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Community news for Byron Bay and surrounds

Issue 14 | January 2024



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Dear Readers,

Happy New Year and welcome to 2024. I hope you all had a wonderful break over Christmas – I know I did. With another trip around the sun complete, now is the perfect time to reflect and think about the year ahead. Personally, my new year begins with gratitude – for the people I love and the community I adore.

This month, our Local Legend is John Ogilvie, founder of the Byron Yoga Centre. He shares his story with us of how he triumphed over emptiness and drug addiction, to create the longest running Yoga Centre in Australia. Our feature article is from Andrew Cameron, Byron Shire Council's Agricultural Extension Officer, who gives us his insights into the current cultural shift from ownership of land to custodianship.

Within these pages, there is something for everyone.

Until next month,

Charla Rallings, Editor.

### Contact us



Got a story? Get in touch.

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### Acknowledgement of Country

*The Byron Wave* acknowledges that we are here on the land of the Bundjalung people. The Bundjalung are the traditional owners of this land and are part of the oldest surviving continuous culture in the world. Always Was, Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land.

### The fine print

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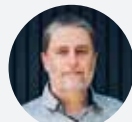
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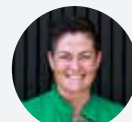
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Physiotherapist



Mark Goetjes  
Osteopath



Nicola Cook  
Hand Therapist



Kate Goswell  
Women's & Men's  
Pelvic Health  
Physiotherapist



Rebecca Buckley  
Exercise Physiologist



Matthew Buckley  
Exercise Physiologist



Gabrielle Coulhurst  
Accredited Dietitian



Elizabeth Margules  
Psychologist



Dr Jan Peter Siefken  
Psychiatrist



Dr Tony Cakar  
Specialist Paediatric  
Dentist



Dr Tim Wood  
Sports & Exercise  
Physician



Dr Candice Silverman  
Laparoscopic Surgeon



Dr Paul Amailuk  
Oral & Maxillofacial  
Surgeon



Dr Michael Facek  
Orthopedic Surgeon





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**What:** Starlight Festival  
**When:** 4–7 January 9:30am - 6:00pm  
**Where:** A&I Hall Bangalow

Discover four days of transformation and healing. Browse the wellbeing market and access a community of practitioners offering healing, readings, massage and much more. Tickets and info: [starlightfestival.com.au](http://starlightfestival.com.au)



**What:** Women Beyond Time: Poetry Night  
**When:** Tuesday 9 January 7:30pm  
**Where:** Drill Hall Theatre, Mullumbimby

Women Beyond Time: Memoirs Through Poetry, will draw you in like no other poetry night. Peek behind the curtain into a feast of the feminine, a journey into the lives of others through poetry. Tickets and info: [drillhalltheatre.org.au](http://drillhalltheatre.org.au)



**What:** Oyster Mushroom Bucket Workshop  
**When:** Saturday 13 January, 10:30–12:30pm  
**Where:** The Paddock Project, Mullumbimby

This free workshop, hosted by Alchemystic Fungi, is a practical, step-by-step breakdown to creating mushroom growing systems at home.

Tickets and info: [events.humanitix.com](http://events.humanitix.com)



**What:** Survival Day: Sisters for Reconciliation  
**When:** Friday 26 January, 11am–3pm  
**Where:** Apex Park, Byron Bay

Alongside the Cavanbah Reconciliation Group, the Sisters will be celebrating the survival of Aboriginal culture, with live music from Uncle Billy Kay, guest speakers, stalls, artwork and weaving. Come along, share good vibes, and meet new people.



**What:** Josh Thomas – Live  
**When:** 24–27 January  
**Where:** Brunswick Picture House

Laugh with Josh Thomas this summer as he brings his hot new show to Brunswick Heads, exploring life's challenges and the pursuit of the impossible.

Tickets and info: [brunswickpicturehouse.com](http://brunswickpicturehouse.com)



**What:** Late for Woodstock  
**When:** Saturday 28 January, 4pm  
**Where:** Hotel Brunswick, free event

Late for Woodstock will be playing the best 60s/70s Classic Rock and Roll to keep the sounds and soul of the Woodstock era alive.

Tickets and info: [hotelbrunswick.com.au](http://hotelbrunswick.com.au)

### Monthly Markets

1st Saturday	Brunswick Heads
1st Sunday	Byron Bay Pottsville Beach
2nd Saturday	Bangalow Flea Market Woodburn
2nd Sunday	Lennox Head The Channon Tabulam Hall Coolangatta
3rd Saturday	Mullumbimby Murwillumbah Salt Village, Casuarina
3rd Sunday	Federal Uki Pottsville Beach
4th Saturday	Byron YAC Flea Market Wilson Creek Kyogle Bazaar
4th Sunday	Bangalow Nimbin Coolangatta Murwillumbah Yamba
5th Saturday	Bangalow Flea Market
5th Sunday	Lennox Head Nimbin

### Weekly Farmers Markets

Tuesday	New Brighton Organic Lismore
Wednesday	Murwillumbah Nimbin Newrybar Hall
Thursday	Byron Bay Lismore
Friday	Mullumbimby
Saturday	Bangalow Uki Lismore Markets
Sunday	Ballina

### Byron Twilight Markets

Every Saturday, Railway Park, Byron Bay  
Between 4pm – 9pm, until April 2024

**For more information visit**  
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## The Shire in brief

### Six projects being supported by Mayoral Fund

Byron Shire Mayor, Michael Lyon, has announced the six community projects being supported by the Mayoral Fund in 2023/24. Grants from \$200 to \$500 have been awarded to the following not-for-profit applicants:

- Goonengerry Public School – to buy cooking appliances and establish an Indigenous food garden for the students who cook lunches using produce from their school garden
- Mullumbimby Community Food Box – to cover freight costs and to supplement the cost of running the cold room
- Bangalow Public School – for two student scholarship awards
- Brunswick Heads Public School – to support a working bee to build the backdrop for the 2024 school musical
- Mullumbimby High School P&C – to buy resources for a space to support students' mental health and wellbeing
- Bangalow Men's Shed – to support the women's wood-working group to build and install an all-weather community pantry for the distribution of dry pantry goods to people in need.

Applications for next round of funding are expected to open August 2024. For more information visit: [byron.nsw.gov.au](http://byron.nsw.gov.au)

### Watch out: nesting turtles about

Sea turtle nesting season is upon us, and with some recent sightings in the Shire, the community is being urged to be vigilant and report any turtle tracks spotted. The sea turtle nesting phase stretches from November to March along the NSW coastline. Chloe Dowsett, Council's Coast and Biodiversity Coordinator, said tracks have been found on Seven Mile Beach near the Ballina and Byron Shires. Although the female turtle didn't lay eggs, experts suspect she was scouting for a nesting site.

'It's possible she will move towards a beach in the Byron Shire and if NSW Turtle Watch and Australian Seabird and Turtle Rescue are aware of a nest, they can put measures in place to protect it,' Ms Dowsett said.

Council stands behind NSW Turtle Watch, working tirelessly towards the conservation and recovery of marine turtles in the region. 'Five species of sea turtles are found in the waters off Byron Shire, and some of these are endangered, so it's important we protect and support these wonderful animals,' said Ms Dowsett.

Encountering turtle tracks on the beach? Capture a photo and promptly reach out to NSW Turtle Watch for reporting.

Zoe White, Council's Waste Education and Compliance Officer, underscored the importance of beachgoers in this conservation effort. 'We are asking people to make an early New Year resolution and collect rubbish every time they go for a walk. Whether the litter is on the beach, in the bush, or on the footpath, there's a good chance that it will end up in the ocean. So save a marine creature and pick it up before it gets there,' she said.

If you would like to find out more information about the project, please contact the project officer on [turtlewatchnsw@gmail.com](mailto:turtlewatchnsw@gmail.com), or visit Australian Seabird Rescue's website: [seabirdrescue.org.au](http://seabirdrescue.org.au)

### Bangalow's future streetscape is on exhibition

Byron Shire Council is currently looking for feedback on the newly proposed Bangalow Streetscape Materials Design Guide. Submissions for feedback are open until 19 January. The guide is a comprehensive resource aimed at ensuring the village's unique charm is maintained for future development, outlining recommended materials and treatments for use in forthcoming projects within public spaces. Its adoption will influence decisions involving street furniture, footpath paving, garden beds, rubbish bins, and more.

The guide will be referenced in the Byron Shire Development Control Plan (DCP) 2014 – the draft chapter is also on exhibition with the guide. The need for this guide was identified in the Bangalow Village Plan and has been promoted by community representatives on the Place Planning Collective.

For more information and have your say visit: [byron.nsw.gov.au](http://byron.nsw.gov.au)

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## Byron Shire on alert for Fire Ants



Authorities have reported the presence of Red Imported Fire Ants in Murwillumbah during late November – a significant concern for local communities. These invasive ants pose severe risks to people, other species, and the environment, exhibiting aggressive behavior and delivering painful stings. Byron Shire Council and the NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) are urgently advising residents to be vigilant and take necessary precautions.

A control area has been established within a five-kilometre radius of the infested zones in South Murwillumbah.

According to Claudia Caliarì, Council Biodiversity Projects Officer, a critical Emergency Order issued by NSW DPI earlier this year emphasises the need to prevent the ants from spreading further within NSW. Residents are urged to adhere to DPI guidelines, which include refraining from moving fire ant carrier materials such as soil, mulch, hay, and turf from the area. Caliarì also stressed the importance of community cooperation, requesting residents to watch out for these ants.

Council staff have received training from NSW DPI to detect and handle potentially infested materials sourced from areas near the detection sites.

Red Imported Fire Ants are typically two to six millimeters long, dark reddish-brown, with a darker brown-black abdomen. Fire ants when

disturbed swarm and sting repeatedly, causing a burning sensation on people or animals. These invasive ants restrict the use of recreational spaces and can also damage electrical, irrigation, and agricultural equipment. Feeding on various creatures and seeds, they endanger native plants and animals, causing irreversible changes in ecosystems. Moreover, their presence hampers the ability to export goods to places free of red imported fire ants.

In case of any suspected sightings, residents are encouraged to report to NSW DPI via an online form or by contacting the Biosecurity Helpline at ph: 1800 680 244.

Further details about the species and safety measures are available on NSW DPI's website: [dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/insect-pests/fire-ants](http://dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/insect-pests/fire-ants)

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# Councillor Column

## Mayor Michael Lyon

A Councillor will be contributing a column to *The Byron Wave* each month. This will be an opportunity to share their thoughts on various issues impacting the community.



It is nice to pause and reflect on 2023, to recognise what has been achieved in our Shire. In July we opened Jarjumirr Park, Byron's brand new all-abilities skate park, which has been really well received by locals and visitors alike. We also saw the opening of a new TAFE 'connected learning centre' in the Byron Arts and Industrial Estate following the successful development of the Council-owned site.

We have progressed our recovery from the floods of 2022, with many roads and causeways repaired, and works on the major landslip on Federal Drive well-underway. Over \$300 million of Council infrastructure was damaged or destroyed and the rebuild will continue for some time.

After many years, we finally won the battle to regulate un-hosted holiday letting on residential premises, with most of the Shire to be capped at 60 days. This will break the investment model that has seen so much of our housing converted from long-term to short-term rentals.

We are also nearing completion of the refresh of our residential strategy, which will ensure that we meet the demand for housing over the next 20 years. In the last street count, the current severe housing stress has seen Byron Shire top NSW for the number of rough sleepers. This is a critical issue to resolve in the short-term as we wait for more housing to come on-line. This is playing out in hotspots such as Brunswick Heads, where there are many resident rough sleepers combined with a large number of travellers from interstate and overseas looking to camp for free.

Managing compliance in this area is complex but we cannot shirk this responsibility. We have increased our compliance budget by \$250,000 in 2023/24 so we can recruit more staff to ensure that residential amenity is maintained and our public spaces feel safe and welcoming.

Balancing a compassionate approach to rough sleeping residents with a strict application of no camping in public streets laws against travellers is difficult, but essential. Being a Council compliance officer is a tough job and I have a huge amount of respect for those who undertake this role on behalf of our community.

Looking ahead at 2024, I am very keen to see the development of a community-led masterplan for Ocean Shores so we can start to provide some long-overdue investment into the north of our Shire. Creating footpaths on the main connector roads, Orana and Rajah Roads is a key priority for me and I will be emphasising this through the review of the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) currently underway.

The Byron Main Beach foreshore redesign process will continue, covering the area from the car park through Apex Park and into Denning Park. There will be an opportunity for everyone in the community to contribute to that process once the draft design ideas go on public exhibition.

It has been a pleasure serving the Byron Shire community in 2023 and I am very grateful for the opportunity to be in the role of Mayor. I always welcome feedback and ideas so please feel free to get in touch.

To get in touch with Mayor Michael Lyon email: [michael.lyon@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:michael.lyon@byron.nsw.gov.au)

<https://www.disabledsurfers.org/>

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

NEXT EVENTS	
SATURDAY <b>10</b> FEB 24 BYRON BAY	SATURDAY <b>16</b> MAR 24 LENNOX HEAD

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# Support Local, Win Big: Our competition winners

by Milt Barlow, CEO and Publisher, Northern Rivers Media



Pictured (left-right): Winners Joanne and Kerry.

From September to November, *The Byron Wave* hosted a competition to support local businesses in the Byron Shire. In the current economic climate, local businesses have been doing it tough, so we asked you to shop at Byron Shire retailers and services, and submit your receipts to enter our prize

draw for the chance to win \$1,000. The response from our community has been incredible, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who participated. We are excited to declare the following lucky winners chosen by random draw.

**Joanne Mather:** Won the grand prize of \$1000 cash, for supporting XHAL in Brunswick Heads.

**Caroline Mitchell:** Won \$250 by supporting Espresso Head in Byron.

**Kerry McKenzie:** Won \$100 by supporting XHAL in Brunswick Heads.

Joanne Mather, said, 'I was so, so excited to win. We were on a girls trip away and I wanted to buy something to remind me of what fun we had in beautiful Byron.'

Caroline Mitchel from Suffolk Park, said, 'It's fantastic to be rewarded for shopping locally and great to have a local magazine that supports local businesses in a practical way. Thanks again for your excellent incentive to encourage readers to continue and use local shops and services.'

We extend our warmest appreciation to all entrants for their unwavering support to our Byron Shire retailers and service providers. The draw for the competition took place on 1 December, 2023. All winners have been notified via the provided contact details. Once again, thank you to everyone who participated. Your contributions have made a significant impact on our local economy, and we look forward to continued support for our community.



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## 2024 looking to the future: Queer Family



Since 2019, Queer Family has been creating safe and inclusive spaces for vulnerable LGBTQIA+ locals. Previously slipping through the cracks with a lack of support, LGBTQIA+ people in our community were isolated, at risk, and starved of community connection. Thanks to Queer Family, individuals can access a safe, understanding, and inclusive place, that prioritises mental health and wellbeing and the reduction of social isolation – all while creating an environment that connects LGBTQIA+ people with allies and the local community. Now they have a home, it's a real game changer.

Recently relocated to a new site in Mullumbimby, Aiden Gentle (they/them), Managing Director of Queer Family Inc, said, 'We are super excited to be creating and facilitating this space, developing the region's first queer arts and community centre. This is a place where people can unmask, connect with queer people; a space for the queer community, bi the queer community.'

