

MUNGO

BALRANALD BYLINES



Welcome 'ghost' from a bygone era arrives at Balranald

Balranald residents could not believe their ears when they heard a paddleboat approaching the town last week.

"A ghost from my girlhood," one woman cried as she rushed to the Murrumbidgee with her grandchildren.

PV 'Bungunyah' is a newly-constructed two-deck paddleboat, part of a growing fleet of boats built to traditional Murray-Darling styles for river voyaging.

Rail News Victoria editor, Roderick Smith contacted *The Riverine Grazier* with news of the exciting arrival.

"Whenever water and snags allow, Yarrowonga - Goolwa is the 'holy grail' for river-boaters," Mr Smith said.

"I just had to grab this chance; there are times when you can't even get a kayak past the snags."

"The lower parts of Darling, Murrumbidgee, Wakool, Edwards, Campaspe and Goulburn rivers provided further challenges."

"After launching, it was moored at Beveridge Island and with rising river levels, it set forth on a voyage not possible for many years."

PV 'Bungunyah' cruised up Wakool River to Kyalite and moored there over the Christmas period.

At the start of January, it continued to the Edwards confluence, but had to hurry downriver again while it still had clearance under the modern bridge at Kyalite (which had replaced a Coraki-type bascule-span opening bridge).

"Bungunyah continued along the Murray and turned into the Murrumbidgee," Mr Smith said.

"It made steady progress against the current to reach Balranald early on January 4 afternoon."

"It was able to get under the modern road bridge, and whistled in triumph as it did so. "The town seemed to



The first paddle boat to visit Balranald since the 1956 flood, PV Bungunyah makes its historic passage under the bridge under captaincy of Jeff Leverett of Ultima. Pictures courtesy Hank van Apeldoorn.

grind to a halt as residents of all age groups rushed to the rare sight.

"Apparently the last paddleboat to reach Balranald was there in 1956, as part of flood relief."

"Since then, the lifting-span bridge has been replaced with a modern concrete one."

"Old timers brought memories of the boats of their youth; some brought photos from family albums."

"Bungunyah didn't linger: after four passages under the bridge for the benefit of photographers, it headed downriver again, with

the aim of continuing to Mildura to join a March fleet of private boats to Renmark, for a major paddleboat gathering celebrating the centenary of PS 'Industry'."

"For that gathering, PS 'Oscar W' will voyage from Goolwa; PS 'Marion' will voyage from Mannum, and recently-recommissioned PS 'Ruby' from Wentworth."

"These three boats are all in survey to carry commercial passengers."

Mr Smith said Tooleybuc and Kyalite provided welcome overnight moorings,

each with a classic Aussie pub and friendly locals. He was on board his own boat, 'Jessie II' which is becoming a familiar sight at river events.

Balranald Shire Council tourist manager, Hank van Apeldoorn confirmed PV 'Bungunyah' was the first paddle boat to visit Balranald since the 1956 flood.

"The owner captain is Jeff Leverett from Ultima near Swan Hill and they just used the high water channel adjacent to Balranald Weir to get around the weir," Mr van Apeldoorn said.

Country Energy delivers early Christmas present

Balranald received an early present from essential service provider Country Energy last month with \$100,000 in electricity upgrades.

Regional general manager Far West and water operations, Guy Chick, said the work strengthens the electricity network that supplies rural areas west of Balranald, in particular the areas around Weimy, Windomal and Walbaira Station.

"The project included the replacement of power poles and insulating devices, bolstering our infrastructure to ensure we can continue to provide a safe and reliable power supply to the Balranald area over the hot summer months," Mr Chick said.

"Extra crews were brought in from Barham, Moulamein and Tooleybuc to assist the local crew to complete the job in time for Christmas, reducing the risk of unplanned power interruptions and enhancing power reliability to the area."

Mr Chick commended the local team on its dedication to maintaining and upgrading the energy supply and being a part of the local community, touching on Country Energy's focus on employment for the region.

"We're investing in the Far West's future by developing local people - the local field service team recently welcomed a new electrical worker, with another commencing in the New Year to boost local service levels," he said.

"Putting on more employees in regional New South Wales demonstrates our commitment to the community by providing new career opportunities we're helping to develop locally-based people, while establishing a foundation for long-term employment."

Country Energy's local crews again got into Christmas spirit by putting up festive decorations in Balranald and Euston.



Inside the newly-constructed two-deck paddleboat - reminder of a bygone era when Balranald enjoyed many years of river trade.

Frogs are back

Endangered Southern Bell Frogs have been heard calling after flood waters replenished wetlands along the Murrumbidgee River.

Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) Senior Wetlands and Rivers Conservation Officer James Maguire said Southern Bell Frog populations may be starting to improve.

"The Lowbidgee floodplain is home to NSW's most significant population of the endangered Southern Bell Frog; however due to a lack of water across the floodplain in recent dry years the population has declined to very low numbers," he said.

"We now have these endangered frogs breeding in numerous wetlands in the Lowbidgee, and just recently researchers have re-discovered them in the mid-Murrumbidgee

wetlands. "Frog surveys conducted in mid 2007 didn't detect any Southern Bell Frogs and we were unsure if populations still existed in the Lowbidgee."

"After the 2007 environmental flows we detected a small number of frogs in Yanga National Park wetlands and other wetlands in private properties in the Lowbidgee."

"Since 2007 a number of environmental flows have been strategically targeted to key wetlands in the Lowbidgee, supporting river red gums and other wetland vegetation, waterbirds and frogs."

"Additionally, carp exclusion screens were trialled in key wetlands to prevent large carp from entering the wetlands and degrading these habitat."

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF NEW SOUTH WALES SYDNEY REGISTRY EQUITY DIVISION PROBATE LIST

After 14 days from publication of this notice an application for probate of the will dated September 8, 2006 of **ISABEL FRANCES SCOTT** late of 69 Mayall Street, Balranald, NSW 2715, will be made by Christine Joyce Millbrook and Geoffrey Donald Scott.

Creditors are required to send particulars of their claims upon her estate to Perrot's, Solicitors, 82 Lachlan Street, Hay NSW 2711, DX 5903 Griffith, Phone (02) 6993 1005. Ref: SM:DW:19500.

Travelscene Hay for all you travel needs - phone (02) 6993 4444

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