

# The Southern Yarn

Dec. 2021 / Jan. 2022

NEWSLETTER OF THE DOWN UNDER CLUB OF WINNIPEG INC.



## downundercalendar

### DECEMBER

#### *Christmas Party*

**Saturday, December 11, 2021**

This was to be a ZOOM party event because of Covid considerations, but for a variety of reasons we decided to cancel it. We wish you all a great Christmas and look forward to seeing you, in person and/or virtually, in 2022. Questions? Phone Judy at 204-275-7083 or 204-218-1448 or send an email to us at [social@downunderclub.mb.ca](mailto:social@downunderclub.mb.ca).

### FEBRUARY

#### *Australia Day and Waitangi Day, Saturday February 5th, 2022*

What we may be able to have at this time is unknown, but there will be either an in-person or Zoom event. In either case, we will have all the usual happenings, eg anthems, a brain-teaser quiz, two-up games, and of course the bake-off (a trifle in a clear glass or plastic bowl), which is always highly anticipated. A potluck depends on whether we are at a venue or on Zoom. Members will be advised in good time by email or phone.

#### *Not into Zoom?*

We know that Zoom doesn't work for everyone, which is why we are also looking at some other in-person options in the new year. Watch for details of those events in the February/March issue of *The Southern Yarn*.



## Dinner was served, and delicious

Yes! We were back! In time to arrange our event, provincial restrictions had eased to the point the Club was able to have their annual not-so-formal dinner on **Saturday, October 30** at one of our favourite destinations – **Bailey's Restaurant** in the Exchange. We acknowledge that it is not so convenient for out-of-town members, and a few members sent apologies, however we mustered 19 diners who were well cared for in the Governor's Boardroom.

This landmark restaurant always seems to get "it" right; the server Patrick looked after our group well, the rack of lamb was a popular choice, and the wines served – a red Killibinbin from Langhorne Creek and a white from the NZ Marlborough district – were good choices. A few members still had room for dessert and, as we were in a private space, we were able to have a socialising chat time on site following the event. We look forward to being able to repeat in twelve months' time.



online



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## editorially yours

Charlie Powell



As Peter reports (right), our recent AGM was fun and multi-national. Not only that, some great ideas emerged and you will see their influence on the content in future issues of *The Southern Yarn*. As always, we welcome the contributions from members and friends. So, "Thank You" to Jude McCudden for her thoughtful poetic offering (p. 6) and Peter Debenham's friend, Brian McCann, for his 'Great Ocean Drive' story (p. 5). Also, Jenny has put together some member related snippets in "Re Member" (p. 3). Again, I thank our regulars and our advertisers!

Meanwhile, as the nursery rhyme advises: "Christmas is coming and the geese are getting fat. Please put a penny in the poor man's hat. If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do. If you haven't got a ha'penny, then God bless you!" And as this food safety professional advises: Keep it simple, keep it cold or keep it hot, but keep it safe!

Be generous and ...  
Enjoy!



### Stay in the Loop

Kia ora from New Zealand.

Lonely Jandal is [link] an e-newsletter to help Kiwis stay connected with Aotearoa.

As a former Kiwi expat and news director for Stuff [link], I know how time-consuming it can be to keep on top of things going on back home while you're busy making a life in another country. Lonely Jandal provides a twice-monthly update - 10 minutes tops - that has all you need to know, including the quirky bits that could only happen in NZ.

Get a free subscription to Lonely Jandal until at least March 2022 if you want to take it for a spin. Just click on the website link, and you are in the loop.

Regards

geoff@lonelyjandal.com

## president's ramblings

Peter Munn



This will be the last opportunity this season to wish all of our members a Merry Christmas, and I hope you enjoy the season with your family. And to every one of us, a new year that gives us reason to look forward to a joyful Christmas next year.

Christmas with family generally brings up pleasant memories of the past. When I was in my teens, my brother and I lived with our widowed mother in North Fitzroy, a suburb really close to the centre of Melbourne. We lived in a public housing commission flat, to the eternal horror of my mother, but it was two steps up from our previous accommodation in Camp Pell, an abandoned American Army camp of Nissen huts, erected during WWII in Royal Park, 2 miles from the city centre.

