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Community news for Byron Bay and surrounds

Issue 15 | February 2024



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Dear Readers,

While it may have been a bit of a soggy summer, I at least hope you got to soak up the good times with family and friends. The kids are back at school and many of us have returned to work – it's full steam ahead. While within the hustle and bustle of our usual routines, I do hope that you make some time for yourself. It could be a beachy stroll, a forest hike, or perhaps taking a rest in your favourite chair with a cup of tea (or something stronger) and a copy of *The Byron Wave*.

In these pages you will likely find something inspiring to help with the 2024 transition. In fact, speaking of inspiring, our feature piece is all about Vaginas (don't make that face – it's a beautiful word). More specifically, the *Vagina Monologues* and the V-Day protest which are run by powerful local women. Their words are sure to encourage, challenge, and inspire you. We also speak to Jason Seibert who tells us of his Heartland Homes Project, designed to provide self-sufficient homes for people who have been affected by the floods.

There is something for everyone here.



Until next month,
Charla Rallings, Editor.

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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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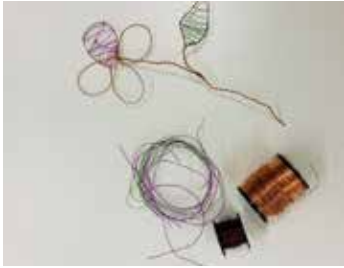
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What: Kids' Making Sessions at the Gallery
When: Until 10 February
Where: Lone Goat Gallery, Byron Bay

The Gallery will have a drop-in art activity set up for kids until 10 February and during the current exhibition by Nettie Sumner. Be inspired to create your own unique wire bloom. Free event. More information: lonegoatgallery.com



What: Dance at Dusk with The Whiskeys
When: Saturday 10 February, from 4:30pm
Where: Hotel Brunswick

Described as old souls with young blood, experience the heavy blues and rock explosion of two-piece band, The Whiskeys. Tickets and info: allevents.in



What: V-Day Protest
When: Wednesday 14 February, 6:30am
Where: Main Beach, Byron Bay

All are welcome to gather at dawn in solidarity with women and the One Billion Rising movement and dance to end violence against women and children in human history. Wear red and be loud. More info on Facebook: [@V-Day Byron Bay](https://www.facebook.com/V-Day-Byron-Bay)



What: *Dancing in the Moonlight* – Ian Thomas
When: Friday 16 February, 6–8pm
Where: Lone Goat Gallery, Byron Bay

Dancing in the Moonlight is an exhibition of celebration of the Shire's vibrant and diverse queer communities. It honours the power of love and the solidarity that emerges from shared experiences. For more info: lonegoatgallery.com



What: *The Eldershaw Chronicles*
When: Thursday 29 February, 7:30–9pm
Where: Drill Hall Theatre, Mullumbimby

Adapted from Stephen Edgar's narrative verse novel, *The Eldershaw Chronicles* is a haunting elegy, imaginatively staged. Tickets and info: drillhalltheatre.org.au



What: The Necks – in concert
When: Friday 1 March, 7pm
Where: Byron Theatre

Returning to Byron Bay after a decade, Chris Abrahams, Lloyd Swanton, and Tony Buck create luminous soundscapes live, captivating audiences through unplanned performances. Tickets and info: byroncentre.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

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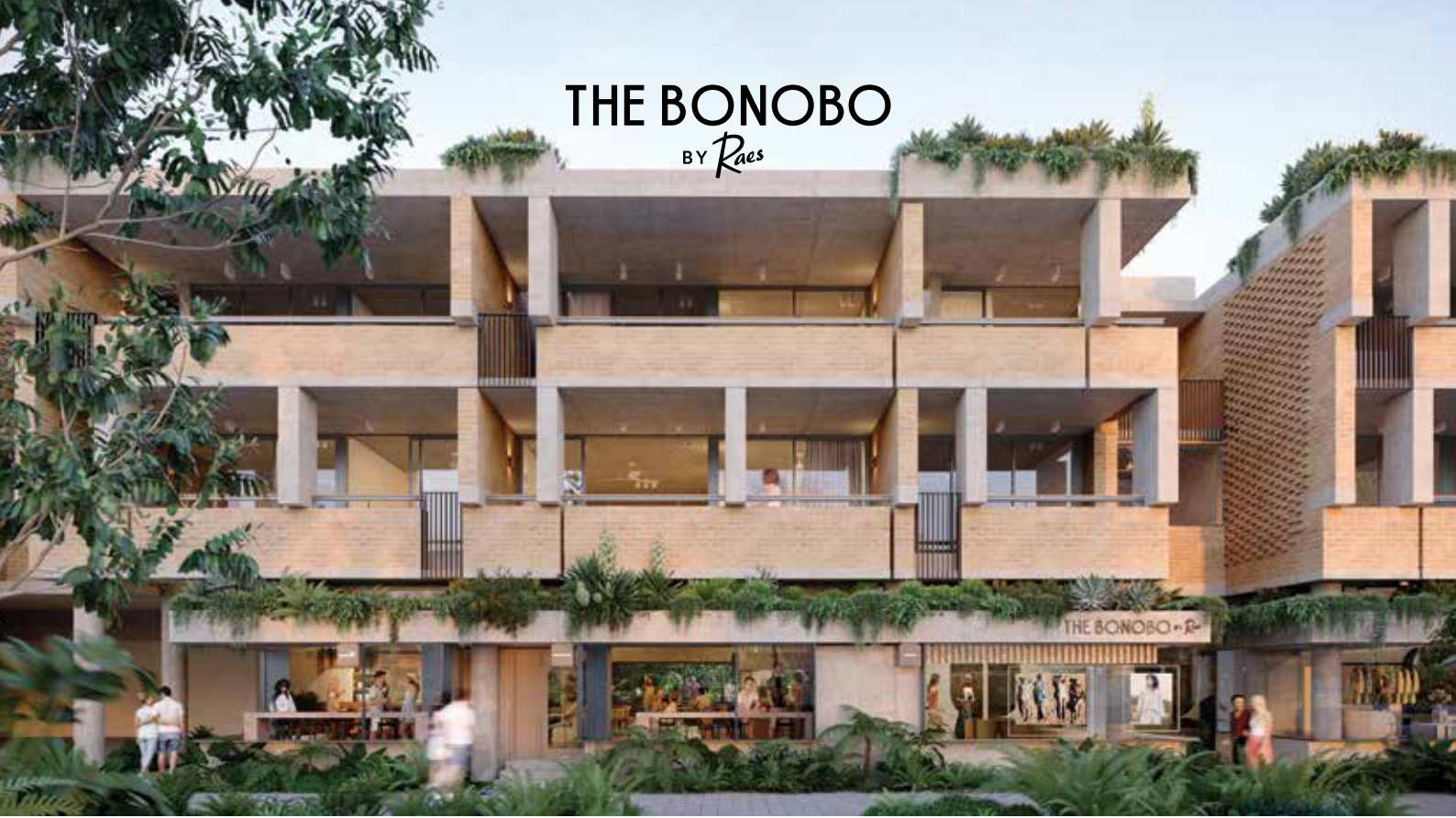
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A new plan: Byron Shire housing



Byron Shire is gearing up for a new approach to housing in 2024. Following a highly engaged consultation period on Byron Shire Council's website, the Housing Options Paper drew nearly 2,000 views and 286 submissions, signaling strong community interest. The aim of the Paper is to refresh the Byron Shire Residential Strategy, a pivotal guide shaping the region's housing outlook for the next two decades.

'The NSW Government has set Council a target to deliver 4,522 homes for 8,590 people by 2041,' said Mayor Michael Lyon, 'and the Residential Strategy will provide the planning framework to allow this to happen.'

At the December 2023 Council meeting, Councillors endorsed the recommendations developed from the Housing

Options Paper which identified four ways for housing supply to be delivered via infill, vacant land, new release, and living differently. Following the consultation period, community-driven input expanded the Residential Strategy's scope, encompassing additional sites and land specified in the NSW Government's Resilient Lands Strategy.

With housing topping the community agenda, the strategy aims to balance development with environmental considerations, preserving the local character. Mayor Lyon stressed the Strategy's focus on providing genuine affordable housing and build-to-rent options, tackling the ongoing housing crisis.

'There are no quick fixes to this problem,' Mayor Michael Lyon said, 'but the Residential Strategy will provide the framework to allow for development to happen in a way that is appropriate for our community, incorporating our values, taking into account the environment and the character of our villages and towns.'

Details on the Housing Options Paper amendments and the Residential Strategy's evolution are available on Council's website, with plans for submission to the NSW Government's Department of Planning and Environment following Council endorsement in early 2024.

For more information visit: byron.nsw.gov.au

Pay parking coming to Brunswick Heads

Byron Shire Council recently greenlit the introduction of pay parking in parts of Brunswick Heads, aiming to address parking congestion, especially in the town's commercial precinct. Mayor Michael Lyon highlighted that parking occupancy is nearing capacity, causing inconvenience for visitors and local businesses.

The decision follows years of debate and modifications to parking policies. The council will explore implementation costs, hourly rates, and extend the residential permit scheme to ease spill-over into nearby residential zones.

The pay parking scheme will expand to foreshore areas, including South Beach Road. Notably, the \$55 fee for residential parking permits in Byron Shire will be scrapped once pay-parking in Brunswick Heads is active.

Mayor Lyon expressed confidence in replicating the success seen in Byron Bay. Detailed plans for the pay parking roll-out will be presented to Council in early 2024.

For more information visit: byron.nsw.gov.au

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New year, new beginning for Feros residents



Pictured: Feros residents celebrating win. Source: ABC North Coast, Bruce MacKenzie.

Residents of Feros Village in Byron Bay breathed a big sigh of relief before Christmas with the announcement from Crown Lands, Department of Planning and Environment, that St Andrew's Village Ballina will take over operations by late January, 2024.

Chief Executive Officer of St Andrew's, Todd Yourell, said his organisation's top priority now was the continuing care of the residents of what will become known as St Andrew's Village Byron Bay.

'St Andrew's recognises the sense of ownership many in the community feel toward the Feros site and following the drawn out process of the last year, our priorities are now clearly focused on the residents, both current and future of St Andrew's Byron,' said Mr Yorell. 'We plan to offer a seamless transition for the eight current residents and we look forward to welcoming back any residents who have sought new accommodation since February and who may choose to return to the Marvell Street site.'

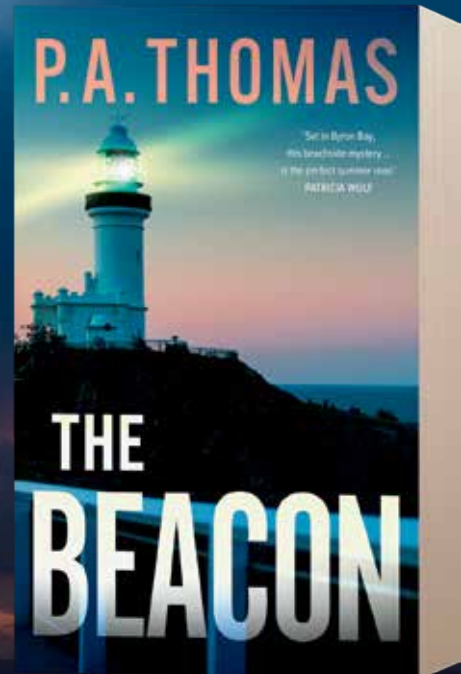
An investment of around \$3 million will also be spent updating and refurbishing the facility, including new beds, a Nurse Call System, Fall Detection System, and kitchen upgrades. Resident input will also be sought during the design phase.

'We believe we can improve and successfully operate the facility in accordance with the current class of use,' said Mr Yorell. 'We anticipate working closely with Byron Shire Council to carry out the upgrade with an absolute minimum of inconvenience to the residents.'

Moreover, St Andrew's Village Byron Bay will extend its services to support individuals aged 65+ facing housing insecurity or homelessness. The transition signifies a victory for the community who fought hard to ensure the wellbeing of its residents. Federal Member for Richmond, Justine Elliot, lauded the collaborative efforts, highlighting the perseverance of state and federal Labor governments and Byron Council in securing a long-term solution for the facility, allowing all residents to remain on-site.

For more information visit: standrew.com.au

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Councillor Column

Deputy Mayor Sarah Ndiaye

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



What's on your vision board for 2024?

Jingi Walla. I hope the year has started well for you and your loved ones. It's always an interesting time of year sharing this beautiful place with so many visitors, but it's been great to have intermittent good weather, sans natural disaster or lockdowns.

Reflecting back on this term of Council, we had our first meeting and then the devastating floods hit. Since then, for me, so much of our collective energy has necessarily been focused on recovery. While there is still work to be done, for example, the reopening of Federal Drive after the landslip and holding the State and Federal governments accountable for the commitments they made to council and our community;

an enormous amount of work has been done. I'm really proud of what our Council staff, the community and all who were impacted have been able to achieve.

Personally, I put aside a lot of the projects I had been focused on and worked towards the immediate needs of the community. Now, tentatively, perhaps we can start looking forward - so, along with world peace and a home for all who need one, I'm putting a year-round, solar-heated, fit-for-purpose aquatic facility on the vision board for 2024. I know it will take longer than that for it to be ready to swim in - a few years no doubt, but I want everything in place to make it happen.

I love our two memorial pools, but to me it's scandalous that in this day and age, if you're in a wheelchair or have other physical challenges that make movement difficult, there's no pool in the Shire that can meet those needs. You must travel to Ballina or Murwillumbah for physical therapy or enjoyment in the water. Our kids are disadvantaged not having access to year-round lessons and the community which builds around the structure of a pool is something that enriches all involved. So many people want this to happen, but it keeps being put on the back burner. Even our very limited accessible beaches have been near impossible to get onto this year. So, what to do?

Council has undertaken a feasibility study and is investigating a series of options. We have two wonderful pools that are both aging and will require some serious investment in the next decade and it's hard to see either of them being able to meet the needs of the community within their current footprints, especially when you take into account parking requirements and flood prone land. We will need to seek funding from other levels of government, there's no question about that, but the big question will be which site will be best placed to serve our population?

