

St. George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY - MAY 2013 EDITION

50th Anniversary



**Michael Gannon (Forest Road)
(From Mitchell Library)**

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Meetings are held 2:00 PM the third Saturday of the month (except January)

In the Meeting Room 1st Floor, Rockdale Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.

Members, please bring a plate. Visitors are welcome.

EVENTS AGENDA

May 4th And 5th LYDHAM HALL OPEN DAY

10:00 am – 4:00 pm



See one of Sydney's finest collections of antique furniture and unique collection of Willow Pattern China

For Enquiries (02) 9567-4259 Entry Is Free

THE GANNONS OF TEMPE PART 1: Frederick Gannon Senior

By Anne Carolan

The name Gannon is familiar even to newer residents of the St Peters/Tempe area because it features as the name of a street. Long-time residents still call the now dilapidated old home in Union Street, 'Gannon's place'. Those interested in local history will know that the road to Hurstville was once called 'Gannon's Forest Road' and that Hurstville itself was known as 'Gannon's Forest' until a century ago. There are also a number of older residents who can just remember the kindly old man with a neat white beard pottering about the garden he loved at 'Hurlingham', the family home. Beyond the home were Gannon's paddocks, the Sts Peter and Paul's Catholic Church in Station Street (1858) and the family vault. One resident remembers his job collecting milk money which included calling at 'Hurlingham' from Unwin's Bridge Road. On one occasion he was grateful to old Mr Gannon who found and returned 10/- which he had lost- -a small fortune in the 1920s.

The Gannon who, in 1850, bought 1903 acres of the Townson grant and, at a toll gate charged the wood gatherers of Sydney Town to enter his forest, was Michael Gannon - convict, carpenter/builder, innkeeper and land speculator. Frederick Gannon Snr., solicitor, of 'Hurlingham', Union Street, Tempe, who died, aged 87, on 10 October 1923 was the fifth of Michael Gannon's seven sons.

The family of Michael and Mary Gannon included: John b. 30.4.1825 (m. Eliza Laurance or Lawrence); Mary b. 29.4.1827 (d. infancy); Robert b. 22.6.1829 (m. Agnes Conley); William b. 13.8.1831 (m. 1 Rose Edmunds or Edwards; 2. Helena Parry; James b. 11.12.1833 (m. Jane Chadburn); Frederick b. 21.3.1836 (m. Clarissa Rebecca Murray); Joseph b. 5.7.1838 (m. Susanah Jane Andrews); Alfred b. 21.6.1840 (m. Elizabeth Hunt) ; Alicia b. 21.6.1842 (m. W.H.D. Mitchell) ; Maria b. 6.8.1845 (in. C.H. Linehan).

Michael Gannon, who was transported from Ireland under a life sentence, arrived with his brother James in Sydney on the 'Almorah' in 1820. In 1824 Michael married Mary Parsonage acquiring as his in-laws Thomas Parsonage ('Hillsborough', 1798) and Mary Jones ('Earl Cornwallis', 1801). The Gannon brothers came as convicts but appear to have established themselves and stable homes through marriage. Michael Gannon also rapidly established himself in business as a builder and auctioneer in Cambridge and Argyle streets, Sydney.

Next time you visit the Rocks, glance over the back wall of 45 Argyle Street and imagine little Fred. Gannon running about the garden with his brothers 145 years ago. For Michael Gannon, the builder, had moved his family into this gentlemen's residence around 1839. It can be assumed that he was skilled at his trade as the house still stands, protected by the Sydney Cove Development Authority which states that 'this house contains more original joinery than any other building in the period in the Rocks. For example, the 200 mm. floorboards are unique to the Rocks and are a rare commodity in historic buildings generally.'

Frederick Gannon was about seven years old when the family moved to Cook's River around 1842. They lived on Cook's River Road (now Prince's Highway) before he moved to 'Hurlingham' in the 1870s. Frederick was educated at Sydney College and was admitted as a solicitor in 1864. In 1861 Frederick married Clarissa Rebecca Murray, daughter of Robert Murray of the Farrier's Arms, George Street, Sydney and 'Yarrum', Lyons Road, Fivedock. Her mother was Rebecca Miller or Bennett and now Frederick, too, had in-laws with convict origins dating from the very early years of the colony. Robert Murray had a half-brother, Thomas Smidmore- -a family also well known in Marrickville and surrounding areas.

