

Summer
2024/25

NEWSLETTER

Community Bank Braidwood, Bungendore and Crookwell



BRAIDWOOD LIONS 2024 YOUNG WRITERS FESTIVAL

The Braidwood Lions 2024 Young Writers Festival Awards presentation was a heartwarming and memorable occasion, held at the Braidwood National Theatre. Sponsored by Community Bank Braidwood, the event celebrated the extraordinary creativity of young writers in our community, bringing together families, friends, and supporters of the arts. This year's festival attracted an outstanding 381 entries, with 26 talented finalists recognised on the night. Their joy was palpable as they received accolades for their exceptional stories, now published in a beautiful book launched during the event.

The event held a special significance as it marked the final community engagement for our esteemed Director, Di Izzard, who delivered an inspiring speech during the ceremony. Di reflected on the power of creative expression, sharing heartfelt encouragement with the young writers. Her resignation from the Board, announced shortly before the event, adds a bittersweet note to her speech as she bids farewell to her role after years of dedicated service.

The success of the festival was a collaborative effort, thanks to the incredible young entrants, the brilliant judges who undertook the difficult task of selecting the finalists, and the generous sponsors, including Community Bank Braidwood.

We are honoured to have supported this event and are inspired by the budding talent within our community. Congratulations to all the entrants, finalists, and organisers for an unforgettable celebration of storytelling. Our deepest thanks also go to Di for her commitment and contributions, leaving a lasting legacy in our community.



MESSAGE FROM THE COMPANY MANAGER

As 2024 draws to a close, I would like to take a moment to reflect on what has been a good year for Community Bank Braidwood, Bungendore, and Crookwell. Our Annual General Meeting in November was a great success, bringing together shareholders, the Board, community members, and our dedicated team to reflect on our achievements and discuss plans for the future. It was a proud moment to highlight the many ways we have made a difference this year, from funding key projects to supporting local events and celebrating the stories that make our community so unique.



From a financial perspective, we are pleased with the steady progress we have made. Our strong performance ensures that we can continue reinvesting in the communities we serve, creating lasting benefits for years to come.

As the holiday season approaches, I want to acknowledge the hard work of our staff, Board, and volunteers who contribute so much to our success. Thank you for your dedication and passion. To our customers and community members, we are deeply grateful for your continued support; it is through your trust and engagement that we can achieve our goals.

I hope everyone takes the opportunity to enjoy a well-deserved break as the year ends. Whether you celebrate this time with family, friends, or simply some quiet moments, may it be a season of rest and joy.

As we look to 2025, we are setting ambitious goals and look forward to working together to create more positive outcomes for our communities. Wishing you all a safe and happy holiday season and a bright start to the New Year!

Craig Pettit, Company Manager

2024/25 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Garry Cook (Chair)
Dale Towell (Deputy Chair)
Rhyll Tozer (Treasurer)
Shane Holness
Richard Elliott
Andrew Callan
Craig Hinder
Alex Rofe

(also pictured staff members
Jess D'Arcy, Craig Pettit, Nick Fry and
Susi Pluess)



SUN SHINES ON BRAIDWOOD YARNING CIRCLE

A crowd of around 120 were blessed with perfect weather in Ryrie Park, Braidwood on Sunday 8 December for the celebration of the Braidwood Yarning Circle. Part of The Yarning Circle's history is the Come Together Braidwood weekend held in 2022. Sheelagh Noonan, Julia Green and Roger James had very positive feedback from the community, with the wish for 2 Fires Festival to continue facilitating conversations or yarning, about indigenous presence in the Braidwood region. Uncle Noel Butler, a Budawang elder of Yuin country spoke of the importance of the Yarning Circle, as a focal point for indigenous people to come to Braidwood and feel



welcome. Uncle Noel didn't perform a Welcome to Country, as he believes this country holds and unifies all people who inhabit it. Four generations of family entranced the appreciative crowd with their traditional dance. The event was completed with a moving smoking ceremony which enabled all present to connect to themselves and the land where they stood. Julia Green spoke to the background and context of the Yarning Circle. Julia has been involved in the indigenous stream of the Two Fires Festival since coming to Braidwood 13 years ago. 'Almost ten years after the unveiling of the Dhurga Rock in Ryrie Park, it is fitting & timely for us to welcome the new Yarning Circle. The need for seating close by the Rock has been clear for many years, and Two Fires & Come Together Braidwood initiated the Yarning Circle project to meet this need.

