

# WACOBU



*Class of 1963-65*

## WAC Old Boys still catching up



*Class of 1973-75*

# 2023

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## **Got News?**

Any old boys with news stories, photographs, upcoming events and reunion news are asked to contact Graeme:

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During the year, WAC Old Boys who attended college 50 and 60 years ago have got together for milestone reunions.

It must be gratifying for the organisers of each reunion to have a large turn-out of Old Boys at each function and realise that times at Ag College were indeed special and mateship still remains a key ingredient amongst the groups of ex-students and their partners.

In today's busy world it is not easy to organise any event but to see the number of Old Boys returning for these reunions is indeed testament to the times they spent at Ag College and the friendships made in that period of their lives.

Thanks to the contributors who took the time to contact the editor with stories and photos of each reunion - which are included in this edition.

With the types of communication between people increasing all the time the role of this annual newsletter is to provide Old Boys with news of the Ag College of past days and what is now the CSU Agriculture faculty of today.

Society is rapidly changing but many of the values held by ex-students from their days at Ag College have not.

Old Boys continue maintaining their links with mates from College days, valuing the education they received and actively promoting agriculture in its many forms to younger generations.

To the family and friends of Old Boys who have passed away in the last 12 months WACOB offers their condolences, remembering their friendship and the contribution they made to the wider community during their lifetime.



Take the time to reflect on your College days and think of those WACOB mates and their families who have been there for you when needed and shared the good times in your life.

**VIA TRITA VIA TUTA**

**Graeme Worboys**

*Pictured with grandsons Alex and Ben*



# 2023 WACOBU Scholarship Presentation



**Ted Wolfe and Stuart Kanaley (WACOBU President), presenting the 20230 WACOBU scholarship to Lucy Bullock at CSU.**

Stuart Kanaley and Ted Wolfe represented WACOBU at CSU's 2023 Scholarship Ceremony and presented the successful recipient Lucy Bullock with the scholarship.

The WACOBU Scholarship is valued at \$2000 and available to undergraduate students undertaking 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Honours Year studying Bachelor of Agricultural Science or Bachelor of Agricultural Business Management on the Wagga campus.

After an interview process, Lucy was the successful candidate to receive the scholarship this year

## *Lucy Bullock – WACOBUScholarship recipient*

To the Wagga Agricultural College Old Boys Union,

I would like to extend my gratitude to the WACOBUScholarship committee for the donation of these funds to the scholarship.

The money is greatly appreciated and will be used to purchase a new laptop to help me finish my degree without the risk of my laptop breaking down whilst completing assignments or studying for final exams.

My final year of the Bachelor of Agriculture is progressing well, with most of my assignments due after mid-semester break which I have started to complete.

During the mid-semester break I will be applying for graduate positions within agriculture companies throughout Australia to start in 2024.

Kind regards,

Lucy Bullock

Bachelor of Agriculture

## Stacey Fish from CSU wrote:

Dear Stuart and Ted (representing WACOBUScholarship),

On behalf of the entire university community, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support throughout 2023.

Your dedication to making a difference in the lives of students is truly commendable.

I wanted to take a moment to personally thank you for attending the Wagga Wagga scholarship presentation ceremony.

It was a pleasure to see you there and witness the impact of your support firsthand.

Your presence made the event even more special, and we are grateful for your continued commitment to our scholarship program.

Attached is a photo taken during the ceremony.

CSU hopes the photo serves as a reminder of the meaningful connections forged and the positive change that your gift has initiated.

Additionally, we have enclosed a heartfelt thank-you letter from Lucy Bullock, the recipient of your scholarship (*see above*).

Her words truly capture the profound impact that your generosity has had on her educational journey.

It is important to recognize that the ripple effect of your gift extends far beyond the individual student it supports.

Your contribution has the power to uplift entire communities, create opportunities, and inspire future generations.

Your decision to invest in education and make a difference is greatly appreciated.

Once again, we extend our deepest gratitude for your invaluable support.

Your partnership enables us to transform lives and foster a brighter future.

Thank you for choosing to be a catalyst for change and for being an integral part of our university community.

***Stacey Fish***

***Development Officer | Advancement Office***



REUNIONS



# 1963-1965 WAC Reunion

By Lindsay and Maryanne Cartwright



## May 5-7, 2023 at Nelson Bay

A collection of 29 "WAC old boys" and partners  
assembled at beautiful Nelson Bay for the 2023 reunion.

