

## Rainfall Report\* (mls)

### 2025

Nov 21.2  
Oct 23.8  
Sept 47  
Aug 118.4  
July 71  
June 22.6  
May 406.6  
April 205.6  
March 243.8  
Feb 26.6

\* Source: BOM, Clarence  
Town Rainfall Station 061010

## 2026: From Planning to Pavement

Happy New Year, everyone. If you're reading this with a slightly fuzzy head and a resolution you've already broken, don't worry – you're in good company.

2025 was, in many ways, the “Year of the Paperwork.” We sat through countless reviews, studies, and town planning sessions, debating exactly who we want to be as a district. While “reflection” isn't always exciting, that groundwork was vital.

As of late 2024/early 2025, Clarence Town and Surrounds reached an estimated Resident Population of 3,173, which builds on the 13.6% population surge Clarence Town experienced between 2016 and 2021—a rate significantly higher than

many other regional hubs. More families are choosing our “big sky” lifestyle, and frankly, who can blame them?

But 2026 is where the dust starts flying. We are officially moving into the “Action Phase.” The construction certificate for the long-awaited petrol station has finally been accepted for assessment, meaning we're another step closer to be able to fill up without a roadmap and a packed lunch.

Even bigger? The \$6-million pub development by Tony McLeod and Williams River Steel is set to transform the town's social pulse (Don't miss the DDCC dinner on 26 Feb, where Tony will reveal all). Add the new Clarence Town Bridge, which is on track to wrap up by late 26.

With Mayor Digby Rayward's council, the Progress Association, the “Community Builders” and other organisations – we are ready to turn those 2025 plans into 2026 reality. It's going to be a year progress – and I wouldn't have it any other way.

*Cathy Schneider, Editor*

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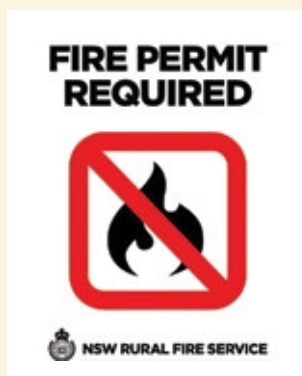
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✦ CLOSING DATE FOR NEWS & ADS IN OUR NEXT ISSUE IS 10TH FEBRUARY ✦



Christmas in  
Clarence Town  
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Apply for Fire  
Permits ONLINE  
RFS PAGE 10



Clarence Town's  
\$6m PubUpdate  
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Under 16s Banned  
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# What's On

Welcome to the heart of Clarence Town!  
Discover local happenings, events and opportunities. To list your local event for free, email [thesentinel2321@gmail.com](mailto:thesentinel2321@gmail.com)

## JANUARY

**01** **THURSDAY**  
**NEW YEAR'S DAY**

**26** **MONDAY**  
**AUSTRALIA DAY**  
**PUBLIC HOLIDAY**

**27** **TUESDAY**  
**BACK TO SCHOOL**  
for public schools

**31** **SATURDAY**  
8am-12pm: **Clarence Town Markets**, at Clarence Town Bowling Club. *Hosted by the Lion's Club.*



CGIs of the new Clarence Town Pub

## FEBRUARY

**05** **THURSDAY**  
6.30pm: **Clarence Town Progress Association** meeting. Clarence Town Community Centre.

**10** **TUESDAY**  
6pm: **Clarence Town Lions Club** meeting. Clarence Town Bowling Club.

**14** **SATURDAY**  
9am-12pm & 1-3pm: **Clarence Town & District Flood Study Info Sessions** at the CT School of Arts. *Hosted by Dungog Council.* See ad pg 13.



**26** **THURSDAY**  
**Dungog District Chamber of Commerce's Dinner Meeting** at the Clarence Town Bowling Club. See their website or FB site.

**28** **SATURDAY**  
8am-12pm: **Clarence Town Markets**, *hosted by the Lion's Club.* Clarence Town Bowling Club.



**A massive thank you to the local businesses who advertise with us, funding The Sentinel. Please support them – without their help, we wouldn't be here!**

*Disclaimer: Articles submitted to this newsletter may be edited for clarity, length, accuracy, and style at the discretion of the editor. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, the views and opinions expressed in submitted articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the newsletter team or affiliated organisations. Publication does not imply endorsement.*



Clarence Town Progress Association Report

# Lights, Lollies, and Looking Ahead

The Clarence Town Progress Association (CTPA) ended 2025 on a high note, starting with a \$2,250 donation of three specialized architectural lights to the Lions Club.