The Yarning Circle is also inspired by Walbunga Elder the late Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison, who often spoke with us about the importance of talking together so we can walk together to create a better future. The timing of our ceremony on today is also close to the anniversary of his sad death on 11th December 2021. I pay special tribute to Uncle Max today. He shared his wisdom and cultural knowledge with us over many years, as the Indigenous Elder for Two Fires Festivals since they began in 2005. Those of us who knew and loved him, live with the sadness of his passing. I also pay tribute to a local white fella elder, the late Jack Featherstone. A strong supporter of Indigenous rights and Two Fires Festival events, and a close friend of Uncle Max. I'm sure Jack is here with us today in spirit. We can only imagine the powerful words he would have share with us about the importance of the Yarning Circle.

In the process of planning the Yarning Circle, one of us had the bright idea of contacting the local Men's Shed.

The beautiful benches making up the Yarning Circle were made with skill & dedication by Noel Shepherd and our local Men's Shed. How lucky we are to have them!

Time will tell how the Braidwood Yarning Circle finds its place in our community. As well as seeing the circle of benches as a beautiful addition to Ryrie Park, we expect the benches to be used as much by visitors as by locals. They are here for anyone to have a yarn!

Judith Nangala Crispin, a poet and visual artist living and working on Yuin/Walbunga country near Braidwood, spoke of the Yarning Circle as a safe space for indigenous and local gatherings, particularly at a time when looking at heritage is so much part of our journey.

Judith is a descendent of the Bpangerang people from the Murray River, and acknowledges Celtic, European and African family heritage. Judith claims no cultural authority and does not speak for any nation, tribe or clan. Her views are entirely her own. She is a proud member of FNAWN (First Nations of Australia Writers Network) and Oculi collective. Judith the author of two poetry collections. Her 3rd collection will be published by Puncher & Wattmann in June 2025.

The crowd appreciated hearing Judith read her Blake Poetry Prize 2020 winning poem 'On Finding Charlotte in the Anthropological Record'.

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SUN SHINES ON BRAIDWOOD YARNING CIRCLE

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Keith Potger also added to the spirit of the day, by leading the crowd, singing his song written for the event. Thanks were given to the contributors and supporters of this significant space in Braidwood: The Community Bank Braidwood for their generous funding to enable the Yarning Circle to happen; Noel Shepherd and the Men's Shed for their commitment and hard work in sourcing, cutting and fabricating the logs; Phil Shoemark for his much needed expertise and help when it was needed to install the circle; Robert Crombie for inscribing the BYC wording into the logs so beautifully, a very difficult job; QPRC management and staff, for supporting this project from the outset; Local Businesses for displaying our poster in order to promote the event; and General Community Support. A Plaque will be installed next year acknowledging the above.

*Sheelagh Noonan
President, 2 Fires Festival 2024*

CELEBRATING A YEAR AS CERTIFIED SOCIAL TRADERS



It's been nearly a year since we became certified Social Traders, aligning with our mission "to be a substantial, sustainable, community-built business that contributes to community prosperity." We are incredibly proud to dedicate the majority of our profits back to the community, helping to make a real difference where it matters most.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A SHAREHOLDER?

If you are looking to support your community while investing locally, consider purchasing shares in **Palerang Financial Services Ltd.**

To register your interest or learn more, please contact us at admin@pfs.com.au or visit this website:

<https://www.bendigobank.com.au/branch/nsw/community-bank-braidwood-districts/lvm-shares>

By becoming a shareholder, you play a vital role in contributing to the prosperity of our community.

Palerang Financial Services Ltd

MEET OUR TEAM: MARTIN GLOVER

Customer Service Officer, Braidwood Branch



Welcome to the Team Martin! Could you tell us a little about your career journey so far and what inspired you to join the Braidwood Community Bank team?

I started in banking in 1983 with one of the majors, so am returning to where I was 40 odd years ago. Starting out as a teller I moved into lending fairly quickly and have been involved in that side of the banking business since then, working with banks, mortgage managers, and then in third party banking (brokers) for the last 16 years. I recently turned a significant age and was looking to move into semi-retirement, but then decided I needed something to do to avoid all the jobs around the house. As banking is what I know best, I spoke to Craig and found out coincidentally that they were looking for some new staff. Having lived in Braidwood for a few years now I was aware of the good work the Bank does and so was keen to join an organisation that is very much part of the community.