We celebrated Christmas with the traditional Christmas fare at that time, ham, chicken, all sorts of vegetables, and

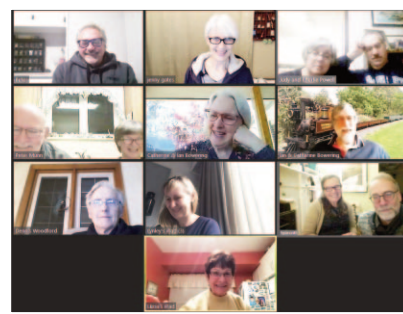
novelty crackers with paper hats and toy whistles. And for a special treat for my brother and me, Lilydale cider, of the high octane variety. One year the choice of Christmas trees was limited, and there was some issue with supply problems. In fact, there were no efficient supply chains in those days. So I was dispatched to Nicholson Street, the dividing line between North Fitzroy and East Brunswick, to bring back a small tree that would fit our budget and small living room.

The search started out with little promise as few trees were on offer, and more expensive than expected. Some vendors even were splitting trees into two and three parts to make up for low supply. Well, I did finally have success by some measure. So off home I went, found an old bucket, and filled it with dirt as ballast, and covered it with colored paper. On went the tinsel and

lights and handmade decorations, and lo and behold, our Christmas stick was a thing of beauty. And it was a great Christmas celebration that year.

So that's it for me for this year, and Margaret and I wish you all the best.

- Peter



The DUCW AGM had an international line-up.  
See full write up on page 3.

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## AGM 2021

The Annual General Meeting of the Down Under Club of Winnipeg was held via Zoom on Friday 26th November, 2021. AGM's can be dry affairs, but not for the DUCW. We attend to our business in a professional manner, but there are many light-hearted moments as well. The beauty of a Zoom meeting is that you can have attendees from all corners of the globe, and we welcomed Lynley calling in from NZ, and the Bowerings from Melbourne. Following the President's opening remarks, and acceptance of last year's AGM minutes, there were reports from the Board members, based on the previous year's activities, and discussion on events going forward, which at this time are still overshadowed by Covid.

Elections for the new Board were conducted by member **Ian Bowering**. A new Board was elected, and in most cases the incumbent was re-elected, with one exception. Vice President **Terry Roberts** had previously advised us he would not be standing for that position in this election, and we are fortunate to have gained **Lynley Davidson** as our new Vice President. Lynley is a past President of the club, and we welcome her back to the Board.

As President, I would like to thank Terry for his contributions to the Club over many years, both as a member of the board, and as someone who has spent countless hours helping with Folklorama, and many other tasks for the Club. Thanks, mate.

## The Down Under Club of Winnipeg board for the coming year:

President	<b>Peter Munn</b>
Vice President	<b>Lynley Davidson</b>
Treasurer	<b>Peter Debenham</b>
Secretary	<b>Margaret Munn</b>
Membership	<b>Catherine Bowering</b>
Social Coordinator	<b>Judy Powell</b>
Newsletter Editor	<b>Charlie Powell</b>
Past President	<b>Terry Roberts</b>

## reMember

Items of interest to you, our members

### Thinking of you all

The past 12 months have been difficult in so many ways, but particularly for several of our current and past members. In late 2020, **Manny Calisto** lost his dad (Nov 11), and in 2021, **Jenny Gates** lost her mum (May 6), **Andrew Stambrook** lost his mum **Beth Stambrook** (July 29) – Beth was a long-time member of the club – and **Bradley West** lost his dad (Nov 25).

Our sincere condolences to all of you and your families.

### On now at the WAG

The extraordinary tri-national exhibition *Naadobii: To Draw Water* is at the Winnipeg Art Gallery until February 5, 2022. The exhibition features more than 20 artists, and shares interdisciplinary artwork from Turtle Island, Australia, and Aotearoa (New Zealand). Visit WAG's website for information about the show [wag.ca].