These lights made a spectacular debut at the December Christmas Carols, bathing the Court House Museum and the historic Casuarina tree in a vibrant rainbow glow.

The festive spirit continued with our donation of all lollies for the Rural Fire Brigade's annual Christmas Eve run. We deeply appreciate the RFS volunteers who ensured Santa visited every child, from town estates to local farms. This was a wonderful conclusion to a busy year.

*Looking forward, the CTPA is already planning new community projects, infrastructure improvements, and engaging local events to make 2026 even brighter. Stay tuned for a very busy and exciting year ahead as we continue working hard for our wonderful town through various initiatives!*

**Bronwyn Green, Clarence Town Progress Association**



*Clarence Town & District Historical Museum Assoc.*

## Summer Highlights at the Museum

November brought a change of plans for the Dungog Historic Motor Club, whose monthly meeting was warmly hosted at the Museum, with more than twenty members attending. A wonderful addition followed soon after, with a generous donation of a 1920s lawn edger presented at their AGM in early December.

The Museum was also proud to host the Clarence Town Lions Club Christmas Carols & Markets on Saturday the 8th December, featuring the inaugural lighting of the Clarence Town Christmas Tree — an event we hope will become an annual tradition. Despite the heat, it was a fantastic afternoon and evening, made possible by the incredible support of local businesses, volunteers and the tireless efforts of Trudy Balstad.

It was truly special to see the Museum, its grounds and its location so actively enjoyed by the community.

**CLOSED JANUARY.** Open the 2nd Sat of each month, 10am–2pm or by appointment. Chris O'Neill, Museum Committee Secretary, [Ctmuseum@outlook.com](mailto:Ctmuseum@outlook.com) 0491 346 491



*Clarence Town Lions Club Report*

## From the Lion's Den



In November 2025, the Clarence Town Lions Club supported Taskforce Veteran by hosting a community BBQ for the "Swim In" event. Special thanks to our dedicated volunteers Shaun, Elio, Steve, Bill, Col, Chris, Cheryl, Rose, Tobi, and Marjorie.

In December, the club partnered with the Courthouse Museum for the annual Community Christmas Carols. Families enjoyed FREE snow cones, fairy floss, and amusements, generously supported by sponsors and the Dungog Shire Council Youth Grant. The inaugural lighting of the community Christmas tree at The Museum added extra magic throughout December.

### **Thank You to Our Sponsors:**

- **CT Progress Association & Dungog Chamber of Commerce:** for purchasing Christmas lights for the tree
- **Thomsen Automotive:** major sponsor of the kids FREE amusements and free treats
- **Dungog Shire Council & Youth Grant:** contributed to amusements and free activities
- **KRH Mechanical, CT Home Timber & Hardware, Clarence Town IGA:** Lollies, lights, and water
- **CT Bowling Club, Dowling Real Estate, Perception Planning, Community Builders:** Funding for singers and amusements
- **CT Rural Fire Brigade:** Bringing Santa on the fire truck
- **CT Lions Club & Court House Museum:** For logistics, MC Chris and to all the many volunteers!

**Get Involved:** Join our meetings at the Bowling Club, 6pm, every 2nd Tuesday or share ideas for future events.

**Lions Markets Return:** Back the last Saturday of each month starting January. Support local makers and growers!

**Contact:** Trudy Balstad (President) – 0409 645 469.

**Follow us on Facebook:** @Clarence Town Lions Club.



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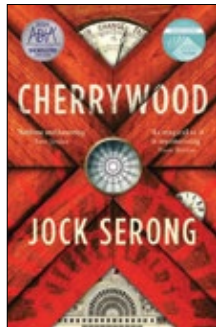
Book Recommendations

## Shelf Life

Looking for your next page-turner? The Sentinel's curated book recommendations make finding the perfect read a breeze – for adults and kids alike!

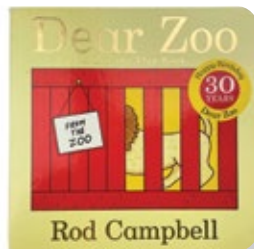
**Cherrywood by Jock Serong**  
– Reviewed by Cathy Schneider

Cherrywood is a genre-bending historical fantasy centring on a legendary paddle steamer built from stolen, sacred cherrywood timber. The story weaves through time, connected by a mysterious, shifting pub that defies the laws of physics. This haunting narrative explores the cost of greed and the grit of survival with a supernatural edge—an atmospheric, speculative mystery perfect for readers who love stories that bridge the gap between history and myth.



