



Southern Gateway to the Barossa

The Willy Wagtail published and distributed by the
volunteers of the WILLIAMSTOWN ACTION GROUP

Issue 538

July

2025

Quiz Night



Friday July 19th

In the

Williamstown

Soldiers Memorial Hall

Doors open 6.30pm

Starts 7pm sharp

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The Amazing Racing Pigeon and the Barossa Valley Racing Pigeon Club.

Imagine you are standing in the sandy outback of our country amongst low scrubby bushes with the huge brilliant blue sky above. You are gazing at an amazing purpose-built German trailer whose roller door is suddenly activated and as it rises each of the nine levels of revealed cages snaps open, bottom to top, and within seconds the air is filled with the flurry of beating wings, the blur of shiny coloured feathers, a stream heading rapidly upwards. Racing Pigeons! On task to find their bearings they begin to circle, but then, amazingly, you are lucky enough to see a breakaway, a small group fanning out into a line and heading unerringly for home, dots in the distance then out of sight within seconds! These pigeons will be the place getters, the winner, amongst them! A few years ago, after nineteen hours on the wing from Alice Springs, the birds who came in first and second were separated by only one second! The South Australian Pigeon Racing Association began in 1895, and the Racing Season begins at the end of May and continues until early October with the racing pigeons covering at times incredible distances – 1000kms in a day and at speeds up to 108kms/hour with the wind behind them, as some did from Orroroo on the fifth of June this year. They may start their race as close as Carrieton in the Flinders Ranges (300kms) or from as far away as Devonport, Kalgoorlie, Alice Springs, Brisbane, Sydney or Canberra. Many fly non-stop, hopefully avoiding predatory falcons and hawks and mishaps along the way. Arriving at their home loft a scanner will clock their arrival time, and the anticipatory waiting time will end for the bird's owner. With a life span of up to 20 years these small birds have incredible stamina and incredible skills. From hundreds of kilometres away, I too, would love to "hear the wind in the Mount Lofty Ranges" and "smell the foliage of the Williamstown area" and "navigate by the earth's magnetic field, the position of the sun and stars" and know exactly where I am. They can also see ultraviolet light. Most people involved with pigeons might have a hundred birds in their Loft! These are kept fit and healthy, with good food and fresh water, exercised and trained, often in conjunction with other Clubs. But, let me point out, these Racing Pigeons have pedigrees, tracing back generations, and these are recorded meticulously. They are NOT to be confused with the masses of pestilent feral pigeons that abound everywhere, but not, I am assured, in Williamstown. To point out the huge gap between the two types, the feral pigeon has been likened to a Shetland Pony and the Racing Pigeon to a thoroughbred racehorse! So where are all these fascinating pieces of information, quotes and stories coming from? My source is Russell Somerville, a member of the Barossa Valley Racing Pigeon Club with whom I was lucky enough to spend a couple of hours a few weeks ago. Russell has a profound knowledge of racing pigeons and all things to do with them and if you thought it was just a matter of letting a pigeon go somewhere and clocking its return time – you'd be wrong! Excitingly, you need to cultivate skills in a broad field of subject areas – "Genetics, Animal Husbandry, Computer Science, Meteorology, Map Reading, Veterinary Science and Team-work" as well as honing your ability to "being involved in a World Wide Sport" which entails "being respectful of the best athletes in the animal world and understanding that the birds choose to come back to the home and care you provide." The Barossa Valley Racing Pigeon Club was preceded by the Williamstown Homing Club, which was established on May 11th, 1937, in the supper room of the Williamstown Institute. Pigeon racing has taken place in Williamstown right through to the present day, even during the War Years. Familiar town names were present at the forming of the Club – Rowe, Lane, Hill, Springbett, Patterson, Wilkin, Adams, Bell and White.

