

# Gateway

*Peats Ferry 80<sup>th</sup> Bridge Celebration Edition November 2025*



## BROOKLYN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AGM

**BCA Annual General Meeting**  
**2.30pm-4pm | Saturday, 6 December 2025**

**Speaker Councillor Olivia Simons**  
**HSC's Draft Flood Risk Management Study and the**  
**Plan for Overland Flooding**

Join us at the Brooklyn Meeting Room

And once the formalities are done, we'll be shifting gears into some well-earned Christmas cheer—a perfect chance to unwind and celebrate together!

BCA Members, guests & friends welcome

[www.brooklyncommunity.org.au](http://www.brooklyncommunity.org.au)  
<https://www.facebook.com/BrooklynNSW/>

## Co-President's Report

As 2025 rushes toward the finish line, it's been a big one — and yes, we'll admit there's a sigh of relief mixed in with excitement! Two massive, decade-long projects finally reached the finish line: the **1 km Mangrove Boardwalk** connecting Tom Richmond Oval to Kangaroo Point and **bush scaping at Salt Pan Reserve** - what a transformation! A space once overrun by weeds is now a thriving, beautiful native habitat enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

Many in the community expressed disappointed that these major long anticipated openings happened without an invitation from Council to residents - we hear you and we are doing what we can to ensure inclusion in the future. Add to that the postponement of the **Blessing of the Fleet Festival** and delays to finalising parking in Lower and Upper McKell Park, Place Planning and Destination Planning, all of which Hornsby Shire Council has pushed into next year. Not ideal, but rest assured, these conversations haven't gone anywhere permanently.

Making a **positive difference** is what drives so many of us, and it's certainly what fuels the BCA. This year, like those before us, we've focused on advocating for projects that improve safety including additional railings installed on the steps in Bridge Street, a path through Parsley Bay, safe path access for all across the rail bridge on Brooklyn Road, hosting a cyber safety seminar, improvements to infrastructure, liveability, and community connection. Sometimes the wins were big, sometimes they were small — but they all matter. To our hard-working Committee: thank you! Your energy, experience and varied talents have helped strengthen our community in countless ways.

Our BCA meetings continue to be a place where members, residents and often our Ward A Councillors come together to hear what's happening and help shape the future of our town. The magic in Brooklyn comes from collaboration, persistence... and yes, the occasional bit of gentle

nagging. You'll see in this year's Gateway(s) some fantastic examples of what's been achieved or is well on its way — thanks to teamwork between community groups, sporting clubs, volunteers, Councillors and Council.

Speaking of volunteers: Brooklyn runs on them. If you haven't connected with a group yet, we'd love you to consider getting involved. The Cottage (a BCA initiative), volunteers who check the 8 AED's monthly, RFS, Marine Rescue, LHARA, the school and preschool, the Soccer Club and sporting clubs, MAC who raise funds for medical equipment at the Brooklyn GP Unit and of course the BCA — all would welcome an extra pair of hands.

We'd also like to acknowledge the support we've received over the year from Council's Place Planners **David Johnson and Julia Morton**, former GM **Steven Head**, Mayor **Warren Waddell**, Ward A Councillors **Nathan Tilbury, Olivia Simons and Jane Seaglove**, and both our Federal and State Members, **Julian Leeser MP** and **James Wallace MP**. Their openness to our (sometimes ambitious!) wish list has helped deliver real outcomes for our community.

Looking ahead, the BCA Committee would love to welcome some **new members** in 2026 — people keen to contribute, share ideas and continue building a connected, vibrant Brooklyn.

Finally, from both of us and the entire BCA Committee:  
**Wishing you a safe, happy and joy-filled Christmas and holiday season.**

Best wishes, and thank you for a fantastic year,  
**Cindy Corkery & Tony Broome**  
Co-Presidents, Brooklyn Community Association (BCA)

**BROOKLYN RESIDENTS BRAVELY DEFY  
WEATHER GODS TO CELEBRATE THE  
SPECTACULAR NEW BOARDWALK**

Not even **rain, thunder** or the kind of **lightning** usually reserved for dramatic movie scenes could stop more than **50 determined Brooklyn locals** from celebrating together the community's long-awaited new boardwalk on Saturday 15 November.

Armed with umbrellas, enthusiasm, and varying levels of waterproof footwear, residents were joined by Mayor **Warren Waddell**, Ward A Councillors **Nathan Tilbury, Olivia Simons, Jane Seaglove**, and **James Wallace MP** for a heroic one-kilometre march through the mangroves.

