



SHOALHAVEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES INC.

Stronger connections. Stronger communities.

Our Community News

FREE

Autumn 2026

01 MARCH-31 MAY 2026



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

A Project of Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services Inc.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in *Our Community News* are not necessarily those of Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services Inc (SNS). All articles are published in good faith.

Produced at the East Nowra Neighbourhood Centre

Sponsored by University of Wollongong Australia

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Our Community News.

In this edition, we share updates on giving back to the community, along with an overview of the Aged Care reform in Australia and what it may mean for the individual, families and service providers.

We also highlight Harmony Week, an event that brings people together to connect, share ideas and enjoy cultural.

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GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Every community thrives because of the people who care for it. Giving back is more than volunteering - it's about creating connections, empowering others and building lasting positive change. Even the smallest act of kindness can create a ripple effect, reaching far beyond what we see, and improving life for everyone around us. By contributing to our local community, we strengthen the bonds that hold it together and nurture a place where everyone feels valued and supported.

Volunteering your time is one of the most direct ways to make a difference. Local organisations rely on dedicated individuals to help run essential services. Assisting at food banks, shelters, hospitals, libraries, or animal rescues can have a profound impact. Mentoring students, supporting youth programs, or helping adult learners succeed are other ways to contribute. Community events such as clean-ups, festivals, charity runs, or awareness campaigns, also depend on volunteers to thrive.

Every hour you dedicate, strengthens both those you help and the community as a whole.

Continued page 3

The University of Wollongong Shoalhaven Campus, located in Mundamia (West Nowra), has been serving the local community since its establishment in 2000. Set on 67 hectares of bushland with panoramic views of the upper Shoalhaven catchment, the campus provides a supportive learning environment with teaching spaces, library, café, and student amenities. The campus also offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses across multiple faculties.

Before the current campus was built, UOW's presence in the region began with the Graham Park Campus at Berry, officially opened on 2 April 1994. As the need for a larger and more permanent facility grew, plans were developed for a new campus.

In 1994, UOW announced its intention to establish a campus in Nowra. At the time, a land claim under the NSW Land Rights legislation had been lodged over the proposed site and surrounding areas. The Nowra Local Aboriginal Land Council later amended this claim to allow a higher education facility to proceed. By 1998, with strong community support and the Land Council's consent, the Minister for Education and Training formally acquired the land under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991.

The Shoalhaven Campus today stands on land gifted over 25 years ago by the local Aboriginal community, on the condition that it be dedicated to education. This generous and visionary gesture reflects the deep commitment of the local Indigenous community to fostering knowledge, opportunity, and social progress in the region.

Since opening, UOW Shoalhaven has produced 2104 graduates, many of whom contribute to the local workforce and regional development. The campus also works closely with community partners, leading to initiatives such as the \$2.5 million MIND the GaP facility, now closed, which supported innovative mental health care programs for young people.

Through its educational offerings, community collaborations, and enduring partnership with local Aboriginal leaders, UOW Shoalhaven continues to play a vital role in expanding access to higher education and supporting the growth and development of the Shoalhaven region.



Continued from page 1

Sharing your skills is another powerful way to contribute your professional or personal expertise. Offering free workshops in areas such as legal advice, medical guidance, or financial planning, helps people navigate challenges in their daily lives. Artists and teachers can bring joy and learning through music, art or language classes. Tradespeople can provide hands-on support with repairs, maintenance, or home improvements for those in need. The skills you share can transform someone's life.

Donating resources is a form of giving back with real impact. Financial contributions to local schools or charities ensure programs continue to run. Gifts of clothes, books, or essential supplies provide immediate support to families. Even lending equipment, such as sports gear, computers or gardening tools, to community centres makes a real difference. Every resource shared strengthens the community and helps it grow.

Being an active participant in community life also matters. Attending council meetings, school board meetings, or neighbourhood committees, allows residents to shape local decisions. Organising initiatives such as street clean-ups, tree plantings, or support groups, improves the environment and promotes a feeling of belonging. Supporting local businesses and farmers helps the economy thrive and keep the community vibrant.