### Vegemite

As far as we know, the only place anyone can buy Vegemite in Manitoba right now is **Family Foods Stonewall**. At the moment, it is out of stock, but if you email Glenda at swfamilyfoods@gmail.com she can put you on their mailing list for Vegemite and similar items, and will also be able to let you know if they have any in stock.

### Christmas Dinner

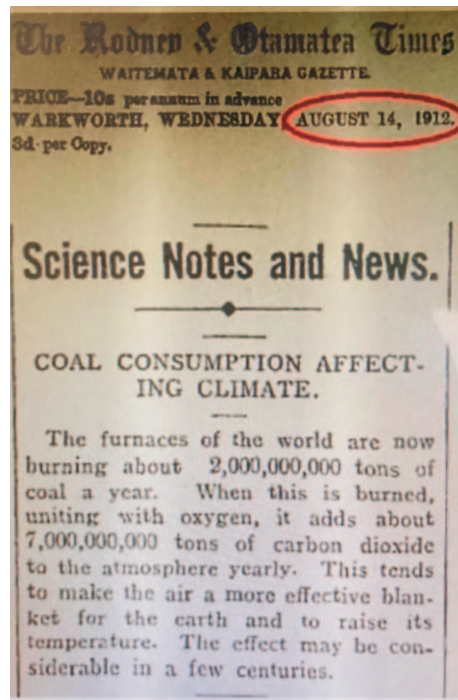
Want lamb for Christmas dinner? Superstore has frozen lamb from New Zealand, Costco has fresh lamb from Australia (although the impact of Covid sometimes interferes with supply), and **Lucia Barron** recently bought frozen New Zealand lamb on sale at a fantastic price at FreshCo.

Let us know when you discover any down under delicacies. (We can also highly recommend the rack of lamb at Bailey's. Absolutely delicious!)

## 100yearsAgo

Our time machine in action

The date of this was 1912. Will we take note this time?



## 250yearsAgo

Our time machine in action

Captain James Cook was home in England, having just returned from his first of three Pacific voyages during which he observed the transit of Venus and "discovered" the east coast of Australia (1769–1771). Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was enjoying the success of his celebratory opera for the wedding of Empress Maria Theresa's son Archduke Ferdinand Karl to Maria Beatrice d'Este on 17 Oct 1771. In Moscow, the bubonic plague epidemic was at its peak, killing up to a third of the population. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* First Edition was published in 1771 in Scotland. Samuel Hearne walked 5,000 miles (8,000 kms) and explored more than 250,000 square miles (650,000 km<sup>2</sup>) between present-day Churchill, Manitoba, and the Arctic.

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## Grafting a Guinness

[Source: ABC Radio, 12 Nov 2021] This man won a Guinness World Record for his tree that bears 10 types of fruit. Hussam Saraf says his record-breaking tree with 10 different types of fruit is a metaphor for how he sees the world.

Saraf is multicultural officer at a secondary school in Shepparton, Australia, and says grafting different fruits together echoes the work he does in his day job. "I saw all the grafts I put in that tree as just like grafting cultures together to come up with a new Australian culture," Saraf told *As It Happens* host Carol Off. "[It's] mother nature that's united us all together. Doesn't really matter how different we are in colour or culture or tradition. We are one, and we can respect each other as one." Saraf has been awarded the Guinness world record for most types of fruit on a single tree. While his tree bears 10 varieties of fruit in total, his record is for the five distinct species.

At first, he was tied with Luis H. Carrasco of Chile, who held the record for two decades. But when he pointed out that Guinness had incorrectly counted Carrasco's closely-related nectarines and peaches as two separate fruits, reducing his total to four distinct species, the record-keeper awarded the title to Saraf.



Australia is putting a rover on the Moon in 2024 to search for water.

## Way beyond the black stump

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has announced his nation's intention to join the United States' Moon to Mars exploration

approach, including NASA's Artemis lunar program. Although the Australian Space Agency is relatively new, established a little over a year ago, Australia has a long tradition of working closely with the U.S. in space activities. A formal agreement between NASA and the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) signed in 1960 allows for tracking and communication of NASA missions through the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex (CDSCC) at Tidbinbilla, as well as the Data Relay Satellite facilities in Alice Springs, Northern Territory, and Dongara, Western Australia. The CDSCC serves as an integral component of NASA's Deep Space Network.