The very first race was from Manoora, a distance of 46 miles, on July 3rd, 1937. Russell, who has had pigeons for racing since 1966, came to Williamstown in 1987 and joined the pigeon racing community. He is a Member of the Australian National Board for Pigeons (ANRPB). In 1990, Williamstown and Lyndoch Pigeon Racers left the Gawler Pigeon Clubrooms to set up their own Clubrooms. Initially, they operated out of people's homes, then the old Lyndoch Scout Hall, before their own building, totally funded by the Club, was erected in 1993, in what is now known as Barossa Park. The Club Building was officially opened on the 28th of January 1995 by Ian Ross. The Club fundraises annually with an event at Curdnatta Park which attracts people from as far away as Victoria and NSW. Birds themselves are often auctioned raising significant sums in many cases. Although the Club's early written records have been handed over to the Williamstown and Districts Historical Society for care and safe keeping, the Barossa Clubrooms still house a few historic relics of how things were done in the past. Since 2013 technology assists in much of the data gathering and recording. An electronic clocking system is used with all clocks set at the same second and everything is very tightly controlled. However, I did love the way a pigeon's foot on a little pad sets the whole thing in motion! The Racing Pigeons, when taken in their air-conditioned, bespoke trailer with food and water laid on and released by technology from their crates at the starting point of their race, don't know how lucky they are as, back in the day, a Club Founding Member, Cliff Patterson, would mount his pushbike and pedal his birds in their small crate to the Lyndoch Railway Station and put the birds on the train to Peterborough or Tailem Bend for training! For years Cliff and good friend Bob Bell hoped to win the "Melbourne Cup" of the Pigeon racing world – Alice Springs to Home, a distance of 1310kms - but it was not to be. However, Russell with his beautiful bird, 'Black Onyx', achieved that goal for them in 2018. The Barossa Club currently has 15 members but only 10 will be competing this year in races: – from the north – from Maree, Coober Pedy, Marla and Alice Springs - from the east - from Lameroo (182 kms) and from various race points between Lameroo and a new site, Bathurst, which is the longest at 1025kms! Racing Pigeons during the War Years provided courier services for important despatches to and from the various theatres of the war that resulted in 32 of the 54 Dickin Awards presented up until 1949 to animals, going to the Racing Pigeons. There is a section in the Canberra War Memorial that showcases their incredible contribution to the saving of hundreds of lives during the Wars. My sincere Thanks must go to Russell for the time he spent explaining to me, so well, and with such infectious enthusiasm, the nature of the sport and about the pigeons themselves. If you are at all interested in learning more about pigeons, pigeon racing or the Barossa Valley Racing Pigeon Club please contact Russell Somerville on 0457446778. L.L.

If you would like to advertise, submit a letter or story to the Willy Wagtail

Email us: wwwagtail@gmail.com or Ph Debbie 0417851061

or write to us and place your entry in the cream Letter Box on the wall on the end of the Post Office Verandah, Queen Street, Williamstown

DEADLINE: 25th of each month

Advertising Prices: Full Page \$50, Half page \$25, Quarter Page \$15. Colour extra \$20

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PLEASE NOTE: The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editor or The Williamstown Action Group.

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What's on in Williamstown

If you would like details of your group added or updated send us your details

| | |
|--|---|
| | Every Tuesday 9.30 am – 3pm (March – October) |
| Amateur Players | Williamstown Soldiers Memorial Hall |
| | Contact: Suzanne 0422 353 898 or Sue 85 246 502 |
| Barossa Writers | 2nd Wednesday of each month at 10am in the Lyndoch Library |
| | (except January) Contact: Doug 0418 855 066 |
| Barossa 4WD Club | 2nd Wednesday of each month at 8pm in the Lyndoch Meeting Room |
| | Contact: Barry Brinkley 0402 312 674 |
| Church of Christ | Sunday Service 10am 8 Margaret Street, Williamstown |
| | Contact Trev: 0426 977 292 |
| Kersbrook Landcare | Volunteers Wednesday 8.30am—4pm. Public Plant Sales first weekend of each winter month |
| Nursery (Williamstown) | Contact: Heidi klg.nursery@landcaregroup.org.au 0431 989 397 |
| Williamstown & Districts Historical Society | Williamstown Soldiers Memorial Hall by appointment . Contacts: Jodie: jvrandall4@hotmail.com.au Denise: ppa19495@bigpond.net.au |
| Knit & Natter | Every Thursday 1.30 pm-4pm Contact Prue 85 246 437 |
| Williamstown & Lyndoch Landcare | Meetings 4th Wed of every month in Library Rooms Lyndoch., 7.30pm Working bees Thursdays 9-12pm (except over 30 degrees). Contact: Chairperson— Angus Atkinson 0498 649 766 |
| Patchers | Every 2nd & 4th Monday (If Monday is a public holiday, then Tuesday instead). Contact: Lexley 0411315166 |
| Playgym & Playgroup | Contact: Williamstown Primary School 85 246 280 |
| Williamstown Community Social Group | Every Tuesday 1pm till 4pm St Peter's Anglican Church Hall Contact: Pam 0427 246 382 |
| Southern Barossa Men's Shed | Tuesdays 9am—1pm & Wednesdays 9am –2pm Contact Glen: 0409 675 937 |
| Uniting Church | SUNDAY SERVICES 10:00 am followed by morning tea . Contact: Peter 0458 202 004 |
| Williamstown Action Group | 7.30pm 1st Monday monthly in Meeting Room upstairs in Williamstown Soldiers Memorial Hall Contact: Graeme 0499 881 08 |



