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Community news for the Byron Shire

Issue 35 | October 2025



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Dear Readers,



Welcome to the spooky season. While I personally don't subscribe (much) to the consumerism around Halloween, I can appreciate any tradition that brings big, toothy, smiles to our kids. Halloween, often associated with death, has origins in Celtic traditions – marking the end of summer harvest, and the beginning of dark, cold winters. Here, in the southern

hemisphere, I feel it's the harbinger of summer – tolling the bells of Christmas and acting as the start of the count-down to the silly season. As the weather heats up, along with the return of Daylight Saving Time on 5 October, I'm happy to be reminded of all the summer-fun that awaits us.

This month we share part-one of a feature story from ocean pioneer George Greenough, who has spent decades in Byron's waters and gives us a detailed account of his close encounters with sharks. We also speak to Jan Olley, recipient of the 2025 Byron Shire Community Member of the Year, who brings us closer to the feathered world of the Byron Bird Buddies. We also get a detailed history into the why some of our towns are called 'shoots' from the Brunswick Valley Historical Society. And finally, we cover the chock-a-block October community calendar, filled with many amazing events. There's much to explore – from the colourful Matsuri Japan Festival to music events, markets, and other community gatherings – all brimming with opportunities to connect and explore.

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.

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From the Editor..... 3

This issue..... 4

Around town ..... 5

News ..... 6

Community..... 8

History.....18

Travel.....21

Local legends ..... 22

In focus .....24

Lifestyle..... 26

Kids and family ..... 29

Education ..... 30

Arts ..... 32

Pets and animals..... 34

Environment ..... 35

Health and wellbeing ..... 36

Sports.....37

Entertainment..... 39

Horoscopes..... 42



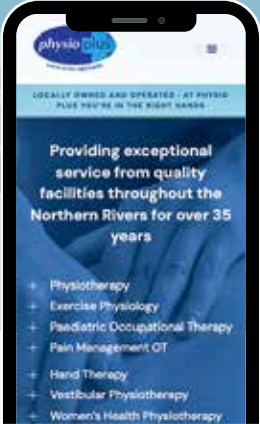
18 – History | All about the shoots



22 – Local legends | Jan Olley



24 – In focus | George Greenough



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**What:** Over 30s Club presents Daytime Disco  
**When:** Saturday 4 October, 3pm  
**Where:** Saltwater Social Club, Byron Bay

After sold-out shows across the UK and Australia, Over 30s Club comes to Byron, bringing timeless beats to the masses. Talented DJs will play a nostalgic mix of all the anthems from the 80s to now.

Tickets and info: [fixr.co/event/](https://fixr.co/event/)



**What:** Queer Family Gardening Workshops  
**When:** Sunday 12 October, 2pm-5pm  
**Where:** The Paddock Project, Mullumbimby

This year for Mental Health month Queer Family has teamed up with Paddock Project for two all-ages workshops to connect with nature, learn new skills and meet new people. Places are limited. Tickets and info: [events.humanitix.com/host/queer-family](https://events.humanitix.com/host/queer-family)



**What:** St. Ali Italian Film Festival  
**When:** Until Wednesday 15 October  
**Where:** Palace Cinemas, Byron Bay and Ballina

Presented by Palace, the Festival features a selection of box office hits and award-winning films. Migrant stories take centre stage with *Looking for Alibrandi* celebrating its 25th anniversary, closing the Festival. Tickets and info: [italianfilmfestival.com.au](https://italianfilmfestival.com.au)



**What:** Byron Bay Film Festival (BBFF)  
**When:** Friday 17 – Sunday 26 October  
**Where:** Multiple cinema venues

From boundary-pushing docs to standout shorts and dramatic features, BBFF showcases global cinema with local heart. This years theme is Love Film and many sessions include Q&As.

Tickets and info: [bbff.com.au](https://bbff.com.au)



**What:** Nimbin Roots Festival  
**When:** Friday 24 – Sunday 26 October  
**Where:** Multiple venues

Marking its 10th anniversary, Nimbin Roots brings an unforgettable lineup and unique cultural experiences. As well as music there will be workshops, markets and the Peace and Love Parade.

Tickets and info: [nimbinrootsfestival.com](https://nimbinrootsfestival.com)



**What:** Spaghetti Western  
**When:** 29 October – 9 November  
**Where:** Brunswick Picture House

Spaghetti Circus and Brunswick Picture House co-produce a breathtaking new show, directed by award-winning, all-female, internationally acclaimed circus sensation YUCK Circus. All ages event.