The weather was great and except for a few minor hiccups, participants seemed to enjoy catching up, the food and drink and the few activities on offer.

It all started with drinks, dinner and 'mingle' at the Nelson Bay Golf Club on Friday night (a hastily organised venue after another venue cancelled on us that very afternoon). A courtesy bus from the Nelson Hotel where most of us were staying was a bonus and the food and drinks seemed to agree with everyone.

After Breakfast on Saturday at the "Little Nel" cafe (attached to the hotel) and a short walk to the Nelson Bay Marina, all boarded the "Moonshadow" for a 90 minute Dolphin Watch and cruise – the sun shone, the water sparkled and yes we all saw some dolphins and enjoyed the cruise on Nelson Bay Harbour.

After a light lunch, we headed by car to a Barramundi Farm at Bob's Farm for a tour of the facility - it was informative (and fishy) but most managed to enjoy the visit.

The reunion dinner on Saturday evening was held at the Nelson Bay Bowling Club.

\* participants contributed to a display of memorabilia (photos, newspaper articles etc.) and clothing which created much discussion and reminiscing.

\* Peter Catling read a letter which Vyner Smithwick had written to his parents describing his first impression of life at WAC in 1963, particularly his experiences of "motting" - it was wonderfully entertaining and very amusing.

\* Bert Green was recognised as the only "old boy" to have attended every reunion – congratulations Bert.

\* a trivia quiz about the College (and other things) was conducted between food courses.

Unfortunately, the quiz master (Lindsay Cartwright) tripped over his big feet during the quiz and lost an argument with a metal window frame, needing six stitches to repair the hole in his head!

\* Al Hartwig and Ross Coomber proved they had the best memories by winning the trivia quiz with a score of 17/20

\*apologies were acknowledged from those unable to attend and a minute silence was observed for the old boys or wives who have passed away.

Bill Sheaffe was able to turn a sincere remembrance (with amusing anecdotes of each old boy) into an entertaining but respectful discourse.

At the end of the dinner Peter Catling, Richard Vickers (and Richard Redfern in his absence) agreed to organise the next reunion in Canberra hopefully within the next two years to mark our 60th year since graduating.



# 50th Year Reunion Weekend

Class of 1973-75

May 26-28, 2023, Wagga Wagga

By Al McMillan



## FIRST YEAR

Top: N. KESBY.

5th Row: B. COPLAND, K. DUFF, M. WATT, S. MANCINI, A. McMILLAN, O. BENNETT, R. TINDALL.

4th Row: R. SCHIPPERS, I. BAKER, M. KEIR, P. HAWKINS, J. WRIGHT, K. CAMPBELL, C. BRENNAN, R. HADFIELD, S. BUCHANAN, S. SNEDDON, M. ELLIOT, B. McINERNEY, I. JOHNSON, J. NICHOLSON.

3rd Row: P. ROSS, J. EMERSON, G. PARR, P. SIMPSON, D. GAGG, P. DICKENS, P. LOCKLEY, R. O'SHEA, G. THOMPSON, L. McCORMICK.

2nd Row: J. McINTYRE, D. HARRISON, C. RIGBY, P. CURREY, M. BRENNAN, J. TOOHEY, D. FINCH, D. DAVIS, D. ROSS, M. BARMBY, J. MASTERMAN, M. THEW, W. HARRIS.

Front Row: P. NAPIER, D. ZINGA, D. ADCOCK, M. WADDINGTON, R. MACLEAN, W. GIBSON, M. STATHAM, S. THOMAS, R. STONESTREET, M. MORTON, L. EGLINGTON, M. OLDFIELD, P. NELSON.

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"KULPANA"

The 1973 First Year group photo.



Our Reunion Weekend was held in the Wagga Wagga on May 26, 27 and 28, 2023.

Wagga Agricultural College (WAC) was the 'ancestral' home of our group from when we started back in 1973.

We were told early in our student days that an amalgamation with Riverina College was inevitable. We learned much later about the mergers and formation of other campuses in the region.

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Year cohort of 1975 was in fact the last year that graduated from WAC.

Over the next 14 years there were three name changes for a number of campuses including Riverina College of Advanced Education, before Charles Sturt University (CSU) was officially incorporated.

To begin with, our Reunion organising Committee in mid 2021 decided to locate everyone from our 1973 group photo.