Four years in the making, the NFP charity has worked hard toward accommodating the different interests and needs of their community for this space. 'It's really important to have this physical location as it provides stability and predictability for people, and allows them to forge longer term connections with us and each other through regular attendance,' they said. 'It also allows us to expand volunteering opportunities. A lot of people want to volunteer, but without a home, we were very limited in the opportunities we could provide for meaningful volunteering experiences, but now we can.'

The new home was made possible by the generosity of local author and artist Asphyxia, who provided the space

on her private property for reduced rent, and the Ingrained Foundation (Stone & Wood) who have paid for their first year of rent. However, Queer Family is in need of establishing permanent funding to keep the space, and cover core costs. 'This is vital and remains a concern. We are still facing an uncertain future with unfunded core costs and no multi-year funding,' Aiden said. 'We have to put a lot of effort into finding funds and resources, which are usually short-term. Honestly, we could really use a rich benefactor. Regardless, we are very excited to strengthen and grow the space, as a place where people can come and hang and feel safe and to run things.'

Queer Family will be running regular place-based programming in 2024. Schedule highlights include:

- Art Studio Day – a regular program for creatives to come and work on their projects and connect with each other
- Auslan lessons – weekly Auslan lessons to increase our members' skills so the d/Deaf community can be better included
- thursday Things – every Thursday night Queer Family will be starting an evening session, which will change every week such as poetry, storytelling night, Queer life drawing, drumming circles and more
- regular groups – Queer Family will continue running well received monthly groups like Book Club and Bush Walking Club
- larger events every couple of months such as performance nights and exhibitions for children and families
- counselling/therapeutic space – helping practitioners establish or offer their services to our community.

'Having a space for Queer events and services is such a triumph for us. Everything we do is centered around supporting our LGBTQIA+, and fostering social connection within the queer and local community. It all ties in together to create a stronger, more resilient community.' We can't wait to see you all again in 2024.'

For more information visit: [queerfamilynorthernrivers.weebly.com](http://queerfamilynorthernrivers.weebly.com) or find them on Facebook: @QueerFamilyNorthernRivers

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# SES Service Award for long-time local hero

By Jen King, NSW SES Volunteer



*Pictured: John Farley with Mullumbimby Unit Commander Tracey Morison.*

Local Brunswick Heads man, John Farley, recently celebrated 25 years of service as an SES volunteer. He has lived in the Shire since the early 1970s and has volunteered in one capacity or another for more than half his 84 years of life.

During his time, he has been a trainer and supervisor and became qualified across every speciality of the SES – all of it as a volunteer. One memorable moment for John was sandbagging Belongil Beach in 1999 when he and other SES volunteers spent 12 days filling about 30,000 sandbags to mitigate the effects of coastal erosion following a storm.

‘I love the concept of the SES, the volunteer part of it. People are just amazing and without it, I don’t know what I’d be doing now,’ John says. ‘I’ve given it my best shot.’

From everyone here, congratulations John. You have been an asset to the NSW SES and an inspiration in your dedication.

## What else have we been up to?

Volunteers with Byron Shire’s SES unit have been busy building the unit’s flood rescue capacity. Several members have been down to the whitewater stadium at Penrith to undertake specialised training to become in-water flood rescue operators and we’ve also bolstered our flood boat operator capacity.

With some heavy rain lately, we’ve also had a few jobs involving emergency repairs to properties affected by fallen trees and branches – a job which utilised the crews chainsaw skills. The crew have also been providing temporary repairs to roof damage caused by recent storms.

You may have seen us about at some recent community engagement activities. We love getting out into the local community and talking to residents about preparing their homes, staying safe and providing education on how to manage during floods, storms and tsunamis. We want you to know that we are available and here to help.

In other news, the NSW SES has begun a \$25million upgrade to its flood rescue fleet. The investment comes

following record flooding last year, which impacted several communities across the state and resulted in more than 80,000 calls for help to the NSW SES. All new vehicles will also have ‘vehicle as a node’ technology, allowing crews to communicate using 4G and satellite networks, in addition to regular radio networks. This helps ensure crews can stay connected during emergencies and overcome any dangerous communications blackspots. Mullumbimby SES is due to get replacement vehicles and one new replacement boat, which we expect will arrive in the new year.

Ongoing planning continues to ensure we are always ready to provide all residents of Byron Shire with help during any summer storms, floods or tsunamis. If you need us, call us on ph: 132 500.


If you think you’d like to volunteer, learn new skills, make new friends and give back to the Byron Shire community, we’d love you to join us as a Unit Volunteer. For more information, visit: [ses.nsw.gov.au/volunteer/](http://ses.nsw.gov.au/volunteer/)

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# The Peaceful Growing Collective

by Brianna Pearl



Nature abounds the Northern Rivers, and there is a plethora of therapists and wellness solutions in the area, but do you know of an integrative solution that adults, children, teens, and carers in the community can all take solace in as a natural, safe, and educational space? Many locals have been rallying for something of this nature for many years, and our need for such a space became greater following the floods of 21/22. Thankfully, we now have one.

Lex and Magdalena, of the Peaceful Growing Collective (PGC), warmly welcome you onto their Wilson's Creek

property, Heartland: a community hub for cross-generational mentoring, nature education, and mental wellness programs. They provide a secure space in the Northern Rivers, with grounded mentorship for youth and adults, and those seeking relational guidance. Heartland also supports those in need of a place to explore knowledge of the land, permaculture, and regenerative food systems.

PGC is a non-for-profit organisation confronting critical societal issues, including screen addiction, mental health challenges, lack of adult mentorship, and cultural erosion. PGC offers Bush School, Peaceful Mentoring (a personalised form of support work), Horse Connection Education, Boys Initiation Programs,

permaculture gardening and eco building projects, men's and women's circles, community gatherings, adult workshops and retreats. Workshops range from day walks and ceremonies to overnight camps, with a focus on building rapport, understanding and beneficial communication with self, others and the environment.

A local 10-year-old recently said after attending, 'I really look forward to it, and by the weekend I'm counting down the days until bush school. I've learnt about how to make fires, foods you can eat, and plants in the bush. I would recommend this since it's so cool, but I don't want to let out the secret.'

For more information visit: [peacefulgrowing.org](http://peacefulgrowing.org)

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## Meet the artisans

By Amanda Kuhn

### Byron Beachside Market: where community and creativity converge

Byron Beachside Market, a beloved event in our coastal town, graces Denning Park along the Main Beach foreshore four times a year. This 'make it, bake it, sew it, grow it' artisan market serves as a vibrant gathering that unites our community, drawing families, friends and wanderers searching for connection and unique handmade treasures.

What distinguishes Byron Beachside Market is its commitment to celebrating artisan craftsmanship. From pottery to jewellery, clothing to art, this market stands as a treasure trove of creativity. Strolling through the stalls, you'll encounter the extraordinary talents of local artisans, each imbuing their creations with a distinct touch.

A defining market feature is the direct interaction between makers and patrons on market day. This personal connection adds an intimate and authentic dimension to the shopping experience, allowing visitors to engage with the artists, delve into the intricacies of their craft and gain a profound appreciation for each handmade piece.

Renowned local artist Mirabela Varga shared her enthusiasm for the Byron Beachside Market: 'I love meeting my collectors personally and having the opportunity to connect in an environment that is vibrant and lively. I provide the local community, as well as the larger international market, with affordable high quality art that is vibrant, fresh and often leaves viewers feeling both inspired and happy.'

In addition to artisan treasures, the market offers live music from local performers, with Guy Kachel, Skyeater and Felicity Lawless playing on 3 January. The market creates a unique blend of art, culture and nature as you savour a latte by the sea, groove to live music and take home a piece of Byron's distinctive spirit. Feeling hungry? No need to worry, as the market boasts an array of gourmet and wholesome food stalls, showcasing the diverse culinary scene of Byron Bay.

Market Coordinator Teya Steinberg invites everyone to experience the market's true essence, embrace its vibrant atmosphere and leave with the enchantment of the Byron Beachside Market. As Teya aptly says, 'I love working for the markets because they bring people together to celebrate local artisans, and it's a joy to see the community thrive.'

Remember to mark your calendars for the Byron Beachside Market in 2024, scheduled for 3 January, 30 March, 13 July and 28 September. Seize the opportunity to delve into the world of artisan craftsmanship and experience the vibrant community spirit of Byron Bay.

For more information visit: [byronmarkets.com.au](http://byronmarkets.com.au)

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## At the Library

by Katie Brown, Library Assistant

We have your summer holidays covered for all things recreational and educational. For children all ages your library card is the ticket to adventure with the return of the popular Summer Reading Challenge running throughout the month. All you need to do is register and read for your chance to be part of the weekly book draw, entries into the major prize of a Samsung Galaxy Tab A7 and an invite to the fun circus finale on Wednesday 24 January at 10am. Don't forget you can visit us online and access our treasure trove of eBooks and eAudiobooks too.

Our school holiday workshops kick off with Creative Canvas on Wednesday 10 January at 10.30am. Ideal for ages 8+, design an imaginative artwork using buttons, collage and paint pens. On Wednesday 17 January at 10:30am the Create

Characters for Cartoon or Manga workshop led by animation and cartoon guru Mark Richards may turn you into a budding comic strip maker. This is a free event for ages 8+ with all art materials supplied. Bookings are required.

Our exhibition wall features the work of local printmaker and artist Sam Sosnowski. Totem Series are seven works in the proportions of Japanese Kakejiku scrolls. Each scroll presents a 'story' for the viewer to step into or to create an imaginative story of their own. The Japanese aesthetic of simplicity, stillness, movement, transition, harmony and subtlety creates throughlines in all seven works.

For those looking for a beach read we also have our big book sale on again. With kids' books and DVDs at 50c and adult books for \$1, there are bargains for the whole family. Visit our website for more information on what is happening at your local library at: [rtrl.nsw.gov.au](http://rtrl.nsw.gov.au)

## Matilda on alert for catastrophic bushfires



Pictured: BBWH team tending to an injured koala. Source: Craig Parry.

Amid the Bureau of Meteorology's heightened warnings of potential bushfire threats in eastern Australia, *Matilda*, Australia's only mobile wildlife hospital, hauled by a UD Truck, stands on high alert.

The brainchild of local vets Dr Stephen Van Mil and Dr Evan Kosack, *Matilda* was conceived three years ago with overwhelming fundraising support from philanthropists, NGOs and the community, and the goal to save wildlife, particularly during natural disasters. Equipped with veterinary facilities necessary for triage, treatment, and life-saving surgeries for wildlife, *Matilda* is self-sufficient with solar panels, onboard water, and deep cell batteries, allowing the vehicle to operate autonomously in disaster zones.

'The world saw the terrible images of burned koalas in laundry baskets during Australia's catastrophic Black Summer Bushfires,' said Dr Van Mil. 'WWF Australia estimated that three billion animals died in that horrifying natural disaster. It's impossible to get your head around the scale of that loss. We vowed to never again allow that to happen, which is why we are preparing for the worst.'

Since 2020, *Matilda*, owned by Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital (BBWH), has treated over 5,000 animals from its permanent base at Knockrow, in the Northern Rivers hinterland.

With a full time team of vets and vet nurses, supported by volunteers and students, BBWH operates seven days a week, providing expert, free care exclusively to sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife. It is the sole all-species wildlife hospital in NSW outside of Taronga Wildlife Hospitals.

Over and above the work they do from their Knockrow base, the BBWH team has made plans for crisis operations and deployment to save wildlife during a bushfire, flood or other natural disaster. 'We have written to every level of Government including the

Prime Minister offering our services,' said Dr Van Mil. 'We hope they call on us to help. It will be dreadful to receive a call from Emergency Incident Controllers, but that's what we're here for – and we are ready.'

Partnering with UD Trucks Australia, *Matilda* is primed to mobilise during natural disasters such as a bushfire, flood, mass stranding or oil spill.

UD Trucks Vice President Philippa Wood, said, 'Sustainability and environmental care are at the heart of everything we do, at UD Trucks and as a part of Volvo Group Australia. This incredible mobile hospital is powered by one of the cleanest, most fuel efficient and safest trucks on the road today, the UD Quon, which is entirely fitting given its mission.

Phillipa Wood also stated, that the partnership between BBWH and UD Trucks is incredibly important. 'We are facing a dangerous summer in terms of fire risk, and I think the work that the BBWH team does is sadly becoming increasingly important as the effects of climate change become more extreme.'

For more information visit: [byronbaywildlifehospital.org](http://byronbaywildlifehospital.org)





# Too Young To Be Angels: a new year special

by Drill Hall Theatre, Mullumbimby



The Drill Hall Theatre Company (DHTC) in Mullumbimby brings an enthralling array of entertainment for the New Year. Nestled on Bundjalung Country in Mullumbimby, DHTC is a vibrant community theatre that breathes life into captivating Australian stories. Each year, they showcase a dynamic program of unique Australian tales, urging the audience to explore and embrace characters who challenge creative boundaries.

Running from 5–14 January, with over 50 artists and 18 shows, including five free events, *Too Young To Be Angels* is set to delight audiences with music, poetry, dance, cabaret, photography, film, interactive theatre, and conversations.

Curated by Gregory Aitken and Sunita Bailey, *Too Young to Be Angels* celebrates and honours artists before they disappear. The season also acts as a fundraiser for the premiere production of Stephen Edgar’s *The Eldershaw Chronicles*, adapted for the stage and directed by Gregory Aitken, and designed by Sunita Bailey. Stephen Edgar was the recipient of the PM’s Award for Poetry, 2021.

Opening with the prestigious jazz ensemble MAROON, the program features a diverse lineup. Highlights include James Ricketson’s film *Sleeping with Cambodia*, in a double bill with his an interactive theatre piece called *Risky Business* sharing Ricketson’s story of incarceration in a Cambodian prison, and Kimberley McIntyre’s *Dance Salon*, showcasing dance pieces accompanied by two live musicians. *Two Journeys*, is a captivating photographic exhibition by John McCormick and Gerhard Veit, promises to transport viewers through their life’s work.

*Women Beyond Time; Memoirs Through Poetry* showcases readings by 10 local women, stirring emotions and

igniting inspiration. The season also presents engaging conversations with Richard Mordaunt, Michael Balson, and David Bradbury. Aria Award-winning GYAN will also present *Kiss & Tell*, a series of song conversations. To complete the *Too Young To Be Angels* season, the spotlight turns to *DIVINE Cabaret*. Featuring a stellar cast of six young angels.

There are also five free events including *Reflections of A Dancer*, a captivating narrative of Michael Hennessy’s life intertwined with dance choreography, a screening of *The Making of the Mullumbimby Gateway* by Richard Mordaunt, *The Ballad of Edgar & Mary* by Claude Gonzalez, and the launch of *The Eldershaw Chronicles* by Stephen Edgar. *Already an Angel*, will feature an archived comical video performance by the late Michael Borenstein, past President of the DHTC and a dear friend. This will also include an unveiling of a photograph of Michael by his lifetime sweetheart and wife, Sonia.

Ticket details and bookings are available at website: [drillhalltheatre.org.au](http://drillhalltheatre.org.au).

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## Community in brief

### Mullum Men's Shed U3A by Geoff Harris



*Pictured: Malcolm at Men's Shed display at the Mullumbimby Show.*

After a break, due to COVID, the U3A Men's Shed was at the Mullumbimby Show in November. The Show is a classic agricultural show held at the Mullumbimby Showground and includes a truck parade, trotting displays, cattle, show jumping and show horses, poultry and sideshows, plus many other events.