There's a report due to come to Council in March and from there, community input will be sought, so be ready to Have Your Say on this and any of the other key issues that come up. Right now, you can comment on the future of the Mullumbimby Hospital Site and The Sandhills Wetlands Project. Keep a look out for The Byron Foreshore Masterplan as well and visit: byron.nsw.gov.au/Your-Say-Byron-Shire

Other things on my vision board for 2024 are Saving Wallum from over development, continuing to protect our precious places, affordable housing on the old Mullum Hospital site and a revised future for the rail corridor. There's still so much more to do. I hope your dreams and aspirations for the year come to fruition with grace and ease.

To get in touch with Cr Sarah Ndiaye email: sarah.ndiaye@byron.nsw.gov.au

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Byron Spaces Give Back initiative

By Amanda Kuhn



Nestled in the heart of Byron Bay, amidst its coastal beauty and bohemian charm, you'll find Byron Spaces – a venue that transcends the ordinary. It's not merely a place to host your events – it's a community-driven initiative by the Byron Community Centre that invites you to become a part of something greater.

'When you choose Byron Spaces, you're not just booking a venue, you're contributing to the community's wellbeing,' says Carl Taylor, Byron Spaces Operations Coordinator.

'It's a unique opportunity to forge connections, raise awareness and leave an indelible mark on Byron's vibrant community spirit.'

Whether for a conference, a workshop or a private party, Byron Spaces invites you to consider their venue, not only for its aesthetics but for its soul. 'It's more than just a location; it's an embodiment of community spirit,' Carl continues. 'It's a venue with a heart, and at its core beats the Give Back initiative.'

In times of adversity, faced with rising cost of living and the housing crisis, homeless services at Fletcher Street Cottage and community programs serve as lifelines for many locals.

'By booking with Byron Spaces, you're directly contributing to vital support services for those most in need,' says

Jen Lunan, Manager of Fletcher Street Cottage, a homeless hub for Byron Bay, directly benefiting from the Byron Spaces Give Back initiative.

Byron Spaces stands out as a venue with a compelling narrative of social responsibility. The Give Back initiative extends an invitation to be an integral part of this, offering an opportunity to celebrate and convene with mindfulness, all while understanding that your choice has a transformative impact on the local community. So, the next time you plan an event in Byron Bay, remember that it's more than just an event - it's an opportunity to become a character in a story of compassion and empowerment.

For more information visit: byronspaces.com.au

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20 years of rescues and re-homing

by Byron Dog Rescue



Pictured: Gertie with her new family in Woolongong after being rescued and rehabilitated by Byron Dog Rescue.

As Byron Dog Rescue celebrates its 20th year, the organisation looks back with pride at the countless lives it has touched and the positive impact it has made on the community. Originally founded by Margaret Brown as Companion Animals Welfare Incorporated (CAWI), CAWI embarked on its mission to care for and re-

home abandoned, unwanted, or abused animals. Margaret, with her extensive background in cat and dog rescue, recognised the need for an animal training and adoption centre in the Byron Shire. In late 2018, CAWI underwent a change, re-branding itself as Byron Dog Rescue to reflect its commitment to canine welfare in the Byron Bay community and beyond.

In order to raise funds to purchase a property to assist in the rescuing of abandoned and surrendered dogs, CAWI Op shops became a key initiative. Said property was purchased in 2019 and staff have been working hard to get it up and running. Byron Dog Rescue goes beyond merely providing shelter; it's about rescue, rehabilitation, and community service.

The organisation's dedicated staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly and their efforts have resulted in the saving of approximately 50 dogs each year.

Extending a heartfelt thanks to volunteers, supporters, and the community President Cindy Squire said, 'We thank the assistance of all of our volunteers and staff who, through the donation of their time and caring, make this all possible. We especially thank all of our foster carers who have enabled us to take on and help each of our rescues. We cannot do it without you.'

Looking ahead, the organisation remains steadfast in its commitment to canine welfare, and responsible pet ownership. For more information visit: cawi.org.au

Volunteers needed for Seniors Festival

Byron Community Centre (BCC) is calling for volunteers in the lead-up to their 2024 Seniors Festival. The celebratory week, themed Reach Beyond, runs across 11–15 March and aims to honour and celebrate the older residents of Byron Shire.

A diverse range of volunteer opportunities await those eager to contribute such as, daily bump-in and bump-out support, design and coordination of the Art Exhibition, organisation and management of the raffle, general administrative assistance and research, planning and hosting of the luncheon and movie day, servers for the luncheon and for tea, coffee and snacks between events, poster design and marketing support, event photography, and liaison with presenters and performers.

The Seniors Festival's theme for 2024 is Reach Beyond and includes free activities, such as drumming, art, drama, chair yoga, African dance, computer club, massages, art exhibition, and a special opening luncheon. The event is proudly sponsored by the NSW Seniors Festival Grant Program 2024, with a generous \$5,000 grant from the NSW Department of Community and Justice.

Those interested in volunteering can contact Izzy Durbin at email: dutyofficer@byroncentre.com.au For more information on the seniors festival visit: byroncentre.com.au



Clean-Up Australia day



Over 760,000 Australians pulled on their gloves and gathered for Clean Up Australia Day in 2023 and on Sunday 3 March, Clean Up Australia is hoping to see a similar, if not better response. Vapes, cigarette butts, coffee cups and soft plastics are amongst the commonly reported items collected by volunteers who are encouraged at each site to report their findings.

Byron Shire Council is rallying the community to join hands in sprucing up our local environment. Collaborating

with Positive Change for Marine Life, Council has arranged a cleanup session at Byron Bay's Main Beach, scheduled from 9am to 11am.

Zoe White, Council's Resource Recovery Education and Compliance Officer, said that it is one of her favourite days of the year.

'I am looking forward to the event this year and encourage everyone to get involved in this fantastic day,' Ms White said. 'You get to spend the morning outside with your community and know you have made a difference to our local environment and waterways. We will provide everything you need, and you will even get a free coffee as a little thank you, just bring your own cup.

'As well as cleaning up Main Beach in Byron Bay, there are several other clean-ups happening across our Shire,

and registrations are still open for you to run your own event,' Ms White said.

Registrations for Clean Up Australia Day 2024 are now open. All volunteers receive a free Clean Up kit, containing gloves and bags and other resources, with packs for individuals, families and community groups available (businesses are asked to pay a small fee to cover costs).

If you are unable to participate, donations to Clean Up Australia are welcomed with 100% of funds raised going directly to empowering Australians to take positive action for the environment and providing Clean Up kits. To register visit the Clean Up Australia Day website: cleanup.org.au

For more details about the Main Beach event, check out Council's What's On page at: byron.nsw.gov.au






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Mullumbimby FlickerFest

by Bronwyn Kidd, Festival Director



Pictured (left-right): Still from *Linda*, and *Last Days of Summer*.
Source: Flickerfest

Flickerfest is set to illuminate the screens of the newly repaired Mullumbimby Civic Hall from Thursday 29 February, to Saturday 2 March. With four fantastic shorts programmes from around the world and Australia, including a local shorts competition, this event will showcase the talents of the global filmmaking community.

Now in its 33rd year, Flickerfest is welcoming one-and-all with the theme Everyone's Invited!, paying tribute to Australian



classic *Murial's Wedding* on its 30th birthday as a testament to the enduring impact of Australian cinema.

After delivering their 10 day Bondi festival, Festival Director, Bronwyn Kidd, and Production and Tour Manager, Shane Rennie, are always thrilled to bring Flickerfest home to their local region.

What to expect

This year's smorgasbord at Mullum Civic Hall consists of over 40 incredible short films, handpicked from a record 3,400 entries, received for Flickerfest's Academy and BAFTA Qualifying short film festival screened in Bondi. Northern Rivers' audiences are the first in Australia to experience the best of Flickerfest on tour. Highlights include recent Academy nominees and much loved festival award winners, all chosen to excite and inspire our local audiences with the best Australian and international short films the world has to offer – screening alongside exciting, fresh local talent.

Opening night is Thursday 29 February at 7pm, with a party to celebrate 26 years in the Northern Rivers. There will be complimentary tasty snacks and drinks from partners Rosnay Organic Wines, Gage Roads Beer and Saba Organic Juices/ Drinks. From 8pm, Flickerfest's Best Of International Shorts programme will screen with a selection of film gems from Academy qualifying and BAFTA recognised Bondi competition.

Friday 1 March will begin at 8pm with Best Of Australian Shorts – a celebration of a diverse range of Australian stories that showcase our unique identity and culture.

Saturday 2 March at 4pm will see a screening of the Byron All Shorts Northern Rivers Competition finalists. Returning for the 18th year, around 15 local short films will screen, celebrating an incredible range of themes and stories. Byron All Shorts is judged by an esteemed jury of local Northern Rivers industry practitioners and will conclude by 7pm, followed by Short Laughs Comedy at 8pm.

Don't miss your chance to be a part of this cinematic extravaganza in the heart of Mullumbimby. Mark your calendars and view tickets and the official full program at: iq.org.au

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2024 Rip Curl Lennox Longboard One Dayer

by George Leslie, Lennox Longboarders Inc



Pictured left: One Dayer contest site, 2023, Lennox Main Beach. Pictured right: One Dayer 2023, Open 9ft competition.



Lennox Longboard Club is thrilled to announce the upcoming third installment of the Rip Curl Lennox Longboard One Dayer, set to take place on Saturday 23 March at Main Beach, Lennox Head.

Longboard surfers of all levels are invited to participate in this exciting event, which features five divisions, including the Open 9ft division with 18 spots (open to all ages), Over 40s with 12 spots, Over 60s with 18 spots, Ladies Open (for all ages), and the new Ladies Over 40s division with 12 available spots. Each first-round heat will run for 20 minutes, while finals will

extend to 30 minutes. An intriguing addition is the Mystery Final, offering a second chance for six surfers eliminated in the first round.

Central to the One Dayer is its commitment to raising funds for local charities, including the Cancer Council of NSW, Lennox Head Alstonville SLSC, The Disabled Surfers Association of NSW, and more. A major raffle will take place, featuring a brand new 9' Astro Surfboard as the first prize, hand-shaped by Gary Burden, along with two other major prizes. Tickets can be purchased on Saturday 16 March, at Lennox Gelato and Coffee, as well as throughout the event.

The competition presentation and raffle

draw will occur at the Lennox Hotel at approximately 4:30 pm following the conclusion of the One Dayer.

The event is made possible with the support of *The Byron Wave*, LJ Signs, and Tony Crump from Rip Curl Ballina, who has generously supported longboard surfing with products and giveaways for all competitors and officials. The organisers extend their gratitude to other long-term sponsors, including Lennox Head Surf, Cape Byron Distillery, Mobile Plumbing, Lennox Gelato and Coffee, Herron Todd White, Lennox Beach Resort, the Lennox Hotel, Inner Beauty Lennox Head, Seven Mile Brewing, Huey's Choice Surf Wax, *Pacific Longboard Magazine*, The Bakery Lennox Head, Lennox Head Butchery and Deli, Woollam Constructions, and Lennox Head Pizza and Pasta.

For those interested in supporting the event, please contact George Leslie from Lennox Longboarders via email: siaosi45@islandstyle.net.au

We look forward to seeing you all there. For more information visit: lennoxlongboarders.org



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Council plans currently on exhibition

Planning proposal for old Mullumbimby Hospital

Currently on exhibition until Sunday 11 February, is a planning proposal to amend the Byron Local Environment Plan (LEP) to allow for the redevelopment of the old Mullumbimby Hospital site. The purpose of the amendment is to allow Council to change the zoning of the site from 'infrastructure – health services' to 'general residential' for the majority of the land. Council plans to earmark a small section as 'environmental conservation' and leave the aged-care facility land as is. The amendment will also allow for the maximum building height to be changed from nine metres to 11.5 metres.

Mayor Michael Lyon said, 'This has been a long process and we are making solid progress towards the goal of being able to turn the old hospital site into an asset for the community. To keep the process moving, we have also been working with

the community via an Enquiry by Design process, to find out what people want to see on this site in terms of housing and facilities.'

After the exhibition period a submission report will go to Council before the final is submitted to the NSW Government. Key matters will also be considered including land tenure and minimum percentage of housing to inform a financial feasibility plan. This will then further refine the concept designs.

'This land, which was once home to the town's very valued hospital, has enormous potential to deliver much needed housing and community facilities,' Mayor Lyon said.

Information about the planning proposal and how to make a submission is on Council's website: byron.nsw.gov.au

EIS for major Byron Bay wetland project



Currently on exhibition until Monday 19 February, is Byron Shire Council's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the degraded Sandhills wetland. After many years of planning, the EIS is a further step in the plan to restore the wetland after the area was extensively sand mined in the 1930s.

The Sandhills wetland covers 1.8 hectares on the fringe of the Byron CBD, bordered by Massinger Street and Lawson Street. After the area was sand-mined, the natural wetlands were destroyed along with a lot of the native vegetation. The project is heralded as being one of the most significant environmental projects to be done in Byron Bay in recent years.

Project Manager, Chris Soulsby, said, 'The restoration of the wetland will have enormous benefits for the environment generally, will improve the quality of

stormwater, and provide local flood storage. Importantly, we have designed this project in consultation with the Arakwal and Tweed Byron Aboriginal Land Council using an approach that respects the cultural significance of the area and improves the health of Country.'

The EIS identifies and assesses the environmental, social, and economic impacts of the project and proposes measures to mitigate and avoid any adverse impacts. Mr Soulsby said, 'We would like to award a tender in the early part of 2024 to enable the work to be done in the middle of the year which is typically the dry season.'



When the project is completed there will be a network of paths through the wetland connecting the centre of Byron Bay to the skatepark and up to the Cape Byron Lighthouse.

People can review the EIS and make a submission by visiting Environmental Impact Statement Sandhills Wetland project on Council's website.

This project is funded by the NSW Public Open Spaces Legacy Program and the Australian Government through the Emergency Response Fund administered by NSW Reconstruction Authority's Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program 2022-23.