How has your experience been settling into the team and the branch? What have you enjoyed most about your new role?

Having spent most of my banking career dealing with third parties rather than direct customers, it has been a pleasure getting back in front of real people. The team at the Bank have all been very welcoming and are a wonderful bunch to work with. There is a wealth of knowledge, and someone is always ready to help with a question (from me), no matter how basic!

You mentioned wanting to use your extensive banking experience to serve the community. How does the reality of the role compare to what you expected?

I really had no expectation about what it would be like getting back on the counter after 40 years away, but I must say it has been more enjoyable than I thought it would be. Many things have changed since I was last on a bank counter, but the basics remain the same, look after our customers and keep their money safe.

What does working in a community-focused organisation like the Community Bank Braidwood mean to you personally?

Being involved in a couple of community organisations I have seen at first hand the support that the Bank can provide. Now that I am part of the organisation, I can see that this support is real and deeply ingrained in everything that we do.

Have there been any standout interactions or experiences so far that made you feel especially proud to be part of the team?

Apart from the strange looks on some people's faces when they first see me behind the counter (when they weren't expecting it), it has to be the watching and listening to Karen and Helen as they effortlessly deal with customers – it seems that between them there is nobody that they don't know and they and they can hold a conversation with anyone on any subject while still dealing with complex transactions.

What are you most looking forward to achieving or contributing to the bank and the local community in the coming months?

Initially it is to master the myriad of systems that we have!! – and then just to be an effective member of the team and upholding the high level of service the team provides. I am also looking forward to being out and about representing the Bank at local events, although I will be trying to avoid having to don the "Piggy" costume for as long as possible!

If you could spend a free afternoon doing anything you love, what would it be?

Preferably it would be an afternoon in mid-June and I would be hanging over the fence at the Le Mans 24 Hours race in France, watching Ferrari win again.

If you could instantly master any skill or hobby, what would it be and why?

I learnt guitar when I was a young but haven't played for many years, so I wish I could pick up a guitar again and play along with jangly '60s pop (The Kinks, Small Faces, Beatles, etc.).

\$45,000 GRANT FOR ST. BEDE'S INFANT PLAYGROUND

The Community Bank Braidwood is proud to contribute a \$45,000 grant to St. Bede's Primary School, supporting the development of a new infant playground. This initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to fostering strong community connections and supporting local education.

St. Bede's Community Council has demonstrated incredible commitment to this project, raising funds through initiatives such as raffles and a walkathon. Their dedication was further supported by the \$45,000 grant from the Community Bank and a \$7,000 donation from a generous anonymous family at St. Bede's. Special recognition goes to Kristi Morrison and Rachel Farley, who submitted a detailed and compelling grant application, ensuring the success of this significant contribution.

To celebrate this milestone, our bank mascot, Piggy, joined staff members Helen Farley and Company Secretary Susi Pluess at St. Bede's Friday afternoon assembly to present the cheque. The students were very excited, with Piggy receiving plenty of high-fives!

The new playground equipment is set to be installed in 2025. We wish the Community Council continued success in their fundraising efforts and are proud to support a project that will bring so much joy and opportunity to the youngest members of our community.

Thank you, St. Bede's, for letting us be part of your journey!



MEET OUR CHAIR: GARRY COOK

interviewed by Susi Pluess



Could you tell us about your journey with Palerang Financial Services Ltd? What inspired you to join the Board and eventually take on the role of Chair?

“I in mid-2018 after 25 years in demanding roles managing big pastoral companies and found myself wanting to stay active,” Garry shared. “I was already involved with The Rotary Club Bungendore and the Mudhooks Rugby Club, and “got back on the tools” doing casual farm work, but I still felt I needed something more challenging that could put my skills to good use.”

Garry credited Sue Smith, who had stepped down from the Board, for encouraging him to apply. “Sue thought it might be a good fit, so I attended a few meetings to see what it was all about. I quickly realised this was a great opportunity to use my professional experience in a meaningful way,” he said.

Garry initially joined the Bungendore Funding Committee, where he became deeply invested in the organisation. “When the Chair role became available, I was honoured to be asked. It was right after our 20th anniversary, which made it a really significant time to step into the position.”