For many years we have had a stall at the Show where we display and sell items that we have made during the year. Being a self-funded NFP, any funds raised contribute to our operation and allow the purchase of machinery and materials. Our only other source of income is from donations from projects and repairs that we do for members of the community.

Although sales were down on previous years, we still had a successful day selling our craft. We also took orders for new work and repairs.

If you'd like to know more visit:  
[mullumbimbymensshed.au](http://mullumbimbymensshed.au)

### Byron Bay Hospital Auxiliary by Mary Webb



The Christmas Raffle collection outside Woolworths was a great success as well as our Christmas garage sale with a the wonderful array of cakes, jams and pickles. There are more fundraising activities planned for the coming year so please support the Hospital Auxiliary when you see the ladies in red.

2023 ended with the Auxiliary being able to provide valuable equipment to Byron Central Hospital in the way of two Medtronic pulse oximeters at \$1,924 and one Verathon medical bio med bladder scanner at \$15,442. This ground breaking artificial intelligence technology harnesses real world data to consistently detect and define bladder location, size and shape, across all paediatric and adult patient types and anatomies.

As a New Year begins, we would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members, supporters and businesses who have donated their time, energy and money, a very healthy and peaceful New Year from everyone in the Byron Bay Hospital Auxiliary.

### Byron Bay Rotary by Joanne Winwood



In 2023, Rotary members once again showed their dedication to community support and fundraising, achieving remarkable results locally, nationally, and internationally. We have continued our support for Bravehearts, backed by the L & R Uechtriz Foundation, who also helped us fund scholarships for Yr12 students. We have facilitated youth programs and education assistance and continued advocacy and support for the 'NO' to domestic violence campaign. We have also contributed to Byron Bay Nippers', provided hampers for isolated elderly during Christmas, and supported Angel Flight and Global Ripple Opshop post-fire. Rotary also supported international aid projects for a Cambodian village, and aid for victims of the tragic earthquakes in Turkey.

We extend heartfelt thanks to all who have helped to make it possible: Byron Bay Farmers' Market, Byron Bay Services Club, The L & R Uechtriz Foundation, Shogun Signs, The Byron Wave, Bangalow Accounting, Fishheads Byron Bay, Byron Hotbread Kitchen, The Coop Rotisserie, and Byron Bay Pork and Meats.

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### CWA Brunswick Heads Branch by Beverly Masters



*Pictured: Brunswick Heads CWA ladies at their Christmas party.*

Happy New Year 2024. We welcome you to our Crafty Women of Brunswick Heads, Country Women's Association. We are women who not only enjoy various crafts, but cherish the company of fellow women and raising much needed funds for specific projects within our community and beyond.

At the end of 2023, we were busy bees. The CWA celebrated with local centenarian, Joyce Rankin – happy 100th to our dear pioneer. We held a working bee to clear out the front yard and remove the old stumps in the back to make mowing easier – a big thank you to our members and the husbands who helped. A sewing machine was also donated to the CWA, and we have been making great use of it in our crafts. We also had our Christmas Party, which was a lot of fun.

Our last Market Day of 2023, held in December, was a great success, and attended by many people looking for homemade and unique Christmas gifts. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for

our next Market Day. You can find lots of delicious goodies and handmade crafts.

Interested in joining the CWA in 2024? Our gatherings provide a warm and welcoming space for women of all ages to come together, learn, and celebrate their artistic endeavours. You can expect lively conversations, as women gather to share stories, and exchange ideas. Our Friday gatherings from 10am – 2pm (excluding public holidays) provide a platform for continuous learning and personal development. All women are welcome – please bring a gold coin donation.

Hall hire is also available. Email [brunscwa@gmail.com](mailto:brunscwa@gmail.com) to find out more.

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# Community in photos

## Carols on the Green, St John's Primary School Mullumbimby - 7 December



*Pictured: Parents and kids picnicking on the school green.*



*Pictured: School community listening to the kids performances.*



*Pictured: Children embracing the Christmas festivities.*

## Byron Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Wildlife Trivia - 18 November



*Pictured: Hosts, Mandy Nolan and Dr Chris Brown. Photographer: Rebecca Johnson.*



*Pictured: Wildlife lovers discussing answers. Photographer: Rebecca Johnson.*



*Pictured: Audience shocked by wildlife fact. Photographer: Rebecca Johnson.*

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# Community Meetings

### Association of Independent Retirees

When: 10am first Friday of each month,  
Where: Ballina RSL Club  
Contact: Bob Taylor, Secretary, ph: 0421 972 192.

### Australasian Order of Old Bastards– Sausage Sizzle

When: 10am–1:30pm first Saturday of the month  
Where: NRAS Animal Shelter, 61 Piper Drive Ballina  
Contact: Henri Rennie, Treasurer, email: aooB.nr@gmail.com

### Bangalow Lions Club

When: 6pm, second and fourth Tuesday of the month  
Where: Bangalow Bowlo  
Contact: Greg Nash, President, email: alfred.lodge@bigpond.com

### Bangalow Quilters

When: 9:30–12:30, second and fourth Thursday  
Where: Anglican Church Hall, Ashton St, Bangalow  
Contact: bangalowquilters@gmail.com

### Brunswick Heads Progress Association

All residents of Brunswick Heads are welcome.  
When: 6:30pm, first Monday of the month  
Where: CWA Cottage, Park St, Brunswick Heads.  
Contact: brunswickheadsprogressassoc@gmail.com

### Brunswick Valley View Club

When: 10:30am, second Thursday of the month  
Where: Brunswick Bowls Club on Tweed Street  
Contact: 0424 852 679 or email: thestrongs@bigpond.com

### Byron Bay Hospital Auxiliary

When: 1pm, third Monday of each month  
Where: Meeting room at Byron Central Hospital.  
Contact: Maureen Weir, Secretary, ph: 6685 3162

### Byron Rotary

When: 6pm, Tuesdays  
Where: Byron Bay Services Club  
Contact: Colin McJannett, email: cmcJannett@gmail.com

### CWA of Bangalow

When: Wednesday and Thursday  
Where: Bangalow CWA rooms, Byron Street  
Contact: cwasecbangalow@gmail.com

### CWA of Brunswick Heads

When: 10am – 2pm, each Friday with gold coin donation  
Where: Corner of Park and Booyun Street, Brunswick Heads  
Contact: brunscwa@gmail.com  
Facebook: CWAofBrunswickHeads

### Friends of the Libraries

When: General meetings, third Wednesday of every month  
Where: 10am Arakwal Room Byron Shire Library  
Contact: byronbayfol@gmail.com  
Socials: @friendsoflibrariesbyronshire

### Lions Club of Brunswick/Mullumbimby

When: 5:30pm, first and third Tuesday of the month  
Where: Ocean Shores Country Club  
Contact: Joan Towers, President, ph: 0400 484 419

### Mullumbimby Men's Shed

When: 9am–12pm, Fridays  
Where: 3 Main Arm Rd, Mullumbimby  
Contact: Bruce Mitchell ph: 6684 4381 or email: mullumbimbymensshed@gmail.com  
Website: mullumbimbymensshed.au

### Ocean Shores Community Association Inc

When: 1pm, second Monday of each month  
Where: Ocean Shores Country Club.  
Contact: Jan Mangleson ph: 0431 477 445

### Repair Cafe Mullumbimby by Shedding Community

When: 1:30–4:30pm, Saturday afternoon  
Where: Repair Cafe, Mullumbimby  
Website: shedding.com.au

If you'd like to have your community meeting listed, please email details to: editor@thebyronwave.com.au

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## What's to come in 2024: Property predictions



*Pictured: 277 Coopers Shoot Road, Coopers Shoot, sold 1 December by Century 21, Byron Bay.*

To wrap up 2023, we asked local real estate agents to reflect on the major trends and market movements witnessed in the property sector, give their insights into the changing dynamics of buyer preferences, and offer predictions for the 2024 property market – including potential growth areas, anticipated challenges, or shifts in demand.

### **Noel Outerbridge** **Century 21, Byron Lifestyle Real Estate**

We have been anticipating increased market activity in 2024 and putting systems in place to prepare. We are very pleased to see that the year is ending stronger than it started. Increased buyer confidence, healthy demand and low stock levels are contributing to relative stability of housing prices in the local area.

There is great activity in the luxury property market and the first home buyers/investors markets. Although interest rates, monetary policy, and increased cost of living still remain at the forefront of conversations, with concern for a property's resale value in the immediate future being more a consideration now than has previously been the case.

The local region's premium housing and rental prices are also contributing to an increased demand for property that offers multi-generational living options or separate self-contained studios, or room for such.

Strong growth is still evident in the rental market, with high demand for rentals in Byron Bay, Suffolk Park, Bangalow and surrounding areas. We are anticipating a strong market for 2024, in sales and rentals, as cash rate forecasts predict lower levels by the end of 2024, and population growth continues.

### **Peter Kakos** **Managing Director, Atlas Real Estate**

The real estate market started in 2023 with predictions of continual interest rate rises, softening market expectations and negative consumer sentiment. In many respects this was correct across the country; however, in the Northern Rivers and Byron regional real estate market, 2023 was still feeling the effects of the once-in-a-generation property boom of 2021 and 2022. The unprecedented growth on the back of



*Pictured: 61 New City Road, Mullumbimby, sold on 5 December by Atlas.*

the pandemic attracted a mass influx of those seeking a relaxed coastal or hinterland lifestyle and led to strong demand for properties, fast price increases and competitive markets.

This came to a halt by the end of 2022 as inflation surged to a 20-year high, and the Reserve Bank of Australia began lifting the cash rate. Prospective sellers were then, understandably, cautious in the first half of this year, holding back on listing their homes for sale. That scarcity of new listings fuelled buyer competition in most capital cities; however, regional areas were still affected by the price surges as the demand dipped and the market became relatively flat. Encouragingly though, toward the latter part of the year we have again seen demand surge, yet we are still in a very price sensitive market with sellers needing to align price expectations that are significantly lower than those of two to three years ago. Those willing to do so are transacting, and those less reluctant remain 'stuck' and are experiencing extended periods of time on the market, and in the end, needing to re-align their price with buyer interest for a sale to take place.

Moving ahead to 2024, there is still an element of uncertainty but the signs are promising, with fertile grounds attracting buyers back to the region. The area is becoming busy again. Population growth, and under-supply of properties and opportunities in the major cities, is again enticing buyers to look for lifestyle appeal, natural beauty, affordability and opportunity.

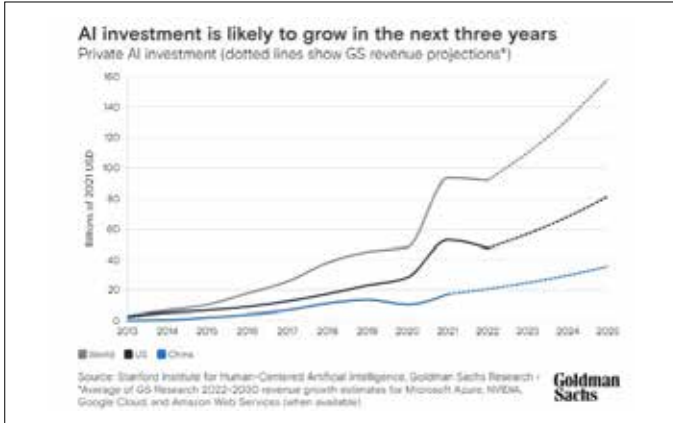
The headwind for price growth is affordability, with high interest rates stretching buying capacity, and wage growth lagging behind home prices. Inflation is the other key measure which, in addition to prolonged interest rate levels and potential rises, could push more mortgage holders into financial stress and listings higher – particularly from investors who are quicker to offload properties than an owner-occupier. Rising inflation will also cut affordability and limit buying power, in turn reducing or limiting property demand.

The tailwind to further enhance growth would see a review to the mortgage serviceability buffer, speeding up access to the property market for many by lifting borrowing capacity. This, together with the prospect of a cash rate cut in the latter half of 2024, would most likely signal a further gear change in property prices and increased demand.



# Can AI help you in your investments?

by Leo Senese, Morgans Finance



Maybe *Blade Runner* and *iRobot* were not science fiction? Most of us have heard about ChatGPT but did you know artificial intelligence (AI) was founded as an academic discipline in 1956? It has taken the spotlight recently with the release of ChatGPT (fun fact: it took ChatGPT just five days to reach one million users - Netflix took 3.5 years).

### AI is more than just ChatGPT and its value extends across sectors and industries. It is estimated that:

- 26% of the Australian economy (nearly \$600 billion in economic activity) will be disrupted by AI (according to Deloitte)
- AI investment is forecast to approach \$200 billion by 2025 – Goldman Sachs (PwC suggested that AI could contribute up to \$15.7 trillion to the global economy in 2030).

### AI development can be thought of as in waves

Wave 1: Inference: Digital platforms picking patterns in your behaviour (Netflix, Spotify, Amazon).

Wave 2: Generation (ie. ChatGPT): AI generating words, images, codes (AI recognising images and speech aka chatbox).

Wave 3: Interaction: robots, avatars, digital twins (all controlled with natural language), self driving cars (Tesla).

### What are the potential benefits?

- Offers potential for huge improvements in productivity and creativity - Increase our quality of living - less grunt work required which should create more spare time.
- Ability to teach /educate on a personalised level and is infinitely patient.
- Increase lifespans ie. higher quality screening for cancer and other diseases, real time data monitoring your vitals, improved /personalised drug design.
- Infinitely scalable and will get better with time.

### How do you invest in AI?

Some examples of those providing the infrastructure are companies like Nvidia, Amazon, IBM and Apple. The ASX has a small number of tech companies leveraged to AI (ie. data centres) but the easiest way is to simply gain exposure by an exchange traded fund (ETF) as a proxy for the AI revolution.

Please don't hesitate to contact us to chat further about these opportunities on ph: 6686 4144

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## A cultural shift from ownership to custodianship

by Andrew Cameron, Agricultural Extension Officer, Byron Shire Council

Actively managing several farms in the Northern Rivers area over the past 12 years and as the current Agricultural Extension Officer for Byron Shire Council, I have come to learn the importance of custodianship and working with the land. I believe this, sadly, has been lost from our culture, if we ever truly had it to begin with in modern Australia.

To me, custodianship is providing care and protection for land, whether you own it or not. I have done most of my farming without owning land, up until very recently, when my partner and I became one of the lucky ones to 'own' a property in the Northern Rivers. I am hesitant to use the word 'own' as it suggests that we possess the land and can therefore control it, as opposed to commune with it.

My current position with Byron Shire Council is to support local landholders and farmers to be just that, good custodians. That is, to be more productive with their land, listen to the land's needs and steer them on a regenerative path with their land management activities. It's a win-win for farming production and the local environment. I like the term 'working with nature, rather than against it' – being part of nature instead of apart from it as we are currently living. Purchasing land recently has really brought to my attention the idea of land 'ownership', custodianship, and what it really means for me, my family and the greater web of biodiversity in our community.