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Community in brief

Mullum Men's Shed U3A by Geoff Harris



We love a challenge at Men's Shed and late last year, in the lead up to Christmas, we had just that. We worked hard to finish two toy trucks that were requested by a customer as presents for her grandsons. As always, we started with the good intention of making four trucks, as we reasoned that while we were cutting and building two, we might as well make four.

As it happens, other events got in the way and a couple of urgent jobs came into the Shed, which meant we were rapidly running out of time to finish. So, with just over a week to go we had to put in some extra hours to meet the deadline. Two trucks were completed and were handed over to the happy customer. The remaining two are 90% complete will be finished in the new year. The trucks are made from various timbers, but mainly camphor laurel and red cedar. The camphor has a honey colour with lovely patterns while the cedar is a deep reddish-brown and provides a nice contrast.

Bangalow Men's Shed by David Noakes



Since its inception in 2016, Bangalow Men's Shed has evolved into a vibrant community space offering a diverse range of programs for participating members. The Shed was initially established by the Bangalow Lions Club on a property generously provided by the Catholic Church Parish, and we are forever grateful to both organisations.

Our Shed prides itself on inclusivity, with an offering of many activities catering to the varied interests of our members. We have multiple programs throughout the week including exercise classes held on Tuesday and Friday mornings, woodworking sessions on Wednesday and Saturday mornings with a ladies' woodworking session on Saturday afternoons. We also host art classes on Wednesday afternoons, and a blues group gathering on Thursday afternoons. Additionally, Mahjong sessions convene on Friday afternoons, while Sunday afternoons are reserved for table tennis enthusiasts.

We are in the infancy stages of creating a nursery and garden, with members currently nurturing seedlings and plants, in pots. We also have a dedicated welfare team, who organise engaging guest speaker talks, ensuring enriching experiences for all members.

We are very proud to be a part of the Bangalow community and we would like to acknowledge the strong ties we have forged with other organisations in the Shire such as Bangalow Lions Club, Bangalow Bowlo, Byron Shire Rebels, Bangalow CWA, Summerland Dressage Club, and Easy Riders.

Looking ahead in 2024, our Shed is set to offer exciting activities in the upcoming months. Plans include basic cooking classes, cheese-making sessions, and a chance to learn and engage in chess. We also offer free community training programs called All About You and Accidental Counselling, which are scheduled for 8–9 February. These programs, conducted by Lifeline trainers, offer valuable insights and skills beneficial for personal and community well-being.

Bangalow Men's Shed is always looking to include new members. For more information visit Facebook: Bangalow Men's Shed

CWA Brunswick Heads Branch by Beverly Masters

The Country Women's Association (CWA) holds a special place in the hearts of many, and the Brunswick Heads branch is no exception. With its unwavering commitment to community, camaraderie, and skill-sharing, we envision a vibrant year ahead as we embark on the first meeting of the year on 2 February at 9am. Here, we will share our suggestions for the year ahead, where the money we raised will go, and reflect on 2023.

Our last donation of 2023 were our hand-made library bags for The Pocket Public School. Principal Will Glasson was happy to receive the bags, with colouring books and double sided crayons inside for the new kindy students starting in February

Every year the CWA celebrates a country. This year that country is France. With the 2024 Olympics set in Paris, we

can expect a wealth of information. France stands as an incredible nation boasting a vibrant history and culture, alongside delectable cuisine, and wines. Perhaps we will create some French doll outfits or try making some crepes or eclairs?

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, stories, and an exchange of 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: bruncwa@gmail.com to find out more.



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CAWI as an organisation has a charter to rescue and re-home animals, particularly dogs, in the Byron Shire. We are a small group whose focus since 2019 has been to establish and build our rescue centre so that we may further achieve the goals of assisting animals in need. Our mother organisation, CAWI, is about to celebrate its 20th anniversary.

We have come a very long way since our early beginnings under the purview of our founder Margaret Brown. While our costs continue to rise, we have been fortunate with funding raised by our op shops and we have been able to identify and purchase a property on which to establish our rescue centre. Expenses also include running costs, rents, insurance, maintenance and equipment of both the shops and the rescue centre as well as building necessary infrastructure such as secure fencing and kennels. The income from the shops has also enabled us to carry on the care of our rescues and additional community services. We are a registered charity and are not supported by government funding. While the organisation is run by volunteers, we have found the need to support two paid positions to assist with our endeavours - our rescue officer and a new position of shop manager, engendering further expense responsibilities. Dogs coming into care require medical evaluation, treatment and preventative health care, behaviour modification, socialisation, neutering, and food.

Community service programmes include subsidized microchipping, neutering and vaccinations where needed (eg. Parvo outbreaks). Also focussed on are the establishment of community education programmes and subsidised training costs for our rescues.

We average 50 dogs re-homed per year. We are heavily reliant on our foster carers and other volunteers who make all of our efforts possible. We could not do it without them!

We thank the assistance of all of our volunteers and staff who, through the donation of their time and caring, make this all possible. We especially thank all of our foster carers who have enabled us to take on and help each of our rescues. We cannot do it without you!

**Op Shop - 19 Booyun Street Brunswick Heads Open Mon-Fri
10am-4.00pm & Saturday 10am-1.00pm Phone 0447 927 600**

Mobile Rescue/Adoptions -0458 461 935

Email: cawidogs2483@gmail.com

Web: www.byrondogrescue.org



The Shire in photos

Soul Street, Byron Bay - New Years Eve



Pictured: Byron Taiko drums
Source: Byron Taiko



Pictured: Byron Taiko gets the crowd going
Source: Byron Taiko



Pictured: Byron Taiko performing
Source: Byron Taiko

McGregors Family Carnival, Brunswick Heads – January



Pictured: Rides and carnival delights.
Source: McGregors Family Carnival.



Pictured: Brunswick Woodchop Carnival.
Source: McGregors Family Carnival.



Pictured: View of the carnival and Bruns River.
Source: Casey Eveleigh

Drill Hall Theatre, Mullumbimby – January



Pictured (left to right): Launch of *The Eldershaw Chronicles*, Michael Sharmon, Gregory Aitken, Sunita Bailey



Pictured: *Divine Cabaret* in the *Too Young To Be Angels* Season.



Pictured: *Too Young To Be Angels* season, film premiere.

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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

When: 10am–1:30pm first Saturday of the month
Where: NRAS Adoption Day Sausage sizzle and other gatherings when and where we can – contact us.
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 Men's Shed

When: Wednesday 8:30am–2pm, Saturday 8:30am–1pm
Where: 26 Station Street, Bangalow
Contact: David Noakes, President, ph: 0403 899 225

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
Website: byronbayrotary.org.au

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

Friends of the Libraries

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

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

Northern Rivers Day Prostate Cancer Support Group

When: 10am - 12pm, second Wednesday of each month
Where: Alstonville Plateau Sports and Bowls Club
Contact: Robert Corney, ph: 0400 747 630

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

Other monthly events

Northern Rivers Animal Services - Adoption Day

When: 10am–1pm first Saturday of the month
Where: NRAS Rescue Shelter, 61 Piper Drive Ballina
Contact: shelter@nras.org.au, ph: 6681 1860

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Protect your small business from cyber attacks

by Nalinda Ranaweera, Independent Advisor, Business NSW

No small business owner wants to be the target of a cyber attack. Even a minor cyber security incident can have a devastating impact on your income, data and website, as well as your reputation.

Nalinda Ranaweera is an independent advisor with Service NSW Business Connect from Central West NSW. He suggests five simple and inexpensive ways owners can protect their small business from common cyber security risks.

Educate yourself and your staff

If hackers gain access to your network, they can cause significant damage with what they find. This might be access to your customer lists, your company's banking details, your business growth plans or your customers' credit card information. No matter the size of your business, everyone is vulnerable. That's why it's important to protect your personal and business information by learning about common cyber security threats. It's also important to educate your staff about the risks of a data breach and put clear policies in place around how customer information and other vital data is handled.

Back up your information regularly

It's best practice to frequently run backups of your data and check that your data remains secure. You should store backups offline or in a separate location to protect against cyber attacks or other data loss incidents. Some small businesses can encounter problems if they are not saving their information weekly or even fortnightly and then storing separately,' shared Nalinda.

Keep software and systems up-to-date

Businesses should update their operating systems, software applications and firmware regularly. While this can seem time-consuming, updates often include security patches that fix known vulnerabilities that hackers can exploit.

Nalinda notes, 'Hackers and cybercriminals constantly search for weaknesses in software to exploit, and outdated systems are more susceptible to attacks. Regularly updating your software, including your mobile devices, ensures that you have the latest security measures in place, protecting your data and systems from potential threats.'

Use strong and unique passwords

You can improve your system's security by creating complex passwords that include a combination of upper and lowercase letters, numbers and special characters. Avoid using information that could be easily guessed, such as your birthday, child's name, business name or pet's name. It's also important to use different passwords for each platform.

'Consider using a password manager to securely store your passwords. Business owners often don't realise that they have been hacked right away. A hacker works by studying your communication habits and style for some time, and then will confidently change your bank details with your contacts via email without you realising,' says Nalinda.

Turn on multi-factor authentication

Use multi-factor, or two-factor, authentication wherever possible. This adds an extra layer of security by requiring a second form of verification, such as a code sent to your mobile device, in addition to your password.

Multi-factor authentication is a clever way to safeguard your business and shouldn't be overlooked. Some programs and websites offer built-in multi-factor authentication that you can enable quickly in your account settings.

Cyber security requires your constant attention. As a business owner, the best way to stay cyber safe is to regularly reassess your security measures, stay informed about emerging threats and adapt your strategies accordingly.



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The day the waves came into Byron Bay

by Anne Caylock, Byron Bay Historical Society



Pictured: Postcard of the fishing fleet at the new jetty, circa 1940s. Source: EJW - supplied by Byron Bay Historical Society.

On Friday 20 February 1954, a tropical cyclone crossed over Coolangatta and then moved south causing severe flooding in the Northern Rivers – including Byron Bay. At the time it was reported as the biggest storm of the 20th century.

During the night cyclonic winds and heavy rain pushed the sea right into Byron Bay's town centre. The sea was breaking right over Julian Rocks and then rolling all the way to the beach.

When the projected path of the cyclone was known, the fishing fleet at Belongil was lifted by the cranes onto the outer section of the jetty. The morning after the local fishermen went down to the jetty to find 600 feet of the outer section washed away along with 22 fishing boats gone. As a result the local fishing industry was devastated and was forced to move to Brunswick Heads. With extensive damage to the jetty and destruction of the fishing fleet, it marked the end of Byron Bay as a major seaport.

In 2008 the Byron Bay historical society interviewed some local residents for their memories of the cyclone.

Bert Brown recalls that during the night of 20 February, on the high tide, a huge wave lifted a boat right off the railway cradle and over the side of the jetty. The cranes and end of the jetty were washed away – 40 piers in all. The decking had been lifted and the railway line bent backwards like a huge hair pin.

Toots Dunn remembers the ocean came down Jonson Street, water everywhere with the foam knee-high. The family lived in Ruskin Street and lost the back veranda and steps and the neighbour's tank ended up in their yard.

Max Prendergast recalls the beachfront underwater with foam three metres deep. The sea came into town at the Top Pub and down Jonson Street, with locals paddling surf skis in the white water near the Great Northern Hotel.

For Carmel McLean, the main memory was floodwaters down Jonson Street as far as the ANZ bank and the newsagent, with water up to the windows.

Details from the Byron Bay Postmasters diary

A severe cyclone struck Byron Bay on 19 February 1954 and peaked during Saturday night and Sunday morning. Heavy seas prevented Belongil creek from clearing which caused local flooding.

The road to Ewingsdale impassable due to flooding. Power failed from Saturday until Sunday morning. Telegraphic communication failed completely on Saturday with 10 telegrams copied and posted to Lismore.

All trunk lines failed except for Bangalow and Mullumbimby and these stations relayed urgent messages. The Lighthouse line failed on Saturday and efforts made to restore the line went on all during that night.

For more information visit: byronbayhistoricalsociety.org.au

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Pictured: V-Day Dance on Byron Main Beach. Photographer: Lyn McCarthy, Niche Pictures.

Vaginas, Vaginas, Vaginas

It may come as a surprise to some that one of Australia's most prevalent crimes is violence against women and children. It's well known that domestic and family violence (DFV) and gender-based killings are disturbingly common in our country, and is one of the main drivers of homelessness among women and children. However, it seems that without on-going media coverage, many Australians forget that DFV is a covert epidemic that continues to claim victims. On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner and nearly half of all Australian women have experienced some form of gender-based violence by the time they are 15. The statistics are dark. Thankfully, many groups are coming together and saying 'enough is enough'.

Each year, on a day globally dedicated to love, the women of the Shire come together in a sea of red, dancing in defiance on Main Beach to protest DFV. Organised and orchestrated by Zenith Virago and Gabrielle Griffin, the V-Day Protest is a local embodiment of the One Billion Rising movement, the largest global action to eradicate such violence.

When asked how this movement came to be in our Shire, Zenith said, 'In 2013, I saw online that there would be a global event on 14 February, envisaged by Eve Ensler, now V, the creator of the *Vagina Monologues* and feminist activist. It called for one million women to rise against the violence perpetrated on women and children. I kept thinking someone will organise an event but as the time got closer, I realised

it would have to be me. I decided to hold it on Main Beach at sunrise, as we are almost the first country in the world to begin the day. About 100 people came, mostly women, and we danced the set choreography then ran into the water to celebrate ourselves and the cause. The event got me thinking about the *Vagina Monologues* which were popular, powerful but dated. So, in 2015, I created a more interactive and contemporary version called the *Vagina Conversations*. I felt we had enough great women and people with vaginas to tell our own stories and that it would be a fundraiser – one that was educational and powerful. I invited 10 women to perform and it sold out. The rest is herstory, and we have sold-out every year since.'

Both events resonate with the local community while maintaining a worldwide impact, shining a spotlight on the one billion women affected by domestic and family violence and highlighting that the lived experience of women is vastly different to that of men.

'They are incredibly impactful,' said Zenith, 'whether in the moment, in the gathering, the dancing, or in the presenting or being apart of the audience. After the events as an ongoing state, it is all about being more powerful and embodied as a woman in a patriarchal culture in a conditioning that has no basic respect for us. Everyone, but especially the men and boys over 15 who attend, gets to see women in their power and learns more about our experiences in the world.'