As Chair of the Board, what are some of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of your role?

“The most rewarding part is engaging with the community,” Garry explained. “We have such a good story to tell about what we do and sharing that story with people is a real privilege.”

However, the role isn’t without its challenges. “Being the Chair of a public company brings a lot of responsibility. You are overseeing operations, ensuring compliance, and making sure everything is done properly and efficiently. With our franchise connected to a major financial institution, there is a lot to stay on top of, and I take that responsibility very seriously.”

You are involved in multiple committees, including Finance & HR, the Bungendore Funding Committee and the Marketing and Communications Committee. How do these roles align with your vision for the Community Bank's future?

“My career really prepared me for these roles,” Garry said. “I spent decades managing large pastoral companies, working with complex operations that included thousands of cattle, hundreds of employees, and turnovers in the hundreds of millions. Finance, HR, and strategy were part of my everyday work.”

The Bungendore Funding Committee allows Garry to stay connected to local community needs. “I know this community well, and I bring that understanding to our decision-making. It is a chance to use my network and experience to make sure we’re giving back in ways that matter.”

With over five years at PFSL and more than two as Chair, how have you seen the organisation evolve, and what has been a standout achievement during the last few years?

“In August 2022, the company celebrated its 20th year of service to our customers and the community and that was a real highlight,” Garry reflected. “That was the year we were able to celebrate the “coming of age” of our company. Our success has been built on the back of the outstanding leadership within the business, the dedication of our magnificent staff, and the continuing support of our customers over those past 20 years. But, it wasn’t just about the numbers—it was about what they represented. It showed how far we had come as a community, as a team, and as an organisation. The hard work of those people who first established the company, the risks people took, the commitment—it all came together in that anniversary celebration. I felt incredibly proud to be part of it.”

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MEET OUR CHAIR: GARRY COOK

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You've been deeply connected with the Bungendore community through various organisations like the Mudchooks and the Rotary. How do these experiences shape your work with the Community Bank?

"You build a strong network by being involved in those organisations over a long period. You get to know a lot of people—not just those directly involved, but also the people those organisations serve. It gives you a real understanding of what is happening in the community: the needs, opportunities, what works, and what hasn't worked in the past. Over time, you gain a pretty comprehensive insight into how the community operates, which has been invaluable for my role at the Bank."

What do you believe sets the Community Bank model apart, and how do you see it continuing to benefit the local communities in Braidwood, Bungendore, and Crookwell?

"What sets us apart is our mission—to always put the majority of our profits back into the community. That's absolutely unique for any financial institution, and I would argue for any business enterprise in the towns our business services. Our company exists to create funding for community benefit, not only to make a profit and that is a profoundly way of doing business and one that delivers real, tangible benefits to the community." That makes us a true social enterprise."

"In addition, I'm always very conscious and grateful of how generous businesses in our towns are in sponsoring sporting clubs and service groups, etc. The businesses in our towns have a strong spirit and track record of community funding, but what makes the Community Bank unique is that community investment is our purpose."

The Community Bank supports many local initiatives. Is there a specific project or moment that stands out as particularly meaningful to you?

"For Bungendore, the seed funding we provided for the construction of the playground stands out. It has been a huge social and cultural benefit for local families and people passing through town. It has even brought extra business into town."

"There are many standout initiatives in Braidwood, like the support for the Braidwood Life Centre. The numerous ways the Braidwood Life Centre serves the community makes a big difference to the community."

"But if I had to choose the most meaningful, I would say the annual tertiary education scholarship program. Investing in young people to help them get a first-class education is one of the most powerful things we do. Hearing from scholarship recipients at our Annual General Meetings about how it has impacted their lives is so rewarding. It's moments like those that remind you why we do what we do."

Balancing multiple leadership roles across the community can be challenging. What motivates you to stay so actively engaged, and how do you manage your time?

"I have always been wired to keep busy. I don't like being idle, and I have taken on leadership roles throughout my career and community life. It's just part of who I am."

"To manage my time I keep track of everything with my diary—constantly filling it in and juggling commitments. But I have to admit, my family, garden, and domestic duties often get squeezed. My family has been incredibly supportive over the years, and I am very grateful for that, and I am also very aware of the cost to them."

"At the end of the day, I feel compelled to do what I do because I see the positive impact it has. That's what keeps me going."