The family of Frederick Gannon Snr. included: Clara b. 4.5.1861 (m. William Edward Carter); Edith b. 2.6.1862 (d. infancy); Frederick S. b. 4.2.1864 (m. Elizabeth Toomey); Leslie b. 24.11.1865 (m. Kathleen Marie Sexton); Ada b. 23.5.1867 (m. Charles McDonell) ; Walter b. 23.11.1868 (m. Patience Longfield) ; Arthur b. 6.1.1871 (m. Lottie Farr); Archibald b. 16.6.1872 (m. Nellie Jones); Percy b. 28.10.1873; Stanley b. 16.7.1875 (m. Ethel Raynor); Claude b. 30.12.1876 (m. Elsie Dibley); Henry b. 10.4.1879.

Such was the pace of social change that Frederick Gannon, a convict's son, was able to model his Hurlingham Estate at Tempe upon the exclusive Hurlingham Sporting Club of London which is still in existence. Tempe, then, was considered an

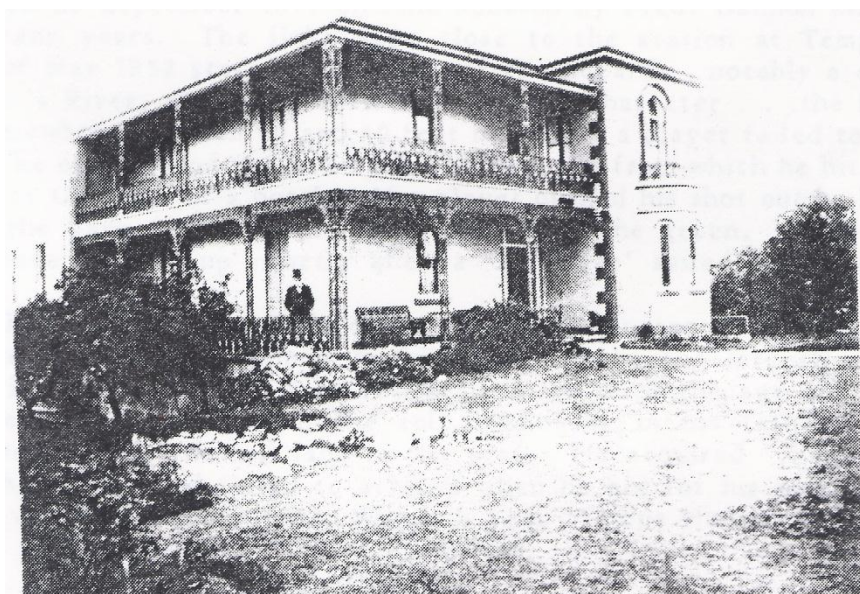
attractive area with grand homes dotting the hills. Holt's 'Warren' and Spark's 'Tempe' were two of these. 'Burlingham', too, was on a hill with splendid views down to the river and out to Botany Heads. It had its own pigeon shoot and became a centre of music, sport and entertainment. In its prime it was graciously furnished and decorated. As time went by some of the rooms became lined with sporting trophies. For Frederick Snr. loved all sport- -he was a noted athlete in his youth and was a cricketer on the old Albert Ground when 'it was not considered playing the game to bowl overhand'. He was a member of the Australian Jockey Club and, even in his last years, his sons were expected to row him about Botany Bay to his favourite fishing haunts.

The third public golf course established in Sydney was at Marrickville. It came into being on 20 September 1897 on land donated by Fred. Gannon who remained its Patron for many years. The links were close to the station at Tempe and the P.G.A. Monthly of May 1952 stated that 'some of the hazards , notably a cliff on the banks of the Cook's River, were of a decidedly sporting character . . .the face of the Cliff Hole was somewhere between 30 and 40 feet high. If a player failed to get height with his iron shot he often found the ball back behind a tee from which he hit. Another unusual hole was at the back of a hotel. If a player pushed his shot out he had to play his second over the back fence of the hotel to get to the green. Some inebriated gentlemen must have sobered up smartly when a 'screamer' sailed over their heads!'

