

THE ILLAWARRA flame

Autumn 2026



Southern edition no. 9



Tide turns for surfer girls

Ruby's rise reflects their
place on the board

Meet Our Contributors



Tamara Hynd is the curator of Shellharbour City Museum which moved to a new contemporary facility at the Shellharbour Civic Centre in 2018. She loves history, heritage buildings and places, and is on the board of Museums and Galleries NSW.



Lesley Roulston is a writer who enjoys hearing the inspiring stories of the people of the Illawarra. She can be found walking her King Charles Spaniel most evenings around the Shellharbour Marina. Her interests include reading and listening to podcasts on health and ageing well.



Ken Magnus was born in Dubbo and moved to Sydney to complete a compositor apprenticeship. He worked in the printing industry for 54 years and joined the Lions in the 70s after watching a fundraiser for St Vincent's heart clinic. On retiring, he moved to Shellharbour where, after over 35 years as a Lion, he is still serving – currently as the Oak Flats media liaison.



Tyneesha Williams is a UOW journalism graduate. Born and raised in Central West NSW, Tyneesha fell in love with the Illawarra's stunning scenery and local community. She runs her own business, Neesh Photography, and in her spare time enjoys taking pictures, attending gigs and going to the beach.



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Next
 deadline is
 11 May for
 Winter

EDITORS Genevieve Swart, Marcus Craft
 CONTACT hello@theillawarraflame.com.au

Features Coordinator: Lesley Roulston, 0411 025 008, shellharbour@theillawarraflame.com.au

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NEXT EDITION Winter 2026

DEADLINE 11 May. Contributions welcome.

COVER Ruby Neill. Pic: Tyneesha Williams

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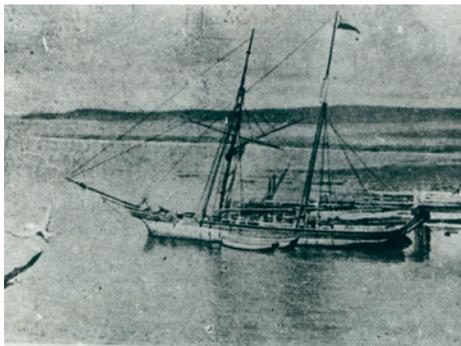
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-  (02) 4297 2285
-  PO Box 264, Shellharbour City Centre
-  Shop 244, Stockland Shellharbour, Shellharbour City Centre, NSW 2529



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Authorised by C.Berry, ALP, Shellharbour



Wreck of the Rangoon

By Tamara Hynd, curator of Shellharbour City Museum

There's a huge red anchor outside the Ocean Beach Hotel at Shellharbour. Most people probably don't know its history, or why it's there.

It belonged to the 374-ton, three-masted timber barque *Rangoon*, built in England in the 1850s, the property of Messrs Smith and Lindsay.

In March 2026, it will be 156 years since the ship was wrecked.

The *Rangoon* left Melbourne on 9 March 1870, in ballast, bound for Newcastle to load coal. For several days she was caught in a storm, forcing the crew to take down the sails.

On Tuesday 22 March at 2.30am, land was faintly spotted through thick fog. It is probable the captain confused the entrance to Minnamurra River for Kiama Harbour. (Kiama Lighthouse would not be built for another 17 years.)

The barque struck rock about 3am as a south-easterly gale forced her into rocks forming part of Stack Island. Captain Sayers and crew spent a terrifying night, battered by sea and rain.

In the early hours of the morning, Captain Samuel Charles, while assessing storm damage caused to his Minnamurra property, raised the alarm after he discovered the ship's crew, who were trying to salvage goods and repair the vessel.

In the meantime, the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company was engaged in the rescue effort and two boats were brought overland by dray for the rescue.

The Kiama boat was manned by Captain Smith of the *Numba*, and crews from *Numba*, *Dairymaid*, and *Agenoria*. These three ships and crew had spent the night sheltering from the dreadful storm at Shellharbour Harbour.

The Shellharbour rescue boat was manned by Captain William Wilson, and was kept at the rear, as a reserve in case the worst happened.

The rescue boats launched into the river about 3pm. The Kiama rescue boat struggled through the

breakers, but somehow managed to make it to the river side of the island. Half the crew were picked up and then the arduous task of navigating the strong current at the mouth of the river began. For a long time, it appeared the boat was going nowhere but, inch by inch, they eventually made it.

