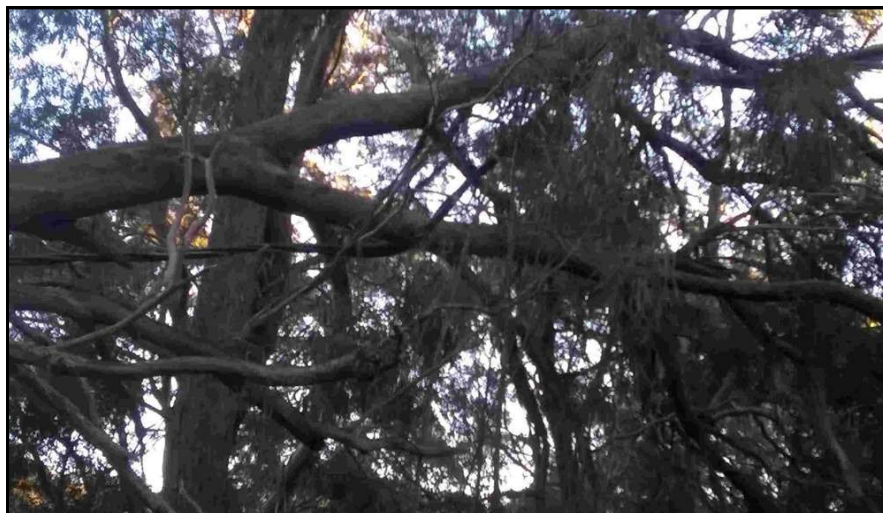
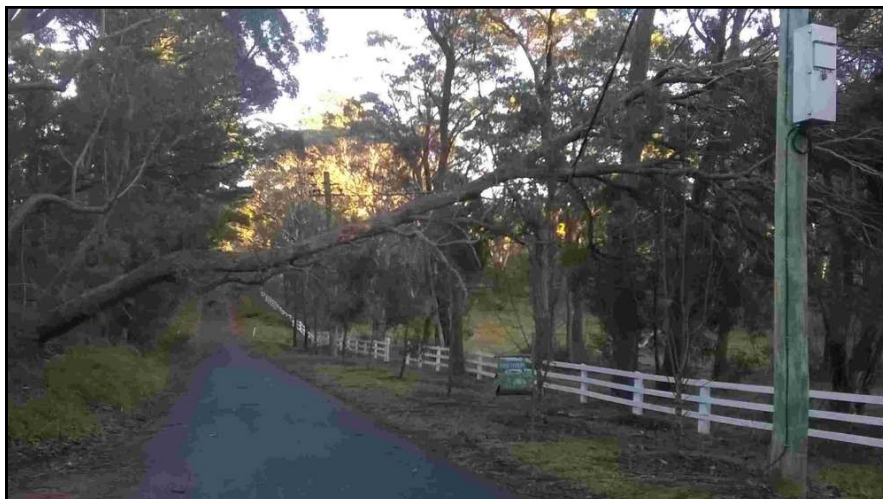


### The value of bundled cable ...

Following a period of intense rain, and then two days of howling winds, a large tree just inside the stone wall at *Hawthorn* fell across Wyndham Avenue in the evening of 21st June.

Remarkably, the tree did not hit the ground as it was held above the road at its crown, entirely supported by the bundled cable of the power lines on the far side of the road.

Not only did the cable remain intact with the initial force of impact, but the bundling held the tree clear of the road for almost two days before a Endeavour Energy crew came to Mt Wilson to clear with damage with the assistance of a huge crane.



**Book Review*****The Things We Keep***

Not as bad as the alternative...

I have, over the last few years, accumulated a number of books on dying, including Cory Taylor's memorable *Dying: a memoir*. I am not sure whether this is as a result of more such books being published or a growing area of interest; I prefer to think it is the former.

As an alternative I turned to a recently borrowed library book, *The Things We Keep* by Sally Hepworth. There were two good reasons not to read this book: it carries the unfortunate label of 'women's fiction' – whatever that may be – which does after all make it 'suitable' for at least 50% of the reading population, and the main focus seems to be on the effects of Alzheimer's disease.