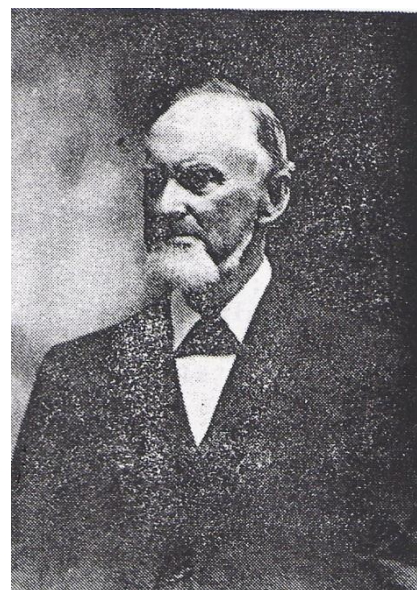
Frederick Gannon Snr. sent six of his sons to Newington College and later two joined him in the firm, Fred. Gannon & Sons, said to be the largest criminal law practice in the city at the time. Gannon practised law until the age of 85 by which time he was the oldest solicitor on the roll. Following in his father's footsteps, Frederick continued to buy and sell land in the area. He acquired 'Tempe House' in 1884, something his father had failed to achieve when he bid for his neighbour Brodie Spark's property on 27 December 1853. Within a year 'Tempe House' and its grounds had been sold to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan.

Clarissa Gannon died, aged 85, on 12 November 1922, 11 months before her husband. They were buried at South Head Cemetery. Subsequently 'Hurlingham' and its remaining grounds were auctioned. Some members of the Gannon family still reside in and around the Marrickville area. Clare Gannon B.A., a grand daughter of Frederick, taught for many years at St George Girls' High School before retirement.

Michael Gannon was my great - great - grandfather; Fred. Gannon Snr. was my great-grandfather; Leslie Ernest Gannon was my grandfather; Biela Gannon, who grew up in 'Hurlingham' was my mother. I would be pleased to hear from any other descendants of the Gannons of Tempe who would like to share their reminiscences.



Hurlingham c 1920 with Frederick Gannon Sr on the Verandah



Frederick Gannon Sr.

THE DAYS WHEN BONDI HAD A CASINO

The Casino at Bondi Beach was not a 'casino' in the current contemporary sense of a gambling venue. It described a building or large room used for entertainment and dancing.

It was advertised as Sydney's first nightclub, it certainly was one of the earliest. It opened in 1923. It was also referred to as the *Bondi Palais de Danse*.

In the 1920s Bondi Beach had been newly discovered by artist and writers and was rapidly developing a slightly bohemian and certainly very hedonistic atmosphere. Bondi had usurped Manly as Sydney's premier surfing beach, with Sydneysiders in their thousands flocking to the surf and to promenade along the beachfront. Campbell Parade was being transformed to reflect Bondi's new status, the *Hotel Astra* and *Hotel Bondi* had been built and it was in this environment that the Casino opened.

The owner of the Casino was David McFarlane McLachlan Kerr, nicknamed 'Andy', who was one of Sydney's early 'colourful racing identities'. In the 1910s and 1920s, he was a high profile bookmaker at Sydney racecourses, known as the 'Coogee Bunyip' because of his love of that beach. Andy Kerr was very wealthy, very flashy and owned a number of businesses, including theatres and a city jewellery shop, as well as the Casino.

The Casino itself was on an enormous site. Located on the corner of Roscoe Street and Campbell Parade, directly opposite Bondi Beach, it took up half the Campbell Parade block between Roscoe Street and Curlewis Street. and stretched back up Roscoe Street as far as the laneway which ran behind the Hotel Bondi.

Inside the Casino a huge lavishly furnished central dance area was complemented by semi-private sitting compartments, called logues, to either side of the public entertainment area. A very high ceiling added to the sense of the large scale and size of the building.

The Casino, Bondi Beach advertised itself as: Sydney's most popular dancing rendezvous. "Specially designed for dancing, this palatial building quickly established itself in public favour. Its situation overlooking the ocean was unique." Its luxurious furnishings, elegant appointments and exquisite *Palm Court* were all in keeping with the refined atmosphere that was the keynote to the Casino's success.