Then, they had to do it all again.

Once on shore, the crew of 10 were taken to Shellharbour, and cared for by Mrs Baxter, Mr Aitken, Robert Wilson, and his son, Captain William Wilson, who had coordinated the rescue.

William was born to Robert and Mary Wilson in Suffolk, England in 1835. His father was later transported to Australia as a convict, serving his sentence in the Illawarra. William followed him to Australia in the 1850s, with his sister, Emma. They settled at Shellharbour, where their father operated a store and established a flour mill. Wilson Street, Shellharbour, is named in their honour.

William became a sea captain and master mariner of several ships and was a figure of much importance in seafaring life in Shellharbour.

In 1864, William married Emma Pike of Kiama. William and Emma had nine children, two of whom died young (one at one month, the other at 10 years). The family lived at Shellharbour, near the harbour, on the site of today's Ocean Beach Hotel. The *Rangoon* anchor was placed at this site to mark the role Captain Wilson played in the rescue effort.

The *Rangoon* broke up over several weeks. Much of the material was salvaged. In fact, the home of the McCabe family who lived at Addison Street, Shellharbour, was partly built from its planks.

After the wreck of the ship that stormy night in 1870, Stack Island became locally known as Rangoon Island.

Visit Shellharbour City Museum's website at discovershellharbour.recollect.net.au 🌟

Million-dollar man paraglides to beat polio

By Lesley Roulston



Berry Rotary member Ken Hutt was recently awarded an OAM for dedication to community service. For the past 12 years, he has been working with International Rotary to help fulfil their mission to eradicate polio across the globe.

What sets Ken apart is the unique way he raises funds for the cause: he paraglides off some of the world's highest peaks.

Ken said he became fascinated with paragliding after mountaineering with a man who paraglided off a peak to get back down. Ken started paragliding himself and found it a newsworthy

angle to help with fundraising efforts for polio.

Climbing Mount Everest has been done many times, he said, but paragliding off mountains was unique. So far, paragliding has helped him to raise more than \$1 million towards polio eradication.

In 2014, Ken climbed to the top of Mt Cho Oyu in Tibet – the world's sixth highest mountain – and paraglided back to base camp. In 2022, he made headlines with his plan to be the first man to paraglide off Mount Everest.

The journey was documented by filmmaker Joe Carter, who produced the film *Fly from Everest* about Ken and his Mount Everest expedition. Unfortunately, Ken developed severe pneumonia at camp 2 so he could not complete the climb.

He said that, even though he didn't get to paraglide from Mount Everest, more than \$250,000 was still raised for polio eradication.

Ken takes trekkers to Mount Everest base camp each year and aims to return next year.

Although Australia was declared polio free back in 2000, the disease is still endemic in Pakistan and Afghanistan, so much of Rotary's effort is focused there. Ken hopes that in another five to seven years, the disease will be eradicated globally. ✨

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Aunty Lindy received an Outstanding Contribution to Reconciliation ward, at the 2025 regional NAIDOC awards



'Widely loved' Yuin Elder honoured

By Genevieve Swart

The "extraordinary resilience" of Yuin Elder Aunty Lindy Lawler, a survivor of the Stolen Generations, has been recognised in parliament.

"Aunty Lindy is highly respected across the Illawarra," the federal Member for Whitlam, Carol Berry, said in a Community Recognition Statement in February.

"Aunty Lindy has endured great hardship in her life, enduring emotional turmoil and abuse after she and her twin sister were stolen from their parents when they were only five months old.

"Aunty Lindy and her identical twin sister were born in David Berry Memorial Hospital, at Berry, on the New South Wales South Coast, in December 1958. In May 1959, their parents were told to take the twins back to the hospital for a check-up, and, when they returned, the girls were gone.

"When they were 18, the sisters were able to meet their mother for the first time.

"Aunty Lindy never got to meet her father."

Today Aunty Lindy is renowned for her leadership, efforts to promote healing and her incredible community service. She has supported the Illawarra Women's Health Centre, Illawarra Aboriginal Medical Service, Shellharbour Council, the United Koori Social Club and the Wollongong Cultural Centre. Aunty Lindy has led Aboriginal art and weaving workshops at local schools, such as Oak Flats High, and Balarang Public. Last year, in a short film with the NSW Department of Education, she said she wanted to give students the chance to learn what she could not as a child: Aboriginal culture, history and language.