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

## Monthly Markets

|              |                                                                         |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1st Saturday | Brunswick Heads                                                         |
| 1st Sunday   | Byron Bay<br>Pottsville Beach                                           |
| 2nd Sunday   | The Channon<br>Tabulam Hall<br>Coolangatta<br>Woodburn                  |
| 3rd Saturday | Alstonville<br>Mullumbimby<br>Murwillumbah<br>Salt Village<br>Casuarina |
| 3rd Sunday   | Federal<br>Uki<br>Pottsville Beach                                      |
| 4th Saturday | Wilson Creek<br>Kyogle Bazaar                                           |
| 4th Sunday   | Bangalow<br>Nimbin<br>Coolangatta<br>Murwillumbah<br>Yamba              |
| 5th Sunday   | Nimbin                                                                  |

## Weekly Farmers Markets

|           |                                                         |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday   | New Brighton<br>Organic Lismore                         |
| Wednesday | Murwillumbah<br>Nimbin<br>Newrybar Hall                 |
| Thursday  | Byron Bay<br>Lismore                                    |
| Friday    | Mullumbimby<br>Evans Head                               |
| Saturday  | Bangalow<br>Uki<br>Blue Knob Gallery<br>Lismore Markets |
| Sunday    | Ballina                                                 |

**For more information visit**  
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# Snapshot

## Byron Visitor Centre closes after 24 years



The Byron Visitor Centre has permanently closed its doors after 24 years of welcoming travellers to the region. Housed in the old Stationmaster's Cottage in the heart of town, the centre was run without institutional funding and relied on the generosity of local volunteers. While the physical centre has closed, its website will continue to provide information on Byron Bay and surrounding areas, including National Parks, waterfalls and coastal walks.

The Byron Visitor Centre remains linked with the Brunswick Heads Visitor Centre and continues to be supported by a membership base of local businesses and individuals.

For visitor information or membership enquiries, contact email: [info@visitbyronbay.com](mailto:info@visitbyronbay.com) or visit the website: [visitbyronbay.com](http://visitbyronbay.com)

## Repairs at Lavertys Gap Weir

Work started in September on essential repairs to Mullumbimby's historic Lavertys Gap Weir, a 100-year-old structure that remains the town's main source of drinking water. The project will address serious creek bank erosion, worsened by the 2022 floods and Cyclone Alfred earlier this year, and is expected to run for around 16 weeks, continuing through October and into summer.

Byron Shire Council says the weir, which is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register, will be carefully preserved while repairs are carried out by NSW Public Works. During the works, Mullumbimby's water supply will come from the recently upgraded Emergency Water Main, ensuring no disruption to residents.

The project is part of the NSW Government's Water and Wastewater Repair and Recovery Program, with Council confirming flows in Wilsons Creek will be maintained throughout the repair period.

## Bayshore Drive roundabout delay

The completion of the new roundabout on Bayshore Drive, at the intersection leading to Byron TAFE and the IGA shopping centre, has been pushed

back by five months due to unexpected stormwater and road issues. Originally scheduled to finish this month, the \$2.4 million project is now expected to be complete by the end of March 2026, weather permitting.

Council's Manager of Assets and Major Projects, Christopher Soulsby, said prolonged rain, a high water table, and complex drainage problems had compounded construction challenges, adding that Saturday work has been introduced to help make up time and reduce disruption.

## Belongil and Tallow floodplains in the spotlight

Byron Shire Council is calling on residents of Byron Bay and Suffolk Park to share their experiences of flooding to help shape future management strategies. The Belongil and Tallow Floodplain Risk Management Plan and Study is being updated, with Council seeking community input on everything from flood maps to ideas for prevention and preparedness. Residents are encouraged to share stories, photos, and suggestions for better management of flood risks, whether from 2022 or earlier events.

Feedback can be submitted online via Your Say Byron Shire until 18 October.

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## Council boycotts companies linked to Israeli settlements

Byron Shire Council's recent decision to boycott companies operating in Israeli settlements has been welcomed by some and condemned by others, sparking debate in the local community. The motion, carried at Council's 28 August meeting, was introduced by Greens Councillor Elia Hauge and seconded by Greens Councillor Michelle Lowe, with Labor Councillor Asren Pugh also bringing forward a similar version that was ultimately adopted.

The main difference between the two motions was the omission of Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese's 2025 report, and Councillor Pugh's recommendation to instead adopt the smaller list of companies identified in the UN's Human Rights Council's updated 2023 report, listing businesses that are profiting from the illegal occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The motion aligns Byron Shire with the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, targeting companies linked to Israeli settlements declared illegal under international law. Supporters of the move say it is an extension of Council's ethical procurement policies.

'Ethical procurement is core Council business,' said Cr Hauge. 'People here don't want their rates funding companies that demolish homes, displace families, or profit from killing civilians. This is good governance – and good conscience.'

Northern Rivers Friends of Palestine spokesperson Subhi Awad described the decision as 'Another huge win for the boycott movement,' adding, 'This isn't about division or anything else, it's about basic human decency.'

But the decision has been criticised by the Northern Rivers Jewish Community Association and the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, saying the BDS campaign is not a peace-based movement, and the decision risks fuelling antisemitism while doing nothing to resolve the conflict overseas.

Michele Goldman, CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, said, 'Weighing into an overseas conflict will not bring peace to the Middle East but is causing clear rifts between Byron community members where they were previously harmonious, undermining local cohesion and hurting both the Jewish and broader local community.'

Amid the debate, local business Santos Organics clarified its position after being linked in online discussions to the BDS campaign. The business also reported instances of harassment towards staff from a small group of people over its decision to keep Israeli dates in stock. Santos Organics said in an online statement: 'We support farmers, not politics, and will continue to source from growers who care for the earth, nurture the soil, and work towards a healthier planet, especially during challenging times.'