Acts of everyday kindness are equally important. Checking in on neighbours, especially the elderly or vulnerable, or helping with groceries, bins, or mail, builds trust and connection. Even online, everyone can contribute. Many non-profits welcome help with marketing, coding, tutoring, or social media promotion for local initiatives, contributions to medical, educational, or emergency funds also provide vital support, even from a distance.

If you feel inspired to make a difference, organisations such as the following are excellent starting points:

Volunteering Australia (<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org>),

Giving Back Australia (<https://www.givingbackaustralia.org.au>),

Nowra Community Food Store (<https://www.nowrafoodstore.com.au>),

Salt Care (<https://www.salt.org.au>)

Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services (<https://www.sns.org.au>)

Did You Know: Adequate sleep reduces risk of diseases such as diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, and heart disease; **laughter is medicine.** It can increase your endorphin levels and decrease feelings of pain and challenging mental health experiences.

<https://www.helpguide.org | mental-health | wellbeing>

AWARE

Achieving Wellbeing And Resilience through Education

For young people aged 8 – 12 where a parent/carer or family member is living with mental health issues.

Enjoy crafts, music, & games with young people who have similar experiences to yours.

Be supported to explore new strategies to:

- Identify and regulate your emotions
- Let others know how you are feeling
- Ask for help when you need it.

April 8-10 2026
9am - 3.30pm daily
Bomaderry Anglican Church

This is a **free program** with lunch and refreshments provided.

To find out more, contact:
Maris: 0429 778 670
Johanne: 0459 880 578
Layla: 0421 054 741



Discover, learn and grow with AWARE!



This program is a joint initiative between Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District School Link, COPMI and Family and Carer Mental health Programs.



Aged Care Reform in Australia: New Aged Care Act and Support at Home Program

As of November 2025, a new Aged Care Act was enforced, with the aim of centering the rights of older people through the establishment of clear guidelines that promote greater independence and autonomy in the care they receive. In addition, the Act seeks to reduce ageism and the potential for elder abuse within this space, fostering more client-centred care. All registered providers are required to ensure these principles are at the forefront of their work alongside older persons.

Further reform has occurred in relation to access to care in the home, with the new Support at Home Program replacing previous home care packages and the Short-Term Restorative Care program. The Commonwealth Home Support Program, which provides smaller amounts of funding for low-level support, will also transition to the Support at Home Program no earlier than 1 July 2027.

These changes have been implemented with the aim of enabling older persons to remain independent in their homes for longer periods. The Support at Home Program differs from the previous Home Care package in several ways, including the introduction of eight new funding classifications compared to the previous four, to create more tailored and flexible funding based on the needs of My Aged Care clients.

Additionally, the assessment process has been streamlined into a single, simplified process that focuses on client-specific goals. Service costs are now subject to means-tested price caps to ensure greater equity across financial circumstances, with financial hardship applications also available where required.

Clients who were previously approved for, or accessing Home Care packages by 12 September 2024, will receive transitioned Support at Home packages. The 'no worse off' principle applies to these clients, meaning they will not experience higher costs or reduced levels of care during the transition to the Support at Home Program.

If you need some help around the house or think it's time to look into aged care services, My Aged Care is there to help. To find out if you're eligible for services through My Aged Care you need to apply for an assessment by calling My Aged Care on 1800 200 422.

Source:

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/improving-australias-aged-care-system>

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/aged-care-programs/support-at-home-program>

<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/aged-care-programs/commonwealth-home-support-program>

South Coast & Country Community Law offers free and confidential legal advice by phone or in-person.

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL.