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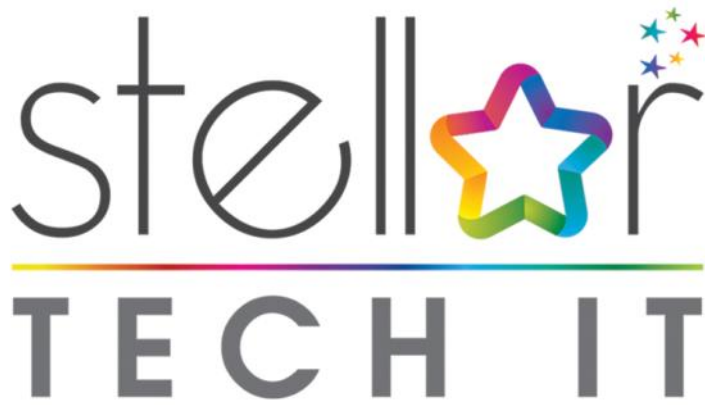
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A photograph of Tony Pasin, a man with dark hair wearing a white button-down shirt, leaning on a wooden fence in a vineyard. In the background, there are rows of grapevines and some old, rusty metal wheels.

TONY PASIN

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR **BARKER**

*Supporting the
Williamstown and Barossa
Valley Communities*

 Shop 5, Murray Bridge Green, Riverview Road, Murray Bridge SA 5253  8531 2466

 tony.pasin.mp@aph.gov.au  tonypasin.com  [TonyPasinMP](https://www.facebook.com/TonyPasinMP)

Authorised by T. Pasin MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Shop 5, Murray Bridge Green, Riverview Rd, Murray Bridge SA 5253.



SOUTHERN BAROSSA MEN'S SHED

The Men's Shed is a concept which is growing in popularity and increasing in number in Australia and around the globe. It provides an outlet for men, much in the same way that the backyard shed has in Australian culture over many years. The Southern Barossa Mens Shed extends a welcome to men from all walks of life to attend our Shed. Without a strict format we foster fellowship and emphasise the importance of men enjoying the activities, feeling a sense of

belonging and being part of a relaxed non-pressured group.

We encourage anyone who simply wants to turn up for 'a cuppa' and socialise while others may want to tinker, mend or create in the well equipped workshop. If you are curious to try new things someone is always on hand to help out. Making or repairing furniture or homewares or toys, mending and fixing motors, renovating bicycles, arts and crafts, all examples (but certainly not the limits) of the activities that can be undertaken at the Shed depending on the knowledge and skillset of the members.

Projects and activities are also undertaken which benefit the community.

The S.B.M.S. shed is located at the rear of the Wirraminna Care Little Shop of Treasures on Queen Street, Williamstown. Any enquiries relating to the shed, membership or the hire of the meeting room (attached to the workshop) can be directed to Glen Venning on 0409 675 937.



Pioneers Mens Chat

Thursday 10th July 2025

2.00pm - \$5.00 per person

Topic

**"Role of Racing Pigeons throughout the War"
Presented by Russell Somerville**

John W-0466 346 215 or John K 0417 405 080

***Venue - RSL/Senior Citizen Hall@Williamstown*
Memorial Drive, Williamstown**

Sandy Creek Uniting Church

July 6th 9.30am HC Rev Geoff Graetz
July 13th 9.30am Rev Brian Polkinghorne
July 20th 9.30am Dr David Taplin
July 27th 9.30am Rev Geoff Graetz
Aug 3rd 10.30am Holy Communion
& shared lunch Rev Cyrus Kung—



Sandy Creek Uniting Church

162 Williamstown Rd, Cockatoo Valley,
Regular Sunday Services are held at the Church at 9.30am
Followed by a time of fellowship and morning tea
All welcome to attend.

Sandy Creek Uniting Church

Bush Chapel

Situated alongside the Church and is available
To all for private, quiet contemplation,
Or can be booked for Function, Weddings,
Baptisms, Funerals and other celebrations

For further information:-E-mail. sandycreeluca@gmail.com



**Are you finding it's tough in this
world at the moment?
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answers.**

**Join us at our Williamstown
Uniting Church Family:**

- Sundays 10am
- Mondays 7pm Life Group
- Tuesday 1pm Bible Study
and more

**Little Eve Street/Church Street
or contact Norma 0408 834 450
or Peter 0458 202 004.**

Williamstown Church of Christ

Worship - 10:00am Sunday's

**All are welcome to come and join
us**

**Contact - Trevor Venning
0426977292**

**You can view our weekly message
on our YouTube page**

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St. Peter's Anglican Church

Friday 4th 9.30 am Holy Communion in
hall

Sunday 6th 10.00 am Holy Communion

Friday 11th 9.30 am Holy Communion in
hall

Sunday 13th 10.00 am Holy Communion

Sunday 20th 10.00 am Holy Communion

Sunday 27th 10.00 am Holy Communion

All are welcome to join us

Priest Steven de Kleer 85642087

Or Church Warden Pam 0427 246 382

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Southern Barossa Coffee & Chat Mornings



We enjoyed a lovely morning tea at the Monkey Nut Café in June. Once again thoroughly supported by the staff, again we thank you.