Santos have temporarily relocated the dates to a cool room, where they are available on request. The retailer also clarified it has not joined BDS.

Council's decision has become a focal point for broader questions about the role of local governments and businesses in global conflicts. For more information visit: [byron.nsw.gov.au](http://byron.nsw.gov.au)

## Having Your Say Federal Park gets a new look

Byron Shire Council is reminding residents to share feedback and help shape local initiatives by visiting the Your Say Byron Shire page, here: [yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au](http://yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au).

This dedicated community engagement platform is the place to learn about projects that affect our community, with opportunities to engage online and in person.

While Council welcomes conversation and engagement on social media, comments posted on Facebook or other platforms are not counted as official submissions. Byron Shire Mayor, Sarah Ndiaye, said, 'We all know people in Byron aren't short of an opinion, but make sure yours is sent right through where it can have the most impact.'

To ensure that your voice is included in the decisions that matter most to you, visit the Your Say Byron Shire page.



*Pictured (left-right): Pyari and Turia restoring the mosaic. Source: Supplied.*

Federal Park is looking better than ever, with Council completing a series of upgrades just in time for the warmer months. The \$39,000 project has given the much-loved community space a spruce-up, including the installation of new hardwood timber bench seats and an outdoor table tennis table.

'I am sure that people are searching for their table tennis bats and balls

and there will be some fiercely competitive battles on that table over the next couple of months,' Malcolm Robertson, Manager Facilities and Open Spaces, said.

Other works included paving to connect existing paths and repairs to the mosaic at the park entrance. The original artists, Turia Bruce and Pyari Cau, generously volunteered their time and expertise to restore the piece.

'Our thanks go to Turia Bruce and Pyari Cau, for volunteering their time to restore the artwork,' Mr Robertson said, 'and also to everyone in the community for their input on this project – the work we are doing is in response to their requests for improvements. The Park has something for everyone, and I hope the community enjoys these latest improvements and additions.'

# Byron Writers Festival: what's on and looking to 2026

by Byron Writers Festival



Pictured: Byron Writers Festival, Book Room, 2025. Source: Ellie Stinson.

The Byron Writers Festival is one of the most anticipated events of the year, but this year, wild and woolly weather forced organisers to cancel the remainder of the program. While disappointing, the decision was made to ensure the safety and wellbeing of patrons, authors, partners, suppliers and volunteers.

Thanks to some quick thinking, the team was able to repurpose parts of the program on Sunday 10 August at the A&I Hall, giving audiences the chance to connect with Festival authors despite the challenging circumstances.

**GEORGY GIRL**  
the Seekers MUSICAL

**NOVEMBER 7-30**

Book by Patrick Edgeworth  
Music and Lyrics by  
Judith Durham, Athol Guy, Keith Potger and Bruce Woodley  
Directed by Paul Belsham & Leanne Broadley



Pictured: Attendees at the Festival, 2025. Source: Kurt Petersen.

Now, attention turns to the future as organisers begin planning for the Festival's milestone 30th anniversary in 2026, with special programs and events to tide us over until then.

Festival Artistic Director, Jessica Alice said, 'We are so appreciative of the support from our community over the last few months. We couldn't do what we do without our patrons, partners, Festival Friend members and everyone who comes to our year-round events, which help us plan the way forward for the Festival to return in 2026 to celebrate our 30th year.'

## Upcoming events

### Sunday 12 October: Craig Silvey in Conversation with Sarah Armstrong

See award-winning author Craig Silvey in conversation with Sarah Armstrong about *Runt and the Diabolical Dognapping*, the sequel to the phenomenal bestseller and family favourite, *Runt*. This is a family friendly event, suitable for all ages held at Bangalow A&I Hall from 1:30pm.

### Monday 13 October: Bob Brown in Conversation with David Heilpern

Byron Writers Festival invites you to a special evening event with Bob Brown in conversation about his new memoir, *Defiance*, with David Heilpern. For half a century, Bob Brown has been standing up to the powerful interests who would put profit before planet. In *Defiance: Stories from Nature and Its Defenders*, he draws on this experience to inspire a new generation of individual and collective action. This event will be held at the Bangalow A&I Hall, from 6:30pm.

### Wednesday 22 October: Jane Harper in Conversation with Leila McKinnon

Join us for a special evening event with international bestselling crime author Jane Harper, and her highly anticipated new book, *Last One Out*. Jane will be in conversation with Leila McKinnon, exploring the book's themes of loss, secrets, and what remains after a disappearance. This event is held at the Bangalow A&I Hall, from 6:30pm.

For information and tickets on the above events, and more, go to: [byronwritersfestival.com/whats-on](https://byronwritersfestival.com/whats-on)

# SCU student helps local refugee family

by Northern Rivers for Refugees



*Pictured: The Jahjah family, from left, Ahmed, Kamar, Abdul and Ibrahim, with SCU student John Omtha. Source: Supplied.*

When John Omtha's family was fleeing persecution by the brutal military regime in Myanmar, little did they know that one day John would be helping other refugees settle in Australia. The Omthas are from the Chin tribal group, which has a history of persecution by more powerful forces in Myanmar.