Today, we are constantly bombarded with bad news for our environment; soil erosion, floods, droughts, biodiversity loss, polluted water ways. The list goes on, however there is a lot we can do to help alleviate the issues, and it can start by getting to know what's below our feet. Yep, the soil. The soil doesn't understand fences, real estate and boundaries – much like myself. The western notion of land ownership is well and truly here in Australia, and likely to stay for some time but maybe we can shift this paradigm for the better. Biodiversity doesn't work within these boundaries we try (and fail) to impose on it.

Perhaps it's time we look at cues from our Indigenous brothers and sisters, who lived with the changing Australian climate for upwards of 80,000 years, farming, producing,

foraging and thriving, all without 'owning' land. How can you truly own land when nature has no boundaries and doesn't understand fence lines? I like to think that I don't own the land I bought, but I own the right to look after it for the short time I am here – my duties as a custodian. It's a responsibility I am happy to bear. I understand the land I now 'own' will be here long after I'm gone, and my children are gone.

Today, we see very quick turnovers of land 'ownership' in our region with people buying land unseen, being sold 'the dream lifestyle' by real estate agents. Owning land is a big responsibility and it's a lot of work. It may not quite be the dream people were expecting. On my regular farm visits as part of my role in Council, I often ask why they chose to be on land and take on such a responsibility? What legacy do they want to leave? Most of the time, I am left with a blank face staring back at me. How have we come to a place where land is a commodity or asset rather than something we are part of and care for?

I dream of a world where we value land on the quality of its soil, its ability to catch and store water and the seasonal foods it can produce. Not by its capabilities of ROI (return on investment) from development or cutting up to capitalise on the 'asset'. A world where if you are a landowner or land manager, you accept that your priority is as a land carer and custodian, and an asset owner second to that.

Shifting culture is no easy task, but we must hope that it can be done. I do. As living with Earth, instead of just on Earth, surely must be the only way forward. I always come back to the Indigenous North Americans' philosophy of 'we do not inherit the land from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children'. I think if we all focused on making things a bit better than we found it, we might just be okay.

If you are seeking advice or guidance on becoming a better custodian of the land you're on, please get in touch by email: [agriculture@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:agriculture@byron.nsw.gov.au). I'd like to help you with your land management needs, whether you're a new landowner or your family has been in the Byron Shire for generations.





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## John Ogilvie: 35yrs of local Byron yoga

*Please note: This article contains mentions of suicide, drug use and drug addiction. If these topics are sensitive to you, please proceed with caution.*

Byron Yoga Centre's 35 anniversary marks a significant milestone, as a local business in Byron Bay, and as the longest running Yoga Centre in Australia. Founded by local John Ogilvie in 1988, the Yoga Centre was born from John's personal drive to create a better future for himself and others, after suffering through many despairing years of drug addiction and emptiness.

'My journey with yoga began over 45 years ago when I was living in Melbourne. At that time, I had reached the lowest point in my life, struggling with drug addiction and a deep sense of emptiness. I was in a black hole,' said John. 'At 23 years old, I made a conscious decision to terminate my life with an overdose. Fortunately I survived, and embarked on my detox journey. At one rehab centre, I was introduced to yoga. It was very basic, and while it helped, it did not fill the void within, and I would slip back into using.'

After multiple failed rehab attempts, John finally found solace in the Northern Rivers through The Buttery Rehabilitation Centre. 'I managed to work up the courage to check myself in. I was grappling with failure and shame, but it was here that I was able to integrate the spiritual guidelines of the 12 step program with the practice and philosophies of yoga. By practising what I learnt at The Buttery and daily yoga, I succeeded in 'healing the hole' that had haunted me since my teens, but not without some scar tissue, which acts as a healthy reminder of how far I've come and inspires me to continue my discipline. I had finally found peace and happiness within myself.'

The Buttery Rehabilitation Centre brought John to Byron Bay, and, like so many others, he fell in love with the town. While

John has seen Byron go through many changes, he says that he loves that it still has a small town feel while being a hustling, bustling place with interesting people from all over the world. 'There's never a dull moment,' he said. 'I love the environmentally aware, spiritually connected community, and of course the climate and beautiful beaches. It was all these things and more that kept me here after The Buttery.'

In 1986 John taught his first yoga class and in 1988, Byron Yoga Centre was born in the Epicentre – a centre for creatives transformed from the old meat factory. Here, John offered yoga classes and set up an affordable yoga teacher training program. He was desperate to share his new found love with the world and make it accessible to everyone.

'The first styles of yoga that I practised,' said John, 'were very gentle hatha yoga in the Satyananda and Shivananda traditions. I then discovered the Iyengar technique which is highly focused on postural alignment and the use of yoga props. After that I started practising Ashtanga yoga which is a more dynamic flowing sequence of postures. But after a while I realised that these styles weren't suitable for all bodies, and I also wanted to incorporate more of the pranayama (breathing exercises), meditation and the philosophy into the practice. I recognised value in each of these styles of yoga and wanted to combine them all. By incorporating the flowing vinyasa of Ashtanga yoga with the detailed alignment from Iyengar, as well as the more gentle and compassionate approach of the Satyananda and Shivananda styles, I realised this made for a much more holistic and complete practice. So, I called this yoga Purna, which is the sanskrit word for integrated or complete.'



In 2009, after 21 years of teaching yoga in the Epicentre, the building was sold to developers and demolished. Fortunately John and his team were lucky enough to purchase the property that would become the forever home for Byron Yoga Centre. 'While the idea for a yoga retreat developed naturally, as a part of my long-term goals and the loss of our space at the Epicentre, I also saw the need for an affordable opportunity for people to experience a yoga retreat. A place to deepen their yoga practice and to be taught the principles of mindfulness and sustainability,' said John.

A breathtaking 30-acre parcel of land only 1km from town, the site had historically been cleared of vegetation for agricultural purposes. However, the surrounding area holds wetlands of state significance, sensitive coastal dunes, coastal swamp forests and riparian areas. The site also contains three endangered ecological communities, which provide habitat for a wide range of native animals including threatened species such as the black-necked stork, koalas, large-footed myotis and little bent-wing bat.

'Since we purchased the property, we have been on a dedicated journey to weave sustainability into the very fabric of our ethos. We recognise the profound interconnectedness between our well-being, the health of our planet, and the vitality of our shared communities. Our commitment to sustainability isn't just a choice; it's a way of life. The landscape of the Centre, and its greater surrounding area, is made up of many features that are interconnected. These include the land, waters, plants, animals, and it includes special places and stories with historical and current uses for Bundjalung nation and Byron Bay Arakwal people. These features are seen as inseparable.'

Since conception, the Center has blossomed with 30 staff, six yoga spaces, and 15 devoted teachers. It boasts various accommodation options ensuring a place for everyone, regardless of budget. With focus on sustainability, it is solar powered, with compost toilets, rainwater tanks, and three acres of beautiful organic gardens – which is the main source for the Centre's vegetarian menu. They also have a solar heated 20m mineral salt swimming pool rich in magnesium.

John's aspiration to create a sustainable eco-village, with a focus on attaining the most minimal carbon footprint possible, extends far beyond the Centre's continuously improving sustainability practices. 'It's from this place that we can discover how to become the best version of ourselves, and how to start to live a sustainable life for ourselves, the community which we live in and planet Earth as a whole,' said John. 'The people who come here experience mindfulness, yoga, a healthy vegetarian diet, and are introduced to the principles of our sustainability, then they go home and spread these sentiments to their work colleagues, family and friends. It creates a beautiful flow-on effect, and together, we can create positive ripples that extend far beyond our yoga mats.'

However, it hasn't all been smooth running. Similar to many local businesses in Byron Bay and across Australia, Byron Yoga Centre has suffered from bushfires, temporary closures

due to COVID-19, the major flood event of 2022, and the current economic downturn. John attributes the Centre's resilience to the local community. 'It's thanks to our beautiful community that we have been able to keep our doors open and continue providing what we love.'

In the spirit of gratitude and community, John consistently provides excess food to Liberation Larder, donates a percentage of profits to The Buttery on a quarterly basis, and donates to Rainforest Rescue and Food for Life. He also practises free yoga for local primary schools. John's vision has remained steadfast – to make yoga accessible to everyone, without exclusivity. 'We constantly aspire to spread the peace of yoga to every town and village, for we believe that yoga has the potential to change the world – as it did mine.'

Byron Yoga Centre now provides yoga retreats every week of the year for all ages and abilities, and offers yoga teacher trainings with an expansion to include yoga for those suffering from trauma, health focused ayurveda training, and training for teaching seniors yoga. To celebrate 35 years, Byron Yoga Centre is giving away a seven-day yoga retreat valued at \$3,490. To enter, tell them in 35 words why you need a yoga retreat at Byron Yoga Centre.

For more information visit: [byronyoga.com](http://byronyoga.com)

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## Brides on display

By Christobel Munson, Bangalow Historical Society



*Pictured: Phyllis Aiken's wedding dress. To the left is Phyllis's pink lace 'going away' dress, and her black silky wedding night outfit.*

For its final six-week exhibition for 2023, the Bangalow Historical Society held a show entitled Brides, Bridesmaids and Ballgowns. For it, the Society had gathered together a collection of more than 25 bridal party dresses and related accessories from local families, displayed in the museum's Heritage House, located at the corner of Ashton and Deacon Streets, adjoining the popular parklands.

As part of the exhibition, dozens of photographs of weddings which happened in Bangalow were also on display – the oldest being the very formal 1894 wedding photograph of local identity Frederick Reading, who married Bridget Rohan, in the first wedding to take place in St Kevin's Church, in Byron Creek – that's the first name given to the town of Bangalow. Provided on entry to the exhibition was a catalogue detailing each dress, as well as some of the behind-the-scenes stories associated with each wedding.

For instance, when Bev Sackett married Glynn Lickiss on 14 December 1957 at the Keen Street, Lismore Methodist Church, the wedding had to take place at 8am. Why so early? Bev's dad wanted to play bowls later that day, so insisted the wedding happen early. Details of Bev's dress provide an insight into 1950s wedding fashions. Her lace dress was made by a family friend; she wore a diamond brooch which her father had given her mother on their 1926 wedding, and she carried

'a bouquet of cream tuber roses, white carnations and roses' donated by friends and neighbours, with the church decorated with blue hydrangeas from her grandmother's garden.

One silk wedding dress which stood out from the crowd was in a delicate shade of apple green. In it, Brenda Armstrong had married Dr Geoffrey Beck at St Marks Church, Geelong, on 11 September 1937. In 1939, money being tight, Brenda had dyed her cream dress green to wear to the Freemason's Ball in Geelong. Brenda's husband, a local doctor, died prematurely at the age of 44, in the war years, leaving 30-year-old Brenda with four children aged five and under. She later re-married and had two more children. Her dress showed signs of more than 80 years in the 'dress-up box' in the home of her 23 descendants.

Bangalow Historical Society member Jan Whitney married David on 24 February, 1973, at the Star of Sea Church in Apollo Bay, Victoria. 'We were both teachers at the Apollo Bay Consolidated School. We took the Friday off, were married on the



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Saturday – my 21st birthday - had a one-night honeymoon in Lorne, and were back at work at school on the Monday. A Big Weekend. No excuse for forgetting our wedding anniversary as it falls on my birthday.'

Local Bangalow identity Charlotte Clark married Alastair Mactier on 16 March 2019. 'Our wedding took place at the Byron Bay Surf Club, where my now-husband volunteers as a lifeguard in summer. Al and I had created a wonderful life together and this was not going to be a 'White Wedding' as we had already been blessed with two sons before tying the knot.

'When I started looking at dresses, there were a few traditions I wanted to keep – bride's prerogative. A friend designed and made my dress, and helping her along the way was one of my special wedding treasures. We chose the colour and all the embellishments— including special



*Pictured: Sybil McWhirter marrying George Johnson 25 February, 1950.*

ones to represent my boys. An absolute must was my veil. Since I was a little girl, I had practised wearing one. But this time, it was real, and I loved it swishing around. Out of everything that day, it made me feel like a true bride. As my bridesmaid, I was accompanied by our little dog Chilli, who wore a dress made by my cousin. But once Chilli saw the beach, it was 'game over' and she raced for the waves – becoming a runaway bridesmaid.



*Pictured: Local family wedding day portrait, names unknown.*

'I loved that day. Every time I look at the dress, I smile and laugh. It contains so much love and is a powerful reminder of how special a wedding day is.'

The Bangalow Historical Society will re-open on 10 January, from Wednesdays to Saturdays. For more information ph: 6687 2183 or email: bangalowmuseum2479@gmail.com

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## Imperial Hotel Gold Coast

reviewed by Milt Barlow

A few weeks back my wife and I decided to indulge in a great European hotel. We wanted style, history, ambience, and refined luxury. Fortunately, instead of having to hurtle across the other side of the world in a metal tube, it was a short drive to the Gold Coast to discover what was once the Palazzo Versace hotel, now re-badged The Imperial Gold Coast after the owners and Versace could not agree on a licence renewal. Twenty two years ago, Palazzo Versace opened as the world's first fully fashion-branded hotel at a cost of over \$200 million – huge money in those days. There was opulence in every nook and cranny from the two Rolls Royce Phantoms parked in the stunning hand-crafted driveway, to the enormous 750-kilogram antique crystal chandelier imported by Versace from Italy, and the stunning furniture and rooms all overseen by Versace. It was the Versace dream to build an entire chain of opulent accommodations worldwide. Today the world has moved in a different direction, and there is only one Versace hotel left in the world in Dubai.

The Versace licence may be gone but the style and opulence remain at The Imperial. The owners have tweaked and toned it down a tad to reflect the style of today whilst retaining the design and ambience of the original. This is a hotel that you want to spend time in, and you need to take this time to let your eye wander. Whether it be the beautiful hand-crafted Italian tiles and stunning pieces of furniture, couches and chairs in the grand lobby or the beautiful table lamps and decorations, designer plates and flatware in the restaurant, or even the lions heads gently lined up and spraying water into the ponds around the pool, there is much to feast your

eyes upon. There are hidden gems everywhere, from the small pieces to the stunning gilded giant ballroom.

Step outside the lobby area and indulge in a massive 63 metre pool with its own sandy beach in the middle and surrounded by wonderful personal cabanas. Bliss.

The Imperial is a great location for people watching. During our stay there were numerous fashion shoots happening in the lobby with beautiful young ladies posing whilst dressed in their finery. Tourists and locals alike come to the entrance and strike a pose alongside the Rolls Royces for Instagram, or have a snap taken under the giant chandelier. The hotel staff ensure this all happens with great discretion. We spotted one lady who had lived in one of the apartments for over 20 years - every afternoon she heads to the lobby at her reserved table to enjoy a slice of chocolate cake and coffee. We chatted to numerous guests who had been giving themselves a treat for years by taking a few days off at the Versace - now The Imperial. Their only concern for the future was that the owners do not change it beyond a tasteful refresh whilst maintaining its style, history and quiet opulence.

### The room

This is a big hotel with some 200 guest rooms adjoined by 72 condominiums. Most of the condos are owner-occupied but a number of two and three bedroom apartments are attached to The Imperial. There are five room types ranging from rooms to suites. We stayed in a deluxe suite. At 80sqm it provides a serene oasis. The first thing you notice is that the room is so quiet and peaceful. Again, this was factored





into the construction with lots of heavy glass, glazing and thick walls to shelter you from the outside world. The room consisted of a large bedroom a with super comfortable king size bed with luxury linens and a separate living area with a Juliet balcony. There is a huge bathroom with a tub big enough for two, separate shower and toilet in addition to a second bathroom/toilet and a walk-in closet and storage area.