The Australian Space Agency's Moon to Mars initiative is a \$150 million investment to grow the space industry. Through this initiative, Australia has the opportunity to showcase our knowledge and capabilities in projects that can support NASA.

NASA is establishing sustainable exploration through the Artemis human exploration program. Collaborating with commercial and international partners to return to the Moon will prepare us for missions to travel on to Mars.

Our aim is for more Australian companies and researchers to take part in the space economy. By being a part of national and international projects, we will create jobs, and further position Australia as a global space player. [Link]

## Cure for burping cows ...

CH4 Global, a US-based company with offices in Australia and New Zealand, is setting an example for the social and economic benefit sharing that sustainable seaweed cultivation can offer through their partnership with Narungga Nation Aboriginal Corporation in South Australia.

The seaweeds will be grown in spaces consisting of 20 hectares of water and two hectares of land, with young algae being transferred from land-based hatcheries to the water to mature. These traditional waters, which are the native home of the *Asparagopsis* species, provide the ideal climate for cultivating both the cold and warm water varieties of the algae, and the company aims to become the world's first commercial scale supplier of *Asparagopsis*.

*Asparagopsis* is claiming a large portion of recent attention in Australia's seaweed landscape due to its commanding potential for climate-change mitigation. The Australian Seaweed Blueprint identified this edible species of red algae as the single biggest opportunity for the industry, estimating that

70 percent of industry growth in Australia will come from *Asparagopsis* cultivation alone. A CSIRO-led study recently found it had the ability to drastically reduce the methane emitted from cattle when a small portion was added to their feed. As well as mitigating the greenhouse gas emissions contributed by Australia's cattle industry - which account for 10 percent of the country's total emissions - the seaweed has significant carbon sequestration properties. [link]

# newszealand

various sources, see web links in online edition



Wellington cable car. Photo: Hagen Hopkins

## Wellington Cable Car

[Source: The Guardian, Eva Corlett, 19 Nov 2021] No trip to Wellington is complete without a quick historic journey on the Cable Car. Enjoy the best views at the Kelburn Lookout, and easy access to the Botanic Garden, Cable Car Museum, Space Place (Carter Observatory) and Zealandia (via free shuttle).

But did you know ... The 215,000-population capital boasts more than 150 personal cable cars (a.k.a. incline lifts). Some look like glass elevators plucked from a science-fiction film, others a giant fibreglass bucket, but however they come, Wellington's personal cable cars are more than just an alternative to scaling the hilly capital's interminable steps; they are a small slice of daily magic for the hundreds of people who use them. [Link].

## Big Doug – another Guinness?

The potato — named Doug because its owners 'dug him up' — clocks in at 7.9 kilos!



[CBC Radio, 5 Nov 2021] When Colin Craig-Brown and his wife came across a huge lumpy mass the size of a small dog buried in their yard, they weren't sure what it was.

The couple was digging up weeds in their Hamilton, New Zealand, garden when they found something so tightly packed in the Earth, they had to use a garden fork to wrench it free.



“[I] gave it a scratch and gave it the taste test – and hey, presto!” Colin Craig-Brown told *As It Happens* host Carol Off. “If it tastes like a spud, it must be a spud.”

But this spud is unlike any other Craig-Brown has ever seen. “It’s bigger than a basketball, and oh, I’d say three times the size of one of your American-football things.”