The education of men and boys is paramount to mitigating the frequency and effect of FDV and while both events are primarily for women, men are encouraged to attend to learn more about the world women live in.

‘We have already created so much change individually and collectively,’ said Zenith, ‘Even in making the word vagina more commonly used in conversation and in media. We are leading the way like we do in so many ways.’

To date, the V-Day protests and *Vagina Conversations* have raised over \$90,000 for women in FDV situations. All funds raised are put into the Support and Recovery Fund, which is managed by the Women’s Resource Service and the Byron Shire Committee Against Domestic and Family Violence (BDCADSV). The funds are used to provide timely and necessary financial support to Byron Shire women and children who have been subjected to DFV and are experiencing financial hardship. Funds are used for things such as accommodation costs, car and transport costs, medical expenses, therapeutic supports and any other cost that enhances safety and/or supports healing and recovery for the women and children.

Organiser Gabrielle Griffin said, ‘It’s time now, more than ever, to rise up and reject social paradigms which don’t serve

the greater good of humanity. We need to protect those most vulnerable, especially women and children, who are most often the victims of violence and poverty. Together, as a global tribe, we can support each other to be better, choose better, do better.’

The V-Day protest will take place on 14 February, Main Beach, Byron Bay at 6:30am for a 7:30am dance. Women, men, non-binary and children are invited wear red, and to gather at dawn in solidarity with women around the world to dance in defiance of DFV.

Following the event, *The Vagina Conversations* takes place at the Brunswick Heads Picture House, from 14–16 February. Hosted by a diverse collective of Byron Shire’s influential women and people with vaginas, it’s an insightful fusion of personal, professional, and political narratives.

Led by creator and MC Zenith Virago, it’s a melting pot of funny, poignant, courageous, challenging, and celebratory stories – illuminating the power, pleasure, pain, and exploitation experienced daily by the ‘most powerful body part on the planet.’

For more information visit: onebillionrising.org and vday.org or go to Facebook and search: V-Day Byron Bay



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Pictured: Jason Siebert, the founder of Heartland Homes, and Subi, resident of the Brunswick pods as a result of the floods.

Jason Siebert: Heartland Homes Project

by Phillip Lionel, Purpose Media Collective

Venturing from a background in stainless steel fabrication on the Central Coast of NSW, Jason Siebert faced the challenges of running a business during COVID. As his business suffered, Jason felt trapped, and ended up having to live in his workshop due to the housing crisis – all of which was terrible for his mental health. Fueled by a desire for change, he purchased and outfitted a van, selling everything to break free from the business. Seeking healing and a new way of living, his journey north exposed the widespread lack of affordable housing amidst available vacant land.

During floods, Jason witnessed the strength of community which inspired in him a commitment to contribute. He went house to house to see how he could help those in need. Greatly affected by what he experienced, he launched the Heartland Home Project, an initiative to provide affordable, comfortable, off-grid tiny homes to those in need.

'I had been living on the road and knew how hard it was to get somewhere to live,' Jason said. 'After seeing the devastation from the floods and how many people lost their homes 'how can I contribute to community' played on repeat. I knew I didn't want to be fabricating the homes within a traditional

business model, so, I made it about we not me and aimed to design a self-sufficient home that could be setup anywhere. Then, we could supply them to people in need. The idea is to sell seven, use the surplus to build the eighth so that someone in need could own it.'

Jason moved to the Northern Rivers to launch this project. I spoke to Jason about what it will achieve, and what his vision is for the future.

How was Heartland Homes born?

Heartland Homes was born off the back of my volunteering time post the 2022 floods. A little later in that year, I was working in a metal fabrication shop thinking about building tiny homes. Then I thought about all those people who lost everything in the floods, and if I'm a part of the greater community, how can I help? So I started from that point and designed a home that could be easy to produce and easily moved in case floods came again.

What's the purpose of Heartland Homes?

To provide homes for people who have been affected by the floods. The sale of every seven homes built, will pay for the



production of one home to someone in need on a lease-to-buy agreement/vendor finance. These homes are also designed to be self-sufficient, to bring down the living costs for owners. There is an integrated solar system in the roof, and the Biogas system outside the house converts organic waste into cooking gas.

How did you begin this? What were the first steps?

The first steps started in an airport on my way to Peru in the final leg of my 2022 spiritual growth year, designing trailers to transport POD homes to people. I found an engineering company that could construct with super light super strong composites and started developing everything for my ideal self-sufficient, drop-in-a-paddock-anywhere and live-in-it tiny home.

Can you give us more detail about the homes?

They are 5.9m x 2.35m on the trailer, fold out to 40sqm, and designed to be under 3,500kg so they can be towed by 4WDs. They are finished in a timber lookalike vinyl with an integrated solar system and Biogas system which converts organic waste into cooking gas. This is so people can cut down on their bills while living. I am trying to keep them as affordable and self-sufficient as possible and have a wholesale price of \$96,333 at this point, although I am in conversations as we speak with my engineers about this.

Is this a potential solution to the housing crisis?

Yes. At least to alleviate the problem. For example, people could set the tiny homes up on their properties where their homes had been washed away to live in while they rebuild. They can be driven onto anywhere there's space and be lived in. I would love to get the funds together to use, to buy, or lease land from farmers who have lost productive land due to the floods and put multiple homes on, teach people land

regeneration and permaculture farming to eat and take to market. So, with living in a home that supplies its own power and cooking gas could be soon living in surplus not expense.

What's your vision for the future of Heartland Homes?

I'd like to build these homes with recycled panels, and also to design floating homes that can rise with flood waters. And finally community living - for Heartland Homes to have enough income or funding to be able to lease or purchase land from farmers that has been made unusable by floods and then put multiple homes on there.

We can teach people how to regenerate the land and how to grow permaculture crops to be used to feed themselves and take to market. Then the community will be in homes where power is provided, cooking gas is provided, we can catch water off the roof, and permaculture farming can provide food and income. Living could be at a surplus, not a cost.

How can people get on board to support this vision?

The main thing we need at this point is for people to either donate to our Gofundme: gofund.me/48b3b1ab, or share the cause with their community. Beyond that, it's pushing for changes in government legislation and joining causes that are proactive in opening up different options for people to live.

We're not just looking for people to donate. We are looking for people who want to buy the homes. We're looking for people who have been displaced to reach out to us. And we're looking for people who have land and would like to be a part of this project. Once the first tiny home is built from the crowdfunding campaign, that home will given away to someone in need.

For more information on the Heartland Homes Project or to get in touch with Jason visit: heartlandhomesproject.life or email: info@heartlandhomesproject.life

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Pictured: The luxurious Silver Nova, a part of the Silversea fleet.

Aussies can't get enough of cruise holidays

review by Milt Barlow

Since the pandemic, the Australian cruise market has exploded, with cruise tourism business generating a record \$5.6 billion for the Australian economy last year alone - and it just keeps growing. In 2022-23 there were some 1,300 ship visits to Australian ports, around 1.5 million Australians take an ocean cruise each year, and in 2024 over 70 cruise ships will visit Australia.

When it comes to cruising, we are spoilt for choice. In the year ahead around 930 cruises will depart from Australian ports. So, which one do you choose? Well, that depends on what you are looking for. Is it budget? A small ship? A themed cruise? Or a singles or younger passenger cruise? The choices are endless. This last year has seen the Disney Cruise Line enter the Australian market, perfect if you want to treat the kids and grandkids. Also joining the lineup in 2024 is Virgin Voyages with their brand-new *Resilient Lady* ship. Like all things Virgin - it's party time.

One of the things to consider, apart from price and inclusions, is the size of the ship on which you are cruising. Are you comfortable cruising with thousands of people and want everything from dozens of dining venues, water parks, bowling alleys, discos, casinos, shopping centres, Disney characters and live shows? Or are you more inclined to a leisurely and luxurious small ship experience?

This month saw the launch of the world's biggest cruise ship in the form of Royal Caribbean's *Icon Of The Seas*. On this monster you will have the joy of travelling with 5,610 passengers across 18 decks, featuring everything from eight pools, one of which is an infinity pool, and thrill rides that allow guests to swing 154 feet above the ocean. It's kind of like Las Vegas on the water.

For me I would rather save for a bit longer and go for a luxurious small ship experience, and the leader of this field in Australia is Silversea. Originally founded in Monaco in 1994 it pioneered all-inclusive small ship cruising and since 2020 has been owned by the Royal Caribbean Group. Passenger numbers on Silversea cruises from Australia over the next year range from 392 on the *Silver Whisper* to 596 on the recently launched *Silver Muse* and 728 on the brand new sustainable cruiser, the *Silver Nova*, which will be debuting in Australia in late 2024. All Silversea cruises have a staff to passenger ratio of 1:1 which adds up to amazing attentive 'butler' service all the way.

Silver Nova is an industry game changer with its innovative asymmetrical design leading to one of the most spacious cruise ships ever built. Like all Silversea ships, each room is a suite, starting at 33 sqm up to 77 sqm - all with large balconies. The vessel's unique architecture leads to some new accommodation experiences including aft suites that deliver 270-degree views from sea to sky. This unbalanced approach also creates a pool deck that includes a deep pool and large lounging areas which are complimented by small intimate private spaces. It has the style of a roof top pool in a luxury 5-star hotel. Nicely done. Inside, the design creates a three deck atrium with sweeping views across giant windows.

The new ship features nine different dining venues including their new S.A.L.T. Kitchen which offers recipes and flavours specific to each port that the *Silver Nova* visits.

Silver Nova cruises departing Australia start from \$10,250 per person port to port for 14 days. Her inaugural journey ex Australia departs 18 November on a Cairns to Auckland cruise or you can join in Sydney from 22 November.



If you can't wait until the end of the year, there are a number of other cruises throughout the year sailing from Sydney, Melbourne, Cairns and Darwin aboard the *Silver Whisper* and the also brand-new *Silver Muse*.

No matter which ship you sail with, on Silversea you really do get to enjoy small ship luxury cruising where most everything is included - sensational food, top notch beverages, butler service, shore excursions, gratuities, and if travelling on a 'door to door' fare, private executive transfers to and from home, airport transfers and international business flights.

A few years back my wife and I had the experience of cruising with Silversea in The Caribbean and it still today rates as one, if not the, best vacations I have ever had. It's the personal touches on Silversea that I loved.

Within 24 hours all the main crew knew our names. When you board you have your photo taken. I am told all the crew who will be looking after you then have to memorise your face and name in the next 24 hours. It's pretty impressive as you leave your cabin on the first morning for breakfast and you are greeted multiple times by multiple staff with, 'Good Morning Mr and Mrs Barlow'. Love it! I remember another moment when I went to move a deck chair by the pool just a few inches when one of the crew rushed up to me with a horrified and concerned look on his face and said, 'Mr. Barlow...your job is to relax and my job is to provide you a great vacation.' At this point the chair was immediately taken from me, moved the extra couple of inches and fresh towels were brought along with our favourite drink requests which the crew had also remembered.

This is the hallmark of small ship cruising but it is in the DNA of Silversea that, whilst now owned by the Americans, is still very firmly entrenched in its original Italian heritage. You kind of expect George and Amal Clooney to stroll past at any time.

For more information on Silversea go to: silversea.com



Pictured: Tables of the S.A.L.T. Kitchen, Silver Nova.



Pictured: Exterior of La Terrazza Restaurant, Silver Nova.



Pictured: Lounge area at the Pool Bar, Silver Nova.



Pictured: Master Suite, Silver Nova.



Pictured: Silver Suite, Silver Nova.



What's Your Story?

By Mandy Nolan



I love listening. People are like books. They are full of experiences and insights. They have endured, they have triumphed, they have suffered, they have travelled, they have stayed still. Ordinary lives that are anything but. I am amazed when I talk to people to find out who they are. Where they are from. What matters to them. What made them. I am humbled by what they have overcome. I am humbled by their quiet capacity for grief. For making sense of loss. We are a human library of extraordinary depth. Sadly, most of the books don't believe in themselves. They think they are dull, or that no one would be interested in their story. We live in a culture that celebrates achievement, but let's be honest, it's achievement that is dull.

Great stories are often about the simplest of things. My favourite memoir is by Vanessa Gorman - it's

called *Layla's Story*. It was about the death of her baby. I never wanted to read it. As a woman with small children I didn't want to read such a harrowing tale. I thought it would be too much. I couldn't bear the thought of opening the door and entering that grief. But I did. And what I encountered was one of the most beautifully articulated and honest books I have ever read. Yes it was about grief, and the loss of Layla was central, but it was about so much more. I felt emotionally and spiritually changed after reading this book.

Everyone doesn't have a story. I believe they have several stories. What people often don't have is the courage to take that first step and put their story on the page. Because sometimes you don't even know your own story until you write it. Writing is an uncovering, an investigation into the unknown aspects of what you thought you knew. It's what makes a memoir compelling. The sense that the writer isn't just telling you what happened – that the act of writing is giving them a fresh perspective on what really happened. Their discovery leaps from the page.

When I teach memoir (I have published four) I like to explain the difference between what I perceive as a very tedious and uninteresting approach: the autobiography. In this a person is born, lives in a place, goes to school, graduates, does the thing that makes

you want to read the autobiography and then comes to a conclusion which is generally unsatisfying because the only end to an I-was-born story is 'then I died'. At least a biography has the opportunity of ending with a death.

A memoir isn't the whole telling of your life. Where autobiography is jumping in a pool and swimming laps at surface level from beginning to end, a memoir is you 10 metres up, diving and rushing to the bottom. You tell part of your story, you go in deep, you unpack it, and then in the end you come up for air, get out of the pool and the book is done.

That is the work I do with people who want to write their story or stories. I ask them to climb up high, and find the courage to dive deep. I have been running What's Your Story - a workshop that gets you started. It will be up to you to finish. I'm proud to say Sally Warriner did one of my classes and she published her cracking good memoir *Not Just the General Manager's Wife* which turned out to be a best seller.

So if you are ready to get started, I have a class on 18 February.