With the storm overhead the group huddled together as vocal advocate for the building of the Board Walk, former President BCA **Di Bowles** and young resident **Stephanie Angier** managed to cut the ceremonial ribbon without being swept away, struck by lightning, or losing control of the scissors. The moment marked the end of the community's **ten-year saga** to see the final piece of the shared pathway puzzle completed — a truly spectacular stretch winding through mangroves and bushland from Seymours Creek (opposite Tom Richmond Oval) to Kangaroo Point.



Since its official opening on 31 July, the boardwalk has already become Brooklyn's unofficial "catwalk" has attracted **thousands of visitors** who stroll, stride, glide and occasionally power-walk their way through the mangroves. Carefully designed to protect precious mangrove and bushland habitats, the boardwalk also links seamlessly to the new shared path along Brooklyn Road, creating an almost unbroken route into town for walkers and cyclists alike.

Rain or shine, this stunning new addition proves one thing:  
**Brooklyn knows how to walk the walk.**



### **BROOKLYN SWAPS WALKING SHOES FOR DANCING SHOES AT THE PEATS FERRY BRIDGE 80TH BIRTHDAY**

Brooklyn knows how to throw a birthday party even when the weather tries its hardest to cancel it. For the **80th anniversary of the Peats Ferry Bridge**, storm clouds rolled in with all the confidence of a guest who wasn't invited... but even they couldn't dampen the celebrations. At one point the sky even attempted an apology, parting just enough to offer a shy rainbow and a hint of blue.

Very wet walkers swapped **walking shoes for dancing shoes**, turning the event into a thoroughly enjoyable bridge-side birthday party.

Speakers brought warmth through storytelling that easily outshone the drizzle. **Councillor Nathan Tilbury** shared an informative history of the bridge, including insights into the completed renovations. His storytelling gave real heart to the occasion, reminding us why this quirky, sturdy, much-loved structure is so important to Brooklyn (see an edited version below in the Gateway).

Then **Warren Waddell** took the mic, delivering his signature blend of good humour and big-picture community spirit. Despite the rain (and that very enthusiastic storm cell determined to steal the spotlight), his words highlighted the decades of contribution made by so many locals; the kind of steady, quiet work that keeps a community strong.

**James Wallace MP** spoke about the power of community working with government;





intergenerational strong community spirit that underpins a celebration of the bridge that has connected ours for eight decades.

One of the afternoon's highlights was honouring two of Brooklyn's treasured seniors, **Bob and Bev Davis**, who cut the birthday cake with absolute aplomb. Eighty years of bridge history, decades of community dedication, and one very well-deserved slice of cake. Read a little more of their connection in the Gateway.

What can the BCA say other than **a huge thank you** to everyone who braved the weather and helped make the Brooklyn Bridge 80th Celebration so special? Julianne and your dancers, Kris and the Soccer club for providing shelter and a mic with enough volume to be heard over the passing storm, Suellen and Estuary for keeping open the facilities well after closing time and everyone...your stories, your laughter, your umbrellas, your costumes and hats and your commitment added true depth to the afternoon - proof once again that this community shows up, rain or shine.

## A HISTORY OF MUD, METAL & MAYHEM: CELEBRATING 80 YEARS OF PEATS FERRY BRIDGE

*Special thanks to Councillor Nathan Tilbury, who's clear and engaging historical research brings Brooklyn's past to life. Much of this summary draws on his work — including his book **Pathways to Freeways**, available for purchase at the Brooklyn Community Shop.*

**Before the Bridge: The Great Northern Highway Changes Everything** - Picture this: It's 1930. Cars are getting more popular, roads are still half dirt, and the idea of driving from Sydney to Newcastle in a single day feels almost impossible.

After five years of hard work, the **Great Northern Highway** officially opened on **2 June 1930** — though locals had already been sneaking onto it since 1929. Built at the same time as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, it was an enormous project, especially the rough, mountainous stretch between Hornsby and the Hawkesbury River.

Hornsby Shire Council, led by Chief Engineer **T.A. Donaldson**, had the toughest section. Thankfully, the brand-new Federal Aid Roads Program supplied funding, and unemployed workers were hired to get the job done.

When the Great Northern Highway opened on 2 June 1930 (although the locals had been sneaking through since 1929):

- Travel time between Sydney and Newcastle was **cut in half** to a thrilling 4½ hours.