He has no idea how it got so big, and he doesn’t have any nifty garden tricks to explain it. “I sprinkle on a bit of general fertilizer, a bit of super phosphate, and a little bit of blood and bone [meal fertilizer] and that sort of thing – but I don’t go crazy with it,” he said. “It’s just one of nature’s little mysteries. That’s all I’m saying.” [Link]

## Adopt a Merino

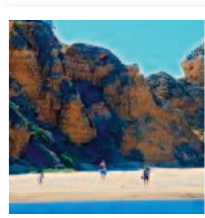
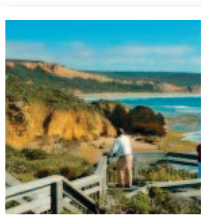
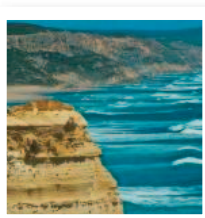
[NZ Herald’s The Country, 30 Nov 2021]

A North Canterbury farmer has come up with a novel way to introduce tourists to Kiwi rural life by “adopting” his sheep out.

Fifth-generation Hurunui farmer Scotty Bamford, and marketer Greg Stubbings came up with “My Kiwi Sheep” - to allow people from all over the world to experience New Zealand farming.

Bamford originally looked into doing farm tours, but Covid-19 border closures put an end to that. My Kiwi Sheep gives clients the opportunity to adopt a Merino, name it, feed it treats, and follow its progress during lambing.

There’s also an option to have wool from the sheep spun into garments, which clients can request for themselves or friends and family. Bamford hoped the experience would give adopters “a bit of an education” about farming while also being interactive.



Brian McCann captured several magnificent lookouts and vantage points along the Great Ocean Road.

## The Great Ocean “Ride” trip

“Twas a dark and stormy night”. So begins one of Gary Hamel’s yarns of shipwrecks along the treacherous coast of the Great Ocean Road. But, I am ahead of myself.

Our quest to find a private driver for our one day tour of the Great Ocean Road began by contacting three companies listed on the internet. At first blush it was a needle in a haystack mission, but that soon seemed to resolve itself with the almost immediate and thorough responses from Gary Hamel of Longhorn Younique Tours.

Reading reviews on the internet should always be a cautious exercise, but sometimes a gut feeling takes over, and from the first contact and several emails to and fro’ with Gary, it all felt very comfortable. The price was also very right, too.

Our booking date, payment and hotel pick up and time was confirmed; all we needed to do was be patient, then travel to “Oz”

The day of our tour dawned, sunny and warm, and there was Gary waiting to greet us warmly just after 7am, as arranged, at our Melbourne hotel. We proceeded to leave the city of Melbourne behind, and our new “Auz-zie mate” briefed us on the day ahead.

Oh, I should mention here our mode of transport was a three-month-old Range Rover, spotlessly clean and very comfortable.

One of our first stops was a mid morning tea break, a carefully selected location of

beauty. My wife and I were told by Gary to explore the glorious spot for ten minutes, and when we returned to the picnic area, the table was set with tea, coffee, and homemade muffins and cookies...deelish!

On we went along the Great Ocean Road, stopping at several magnificent lookouts and vantage points, some inaccessible to those large tour buses, and sometimes just the three of us to view the dramatic coastline.

A delicious lunch (included) was at a restaurant in Apollo Bay. The afternoon was punctuated with more famous landmarks along the Great Ocean Road, the magnificent monument to the returning World War 1 servicemen, the Twelve Apostles, Loch Ard Gorge, London Bridge, etc; and magnificent beaches, also a side road stop to view parrots and koalas both in their native habitat.

The memories of this day will remain with us forever together with the photos. I am a keen photographer and Gary made sure I got the opportunity to shoot some spectacular scenery.

Our return to Melbourne was via the hinterland, arriving at our hotel after 9pm, a very full and memorable 14-hour day, and as a parting gesture from Gary, a home-made cake to tuck into.

My wife and I conveyed our thanks to Gary, and recommend to anyone who is contemplating a trip like this, to put aside the less expensive large bus excursions and the associated inconveniences. Treat yourself to a customized “stop when and where you want” experience. You will never regret it. Gary’s knowledge and enthusiasm will keep you agog all day.

Our only regret is that we did not heed Gary’s advice to extend the tour over two days, instead of one very long day. It would have afforded us the opportunity to witness amongst other things, the view of the early morning and sunset light, and all at a slightly more leisurely pace.