Just like the lobby, your eye instantly falls upon the attention to detail within the room. With beautiful parquet floor, hand crafted cornices, marble finishes in the bathroom and exquisite cushions and lounges, this is one classy room. While the hotel re-establishes itself as The Imperial there are some great rates with rooms starting around \$450 including breakfast and suites starting at \$550 including breakfast. In the Versace days these same rooms were probably double or more what you are paying in this transition period for the hotel. So, if you want luxury at a great rate I would book sooner rather than later.

**The food**

The new Imperial is going through some changes in this department. In the Versace days, Vanitas was the main drawcard with its spectacular contemporary cooking and rich Italian flavours: the nine course degustation menu being a highlight. This is sadly gone at the moment, but the hotel says, 'watch this space'.

Retained is the Il Barocco restaurant which offers a more relaxed contemporary dining experience for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The menu and wine list are adequate but not huge. The food is comforting and well presented. The breakfast buffet is a delight and for dinner we dined on some fabulous oysters which were fresh and complimented by a champagne mignonette and finger lime followed by a very tasty linguini with king prawns, Moreton Bay bugs, fermented chilli and sourdough crumb. My wife enjoyed the pumpkin

risotto with saffron, gorgonzola, goat cheese stuffed zucchini flowers, macadamia and pistachio crumble - yum.

Between both restaurants is La Jardin for cocktails and a fabbo high tea. We recently partook of high tea at The Langham Gold Coast. Worldwide it's been a signature event for the Langham but I think the high tea at The Imperial leaves it for dead. Beautifully crafted sandwiches, sweet and savoury items, freshly baked scones and homemade jams make this a 'must do' at The Imperial. My wife loved that everything on the high tea menu was available as gluten free. Hats off to the high tea chefs.

**The wrap**

The Imperial is classy. I think it is my favorite hotel on the Gold Coast at the moment. Go for the style and luxury and treat yourself for a few days off. But do take the time to let your eye wander and soak up the amazing detail and craftsmanship that went into the construction of this hotel. It's a one off. Enjoy.

For more information visit: [theimperialgc.com.au](http://theimperialgc.com.au)

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*Author stayed as a guest of the hotel.*



# Impress your guests with this summer delight

## Fish Crudo by Azure Bar and Grill's Executive Chef, Ebony Baker



*Pictured: Fish Crudo with sunrise lime and truffle dressing, truffle mayonnaise, tempura crumbs and micro cress salad.*

### Ingredients

#### For the fish

- coral trout or kingfish

#### For the sunrise lime and truffle dressing

- Sunrise lime peel 3g
- Eschallots 10g
- Garlic 2g
- Ginger 2g
- Mirin 18g
- Yuzu Juice 16g
- Soya Sauce 6g
- Light soya sauce 6g
- Truffle oil 20g
- Olive oil 4g
- Sea salt flakes pinch

#### For the truffle mayonnaise

- Japanese kewpie mayonnaise 60g
- Truffle oil 15g
- Sea salt flakes pinch
- Black pepper cracked fine pinch

#### For the tempura crumb

- Plain flour 100g
- Cornstarch 50g
- Baking powder 25g
- Salt pinch

### Recipe notes

In this recipe, we are using freshly line caught coral trout from Ballina. We also use kingfish from Southern Australia and Tasmania. We slice the fish against the natural membrane of its meat and plate on a very cold plate. It is very important to keep the fish as cold as possible from start to finish. We dress the fish with a sunrise lime and truffle dressing. The acid in the dressing starts to cook the fish slightly. The Australian sunrise limes that we use

are grown on the property and are a hybrid of the native finger lime and the calamondin (cross between a mandarin and cumquat). They can be eaten whole like a cumquat and are delicious.

This is a very refreshing dish. Fish and truffle are, surprisingly, a match made in heaven. We finish the dish with tempura crumbs, mixed micro herbs and truffle mayonnaise. The creaminess of the mayonnaise and the crunch of the tempura crumbs really ties the dish together.

### Method

1. For the dressing, super finely chop sunrise lime peel, eschallots, garlic and ginger.
2. In a small pot bring olive oil to medium heat and saute off eschallots, garlic and ginger.
3. Remove from heat, drain excess oil and reserve for the dressing, add sunrise lime peel.
4. Place mirin, yuzu juice, soya sauces into a blender, blend on low, then slowly pour in the truffle oil and the olive oil that you drained off the eschalot mix.
5. Once emulsified, pour into a bowl and combine with the eschalot mix.
6. For the mayonnaise whisk kewpie mayonnaise, salt and black pepper

and slowly pour in truffle oil whilst whisking to combine.

7. For the tempura, very lightly whisk flour, cornstarch, baking powder with ice cold filtered water. Don't overwhisk the tempura, or you will overwork the gluten.
8. Deep fry the batter by drizzling it into the hot oil. Cook until golden, then remove with a sieve and add pinch of salt. Allow to cool, then crumble.
9. Thinly slice the fish against the natural membrane of its meat and assemble on a very cold plate. The whole dish should be very cold.
10. Next, drizzle the truffle oil on the fish, add the truffle mayonnaise, the tempura crumbs, and micro greens.

Enjoy with loved ones. Serves four.



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## About the Chef



Ebony Baker, Executive Chef of Azure Bar and Grill at Elements of Byron, has a wealth of international culinary expertise. With over 15 years of experience across Europe, Asia, and South America, including stints in top-rated restaurants and luxury super yachts, Ebony's culinary journey cultivated a passion for rich native flavors and local produce to create an innovative dining experience.

### Why did you become a chef?

I was born in Sydney and from a young age I fell in love with food and how dramatically it changed from place to place when travelling. I had a desire to travel and explore the flavours and produce from around the world, and in high school I took one year off to travel and that's when my passion for food was born. I travelled through Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, and France – it was and still is incredible to see how each country utilises ingredients and produce. I came back to Australia after one year abroad and began a hospitality course and I've never looked back.

### How has your international experience contributed to your recent current culinary designs?

Throughout my career, I've spent most of it (10 years) working on luxury super yachts in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, including one of the biggest super yachts in the world, *Luna*. Leading a team of chefs on a super yacht has certainly defined me as a leader and Chef. Being able to adapt, take risks and add creative flare to each client's experience was key to ensuring success. On a super yacht, you don't have the produce available that you may have in a restaurant kitchen – as well as the space. So, you really need to work as a team to deliver the fine dining restaurant quality that is expected, in a small space with limited produce, and you just make it work.

When arriving back to Australia, the appreciation for local and seasonal produce was more apparent than ever, and that is an integral focus here at my job, with our food philosophy being native, local influences with international flavours.

### What is the appeal of using native ingredients?

We are blessed with some of the best native ingredients and access to local produce, which is where our inspiration for new menu items has stemmed from over the last 12 months. We have over 60 native plant species located around the resort,

so to be able to work with the team to harvest ingredients from our own backyard and transform onto a plate is certainly something you don't have access to on a super yacht.

Here, we aim to add a new perspective to resort dining, showcasing native ingredients and local produce of the region on a plate or in a cocktail, combined with flavour combinations from around the world to provide guests with a unique dining experience.

### Could you tell us about the importance of sustainability in a commercial kitchen?

We implement sustainability practices – utilising ingredients in season that can be used across dishes in the kitchen and beverages at the bar. We source our produce from local farmers including seafood from Ballina, and of course, native ingredients harvested on property.

### What's your favourite native ingredient at the moment?

Sunrise lime, which is a cross between a calamondin (mandarin crossed with cumquat) and a native finger lime, would have to be my favourite.

For more information visit: [elementsofbyron.com.au](http://elementsofbyron.com.au)

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# Kids Corner

## Jokes

- Q. Why did the sun go to school?
- A. Because it wanted to be brighter.
- Q. What did one beach say to the other beach?
- A. Nothing, they just waved.
- Q. What do you call a snowman in summer?
- A. A puddle.
- Q. Why do bananas use sunscreen?
- A. Because they peel.
- Q. What's a frog's favorite summer treat?
- A. Hopsicles.
- Q. How do you prevent a summer cold?
- A. Catch it in the winter
- Q. Why did the mermaid blush?
- A. Because she saw the ship's bottom.

## Puzzle

Can you spot 6 differences?



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# School holiday activities

## Byron Bay Wildlife Sanctuary



### Puggles Vacation Care

These school holidays the Byron Bay Wildlife Sanctuary is running our Puggles Kids Club Vacation Care service from Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm, and is open to primary school children ages 5-12.

**Dates:** 15-19, and 22-26 January  
**Cost:** \$50 per child, per day

For more info or to book, visit:  
[byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au](http://byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au)



### Keeper for a Day

If you're aged between 12-18 you can spend a day behind the scenes with one of our senior keepers during these school holidays from 9am-3pm. Find out what working in a wildlife sanctuary is all about.

**Dates:** Between 4-20 January  
**Cost:** \$100 per child, per day

For more info or to book, visit:  
[byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au](http://byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au)



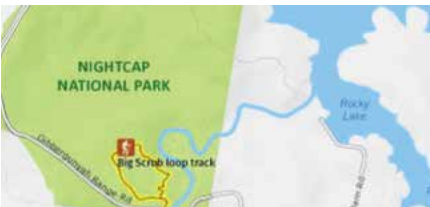
### Wildlife Guardians

Your children can become Wildlife Guardians and spend the day with the keepers behind-the-scenes in the Wildlife Sanctuary, learning about conservation and caring for our wildlife from 9am-3pm.

**Dates:** between 3-26 January  
**Cost:** \$80 per child, per day

For more info or to book, visit:  
[byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au](http://byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au)

## Get outside and explore



### Nightcap National Park

There are multiple bushwalking tracks within this superb subtropical rainforest. You'll see enormous trees, and an abundance of birdlife, including Albert's lyrebirds, brush turkeys and rainforest pigeons. For more information visit:  
[nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://nationalparks.nsw.gov.au)



### Brunswick Heads Fairy Trail

Fairies have taken up residence in Brunswick Heads. They have made lovely little homes all around Brunswick Heads. Can you find them all? A clue sheet is available at the Visitors Centre to guide your exploration. For more information visit:  
[brunswickheads.org.au](http://brunswickheads.org.au)



### The Northern Rivers Rail Trail

A fantastic way to get the kids out of the house and into nature. Ride your bikes or walk, and make a pit stop at one of six towns and villages this trail passes through. For more information visit:  
[northernriversrailtrail.com.au](http://northernriversrailtrail.com.au)



### Byron Solar Train

This world first Solar Train is an immaculately restored 1949 era two carriage heritage train. Relax on vintage seats as you pass through rainforest, wetlands and over Belongil Creek. Visit:  
[byronbaytrain.com.au](http://byronbaytrain.com.au)

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**MULLUMBIMBY**



# Welcome to 2024 at Mullumbimby High

Kelly Spilstead, Relieving Principal, Mullumbimby High School



2024 looks like it is going to be a fantastic year for Mullum High. We have many newly refurbished facilities now in action and we cannot wait for students to be putting them to great use. Here are our new/refurbished facilities:

- our Library has just completed a complete transformation and is now a state-of-the-art facility with study areas, technology corner, reading nooks, a theatre style classroom and meeting rooms
- the school's upgraded tennis courts are complete with new turf, multi-sport markings (allowing for futsal, netball, pickleball and tennis to all be played). In addition we have received new equipment, and perimeter fencing to allow for plenty of class time and lunchtime activity
- our performance workshop has been transformed into a 'theatrical dream'. The ceiling has been raised, new furniture purchased, an amazing sound and lighting system has been installed - all ready for our next wave of budding superstars
- a number of classrooms have also received makeovers that have included fresh carpet, paint and MLDs.

Mullumbimby High school is a fully comprehensive High School here in the Northern Rivers. The school has a vibrant learning environment, and students are given the opportunity to excel academically as well as in sport, creative and performing arts, vocational education, VET, public speaking, leadership and a varied range of cultural and social extra-curricular activities.

Proactive wellbeing programs enable our students to be fully supported in their learning and personal development. The school is recognised for its outstanding Aboriginal cultural programs, inclusive support systems for students with learning difficulties and active involvement in community events.

I would like to introduce and welcome our new school student leaders for 2024:

**School Captains:** John Ray and Safiya Wilkinson

**School Vice Captains:** Gabe Libonardi and Rotem Hadid.

The students have been aspiring leaders since starting high school, when they joined our school's SRC group. Each of the students brings natural leadership qualities to the role and all have our core school values of Respect, Responsibility and Learning at the centre of their decisions. The team are also very supportive of community connections and have a number of great ideas on the agenda for 2024.

We are looking forward to seeing our Yr7, Yr11 and Yr12 students on Thursday 1 February and all other year groups on Friday 2 February.

New enrolments are welcome, with the office open from Tuesday 30 January. Contact us ph: 6684 2600 and check out our website: [mullumbimb-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/](http://mullumbimb-h.schools.nsw.gov.au/) or visit us on Facebook: @mullumbimbyhigh



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Paediatric Occupational Therapy

Shockwave Therapy



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# Byron Bay Public School

by Nicky Greenlaw, Teacher, BBPS



*Pictured (left to right): Winners of the Cheryl Booker Memorial Public Speaking Competition, Halo – stage two winner, Ava – stage three winner, and Charlotte – stage one winner.*

## Cheryl Booker Memorial Public Speaking Competition

As part of the English curriculum, students in Yrs1–6 develop and hone their public speaking skills by preparing a variety of speeches which they present to their classes. Two finalists from each class were chosen to represent their peer group at our Public Speaking Competition in November. The topics were interesting, speeches were well prepared and confidently delivered. The judges agreed it was hard choosing between them as the standard was very high.

Ava in Yr5 received the winning trophy for Stage 3 with her inspirational speech about 'Lillian Armfield, The First Female Australian Police Detective'.

Yr3 student, Halo was awarded first place in Stage 2 for her amusing speech on 'How To Annoy Your Parents'.

Charlotte from Yr2 was chosen as the Stage 1 winner for her entertaining speech on 'Skateboarding'.

Congratulations to all the finalists who spoke at the Cheryl Booker Memorial Public Speaking Competition Finals. The standard was outstanding, and all students should feel very proud.

## Byron Bay High School Students

In Term 4, students from Byron Bay High School visited to assist in classrooms and with outdoor activities. It was wonderful to see some of our past students reconnecting with teachers from their primary school days and enjoying revisiting their old classrooms.

Yr9 students, studying Physical Activity and Sports Studies (PASS) as an elective, conducted sports lessons with our Kindergarten and Yr3 classes whilst Yr10 students helped in

the K-6 classrooms two days each week. It was a rewarding experience for all involved.

## Intensive Swimming

With the warmer weather and summer holidays fast approaching, students in Yrs1 and 2 headed to Byron Bay Swimming Pool for two weeks of intensive swimming. They learned how to enter the water safely, tread water, survival floating, survival strokes, back sculling to enable them to reach safety, how to call for help and to be able to safely help others in difficulty. Students in Yrs3 – 6 were excited to finish the year with excursions to Mullumbimby Pool and Ballina Waterslides.

## Kindergarten Orientation Days

Preschool students attended orientation days to help with their transition to 'big school'. Each prospective Kindergarten student was allocated a buddy from amongst our current Yr5 students who are especially excited to take on this important role. We look forward to welcoming our new Kindergarten cohort and their families in 2024.