Enrolments on my website: mandynolan.com.au or email: mandy@mandynolan.com.au

Mandy will also be MC at the Shire's local heats of Melbourne International Comedy Festival's RAW Comedy competition. For more information or tickets visit: mandynolan.com.au




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Farming can be a tough nut to crack

by Kylie McGregor, Byron Farmers Market



Pictured: Mac, Sophie, Frank and Andrea from Marlivale Farm.

When fourth-generation farmer Frank Boyle lost his pecan crop last year due to the wet weather conditions, he still had something for which to be thankful. While there were no nuts, there was a safety net – rice.

‘We were heading for a fairly good pecan crop (last year),’ Frank said. ‘The trees and the crop survived the flood, but the relentless wet weather turned the orchard into mud and we couldn’t get any machinery out there to harvest.’

In an effort to salvage some of the crop, Frank, along with wife Andrea, daughter Sophie and son-in-law Mac, even tried hand harvesting but to no avail. ‘We harvested about 200kg by hand, but 85 per cent was rotten because the nuts had been sitting in mud,’ he said. ‘Not having pecans really brings home the fact that when you’re in farming, you’re so vulnerable that you really need some diversity. So it’s a great relief to have the rice.’

The idea to plant rice was sparked when drought hit the Riverina region, a prime rice-growing area, in 2006/2007 and the search was on for high-rainfall areas to grow rice.

The Boyle family farm at Goolmangar had already been cropping so it wasn’t a huge stretch to try rice.

‘We decided to plant out about a hectare of rice,’ Frank said. ‘We really wanted to diversify so we thought we’d give it a go.’



Pictured: Farmer, Frank Boyle, with his pecan harvest

Frank had already been selling his pecans at Byron Farmers Market for a number of years and decided to test the rice at the market. ‘We turned up one Thursday morning with 50 1kg bags of rice and they were sold out within an hour and a half,’ he said. ‘It was incredible, and it really brought home that there are so many people in this area really passionate about eating locally grown food.’

Today the range of rice products has extended into rice cakes, rice flour and rice crumbs.

Regular customers will have noticed not only the new faces of the next generation – Sophie and Mac – at the markets, but also a name change with Nimbin Valley Pecans and Rice switching to Marlivale Farm, after the name the family farm was given back in the 1840s.

Thankfully, Frank and the family have had a better year this year with a great pecan harvest – as well as their amazing rice – so you can try their full offering at Byron and Bangalow Farmers Markets.

Byron Farmers Market is held every Thursday 7-11am at Butler Street Reserve and Bangalow Farmers Market is every Saturday morning 7-11am behind the Bangalow Pub.

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On the cover

Photo by Tina O'Donell



Tina O'Donell, originally from Sydney, has worked in the fitness industry for 25 years, including owning and operating a business designing and making fitness wear. Despite the corporate nature of Sydney's CBD, Tina has always been drawn to creative pursuits. Upon moving to Byron Bay 20 years ago,

Tina fell in love with its natural beauty and creative art-scene.

'As time went by my interest in photography grew,' Tina said. 'I started practising with the ever-improving iPhone cameras and with a compact camera.' Finding landscape and seascape images very appealing, Tina started to explore other means of capturing photos. 'In 2019, I began flying a drone to capture the beauty of nature from above. As drone technology evolves, and with cameras and sensors just getting better, I look forward to becoming even more creative in the air. The cover photo depicts daily life at The Pass, Byron Bay.'

On her Instagram account, Tina posts daily photos of Byron Bay which are also available for purchase as prints. For more information visit Instagram: @byronbay_daily

Vegan Strawberry Trifle

by Katie White, Chef, Olive Wood Vegan



Ingredients

Sponge

- 1 and 1/2 cups plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 3/4 cup caster sugar
- 3/4 plant-based milk
- 1 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup vegan butter, melted
- 1 tbsp vanilla essence

Jelly

- 250g strawberries, stems trimmed
- 1 cup cranberry juice
- 1/2 cup caster sugar
- 1 tbsp agar powder
- 1 cup water

Custard

- 1 and 1/2 cups coconut cream
- 1/2 cup caster sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla paste
- 2 tbsp cornflour
- 1/4 tsp ground turmeric

Whipped coconut cream

- 2 cups coconut cream, chilled
- 1/2 cup icing sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla paste

Decorations

- 250g strawberries
- Edible flowers (I used apple blossom)
- Leaves (I used apple leaves)

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Start with the sponge so that can bake while you prepare everything else. Simply combine the dry and wet ingredients together separately, then combine well and pour the batter into a non-stick (or greased and lined) 20cm cake pan. Bake for 25mins and, when ready, set aside to cool.

Meanwhile, make the jelly. Lay the strawberries in the base of a trifle stand. Add all the other jelly ingredients to a saucepan. Heat, whisking

occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved and the liquid has reached boiling point. Hold it there for a minute to activate the agar. Pour this liquid over the strawberries in the base of the trifle stand and place in the fridge to set.

Make the custard by combining all the ingredients in a saucepan on a medium heat and whisking well until thick and smooth. Set aside.

Make the whipped coconut cream by beating the ingredients together with an electric beater until soft peaks form. Set aside in the fridge.

To assemble, place the cooled sponge on top of the jelly layer. If the whole sponge does not fit into your trifle stand or serving dish, cut into cubes and wedge these in to make the sponge layer. Follow with a layer of custard then whipped cream, then place the strawberries and other decorations on top and chill before serving.

Tip: Make this trifle the way you like it – for example, if you don't like jelly, keep the jelly ingredients the same but don't add agar to set it. Use it as a syrup to pour over the sponge layer.



About the chef - Katie White



Katie White is a Le Cordon Bleu trained plant-based chef and the author behind *The Seasonal Vegan* cookbook, released in April 2023. Recently, she began a cooking school in the Byron Bay hinterland with a vision to democratise plant-based cooking and empower individuals with new culinary skills. Her goal is to facilitate a seamless transition for everyone toward plant-based eating and elevate their home cooking proficiency. Katie chose to establish her school in this region after seeing the community's receptiveness and eagerness to embrace plant-based cuisine. She aspires to engage with a food-centric populace invested in this lifestyle. Moreover, she finds inspiration in Byron's renowned tourism, anticipating opportunities to interact with individuals globally and extend her culinary influence.

How and why did you become a vegan chef?

My passion is cooking, and when I went vegan it became very clear to me I had to do something to help the animals. When you first go vegan you naturally get fired up with the horrors you have learned about our current food industry. I for one, felt deep urgency to help the movement. It made sense to tap into my cooking passion and educate people on how to cook and eat more plants and less animals. The environmental and health positive aspects of veganism are also drivers. It's wonderful to see someone eat more plants, drop their cholesterol, lose weight, and gain so much energy and vitality. Seeing people light up with excitement when they try what we have just made in class, or wondering what their kid will think when they serve up that dessert next weekend – these are the lovely moments that keep me going.

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

My training at Le Cordon Bleu challenges and pushes me to take things to the next level. However, most of my food designs these days need to be simple enough for people to follow along on Instagram or in my classes. So, I keep it all as simple as possible whilst making sure each dish is a little bit special and gourmet – which can be quite easy. When designing a

menu, I first look at what's in season, then I look at the balance of proteins and carbs, textures, and the salty and sweet aspect. If there is space for it, I then think about how I can include a native plant, or something a bit extra. After all that is considered, I make sure it plates well and is balanced as an end product with garnish, sauce, toppings etc. This process comes very naturally, and I love it as a creative outlet.

What is the appeal of vegan recipes? Why should we eat more plant-based meals?

It's 2023. If we were having this chat 100 years ago I may not suggest people be vegan because back then things were very different, but in this day and age, in western cultures, there is no need to eat any animal products. Moreover, it is detrimental to our sustainability as a species and also totally unaligned with 99% of people's ethics. At first, someone will argue with this, but I ask you to think for a second, is it within your ethical scope to hurt an animal unnecessarily? Would you choose for a person less fortunate than you to have a job where they work in horrendous conditions slaughtering animals and gaining immense PTSD? Would you enjoy that job? Could you even do that job? If the answer is no to any of these things, your ethics are already vegan. We are taught to eat and need animal products, where in reality, we simply do not. In 2024, we are lucky enough to have that choice, and still eat all the same kinds of foods we love (like trifle) and if we can have a happy and healthy life without harming others, why wouldn't we?

Does this help with sustainability and reducing waste?

When cooking plant-based, you are already well ahead of the measure when it comes to food resources, wastage etc, but to take it even further, there are plenty of things you can do. I compost all my food scraps as I can't stand putting them in the bin – it feels so wrong. The other great thing about vegan food is that it last a lot longer, and it's usually animal foods that harbour harmful bacteria such as salmonella. Because of this is, vegan food can be kept in the fridge for many more days compared to its non-vegan equivalent.

What is your favourite cuisine/style at the moment?

In my last run of classes, I taught participants how to make a Moroccan spread which included Shak shuka, pilaf, cardamom and lemon tart, confit garlic and white bean dip as well as beetroot and fennel labneh dip. It's delicious and always a winner. Moroccan food has so much space and flavour, as well as punchy layers like the tartness from preserved lemon. It's hearty and colourful too – I love it.

What's next for you?

This summer is all about booking-out my cooking classes, meeting as many new people as possible, and planting the roots of the Olive Wood Vegan Cooking School. I'll also be writing my next book soon, in Italy, and I have a cooking show in the works.

For more information visit: olivewoodvegan.com



Kids Corner

Jokes

- Q. What is a little bear with no teeth is called?
A. A gummy bear.
- Q. What do you call a noodle that is fake?
A. An im-pasta.
- Q. What's an alligator in a vest called?
A. An investi-gator.
- Q. What's the best way to throw a birthday party on Mars?
A. You planet.
- Q. When is the only time a moth flies straight?
A. When it farts.
- Q. What's a pirate's favourite class to take in school?
A. Arrrrrt.
- Q. Why does Peter Pan fly around so much?
A. He Neverlands.
- Q. What did the Dalmatian say after she had a huge meal?
A. That hit the spot.

Riddles

Can you figure out these riddles?

1. Billy's mother had five children. The first was named Lala, the second was named Lele, the third was named Lili, the fourth was named Lolo. What was the fifth child named?
2. It's at the centre of gravity and you can find it in Venus, but not Mars. What is it?
3. You're driving a city bus. At the first stop, three women get on. At the second stop, one woman gets off and a man gets on. At the third stop, two children get on. The bus is blue and it's raining outside in December. What colour is the bus driver's hair?

Riddle answers

- Answers:**
1. Billy
 2. The letter 'V'
 3. Your hair colour. Remember, you're driving the bus.

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Protecting your kids online



In this digital era, children's lives are increasingly intertwined with the online world, offering learning, connection, and entertainment, yet it also exposes our kids to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, privacy leaks, harmful or explicit content, and predatory behaviours from adults. Protecting our children from these online threats demands vigilance, open communication, and proactive measures to ensure their safety and well-being in the virtual sphere.

Recent statistics from a 2021 eSafety study show that more than half of young Australians (aged 12-17) have been cyberbullied, with a third stating that it directly related to bullying that had occurred at school. These numbers increased dramatically within groups who identify as LGBTQIA+, have a disability, or come from a culturally diverse background. Further to the above, 40% reported having at least one negative experience online, with the top two being:

- 30% were contacted by a stranger or someone not known to them
- 20% received inappropriate, unwanted content such as sexually explicit or violent material.

The likelihood of a having a negative experience online increased to over half within the 14-17 age bracket, with young women more likely to be targeted.

A 2022 ESET study of Australian children aged 6-13, found the major platforms used within this age bracket are YouTube, Minecraft, and Roblox, and the main concerns from the children in this study are as follows:

- 59% were slightly worried about seeing upsetting or disturbing content
- 58% were very worried about being approached online by adult strangers
- 54% were very worried about being hacked or getting a virus on their device and
- 49% were very worried about being cyberbullied.

Despite these numbers, both studies found that most kids were equipped to deal with online threats with 80-84% taking some form of action in response to the threat, namely reporting the incident to a trusted adult or their friends, or blocking the person responsible for the negative experience.

What can parents do to help?

While the findings may suggest that children and teens have the practical ability to handle online threats, the emotional and psychological damage caused by cyberbullying and exposure to unwanted explicit content is still a major concern.

It's more important to educate your children on safe and responsible online behaviour, rather than limiting or blocking their internet use. Parents can support their children in the following ways.

Set guidelines around usage

- Create a set of rules to safeguard your kids, and explain to them in detail why these rules are important. Some kids may not understand the implications of their, or others', online behaviour and actions.
- Make it clear that they should not post or trade personal pictures, or personal information. Create a screen name and encourage them to not share their passwords (other than with parents).
- Explain what predatory behaviour is, how to recognise it, and outline the risks associated with meeting someone from online in-person. Any in-person meetings should be done with parent approval and/or supervision.
- Explain that their online activities create a footprint which can be traced to their identity, and outline the consequences associated.
- Tell them to never respond to a threatening email, message, post, or text. Encourage them to inform a parent, or other trusted adult, about any communication or conversation that was scary or hurtful.
- Show them how to block and report people/accounts. Ask them to show you the harmful content, and collect a screenshot as evidence to report it to the relevant online/legal authorities.

If your child seems worried or anxious around their phone, computer or device, ask them about what is happening. Tell your child that no one deserves to be hurt online and that it's OK to feel upset. It's important to create an environment where your child feels safe and comfortable enough to tell you what is concerning them, without fear of retribution or having their online access limited.

You can also change the privacy settings on your devices, lock/password protect on certain applications and websites.

For more information visit: esafety.gov.au

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Welcome to 23 Surf Avenue in the heart of Skennars Head, where each day feels like a cherished holiday. This exquisite two-story coastal home boasts 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a separate media room, and additional storage space, designed to seamlessly combine comfort and functionality. PLUS Separate one bedroom cottage, perfect for additional income, in-law accommodation, guests etc.

Experience the harmonious flow and impeccable design of this stunning property. From the inviting open-plan living areas to the dedicated media room for serene nights in, every facet of this residence has been meticulously crafted for your utmost enjoyment.