John arrived in Australia as a boy and is now studying for a Community Welfare degree at Southern Cross University in Lismore. As part of his course, he is undertaking a placement, organised through Northern Rivers For Refugees (NRFR), and is helping a Syrian family start a new life in the Byron Shire.

After fleeing Syria and living for 12 years as refugees in Turkey, Abdul Jahjah, his wife Kamar Tinnayi, and their sons Ibrahim (17) and Ahmed (12) were settled earlier this year in Ocean Shores. They were granted permanent residence in Australia under a community sponsorship scheme, whereby a group of local residents supports the refugee family for a year.

The local group, known as a Community Supporter Group (CSG) has found the family accommodation, enrolled the children in school, organised English classes, as well as being on call for a myriad of support needs.

The coordinator of the Ocean Shores CSG, Natasha Reddrop, said John's placement had been invaluable: 'He has a lot of great skills to connect with and support people, but the real bonus for us is that he has had the experience himself of coming to Australia as a refugee.'

The connection between John and the family is obvious. It's cardamom coffee, Tim Tams, and smiles all round as John chats with the family, often using a translation app. He helps with daily tasks and improving the family's English skills.

'The difficulty of learning English is a big barrier for refugees,' John says. 'It makes it hard to get a job, which Abdul is desperately keen to do. He is a butcher, as well as having experience in raising livestock.'

So English classes at TAFE are essential. For the boys, being thrown into the mix at Mullumbimby High School has brought their language on faster. Abdul expresses his thanks through the translation app: 'We are grateful to Australia.'

Life was hard in Turkey. In Australia, life is much better and Government services are good.'

For John, the experience has been an eye-opener. 'I got involved because I just want to give back. There are so many gaps for new families. They are socially isolated, they need to work and get on their feet financially,' he says.

Using his own family's experience as a positive example: 'My parents arrived in Coffs Harbour and started out with nothing, and now they have their own business. It takes time and hard work, but you can get there.'

To find out more about refugee settlement in the Northern Rivers, visit Northern Rivers For Refugees: [nrfr.org.au](http://nrfr.org.au)

## Urgent support needed for at risk creatives



*Pictured: Krishma Obaidi presents her TikTok news. Source: Supplied.*

A funding appeal has been launched to help three Afghan creatives in danger of being deported from Pakistan into the hands of the Taliban.

Ocean Shores woman Sara Gloede has started the appeal to pay for visa extensions so Sabz and Hamid Ehsas, and Krishma Obaidi can remain in Pakistan while their refugee status is being processed. Northern Rivers for Refugees has already provided substantial financial and emotional support, but ongoing help is urgently needed. Thanks to the generosity of people in the Northern Rivers, these artists were first supported more than four years ago through the Project 50 initiative, which helped 50 Afghan artists at high risk submit humanitarian visa applications.

Krishma Obaidi is an actress and journalist presenting news to Afghans via the Kabul News TikTok channel, which reaches over 20,000 followers. Her reporting challenges Taliban censorship and provides truthful news to Afghans across borders. Despite repeated assaults and threats, Krishma continues her work. Also at risk are actress Sabz Ehsas, who is pregnant, and her husband Hamid Ehsas, a respected Afghan director, actor, editor, and producer, best known for his film *Ruthless Father*. Their artistic work and social profile has made them visible and vulnerable, and they face significant threats due to their public profiles and outspoken views.

Pakistan has begun expelling Afghan refugees without visas and has made the cost of visa extensions high – US \$750 for six months. The UNHCR has urged Pakistan to exempt vulnerable Afghans from deportation.

For more information or to donate visit: [givenow.com.au/safety](http://givenow.com.au/safety)  
To offer support, contact Sara Gloede on email: [saragloede@yahoo.com](mailto:saragloede@yahoo.com)

# Women's Giving Circle Pitch Night success



Pictured (left-right): Sandra Duncan, Shelley Webber, Nickolla Clark, Vicki Galliard, Susan Williams, and Amy Colli.

Source: @mazzzerphotography\_byronbay

On 4 September, women from across the Northern Rivers came together at the Brunswick Picture House for the annual Women's Giving Circle Pitch Night. This year, the Circle reached an exciting milestone – awarding four Empowering Women and Girls grants, each worth \$20,000, to grassroots organisations tackling some of our region's toughest challenges.

The Circle, an initiative of the Northern Rivers Community Foundation (NRCF), is a space where like-minded women gather to give with impact and create lasting change.

Membership fees are pooled, with half supporting NRCF's Northern Rivers Women's Fund and the other half directed to the Circle's grants program.

'This is what makes the Circle different,' said Coordinator Amy Colli. 'It's not charity in the usual sense. Its women backing women, ensuring those closest to the issues have the resources to lead change.'

In the spirit of fairness, members cast their votes online ahead of the event, choosing from seven shortlisted groups. On the night, guests were welcomed with the first release of Brookie's Sundrift Spritz and a fragrant paella dinner by The Spanish Catering Co – with plenty going back for seconds.