Many thanks, Gary. You made a huge contribution to our holiday “down under”. We wish you well. [Source: link]

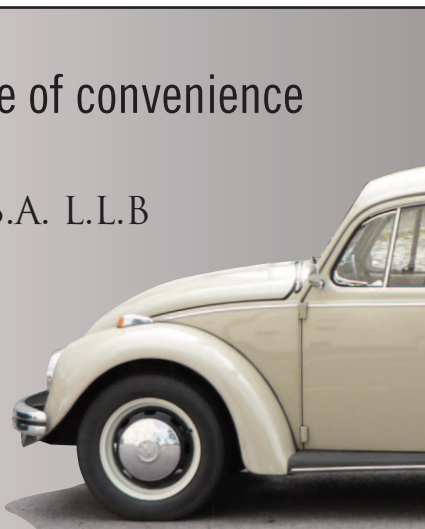
– Brian McCann

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## General John Monash

[Source: Australian War Memorial] John Monash is considered one of the war's outstanding commanders. Monash was born in Melbourne on 27 June 1865. He was dux of Scotch College, and studied arts and engineering at Melbourne University, where he was also involved in debating and student politics. Outside of university he dabbled in acting. In 1884 he joined the university company of the 4th Battalion, Victorian Rifles.

Monash was a driven young man, ambitious and intelligent. He worked on the construction of the Princes Bridge in Melbourne and in 1888 was placed in charge of constructing a new railway, even though he had yet to complete his degree. Monash married Hannah Moss in April 1891, finished his studies in 1895 and, having long since decided to combine engineering with a military career, was promoted to captain in the Garrison Artillery that year. In 1897 Monash was promoted to major in the North Melbourne Battery and served there for 11 years.

Meanwhile, he and a friend had established a private engineering practice in 1894. The business grew steadily, but a series of setbacks left him with large debts in 1902. Starting again, Monash recovered and his business prospered. He also gained promotion to lieutenant colonel in the Australian Intelligence Corps in 1908 and 1913 took command of the 13th Infantry Brigade.

After the outbreak of war, Monash was given command of the AIF's 4th Infantry Brigade, landing at Gallipoli on 26 April 1915. In July he was promoted to brigadier. Despite having encountered some criticism for his performance on Gallipoli, Monash took his brigade to France in June 1916. He became a major general in July and took command of the 3rd Division. The division's first major battle, Messines, was hailed as a great success. Further success followed and in May 1918, Monash was promoted to lieutenant general and given command of the Australian Corps. His first battle in this role, Hamel, of which he wrote: "the operation is a striking example of the success which invariably results from careful preparation and coordinated action: and will serve as a model and the standard of the fighting efficiency of the Australian corps". Monash remained in com-



mand through the victorious battles in the last months of the war. He was an innovative leader who earned high praise from many leading political and military figures.

After spending eight months in London overseeing the repatriation of the AIF, Monash was welcomed home in Melbourne by an enthusiastic public on Boxing Day 1919. He returned to business and in 1920 became manager of Victoria's State Electricity Commission. An advocate for returned soldiers, Monash also held a range of high-level positions. His opinions were widely sought and he became a leading figure in Melbourne's Jewish community.

Monash died of heart disease in Melbourne on 8 October 1931 and was given a state funeral attended by some 250,000 mourners.

Born 12 June 1865, Melbourne – died 8 October 1931, Melbourne.

Read more: [\[link\]](#)

### provincial passage

a poem by Jude McCudden

You grapple for familiar,  
for you're on the rim  
of a new existence, with  
a sextant going haywire.

Some place called Hortons,  
a usual cup of coffee, but  
an accent unrecognized,  
you speak slower, louder.

Stunned, time to withdraw,  
stay silent, observe.  
Take in the scenery  
and the customs.

Google is your friend,  
it won't squeal on you.  
Who is Wayne Gretzky,  
Stuart McLean on radio?

A smile, a thousand words.  
It gets you through  
a long winter without  
a known life.

Identity stripped,  
makes you delve into  
your soul and question  
who are you really?