Once we did achieve that we were still a full two years away from any milestone anniversary year (50<sup>th</sup>)

However, it was decided while the enthusiasm was strong and the feedback positive we would make 2023, our 50th Year anniversary, based on 1973, when we started at WAC.

There were no regrets with that decision. It was so good to catch up with old friends who started but may not have finished with us.

The Reunion Weekend kicked off with a 'muster' at the Thirsty Crow on the Friday night. Any reservations or trepidation people had about attending soon evaporated during the night. Name tags and WAC Polo Tops were distributed on arrival. Yes the name tags were essential!

The ice was well and truly broken and this set the tone for the whole weekend.

On the Saturday morning the group including many partners, took a bus tour of the CSU farm and Campus hosted by former Head of the School of Agriculture, Emeritus Professor Ted Wolfe.

Ted's 'gift of the gab' and knowledge of the Campus, Agricultural Research institute and Ag students/courses kept everyone entertained for the whole tour.

This included commentary while on the bus even though it didn't have a microphone. Great job Ted!!

In the afternoon many of the reunion group headed out to Beres Ellwood Oval to watch the Aggies play Wagga City. Maybe it was the extra cheer from our supporters but it was exciting to see the Aggies, who were the underdogs, pull off a great win on the day.

Several people probably suffering from nostalgia took the opportunity to celebrate with a beer at the 'Black Swan' (Dirty Duck) on their way to the game.

On the Saturday evening everyone attended the Reunion dinner function at the Wagga RSL Club. Some of the highlights were our ageless guest speaker Emeritus Professor Jim Pratlley.

Jim and Dave Glastonbury were lecturers from our era although apologies were received from Owen Lysaght and Peter Slater. Other special guests were Ted Wolfe and Stuart Kanaley (WACOBU President)

Highlights from the nights provided by individuals from our group included tables decorated with green and gold balloons, old vintage photos on auto power point, a special 70's music playlist, a special WAC 73-75 year trivia quiz, via power point.

A reunion raffle was run during the three course dinner with all prizes generously donated by fellow classmates while afterwards we finished off with a series of group photos.

CSU Alumni also provided the group with a small gift pack of 'knick knacks' and information on the types of scholarships offered by WACOBU to Agricultural students.

CSU Alumni contacts were provided to anyone who was interested in contributing to this worthy cause.

On the Sunday morning we were hopeful that some people would drop down to the Wagga Beach/Levee area for a coffee/goodbye after checking out from their motels.

This was an optional activity and we were amazed at the number who turned out.

Many walked along the levee path to the Hampton bridge memorial and coffee outlet while others went straight to Romano's where we all finished up for lunch.

The Organisers couldn't have asked for a better weekend reunion then what we experienced. Many told us that it exceeded their expectations.

Since the weekend photos have been shared on our newsletter and our WAC Class of 73-75 private FB group. A contact list of people's mobile and email has been drawn up with the permission of everyone in the group and already it has been used by several people to connect.

To cap off the weekend a few within the group have put their heads together to form a new committee and already there is talk of another reunion at a different location in the next two or three years.

Hopefully they can have as much satisfaction and enjoyment as we have experienced.

Apart from the Reunion Weekend, it has been extra special and gratifying to be able to locate all of our class after so long and help them to reconnect with others in the group.

*Cheers from the WAC Class of 73-75, 2023 Reunion Organising Committee.*

***Al McMillan, Peter Napier, Dawn Currey, Phil Currey, Mac Elliott***

# PHOTO GALLERY



The Organising Committee were especially happy to see the way we all returned to our former selves over the weekend.

*Back Left Al McMillan, Mac Elliott, Peter Napier*

*Front Left Dawn Currey, Phil Currey*



Listening to Emeritus Professor Ted Wolfe on the various CSU Farm and Campus sites was a delight.



Some of us have hardly changed in 50 years. From the left Mike Watt, Chris Rigby and Sam Mancini

*The Thirsty Crow meet-up on Friday evening was a great way to break the ice.*

From the back Michelle Oldfield, Mike Oldfield, Maggie McKelvey, Mac Elliott, Rob Tindall and Sue O'Rourke





**This was reunion group at the end of a great night of fun, laughter, nostalgia and catching up, at the Reunion Dinner at the Wagga RSL Club**

Amazing that all the group could fit onto the one coach to make a thoroughly enjoyable tour of the old WAC – new CSU farm. Great to recognise old land marks but also humbling to see all of the great capital improvements and investments into the various courses, running at CSU today.