- The overland journey was shortened by **80 kilometres**.
- At £1.25 million total, it was the **biggest road project ever attempted** in Australia at the time.
- It was also the **first road in the nation designed specifically for motor vehicles**.

Communities from Asquith to Brooklyn quickly felt the benefits — more travel, more business, more visitors, and suddenly, “road trip” was becoming a thing. **There was just one small problem... a Highway Without a Bridge ... Bring On the Ferries.**

Two brand-new diesel ferries: the **George Peat** and the **Frances Peat**, named after the area’s first ferryman and his wife were impressive for their day:

- Top speed: 10 knots (with a full load and a good tailwind).
- Capacity: 37 cars + 20 passengers.
- Together, they could carry **up to 240 vehicles per hour**.

On the southern side, the wharf was built at the old Peat’s Ferry landing at Kangaroo Point. On the northern side, the road to what is now Deerubbin Reserve was originally built purely for the ferry queue. The service ran every day, even during WWII, until the bridge opened in 1945.



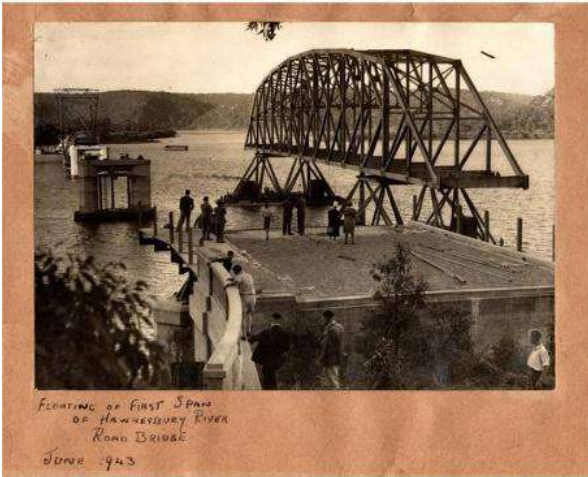
At Christmas and Easter, queues stretched all the way to **Cowan**, complete with toll collectors, sweating livestock, restless children, and probably more than a few frayed tempers.

**Building the Peats Ferry Road Bridge — A World Record Effort** - Bridge construction kicked off in **1938**, a year before the start of the Second World War. It turned out to be a serious engineering challenge - the Hawkesbury River basin is deep, muddy and unpredictable, and wartime shortages slowed everything down.

*Madam Nasser at Kangaroo Point* Still,

what the engineers achieved was remarkable:

- The bridge’s two massive **K-truss spans (135.5 m each)** were the **longest welded trusses in the world** when they were built by Clyde Engineering.
- Welding was cutting-edge for the 1930s — riveting was old news, and this pioneering technique allowed for larger, stronger spans.
- One of the caissons (foundations) had to be sunk **74 metres below low tide** — just a few inches shy of the world record held by the San Francisco Bay Bridge.



FLOATING OF FIRST SPAN  
OF HAWKESBURY RIVER  
ROAD BRIDGE  
JUNE 1943

Australian companies did the entire job, while workers were simultaneously building a new railway bridge to replace the cracked 1889 original.

Astonishingly, despite all this heavy and hazardous work, the bridge teams recorded only one fatality - the earlier accident during road blasting.

**Opening Day: 5 May 1945 — A New Era for Brooklyn** - Although light traffic had been allowed through since March, the Peats Ferry Road Bridge officially opened on **5 May 1945**. A toll was imposed to repay the £451,000 cost (same prices as the ferry) and remained

*Manoeuvring a Bridge Span June 1943*

until 1954. More than **1,200 people** attended the opening day, including five descendants of the Peat family.



In a last-minute flourish, the Minister for Transport announced the name "**Peats Ferry Bridge**", honouring the original ferrymen rather than the plainer "Pacific Highway Bridge." Patriotic pride ran high - Australia had designed and built the bridge entirely with local materials, labour and expertise during a world

*Madam Nasser at Bridge Opening May*

war.

Locals quickly gave it a nickname:

**"The Rat's Tail Bridge,"** because its long northern approach looked like a tail behind the two big steel trusses. The nickname stuck... until the freeway bridge opened beside it in 1973. In 2005, engineers installed an Historic Engineering Marker to honour the original designers and builders.

**Bridge Restoration Completed in 2025** - The Peats Ferry Bridge received a long overdue makeover. Originally pushed for by local MP Judy Hopwood and later strongly supported by Liberal MP Matt Kean, funding was finally allocated for full restoration. After blasting away old lead containing paint, reinforcing steel, and giving the entire structure a protective new coating, the NSW Government announced a **\$39 million refurbishment**, completed in 2025. Today, the bridge looks cleaner, brighter, and far more dignified, a true gateway into Hornsby Shire.