Ms Berry told parliament that Aunty Lindy was "widely loved and admired", and thanked her for her service. 🌟

Back to school, with big year ahead

By Chris Klein, principal of Shellharbour Public School

Welcome back to the 2026 school year. Our year has started exceptionally well, with our students quickly settling into their classes with their new teachers and engaging in quality learning tasks.

It is exciting for me to return to Shellharbour Public School after relieving at another school for two years. Immediately, I am reminded of the rich sense of community here and the incredible connection and genuine partnership between the school and its community. There is a real sense of optimism and enthusiasm across the school as we look ahead to all that 2026 has in store.

This year promises to be filled with rich educational opportunities and engaging sporting events that will allow our students to learn, grow and shine. From classroom achievements to time spent representing our school in various competitions, there will be many moments that celebrate both effort and success. We are committed to ensuring every child is supported and challenged to achieve their personal best.

It has been especially heartwarming to meet our new Kindergarten students and their families. Our youngest learners have made a fantastic start to their school journey, settling in beautifully and already embracing school life with smiles and confidence. I look forward to watching them grow in independence, skills and friendships throughout the year.

We are also delighted to welcome several new staff members to our school. They bring fresh ideas, enthusiasm and experience, and we warmly welcome them into our school family.

I am confident that 2026 will be a rewarding, successful and memorable year for everyone at Shellharbour Public School. 🌟



Principal Chris Klein

Follow the Yellow Rock Road upgrade

The rural road is having a major makeover



Carol Berry MP and Shellharbour City Mayor Chris Homer at the Feb 13 ceremony.

Construction has begun on the Yellow Rock Road upgrade in Tullimbar, with Member for Whitlam Carol Berry MP and Shellharbour City Mayor Chris Homer pitching in at a ground-breaking ceremony on 13 February.

Cleary Bros has been appointed to deliver the

works, which will improve Yellow Rock Road between the Illawarra Highway and Araluen Terrace, helping increase road safety and pedestrian access.

The project will widen over 600 metres of Yellow Rock Road and include new kerb and guttering. The road will be re-graded, with more car parking spaces added and better stormwater infrastructure and lighting. Intersections will be upgraded and access points added, with provisions to encourage active transport such as building a pedestrian refuge and creating a shared path.

New signage and line marking will also be installed. The project is funded through the Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program and Roads to Recovery program, with \$8.15 million in federal funding, supported by \$2.75m from Shellharbour City Council.

Ms Berry said the upgrade was a “significant investment in local safety and liveability” and would make “a real difference to safety and traffic flow”.

For updates, visit letschatshellharbour.com 🌟

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McKenzie Lawrence, soprano | John Martin, piano
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How to get out of the way and let the art flow

By Lesley Roulston

Cheryl Cattarin had not so much picked up a paintbrush since high school when she found herself in front of an easel. Art wasn't even on the radar.

"I had the belief I wasn't capable of doing art," the meditation and reiki instructor says, after being told in high school that her art "was okay but not very good".

When her daughter invited her to an intuitive art class in 2016, Cheryl loved the process, discovering the unstructured genre complemented her meditative practices perfectly.

Now she teaches intuitive art, running wellbeing workshops using her meditation skills to help participants unlock creativity.

"It's a nice way of helping people relax without them really noticing they are doing it," she says.

Once people feel relaxed, creativity follows. Intuitive art is about free expression, not working within genre parameters. It's a free-flowing process.

Cheryl often runs her intuitive art workshops at

the Imaginarium in Shellharbour Village. Self-discovery naturally follows when participants are creating from the heart.

"One lady who took one of my workshops painted a beach scene," Cheryl says. "She didn't realise throughout that was what she was painting, but by the end when the work was complete, she wasn't surprised the process had taken her in that direction as it was her intention to live by the beach in the future."

"Intuitive art is a developing process. Working with acrylic and ink, the result is a fluid, slow-moving art piece. Wet ink on a canvas – move it around so it creates an image. Lines forming on a canvas can then turn the work into something completely different."