Despite such inauspicious beginnings the book is well plotted with several memorable characters, and yes, they are women; or perhaps I should say female as one of them, Clementine, is a girl.

For various more-or-less credible reasons the central place for these characters is a nursing home; and one rather better than those I have had any dealings with. Despite such grim beginnings the novel is an interesting, and at times provocative, look at memory, the right to live as we please rather than as it may please others, what gives anyone's life meaning, how connections may be made and the importance of family.

There are deaths but there is also love, acceptance and hope. I surprised myself by enjoying this reading experience and certainly did not feel as though I had wasted my reading time, which is becoming increasingly precious!

**Alison Halliday**

**Post script to The Mounts, June 2016 article regarding Percy, the Pygmy Possum:**

As a result of the Sydney and Melbourne exhibitions for the NF Foundation (Neurofibromatosis Tumours in Children), two framed images of Percy were ordered and sold for \$495 each which means that nearly \$1,000 went to the foundation.

Well done Dianne!

# ATN\*

The column formerly known as "Ask the Neighbours"

So, Tim. We've survived another heady Election. It was close. Soooo close! And the behaviour of the opposition's candidates? Very disappointing, Tim. What with scares, counter-scares and double bluff scares with pike – it was all too confusing. But, there was triumph and, in the end, vindication, Tim.

What's that Tim? Our dear readers aren't aware of the behind the scenes machinations? No doubt that's because the Four Corners expose is yet to be screened. Well dear Readers and RAATs\*\* constituents – I can now advise that, following an exhaustive recount and the tireless work of our scrutineers and their Liquid Paper, we survived yet another attempted takeover of RAATS by those Bullies from a town not so far away. Let's just call it "town B".

I knew there would be trouble when we got those so-called innocent enquiries about eligibility for RAATS' membership. It wasn't just attempted branch stacking, Tim. They were trying to take over the whole tree. Just as well they hadn't twigged to the recent change to the RAATS Constitution which requires candidates for membership to not only provide original antechinus/ lyrebird/ wombat recipes but to also cook and eat them in Masterchef-like conditions.

It was brilliant multipurpose manoeuvring if I do say so myself: we got to prune back potential membership candidates as well as find new recipes for that Second Edition of *RAATS in the Rotisserie*. It really separated the mice from the RAATS, Tim. And, you were brilliant as head taster. Really – above and beyond the call of duty, especially with that subsequent stomach pumping thing.

And so, with the people having honoured us with another Term leading RAATS in our inimitable Pied Piper like way, we need to find more new and exciting things to do. Our Election promises don't give us much inspiration. Of necessity, our Election platform got whittled away quite a lot and we did have that warped splinter group which required me to ply the Electorate with non-core promises and to sacrifice most of the Platform to the pyre of pragmatism.

But enough wooden attempts at humour, Tim. This is serious. Once again, we must put our faith in the electorate and Ask the Neighbours what they'd like us to do in this our record fifth term as RAATS leaders.

And while we collate and filter the avalanche of feedback which is surely to come our way, we can get on with that part of our Platform which wasn't whiteanted. Yes - more hedonistic lifestyle content – more vacuous topics, such as lists of the 10 things we must:

- a. OWN for lasting happiness
- b. EAT to lose weight
- c. DO to stay young.

It's a challenge, Tim. But, as I always say, no one does trivial better than us here in the ATN Creative Department. And why is that? Because, we can plagiarise and repackage with the best of all the other originally creative wunderkinds out there in the dog eat dog world of lifestyle entertainment.

## Elizabeth M

Lifestyle Editor and RAATS President (again)

\* ATN Productions, a Subsidiary of Bread and Circuses (Cayman Islands) Limited.

\*\* RAATS - The Rural Anti Antechinus Training Service (for those whose memberships/ memories have lapsed. We still know who you are)

**Suggestions, comments or contributions warmly welcomed!**