**Eighty Years Strong** - From horse ferries to diesel ferries, from world-record welding to the queues at Cowan, the Peats Ferry Bridge has been part of our community story for generations. Eighty years on, the Peat Ferry Bridge is still standing proud — a testament to engineering brilliance, local persistence and Brooklyn's enduring love for

its river crossings.

*Thank you to Tim and Ian Shadie for supplying the photos*

### ***BOB AND BEV DAVIS - BROOKLYN'S TREASURED SENIORS***

In 1945, the Brooklyn Road Bridge replaced the Peats Ferries— linking Sydney's north to the Central Coast and beyond.

That same year, a barefoot eight-year-old named Bob Davis was walking through orchards and paddocks to Asquith Public School, shanghai in his back pocket.

Like our own Ginger Meggs, maybe a touch wilder, young Bob grew up in Hornsby's orchards with his brothers and sister, while just across town, Beverley Smith was the Hunter Street girl who would later steal his heart. A few years on, the teenage paperboy and the Hornsby "Capulet" met, fell in love, and Bob, ever the sentimental bloke, carved "Bob loves Bev" into the rockface of a local waterfall — now hidden beneath the F3. In the years that followed, Bob ran a bee supplies business in Hornsby while Beverley kept locals fed and smiling from her sandwich shop in Asquith. Together, they raised four children and spent summers exploring the Hawkesbury River on their boats *Nimmitabel* and *Mandalay*.

By the late 1980s, they'd made Brooklyn home and what a difference they've made since. From the Ratepayers Association to the Brooklyn Community Association, they've fought to protect our natural beauty, supported local projects, and helped bring in a proper sewerage system (no more stinky pump-out!). They also ran the Brooklyn Seniors Association for many years, bringing laughter and connection to the older members of our village.



And if we had a dollar for every raffle ticket Bob and Bev have sold for community causes - well, we could probably build another bridge!

But what makes them truly special isn't the number of events or fundraisers; it's their warmth, humour, and generosity. They've welcomed countless new residents with a smile, a story, and a genuine love for this community.

Bob and Beverley Davis truly embody the best of village life —

connected, kind, and full of heart.

*Bob Davis*

## *Cowan Creek Weeding Program – A Great Success*

Local residents Olivia Simons, Brett Hogbin and Rob Corkery joined Chase Alive volunteers and Sarah Glendenning (NPWS Ranger and also a local resident) during the Cowan Creek Weeding Program conducted on Tuesday 28 October 2025.

A total of eight sites were visited and a range of weeds were removed at seven of the sites. The sites weeded were Fishermans Beach which was previously weeded on 01/07/24 where we removed approx. 1100 watsonia and gladioli plants, 50 crofton weed plants, 150 Briza plants, one bag of ehrharta, two juvenile flame trees and collected numerous bottles (some broken), cans, plastic bags and myriad rubbish items.

The main weed removed elsewhere was crofton weed both at previously weeded sites adjacent to Cowan Creek and three new small sites including two isolated rocks within Jerusalem Bay itself.

This program confirmed the effectiveness of the previous weeding programs with reduced numbers of weeds present at all locations with many of those re-emerging only being juvenile and easily removed. It was also positive that we were able to identify some small areas that had not been previously weeded and only accessed by boat.



*Gladiolus / Watsonia*



*Crofton Weed*



*Briza*



## MARCUS SHINES AT THE NSW PREMIER'S SPELLING BEE STATE FINALS



Brooklyn Public School's **Marcus Sahlman** proudly represented our community at the **2025 NSW Premier's Spelling Bee State Finals** on Friday 7 November at Penrith's Q Theatre.

Selected from more than **200,000 entrants**, Marcus was one of just **32 junior finalists**. His day started with a special moment—an interview with **Craig Reucassel on ABC Radio Sydney's Breakfast Show**, where he confidently spoke about competing and representing Brooklyn Public School.

On stage, under bright lights and news cameras, Marcus tackled a challenging mix of words. He confidently spelt *percussion*, *colloquial*, *diligent* and *ignorant* before being eliminated midway through the competition on the word *Lycra*, placing him in the top half of the state's best young spellers.

All finalists received certificates and prize packs, and Marcus enjoyed a celebratory lunch and the excitement of being part of televised news coverage later that day.