The floor of Tasmanian blackwood was considered perfect; the full strength all-Australian band was extravagantly advertised as "a revelation in the possibilities of syncopated melody".

The twenties were the heyday of the Casino until the depression when Andy Kerr lost all his money. and the Casino finally closed in 1931.

However, the cavernous dance venue was then resurrected as the Rialto Skating Rink. It was still later re-developed as the Kings Theatre, opening in 1937 and in that form enjoyed a good run with many readers of this *Bulletin* enjoying its offerings until it again fell victim to change, this time, to television in 1969. In later years the Hakoah Club occupied the site. Now it, too, has gone!

Source: Waverly Historical Society Bulletin

Vol 25 Number 3 March 2013

Image Source

<http://www1.waverley.nsw.gov.au/library/localstudies/historical/casino.htm>



Casino and Hotel Bondi, Sydney

Happy



Mother's

Day



2013 Ron Rathbone *Local History Prize*



Rockdale
shopping centre,
circa 1900.

A prize of **\$5000** will be awarded to
the author of the best piece of original research
on any aspect of the City of Rockdale

Entrants in the prize can submit a piece of original research on any aspect of the Rockdale local government area: its history, buildings, organisations, people, parks, natural features or events. Entry forms and guidelines are available at all Rockdale branch libraries and at www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au

All entries must be received by Friday 2 August 2013

For more information contact Council's Local History Services Specialist, Kirsten Broderick, on 9562 1821 or kbroderick@rockdale.nsw.gov.au



2013 Ron Rathbone Local History Prize Guidelines

Aim

The aim of the Ron Rathbone Local History Prize is to encourage original research into the history of the City of Rockdale and to ensure that such research is archived and made available for future researchers.

Prize

The winner of the 2013 Ron Rathbone Local History Prize will receive \$5,000.

Entry Criteria

1. Entrants must submit an original piece of research. If the research work has been previously submitted to an academic institution as an assignment, or has been used as part of or in connection with any other project, it may still be submitted; however, it must be presented in a style appropriate for entry into the Prize.
2. The research may be on any topic as long as it substantially relates to the City of Rockdale.
3. Entrants do not need to be residents of the City of Rockdale.
4. Only individuals, not organisations or societies, may enter; however, entries with joint authors are permitted.
5. Councillors and employees of Rockdale City Council are not eligible to enter.

Judging

The judging panel will consist of Dr Peter Orlovich; the Manager - Community & Customer Services; and the Local History Services Specialist.

Entrants are strongly advised to consider the judging criteria outlined below before entering the competition.

Conditions of Entry

1. Entries may be submitted in either hard or soft copy. If an entry is emailed, it must be in either Microsoft Word or PDF format.
2. Entrants must complete and sign an official entry form and lodge it together with their entry. If the entry is emailed, a signed entry form must either be scanned and emailed with the entry or mailed to the Local History Services Specialist.
3. It is the responsibility of the entrant to ensure that their entry is properly submitted and received.
4. Entries must be in English.

Rockdale City Library

448 Princes Highway Rockdale Tel 9562 1821

Rockdale City Council

2 Bryant Street / PO Box 21 Rockdale NSW 2216

rcc@rockdale.nsw.gov.au www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au

Tel 02 9562 1666 Fax 02 9562 1777

5. Entrants may submit more than one piece of research if they wish. A separate entry form is required for each entry.
6. Copyright of any research work submitted remains with the author of the work at all times.
7. All entries will be placed in the Local History Collection of Rockdale City Library where they will be available for people to read.
8. If entrants agree, their entry will also be made available on Rockdale City Council's website.
9. The judges shall have the discretion to divide the prize equally between entrants they consider of equal merit.
10. The entries will be judged on individual merit. The judges reserve the right to award no prize if they deem there are no entries of sufficiently high quality. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Judging Criteria

Entries will be judged based on the following criteria:

1. How closely the work relates to the history of the City of Rockdale.
2. How much original historical research and consultation of primary and secondary sources the work involves.
3. How well the sources used are documented.
4. Whether or not the work provides us with new information, or is on a topic that has not been written about in-depth before.
5. Whether or not the work has a consistent theme or a cohesive argument.
6. The professional quality and the style of the work and the writing itself (spelling, grammar, layout, etc.).