**CP CRAIG PARRY**  
photography

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## Artist profile: Nanette Merriman



*Pictured: Parisian Salon by Nanette Merriman.*

After living and working in London and Los Angeles for several years, in advertising, fashion and exhibition design fields, artist Nanette Merriman found an intense passion for colour and design. Homesickness brought her back home to Sydney, and during a holiday in the early 90s, she discovered the unique charm of Byron Bay. Nanette knew that this eclectic, and visually stunning place would eventually become her forever home. Over the years she had brief respites in Byron Bay, including annual pilgrimages over Easter and the Christmas holidays.

'It was my go-to destination for Easter break to enjoy BluesFest,' she said, 'and again over the Christmas holidays for all the wonderful live music at the Rails and other venues, as well as attending the markets, lounging on the beautiful beaches and, of course, immersing myself in Byron's art world.'

In 2001, Nanette decided to buy a property and in 2012, she moved up full-time after completing renovation of an old farmhouse hidden away within a bamboo forest. 'I have now lived here since then, and slowly worked my way into Byron's wonderful social scene, making life-long friends.'

Surrounded by creatives and an art-focused culture, Nanette pursued her artistic endeavours. 'Colour is everything to me,' she said. 'It motivates my painting, and my day in terms of what I wear and coordinate.'

With an extensive wardrobe bursting with colour, and a background in fashion, Nanette often looks like a walking piece of art. Each of her outfits is intentionally assembled, with a special focus on creating aesthetically balanced colour combinations, reflective of her artistic style.

Initially experimenting with landscapes, flower arrangements and abstracts, Nanette eventually settled on figure poses and stylised portraits, painting her subject's likeness with colourful settings and furnishings, personalising the surroundings to reflect her subject's personality.

'I began painting stylised portraits of my friends for birthday presents. They loved them, so I continued. Bright colours and



*Pictured: A Royal Sikh by Nanette Merriman.*

interesting fabric patterns give me so much joy. After plenty of encouragement, people were eventually commissioning me to paint for them. I also like to bring in humour and fun, as well as a bit of fantasy. One of the pieces I'm showing was inspired by an old 18th century postcard of a reclining figure of a woman.'

Like many artists, Nanette experimented with different mediums but ultimately settled on acrylics. 'I tried pastels and oils, but acrylics, applied in a generous solid format, makes the colour so intense and true. My brush strokes are not really relevant, but I love to add patterns and textures to the furnishings.'

When asked about her process, Nanette said, 'I prefer to paint from a good clear reference photo onto canvas, usually nothing larger than 900mm x 600mm, as this has been easy to source locally. I start with a light pencil sketch then add painted outlines. It grows from there, adding shading and highlights where appropriate. I also like to incorporate some personal items from my subject into the piece to reflect their personalities. I love colour and I love fun. My paintings are a bit tongue-in-cheek. The person tells me to put their face in, make them look good, and add things that compliment their personalities and encapsulate their fantasies. It's about creating a fun and colourful piece that makes them feel happy every time they see it – it's all about making them happy.'

Nanette is currently working on a series of decorative vases on brightly coloured backgrounds, but says she would like to explore more varied subjects in the future. 'For now, I enjoy painting people and objects in their home environment, in a forest, on a mountain top, or in the ocean – wherever their imagination takes them. If someone wants to be on a space ship or on a submarine, I'd love to make that vision come true for them with a realistic, one-of-a-kind, characterisation to hang on their wall. I'm more than happy to take on any commission and my pricing is very reasonable with a turn-around time of about three weeks –sometimes less.'

While Nanette doesn't have a website, anyone interested in commissioning a painting, can contact her on email: [contempodesign@optusnet.com.au](mailto:contempodesign@optusnet.com.au)



## Byron All Shorts 2024

### Call for entries open until Monday 8 January.

Now in it's 19th year, Byron All Shorts celebrates the filmmaking talent of the Northern Rivers region and encourages audiences to experience the many amazing films and local stories that are produced here each year. Filmmakers from across the region are invited to submit their short films of up to 30minutes in length, from all genres.

The best of local short films will screen in the Byron All Shorts finalists programme on Saturday 2 March at 4pm, with the finalists from the Northern Rivers region hotly contesting prizes that recognise excellence in short filmmaking. Prizes and cash to the value of around \$3,000 will be presented for the iQ-Flickerfest Best Short Film Award, the Emerging Talent Award and the Best Short Film Audience Award; recognising the incredible talent in our region.

If you live in the Northern Rivers, or have produced a film in the Northern Rivers, or have made a film about the Northern Rivers you can enter Byron All Shorts.

For more information and to enter visit:  
[iq.org.au/byron-all-shorts-2024-call-for-entries/](http://iq.org.au/byron-all-shorts-2024-call-for-entries/)

## Paint and Sip



**What:** Paint and Sip with Cat Gerke  
**When:** Saturday 6 January, 1pm  
**Where:** Byron Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

In this class you'll learn how to paint from life with a beautiful native flower display to inspire you. You'll also do some charcoal

sketching, learn about composition and just have a great time. The class includes everything you'll need including the canvas (30x40cm), paints and brushes (if you do have brushes or paints of your own feel free to bring them along). As a paint and sip event the class also includes wine plus some antipasto refreshments available throughout. All funds raised from this art class go directly back to building Lemonade the Black Cockatoo her new forever home at The Sanctuary.

Cat Gerke is a Northern Rivers artist focused on contemporary still-life painting. She is represented in a number of galleries throughout Australia and has had numerous national and international exhibitions.

For more information and tickets, visit:  
[byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au](http://byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au)



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# Time to screen

by Yonit Kitay, Cancer Council NSW



Did you know that cervical cancer is largely preventable? Yet, NSW has one of the lowest participation rates for cervical screening of all states and territories, with the age group of 30-34 among the lowest participating cohorts.

Cancer Council NSW is urging all women and people with a cervix to ensure they're up to date with their cervical screening. If you're 25 and over, and have ever been sexually active, you may be due for cervical screening.

Women and people (aged 25–74) with a cervix can have a cervical screening test every five years through the Australian Government's National Cervical Screening Program. Currently in Northern NSW, approximately 70.4% of women and people aged 25-34 with a cervix participate in cervical screening.

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV and regular cervical screening is your best protection against cervical cancer. Yonit Kittay, Community Coordinator at Cancer Council NSW said, 'You now have a choice in how you participate in cervical screening. It's empowering to be able to pick the screening option that suits you best.' Ms Kittay also stated that the option to self-collect a sample using a small swab, is a game-changer as it's quick,

easy, private and just as accurate as a test done by a healthcare provider.

Cancer survivor, Kirsty, was just 26 when she went to the GP for a routine appointment and cervical screening test. Several tests later, doctors confirmed Kirsty had a rare and more aggressive form of cervical cancer. Eight weeks later, Kirsty had major surgery, followed by an intense recovery. Despite this, Kirsty was still able to become pregnant naturally and welcomed her son in 2017.

If you are due or overdue for a cervical screening test, book in to speak to a doctor or specially trained nurse about your options, including self-collection. One test every five years could save your life. For more information visit: [cancercouncil.com.au/](http://cancercouncil.com.au/)

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## Starting a new fitness journey

by Matty Schmidt, Personal Trainer



Starting a new fitness journey at the gym in early January is a common resolution for many people. I understand the excitement and determination that comes with this decision. However, it's important to approach this endeavour with a well-thought-out plan and realistic expectations. Let me share some valuable advice and insights to help you make the most of your gym experience and set yourself up for long-term success.

First and foremost, setting achievable goals is essential. Many people make the mistake of setting unrealistic expectations, such as losing a substantial amount of weight in a short time or gaining significant muscle mass in a matter of weeks. While it's great to aim high, it's crucial to set smaller, incremental goals that are attainable. This will help you stay motivated and track your progress more effectively.

Consistency is the key to success in the gym, (and in life in general, but that's a topic for another day). Make a commitment to yourself to stick to your workout schedule, even on days when motivation wanes. Creating a routine and making exercise a habit will go a long way in achieving your fitness goals. Remember, it's not about being perfect; it's about being consistent.

Education is your best friend when starting out at the gym. Take the time to learn about different exercises, proper form, and nutrition. You can ask for guidance from fitness professionals at the gym, read books, or watch informative videos. A well-rounded understanding of exercise and nutrition will empower you to make informed choices and avoid common pitfalls.

Speaking of form, it's crucial to prioritise proper technique over heavy weights or intense workouts. Poor form can lead to injuries and hinder your progress. Don't be afraid to start with lighter weights and gradually increase the load as you become more comfortable with the movements. Quality over quantity is the name of the game.

Nutrition is a fundamental aspect of your fitness journey. Your body's fuel plays a significant role in your performance and results. Consult with a registered dietitian or nutritionist to create a balanced meal plan that suits your specific goals and dietary preferences. Keep in mind that fad diets or extreme restrictions are not sustainable in the long run. Focus on a healthy, balanced diet that provides your body with the nutrients it needs.

Tracking your progress is an excellent motivator and allows you to make necessary adjustments to your fitness plan. Keep a workout journal, take regular photos, and measure key metrics like body fat percentage, weight, and strength. This data will help you see the tangible results of your hard work and identify areas where you can improve.

It's important to acknowledge that setbacks and plateaus are a natural part of the fitness journey. Don't be discouraged by them. Instead, use them as opportunities to learn, adapt, and push through. Plateaus can often be overcome by making subtle changes to your workouts or nutrition.

Seeking support and accountability can greatly enhance your gym experience. Consider finding a workout buddy or joining fitness classes or groups. Surrounding yourself with like-minded individuals can help keep you motivated and inspired.

Lastly, always listen to your body. Rest and recovery are integral components of a successful fitness journey. Overtraining can lead to burnout and injuries. Ensure you get enough sleep and allow your body time to recover between workouts.

In conclusion, embarking on a fitness journey at the gym in early January is an admirable endeavour. By setting realistic goals, staying consistent, educating yourself, prioritising proper form, focusing on nutrition, tracking your progress, embracing setbacks, seeking support, and listening to your body, you can set yourself up for long-term success. Remember that fitness is a lifelong journey, and the most important thing is to enjoy the process and take pride in the positive changes you make in your life. With dedication and perseverance, you can achieve your fitness goals and lead a healthier, happier life.

For more information visit: @goodschmidtfitness

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# Bangalow Koalas: planting hope



Pictured: Koala in tree at 54 Rifle Range Rd, Bangalow.  
Source: David Hall Photography.

Since 2022, koalas have been listed as an endangered species and it's well known that preserving and regenerating koala habitats is crucial to prevent a further decline in their numbers. Without action, Australia may very well lose these iconic animals. Thankfully, our Shire is home to a dedicated local group who is determined to restore koala habitats and safeguard their existence for future generations.

Founded in 2016 by a group of concerned neighbours and led by local Linda Sparrow, Bangalow Koalas has been making impressive headway in this battle of conservation. The original initiative aimed to safeguard a vital stretch of 30-year-old koala food trees. Eight years later, Bangalow Koalas has evolved into a dynamic force committed to creating a wildlife corridor across the Northern Rivers region to protect and connect crucial koala habitats, mitigating threats like disease, dog attacks, and vehicle collisions resulting from habitat loss.

Bangalow Koalas' dedication has borne fruit year after year, with the successful planting of over 335,000 trees. During 2023, the group reported an impressive milestone in their conservation efforts with a grand total of 95,948 trees planted or supplied across 32 sites, spanning 30 properties and five shires. This achievement stands as a testament to the collective efforts of the community, including partners, landholders, contractors, volunteers, nurseries, and countless supporters. The organisation also received additional funding from WWF Australia - Regenerate Australia in 2023, bolstering their efforts.

Bangalow Koalas President, Linda Sparrow, said, 'We are so grateful for all the support we have received, not only from this year – but from day one. However, we cannot slow down. In order to achieve our goal of 500,000 trees by 2025, we still need to get 164,000 in the ground, and that means we need funding to plant and maintain more than 80,000 trees a year for the next two years.'

Bangalow Koalas' mission now transcends planting trees; it's about nurturing hope for the survival of koalas, the planet, and the mental wellbeing of Australia's future generations amidst climate change.

'Given the state of the world and the incredibly devastating impact we've already seen climate change have here in Australia, as well as in so many other countries recently, I think everyone would agree that now more than ever, we need hope,' said Linda.

All funds raised will be used to prepare, plant and maintain trees over the next three years in strategic locations as part of Bangalow Koalas' essential wildlife corridor.

'If you're a government agency, an NGO, a corporation, business, foundation, community group or simply an individual who wants to save koalas, we really need your help,' said Linda, 'It's imperative that we come together as a community to mitigate the loss of these beautiful animals.'

For more information on Bangalow Koalas or to contribute to their cause, visit: [bangalowkoalas.com.au](http://bangalowkoalas.com.au).

## Community Recycling Stations

The right place for your small problem waste



**It's FREE to drop off:**

- Household batteries
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Collection of these items will vary by location.

To find your nearest Community Recycling Station and the items accepted, call **Byron Shire Council** on **02 6684 1870** or visit [www.newaste.org.au/crs](http://www.newaste.org.au/crs)








# How to make your donations count

by Karen Rudkin, NE Waste Project Coordinator



*Pictured: Donated items left outside of Op shops and bins. This creates a huge expense for charities and can result in a fine for those who leave it there.*

Donating stuff we no longer need to a local charity shop is something that most of us love to do but have you ever stopped to think, 'am I donating or am I dumping?'

It's not unusual, particularly after Christmas to see bags of donated clothing and household items piled up outside charity stores or around charity donation bins. This is a real problem for charities because when this happens items are often stolen, vandalised or damaged by the weather, making them no longer suitable for sale, but worse than that it turns a good deed into an



expensive problem by leaving charities with the clean-up bill.

Every year an estimated 30,000 tonnes of unsaleable donations end up in NSW landfills, costing charities \$7.3 million in disposal fees. This is money which should instead be spent on front-line services such as social welfare programs to help disadvantaged people.

Local charities depend on the donations that many of us provide, so it's really important that we continue to give generously to help support people in need. However, to avoid your donation ending up in landfill and contributing to the millions charities have to pay to sort, transport and dispose of it, please take a minute

when you're clearing out, to consider whether you're donating or dumping.

Here are a few tips to help you keep on track and make sure that your donations always count:

- give it the 'mates test' - if you wouldn't give it to a mate, don't donate it
- if it's stained, damaged or broken don't donate it but consider if you might be able to repurpose, repair or recycle it – check out the Northern Rivers Reuse and Repair Trail visit: [reusetrail.com.au](http://reusetrail.com.au)
- don't leave donations outside of charity shops or charity bins – only leave them inside. Leaving them outside is considered dumping and could result in you being fined. It's not worth the risk
- if you do have items to dispose of that are not suitable for donation or won't fit into your red lidded waste bin, contact your local council to discuss other options or to find your nearest waste station.

Happy New Year and Happy Donating.



**TAMARA SMITH MP**  
MEMBER FOR BALLINA

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## WHAT SHOULD I FOCUS ON IN 2024?

As your local Member, it's my job to advocate for you in parliament. And I want to know what issues you care about before I head back down to parliament for the 2024 year.