Prior to the farm tour Professor Ted Wolfe gave an insightful rundown about the WAC – CSU farm. Ted reminded us of some historical facts re the land use prior to his first connection with the WAC back in 1971.

Terrific that Ted could recite the more recent history 1971 to 2023 as in many respects he has lived it.

Ted impressed us all, not only with his physical vigour getting around but his good wit and the sharing of



Ted and the 1973-75 WAC students and partners taking a photo break on the farm – Uni tour.



Sunday morning walk along the mighty Bidgee before a coffee break near the old Hampden Bridge. Pictured left to right Al McMillan 'Big Al', Ian Johnson 'Smiley', Peter Hawkins 'Groucho', Warren Harris 'Harry', Justin Toohey 'Jus', Ross O'Shea, Chris Rigby 'Dribble' and Peter Napier 'Naps'.



*Sunday farewell lunch  
at  
Romanos Hotel*



From the back Michelle Oldfield, Mike Oldfield, Maggie McKelvey, Mac Elliott, Rob Tindall and Sue O'Rourke.



From the left Michelle Harper, John Harper, Shane Sneddon and Chris Rigby



From Left Peter Hawkins, Warren Harris, Peter and Wendy Lockley



Saturday night Guest speaker Dr Jim Pratley did not disappoint. Always a great delivery, often provocative and usually witty, particularly when bringing up very recognisable anecdotes from certain past students, who were present.

## Regarding the WAC Reunion

*Hi Graeme,*

*We had a great 50 year reunion of the Class of 73-75 last month in Wagga, well organized by Al, Naps, Phil, Dawn and Mac .*

*Al McMillan had posted out the 2022 WACOBU newsletter prior to the reunion for all the group.*

*I very much liked what you wrote about 50 years of female students at WAC. Beth I have three daughters and three granddaughters. My eldest daughter Claire has joined my business to pursue a career in agriculture and to delay my retirement plans. Fun though!!*

*Jim Pratley gave a great speech at our dinner and Ted Wolfe was a wonderful tour guide for WAC/CSU, all 10,000 acres (5000 acres NSW DPI + 5000 acres CSU).*

*I volunteered for the job for organizing the next reunion in 3 years with Maggie (Bamby), Liz (Eglington) and Michelle (Waddington).*

*No other lads have offered to help - but I know the ladies are great organizers!*

*Regards and all the best,*

***Ian "Smiley" Johnson***





# WAC Old Boy still helping mates

Original Article published by Edwina Mason (About Regional November 2023)



**Drawing from his own struggle with depression, John Harper now travels widely to talk with farmers.**

Stockinbungal farmer John Harper vividly remembers the time in his life when he sat on the veranda of his house devoid of motivation and energy.

“All I recall is thinking, ‘I can’t shear, can’t drench sheep, don’t want to put any crop in.’ I just didn’t want to move, I felt bleak and hopeless,” he said.

Aged 45, he’d just given up shearing, a profession he loved.

If it weren’t for his wife, he likely wouldn’t be here today.

“I got help in the end because my wife just whinged and nagged me.

“I went to the doctors thinking nothing was really wrong with me.

“The doctor is a friend but when he said I had depression, I near throttled him because I thought he was having me on”, said John.

After visiting a counsellor, not believing for a moment his doctor friend was on the right track, John came away with one piece of advice – Talk to your mates.

He talked to his mates. Three weeks later, one of those mates also started talking and then another and John realised he wasn't alone.

The discovery that talking was not only doing him and his mates good but also creating bridges over troubled waters in helping a growing community of men in rural and regional areas to open up to each other led to more talking over a wider area, to the point where John is now known nationally for his mental health advocacy.

And it's not just groups of men and communities. Today John also offers his practical advice to a range of agencies and government departments, helping to raise awareness of what people in rural communities are experiencing.

The straight-shooting man on a mission who brought mental health to the kitchen table also turned to podcasting to broadcast his message.

Mate Helping Mate podcasts is a series of interviews with locals – be it farmers, farm workers, shearers, mothers, athletes, specialist psychologists and counsellors – all over NSW about what works (and what doesn't) for helping people struggling in remote and rural communities.

The nine episodes (so far) also go some way to reflecting John's simple philosophy.

Over the years of chatting with individuals and communities, he still believes talking openly is what's needed when life and times are tough.

“Talk to your mates, to your neighbours, talk openly with your partner, who in reality is probably your best mate. This is easy for me to say and advise but harder to actually do when you are struggling,” said John.