MEET OUR CHAIR: GARRY COOK

In addition to your work with the Community Bank, you have held various leadership roles in local organisations. What advice would you offer someone looking to make a lasting impact in their community?

"Just put your hand up. Get involved. The more you put in, the more you get back. You broaden your social network, create opportunities, and develop skills—not just for yourself, but for others around you."

"I know life is busy for everyone, but even a small contribution can make a difference. The rewards of community involvement go far beyond the time you invest. It's about building a stronger, more connected community, and that is incredibly fulfilling."

Finally, when you are not busy with your many commitments, how do you like to spend your free time? Do you have any hobbies or passions outside of community service?

"Honestly, most of my social life is tied to the Mudhooks and Rotary. The Mudhooks is my main outlet—it is a young person's organisation with a lot of energy, while Rotary provides a great network with more mature age groups and community service possibilities."

"Saturdays at the footy, especially away games, are a big part of my downtime. It's a great social time, and I always have fun. I also try to keep bees, which is something a bit different to my lifetime of work with sheep and cattle, and a rewarding challenge. But overall, my hobbies and passions tend to revolve around the community work I am already doing—it is all pretty intertwined."

Closing Thoughts

"Palerang Financial Services Ltd has an incredible foundation of community spirit and dedication," Garry concluded. "As Chair, my role is to build on that foundation and ensure we continue to grow and support the region. It is a privilege to do this work and to contribute to something so meaningful."

Publisher

Palerang Financial Services Ltd
Unit 1 / 2 Park Lane, Braidwood NSW 2622

Editors

Nick Fry & Susi Pluess
With thanks to all contributions from
staff, board & community members.



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 Community Bank - Braidwood

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TALK TO US TODAY

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We are open:

9.30am – 4.00pm Monday to Friday

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PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SCAMS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Scams are becoming more sophisticated and can come through phone calls, emails, SMS, or even social media. They cost Australians billions of dollars annually, causing financial and emotional distress.

Common Scams to Watch Out For

- PayID Scams: Fraudsters use fake profiles to trick people into transferring money.
- Impersonation Scams: Scammers pretend to be trusted organisations, asking for sensitive information.
- Investment Scams: Beware of unsolicited offers promising high returns with little risk.
- Remote Access Scams: Never give control of your devices to unknown callers.

Quick Tips to Stay Safe

1. **Stop:** Avoid sharing personal or financial information if unsure.
2. **Think:** Could this message or call be fake?
3. **Protect:** Report suspicious activity and act immediately if you think you've been scammed.

Visit our Scams Knowledge Hub for detailed information and tips to safeguard yourself:

<https://www.bendigobank.com.au/security/scams>

If you suspect fraud or have clicked on suspicious links, contact us immediately. Together, we can help keep your finances secure.

Big on
community.

Bigger
for the one
you care
about.



COMMUNITY FUNDING APPROVALS

since August 2024

\$18,103: Braidwood Regional Arts Group - Installation of Gallery Lighting

\$500: Nerriga Progress & Sporting Association - Camp Oven Cook Off

\$7,500: Braidwood CWA - Kitchen Replacement

\$5,000: Crookwell Rugby Union Club - Sponsorship

\$500: Braidwood Motor Club - Show and Shine 2025

\$658: Braidwood Hospital Auxiliary - 2024 Fete

\$1,000: Braidwood Preschool - 2024 Open Gardens

\$1,000: Braidwood FM - Apparel

\$10,000: Majors Creek Festival - 2024 Festival

\$4,925: Braidwood Life Centre - Community Christmas Hampers

\$1,000: Braidwood RSL - Commemoration Dinner

\$45,000: St Bede's Primary School Braidwood - Infant Playground

\$5,000: Braidwood Swimming Club - Season Sponsorship

\$31,500: Braidwood Central School P&C - School Tractor

\$2,300: Braidwood Quilters - 2024 Airing of the Quilts

\$5,000: Crookwell Rugby League Football Club - Sponsorship

\$12,000: Braidwood Show Society - 2025 Braidwood Show

\$7,500: Braidwood National Theatre - Replacement Gas Heaters

\$18,180: Consensus Education Foundation - Think Tank

\$6,645: Braidwood Historical Society - Meeting Room

\$5,000: Terry Campese Foundation - 2025 Youth Mentoring Program

\$1,000: Two Fires Festival - Welcome Ceremony Yarning Circle

\$63,382: Mongarlowe Area Community Association - Community Hall Kitchen and Smarthub Fitout