Is it health? Cost-of-living? Climate change? Take the 2-minute survey and tell me what you think!

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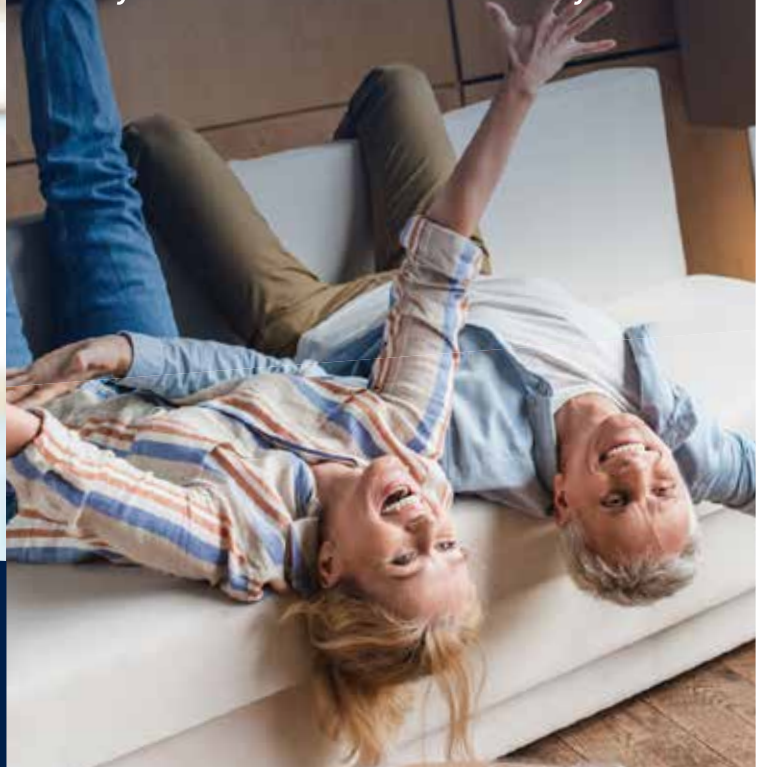
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# Paws for thought this summer

by Dr. Kirsty Robertson BVSc, Racecourse Road Veterinary Hospital

With summer having arrived in Byron, I can guarantee that your pet has noticed things starting to heat up. Unfortunately, some pet owners do not realise how easy it can be for our animals to overheat. If they are not able to cool properly, it can lead to heat stress or heat stroke. This can occur all year around, even in milder conditions. However, we tend to see more cases in the summertime. There is a very short amount of time from noticing the first clinical signs in your pet, to life threatening multi-organ damage. This is because dogs and cats are unable to sweat like humans, instead they release heat through other means, one main way is through the pads on their feet. You may also have noticed dogs panting more when they are hot. Panting works through the process of evaporative cooling across the moist mucous membranes of their mouth and nose. Humidity will impair their ability to cool efficiently and there is increased risk when the humidity is above 35%. Once greater than 80%, their ability to cool via evaporation is gone altogether.

### Increased risk factors for heat stress/stroke include:

- age: young and old animals are not as efficient at regulating their body temperature
- breed: brachycephalic (flat faced) breeds such as pugs and bulldogs have a decreased ability to cool air due to the anatomy of their respiratory system; also large/giant breeds
- medical conditions such as obesity, heart disease or respiratory disease
- exercising on warm and humid days. Temperatures greater than 20 degrees celsius will impair their ability to cool
- confined spaces such as dogs being left in cars or pocket pets such as mice and rabbits, as they are often in small enclosures unable to escape the heat.

### What to do if you think your pet has heat stress?

- Stop any more physical exertion such as exercise, playing with toys or removing them from stressors.
- Relocate them to a cool area, such as a shady spot or air-conditioned room.

- Ensure cool water is easily accessible.
- Wet their coat with cool (not cold) water. Cold water/ice packs can constrict blood vessels, preventing effective cooling.

If an animal is unable to cool themselves efficiently enough, the heat stress will progress into heat stroke. Weakness, hypersalivation, vomiting, diarrhoea, seizures, and collapse can all be signs of potentially fatal heatstroke. If you suspect your pet may be experiencing heat stroke, always seek veterinary attention as soon as possible. It is estimated that less than 30% will survive if they present for treatment after 90 minutes from the onset of their clinical signs. There is also no increase in survival rates between pets who were cooled prior to arrival at the vet and those who weren't.

### Nine tips to keeping cool this summer

1. Provide access to a well-ventilated space with shade and unlimited fresh drinking water.
2. Cooling beds or a shell pool to stand or lay in can be ways to add extra relief.
3. Frozen treats, better known as pupsicles, provide not only a way for our pets to cool down but also a stimulating activity and a high valued reward. Get creative by adding different fruits or treats your pet enjoys, to an ice cube tray or container and freeze.
4. Regular grooming: including brushing to remove loose hair and clipping to keep coats short allowing heat to escape.
5. Never leave your pet in a car or direct sunlight as temperatures can rise rapidly.
6. Keep exercise to a minimum on warm days. Do not walk them on surfaces such as cement, bitumen etc.
7. Protect you pet from UV rays. It can lead to skin diseases or cancer. There are special dog sunscreens you can use or check out the Bromelli sunsuits.
8. Cats do not pant. If you notice that it appears your cat is panting please seek veterinary attention immediately as this is usually an emergency and less likely to be heat related.



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# Juniors' basketball success

by James Short, Byron Bay Basketball



On Saturday 2 December Byron Bay Basketball held their first ever Juniors Finals Day. It saw the Primary School Boys, High School Girls, and their High School Boys (three divisions) play for first, second, third and fourth places – a huge success.

To all the players, well done. You should all be very proud – there was some phenomenal basketball that was played. The respect you had for yourselves, the club and the game was incredible. To all the parents who volunteered and all the players parents', a huge thank you for your continual assistance through the day and over the season. To the amazing referees and Ref Coordinator, Rebekah Wall, thank you for your incredible support throughout the day ensuring it ran smoothly and the amazing work you all do as referees. To the talented coaches and team managers, your dedication to develop our Junior players is outstanding. You are not just

teaching them basketball skills, but life skills and lessons - our deepest gratitude for all that you do.

To the incredible sponsors that ensured the day went ahead – your ever-giving support and commitment is truly thoughtful and much needed. These include our vendors on the day, Zac the Coffee Man and Bay Kids, with suppliers for the BBQ being Woolworths Bryon, and Byron Bay IGA Store. Plus a huge thank you to all those business who donated prizes for our raffle: Bailey Nelson, Aurum, Byron Bay Golf Club, Byron Bay Camping and Disposals, Grill'd, Thrills, and Social Remedy.

And to those behind the scenes, who helped tirelessly ensuring it all came together, we couldn't have done it without the passion and love you all have to see the kids shine and have so much fun - thank you Matt Barwick, Michael and Noa Sonnenfeld, Cilla Jolliffe, Kelly Shaw, and Dave Shaw.

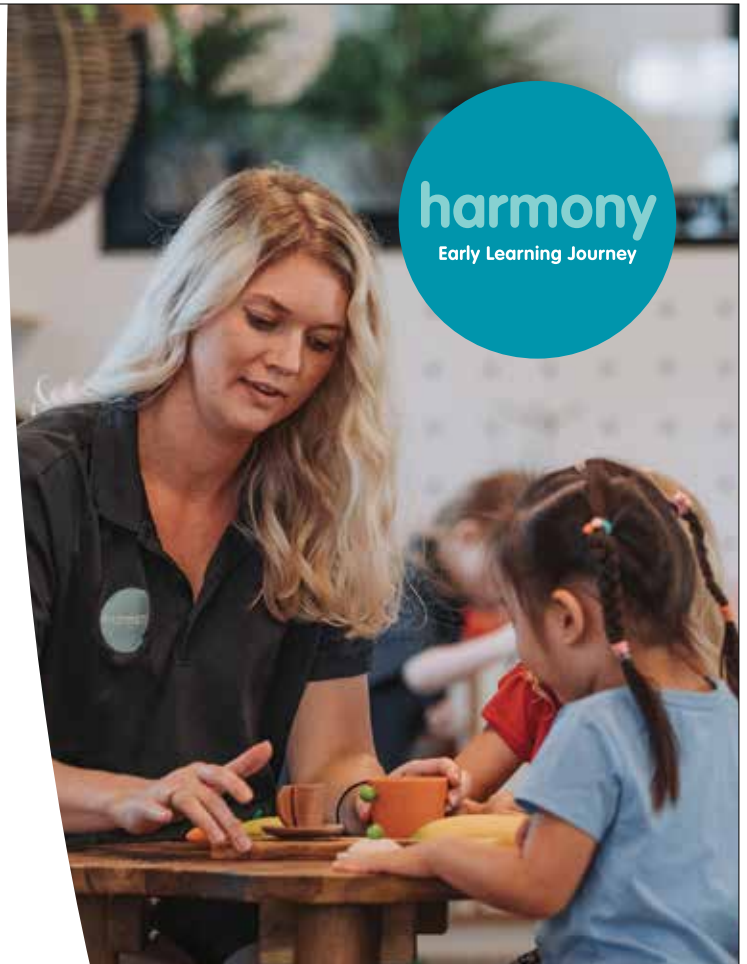
We look forward to the 2024 upcoming season, because we love this game. To find out when the 2024 season begins and all the latest info visit: [byronbasketball.com](http://byronbasketball.com) or go to the Facebook: [@byronbasketball](https://www.facebook.com/byronbasketball)

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# Herb Elliot Twilight track meet

by Byron Bay Runners



*Pictured: Runners at Herb Elliot Twilight Track Meet, 2023. Source: Louise Beaumont.*

Lace up your joggers, and get ready to run in Byron Bay Runners' annual Herb Elliott Twilight track meet on Saturday 27 January, 5pm–9:30pm.

Sanctioned by Athletics NSW, this is becoming a key event in many runners' race calendars, attracting big numbers

of community and elite athletes. Previous competitors have included Shaun Creighton (current Australian 3,000m steeplechase record holder), Julia Degan (Australian Representative, World Championships) and Daniel Williams (current 800m and 1,500m national champion) as well as many of our homegrown talents.

We hope to offer again an attractive prize pool in all events (100m, 400m, 1,500m and 3,000m): in 2023 our prize pool was over \$2,000.

The night is also great for spectators. Trackside, you will find food trucks, barista coffee, and atmosphere provided by a live DJ, race commentary, athlete interviews and

more. Please bring a chair, or a picnic rug as we don't have trackside seating. Registrations are open and will close on Thursday 25 January.

This event is a major fundraiser for the Club. We are a not-for-profit community Club, run entirely by unpaid volunteers. We are currently seeking sponsorship from local businesses to help us cover the costs of staging this annual event for the community. We also have a range of sponsorship packages so please get in touch with via email: [byronbayrunners@gmail.com](mailto:byronbayrunners@gmail.com)

For more information, including a link to online registration, visit: [byronbayrunners.com](http://byronbayrunners.com) and click on Event–Races.

# BBSLSC SLS Far North Coast Branch event

by Lyndell Crawford, Byron Bay Surf Life Saving Club



*Pictured: Byron Bay Surf Lifesaving competitors Jared Monti, Paul Jones, Christian Round, Jamie Costello-Manning, Paul Pattison and Jaime Cascajares.*

On 9–10 December, Main Beach came alive as the Byron Bay Surf Life Saving Club (BBSLSC) played host to a spectacular two-day carnival. Drawing in more than 700 competitors from Surf Life Saving Clubs across the Far North Coast, competitors ranged from U8's to 60+ and showcased their talents against a backdrop of perfect weather.

The carnival featured an array of classic events, including thrilling flags and sprints; surf, ski and board races. Byron Bay placed 2nd overall in the Point Score Championships, with local talents Roland Cohen and Beau Bilbe placing 1st in the flags in their respective age groups, and Roland Cohen,

Beau Bilbe, Lola Simpson, Charlie Isaacson, Denika Duguid and Delilah Warton placed 1st in the beach sprints. The U11 relay team also took the win with sprints across the hot sand.

In the water, Byron Bay also achieved some excellent results. Open and Senior competitors contributed steadily to the Club's point tally with Club's Surf Sports Director, Kurt Tutt winning the open male single ski. The U13 board relay and surf team took home the gold, with nippers Hazel Tutt placing 2nd in U9 board and surf race, Elijah Round placing 2nd U12 surf race and Iron Person, and Tommy Pockley placing 2nd in the U13 surf race.

The highlight of the weekend remained the Iron Race, with competitors U17 and older, testing themselves against Byron Bay's surf conditions in a demanding event that combines four aspects of surf lifesaving into one race – the ski, swim, board, and run.

The event sets the stage for another thrilling showdown scheduled for Australia Day long weekend, where members of BBSLSC will attend the 2024 Oakberry Acai NSW Surf Life Saving Country Championships, at the home of defending Country Champions, Warilla-Barrack Point SLSC.

For more information visit: [byronbaysurfclub.org](http://byronbaysurfclub.org)



# The look

with Billy Bob Thoughtson



This month, I explore the idea that vocalised words are really a shallow bedfellow to the more subtle and sophisticated forms of communication. Thankfully, humans have developed a wide range of 'looks' to use in scenarios where verbal communication would be impolite, dangerous, or unnecessary.

It's incredible how much the spoken word can annoy. For example, if someone talks too loudly, too softly, too fast, too twangy, or interrupts frequently, it can be very irritating. It can also be very distracting, which partly explains why we get 'shushed' in libraries. By necessity, librarians have developed a their own look to compliment their shushing. It's meant to encourage quietness, often involving a subtle, yet, very firm facial expression, direct eye contact with the noise maker, and if necessary, a finger to the lips in a gesture for silence. It's a powerful look and usually has the desired result.

*The Mona Lisa's* look is also renowned with the subtle, mysterious smile that captivated the world, an expression which seems to change depending on the viewer's perspective. Leonardo da Vinci painted her portrait between 1503 and 1506, and her identity was confirmed as Lisa Gherardini. There are no words or writings recorded from Lisa Gherardini, and while her life is mystery, her look has unequivocally compelled and inspired us throughout the ages.

The way someone looks at you can make you wonder if you're the most beautiful person in the world or the ugliest. Estimates of the importance

of these looks vary, with some studies suggesting that as much as 70-93% of our communication is nonverbal and more influential in conveying messages. Luckily for you, I've compiled a comprehensive list of looks you can share with, or use on, other people.

**The inside joke** – a classic amongst friends and family, particularly siblings. Usually, this happens mid-conversation when the speaker has said something distasteful, factually incorrect, or 'innuendoed' (you already know the details– it's an inside joke after all). The look consists of a shared glance to those in on the joke. It happens so fast that if you blink, you'll miss it.

**The up-and-down** – this one can be used with devastating effect. It's also known as the 'are you really going to wear that?' or the 'who does this person think they are?' look. It can also be enhanced with a wrinkling of the nose as if you've smelt something bad.

**Stink-eye** – Speaking of smelling bad things, stink-eye, evil-eye, and the dirty look are all fantastic non-verbal portrayals of anger, hate, disapproval, and disgust. Think of the term 'if looks could kill'. Entailing a glare, in conjunction with a frown, a lip-curl or wrinkled nose, this look can immediately illicit behavioural change in the receiving party, who in turn may think on it for years. They may even keep themselves up at night, wondering what caused them to receive such a look...Not me, though. Luckily, I've never received such a look.