Indulge in the allure of high ceilings, expansive living spaces, and attention to detail that greet you each time you return home. The generously sized, undercover deck offers an ideal vantage point to soak in the beauty of the landscaped pool area, either entertaining or relaxing - this is the place you will be spending all of your time.

The heart of this home, the spacious kitchen, serves as the central hub. Revel in the expansive breakfast bar, the convenience of a butler's pantry, and the array of high-quality appliances, ensuring culinary experiences are a delight.

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Why kindness rocks at Main Arm

by Virginia Pavlovich, Principal, Main Arm Upper Primary School



Main Arm Upper Primary School is a beautiful inland school nestled under Mount Boogarem, about 30kms from Byron CBD. At our school, one of our biggest priorities is to develop a culture of kindness.

We have many programs at school that develop these kindness muscles. One of our longest-running is Kindness on Purpose, developed by Katrina Cavanough, an experienced clinical therapist whose vision is to inspire a more emotionally aware generation.

In 2005, the first Kindness on Purpose session took place and had an instant beneficial impact. Kindness on Purpose is really an empathy-based program. The research states that as we increase empathy in students, the better their academic results get. It really does make sense because a brain in pain can't learn.

The more empathy for self and for others that children have, the calmer the brain is, and the more ready they are for learning. In essence, Kindness on Purpose is teaching our students about empathy so they can have happier and healthier relationships.

Kindness in action

So what does Kindness on Purpose look like from day to day? Well, each morning, our students file into their classrooms and write their names beneath an emotion written on the whiteboard – some are 'tired', some are 'sad,' others under 'happy.' And one by one, the teacher acknowledges the emotion of each student.

By doing so, they're embracing the notion that all feelings are welcome, and the children start their day being seen as they are in that moment.

There is no wrong emotion. In this way, our children learn to simply acknowledge and express the varying complex emotions we all have, in a safe and appropriate way. This may seem like a simple routine, but we know that this has already made a huge difference to our students.

Why Kindness on Purpose?

When we increase empathy, we:

- decrease rates of depression, anxiety and bullying
- reduce the negative incidents in the playground
- see a reduction in students feeling very alone and socially isolated
- offer students the tools to deal with unkind situations. The daily practice of emotional awareness naturally develops emotional intelligence. This helps our students to make better choices in self-care and in turn care for their classmates.

In these complex times we live in, I truly believe there is a need to build our students' sense of empathy through kind and compassionate acts, which spill out from the school into the home and beyond.

Compassion and kindness have the power to touch deeply – and the best thing is, it's contagious.

For more information on Main Arm Upper Primary School, visit: mainarmup-p.schools.nsw.gov.au/

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Artist profile – Cat Gerke



Cat Gerke, a contemporary local still life artist, is known for her vibrant artwork celebrating the essence of togetherness and shared moments around food. Her artistic journey began at the College of Fine Arts, where she honed her unique style, blending realism with an expressive touch, evoking emotions through contrasting colour palettes and skillful use of negative space and lighting.

With a decade-long immersion in the interior design realm, Cat seamlessly integrates her art into living spaces, envisioning each piece as an integral part of a home's aesthetic.

What inspired your interest?

During my time at the College of Fine Arts in the late 2000s, I delved into the world of painting and drawing, shaping a unique style that melded realism with an expressive use of paint on canvas. It was an exciting period of exploration and discovery in my artistic journey. In my paintings, I focused on employing contrasting colour palettes to infuse a dynamic energy that flowed seamlessly across the canvas. Additionally, I paid close attention to negative space, directional lighting, and intricate patterns. These elements served as pillars in my compositions, allowing me to strike a balance while celebrating the sheer delight and allure of indulging in exceptional cuisine.

Can you walk us through your creative process?

I approach each composition with a keen eye for arrangement and visual flow, intending to guide the viewer's gaze across the canvas. The compositions I craft are always an attempt to create a harmonious balance between objects, space, and colour. I worked in an interior design business for many years and throughout that time I learnt about what designers want from artists and from artworks. This knowledge informs every work I paint. I always try to envisage the space that my piece will hang in and incorporate appropriate colours that allow it to seamlessly blend into an interior scheme.

How does still-life art contribute to the broader art world?

Each piece of art, regardless of its style or category, has its own special spot in the artistic world. To me, still life art is much more than just painting or drawing everyday objects. It carries a lot of cultural weight and can tell a whole story about the people who own the piece. Sure, art can be about the artist expressing something to the audience, and I definitely do that in my work. But there's something special when I get to weave in the meanings of my clients too, especially since the artwork will hang in their home. Still life has this amazing way of capturing the core of human existence using ordinary things. It's like finding beauty and meaning in the everyday stuff, which I think is a really important part of art.

What challenges or joys do you encounter during the process?

I love using colour and pattern in my still life paintings to evoke a sense of joy, wonder, and emotional connection. I try and layer in elements which are interesting shapes and colours which keep the viewer looking at a piece.

Is there a piece that holds a special place in your heart?

Back when I was starting my journey in the art world, my parents asked me to create a painting for their kitchen

in their new home. It was an exciting moment for them after years of building, and they were envisioning the perfect decor.

The piece I painted for them was titled *Don't Be Such a Sour Puss*, focusing on various citrus elements set on a blue/grey napkin. I poured my heart into it, spending countless 12-hour days, because I was absolutely captivated by the project. Finishing it brought me immense satisfaction. Seeing it proudly displayed in my parents' home, where they enthusiastically show it off to guests, was incredibly rewarding.

Surprisingly, I also decided to offer prints of this piece on my website, and they turned out to be my best-selling items. This experience taught me the importance of infusing every painting with genuine passion and love—it's what truly resonates with people and brings the most fulfillment in my artistry.

What are you currently working on?

In my latest series of original paintings, I've delved into the world of silk scarves and bandanas hailing from the vibrant eras of the 60s and 70s. It's a nostalgic and lively exploration of colours and patterns that stemmed from my fascination with the romantic allure of fabric drapery and its portrayal in fine art.

The paintings in this collection depict drapery that seems to float ethereally on the canvas. They reference the impeccably arranged images we often encounter on e-commerce platforms, contrasting them against the hand-painted essence of the scarves themselves. This juxtaposition captures the blend between the digitally pristine and the organic, showcasing the uniqueness of each hand-painted scarf form. This new collection of originals is currently available at Gallery Alchemy, Milton, NSW.

Cat Gerke's new and previous collections, prints and originals, can be found at her website: catgerkecreative.com

New Artistic Director for Byron Writers Festival



Pictured left: Jessica Alice, Artistic Director. Source: Sia Duff.

Pictured right: Byron Writers Festival, 2023. Source: Kate Holmes.

A new Artistic Director for the 2024 Byron Writers Festival (BWF) has been appointed following the departure of previous director, Zoe Pollock.

‘We are delighted to welcome Jessica Alice to the position of Artistic Director and look forward to her curation of the 2024 Byron Writers Festival and leadership of the organisation in collaboration with Executive Director, Shien Chee,’ said Adam van Kempen. ‘Jessica’s appointment follows the departure of Zoe Pollock, who resigned in September to focus on her family.’

Acknowledging Zoe Pollock, the Board expressed gratitude for her dedication. ‘The Board acknowledges the very significant contribution Zoe Pollock made to the festival in her tenure as Artistic Director and CEO over the last two years, including successfully returning the festival to the stage after the pandemic and transitioning to a new site in Bangalow.’

Jessica Alice, a distinguished writer and arts leader, joins BWF from her role as CEO of Writers SA, the peak organisation for writing and literature in South Australia. Her extensive experience spans literature, festivals, media, theatre, and visual arts. She also serves as Chair of the Arts Industry Council of South Australia and Chair of the National Young Writers Festival.

‘I am thrilled to join BWF as Artistic Director,’ said Jessica. ‘Festivals are vital sites of civic discourse and democratic participation that place writers at the heart of public life – and BWF has long established itself as a leader in the sharing of storytelling and ideas.’

BWF 2024 is set to unfold from 9–11 August, 2024, in its new home at Bangalow Showground. ‘We had fantastic feedback about the festival site this year, held for the first time in the beautiful Bangalow Showground, so we are very happy to announce we will be returning in August 2024 to gather under the shade of those majestic gum trees. We deeply thank the community of Bangalow for making the festival feel so at home,’ said Adam.

The festival’s commitment to engaging with the Byron Bay community remains strong, with plans to host events throughout the Festival week and the year. BWF looks forward to welcoming the community to another enriching and inspiring literary celebration in 2024.

For more information visit: byronwritersfestival.com

What’s on at Lone Goat Gallery?



What: *Chronicles: Silent Conversations* by Nettie Sumner

When: Ends 10 February

Where: Lone Goat Gallery

This year’s exhibition program kicks off with a stunning exhibition by Nettie Sumner, a contemporary artist and sculptor based in Sydney. *Chronicles: Silent Conversations* is a curated and extraordinary collection of installations and sculptures that harness traditional craft and methodologies. Her works evoke the natural environment and connect local and individual narratives across both time and landscape. Sumner employs various techniques including hand knitted copper wire and silver to create experimental and captivating finishes, sometimes intermixing a range into a single piece.

For more information visit: lonegoatgallery.com.au

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CBD oil: what is it and who is it for?

In recent years, CBD oil, or cannabidiol, has become a focal point in the evolving landscape of medical treatments. Australia, in particular, has witnessed the approval of low-dose CBD products made readily available over the counter and online. The surge in popularity has been fuelled by testimonials about CBD's potential to alleviate conditions like anxiety, insomnia, pain, and even for lessening symptoms of conditions like epilepsy and multiple-sclerosis. However, it's crucial to find the truth among the hype, considering that current scientific evidence supporting CBD's efficacy and its diverse range of applications is relatively limited.

Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence continues to grow and people are now understanding that cannabis may not be the terrible thing it was once made out be.

Unlike its psychoactive counterpart THC (tetrahydro-cannabinol), CBD does not induce the characteristic high associated with marijuana use because it does not engage the same receptors in the brain. It's essential to understand that CBD is distinct from what people commonly associate with cannabis and the THC component, as it is instead derived from hemp (or cannabis plants), which lack the potency of THC. While both are cannabinoids (substances from the Cannabis Sativa plant), they differ significantly. In fact, the Cannabis Sativa plant contains over 100 different types of cannabinoids that can influence the human body and potentially help with other mental and physical afflictions.

But how does CBD help the body and mind? CBD's mechanism of

interaction revolves around numerous biological processes. By intercepting CB1 and CB2 receptors in our brain, CBD influences pain management, inflammation, sleep, mood, and digestion. This direct engagement forms the foundation for CBD's therapeutic applications. People typically use CBD to help treat inflammatory bowel disease, seizures, depression, inflammation, anxiety, migraines and many others.

Anecdotal evidence and early-stage studies present a positive outlook, comprehensive clinical trials are still being conducted to affirm its impact, and potentially, its side effects. For those considering CBD, consulting with a healthcare professional remains your first step. Additionally, research and sourcing reputable CBD oil providers is crucial to having a good experience and perhaps finding alternate pain relief.

Are You Being Served?

Written by
Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft

Directed by
Fran Legge

15th - 24th March 2024

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Language of Love

by Murray Parr

One of the stories that often gets retold around the family dinner table is when my dad gave my mum a jaffle iron for their first Valentine's Day. Most of the time my dad can be quite the romantic, however on this day his gift was literally thrown back at him. It was an epic failure. I guess he saw it as a practical gift they could both enjoy. Mum, who was more of a flowers and chocolates kind of girl, saw it in a completely different way. Perhaps dad was still learning what mum's love language was during that first year of marriage.

Valentine's Day for many people is supposed to be a day when you let that someone special know how you feel about them. Fortunately, I lived to see my mum and dad celebrate more than 60 Valentine's Days over the years. Ask any couple who has lived and survived that length of time together and they will quickly tell you that not every day was filled with romance. On the contrary, it sometimes takes a superhuman effort to stay together and keep the romance alive.

With this in mind, one could ask why we even celebrate Valentine's Day? Surely every day in your relationship is worth celebrating, even if it's not always chocolates and roses. Relationships take time and effort, they take empathy and compassion, they take understanding and compromise, and often forgiveness. By all means celebrate Valentine's Day with your special someone, but let that be the catalyst to remember that each and every day in your relationship is worth celebrating and treasuring.



Mythical and magical: Lemurian Crystals

by Eloys Harradance, Healing Grounds Byron Bay



Pictured: Lemurian Crystal. Source: Healing Grounds Byron Bay.

Lemurian Crystals draw us in to the magic that was the ancient civilisation of Lemuria. To some, these bring the activations of long lost memories and sacred knowledge and healing gifts of Lemuria and their lives spent there. They bring a connection to unconditional love and connection to your higher self and teaching guides. For others they open the heart to unconditional love and clear all the chakras at once.

Who were the Lemurians?

The Lemurians were a gentle and peaceful race of light beings descended from star nations, most notably, the Pleiades. It is thought that they pre-dated the Atlantean civilisation living in watery and crystalline realms in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

The Lemurians' mission was to bring higher levels of consciousness to planet earth. It is said that Lemurian Seed crystals were programmed with the energetic teachings of the divine feminine, unconditional love and unity, so that humans could one day remember and integrate this wonderful high vibrational energy. And indeed in recent years we are able to access Lemurian Crystal consciousness as we rapidly grow and expand. During these exciting times we are gaining access to our akashic records more easily and remembering who are on a soul level.

How to distinguish a Lemurian Crystal from quartz

You can spot a Lemurian Crystal by looking for horizontal lines or striations on the sides of a crystal. These lines can be faint or quite prominent. They contain the metaphysical information about the crystal, the akashic history and teachings encoded by the Lemurian civilisations.

Lemurian Crystals also very often have a frosty look, meaning they are not completely see through. This is true for the Lemurians that come from Brazil. The frosted look attributes to the soft, fine feminine energy of one-ness and unity. Lemurian Crystals only come from a few locations in the world so always ask your supplier and buy from reputable sources.

Since the first find of Clear Lemurians as far back as 1985,

we have since discovered Smoky Lemurian, Pink Lemurian, Scarlett Lemurian, Root Keys, and Lithium Lemurian just to name a few.