\$1,000: South Coast Branch Australian Stock Horse Society - Event Sponsorship

\$1,193: Bungendore War Memorial - 100yrs memorial Plaque

\$825: Bungendore Chamber of Commerce & Industry - Sponsorship

\$1,000,000: Bungendore Preschool Association - Purchase of property

\$750: Bungendore Chamber of Commerce & Industry - Sponsorship

\$5,000: Bungendore Netball Club - Sponsorship

\$5,000: Rotary Club of Bungendore - Sponsorship Bungendore Hooters

\$3,000: Bungendore Bunyips Cricket - Sponsorship

\$3,000: Bungendore Spring Ball Committee - 2024 Spring Ball

\$5,000: Tarago and District Show Society - 2025 Tarago Show

\$2,000: Captains Flat Fishing Club - Sponsorship

\$2,000: Gunning Pastoral and Agricultural Society - 2025 Gunning Show

\$7,500: Sutton Public School P&C - School Fair

\$2,000: Rotary Club of Bungendore - Christmas Hampers

\$1,680: Lions Club of Canberra City - Festival of Magic

\$400: Bungendore Quilters - Annual Quilt Exhibition

\$10,000: First Steps Pregnancy Support Ltd - 2025 Pramathon

\$2,000: Lions Club of Bungendore - Highschool Breakfast Club



BLAZE Aid PUTS OUT THE FIRE IN BRAIDWOOD COMMUNITY

by Nick Fry

The devastation, destruction and memory of the 2019-2020 Black Summer fires will stay with many, many people. It was one of the most intense and catastrophic fire seasons on record.

On the 6th of January, 2020, BlazeAid listened to and answered the calls of the community and a camp was established on this day at the Braidwood Showground. Local council, QPRC, (Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council) gave BlazeAid instructions to stay there as long as it takes at no cost. BlazeAid finally packed up 11 months later on the 20th of November, 2020. Overseen by Dennis and Caol McGrath, the camp and its volunteers achieved some remarkable statistics:

- Fencing completed 249 km's
- Properties registered and completed 265
- Pickets installed 29,332
- Strainer posts installed 1,914
- Meals served 28,881
- Costs per meal \$3.70
- Age of oldest volunteer 82
- Age of youngest volunteer 14
- Money spent locally \$500,113.06
- Total value of work \$1,877,265
- Total volunteers 454
- Volunteer days 9,392
- Overseas volunteers 32
- Nationalities represented 29
- Average age 50.86



The volunteers became part of the Braidwood community. When it was time to leave, many items could not be returned to BlazeAid HQ in Victoria and QPRC again assisted by using one of their sheds for storage. The shed was stacked with items and at least 10 trailers, many of which were donated by Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise Foundation. The Bank still has very strong connections with BlazeAid.

This morning, Monday the 9th of December, 2024, a BlazeAid truck, driven by BlazeAid Brett, came and collected what was remaining. The truck itself was one of 2 flat top Isuzu trucks recently donated by Isuzu. After a few hours of meticulously placing items on the truck like a jigsaw puzzle, Brett and the truck bid farewell to Braidwood.

The district were so very fortunate to have the efforts of BlazeAid and its team at a time when we needed them most. BlazeAid are still out there, in communities which have been ravaged by fire or flood. In fact, not only is Braidwood fortunate, our country is blessed that its founders, Keven and Rhonda Butler, had the vision to establish an organisation such as this.

Unfortunately, there will be another natural disaster, but we do know that BlazeAid will do everything in their power to be there to assist.

BRAIDWOOD SWIMMING CLUB MAKES A SPLASH WITH NEW SWIM PARKAS

by Susi Pluess

The Braidwood Swimming Club celebrated the arrival of their brand-new swim parkas, thanks to a \$5,000 sponsorship from the Community Bank Braidwood. The timing couldn't have been better, as the chilly evening made the warm, comfortable parkas a welcome addition for everyone.

Embroidered with the Community Bank logo in large format on the back, the parkas are not only practical but also a striking way to showcase our partnership. The embroidery was expertly crafted by local small business Little Stitches, adding a special community touch to this project.