Once everyone was settled, Amy took to the stage to acknowledge Country and thank sponsors, members and the Circle team for making the evening possible. Members also heard from last year's recipients, who shared the real difference their grants had made in the lives of women and girls. Local restaurateur and proud Bundjalung woman, Mindy Woods then spoke powerfully about the role of matriarchy in community, encouraging women to walk alongside Elders and embrace their innate ability to nurture and lead.

Thanks to the growing membership, the Circle was able to support a record number of recipients in 2025. Each of the four grant winners took to the stage, speaking with passion, eloquence and deep care for their communities.

## The recipients

- Nickolla Clark – Muggi Dubai – Strong Women at Country As Teacher, mentoring young First Nations women through culture, arts and education pathways.
- Susan Williams – Cooking and Healthy Living for Muli Muli at NSW Aboriginal Land Council, creating a culturally safe space for First Nations women to connect through food and health education.
- Shelley Webber – Cultivating Calm at Kyogle Family Support Service, helping women reclaim safety and strength after domestic violence.
- Vicki Galliard – Circle of Friends, Iluka Community Organisation Planning for Emergencies (ICOPE), tackling isolation for older and vulnerable women through weekly gatherings that foster joy, dignity and belonging.

The evening closed with a lively performance by the Bollywood Sisters, with plenty of guests jumping up to learn some new moves.

The success of the Women's Giving Circle lies in its collective power. Through generosity and shared purpose, this group of women is transforming lives, addressing gender-based disadvantage, and proving that when women support women, entire communities are strengthened.

For more information or to get involved visit: [nrcf.org.au/womens-giving-circle/](http://nrcf.org.au/womens-giving-circle/)

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## At Byron Library

by Stacey Shepherd, Byron Shire Librarian



Pictured (left-right): Vicki Evans and Ciaran Carolan, with the Byron Bay Library Quick Reads collections. Source: Supplied.

Last month, our Friends of the Libraries Byron Shire (FOL) group generously donated just over \$8,000 to support our popular Quick Reads collection, a vibrant mix of much-loved authors and exciting new releases available across all Byron Shire Libraries. We're grateful to our dedicated volunteers, whose efforts support value-added services and strengthen community engagement in our libraries.

When asked what she enjoys most about being part of FOL, Vice President, Beryl Main shared, 'It's advocating for the love of literature, lifelong learning, and encouraging curiosity and reading among young people. The collaborative culture and friendships within FOL are so rewarding, spending time with people who share a common purpose.'



Beryl added, 'Leading a team of volunteers who give tirelessly to make our libraries well-used, welcoming places is fulfilling as well as hearing the generous words of appreciation from staff and community in acknowledgement of our achievements.'

For those considering volunteering with FOL, Beryl encourages, 'As a member of FOL, you have an opportunity to make a difference alongside like-minded people with a passion for reading and learning and who support our community on that journey. So important in volunteering, is the joy of being part of a group making a positive contribution'.

### From our community

Local Library member Vicki Evans has been visiting the Library for over 30 years and borrowing from the Quick Reads collection for the past two.

Her children and grandchildren have all grown up with the Library, enjoying branches across the region.

What Vicki loves most about Quick Reads is, 'You don't have to wait on a long reserve list to get the latest title. There's a variety of genres, and I love discovering new authors.' Her favourites so far? 'Lola in the Mirror by Trent Dalton and as I love Norwegian crime, *Killing Moon* by Jo Nesbo'.

Ciaran Carolan is a long-time borrower and local legend on land and sea.

'Since the beginning (five years) when I come in to borrow, it's the first place I check. I head straight to the Quick Reads to see what's on offer for the week. You can skip the queue and read the latest titles published and it also makes me commit to reading. The week only loan makes you crack on and get reading.'

Ciaran's favourite Quick Reads so far? 'Ripeness by Sarah Moss, *Devotion* by Hannah Kent, and *Edenglassie* by Melissa Lucashenko'.

We're always here to help you find your next great read. Connect, discover, and escape with us at the Library. For more information visit: [rtrl.nsw.gov.au](http://rtrl.nsw.gov.au).

Interested in joining FOL? Come in and ask us how or visit: [byronbayfol.com](http://byronbayfol.com)

## Dementia Symposium: 17 October

The Dementia Inclusive Ballina Alliance (DIBA) will host its fourth annual Dementia Symposium on Friday 17 October at the Ballina RSL Club. This year's theme, Social Connectedness, highlights the vital role relationships and community play in healthy ageing. Research shows strong social ties can delay health conditions by more than a decade, while loneliness can increase dementia risk by 26%.

An outstanding lineup of speakers will share their expertise, including Professor Henry Brodaty from the UNSW Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing; Professor Vicki Flood from the University Centre for Rural Health; Dr Rachel Jones, Northern NSW LHD Geriatrician; Ms Gautami Motupally, Program Manager of Western Sydney Alliance; Associate Professor Margaret MacAndrew, School of Nursing QUT; and Dr Jennifer Mann, who will share insights into healthy ageing for Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander people. Local GP Dr Hilton Koppe will also take part, alongside Dr Sabrina Pit, who will contribute to a special panel on younger onset dementia.

Chair of DIBA, Anne Moehead, said, 'Participants will obtain practical, client-focused information, engage in peer networking opportunities, and take part in discussions regarding the development of inclusive environments for individuals with dementia and their carers.'