**“Dear Zoo” by Rod Campbell**  
– Reviewed By Anne Fisher

“Dear Zoo” is a light hearted lift-the-flap book which encourages children to interact with the story. The simple sentences and bold, colourful illustrations tell the story of a child who wants a pet. The child writes to a zoo requesting a pet and is sent crates containing a variety of unsuitable animals! The giraffe is too tall, the elephant is too big, the frog is too jumpy, the monkey is too naughty. The reader is presented with these creatures in a fun playful way drawing attention to the animals’ special individual features. Finally, the child receives a “perfect” puppy.



**Brought to you by “Books & More,” 232 Dowling St, Dungog.**  
**Explore our \$5 book collection and support Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. Open Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.**  
**Contact Anne Higgins at 0403 029 181.**



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AUSTRALIA  
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Clarence Town Tennis Club

# The Summer of Tennis is Upon Us



All the greats of the game are playing tournaments around Australia culminating with the Aus Open. In Clarence Town, you can get in on the fun of the game by hiring a court and having a hit with your family and friends.

Book a court and enjoy the summer weather on the tennis court. The Summer social night competition for club members will start when school goes back. If you are interested in playing get in touch with me. Club membership is available for \$35 for Adults and \$25 for children. Get a family membership for \$80. We look forward to seeing the tennis club being used more and more during 2026.

Visit our website to find out more about the Clarence Town Tennis Club [play.tennis.com.au/clarencetownnanddistricttennisclub](http://play.tennis.com.au/clarencetownnanddistricttennisclub) or follow us on Facebook. To make a court hire booking or for more info contact Bradon 0417 651 577 or Gai on 0419 600 219.

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Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube icons

## Clarence Town Bowling, Sport & Recreation Club

Ph- (02) 49964222

Email - [admin@clarrobowlo.com.au](mailto:admin@clarrobowlo.com.au)

Socials - FB: Clarence Town Bowling Club

IG- @clarencetownbowlingclub\_



**MONDAY**- Bingo 11:30am start, \$12 for 20 games & 2 jackpot sheets

**TUESDAY**- Euchre 6:30pm  
Bingo! 6:30pm start, \$12 for 20 games & 2 jackpot sheets

**WEDNESDAY**- Happy Hour 4-6pm

**THURSDAY**- Bingo 11:30am start, \$12 for 20 games & 2 jackpot sheets  
Happy Hour - 4-6pm

**FRIDAY** - Meat & Voucher Raffles, Members Draw & Live Music  
(tickets on sale at 6pm and drawn at 7pm)

**SATURDAY** - Meat Raffles  
(tickets on sale at 2pm & drawn at 4pm)  
Happy Hour- 2-4pm

**LAST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH** - Meat & Voucher Raffles + Members Draw  
(tickets on sale at 5pm and drawn at 6pm)

**OPENING HOURS:**  
Monday-Sunday - From 11am

**Maria's Kitchen Opening Hours:**  
Lunch: 12:00-2:00 Wednesday- Sunday  
Dinner: 5:30-8:00 Tuesday- Sunday



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*New South Wales Rural Fire Service*

INFORMATION FOR LANDHOLDERS  
AND FARMERS re FIRE PERMITS

# If a Total Fire Ban is in place, *you cannot burn...*

**WHEN ARE FIRE PERMITS REQUIRED?** During the Bush Fire Danger Period (1 October to 31 March but this can vary from season to season). If your burn is likely to endanger a building (year round) If the proposed burn is in a Fire and Rescue NSW district (year round).

**WHEN ARE FIRE PERMITS NOT REQUIRED?** Fire permits are not required for small recreational fires used to cook or barbeque in the open or for reasons such as camping, picnicking or scouting, **provided that:** The fire is in a permanently constructed fireplace. Clear all combustible materials at least 2 meters away from the fire - The fire is completely extinguished before leaving.

**FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS** Other restrictions, approvals and/or permits may apply in certain council areas, even when the Bush Fire Danger Period has not been declared. If your burn is for bush fire hazard reduction purposes, you can obtain an environmental approval (Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate) free of charge from the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS). This approval may also cover the clearing of vegetation for bush fire hazard reduction purposes.

If your burn is not for bush fire hazard reduction purposes (for example agricultural burning or burning to remove or clear vegetation), there are two primary types of environmental approval that you may need an approval for:

- Burning native vegetation
- Burning in the open

**Fire Permits are automatically suspended during:**  
Total Fire Bans, No Burn Days Fire Permits are typically suspended at a Fire Danger Rating of High or above.

Fire Permits can also be suspended at any time due to local conditions or ongoing fire activity. Landholders should consult with NSW Rural Fire Service, and/or Local Council for further information prior to using fire on your property.