A huge congratulations to **Marcus** for his outstanding effort and for representing Brooklyn Public School with such pride.

Our local students are fortunate that **Mrs Ashley Smith** introduced the Spelling Bee at BPS, and to **Principal Mrs Leanne King** for supporting Marcus on the day.



## CAUGHT IN THE NET CATCHES BIG LAUGHS

Under a perfect, star-lit sky on **Saturday 8 November**, at least **250 locals** gathered for this year's Brooklyn Community Theatre in the Park performance of ***Caught in the Net*** the much-anticipated sequel to last year's riotous *Run for Your Wife*. And true to promise, the audience was treated to a glorious tangle of **mistaken identities, secret schedules, and enough double lives to require a spreadsheet.**



From the opening scene, the **talented cast** delivered comedy with such enthusiasm that even the mozzies stopped biting just to pay attention. Their timing was sharp, the chaos beautifully choreographed, and the facial expressions alone deserved their own encore. At several points, the audience were laughing so hard they nearly spilled their picnic wine — a true sign of theatrical success.



Whether it was an unexpected entrance, a phone call that arrived at precisely the wrong moment, or a character sprinting across the stage as if trying to qualify for the Olympics, the energy never dipped. The plot tied itself into knots, untied itself, and then knotted up again for good measure — and we loved every second.

Another wonderfully funny night of live performance in our community. Bravo to the cast of 7, the 25+ crew, and everyone who helped make *Caught in the Net* a night worth getting “caught” up in!

**DATES TO PUT IN YOUR DIARY- NEXT PAGE....**



**COMMUNITY SUMMER EXHIBITION**  
at The Cottage

**6 December 2025 - 18 January 2026**  
**Art and Craft**  
10 Dangar Road, Brooklyn

The Cottage is an initiative between the Brooklyn Community Association and Horsley Council



# The Cottage

## Art, Craft, History

10 Dangar Rd, Brooklyn  
Open Sat/Sun 10am-3pm

### Volunteer

We are always after volunteers  
to welcome visitors

### Craft Group

The group meets each Tuesday  
from 2-4pm

Are you interested in holding a workshop,  
talk or another activity at The Cottage?

Please contact by social media or email  
[thecottage@brooklyncommunity.org.au](mailto:thecottage@brooklyncommunity.org.au)



## 2026 Exhibitions at The Cottage

24 January - 1 March : Lorraine Best & Richard Sakurovs

7 March - 12 April : Genevieve Ginty

18 April - 24 May : Shane Shepherd

30 May - 5 July : Mooney Mooney Art Club

11 July - 16 August : Debra Pittam

22 August - 27 September: Wendy Prince

3 October - 8 November : Brooklyn Public School

14 November - 20 December - Jane Walker






*To our 2025 volunteers,  
exhibiting artists and visitors  
THANK YOU*

*Happy Christmas and  
have a wonderful 2026*

 SYDNEY TRAINS: WEEKEND MAINTENANCE – Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 January 2026



-  Buses replace trains all weekend
-  Telstra: Backup battery & generator in place
-  Optus & Vodafone: Contact your provider for support
- Plan ahead for travel and phone/internet use

*Dates may change – stay updated!*

### JIVE ARRIVES IN BROOKLYN!

Brooklyn is officially dancing, thanks to **Julianne Dance Modern Jive** — and you're invited to join the fun!

No experience needed, just enthusiasm and maybe shoes that won't fly off mid-twirl.

 **Contact Julianne on 0403 000 448 to book your spot.**

A big **thank-you** to Julianne and her dancers for their fabulous 1940s-style jive display at the bridge's 80th birthday. Vintage outfits, swinging music, high kicks — Brooklyn hasn't looked that stylish since... well, the 1940s.

### SUMMER'S HERE – KEEP UP TO DATE WITH TideKing

#### Plan Your Day on the Water with TideKing

Whether you're a keen fisher, a boating enthusiast, or just planning a relaxing day by the river, TideKing has you covered. TideKing provides up-to-date local weather forecasts, tide charts, and fishing times tailored for Brooklyn and the surrounding waterways.

Perfect for both residents and visitors, TideKing makes it easy to stay safe, enjoy the best fishing conditions, and make the most of our beautiful river and bay.

 **Check it out here: <https://tideking.com/Australia/New-South-Wales/Hornsby-Shire/Brooklyn-Wharf/>**

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*Contact details Gateway Editor: [info@brooklyncommunity.org.au](mailto:info@brooklyncommunity.org.au)*

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