Open to professionals, carers and community members, the symposium runs from 8am–5pm, and is an opportunity to better understand dementia, ageing, and community health strategies. For more information visit: [dementiainclusiveballina.org.au](http://dementiainclusiveballina.org.au). To register: [events.humanitix.com/dementia-inclusive-ballina-annual-symposium-2025](http://events.humanitix.com/dementia-inclusive-ballina-annual-symposium-2025)

## Celebrate 20 years of the Byron Latin Fiesta

by Sky Blue, Fiesta Director



Byron Latin Fiesta is turning 20, and the celebrations promise more excitement than ever. From 30 October to 2 November, Byron Bay will once again come alive with the rhythm and joy of Latin dance. Over four nights and three days, participants can immerse themselves in Australia's longest-running Latin dance festival. Founded in 2006, the Fiesta has blossomed into a world-class event, born from a deep love for Latin American music, dance, and culture. Celebrate with us in and indulge your Latin passion.

The milestone edition takes place at the Byron Theatre, 69 Jonson Street, with its sprung dance floor, retractable seating, and state-of-the-art sound system. The theatre will be the main hub for unforgettable performances, parties, and workshops. Two upstairs rooms and a large balcony will host pre-parties,

Zouk and Kizomba Socials, while the courtyard provides the perfect spot to eat, drink, and mingle with fellow enthusiasts.

The Fiesta brings together a stellar line-up of local, national, and international artists. Learn from the inspiring instructors in the three workshop spaces, enjoy their spectacular shows at night and social dance with them at the parties. New to Latin dance? The Beginners' Hub makes it easy to jump in and try styles like salsa, bachata, zouk, and kizomba. More experienced dancers can explore the full spectrum of Latin rhythms including tango, afro, reggaeton, and more.

At night, the Fiesta truly comes alive with two party spaces – the theatre and upstairs rooms – which will light up with professional and student performances, DJ sets, live band Chukale on Saturday night, and plenty of social dancing to keep the energy flowing until late. Food stalls and a courtyard bar will round out the experience with the perfect vibe for celebrating 20 years of the Byron Latin Fiesta.

Ticket options are available to suit all budgets. Full passes and beginner passes are the best value, day passes and party passes are also on offer. Numbers are capped, so secure yours now and be part of the 20-year celebration event.

For more information and tickets, visit: [byronlatinfiesta.com.au](http://byronlatinfiesta.com.au) or Instagram/Facebook: @byronlatinfiesta

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## Tuber sale and EPIC fundraiser at Coorabell Hall



Coorabell Hall is set for a big day this October, hosting not one but two fantastic community events on Saturday 25 October. In the morning, the Queensland Dahlia Society's annual tuber sale will bring an opportunity for gardeners and enthusiasts to buy rare and popular dahlia tubers. While the sale is unaffiliated with the Coorabell Hall committee, the Queensland Dahlia Society is no stranger to the venue, with its dahlias often featuring in the Hall's annual flower show. Then, come evening, the Hall will come alive with music, food, and dancing at the EPIC Fundraiser, showcasing the legendary cover band EPIC to raise funds for Coorabell Hall. More details below.

### Coorabell Dahlia Tuber Sale

Flower lovers are invited to the Queensland Dahlia Society's (QDS) annual tuber sale, happening at Coorabell Hall on Saturday 25 October from 8am to 11am. Entry is free and the sale offers a wide range of dahlia tubers, with prices set at \$10, \$15, \$20, and \$25, from rare unicorn varieties to seasoned favourites.

'Buying directly from growers not only saves on postage but also gives you the opportunity to learn from experienced dahlia enthusiasts,' organisers said. Members of the Society will be on hand throughout the morning to share expert growing tips and advice. The event is popular, so visitors are reminded that doors will open at 8am sharp, with sales in-

person only. Attendees are encouraged to bring a carry bag or box for their purchases.

Everyone is welcome, and you don't need to be a member of QDS to attend. For more information visit Facebook: [CoorabellTuberSale2025](#)

### EPIC Fundraiser rocks Coorabell Hall

Music lovers are in for a treat on Saturday 25 October, when legendary cover band EPIC takes the stage at Coorabell Hall for a night of food, fun, and unforgettable tunes. The fundraiser will run from 7pm–11pm, and guests can enjoy a delicious meal from Yana's Mediterranean Feast, a fully stocked bar, and, of course, a live performance from EPIC.

Known for their unique mission, playing the songs other cover bands won't, EPIC has been entertaining audiences along the east coast for over a decade. The band was founded by the late Jesse Balfour (1967–2024), a visionary musician whose passion shaped EPIC's distinctive sound. Today, the line-up features Alan Park (Keyboards), Stuart Kent (Vocals/Guitar), James Palmer (Vocals/Drums), and Greg Strong (Vocals/Bass). Over the years, EPIC's members have shared the stage with some of the biggest names in music, including Sir Cliff Richard, The Doobie Brothers, Earth, Wind & Fire, Skyhooks, Ian Moss, Brian Cadd, and even Dame Edna and Billy Connolly. Their high-energy performances guarantee a night of dancing and singalong favourites.