## **SAFE BURNING CHECKLIST BEFORE YOU LIGHT UP:**

Check you are allowed to burn in your area. Contact your nearest NSW RFS Fire Control Centre to confirm.

1. **GET A FIRE PERMIT:** They are free and easy to get. NOTIFY your nearest NSW RFS Fire Control Centre at least 24 hours before you plan to burn on 1800 820 533 Monday - Friday **OR apply online by scanning the QR Code below.**
2. **NOTIFY YOUR NEIGHBOURS:** You must notify all adjoining neighbours **at least 24 hrs before you burn.**
3. **ON THE DAY** Check and monitor weather conditions Check the Fire Danger Rating at: [rfs.nsw.gov.au/fdr](https://rfs.nsw.gov.au/fdr), on the Fires Near Me/Hazards Near Me mobile app or on the roadside signs. Check if permits have been suspended due to a Total Fire Ban, No Burn Day or if the Fire Danger Rating is above High.

*You will be caught - "Police were called to a local incident recently and a \$2200 fine was issued for lighting a fire on a Total Fire Ban Day." Do not do it! Clarence Town and Flat Tops Brigades have barely had a day off through November and early December with local call outs and assisting at the Bulahdelah and Redhead fires. A massive effort from our volunteers. Thank You!*

### **NSW Rural Fire Service Website**

**[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) - [www.myfireplan.com.au](https://www.myfireplan.com.au)**

### **Bush Fire Information Line**

**1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737)**

### **PREPARE, ACT, SURVIVE.**

*Stay safe until next time, Di Bennett OAM*

*Lower Hunter Zone Community*

*Engagement Team*

*New South Wales Rural Fire Service*



PLEASE SCAN  
HERE TO NOTIFY





*Clarence Town First Responders (CFR)*

# Why your “9-to-5” could save a life...

Happy New Year everyone. We hope you had a very special, happy and safe Christmas and New Year with your family and friends.

The CFR has maintained a level of coverage over this time whilst also taking a bit of a rest with family as well. Now that the New Year is here we are looking to build our team to enable us to continue to provide this much needed service to this community. If we can get a few more members trained up, especially with an ability to provide a response during the normal daily working hours, it will increase our coverage greatly. Many of our dedicated volunteers have full time working commitments and this means they often cannot respond through the Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm time period. It's during these times we really need extra help from local “Home Heroes”. Are you a retiree, parent or guardian who is home while the children are at school, work from home employee with flexibility to respond to a medical emergency, if so we want to hear from you?

If you live in the Clarence Town area (in or close to town) and have a desire to help others in need of medical help, we will train you up to and welcome you as part of our team.

*Please give me a call to discuss – Brad Elroy, 0417 651 577.*



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 [alison\\_penfold\\_for\\_lyne](https://twitter.com/alison_penfold_for_lyne)

Authorised by Alison Penfold MP, National Party of Australia, 144 Victoria St, Taree NSW 2430.

# Pavement, Piles & Planning: 2026 Update

## **Clarence Town & District Flood Study**

The Draft Clarence Town Flood Study is on public exhibition from 12th January until 1st March 2026. It will be displayed on Council's website and hard copy can be viewed at the Clarence Town Post Office.

This is a very comprehensive and technical document covering the area included in the Clarence Town Structure Plan and it features all major watercourses in the district. Letters will be sent to all affected residents. The study shows the extent of the Flood Planning Area, which is the area that is affected by the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability Flood (1:100 year) and also defines areas covered by the Probable Maximum Flood.

**On Sat 14th Feb, Council is holding morning and afternoon information drop in sessions at the Clarence Town School of Arts between 9am-12pm and 1-3pm.**

## **New Clarence Town Bridge**

The major risk aspects of construction such as excavating the extremely hard rock and establishing piles in the river have been completed within budget, so Council has been able to expand the scope of the project.

The bridge design has been widened to improve traffic flow, additional kerb, gutter, and stormwater works will be undertaken, and designs are progressing for the intersections

at Duke Street/ Durham Street and Waterview Road/ Limeburners Creek Road. Also, footpaths from the bridge will be extended further than originally intended.

When the bridge is being assembled, a 150 metre tall crane will be located on the western abutment to place the two 70 tonne beams on top of the piles in the river before installing the beams that will carry the bridge deck.

## **Draft Dungog Shire Housing & Infrastructure Master Plan**

This suite of major strategic planning documents under the Commonwealth Government-funded Housing Support Program will form the foundation of our long-term growth management framework and have been developed to guide how the Shire will meet the NSW Government's Hunter Regional Plan 2041.