How to start working with Lemurian crystals

- As you meditate, rub your finger along the striations on the side of a Lemurian Quartz Crystal to activate and awaken the Lemurian energy within you.
- Keep them close by your bedside for a few weeks as your body attunes to their fine high vibrational energy.
- The crystals may allow you to tap directly into the divine realms and establish a clear connection to your Lemurian lineage and teachers.

Some Lemurian Crystals are healing tools for working with the energy body in a targeted way such as fine wand work and psychic surgery and others are for holding space for group healing and akashic records exploration. I hope you enjoy the wonderful fine and loving healing energy that Lemurian Crystals can bring into your life.

For more information visit: healinggrounds.com.au



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Never bin your batteries – just B-cycle them

by Karen Rudkin, Project Coordinator, North East Waste



Pictured left: One of Byron's six Community Recycling Stations. Pictured right: Ease of use, demonstrated at Ballina facility.



Batteries disposed of in bins are causing fires with one battery related fire per week occurring in waste trucks and facilities across the country.

This is endangering workers and damaging equipment but it's also wasting a valuable resource that can be recycled and used in new products. To prevent battery fires occurring in the Byron Shire – never bin your batteries.

Here's how to dispose of used batteries safely.

- Remove batteries from appliance (if not embedded).
- Tape the terminals of batteries to avoid sparking that can cause fires.
- Put them in a ventilated glass container for no longer than six months and keep out of reach of children.
- B-cycle them for free at your nearest Drop-off point.

Battery drop-off points include any of Byron Shire's six Community Recycling Stations where the public can drop off small amounts of handheld batteries, mobile phones and fluoro lightbulbs.

They are located at the Byron Council Customer Service Centre, Myocum Resource Recovery Centre, Cavanbah Centre, Bangalow Bowls Club, Woolworths at Byron and Ocean Shores Village Shopping Centre.

Other B-cycle drop-off points are available at many large local retailers and the Byron Community Recycling Centre, The Manse Rd, Myocum.

For more information or to locate your nearest drop-off point visit: bcycle.com.au/drop-off/ or contact Byron Shire Council on ph: 6684 1870.

Products with batteries embedded in them, such as phones, laptops and power tools, should be disposed of at an e-waste recycling facility or e-waste drop-off event.

This project is a NSW Environment Protection Authority Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy initiative, funded from the waste levy



Local Artist Exhibition
9-15th March 2pm -8pm
daily
Location :
Eltham Village Gallery
445 Eltham Road Eltham
(next to Eltham Pub)

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Is cork the new leather?

by Phoebe Jones, The Cork Shop



Pictured: Cork Oak Trees and cork bag. Source: The Cork Shop

Many years ago, while living overseas and travelling through Portugal, I fell in love with the concept of using the natural and sustainable material of cork as an alternative to plastics, canvas, and leather. So, in mid 2020 I decided to establish the first cork shop in Australia right here in Byron Bay. But what are the benefits of cork and where does it come from?

Cork is harvested from the Cork Oak tree (*Quercus Suber*) without damaging the tree. The process of harvesting cork involves carefully removing the outer bark of the tree, which then regenerates over time, allowing for subsequent harvests every nine to 12 years. In fact, harvesting helps regenerate the trees, contributing to an impressive life span of more than 200 years. Cork trees also naturally store carbon dioxide and every year cork oak forests absorb more than 20 million tonnes of CO₂, reducing greenhouse gases. The trees capture five times more CO₂ when harvested.

Portugal cork oak forests produce about 70% of the world's supply of cork and the industry is carefully regulated to protect the integrity of the environment. Responsible harvesting creates high-wage seasonal jobs for thousands of workers and the forests also support one of the highest levels of biodiversity

among plants and animals found anywhere in the world.

One of the key reasons cork is considered eco-friendly is its durability as a highly resilient material. It can withstand heavy use without deteriorating and it has natural shock-absorbing properties, making it excellent for insulation and flooring. In recent years, cork has been utilised in the fashion industry through accessories, bags, and shoes because it is easily shaped and moulded into various forms. I personally fell in love with it as cork is the best alternative to leather. Processing requires no tanning process and no toxic chemicals – unlike leather. It is also vegan, natural and looks and feels great too with its unique texture and warm tones. It's a great alternative for eco-conscious consumers.

As a carbon-negative material, cork oak trees absorb more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than is emitted during the production and transportation of cork products helping to mitigate climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is also biodegradable and recyclable. At the end of its life cycle, cork products can be easily composted and returned to the earth without leaving behind harmful residues. It can be recycled and used in the production of new cork products, further reducing the demand for virgin materials. For more information visit: thecorkshop.com.au



TAMARA SMITH MP MEMBER FOR BALLINA

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TAKE THE SURVEY

What should I focus on in 2024? Scan the QR code to have your say!



Authorised by Tamara Smith MP, Member for Ballina. Funded using parliamentary entitlements.



Pets of the month: Louie and Lola



Owner: Luis Murphy
Pet names: Louie and Lola
Age: 4.5 and 1.5 years
Breed: French Bull Dogs
Nicknames: Lu and Lu Lu

These two adorable dogs, Louie (fawn) and Lola (brindle), are French Bulldogs, if you couldn't tell from their distinctive

bat ears and expressive face wrinkles. This breed originated in 19th-century England, gained popularity in France, and evolved into the beloved breed known for its distinctive appearance and friendly nature.

Louie (boy) and Lola (girl) both live in the Byron Shire with their caring owner Luis who says his dogs are not only wonderful companions but also great therapy. Luis is currently recovering from a double lung transplant surgery carried out just eight months ago and says the dogs have been wonderful in assisting his recovery, and he would highly recommend the breed to anyone.

While they are mainly inside dogs, Louie and Lola have a large verandah area on which to play. Their favourite food is mince and veggies with kibble, and Louie particularly enjoys playing

with rolled-up socks. Both dogs are still fairly young and are being trained at the moment.

As a breed they have fairly low exercise requirements but they go the beach everyday. Louie loves being on the bed but Lola doesn't like it so much. Apparently, Louie is the one in charge between them and he loves to dominate, especially from the top of the stairs and he must sit in the front seat of the car – or else.

Normally, Frenchies are not particularly fond of water as their short-nosed anatomy makes swimming challenging. However, Luis says that Louie loves the pool water but Lola doesn't, staying as far away from the pool as she can.

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Pets and allergies

by Dr. Kirsty Robertson BVSc, Racecourse Road Veterinary Hospital

Allergies are the body's immune system overreacting to certain normal stimuli which cause itchiness and changes to your animal's skin and coat. Most allergies are not able to be cured and are a lifelong condition that will need to be managed, which can be frustrating. But if approached thoughtfully, management can be extremely effective. These conditions can range from mild to severe and treatment depends not only on cause of the allergy but also severity of signs.

Allergies in animals can be divided into four categories, as listed below. All allergies cause itchiness (scratching or biting), and inflammation or redness of the skin, which makes it hard to determine the cause. They lead to secondary skin infections which make the animal quite unwell if not treated. We must remember however, the allergy is the underlying cause and without effective management your pet will continue to have issues arise.

Flea allergy Dermatitis

The most common flea in Australia is the *Ctenocephalides felis*, or the cat flea, which bites cats, dogs and also humans. It is a hypersensitivity to the flea's saliva, which is injected into the skin while the flea feeds. A large inflammatory response occurs, disproportionate to the number of fleas your animal may have. Fleas tend to originate in certain areas such as the base of the tail and thighs, but can extend over the body. With the effective parasite protection available these days, we tend to see fewer cases. Please ensure all pets in the household are up to date with parasite protection year round.

Contact Dermatitis

This type of allergy requires direct contact with the skin and the offending substance. Most commonly contact allergens include flora such as grasses, Wandering Jew and Moses in the Cradle, however it can also be caused by certain chemicals. Because direct contact is needed, we usually see changes to the skin in contact with ground surfaces such as the bottom of the feet and stomach. Managing this condition involves removing

access to the allergic substance but this is not always possible. In these cases, certain shampoos can provide relief, however, veterinary attention is often required. T-shirts or bodysuits can also be used to prevent contact with allergic surfaces.

Food Allergies

Food allergies are abnormal reactions to a component of your pet's food, most commonly a protein. It is the most uncommon cause of pet allergies. Clinical signs include general itching and redness of the skin but can also include changes to their ears, eyes and sometimes gut irritation. The only way to diagnose this condition is to perform a food elimination diet for a minimum of six weeks and challenge it. Blood and skin tests are not reliable. Diet trials can at times be frustrating, and sometimes need to be repeated, however, once a diagnosis is made management is as simple as choosing the right foods to feed your pet.

Atopy (environmental allergens)

Atopy is the most common cause of allergies and is a complex disease that involves the immune system, an abnormal skin barrier and increased skin infections. All factors need to be addressed for effective control but there is an underlying genetic component. It is similar to hay fever and allergens can include pollens and dust mites. The clinical signs usually present within six months to three years of age and are similar to food allergies including the paws, face, ears, eyes and bottom. Once diagnosed, therapy includes regular bathing and often medication either long term or intermittently. Immunotherapy or desensitizing vaccines can be individually made for your pet to try and achieve a cure which is seen in up to 70% of animals.

If your pet is itchy or you suspect any of the above conditions, have a chat with your vet who can tailor an individual diagnostic and treatment plan for your pet if required. It may be the difference in getting a good night's sleep for both of you.



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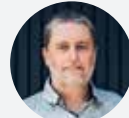
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Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu National Australian Open



*Pictured: BJJ competitors battling it out.
Photos by: Rian Elford.*

Where skill meets passion on the mats

Prepare for an electrifying display of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) mastery at the BJJ Australian Open, hosted at the Cavanbah Centre on 18 February.

The premier event promises a thrilling experience, ensuring fair play and high-level competition across all categories and adhering to the stringent International Brazilian Jiu-



Jitsu Federation (IBJJF) rules.

In recent years BJJ has gained international popularity with a growing community of practitioners globally.

According to BJJ Australian Open Federation Director Mr Raz Harel, 'Japanese Jiu-Jitsu was introduced to Brazil master Mitsuyo Maeda who travelled the world teaching the art in the early 1900s. While in Brazil, Maeda taught it to the Gracie brothers Carlos and Helio, leading to the development of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, notably

popularised by the Gracie family's success in martial arts challenges.'

'BJJ is the fastest growing sport in the world based on membership per Federation,' Mr Harel said. 'Participants for our upcoming national championship come from many parts of Australia as well as different countries.'

The Cavanbah Centre will provide the perfect canvas for BJJ athletes to show their skills.

From the youngest contenders engaging in a Round Robin format for kids, to the older practitioners in the Juvenile, Adults, and Masters divisions competing in the Single Elimination battles, every inch of the Cavanbah Centre will resonate with the sounds of determination and enthusiasm.

Matches will take place between 9am and 3pm at the Cavanbah Centre, Byron Bay, on 18 February. Tickets are \$10 and children under 12 are free.

For more information visit:
bjjao.smoothcomp.com/en/event/14311

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Hey Skip, you're a bloody marvel

with Billy Bob Thoughtson

It's the start of a new year (better late than never) and I have been wondering what new fashion trends might emerge. Everyone loves a new trend but we also love the retro ones. My Grandad said everything always comes cycling back into fashion, so the marketers capitalise on nostalgic sentiments.

'Can you give me some examples of things that cycle back Grandad?' He started with a funny quip about the penny-farthing bicycle but within minutes he rattled off various fashion trends like flared jeans from the 70s, choker necklaces, platform shoes and tie-dyed something or others – all of which came back every 15-20 years. At the end of his revival monologue, he predicted the comeback of Polaroid cameras and vinyl records. Impressed with his insights, I asked him does the cycling-back thing apply to everything in life? He said, 'not everything', then elaborated that some aspects of life never change, like our emotions, desires, and various challenges that persist over time, such as common themes of love, conflict, war, and the search for the Holy Grail – the meaning of life.

Grandad reckoned this cycling/retro-revival stuff has gone on since Biblical times. Sure enough there is a reference in the Bible implying that history repeats itself, 'What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.' – Ecclesiastes

1:9. Now I'm not religious, but I think this passage reflects on the idea that, despite technological or cultural advancements, fundamental aspects of human existence remain constant.

Speaking of the tech world, it seems that nowadays everything ends up being redundant in about two years. Funnily enough, virtual reality (VR) experienced a surge of interest in the 1990s, then waned for a while until the 2010s. The history of artificial intelligence (AI) also includes periods of significant research followed by 'AI winters,' where interest and funding declined. We are currently in a massive AI and VR resurgence.

In Australia, there are many examples of nostalgia revival. Think of retro surf fashion and vintage surfboards, or rock bands like AC/DC and INXS. Then we have Aussie snacks such as Twisties and Violet Crumbles, and of course, there are Classic Aussie TV Shows like *Neighbours* or *The Sullivans*. In my opinion, nothing compares to *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo*. This show is still being shown in some countries 56 years after it was first made. It's still on free-to-air TV today, where you can catch any one of the 91 episodes.

Skippy's popularity comes from its real feeling – especially for younger people. It's not hard to believe that *Skippy* (the Bush Kangaroo) was a

live, trained kangaroo. The reality is that between nine and fifteen different kangaroos were used for each episode. To make *Skippy* move her mouth (for that trademark 'tchk tchk tchk' noise), production staff gave the kangaroos chocolate, chewing gum or grass. Unbelievably, kangaroo paw bottle-openers were utilised for close-up scenes of opening doors or picking up objects. There was even a stuffed kangaroo for when *Skippy* was required to jump into a confined spaces.

Oh no, the Editor looks mad. Apparently, I've ruined *Skippy* for her. She thinks I need to break it easy to the readers that 'Skip' isn't all she's cracked up to be. It's true in most episodes *Skippy* seemed capable of near-human feats of thought and reasoning, carrying things in her pouch, foiling villains, rescuing bushwalkers, and even operating the radio. In one episode she organised a change of clothes for Clancy, and in another she placed a winning bet on a horse race at Randwick.