Closing date

All entries must be received by 5pm on Friday 2 August 2013.

Enquiries

For further information or enquiries, please contact Kirsten Broderick, Council's Local History Services Specialist, on 9562 1821, or email kbroderick@rockdale.nsw.gov.au.

Rockdale City Library

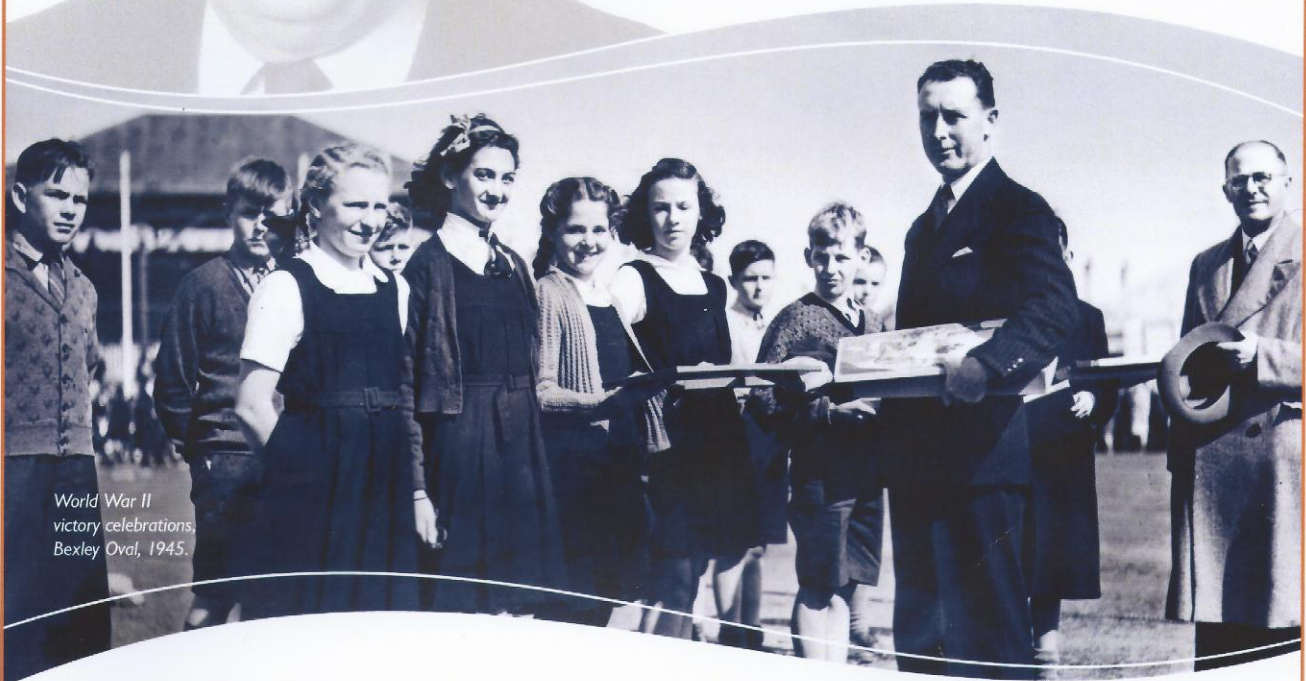
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2013 Ron Rathbone **Junior Local History Prize**



World War II
victory celebrations,
Bexley Oval, 1945.

\$500 prize each for the primary school student
and the high school student who writes the best essay
on any topic related to the City of Rockdale

In their essay, students can:

- ◆ Write a brief history of any local school, church, building, business or park.
- ◆ Write a brief biography of a current or former resident, politician, sports person, business person or entertainer.
- ◆ Write a family history describing how their family came to live in the Rockdale City area and any connections that their family has with it.

Alternatively, students can write an essay on any topic they choose as long as it relates to the City of Rockdale. Entry forms and guidelines are available at all Rockdale branch libraries and at www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au

All entries must be received by Friday 2 August 2013

For more information contact Council's Local History Services Specialist, Kirsten Broderick, on 9562 1821 or kbroderick@rockdale.nsw.gov.au



2013 Junior Ron Rathbone Local History Prize Guidelines

Aim

The aim of the Junior Ron Rathbone Local History Prize is to encourage an interest in the research and writing of local history among our school students.