It aims to address strategic planning needs including housing, agriculture, infrastructure and the environment across over the next 15 years. Dungog Shire has been earmarked to deliver a minimum 2400 homes as part of the region's strategy.

The Draft Master Plan was placed on public exhibition during November and December and submissions are now under review. Under the terms of the grant, the Master Plan will be adopted by Council in March and forwarded for endorsement by the government. The Clarence Town Structure Plan is complimentary to the Master Plan.

Your local B Ward Councillors:

**James Campbell 0484 599 709**

**[james.campbell@dungog.nsw.gov.au](mailto:james.campbell@dungog.nsw.gov.au)**

**Steve Low 4996 4022 [steve.low49@gmail.com](mailto:steve.low49@gmail.com)**

# COST OF LIVING ASSISTANCE

The NSW Government has programs to assist with cost of living expenses.

Call Service NSW on 13 77 88 or visit your local Service Centre.

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**Dave Layzell MP**  
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## DRAFT CLARENCE TOWN FLOOD STUDY

### We need your feedback before 1 March 2026

The Draft Flood Study for the Clarence Town area will be on public exhibition from 12<sup>th</sup> January to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

The study provides flood information for Council, emergency services and the community. Outcomes of the study will help to develop strategies to support the ongoing strategic development of Clarence Town and its surrounding environs, as well as inform decision-making to minimise potential flood risk for new developments.

You can find out if your property is identified as being flood-prone by scanning the QR code and visiting our website. You can also lodge your feedback via our website, or by writing to Dungog Shire Council: 198 Dowling Street Dungog NSW 2420 before 5pm, 1 March 2026.

### Community drop-in session

Like to ask our Council planning team a question about the draft Flood Study? We will be holding a community drop-in session and would welcome you to come along and have a chat to us.

Date: **Saturday, 14 February 2026**

Times: 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 3pm

Location: Clarence Town School of Arts Hall



[www.dungog.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dungog.nsw.gov.au)



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The Dungog District Chamber of Commerce



## More Than a Map: Charting Our District's Growth

As we step into the new year of 2026, let's take a moment to reflect on a sample of achievements of DDCC in 2025 and the exciting plans on the horizon.

The year kicked off with dinner meeting at the Clarence Town Bowling Club, where Matt Clinch from Gloucester Chamber introduced the innovative Spendmap program. This cutting-edge tool tracks spending trends, money flow into and out of the Shire, and provides invaluable insights for businesses to make smarter decisions. While the program comes with a hefty price tag, the Chamber is committed to exploring ways to bring this transformative initiative to the Shire.

Another standout project was the launch of the Dungog Shire Welcome Pack, a thoughtful initiative designed to warmly greet new and prospective residents. This comprehensive collection of organizational details, created in collaboration with the DSC Visitors Centre, ensures newcomers have easy access to essential information about the community.

September brought the much-anticipated Red & Black Maitland Mutual dinner, a testament to the Chamber's strong partnership with this local banking institution. The event celebrated the mutual support and collaboration that strengthens our community.

The Chamber also proudly supported the Clarence Town Lions

Club with a donation to assist lighting the Christmas tree at the Clarence Town Community Christmas Carols. The event was a heartwarming display of community spirit, with local businesses generously contributing to make the celebration a success. Kudos to the Lions Club for organizing such a memorable evening!

Looking ahead, the Chamber is gearing up for its first dinner meeting of 2026, scheduled for Thursday, February 26, at the Clarence Town Bowling Club. The event will feature Tony McLeod from Williams River Steel as the guest speaker, who will share exciting updates on their new development in Clarence Town. Invitations will be sent out soon, so mark your calendars for what promises to be an engaging evening.

*With a year of accomplishments behind us and exciting plans ahead, the Chamber is ready to continue fostering growth, collaboration, and community spirit in 2026. Stay tuned for more updates and join us in making this year one to remember!*

**Stay tuned to DDCC's social media channels for updates on these exciting events. Contact [secretary@ddcc.org.au](mailto:secretary@ddcc.org.au) or visit [www.ddcc.org.au](http://www.ddcc.org.au)**



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# Digital Shifts: Banished Apps, Mandated Tracking, and Microsoft Refunds

## ***Under 16s Banned from Social Media (from 10 December 2025)***

Social media platforms including Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, X, YouTube, TikTok and Reddit will be banned for under 16s, with more to follow.

Kids over 16 will need to prove their age, however the Social Media Minimum Age legislation specifically prohibits platforms from compelling Australians to provide government-issued ID such as a driver's licence or Medicare card.