SEPARATION / DIVORCE	SPEEDING, LICENCE & REGISTRATION ISSUES	TENANCY
CHILD SUPPORT	ALCOHOL / DRUG DRIVING	CREDIT & DEBT
PROPERTY	PENALTY NOTICES	EMPLOYMENT
PARENTING	NEIGHBOURHOOD DISPUTES	DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE ORDERS
POWER OF ATTORNEY DOCUMENTS	DISCRIMINATION	PERSONAL VIOLENCE
GUARDIANSHIP DOCUMENTS	CONSUMER ISSUES	VICTIMS SUPPORT

scclaw.org.au | 1800 229 529 | info@scclaw.org.au

Know when to stop and check – stay safe from scams

ScamWatch have developed and launched new guidance material to help provide support to someone who is being scammed.

The guidance topics include:

Help someone who is being scammed: Emotional support and practical steps you can take.

Red flags checklist for family and friends: A list of warning signs - financial, behaviour, relationship and communication changes.

Conversation starters for family and friends: What to say, what not to say.

Understanding how Scammers manipulate your loved one: Understanding the techniques to help you approach the situation with greater empathy and patience.

The guidance materials can be found on the ScamWatch website:

<https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/types-of-scams>

<https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/stop-check-protect>

<https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam>

<https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/research-and-resources>

Social Media Minimum Age Scams

What's happening

From December 10, 2025, some social media platforms were restricted, by law, to those aged 16 and over. These laws required affected platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent anyone under 16 from creating or holding accounts.

The measures were designed to protect young people from the risks and pressures associated with social media use.

ScamWatch has identified 4 potential scams that opportunistic criminals may use to take advantage of these changes.

Who's at Risk

- Young people and their families affected by the new social media age restrictions
- Social media users

What the scams might look like

Platform impersonation: Scammers may pretend to be social media platforms or age verification providers, and ask you to verify your age or risk losing your account.

Government impersonation scams: Scammers may pretend to be from government or law enforcement, claiming you have breached the new laws and threaten fines unless you provide proof of age.

Fake ID scams: Scammers may offer fake IDs or access to age-verified accounts for a fee, targeting young people under 16 and their families.

'Hi Mum' scams: Scammers might impersonate young people aged 16 or older, contacting their parents or guardians to claim they need help verifying their age to use a social media platform.

If you are contacted about the social media age restrictions:

Stop - Don't be rushed to share age verification details. Don't make payments. No legitimate platforms are requesting payment associated with these laws.

Check - Make sure the person or organisation is real. Find out how your social media platforms are communicating with users about the restrictions and how they are verifying users' ages. See eSafety's frequently asked questions page for more information.

Protect - If you've given any personal information such as your age or proof of identity, or money to someone you suspect is a scammer act quickly. The What to do if you've been scammed page on scamwatch.gov.au has steps you can follow.

<https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/about-us/news-and-alerts/scam-alert-social-media-minimum-age-scams>

EAST NOWRA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE ACTIVITIES

Unit 2 / 80 Park Road East Nowra - 02 4422 1299

MONDAY

Busy Bears Craft Group ~ 9.45 am - 11.45 am ~ Cost \$2.00 pp

- Weekly craft group. New members welcome.

TUESDAY

Me & My Grandparents ~ 9.30 am - 10.30 am ~ Free

- During school terms. All are welcome - **registrations are essential.**
- Weekly program designed to build close relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren.

Reading with Bub ~ 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm ~ Free

- During school terms. All are welcome - **registrations are essential.**
- Parents, carers and children 0-5 years join us to read stories, sing songs and meet new people.

WEDNESDAY

Cuppa & Chat Women's Group ~ 10.30 am - 12.30 pm ~ Free

- During school terms. All are welcome - **registrations are essential.**
- Join us each week to have a cup of tea or coffee, educational information sessions and to meet new people.

FRIDAY

Compassionate Friends Support Group ~ 10.30 am - 12.30 pm ~ Free

- **4th Friday** each month.
- Peer support group offering friendship and understanding to grieving parents/siblings/grandparents who have lost a child of any age.