Cheryl is a member of The Shellharbour City Arts Society. Her work will be part of the Shellharbour City Art Society Exhibition at the Old Fire Station in Kiama, from April 30 to May 6.

Follow @cheryl_cattarin_art on Instagram. 🌸

understorey.com.au Scan for more info

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Artworks by Cheryl Cattarin



Congrats to successful citizens

By Genevieve Swart

Shellharbour's top citizens in 2026 are a rugby league referee celebrated for promoting grassroots sport and a young rural ambassador, who is also a karate mentor, from Albion Park.

Citizen of the Year Jarrad Borg was honoured for transforming the refereeing landscape as president of the South Coast Group 7 Referees Association, which has had record growth under his leadership.

Young Citizen of the Year Tahlia Bonanno has supported local shows (and won awards for poultry showing), volunteered for Convoy and served as vice president of The Ag Group (TAG), inspiring youth involvement in agriculture, all while competing at elite levels in karate.



The 2026 local heroes who embody the spirit of Shellharbour were announced at council's Community and Australia Day Awards on 16 January at Shellharbour Civic Centre.

Stand Up Paddle Boarding Shellharbour owner Rebecca Dunning was named Athlete of the Year after winning national titles, including the Open Women's SUP surfing crown. All-rounder Imogen Moore – who excels at surf lifesaving, athletics, AFL and hockey – won Young Athlete of the Year.

Oak Flats Swimming Club life member Boris Baraldi was awarded for his services to sport. Long-time Landcare worker Ruth Jenkins was named Volunteer of the Year.

President of Roo Theatre Company Renee Brighton was recognised for her outstanding contribution to the arts; the community capacity builder award went to Shellharbour Surf Lifesaving Club and Shellharbour Hospital Auxiliary won community group of the year. The Illawarra Star Strikers Ten Pin Bowling Club, a long-running team of 12 bowlers, all living with varying disabilities, were awarded for their outstanding contribution to diversity and inclusion. 🌟



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Tide turns for surfer girls

By Tyneesha Williams



Ruby Neill with her parents,
Ashleigh and Grant. Photos:
Tyneesha Williams

The tide is turning on a long-held tradition of male-dominated elite Australian surfing as success stories continue to evolve among the Illawarra's youngest athletes, including a growing cohort of girls from Kiama Downs.

"Our girls have just been on fire," says Hayden Bombaci, president of Jones Beach Boardriders. "Over the last three, four years, you can see that focus around the girls really owning their own space, certainly in our southern boardriders down here."

Throughout the season, a strong group of

stand-out girls from Jones Beach Boardriders have taken the win at a number of events. "Jones girls" – such as Alice Hodgson (under 18s) becoming the first girl to win the club's annual Robbo's Round competition (against women and men of all ages) last year and 16-year-old Lani Cairncross taking first place (under 18s) and third place (Open) at Tasmania's Red Herring Pro-Am in January – are making their small community proud.

"Everyone's really loving watching them surf and you see them all stoked for each other, and it's good to see that they've got that competitive nature in

the water as well as being kind to each other,” Hayden says.

“It’s not just the girls, either. It’s pushing the lads to check themselves. It’s not the old school view from 20 years ago; the girls are ripping the boys back.”

Thirteen-year-old Kiama Downs talent Ruby Neill is at the forefront of this shift. The Illawarra Sports High School student has been carving out a name for herself on the national stage, achieving an impressive equal third-place finish in her first Australian Junior Surfing Titles in December – a feat made possible by her personal dedication and changing attitudes toward girls in surfing.

“Back in the day, the sport was very different,” says Ashleigh Neill, Ruby’s mother.

“The girls surfed in bikinis, and you hear the stories of Layne Beachley and all that. Culturally, it’s definitely changing. Now it’s all about the athleticism behind it. It’s seen as a sport with a real career path.”

Ruby’s trajectory began early when she hit the water on a foamie at just four years old. Both of her parents grew up competing in local sports, father Grant having surfed Illawarra beaches since he was a teenager. Ashleigh grew up in Kiama playing touch football with no interest in surfing, but eventually hit the waves to enjoy the activity in family mode.

“Ruby is surfing seven days a week – just every single day, and that promotes a healthy lifestyle,” Grant says.