But, he says, the clue lies in active mateship – like pulling up for a chat, shaking someone's hand, looking them in the eye, making time to listen and showing a genuine interest in their lives.

“These indicate or demonstrate care and value of the other and this actively addresses the poor mental wellbeing negative thinking of nobody cares about me and I'm of no value to my family or community.

“When you’re contemplating suicide, your perception, not reality, is that nobody cares and there is no brighter future, but all it takes is one conversation to turn that around, like it did for me.

“It comes back to the fact that most blokes are like me.

“I couldn’t help myself with my mental illness, but as an Aussie I believe you do anything for a mate,” said John.

He said the concept of mateship and connection had been lost in a modern life so busy that people in rural and regional communities were just driving down the road and waving as they passed.

“Look back to 50 years ago when life was simpler: living on the land provided an income but also a lifestyle,” he said.

He reckons society took a spill when many people believed that to be any good, to be of any value, we had to be the best.

“And to be the best, you were outstanding, you stood at the top of the pyramid, at the apex, and there you are on your ‘Pat Malone’.

“But that’s not good for overall wellbeing, whether that is an individual, community or nation. It’s united we stand, divided we fall.

“As individuals, as a community or nation, we need to strive to be better, not necessarily to be ‘the best,’” added John.

John’s first podcast was released in March 2020 and drew a strong response, quickly jumping to a five-star rating and a healthy 4000 listeners.

“People have to acknowledge they have a problem and then we have to motivate them somehow to move forward,” said John.

Mate Helping Mate came back to the simple fact that helping somebody else makes you feel good.

John is also a board member of Rural Outreach Counselling (ROC), a Wagga-based service started in the Riverina region and now covering southern NSW and parts of northern Victoria, servicing the smaller towns and communities where there is minimal access to on-the-ground mental health services.



**Mate Helping Mate is available on Google, Apple, Stitcher and Spotify.**





# **VALE** Graham Nicol and Stephen Gell

*Old Boys from the early 1970's were saddened to hear of the passing of two of their mates from Ag College – Graham Nicol and Steve Gell, leaving a huge void within their families, many friends and their communities.*

## **Graham “Norton” Nicol (1971-73)**

The passing of Graham Nicol saddened Old Boys of his era. Highly respected as a mate, “Norton” made every effort to keep in contact with his college mates and attend any reunions that were organised.

Coming to WAC from Glenorie, Graham quickly established himself in the college community, especially on the rugby field where he played half back with the First XV for three years, winning two premierships in that time.

He was a very competent and diligent student who was well liked by students and staff at College and it was no surprise to see him quickly gain employment in agriculture after graduating.

His major working life was in the plant world.

Graham worked for Schering Agriculture after graduating and then used his vast skills as a cotton consultant in Wee Waa in the 1980's before moving to Nelson Bay where he had a break from agriculture and worked in pubs.

Drawn back into the agriculture industry again, he joined Bayer Crop Science, working with the company for over 25 years in a variety of important roles in sales, research and product development before taking a redundancy in 2019.

He then worked with agricultural supplier Ace Ohlsson, helping their clients in their stores along the coastal strip of NSW.

Graham was a respected and admired person. To those who knew him from WAC and the agricultural industry he was a good friend, a true gentleman, had a strong work ethic and a passion for agriculture. One of the good guys!

Graham had a battle with cancer and fought it to the end.



Some of Graham's mates from Ag College 71-73 in happier times (l-r) Phil Hawes, Iven Denyer, Steve MacDonald, Geoff Spence, Graham, Doc Ward.



Graham Nicol  
at the 2019 WAC 1971-73 reunion

## Steve Gell (1972-74)

Steve Gell arrived at Wagga Ag College in 1972 and immediately made an impact on College life and on the rugby field.

After WAC, Steve went to Armidale to do his Dip.Ed and he pretty much continued the life he led at WAC.

He enjoyed a great social life, worked odd jobs for farmers, and played a lot of rugby. He played in the New England zone representative team and again made enduring friendships on and off the field.

He then taught at Moree for two years. Same story! He made lots of friends that remained friends for life, worked on local farms at harvest, and played a lot of rugby. He also played in the Central North zone representative team.

After two years of teaching, he had had enough and went home to Nowra to work in his family's business.

He played cricket and rugby in Nowra and again was popular socially. He played in the Illawarra zone representative rugby team.