SUNDAY

Brilliant Stars ~ 3.00 pm - 4.30 pm ~ Free

- During school terms.
- A group for children 5-12 years to learn qualities such as kindness, truthfulness and respect through songs, stories, crafts and games. A community building service sponsored by Shoalhaven Baha'i.



NOWRA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE ACTIVITIES

41 Worrigeer Street Nowra - 02 4421 5077

MONDAY

Monkey Mondays Playgroup ~ 9.30 am - 11.00 am ~ Free

- During school terms. All are welcome - **registrations are essential**.
- A weekly playgroup supporting children, families and carers. Come and meet new friends, play, create and read stories.
- Please bring a sunhat and water bottle - fruit is provided.

Meditation ~ 6.30 pm - 7.30 pm ~ Cost \$20.00 pp

- Guided meditation group.

SELF-HELP /SUPPORT GROUPS

Nowra Neighbourhood Centre hosts a range of support groups that meet every week. Please contact the centre for further information on 02 4421 5077.

- **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)**

<https://aa.org.au>

- **Al-Anon Support Group**

<https://al-anon.org.au>

- **Narcotics Anonymous (NA)**

<https://na.org.au>

NEED A MEETING ROOM?

Our Neighbourhood Centre's currently have meeting rooms available to hire. Please call (02) 4421 5077 for further information.





Google

Q Saver Plus YouTube

to see our quick explainer video and find out if you're eligible.



Do you have a health care card? You could be eligible for Saver Plus.

For every dollar you save, you'll get a dollar from ANZ to spend on educational costs, up to \$500.

To join, you need to meet all of these requirements:

- ✓ Be 18 years or older
- ✓ Have a current Health Care or Pensioner Concession Card
- ✓ Be in receipt of an eligible Commonwealth social security benefit, allowance or payment
- ✓ Have a child in school, starting school next year, or be studying yourself
- ✓ Get a regular income (can be you or your partner)
- ✓ Agree to join in free online financial education workshops


saverplus

saverplus.org.au
1300 610 355



Community Leaders - Leading by linking, not fixing

Community leadership doesn't always mean having all the answers or being the one who 'fixes' everything. Often, the most powerful role a leader can play is being the linker - connecting people, ideas, and resources so the community can support itself.

Being a community leader is both a privilege and a responsibility. The role can carry pressure and emotional weight, particularly during difficult times. It's helpful to remember that leadership takes many forms. Using your influence thoughtfully and seeking fresh perspectives when needed can help guide positive outcomes.

Leading in Today's Communities

Community leaders often balance multiple roles, such as friend, family member, mentor, advocate or advisor. Knowing which 'hat' you're wearing when someone seeks support helps manage expectations and maintain healthy boundaries.

Leadership frequently shows up through connection rather than control. This can include strengthening relationships by acting as a bridge between people and services, bringing people together to share responsibility and recognising the achievements of others. Leaders also role-model authenticity by showing that learning, vulnerability and growth are part of strong leadership.

Creating welcoming, judgement-free spaces encourages people to connect, share ideas and seek help when needed.

Practical Tips for Community Leaders

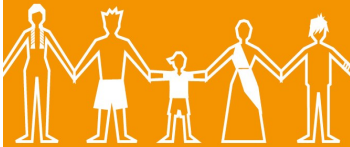
- Build strong networks: Connect people with local services and opportunities and collaborate with other leaders to share responsibility.
- Listen first: Often people want to be heard. Ask open questions and validate experiences without judgement.
- Set healthy boundaries: Be clear about what you can offer and encourage professional support when issues are beyond your role.
- Encourage new leaders: Support emerging voices, particularly young people, by sharing opportunities for learning and leadership.
- Communicate openly: Share information clearly and celebrate successes to build trust and shared ownership.
- Look after yourself: Rest, peer support and time out is essential for sustainable leadership.

A final thought - Community leadership isn't about doing everything alone. It's about connecting people, amplifying strengths and walking alongside others. You don't have to fix everything - sometimes being the link is more than enough.