Five years have passed  
Like some movie that  
cannot choose its genre;  
mystery, adventure, romance.

The credits keep on rolling,  
for many names  
sustained this survival  
and should be applauded.

Punjabi boy knocks on library door,  
anxious for vital papers.  
Proof for a province,  
red tape of an immigrant.

I remember that desperation,  
tiny cog in a maple leaf wheel.  
No sense of belonging, yet  
ready to hold on.

©J McC July 2021

**The United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26** was held in Glasgow from 31st October to 12th November. The Commonwealth Secretariat organised its first Commonwealth Pavilion at COP26, to serve as an inclusive and collaborative space for member countries and accredited organisations to meet, host side events, convene meetings and showcase research. Many of the daily livestream recordings are available here: [\[link\]](#)

**The Commonwealth Blue Charter** is highlighting case studies from the Commonwealth and beyond, as part of a series to spotlight best practice successes and experiences. One such case study is summarised as follows:

**Reef Credits** is a new, voluntary, environmental market scheme that rewards landholders for actions that improve the quality of the run-off from their land into the Great Barrier Reef catchment. When landholders implement projects on their land that meet approved water quality methodologies that demonstrate reduction in nutrients or sediments, they generate Reef Credits. Reef Credits are tradable units that represent a quantifiable volume of nutrient, pesticide or sediment (Reef Credit, 2020). One Reef

Credit equates to preventing 1 kg of nitrogen, or 538 kg of sediment, from entering the Great Barrier Reef. Reef Credits are sold to organisations in the public and private sector that are keen to improve their environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance, demonstrate their support for sustainable initiatives or offset their own impacts.

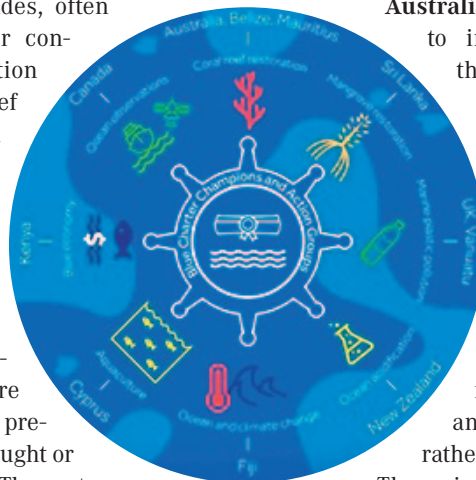
**Environmental markets** are considered a type of policy response, offering incentives to protect the ecosystem or the services it provides, often complementing other conservation or protection measures. The Reef Credit Scheme is an environmental market instrument that uses standards, accounting methodology (quantification), independent auditing and a registry system to measure and validate pollution prevention that can be bought or sold as a commodity. The system is based on the methodology developed by the US organisation Verra. Reef Credits provide landholders with an additional, diversified income stream over 10-25 years and are generated annually. Under the scheme, landholders implement one (or more) accepted

water quality improvement activities based on an accepted methodology. Activities must align with water pollutant reduction targets for the Great Barrier Reef, and must be additional, measurable, monitored and verified by third-party organisations. The concept of additionality refers to the requirement that the activity must be a new undertaking, which is a central notion in other credit schemes as well, such as generating carbon credits.

A new entity called **Eco Markets**

**Australia** has been established to independently manage the Reef Credit Scheme, including adherence to market rules, registry systems and verification. The first credits have already been sold to the private and public sector. Reef Credits do not have a set price and do not function as a cap-and-trade market, but rather as a voluntary scheme.