“She’s eating healthier because of it, she’s training harder. We surf, we live close to the beach, she and her friends and the community surf – it’s just a sense of community that keeps her surfing.”

Ruby’s love of the sport and athletic drive led to her being selected as one of 13 girls nationwide for Talent UNLSHD, the Surfing Australia high performance program. The program will provide elite pathways, including trips to the High Performance Centre in Queensland, funded by Surfing Australia and the government.

“I like how I can go surfing with all of my mates, and it’s just a good thing to bring us all together,” Ruby says.

“I just find it so peaceful. When I go surfing, it just takes all my stress away from school and stuff, and it’s just fun.”

For Ruby and her peers, these impressive podium finishes start with inclusive connections made through boardriding groups. Girls aren’t a minority among Ruby’s clubmates at Jones Beach Boardriders; they’re a supportive group of thriving athletes.

“The level of coaching and support the local boardriders give them is incredible,” Ashleigh says.

“There’s no rivalry or comparison culture there.

They’ll be competing in a heat and then next minute they’re all wrestling and hugging on the beach saying ‘well done’. It’s a really positive environment that’s building a generation of young, confident women.”

Beyond technical and competitive achievements, the sport is providing young people with vital life skills. A member of both Jones Beach Boardriders and Southbridge Boardriders, Ruby is a multi-talented athlete, competing in OzTag and League Tag, which complements the physical and mental demands of the surf. Looking ahead, she is eager to dive back into competition, with plans to return to the Ocean Queen Classic in Woonona in March.

“Ruby’s developed a lot of resilience through being involved in so many competitive sports – especially in a sport like surfing where you lose more than you win. She’s got a lot more confidence in herself, very resilient and a good sense of belonging,” Ashleigh says.

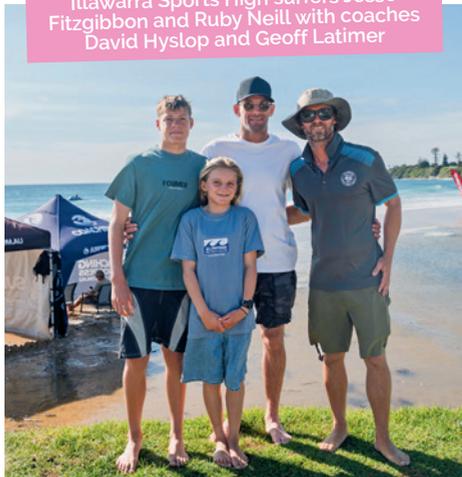
As a surf parent, Ashleigh’s proudest moments don’t always involve a trophy. She is proudest when Ruby demonstrates the sportsmanship that her sporting culture has instilled in her.

“To be honest, we’re proud every time she comes out of the water and she’s happy with how she’s gone in herself. That is when I’m most proud, regardless of the result,” says Ashleigh.

“If she comes off the beach and she’s hugging all the other girls and congratulating them all... that makes me so proud because I know she’s having fun and enjoying what she’s doing.”

Keep up with @jonesbeachboardriders on Facebook and Instagram. Follow Ruby’s journey on Instagram @rubz.neill 🌟

Illawarra Sports High surfers Jesse Fitzgibbon and Ruby Neill with coaches David Hyslop and Geoff Latimer





You are being sustainably served

By Lesley Roulston

A new meal-delivery service allows customers to save time and spare the planet.

The Loop Kitchen, founded by Canadian-born Veronique Robin, is focussed on sustainability while delivering high-quality meals to people.

“Before starting The Loop Kitchen, I worked with elderly clients who would receive regular delivery meals,” Veronique says.

“I couldn’t help but notice the amount of waste associated with these meals. The plastic, the throwaway containers – it was a lot.

“I have always loved cooking and helping people and I am passionate about doing what I can to reduce waste and help the planet, so I decided to start researching a more sustainable way to provide these meals.”

Veronique came up with The Loop Kitchen – fresh, healthy meals in reusable packaging.

“I don’t use any single-use plastics,” she says.

Her meals are delivered in a cardboard esky made from compacted recycled materials and the

meal boxes come from a company called Replated in Sydney.

“They are made from ocean-bound plastic,” she says. “That means the materials for the containers are sourced from plastics found within a 50km radius of the ocean and have been saved from being swept into the ocean.