<https://steptoegether.gov.au/support-and-advice/for-your-community/community-leadership-in-todays-world.html>



HARMONY WEEK



**JOIN US IN
CELEBRATING**

HARMONY.GOV.AU



EVERYONE BELONGS
www.harmony.gov.au

Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services

Invites you to join us in Celebrating

Harmony Week

16-22 March 2026

We are proud to celebrate the diversity of our communities and look forward to coming together to embrace and celebrate our unique backgrounds and stories.

Feel free to bring a dish to share and join us for a couple of hours of cultural exchange, reflection and connection.

Let's make Harmony Week a memorable and inclusive celebration for all!

Please mark your calendar and save the date!

Wednesday 18 March 2026

10:30 AM - 1:00 PM

2/80 Park Road, East Nowra

*Please RSVP by Tuesday 10 March 2026
to Nadia 0478 641 187*



SHOALHAVEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES INC.

Stronger connections. Stronger communities.

Easy Recipes

BREAKFAST - Muesli

- ½ apple (peeled, cored, finely grated)
- ½ cup muesli
- 1 cup pear juice
- 2 x kiwi fruit
- Blueberries and raspberries - number of each to your taste

Place apple, muesli and juice in a bowl, mix well and leave to soak for 1 hour or overnight in fridge. Dice up kiwi fruit, blueberries, and raspberries and place on top.

MID-MORNING SNACK OR BREAKFAST - Cinnamon Pancakes (makes 8)

- 1 cup (175g) self-raising flour
- 1 cup (250ml) milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tbs cinnamon

Lightly whisk all ingredients together. Heat a small non-stick frying pan, pour in enough batter to coat most of the base. Cook over a medium heat until bubbles form. Flip and cook until golden on the other side.

LUNCH OR DINNER - Savoury egg in a hole

- 2 tbs (30g) butter
- 2 slices of bread
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp chives optional (supermarkets have packets of lightly dried and chopped chives)

Cut a 3 cm hole in the centre of the bread slices. Over a low heat, melt butter in the frypan. Place the bread in the frypan, when the side is slightly toasted (approx. 2 minutes), flip and crack an egg into the centre of each slice, season with salt, pepper and chives if desired. Cook until the egg is mostly firm, flip again and cook for 1 minute. Serve immediately.

DESSERT (serves 2)

- 2 apples
- 2 tsp honey
- 1 lemon

Slice the apples into thin circles. Mix 1 teaspoon lemon zest and juice with honey and drizzle over apple.

A WORD FROM MAXINE
Manager, Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services Inc.

Volunteers make a real difference in our communities and we need you! By giving a little time, you can support older people, build meaningful connections and strengthen community spirit.

Your time could be spent together enjoying a coffee, having a chat, accompanying and assisting our clients with their shopping, attending appointments or going to cafes, museums or group outing activities.

If you can commit 3+ hours a week, we have wonderful opportunities waiting. Contact us on 4421 5077.



Animal Awareness Days Calendar 2026

(www.worldanimalprotection.org/animal-awareness-days)

MARCH

International Primate Day	1
Japan Dolphin Day	1
World wildlife Day	3
International Vulture Awareness Day	6
Buzzards Day	15
International Panda Day	16
World Manta Day	17
World Frog Day	20
International Red Panda Day (3rd Sat)	20
World Sparrow Day	20
International Tamarin Day	22
World Rhino Day	22
World Bear Day	23
World Gorilla Day	24
Manatee Appreciation Day (last Wed)	25
World Cassowary Day	26
Rabies Day	28

MAY

National Bison Day (US) (1st Sat)	1
World Vegan Day	1
World Anteater Day	19
World Fisheries Day	21
International Jaguar Day	29

APRIL

World Vegetarian Day	1
World Farmed Animals Day	2
World Animal Day	4
International Migratory Bird Day	11
International Sawfish Day	17
World Okapi Day	18
International Sloth Day	20
Reptile Awareness Day	21
International Wombat Day	22
International Snow Leopard Day	23
Freshwater Dolphin Day	24
International Gibbon Day	24
World Lemur Day	31

Fun Facts

Q 1: While northern hemisphere trees go red/gold, what colour change happens to some Australian native trees in Autumn?