For more information on what to expect, visit:  
[www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions/faqs](http://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions/faqs)

If your family is struggling with the transition, Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800) remains the gold-standard 24/7 support service in NSW for young people and parents navigating this change.

## ***The End of 32-Bit Programs***

32-bit programs are already being phased out. Windows XP was commonly 32-bit, while Windows 7 and 10 supported both. Windows 11 is 64-bit only. A 32-bit operating system can only access around 3GB of memory, making it unsuitable for modern computers with 8–32GB RAM. While some 32-bit programs can still run on 64-bit Windows, all 32-bit programs are expected to be discontinued by the end of 2025.

## ***Location Tracking***

A Windows 11 update in September 2025 made location tracking mandatory, with ongoing prompts to enable it. Even installing a printer may now require location access. Location data will also form part of age-verification systems.

Microsoft Teams is expected to introduce a feature in December 2025 that can identify your location even when using a VPN. As advanced tracking increases, VPNs may become less effective.

## ***Office 365 Subscription Refund***

After a 40% price rise, the ACCC took Microsoft to court. Users can now choose Office 365 Family (\$179, with AI) or switch to Office 365 Classic (no AI) for \$139 and receive a refund for the difference. Log in at [office.com](http://office.com) to change.

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# From the Parson's Pen

As I get older – past the ‘shop ‘till you drop’ age – with children and grand kids living overseas – I now spend more time thinking about the details of the Christmas story.

Sometimes – after an incident like the recent Bondi Beach shooting (and many other wars and incidents) – why God bothered to send Jesus to us at all, as we seem to be so stubbornly determined to do the wrong thing. It was a brutal world then and often appears not to have changed much for the better.

I think of all those things that are counted as ‘God’s gifts to us’ – Joy, Peace, Love etc and see that many people treat these like room sanitisers; hung up and releasing pleasant fragrances to dispel unpleasant odours. I have come to see these gifts as more like gardening tools – looking good hanging on the wall of a shed but – if you want your garden to actually be dug up, you have to put the effort into actually using the tools to achieve an end result.

As a Defence Force Chaplain (Army) of nearly 30 years I found on three deployments that Christmas fell during that time. These deployments were (1) Bougainville, (2) Solomon Islands, (3) Baghdad and (4) Defence Force personnel.

**Bougainville.** A very religious people. After 10 years of civil war – ‘woke up’ – to see the devastation they themselves had wrought – from having the most developed infrastructure to being back to the stone age. They saw their actions as sinful – requiring confession, forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, compensation. They saw Christianity as providing the way towards true and lasting peace. To be able to celebrate Christmas in peace (I was told) was to see God in Jesus as God giving them another chance – with the challenge to ‘do it God’s way and not their way. Did this top all wrongdoing? Of course not – after all, we are still human and we all sin. For me it was an outstanding time of learning looking through ‘different eyes’.

**Solomon Islands.** Also a religious people. There’s was the collapse of civil infrastructure – gross corruption. People kept asking “how could this happen here; how could our respected leader do this to us?” Sitting in church I heard comments like - “... I hope these high representatives are actually listening to Jesus’ words” – making their confession – preparing a public apology for their betrayal of our trust – give up their corrupt ways.

**Baghdad.** While Saddam Hussein was in power there was allowed a freedom of religious groups to practice their faith. Of course, all were watched. With his fall the dominant group (Shia – backed by Iran) set out to wreak havoc on everyone else; Sunnis (of Saddam’s group) – revenge – Jews and Christians because of who they were (non-Muslim) seen as supporters of the Western Coalition.

Christian clergy and males were assassinated and places of worship targeted. Worship took place in ‘secure and guarded locations’ – fearful – holding onto their faith, while wondering what the future held for them. Celebrating Christmas while really looking beyond to the image of the suffering/ crucified Jesus.

**Defence Force Personnel.** First thoughts – a long way from home – desperately missing family – questioning “why are we here?” A mixed faith (and no faith) group – one person questioned me as to why I (the Padre) was part of the Christmas organising committee – what has religion got to do with Christmas? Produced incredulous looks from others in the group – trying to organise appropriate denominational services – going to worship in helmet, armoured vest, weapons, half expecting and attack of some sort or another.

**Padre.** There to remind people of what is ‘normal’ (and what is not) – preaching peace without taking it for granted. As I said in the beginning – it’s easy to see all the bad things and to wonder why God doesn’t lose patience with us. But I know that God doesn’t lose patience with us because when I look around I see all of the people who strive to be better, to love, to care and know these things are not easily accomplished – we need God’s help.