**Side-eye** – This particular look has a long history, immortalised through art, and even published in 1922 in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. It consists of a side-long gaze with narrowed eyes which can emote suspicion, scorn, annoyance, jealousy, or for a softer look, veiled curiosity. This look has recently had a powerful upgrade, popularised on TikTok, with the 'bombastic side-eye' and 'criminal, offensive side-eye'.

**The 'sound the alarm'** – Used effectively, this particular look can lead to group-wide panic and confusion. Historically, I'm sure it was used to silently notify other humans of impending danger. Nowadays, this look can let your friends know of your discomfort in a situation, prompting them to intervene or rescue you.

**The sisterhood** – I was only recently informed of this look, and apparently, it is hardwired into the female brain. It can be shared amongst women, strangers or not, and intrinsically understood. Sadly, from what I've heard, it has been formed to defend against misogynistic and/or predatory behaviour. Impressively, this look's versatility encompasses every look in the look book. For example, when receiving unwanted attention, women can employ the 'sound the alarm' look for a prompt rescue; in safer situations where a man is grandstanding, peacocking, or letting his misogyny show, women can employ the 'inside joke look'; a variation of stink-eye can be used to warn other women of a potential threat; the up-and-down look can be used with compassion, to inform another of their compromised dignity.

**Bedroom eyes** – Well, now, here is a seductive favourite amongst–

Hang on, the Editor is giving me a bombastic side-eye look. She says I shouldn't be encouraging these types of naughty knookie–lookies. Looks like I need to insert another disclaimer.

*Billy Bob disclaimer: this article is meant to encourage improved non-verbal communications. Please consider the legal and social contexts these looks can have before acting on them.*

Regardless of the consequences, what I really want you to see is that these looks are universally understood and powerful. While you may only speak one language, remember, we are all eye-lingual.



# This Month

with Milt Barlow

## At the movies

January means peak holiday screenings at the movies - a great place to escape the heat for a few hours. Big movies continuing for the school holidays include *Poor Things* and *Anyone But You*, but there's much more to anticipate.

Nicolas Cage is getting rave reviews for his lead performance in *Dream Scenario*. He plays a family man who finds his life turned upside down when millions of strangers start seeing him in their dreams. The dreams turn into nightmares though when he is forced to navigate his newfound stardom. Many are saying its Cage's best performance in years and it's definitely worth a look.

You can always count on brilliant Kiwi director and writer Taika Waititi to deliver the goods and in the spirit of *Cool Runnings* he nails it with *Next Goal Wins*. This is a quirky little film with a big, big heart, telling the story of a fired and down-on-his-luck US soccer coach, Thomas Rongen (Michael Fassbender), being shipped off to American Samoa to train a soccer team that has never scored a goal. It's based on a true story of a FIFA match that the team lost in 2001 with a bruising 31-0 score. Don't miss this one.

Opening 4 January is the powerful *Ferrari*. Directed by Michael Mann with an all-star cast of Adam Driver, Penelope Cruz and Patrick Dempsey it is based on the autobiography of Enzo Ferrari. The year is 1957 and the company that he and his wife built 10 years earlier is on the verge of bankruptcy. He decides to roll the dice and wager it all on the iconic Mille Miglia, a treacherous 1,000-mile race across Italy. Beautifully shot with a great cast, there are some big heart stopping action moments in this great movie. This is definitely one of the highlights for January.



The other must-see this month is *Priscilla* (18 January). Directed by Sofia Coppola it tells the heartwarming story of Priscilla Beaulieu and Elvis Presley. Relative newcomer Cailee Spaeny is a delight to watch as Priscilla and young Australian actor, Jacob Elordi, nails it as Elvis.

## Summer on the couch

If you missed it with all the Christmas festivities don't forget the absolute final of *The Crown* that dropped on 14 December. It's sad to think 'that's it folks' as it had been an annual tradition since 2016.





If you missed it at the movies, John Farnham *Finding the Voice* is now up on Apple TV and Prime. The doco tells the story of John's rise to fame from being a novelty with *Sadie The Cleaning Lady* to becoming Australia's biggest star with *The Voice* which sold some 1.7 million albums. This is a great watch.

And whilst on the subject of great music, a terrific holiday watch is the original Broadway cast of *Hamilton* (Apple TV+). This would have to rate as one of my favourite musicals. I was lucky enough to see the Australian version in Sydney and it was terrific, but being able to watch the award winning Broadway cast is a great night in.







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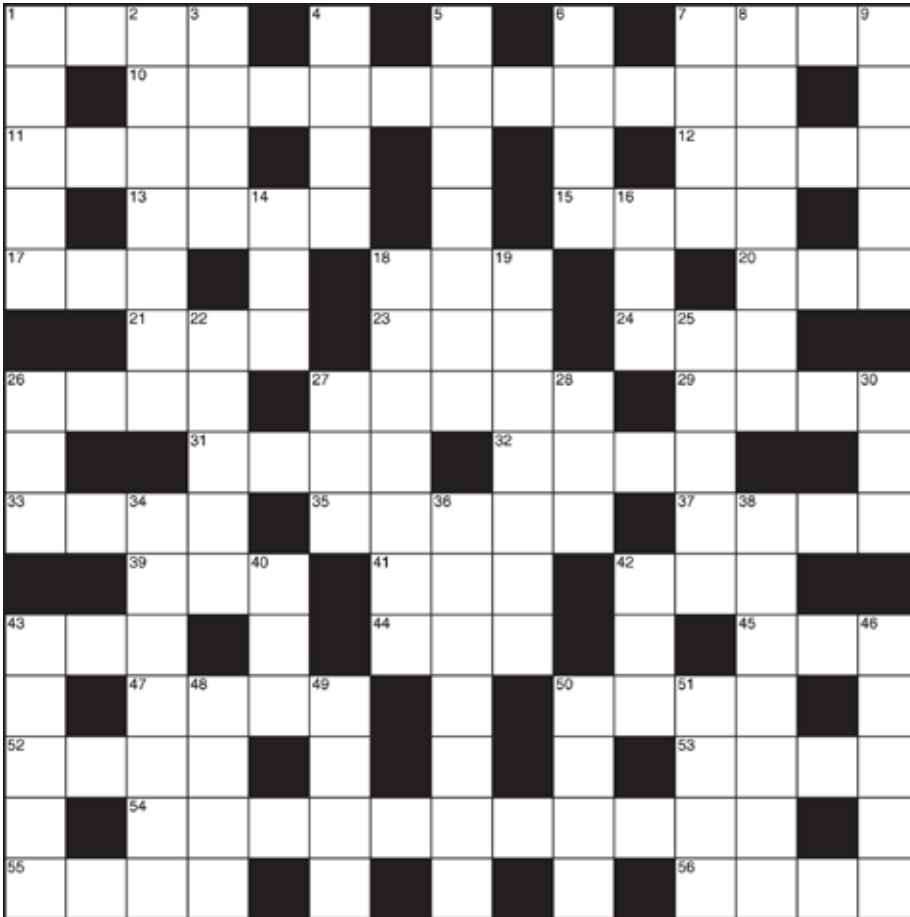
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# January crossword

© Lovatts Puzzles



### Across

- 1. Flower stalk
- 7. Bamboo rod
- 10. Convicts
- 11. Sharpen (appetite)
- 12. Apple MP3 player
- 13. Bridalwear item
- 15. Toothpaste container
- 17. Gene acid (1,1,1)
- 18. City, ... Francisco
- 20. Billiards stick
- 21. Twice five
- 23. Filled pastry
- 24. Picnic pest
- 26. Feel anxious
- 27. Ligament
- 29. Mongolia is there
- 31. Detect sound
- 32. Tall, ... & handsome
- 33. Loose garment
- 35. Brick barriers
- 37. To ... his own
- 39. Crescent
- 41. Tell a whopper
- 42. Music discs (1,2)
- 43. Promise
- 44. Phone text (1,1,1)
- 45. Battery size (1,1,1)
- 47. Alley
- 50. Bellow
- 52. Type of pork chop
- 53. Petrol or diesel
- 54. Meaningless
- 55. Roadway symbol
- 56. Rip violently

### Down

- 1. Stitched
- 2. Hoist
- 3. Partner
- 4. Cain's brother
- 5. Landscape
- 6. Short theatre sketch
- 7. Baby's bed
- 8. Features
- 9. Comedian, ... Murphy
- 14. Spy writer, ... Fleming
- 16. Actress, ... Thurman
- 18. Swirls
- 19. Tattooist's tools
- 22. Anaesthetic
- 25. In one's birthday suit
- 26. Representing
- 27. Laid eyes on
- 28. They were, I ...
- 30. Fire residue
- 34. Shouting loudly
- 36. Walking painfully
- 38. Usually (2,1,4)
- 40. Soup tin
- 42. Pigeon call
- 43. Electrical units
- 46. Suffered
- 48. Unknown author
- 49. More
- 50. Drizzle
- 51. A great way off



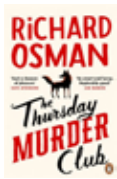
## Summer reading

Compiled from Dymocks top 10 list of 2023



### **The Seven Husbands Of Evelyn Hugo** by Taylor Jenkins Reid

The entrancing story of a reclusive Hollywood starlet as she reflects on her relentless rise to the top and the long-held secrets the public could never imagine.



### **The Thursday Murder Club** by Richard Osman

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet up once a week to investigate unsolved murders.

But when a brutal killing takes place on their very doorstep, the Thursday Murder Club find themselves in the middle of their first live case. Can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer before it's too late?



### **The Girl Who Fell From The Sky** by Emma Carey

When Emma Carey was twenty, she fell from 15,000 feet and survived. Emma tells us the inspirational story of how, through what could be considered one of her greatest tragedies, she

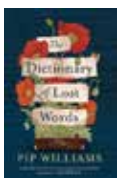
found her truest self. More than a memoir, this book is a call to action that reminds us not to take our lives and abilities for granted-to live every day like it could be our last.



### **The Book Thief** by Markus Zusak

It is 1939 Nazi Germany. By her brother's graveside, Liesel's life is changed when she finds The Gravedigger's Handbook. So begins a love affair with books and soon she is stealing them from Nazi book-burnings and wherever they can

be found. But these are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jewish fist-fighter in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up, and closed down.



### **The Dictionary Of Lost Words** by Pip Williams

Set when the women's suffrage movement was at its height, Esme watches as her father and his team make the first version of the Oxford English Dictionary. She soon realises that some words

are discarded – often those relating to women's experiences. Secretly, she begins to collect words for another dictionary, revealing a lost narrative, hidden between the lines of a history written by men.

## Tricky Trivia

1. Who is the king of the gods in Greek mythology?
2. What is the chemical symbol for the element mercury?
3. What is the official animal of Scotland?
4. What animal's milk is pink?
5. What is the northernmost capital city in the world?
6. In what year did the Berlin Wall fall?
7. Which mountain range is the longest in the world?
8. What does HTTP stand for in a web address?
9. Who was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize (in 1903)?
10. Which company owns Bugatti, Lamborghini, Audi, Porsche, and Ducati?



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## Your 2024 horoscopes by Patsy Bennett - [patsybennett.com](https://patsybennett.com)

### Aries

Be prepared to view your career and general path in 2024 in a new light. You'll be shouldering new or different responsibilities and so must plan ahead, both financially and strategically. Romantic Aries are due a fresh phase in your love life. Singles may meet someone new and couples will be drawn to new ways to establish balance in your relationship. You'll appreciate investing in your home or a remodelling project.

### Taurus

Be courageous and believe in yourself. 2024 is the year to take plans you formulated in 2023 and make them happen, especially career-wise. Your home and love life will flourish as a result, so be sure to focus equally on these important areas. Jupiter in your finance sector from the end of May onwards will help you to build wealth, but you must avoid overspending, or you'll begin a lengthy debt cycle.

### Gemini

2024 is an excellent year to formulate a stable and workable schedule in your career, at home or with property. Be sure also to focus on socialising as well; if you're single, you'll appreciate the chance to meet someone like-minded and compatible. Career-wise, avoid restricting your growth, and be prepared to step into new roles and avenues. Mid-July to mid-August will be especially excellent for home improvement.

### Cancer

Begin the year the way you mean to carry on: with determination. 2024 is all about building a strong foundation so that all your projects can flourish. Changes at home or with family will impact not only your finances but also your relationships. January and February will be two of the most romantic months of the year, so be sure to take the initiative early in 2024 and bring more romance into your life.

### Leo

Your love life, your career and general direction in life will be the focus in 2024. You'll gain the opportunity to boost all these areas, facilitated by the lovely aspect between Saturn and Jupiter in the first quarter of 2024. If you feel restless early in the year, aim to channel excess energy into building a strong position for yourself work-wise, one that facilitates growth but that also provides stability.

### Virgo

You love to feel grounded and that your efforts produce good results. And yet in 2024 adventure will beckon too, which will encourage you to enjoy fresh experiences such as travel and moving into fresh social circles. Just be sure to choose activities and friends wisely. Long-term changes will be mostly at home and in your love life. Work-wise, you must avoid overwork, as this will be counter-productive.

### Libra

You can regain a sense of proportion, well-being and happiness in all areas of your life in 2024, especially in your personal or love life and at home. Shared concerns, such as joint finances or duties will be the foundation stone for many of your decisions, and you may need to re-think existing arrangements. Your domestic life or a change regarding property will take effect, so be sure to research options carefully.

### Scorpio

2024 is about finding balance in your life. So where you tend to burn the candle at both ends, you must avoid burnout. You'll manage to find a good balance between work and home life this year, but may have a tendency to limit your home life. And yet your home is a key area where you obtain stability. Financially, the start of the year will bring good opportunities to earn well but you must set up a balanced budget.

### Sagittarius

2024 will be a busy and a productive year, as long as you put in place a solid and healthy work schedule. This will allow you to make the most of proactive and dynamic stars which also encourage you to have more fun in life. You must consider how best to manage finances, especially at home and with family. Some domestic developments may even be life-changing, so be prepared to take the initiative.

### Capricorn

Be innovative in 2024. It's a good year to progress projects and ideas you formulated in 2023, especially in your career and at home. You may be surprised by developments in your love life, as you seek to bring fresh experiences into your life. Mid-2024 will be particularly romantic, ideal for planning a holiday and for singles to socialise. Be sure also to rest adequately, as you may otherwise make rash decisions.

### Aquarius

Pluto brings the chance to reinvent your life in 2024 - and you'll appreciate a sense of progress and productivity. You can step to a fresh level with some of the endeavours you already considered in 2023, so be sure to take the initiative, especially if you'd like to turn a corner in your career. Just be sure not to be swept up in dramatic changes at the expense of time spent with your family and those you truly love.

### Pisces

This year romance will captivate you, as Neptune makes some impressive moves guaranteed to liven up your love life. Just be sure to avoid keeping the peace at all costs and avoiding disappointments. Be spontaneous instead on occasion and as a result you'll enjoy some lovely synchronicities. Your domestic life is also set for change, as you'll gain the chance to improve your home life so that it suits you better.



# Crossword solution

December



# Trivia answers

1. Zeus
2. Hg
3. Unicorn
4. Hippopotamus
5. Reykjavik, Iceland
6. 1989
7. The Andes
8. HyperText Transfer Protocol
9. Marie Curie
10. Volkswagen

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