So, gather your friends and come along to support this community event. With great food, a lively atmosphere, and music that dares to be different, the EPIC Fundraiser at Coorabell Hall is set to be a night to remember.

Tickets are \$45 and includes a light meal.

Bookings can be made online at:

[events.humanitix.com/epic-fundraiser-coorabell-hall](https://events.humanitix.com/epic-fundraiser-coorabell-hall)

## Byron Community Markets goes back in time



Byron Community Market is set to rewind to the 1980s on Sunday 5 October. This celebration pays homage to the decade the Byron Community Centre (BCC) first took on management of the markets in 1987.

The event also forms part of BCC's 130-year anniversary celebrations,

marking an impressive milestone for one of the regions most important community organisations.

Market-goers can expect a day of big hair, bright colours and classic 80s tunes, with live performances from The Versace Boys, Lainie Godiva and ObiSun, along with a high-energy dance workshop by Byron troupe, The Cassettes.

Visitors are encouraged to dress in their best retro outfits, with on-the-spot prizes offered throughout the day. A social media Tag and Win competition will also run throughout

the day, giving market-goers the chance to share their outfits or favourite stalls online for extra prizes.

'Born in the 80s is a chance to celebrate the Market's history while creating a vibrant and memorable day for our stallholders, locals and visitors. It's all about bringing people together in true Byron spirit,' said Carl Taylor, Byron Market's Manager.

The Born in the 80s Market runs from 8am–2pm at the Byron Bay Main Beach Foreshore. Entry is free.

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

## Destination Byron holds annual Symposium



*Pictured: Destination Byron's Board. Source: Supplied.*

Destination Byron will host its annual Symposium on Thursday 23 October at the Byron Community Centre, inviting locals, business owners, and community leaders to come together for a day of learning, collaboration, and forward planning.

This year's theme, *Thriving Together: Building the Future for Byron Bay*, highlights Destination Byron's commitment to managing a sustainable visitor economy that benefits residents and the natural environment. 'This year's symposium sees our strongest line-up yet,' said Destination Byron President Wendy Bithell. 'We're offering a day jam-packed with the latest insights and trends, information on how we can all work to support the transition to more sustainable practices and sessions that give practical advice for local businesses to thrive.'

One of the sessions will also invite community input to find ways to better harness Byron's tourism visitation to drive positive outcomes for residents, local businesses, natural environment, and the community's unique local culture.

The morning program includes a keynote on sustainability from Professor Sara Dolnicar, a deep dive into regional tourism data, and a case study on accessible events with adaptive surfing champion Mark 'Mono' Stewart. Economist Clifford Bennett will also provide a global update on business and tourism trends.

In the afternoon, keynote speaker Jess Ruhfus, an award-winning marketer, will share strategies for building successful brand partnerships, followed by a panel discussion with community leaders and council representatives. A working-style lunch will encourage networking and idea-sharing, while a funding workshop will give members the chance to shape Destination Byron's future initiatives.

Destination Byron thanks all its sponsors of the event, which runs from 9am–2:30pm. Tickets are \$89 and can be purchased online at: [byroncentre.com.au](http://byroncentre.com.au). For more information, visit: [destinationbyron.com.au](http://destinationbyron.com.au).

## Bangalow Resilience Network meets disaster expert

Bangalow Resilience Network (BRN) is teaming up with Monash University researcher Paul Cull to explore how communities can better prepare for and respond to disasters.

The project, *Enabling Community-Led Disaster Response Initiatives*, will run two sessions across Saturday 7 and Sunday 9 November, at the Bangalow RSL Hall, and aims to co-design practical strategies with residents who have lived through disasters.

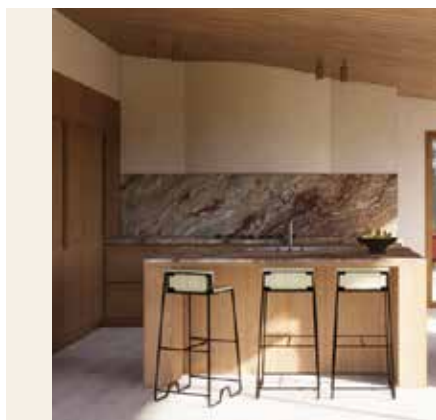
Paul Cull, a PhD candidate at the Monash University Accident Research Centre, has just returned from Brazil where he worked on similar projects, and is now turning his focus to the Byron Shire. In Bangalow, topography makes CB radios less effective, so BRN has been building a network of 27 CB radios, throughout the 2479 postcode, across enclaves including Coolamon, Newrybar, Nashua, Eureka, Bangalow, and Coopers Shoot.

The idea is to strengthen connections between hubs so information can flow more effectively in an emergency.

Locals are encouraged to get involved in the workshops, which will follow a seven-step co-design process. Participants will share past disaster experiences, map risks and resources, identify useful skills and supplies, and take part in a simulated response exercise. At the end of the process, communities will have a tailored disaster response plan and a clear picture of what support is already available.

BRN hopes the collaboration will deepen engagement between residents and resilience groups, helping ensure that when the next disaster strikes, the community is ready to respond together.