*Rev. Greg Clarke*

## St. Patrick's Catholic Church

41 Rifle St, Clarence Town

Pastor: Rev Andrew Doohan

*Service Times: Every Sunday 8am*

The Parishioners of St. Patrick’s would like to wish everyone in our wonderful area of Clarence Town the joy and blessings of a wonderful New Year.

We pray for a year of peace and prosperity in the world. Congratulations to all those who organised the Carols and Markets in December. They were wonderful. May God’s Grace bless us all in 2026.

*Marilyn Amos*



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## St. John's Anglican Church

36 Grey St, Clarence Town

Pastor: Rev Beatrice Pate

*Service Times: Every Sunday, Holy Communion at 10.30am, followed by morning tea.*

I think I need to begin with an apology for advertising the incorrect service time for our Christmas Eve service. I advertised it at 5.30pm when it should have been 5pm. So sorry for any inconvenience. We had a lovely service and enjoyed a bring and share supper in the hall following the service.

We have had the centre panel of our beautiful stained glass window removed without mishap. An answer to pray for us. We held our breath. It is now being repaired and strengthened and we hope to have it re-installed some time in January. This window was a gift from the Robards family back in 1938.

We are fortunate to have the Rev Beatrice Pate looking after our Parish until a new appointment Minister is made. I fear this may take some time. In the meantime, we are enjoying having her and husband Dennis in our midst.

Our Holy Communion services are at 10.30am each Sunday morning, and you would be most welcome. May this New Year bring you and your family many blessings of peace, love and good health.

*Sue Flannery*

### *Clarence Town Op Shop & Treasure Centre*

## The Treasure Hunt Resumes: January 21

We are currently closed for a well-earned rest and will re-open again on Wednesday, 21st January, so do come in and say hello and tell us about your Christmas with family and friends.

Our bins are also closed and we would appreciate it if you don't bring any donations until the 14th January. Thank you so much. From then, we will be open every Wednesday from 8.30am to noon.

Thank you so much for the support you have given to us over the years. We couldn't function without you all and it is a pleasure and an honour to be able to serve our community. You are a blessing to us.

**Follow us on Facebook: @OP SHOP Anglican Church Clarence Town to stay updated on our latest deals!**

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St. John's Anglican Church, Cnr of Grey & Queen Sts

## Christ Church, Dungog

Dowling Street, Dungog

*Service Times: Every Friday 10.30am, Sunday 8.30am*

*Sunday night service: 4th Sunday of every month at 5pm*

I hope 2026 goes a bit slower than the last one did. Happy New Year all!!

We have all been busy at Christ Church with our fill in Minister Rev Beatrice Pate looking after us and in the New Year we are so lucky to be getting a new Priest. Date has not been confirmed at time of printing. The Rev Amanda Brockwell will be coming back home to us. She was a High School teacher in Dungog and studied for the ministry and eventually went to Harrington for a few years and then to Braxton for a few years. We are all excited!

In the meantime we will continue all our services. 8.30 each Sunday and 10.30 on a Friday from the 9th January. There will be no Sunday Nite at Christ Church till end of February and no St. Peter's in the Paddock till March 1st. We will have a break from Cuppa N Chat each Friday till the end of January. The Op Shop will only close for two weeks and all back to normal on January 9th. The First Market for the year will be on the 7th February and then the 7th March.

The World Day of Prayer will be held at the Catholic Church in Dungog on Friday 6th March and the Country we will celebrate will be Nigeria.

*Thanks and Blessings Margaret Flannery*



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Clarence Town Primary Public School

# The Data and the Dreaming: Our 2025 Story



As principal of Clarence Town Public School, I am delighted to share with families, students, staff, and our wider community a reflection on the achievements and growth we have celebrated throughout 2025.

This year has been my first at Clarence Town Public School, and I want to sincerely thank you all for the warm welcome and support that have made my transition so enjoyable. Getting to know our students and families has been a privilege and a highlight of my professional journey.

In 2025, our school has continued to shine through collaborative efforts to enhance student learning. We have implemented data-driven teaching strategies, which enable our teachers to tailor lessons and provide targeted support based on student progress. Our commitment to Explicit Instruction, aligned with other Hunter Network schools, has helped students build strong foundations by breaking down concepts clearly and regularly checking for understanding.

The care, professionalism, and high expectations for learning demonstrated by all staff ensures our students succeed and thrive each day.

Student wellbeing and inclusion remain a priority. I am particularly proud of the progress made in Aboriginal education and cultural awareness, thanks to our partnership with the Youyoong Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. Our students participated in NAIDOC Week celebrations, learned about local history and First Nations perspectives, and engaged with Personalised Learning Pathways to set individual learning and cultural goals. Our new permanent yarning circle serves as a special space for connection, storytelling, and fostering respect for culture and community.