“I also use jars for snacks and soups and repurpose water bottles to use as ice bricks. Labels are all made from recycled cardboard. Single-use plastic is not used in the packaging at all.”

Veronique’s weekly menus feature a choice of three meals, plus snacks.

“Meals are cooked in line with the seasons,” she says. “In winter I will be featuring soup.”

Meals can be collected from her home in Barrack Heights or from The Source Bulk Foods in Shell Cove. The Loop Kitchen delivers to postcodes 2527, 2528, 2529, 2502 and 2506.

[0420 505 535](tel:0420505535) or [The Loop Kitchen website](https://www.theloopkitchen.com.au). ✨

Fresh to market

By Lesley Roulston



Food, fun and friendship are what you will find at the Kiama Farmer’s Market each Wednesday. The community is dedicated, turning out in support of farmers and businesses while stocking up on seasonal fruit and vegetables, meats, dairy, eggs, artisan breads, honey and more.

Join the crowd on the grass overlooking the surf, enjoying a picnic of street foods, freshly squeezed lemonade, pizza, Gozleme, dumplings, donuts and other delights. The farmers market is on every Wednesday 2–6pm (outside of daylight-saving hours) at Coronation Park Surf Beach, Kiama. ✨

New digs for possums!

By Jennifer Kay, a volunteer rescuer with WIRES Illawarra

Hot days in summer and autumn can cause problems for our wildlife who cannot always find suitable trees for shelter. Many animals are forced to shelter in nooks and crannies of houses and buildings. Hot roofs, particularly corrugated iron, are not suitable for animals on hot days.

WIRES attended many rescues over the holiday season for heat-stressed possums who had been residing in unsuitable locations. These possums, weak and severely dehydrated, required days in care, receiving hydration and rest to regain their strength.

Fortunately for the possums, WIRES Illawarra, has an enthusiastic supporter who generously donates his time to help possums find new digs!

Meet arborist George Wilkinson, who spent many hours installing possum boxes as new homes for possums. This was possible with materials donated by Bunnings, and skilful construction by members of local Men's Sheds, who supplied possum boxes for free, ready to be installed.

Do you have a possum residing in your roof?

It is illegal and inhumane to trap and/or relocate possums. Removing them from their area and releasing them elsewhere, even into suitable habitat such as bushland, is a death sentence for possums as they are a territorial species. Advice must be sought from licensed authorities, such as WIRES, and any removal and relocation undertaken as a last resort. Contact the WIRES Rescue Office on 1300 094 737 if you have possums residing in your home and wish to request a possum box and help with humane relocation.

This is a free service. Information can also be found on the website www.wires.org.au/wires-news/possum-in-your-roof-heres-how-to-help

Become a possum protector

The Illawarra is home to several species of possums but the two you are most likely to encounter are the Eastern Ringtail Possum and the Common Brushtail Possum. Both are nocturnal but there are significant differences between them. Information about them can be found on our website (see below), which also provides information on how to build suitable possum nesting boxes.

The challenges these possums face, such as habitat loss and urbanisation, make it crucial for us to step in as protectors of their well-being. You can help support possum conservation by providing artificial homes and advocating for habitat preservation. It is important to take care of our wildlife, who take care of us, because they play a vital role in the ecological and biological processes that are essential to life.

Visit www.wires.org.au/species-information/possums ✨



George installing a Brushtail Possum box



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Electrify and save

By Denise Aubourg of Electrify Illawarra

There's a lot of talk about rising power prices – but here's the part that often gets missed. According to the latest Residential Electricity Price Trends report from the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC), households that electrify can significantly cut their total energy bills – and most upgrades pay for themselves in less than 10 years.

The AEMC forecasts electricity prices will continue to rise over the decade. But electricity prices are a piece of the puzzle. The real story sits in what the AEMC calls the "energy wallet" – the total cost of electricity, gas and petrol combined. On that measure, electrification is a clear winner.

Modelling shows that households that go all in – replacing gas with electric appliances, switching to an EV, and installing solar and a battery – can reduce their annual energy costs by as much as 90%. I've seen this play out in my own home.