After a year or two, he went to live at East Gresford in the Hunter Valley, to manage the property his parents had bought. And there he stayed. He loved living on the land, playing rugby and doing some casual teaching.

(In fact wherever he lived, he played representative rugby until he threw the boots away in his early thirties).

He had always been interested in winemaking and after a couple of years at Gresford, he obtained a teaching position at Hunter Institute of TAFE teaching Viticulture and assisting with wine production. He loved it!

A lot of his students subsequently found jobs in the local wine area. He formed a wonderful relationship with the wine producers in the Hunter and there was a great mutual respect.

He formed strong friendships with many of his students in the days when TAFE offered wine growing and production courses as adult education. He is missed in the Hunter.

Steve and Jen married in 1982 and have four daughters. When we were waiting on the birth of our fourth baby, someone asked him if he wanted a boy to which he replied "nah, I'm happy with rugger huggers".

Steve and Jen lived all their married life near East Gresford where he built up a consultancy business in the Hunter doing soil surveys and advising on viticulture - in the days before there were gluts of grapes and wine.

Steve passed away at home, aged 70.

He was well-loved and he will be dearly missed by family, friends, students and peers.

Steve's funeral was held on Tuesday April 18 at St. Mary-on-Allyn Church, Allynbrook NSW.

Attendees included many of Steve's mates from Scots College and Wagga Ag College.

People were asked to consider a donation to the family's fundraiser for the Mark Hughes Foundation for brain cancer: <https://markhughesfoundation.com.au/>



**Some reflections on Steve from classmates, WAC and colleagues:**

*So sorry to hear of Steve's passing. I have nothing but fond memories of him at TSS and I extend my sincere condolences to his family at this very sad time.*

*So sorry to hear the news of Steve's passing. Working with Steve at Kurri Kurri TAFE, he was a larger than life character, who will be missed by all.*

*Steve was a wonderful teacher and work colleague at Kurri Kurri TAFE who knew the value of passing on his knowledge to students and staff. I have fond memories of Steve and he was a true gentleman.*

*Another outstanding WAC Old Boy who made many friendships with his peers and really enjoyed catching up with everyone at reunions.*





## Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute celebrates 130 years of research

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) held an open day on October 21 to celebrate a milestone - 130 years of primary industries research.

Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute (WWAI) Director Deb Slinger (**WAC 1979-81 and WACOBU committee person**) said the day was an opportunity for the public to learn about the latest developments in agriculture and explore the history of the Institute.



*Deb is well-regarded by the southern NSW farming sector, where she has spent the past 25 years effectively communicating the results of scientific research to those working in the paddock.*

*Along with her ability to nurture successful, longstanding partnerships with key industry organisations, Deb received the GRDC Recognising and Rewarding Excellence Award in 2019.*

**Deb Slinger with GRDC Northern Region Panel Chair John Minogue in 2019**

*GRDC Northern Region Panel Chair John Minogue described Ms Slinger as an outstanding industry leader with a proven track record in delivering practical, relevant information to growers, working with scientists and technical staff to develop and manage research projects and mentoring young scientists.*

The WWAI site started in 1892 when the Department of Agriculture established an Experimental Farm on the site.

Today, WWAI is the leading research institute for southern farming systems, with experts working across the fields of agronomy, viticulture, livestock production, the sciences of managing weeds, soils, entomology; as well as feed testing, cereal and oil laboratory services supporting producers across NSW and beyond.

At the open day there were displays, information and activities to keep all the family engaged, showcasing the world-class research and development that is conducted at WWAI, highlighting their important paddock to plate aspects of the research.

Farm tours showed guests around the 893ha of farm to showcase what and how research in farming systems is carried out, demonstrating the diversity of agricultural production of this area.

The previous day NSW DPI's Young Farmer Business Program Ag.x event was held to highlight the benefits of data-driven decision making to young farmers and fishers from across the Riverina.

Organised by NSW DPI with support from NSW Young Farmers, the Future Farmers Network and Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Youth Council, the event was aimed to equip participants with the essential knowledge, skills and tools needed to thrive in today's dynamic and rapidly evolving agriculture and aquaculture industries.

Highlights of the event's program included a strong digital theme and hands-on learning of the future of Australian farming through technology and data innovations.

These two valuable field days showcased the benefits of research and extension for the Riverina farming community.