Attendance at our school continues to be strong, with over 90% attendance, well above the primary school average across NSW.

A highlight of 2025 has been the establishment of the Tawny Voice Student Council. This group empowers students by providing a platform for their ideas and aspirations, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact it will continue to have on our school and broader community.

I am so proud of the hard work, kindness, and curiosity shown by the students of Clarence Town Public School. I especially commend our Year 6 students for their leadership and readiness for high school and wish them the best as they move on.

We have truly appreciated the wonderful involvement of parents and carers this year. Open classrooms and whole-school events have brought us together in celebration of student achievement and community spirit. Whether volunteering, attending events, or encouraging learning at home, your involvement means so much. I want to extend a special thank you to our P&C for their dedication to the school and support of our students.

*I wish everyone a safe, joyful, and restful break with your loved ones and look forward to working with you in 2026.*

**Kim Smith, Principal**

**Email: [clarenceto-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:clarenceto-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)**

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*Glen William Primary Public School*

# Celebrating a Memorable 2025

As 2025 concludes, Glen William Public School reflects on a year of enriching activities, community events, and outstanding achievements. Our community came together to foster growth, fun, and connection, making 2025 a truly remarkable year for our students and families.

## ***Beach to Bush – Promoting Beach Safety***

A highlight of the year was the Beach to Bush program, an engaging initiative teaching students essential water safety. Delivered on campus to prepare our children for local beaches, trained instructors guided students through identifying hazards, understanding surf conditions, and safe water behaviours. This vital education builds confidence, empowering students to stay safe year-round.

## ***Book Week Celebrations***

Book Week captured the imagination of the entire school. Students participated in themed activities encouraging creativity and a passion for storytelling. From dress-up parades to interactive reading sessions and writing workshops, Book Week reinforced the joy of reading while developing literacy skills in a fun and engaging way.

## ***Grandparents Day***

In a heartwarming tradition, Grandparents Day brought generations together to celebrate the unique bond between students and their grandparents. This special day fostered intergenerational connections and highlighted the vital role grandparents play in the lives of our children and our school community.

## ***Sporting Events***

Physical activity was a major focus this year. At the Swimming Carnival, students competed against other small schools and were crowned overall champions, bringing home the trophy. The Athletics Carnival provided a further chance to showcase skills in running, jumping, and throwing, with both events celebrating participation and sportsmanship. Finally, our Surf Fun Safe Day combined beach activities with expert safety lessons, encouraging fitness and reinforcing vital water safety messages.

## ***Christmas Lunch from the P&C***

To round off the year, the P&C organised a joyful Christmas Lunch for students, staff, and families. This festive event offered a wonderful opportunity to enjoy delicious food and celebrate the year's successes in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. The generosity of P&C volunteers creates a warm sense of community that truly enriches life at our school.

## ***Presentation Day***

It was inspiring to see the COLA filled for Presentation Day as we congratulated our students on a fantastic year. We share a huge thank you to our staff, parents, and community for supporting our small school throughout 2025.

As our Year 6 students – **Saxon, Kyron, and Owen** – head off to high school, we thank them for an incredible year of leadership. They leave with a strong foundation to thrive as they hand over the baton to our 2026 leaders:

**School Captain: Ava**

**Vice-Captain: Desmond**

**Leaders: Bella, Jason, and Preiseis**

## ***Special Congratulations to our Perpetual Award Winners:***

Library Awards: **Junior: Eliza | Senior: Theo**

Sports Award: **Desmond**

Premier's Sporting Challenge Medal: **Kyron**

Encouragement Awards: **Junior: Oceana | Senior: Ava**

Citizenship Awards: **Junior: Eliza | Senior: Preiseis**

Academic Effort Awards: **Junior: Avalon | Senior: Kyron**

High Achievement Awards: **Junior: Xavier | Senior: Owen**

State Goodwill & Leadership Award: **Saxon**

CWA Peer Support Scholarship Award: **Priseis**



Alongside these events, our dedicated staff continued to deliver high-quality education, fostering curiosity and resilience across all year levels. We are proud of the progress made by every student this year. Here's to continued learning and friendship in 2026!

***Glen William Public School is now accepting enrolments for 2026. We warmly welcome new families to join our vibrant, supportive community where every child is encouraged to reach their potential in a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment. Please contact the school office or visit the school website to complete an online enrolment.***

**Phone: 4996 5507**

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## Community Contacts

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