An initial order of 50 parkas was made based on last year's membership numbers. However, with the club now boasting nearly 70 active members, plans are already underway for a second order. It is a testament to the growing popularity of the club and its importance within the community.

Swim Club families have expressed heartfelt gratitude for the sponsorship, with many sharing how proud they are to wear the new parkas. Seeing the club members united in their stylish and functional attire reflects the spirit of community and teamwork that the club fosters.

Great way to support the Braidwood Swimming Club and their efforts to provide a great environment for swimmers of all ages. Here is to another fantastic season in and out of the pool!



A COMMUNITY PROJECT SUCCESS

by Malcolm Campbell, Scouts NSW

Thanks to the ongoing support from the Community Bank, our Group has completed a vital maintenance project that will benefit everyone who uses our facilities.

The outdoor table and bench seating area, once plagued by splinters and wear, has been transformed into a safe and comfortable space. Special thanks to Damo Biggs for his craftsmanship —our refreshed seating area is already a favourite, tested during our recent Christmas party!

Our biggest undertaking was the long-overdue concrete path, expertly laid by Shannon. This safe and durable walkway now connects key areas, from the quilters' front shed, past our storage sheds and Venturer's Den, to the bin area. No more trip hazards, muddy patches, or struggles with trailer access!

We even added new garbage bins, integrating them into our Return and Earn scheme as part of our effort to reduce waste while raising funds for the Group.

Although gutters might not be photogenic, they've been cleared and are ready to protect us from heavy rains and bushfire risks.

We're immensely grateful for the bank's continued support, which made these improvements possible.



MONOPOLY LAUNCH

The Rotary Club of Bungendore celebrated the launch of their custom Monopoly board game. Over 50 guests, including local business owners and Rotarians, gathered to mark the occasion and connect with one another.

Garry Cook delivered a fantastic speech on behalf of the bank, and Christine Allard, the driving force behind the project, was recognised for her outstanding efforts. The event featured a poster-sized unveiling of the game and a celebratory cake-cutting ceremony.

The Monopoly games will soon be available for purchase at various locations, including our branch. Rotary also presented us with a signed T-shirt as a token of appreciation, which will be framed as a keepsake.

Congratulations to Bungendore Rotary on this creative and community-driven project!

SHEARERS SHOWDOWN 2024: A BIG WIN FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES

by Alex Rofe & Susi Pluess

Held on 14 September 2024 at the Crookwell Showground, the Shearer's Showdown, to raise money in support of the town of Bigga, was a resounding success. Proudly sponsored by the Community Bank, the event brought together all surrounding rural communities for an unforgettable event.

Organised by Quick Shear Inc. – a not-for-profit organisation founded in 2023 and powered entirely by volunteers, all about making a big impact in the local community. Each year, they host an exciting shearing competition, using it as a platform to support other local non-profits and community projects through fundraising. Their events aim to:

- Boost community spirit and engagement
- Help other non-profits hit their fundraising and project goals faster
- Attract visitors and income to our shire
- Give local businesses a great advertising opportunity
- Inspire more people to get involved in the shearing industry
- Promote the growth of agriculture



This celebration of shearer talent also gave back in a big way, raising over \$17,000 for local organisations. Among the beneficiaries were Bigga Public School P&C, receiving \$7,420 to support student programs, and Crookwell Meals on Wheels, which gained \$2,655 from the Calcutta auction. The Bigga Progress Association received \$2,500 to fund a much-needed shelter shed at the Bigga Recreational Area, while Bigga RFS collected \$1,287 at the gate to bolster their fire-fighting efforts. Additional contributions included \$1,000 for the Crookwell Community Men's Shed and \$500 to The Man Walk Australia – Crookwell Branch, supporting mental health and connection.

Bigga Public School also celebrated its 140th anniversary, marking the milestone with new sporting equipment to inspire active play and school pride. Kerrie Picker, President of the Bigga Progress Association, shared her gratitude: "The generous support from Quick Shear Inc. and the Community Bank will make a lasting impact. The funds raised will help us create a shelter for locals and visitors to gather in any weather, strengthening community ties." This initiative highlights the power of collaboration in small towns, proving that with teamwork and generosity, rural communities can achieve great things.

After the success of this event, it has been announced the Shearers Showdown will be a permanent, annual event in Crookwell. Mark your calendars for the second Saturday in September!



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