Our catch up for July will be at the Yaldara Riverside Restaurant, 159 Herman Thum Dr, Lyndoch.

Please note time for this –11am! That is when they open. Thursday 10th July.

We are always happy to see new faces from the Southern Barossa towns which include Lyndoch, Rowland Flat, Williamstown, Rosedale, Sandy Creek and Cockatoo Valley

So if you have a spare hour or two, we would love to have you join us.

If you require further information, please contact Judy on 0413 606 565

LET'S GET SOCIALISING!



COME AND JOIN US AT THE WILLIAMSTOWN COMMUNITY SOCIAL CLUB!

IF YOU LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN PLAYING TABLE TENNIS, PLAYING BOARD GAMES OR CARDS, DOING JIGSAW PUZZLES, SOCIALISING AND HAVING FUN, ENJOY TEA, COFFEE AND BISCUITS THEN COME AND JOIN US!

WHERE: St Peters Anglican Church Hall George St, Williamstown

WHEN: **EACH TUESDAY**
1PM TO 4PM COST: **\$4.**
Contact: Pam 0427 246 382



Barossa 4-Wheel Drive Club

The Barossa 4WD club is a small group of friendly individuals who enjoy exploring this beautiful country of ours together.

We organize both social and holiday trips of various duration where members are free to opt in to a variety of activities.

If you own a 4WD vehicle and are keen to share your time with other like-minded people, come along to one of our monthly meetings and say hello.

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at the Lyndoch Library meeting room at 7.30pm. or send us an email at barossa4wdclub@gmail.com

You can also find us on Facebook. Barossa 4WD Club Inc.

The third Tuesday every month

July 15th 2025

10 – 11.30am RSL HALL



‘Scone Time’

\$5.00

Time for a scone,
(with jam and cream or savoury)

Plus..an endless cuppa tea or coffee

And a lucky door prize

*Last month Commonwealth Bank rep
presented a very well accepted Cyber Security
topic. Thank you*



This month –

**We're two years old-
Let's celebrate!!**



Extra door prizes and surprises!!

*** Information** – do you need to know how to –

- Contact My Aged Care?
- Need help with rent assistance?
- Help with something else?...we can point you in the right direction

*** or just some one to share a cuppa with or
meet new people in the town?**

EVERYONE WELCOME

Snippets

Good News! The Barossa Bakehouse Bistro (formerly The Bakehouse Tavern) will, hopefully, be opening now on Wednesday July the 30th. They will be serving pizza, pasta and slow cooked meats in a Family friendly environment. Open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for dinner only they will be open on Saturdays and Sundays for Lunch and Dinner. Actual opening hours are still unavailable but to start with bookings can be done via Facebook messenger or email

manager@barossabakehousebistro.com.au

The bistro's phone will be connected sometime in July. Good Luck to this new venture in Williamstown. L.L.

A man and a woman are standing in a lush vineyard. The woman, on the left, has long dark hair and is wearing a black off-the-shoulder dress. The man, on the right, has short blonde hair and a beard, wearing a white shirt and a light-colored blazer. They are both smiling. The background shows rows of grapevines and a wooden fence in the distance.

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Opening Hours Mon—Fri 9am—5.30pm & Sat 9am –2pm

Keep an eye out for the NEW changes about to take place at the Williamstown Pharmacy with new Renovations taking place in the next few weeks.

The Pharmacy will double in size and offer larger Webster packing space and a consulting room, adding extra services when complete.

With the friendly staff on hand to assist with webster packing, advice and local delivery, the Pharmacy and knowledgeable staff are there to offer their service to the local community.

Upmost consideration will be taken to cause as minimal disruption as possible. There may be possible interruptions to the hours of operation for the short term.

If you have an added service or product that you would like provided at the Pharmacy, let them know. They will have more room and are keen to make the Pharmacy accessible and available to all in the community.

In the meantime, the girls will be doing their best to keep smiling while avoiding the dust and noise that renovations come with.

It will be exciting to see the progress and the end result, when completed. Stay tuned..... in the next issue we will have a story about the history of the



building and the plans for the bigger and better Pharmacy.

Good luck ladies and all the best.

Great to see you investing in Williamstown.