Entry requirements

Students are invited to submit an essay on any topic related to the history of the City of Rockdale.

Students may choose:

- To write a brief history of any local school, church, building, business or park.
- To write a brief biography of a current or former resident, politician, sports person, business person or entertainer from or associated with the City of Rockdale.
- To write a family history describing how their family came to live in the Rockdale area and/or any connections that their family has with the Rockdale area.

Alternatively, students may write an essay on any topic they choose as long as it substantially relates to the City of Rockdale.

Prizes

The winning high school student will receive \$500.

The winning primary school student will receive \$500.

Closing date

All entries must be received by 5pm, Friday 2 August 2013.

Judging panel

The judging panel will consist of Dr Peter Orlovich; the Manager - Community & Customer Services; and the Local History Services Specialist.

Conditions of Entry

1. The competition is open to all school students.
2. Students must complete and sign an entry form and lodge it together with their entry.
3. The work submitted must be entirely by the student.
4. If they choose, two students may work together and submit a joint entry. Entries with more than two authors are not permitted.
5. At the conclusion of the competition, entries will be placed in the Local History Collection of Rockdale City Library and will be placed on Rockdale City Council's website for people to read.
6. If necessary, the judges shall have the discretion to divide the prize equally between entries they consider of equal merit.
7. The entries will be judged on individual merit. The judges reserve the right to award no prize if they deem there are no entries of sufficiently high quality.

8. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Enquiries

For further information or enquiries, please contact Kirsten Broderick, Council's Local History Services Specialist, on 9562 1821, or email kbroderick@rockdale.nsw.gov.au.

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Tel 02 9562 1666 Fax 02 9562 1777

2013 Ron Rathbone Local History Prize Entry Form

Ms/Mr/Mrs/other (please state)		Family name		Given name	
No.	Street		Suburb		Postcode
Mailing address (if different)					
Tel (home)		Tel (work)		Tel (mobile)	
Email					
Title of work					
Permission is given to make my entry available on Rockdale City Council's website (please tick the appropriate box)				Yes	No

Declaration

- I have read the Ron Rathbone Local History Prize guidelines and I agree to abide by the conditions of entry.
- The research work submitted is my own work.
- I understand that while I retain copyright of my own work, a copy of my work will be placed in the Local History Collection of Rockdale City Library for people to access.

Please Note

The personal information required on this form may be available for public access under various legislation.

Entrant's signature	Date ____ / ____ / ____
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Hard copy entries are to be submitted to:

Kirsten Broderick - Local History Services Specialist
2013 Ron Rathbone Local History Prize
Rockdale City Council
PO Box 21
ROCKDALE NSW 2216

Soft copy entries (in Word or PDF format) are to be emailed to: kbroderick@rockdale.nsw.gov.au

All entries must be received by 5pm on Friday 2 August 2013.

For enquiries please contact Kirsten Broderick on 9562 1821.

Rockdale City Council

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Tel 02 9562 1666 Fax 02 9562 1777

2013 Junior Ron Rathbone Local History Prize Entry Form

Entrant's details

Given name		Family name	
No.	Street	Suburb	Postcode
Telephone		Email	
Name of school			
Class		Age	
Title of essay			

Declaration

- The entry submitted is my own work.
- I understand a copy of my work will be placed in the Local History Collection of Rockdale City Library and on Rockdale City Council's website for people to read.

Please Note

The personal information required on this form may be available for public access under various legislation.

Entrant's signature	Date ____ / ____ / ____
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Hard copy entries are to be mailed to:

Kirsten Broderick - Local History Services Specialist
2013 Junior Ron Rathbone Local History Prize;
Rockdale City Council
PO Box 21
ROCKDALE NSW 2216

Soft copy entries (in Word or PDF format) are to be emailed to: kbroderick@rockdale.nsw.gov.au

All entries must be received by 5pm on Friday 2 August 2013.

For enquiries please contact Kirsten Broderick on 9562 1821.

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