We don't have gas, so we started with rooftop solar, taking advantage of the long-running federal rebate scheme. The annual savings of \$1600 recovered the upfront cost of the system within three years. Two years later, we replaced our diesel car, capitalising on the short-lived NSW EV rebate and a wave of more affordable, longer-range models. Charging mostly from our solar panels – and with lower maintenance costs – we save about another \$2200 a year.

The house battery was a trickier decision because of the higher upfront cost. But when the Federal Government introduced the Cheaper Home Batteries program, we took the plunge. It's given us more energy independence and further reduced what we draw from the grid. I'm curious to see the first electricity bill after the battery install. And there's still the tempting NSW Virtual Power Plant (VPP) incentive to claim if/when we decide which Virtual Power Plant to join.

The AEMC's modelling backs up what many households are discovering firsthand.

The annual savings made from electrifying gas appliances typically covers the cost in about seven years. Solar in around six. Batteries in roughly seven. And apparently the payback period is quicker if you can manage to do it all at once. Electrification isn't just about emissions anymore. It's increasingly a smart financial decision.

Electrify Illawarra will have a stand at:

- Saturday, 14 March 10am-2pm, Climate Action Week event at the Science Centre, UOW Innovation Campus
- Sunday, 29 March, 10am-2pm, Greenfest Sustainability Expo by Corrimal Rotary at Corrimal High School. ✨

Good luck keeping up with the Jones' mob

By Tyneesha Williams

For more than 40 years, the Jones Beach Boardriders Club (JBB) has shown how a friendly, small-town community can produce fiercely competitive, world-class talent.

This summer, the small club continued to dominate national competition as members of all ages brought medals back to Kiama Downs.

"We're the underdogs and we can take it to these big clubs, these Queensland clubs, and win," club president Hayden Bombaci says.

"But you can also have that transparency, that awareness and that softness between each other to build those connections, to make it a collaborative and inclusive sport."

Hayden grew up in Kiama Downs and joined the group at age 10, eager to follow in the footsteps of his older brother, Reece, who achieved success as a professional surfer. Despite his club leadership role and 26 years of experience, Hayden says the ocean remains the ultimate teacher.

JBB welcomes 150-200 members each year, offering an intergenerational social web that connects inspiring masters of the sport such as Brett Connellan, Matt Thompson, Joel Trist and Bruce Flint with junior talent performing on the national stage such as Alice Hodgson, Lennox Lindsay, Ruby Neill and Lani Cairncross.

"We're just different generations and different

jobs, but surfing is the one thing that brings us together," Hayden says.

The club holds nine competitive events a year, running from February to November, including the South Coast Cup, which welcomes clubs from Bondi to the southern NSW border in May 2026. Members have the developmental support to compete for national and international titles, such as Lennix Smith, who earned equal third at WSL World Junior Championships in the Philippines in January.

Membership for the Jones Beach Boardriders typically runs through the peak surfing months, with events hosted at Jones Beach in partnership with the local surf lifesaving club.

Facebook @jonesbeachboardriders 🌟



Lions never stop volunteering

By Ken Magnus of Oak Flats Lions Club

Readers of *The Flame* would be well aware of this year's devastating bushfires in South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales, and the flooding rains in North Queensland. How could anyone not have seen the images on television, heard on the radio or read in the newspapers just how bad our fellow Australians have suffered.

Lions Clubs across Australia were asked to chip in financially to help those areas affected and Oak Flats Lions members decided unanimously that our club should donate a sizable sum of money towards disaster relief and recovery for the affected communities.

Funds put aside by Oak Flats Lions Club are generated through the barbecues we hold at Bunnings Shellharbour every second and fourth Wednesday each month and through sales from the donation of books, DVDs and Blu-rays at our



Bookshop in Oak Flats.

Readers can support us by taking advantage of our 'Special Offer' where novels by popular authors are available for \$3 each or four for \$10. We have thousands of novels, including many Australian authors, on the shelves.

Please don't hesitate to ask our friendly volunteers for advice. You will also find more than 1000 top-quality childrens' books, starting at \$1 each, plus hundreds of children's DVDs.

Find us at 59a Central Avenue, Oak Flats, open Monday to Friday 9am-4pm, Saturdays 9am-1pm.

You can also pick up extra copies of *The Flame* and if you missed out on buying a Lions Xmas Cake or pudding, they are also available to purchase in the shop.

Please let our volunteers know that you read about us in *The Flame*. 🌟



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