***Editor: Congratulations Deb Slinger on your commitment to agricultural research and education.***

All past newsletters can be found on the CSU alumni website:

[alumni.csu.edu.au/news-and-events/newsletters/wacobu](https://alumni.csu.edu.au/news-and-events/newsletters/wacobu)





## Craig Whiting - New Role



Craig Whiting pictured with Janelle Jenkins at the WWAI in his previous role as team leader Crop Genetics.

Based at the Institute, Craig (**WAC 1992-94 and WACOBU committee person**) has taken a role as the Commercial Manager of The Seedcare Institute for Syngenta (Australia and New Zealand). Syngenta is a global, science-based agricultural technical company made up of Crop Protection and Seeds business units with more than 30,000 employees in 90 countries.

Prior to that Craig was the NSW DPI Team Leader for Southern NSW Crop Genetics, also based at Wagga, for five years after working for Bayer Animal Health for over a decade.

With an extensive background in agricultural agronomy services, research and sales at both wholesale and retail level as well as on-farm work experiences, Craig is looking forward to the challenges of working with this international company.



## Agriculture teacher shortage in High Schools across Australia

**Agriculture graduates are being urged to consider working in the classroom, as a shortage of agriculture teachers raises concerns about the future of the skilled farming workforce.**

There were over 90 Australian schools looking for agriculture teachers between January and October in 2023, according to research undertaken for the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Foundation.

Jim Pratley, Emeritus Professor of Agriculture at Charles Sturt University, said the shortage was concerning, as teachers were key to building the major industry.

Teachers are seen as one of the greatest influences on what careers students might follow, acting as a vital link to a better and more highly trained agricultural workforce.

The agriculture sector currently employs around 240,000 people and is worth over \$70 billion to Australia's economy.

Primary Industries Education Foundation chief executive Luciano Mesiti said as older teachers retired, there were not enough qualified candidates to fill their places meaning a lot of schools are teaching agriculture without a trained agriculture teacher.

Many high schools are doing great things with their agriculture programs but a lack of teachers will seriously impact these studies in the future.

In the 1970's and 1980's many agriculture graduates from RCAE started their working life as agriculture teachers in State high schools, but many chose another career path after five-15 years of teaching.

The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Foundation has set up a new program for graduates who want to pursue a career in teaching, offering five \$10,000 scholarships for post-graduate study in NSW and the ACT.



Wagga Ag Race Day  
~Murrumbidgee Turf Club~



The Wagga Ag Club hosted the annual Wagga Ag Race Day at the Murrumbidgee Turf Club at Wagga on Saturday September 16.

It is the biggest social event of the calendar for the Ag Club and was first held in 1989 by agriculture students as a fundraiser for Peter Worsley who suffered serious spinal injuries in a rugby match.

Since then, the Wagga Ag Club has raised money for Peter and the wider Ag community from this day. In 2022, the Ag Race Day committee raised over \$30,000.



*Peter at the 2017 races with then Ag Race Day president Will Whiteley*

The official Aggies “After Party” was held at the William Farrer Hotel following the races with live music and plenty of banter.

Another successful day was held and congratulations to the hard working committee who coordinate this great event.



*A great day out at the Ag Race Day!*

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME



# WAC Rugby

## Season 2023

*A great rugby club*

2023 was a strong year for the Club with all teams contesting the semi-final series, finishing a close third in the Club Championship, Tessa Good winning the Southern Inland's best and fairest award, the Alicia Lucas Medal and Anthony Taylor just missing out on the Bill Castle Medal in first grade.

After a fantastic season, the tilt for the 2023 Premiership Cup sadly came to an end when both the First X1 and Women's WAC sides went down in their respective Preliminary Finals at Tumut.

Both sides gave their absolute all on the field and kept the pressure on right up until the final whistle. The girls' score was tied at both the end of official play, and at the completion of an extra ten minutes, and a place in the grand final was awarded to Griffith as they ended the season higher on the ladder.

The First Grade Aggies dug deep, but the strong Waratahs unit was just too good on the day and won their spot in the Grand Final 23-12. WAC had beaten both Waratahs and Wagga City during the season and these three clubs were the strongest teams in the competition, with very little between them in each contest.

Waratahs lifted the first grade trophy following a strong second half performance against Wagga City, winning 26-10.

Waratahs was also crowned the 2023 Women's Premiers after an exciting match against the Griffith Blacks 31-29 after extra time.

Wagga City was crowned the 2023 second grade premiers following a tight contest against Tumut, winning 29-24.