The price of Reef Credits was negotiated between seller and buyer. The Reef Credit Scheme has the potential to improve water quality in other catchment systems (including non-reef ecosystems) because it could be adapted for different catchment ecosystems. [\[link\]](#)



## BushYarns

### Folklore

Folklore comes in so many forms and it is important that it be seen as part of a living tradition and not simply as something from the past. We all create and pass on folklore, mostly unconsciously, and the workplace is just another opportunity for us to document our lives through storytelling. One of the most active areas related to workplace lore is that of nicknames. Australians love to pin nicknames on each other. An old mate of mine, Harry Stein, used to collect nicknames for me from down at the wharves where he worked. Some of them were beauties:

- 'The Judge' – was always sitting on a case
- 'Hydraulic' – he'd lift anything
- 'The Barrister' – spent so much time at the bar
- 'The Dog' – used to call everyone 'Pal'
- 'Preserved Peaches' – always in the can
- 'Singlets' – the boss who was always on the workers' backs
- 'Crocodile' – always biting mates for a loan
- 'The Undertaker' – always sizing you up

### First Day Pranks

[Source: 'Classic Bush Yarns' by Warren Fahey, 2001.] Then there's the tradition of **first-day pranks** where new chums, often apprentices, are sent out for impossible objects or targeted to be sent up. In many cases, everyone else knows about the joke except the poor individual. Plumbers are dispatched to the local hardware store for a 'long weight' and the store staff simply instruct him to 'wait here' and he does! Nurses are often sent to the hospital store to request 'fallopian tubes'. Carpenters are sent for 'a dozen sky hooks'. Bricklayers are sent for a 'right-handed trowel'. Accountants are sent for 'scales to balance the books' and young lawyers are sent for 'verbal agreement forms'.

[Editor: And in one of my early jobs in the food industry, a boss thought he could fool me into fetching 'a bucket of steam'.... Designer: And I actually fell for a request for a 'wrinkle-stretcher' while photographing a team of sheep shearers in western NSW. Ugh!]

### A joke about the New Zealand accent

An Australian tourist visits New Zealand. He decides to go a small town to take in the lush, rural landscape. He sees a New Zealand farmer walking down the street, carrying a sheep under his arm. Curious the Australian asks, "Are you going to shear that sheep?" The Kiwi farmer responds in a heavy New Zealand accent, "No, I won't *shear* this sheep with you. Get your own." — Billy T James [\[link\]](#)



Our own  
pileated wood-  
pecker. Photo  
by Charlie  
Powell

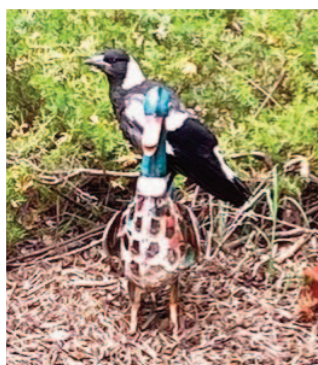


## Woodpeckers

There being no woodpeckers in Australia, my first encounter was while camping in eastern Manitoba in the early 1990s. And, of course, the rat-a-tat-tat was heard before the source of the noise was spotted. After observing them in action, I now know that the creators of Woody Woodpecker took liberties. Chips do not fly with the rat-a-tat-tat! The drumming is just to impress mates and claim territory. But they can certainly chisel out chunks of wood. A good explanation of their unique features can be found here: [\[link\]](#)

Here in Manitoba, we get to see a variety of woodpeckers, from the 6" downy to the 17" pileated (shown above). In between are the red-headed, yellow-bellied (sapsucker), black-backed and the northern flicker. Mexico claims the world's largest – the imperial woodpecker. According to Wikipedia, "The last universally accepted sighting of an American ivory-billed woodpecker occurred in Louisiana in 1944, and the last universally accepted sighting of a Cuban ivory-billed woodpecker occurred in 1987; sporadic

reports of sightings and other evidence of the birds' persistence have continued since then. In the 21st century, reported sightings and analyses of audio and visual recordings have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals as evidence that the species persists in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Florida. Various land purchases and habitat restoration efforts have been initiated in areas where sightings and other evidence have suggested a relatively high probability the species exists, to protect any surviving individuals. In September 2021, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed that the species be declared extinct, pending a 60-day period of public comment ending November 29, 2021. The IUCN has not changed its assessment of the species."



## Reader feedback

Related to last issue's "Staggering Numbers" article, **Ed**, in Adelaide sent this link to another recent example [\[link\]](#). And **Malcolm**, in Canberra, offered this magpie-duck stand-off, or stand-on.



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