Billy Bob disclaimer: This article is meant to shine light on the phenomenon of cyclical revival and point out that some things in life are more enduring because they are so good in the first place. None of this is meant to undermine cultural icons like Skippy's fake 'tchk tchk' sound, but it's a reminder that often the best things in life have been around for a very long time.

I will finish with some inspirational wisdom, accrued from watching many hours of *Skippy the Bush Kangaroo*. In *Skippy* and much like in our own revival of past comforts, contrasting worlds often converged, and in this space there is an impeccable sense of respect and reconciliation, where cultural differences are bridged and time is no longer an enemy. Our revival of the old, and our nostalgic love of what once was, can be a place to share our understandings of humanity and the themes that have prevailed in the landscape of our recent and ancient cultural history.

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This Month

with Milt Barlow

At the movies

The kids are back at school and February brings a lovely cross section of new movies. A visit to the cinema is a great way to escape the heat and relax for a few hours.

The much anticipated sequel to Aussie hit, The Dry lands on 8 February with the release of Force Of Nature: The Dry 2. Eric Bana returns as Aaron Falk; this time he's searching for a missing hitchhiker in a remote wilderness area. What starts out as a routine search soon turns into anything but.

The must-see for this month is Bob Marley: One Love (14 February). What a great way to spend Valentine's Day. Everyone loves Bob and this bio pic is a stunner. British actor Kingsley Ben Adir (he played Basketball Ken in Barbie) gives an award winning performance as Bob. The movie was produced by Ziggy, Rita and Cedella Marley. The film follows Marley's life through his rise to fame as the world's greatest reggae singer up to his death in the early 80s. Get ready for lots of singing, jiving and dancing in the aisles.


Lovers of international films are in for a treat with the Finnish love story Fallen Leaves (14 February). A hit of the film festival circuit, it garnished glowing reviews such as 'best film of the year' from the International Federation of Film Critics to 'glimmers like a jewel in the dust' from the Hollywood Reporter.

I want to see anything from the Cohen Bros and 21 February sees Ethan Cohen's Drive-Away Dolls hit the big screen. It's a rollicking good road movie as two young women looking for a fresh start embark on a trip to Tallahassee. Things quickly start to go wrong when they are asked to carry a package from a group of inept criminals. The movie proceeds at a cracking pace with Geraldine Viswanathan (Bad Education) and Margaret Qualley (Once Upon a Time In Hollywood) in the lead roles with Matt Damon lending some star power.

The end of February delivers a big one with Dune: Part 2 (29 February). This is a movie that you must see on the big screen. As the sequel to Dune: Part 1 (2021), the word epic doesn't do it justice.


Summer on the couch

You are spoilt for some great viewing in February. One of my favourites at the moment is Boy Swallows Universe (Netflix). The Australian series, loosely inspired by real life events and adapted from Trent Dalton's excellent novel looks like becoming Netflix's most successful Australian series and I can see why. Everything about this series delivers. It is a sensational cast, great sets and beautifully directed. Make sure you add this to your watch list. Another favourite at the moment pops up on SBS On Demand with the new series of Fargo. Season 5 delivers big time with Juno Temple, Jon Hamm and Jennifer Jason Leigh starring as the story follows a housewife whose past begins to slowly unravel when she lands in trouble with local authorities. Fargo has been with us since 2014 and having it return is like putting on a comfy pair of slippers.





BYRON BAY · BALLINA FAIR

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FEB 08	FEB 14	FEB 14
		
FORCE OF NATURE: THE DRY 2	BOB MARLEY: ONE LOVE	MADAME WEB
FEB 14	FEB 22	FEB 29
		
FALLEN LEAVES	DRIVE-AWAY DOLLS	DUNE: PART TWO

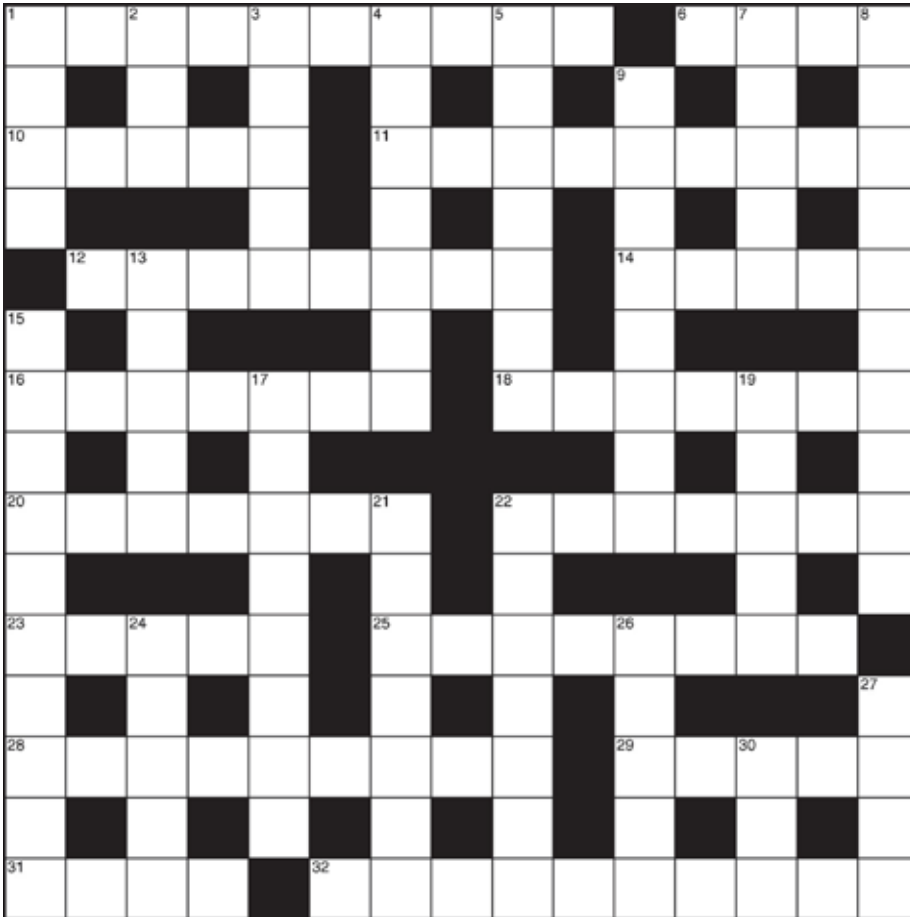
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February crossword

© Lovatts Puzzles



Across

- 1. Mandatory
- 6. Coloured (hair)
- 10. Gold bar
- 11. Relinquishes (claim)
- 12. Pursuing stealthily
- 14. Carries (gun)
- 16. Encrypts
- 18. Move sinuously
- 20. Severe
- 22. Port Vila is there
- 23. Subject
- 25. Upset result
- 28. Brand (5,4)
- 29. Stop
- 31. Uses spade
- 32. Deprived of water

Down

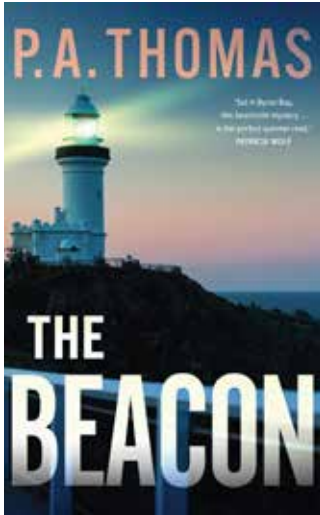
- 1. Spiral
- 2. Tankard
- 3. Up to the time
- 4. Combat flights
- 5. Breaks promise
- 7. Sloop or ketch
- 8. Calamitous
- 9. From Vienna
- 13. Nails
- 15. Laid to waste
- 17. Saturates
- 19. Mounds
- 21. Put into bondage
- 22. Assortment
- 24. Car crash
- 26. Come up periodically
- 27. Give food to
- 30. Appropriate

Tricky Trivia

- 1. In what year was the movie Jurassic Park released?
- 2. What is the national sport of Canada?
- 3. 2024 is a leap year. True or false?
- 4. In what year did a cyclone hit Byron Bay?
- 5. What animal has the highest blood pressure?
- 6. Who holds the record for winning the most Oscars?
- 7. What is the furthest planet from the sun?
- 8. Samuel Langhorne Clemens is more famously known by what pen-name?
- 9. What are the four states of matter?
- 10. A jumbuck is an Australian English term for what?



A murder mystery set smack-bang in Byron



If you're a lover of local knowledge, crime and mystery, this book will have you sitting on the edge of your surfboard. Byron Bay, our coastal town, is the set of debut murder mystery *The Beacon* by local author P.A. Thomas.

The novel is centred around character Jack Harris, the disgraced son of a powerful business tycoon, who has just been exiled to Byron Bay as a junior journalist at his father's smallest regional newspaper *The Beacon*.

His arrival coincides with the disappearance of the newspaper's editor, Patrick O'Shaughnessy, while out on his morning surf. When Patrick's body is discovered in the ocean, with a severed leg, it appears certain that he's fallen victim to a shark attack. But when rumours emerge that Patrick was about to publish an explosive article – its subject unknown – Jack begins to suspect his death is not what it seems.

Although police aren't buying his murder theory, Jack joins forces with Patrick's daughter and investigates anyway, taking a sometimes less than lawful dive into the newspaperman's past. Together they discover plenty of Byron locals with a motive to kill, including a bioholistic dentist with a secret, a

naturist with an undisguised grudge, and even the mayor of Northern Rivers Shire. But has Jack bitten off more than he can chew?

This murder mystery, set in our very own town, is full of humour, local colour, memorable characters and page-turning action. When asked why Byron Bay became the set of his novel, author P.A Thomas said, 'They say write what you know, and I live here, so, I know Byron inside out. I think that comes out in the writing – there is a very strong sense of place, and Byron is a larger-than-life 'character' in the book.

'But more than that, it has everything you could want as a setting for a murder mystery: a thriving surf, food and arts culture; fascinating characters from diverse backgrounds; a small community, the politics can be on the fringe, and there is spectacular natural beauty. Not to mention that iconic lighthouse.'

Being so close to home, one may assume that the characters in *The Beacon* are based on real people. Well...this is partially the case.

'The characters are definitely based on people in Byron Bay but they are more of a mash-up, rather than particular individuals. Readers might recognise parts of themselves, whether they wear white linen and sandals, wear nothing and hang out at the clothing-optional beach at Tyagarah, ride a Harley dressed as Animal from the *Muppets*, or having a drink at a fancy dress party at The Rails Hotel dressed as a nun.'

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February horoscopes

by Patsy Bennett - patsybennett.com



Aries

A little planning, innovation and strategy especially around the new moon on the 10th will help you to move forward with fresh ideas and developments, financially and at work. If communications stall mid-month, look at innovative ways to move ahead; be inventive.



Taurus

A fresh chapter at work or career-wise in February is best met with a steady approach; you must avoid impulsiveness now to provide yourself with adequate time to think and plan. The full moon in fellow earth sign Virgo on the 24th will be constructive so be inspired, but also practical.



Gemini

Matters that have been stuck will move forward, and positive collaborations and relationships can flourish. The new moon on the 10th will spotlight matters to do with travel, legal or self-developmental matters. Be sure to look for help from experts and organisations.



Cancer

February is a good month to better organise the shared areas of your life, such as joint finances or responsibilities. It's a good time around the new moon on the 10th to make fresh financial or personal commitments. Romance could flourish on the 14th, but you must avoid arguments.



Leo

The new moon supermoon on the 10th will kick-start a fresh chapter in a key relationship, and this will spotlight an unpredictable situation for some, which is best managed carefully. An underlying health issue may emerge, bringing the focus to your well-being or that of someone close.



Virgo

The Virgo full moon on the 24th will spotlight the start of a fresh daily health or work schedule. August-born Virgos may turn a corner in your personal life. Be innovative about making changes, but avoid rash decisions you'll regret. It's a romantic month, so be prepared to take the initiative.



Libra

The Aquarian new moon on the 10th will encourage you to be imaginative about your home life, family and work. It's time for something new. This will also apply in your love life and St Valentine's Day will be par for the course. Consider a fresh approach to health towards the 24th.



Scorpio

Keep an eye on health and well-being to avoid over-tiring yourself and the necessity to remedy or to backtrack over health issues. Developments towards the end of the month will spotlight the need to be sensitive or to help someone and, if you need help, it will be available, so be sure to ask.



Sagittarius

Developments in February point to fresh territory, with the full moon on the 24th providing insight into a new direction career-wise or in your status. Domestic, family or property-related matters will demand your focus, and you'll gain a sense of purpose from creating a happy home life.



Capricorn

This is a busy time for you until at least the 10th. You'll see developments take shape in the field of work and health and a fresh path could even open for you towards the end of the month. Consider key financial decisions in light of your potential to build more stability in your life.



Aquarius

A whoosh of opportunity – or at least feelings of restlessness – will bring something new your way. Be sure to align your actions with a bigger picture purpose, or you risk being distracted. Focus on creating an uplifting daily work and health routine. Romance could flourish, so plan dates.



Pisces

Romance will be inspiring this month, and a degree of nostalgia or wishful thinking needn't get in the way of a happy love life. The full moon on the 24th offers couples the chance to stabilise your relationship and could even bring in someone new for singles, so be sure to plan some treats.



Crossword solution

January

S	T	E	M		A		T		S		C	A	N	E
E		L	A	W	B	R	E	A	K	E	R	S		D
W	H	E	T		E		R		I		I	P	O	D
E		V	E	I	L		R		T	U	B	E		I
D	N	A		A		S	A	N		M		C	U	E
		T	E	N		P	I	E		A	N	T		
F	R	E	T		S	I	N	E	W		A	S	I	A
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		A	R	C		L	I	E		C	D	S		
V	O	W		A		S	M	S		O		A	A	A
O		L	A	N	E		P		R	O	A	R		I
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T		N	O	N	S	E	N	S	I	C	A	L		E
S	I	G	N		E		G		N		R	E	N	D

Trivia answers

- 1993.
- Lacrosse.
- True. This year, there is a 29 February.
- 1954.
- A giraffe.
- Walt Disney who won 22 times.
- Neptune.
- Mark Twain.
- Solid, liquid, gas, and plasma.
- A sheep.

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