Q 2: What native marsupial becomes busy gathering food for Winter during Autumn?

Answers on back page

		1	2		3	4	5	6	
	7				8				
9			10	11				12	13
14			15			16	17		
18		19		20	21				
		22	23				24	25	26
27	28				29	30		31	
32				33				34	
	35	36	37			38	39		
	40					41			

ACROSS

1. $369 \div 9$
3. 12 across x 112
7. $405 + 351$
8. 14 across x 60
9. $78 - 26$
10. 21 down $\div 9$
12. 2 down - 1,596
14. 32 across - 29
15. 37 down $\div 3$
16. 33 down x 10
18. $661 - 93$
20. $2 \times 3,863$
22. $5,415 + 2,970$
24. $569 - 196$
27. 1 down + 7,944
29. $45 + 20$
31. $291 \div 3$
32. 16 down + 38
33. 249×2
34. $116 - 48$

35. 7 down - 5, 029
38. 1 across x 9
40. $2,067 + 2,173$
41. $224 \div 7$

DOWN

1. $40 + 5$
2. 58×29
3. $3,724 \div 4$
4. $38 + 22$
5. $324 \div 9$
6. $398 + 2$ down
7. $4,417 + 2,799$
9. $1665 \div 3$
11. 41 across + 4,846
13. $105 - 45$
16. $73 - 31$
17. 7×109
19. 36 down x 74
21. 841×9

23. 27 down $\div 2$
25. $5147 + 2822$
26. 7 across $\div 2$
27. $624 \div 8$
28. 41 across x 282
30. 307×19
33. $592 - 122$
36. $9 + 3$
37. 9 down - 471
39. number of dozens in 744

All answers on back page

Puzzle answers:

ACROSS: 41, 9632, 756, 3060, 52, 841, 86, 51, 28, 4700, 568, 7726, 8385, 373, 7989, 65, 97, 80, 498, 68, 2187, 369, 4240, 32

DOWN: 45, 1682, 931, 60, 36, 2080, 7216, 555, 4878, 60, 42, 763, 888, 7569, 39, 7969, 378, 78, 5833, 470, 12, 84, 62

Q 1: Trees such as the Ghost Gum/River Red Gum shed bark, revealing fresh white/reddish bark

Q 2: Possums or Sugar Gliders

Did you know!

Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services is a provider of support services for people who have an approved NDIS plan.

If you're looking for support to access the community or for more information about the services we can provide, please call us on 4421 5077.

Our Community News is produced by a small team of volunteers and staff at Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services.

You can support us by placing an advertisement, sponsoring the newsletter, or volunteering to help produce it.

For more information please email community@sns.org.au or call 02 4421 5077.

Newsletter advertising rates:

A5 Size Page	Dimensions	Total GST incl.
1/4 page	6 cm (W) x 9.2 cm (H)	\$11.00
1/2 page	12 cm (W) x 9.2 cm (H)	\$22.00
1 page	12 cm (W) x 18.44 cm (H)	\$44.00

Estimated readership over 9,000 in the Nowra area.

Volunteer with Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services!

Are you looking for a volunteering opportunity that is fulfilling and flexible?

Call **4421 5077** to find out how you can become part of this dynamic, local organisation and make a difference in your and others lives. Volunteering opportunities include social support and administrative roles.

Volunteering provides many benefits to both mental and physical health by:

- * enhancing self-confidence, self-esteem, life satisfaction, and the chance to make new friends
- * reducing the risk of depression and anxiety
- * supporting an active lifestyle for overall physical health
- * contributing positively to the community
- * gaining new skills for better employment opportunities