The Hay Cutters Rugby Union Club lifted the third grade McMullen Cup with a one point victory over Wagga City, 27-26 and boy did they celebrate the win.

Wagga City Rugby Club collected the club championship trophy – the Wal Blake Cup, from Waratahs with Ag College in third place, showing the strength of the three Wagga based clubs.

Jacob Neilsen from Wagga City Rugby Club received the Bill Castle Medal for SIRU’s best and fairest player in the 2023 DevCore first grade season, from Tasitumua Sala (Tumut) only one point behind and WAC Rugby’s Anthony Taylor third, a further one point behind.

Congratulations to WAC Rugby’s Tessa Good who won the Alicia Lucas Medal for Best and Fairest of the 2023 Macarthur Real Estate Agency Women's X’s season after a stellar year.



*Anthony Taylor on the burst against Wagga City in the club’s win over Wagga City at Beres Ellwood Oval on May 27 in front of the Class of 73-75’s reunion (photo courtesy of Wagga Daily Advertiser)*







## Southern Inland Rugby 2023 Wrap Up

### Alicia Lucas Medal



Tessa Good	WAC	14
Amelia Lolotonga	Griffith	12
Lele Katoa	Griffith	9
Amy Fowler	Waratahs	9
Ellen McIntyre	Reddies	7



### Bill Castle Medal



Jacob Neilsen	Wagga City	15
Tasitumua Sala	Tumut	14
Anthony Taylor	WAC	13
Nico Maclean	Waratahs	13
Lachlan Day	Waratahs	11
Calum Marr	Waratahs	11





## WAC Rugby Charity Day 2023

Charity Day saw WAC Rugby's four grades take on the Griffith Blacks for a huge day of rugby at Beres Ellwood Oval on Saturday July 15.

The club was raising money for **Country Hope**, a charity supporting country families affected by childhood cancer.

Donations were raised through an auction of the First XV's specially designed charity day jerseys after the match at the William Farrer Hotel, as well as \$25 from WAC Rugby for each try celebration and generous donations from spectators at the games.

It was appropriate that the Sponsor of the day was the club's major sponsor, the William Farrer Hotel, which has been a loyal, proud supporter of WAC Rugby for over 10 years and everyone adjourned to the pub for the jersey auction and a great night.

This game was also a very special occasion for one of the club's senior players, Tas Kuhn as he celebrated his 100th game with Ag College.

It was a very successful day on and off the field for WAC Rugby and Country Hope greatly appreciated the support from the Aggies. Ego Yah!

## WAC Rugby AGM

The club held their AGM and would like to thank the outgoing committee for a fun, smooth and fabulous 2023.

Congratulations to the incoming committee and good luck with your roles for the next 12 months.

President- Ted O'Rafferty, Vice president- Tom Heilman, Treasurer- Malcolm Bartlett, Secretary- Will Crawford, Club captain- Josh Elworthy, Register- Jack Johnston, Merchandise- Archer Nugan, Sponsorship- Tessa Good, Match day organisers- Josh Flick and Harry Parnaby, General Committee- Sophie Janota, Jack Cole, Hugh Shadwell, Trent Fordham, Club tutor- Mark Lui, Spiritual advisor- Ellie Burnett.



# Pat “Lepto” Lemmich

## *Awarded Life Membership of WAC Rugby*

Congratulations to Pat “Lepto” Lemmich who received Life Membership of WAC Rugby at the club’s presentation night held in September 2023.

Lepto’s dedication to the club is unrivalled and has done Ag College proud.

He has served four years on the committee with two of those as President.

A key player as a part of WAC’s first XV, he has been a leader within the team and for the wider rugby community.

We thank Lepto for his service over the last six years and wish him all the best.



FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME



## Help celebrate 75 Years of WAC Rugby

A special celebration of WAC Rugby will be held on July 13, 2024

with a 75 year Reunion Ball to be held at The Range Function Centre in Wagga.

Event organisers Ted O'Rafferty and Trevor Fosdyke are hoping for a big turn-out of past players, supporters, friends and partners for the Ball to mark this special occasion.



The day will begin with rugby at Beres Ellwood Oval followed by a Reunion Ball at the Range Function Centre Wagga.

Mark the date in your diaries and RSVP your attendance via facebook.

There is a link for details:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/q1Xw6fuJMwKzWrGv/?mibextid=9I3rBW>

*Please respond if you do plan on attending the Reunion ball as numbers will determine ticket prices.*

*The final details will be released closer to the date.*