Anyone interested in taking part or learning more can contact researcher Paul Cull via email: [paul.cull@monash.edu](mailto:paul.cull@monash.edu) or visit the BRN Facebook page.



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# Matsuri Japan Festival 2025



*Pictured (left-right): Matsuri Byron Bay Samurai Show, 2024, and Byron Taiko performance, 2024. Source: Supplied.*

On Saturday 18 October, the Matsuri Japan Festival returns to Main Beach for an afternoon and evening of celebration, delicious flavours, and cultural immersion. Organised by the Byron Bay Japanese Matsuri Committee and Byron Taiko, the free community event will feature more than 50 stalls, including 15 Japanese street food and drink vendors, a lively marketplace selling traditional goods including kimonos, and a beer garden fundraiser at the Surf Club.

Festival-goers are advised to bring a blanket and enjoy the picnic atmosphere. YATAI Asian street foods will be served under the lantern, and live Japanese music, alongside



cultural performances such as the Bon-Odori dance and thrilling Taiko drum workshops, will be provided. Families are well catered for too, with kids' craft workshops and Japanese kids games.

The event officially opens from 12pm, with the main program running in the cooler hours between 2pm to 8pm. Music and the bar will continue until 10pm. In case of wet weather, activities will move inside the Surf Club.

Matsuri has been introducing our community to unique Japanese cultural experiences since 2017. With its mix of food, music, dance, and hands-on workshops there is something for everyone. For more information visit Facebook: [MatsuriJapanFestivalByronBay2025](https://www.facebook.com/MatsuriJapanFestivalByronBay2025)

## Get ready to swing: Byron Bay Lindy Exchange



Byron will host the Byron Bay Lindy Exchange (BBLX) this spring, with three days and nights of swing dancing, live music, and community celebration running from 17–19 October. The festival is the first of its kind, and is presented by Swing On In, bringing together dancers from across Australia to celebrate the joy of Lindy Hop.

This year's theme, Tiki Summer Holiday, promises colourful costumes, playful parties, and plenty of warm energy. The program is packed with highlights: a Friday night Tiki Welcome

Dance featuring a live swing band, Saturday's glamorous BBLX Swing Ball at Byron Theatre, and a Sunday Farewell Dance and Mystery Bus Tour with blues and jump-swing tunes.

Daytime activities include yoga, lighthouse walks, beach picnics, and a Charleston Stroll class, offering plenty of chances for attendees to connect on and off the dance floor.

The event also supports local charity Beauties Feeling Fabulous Inc.

Founded in 2017 by sisters Chrissy and Veronica, the charity was formed to honour their sister Elisha, who battled cancer and wanted to feel beautiful during her treatment. This inspired the sisters to help women living with, or undergoing, cancer treatment to feel fabulous through their struggles. They provide a safe space for women to get pampered and promote self-care.

The BBLX is all about building community, creating lasting friendships, and elevating your Lindy Hop experience. It's not just about the dancing (although that's a big part), it's about embracing the culture of swing dance, finding new partners, and creating memories in one of the most beautiful places on earth.

Tickets are available for individual events or as a full weekend pass. For the full program and bookings, visit: [byronbaylindyexchange.com.au/#tickets](https://byronbaylindyexchange.com.au/#tickets)

# Byron International Film Festival - Love Film



Pictured (left-right): Cast of *Birthright*, and the film's director, Zoe Pepper. Source: Supplied.

The Byron Bay International Film Festival returns 17–26 October for its 19th edition with a theme that says it all: Love Film. Across 10 days, audiences will discover stories that move, challenge and inspire, spanning international cinema, local voices, filmmaker Q&As and special events.

Among the documentary highlights are *Comparsa* (Guatemala), where young women use street theatre to resist violence and reclaim joy; *Journey Home*, following David Gulpilil's final wish to be laid to rest in his birthplace; and *Champions of the Golden Valley* (Afghanistan), where local skiers carve joy and resilience against the odds.

Environmental works such as *Turtle Walker* and *Fool's Paradise (lost?)*, and the genre-defying *The Extraordinary Miss Flower*, are also part of the powerful line-up. The compelling drama program includes the darkly funny Australian feature *Birthright* opening the Festival; *HappyEnd*, set in near-future Tokyo, exploring politics, rebellion and friendship; and *It Was Just An Accident*, a revenge thriller that recently claimed the Palme d'Or at Cannes. Short film showcases bring bold new voices, while festival awards honour Best Film, Best Documentary, Best Short, Young Australian Filmmaker and more.

Screenings take place across the region – in Byron Bay, Ballina, Brunswick Heads, Lismore, Coorabell and Mullumbimby. From confronting truths to celebrating resilience, to the shared experience of joining fellow film lovers, BBFF 2025 is an invitation to experience why we truly love film.

## Exclusive interview with opening night film Director – Zoe Pepper

Ahead of the Byron Bay Film Festival's opening night, we caught up with writer-director Zoe Pepper, to talk about her debut feature *Birthright*, a razor-sharp satire on generational inequality. Described as 'a darkly twisted tale about a disillusioned generation and their chase for the success of their baby-boomer parents' *Birthright* follows the story of the evicted and jobless, Cory and his pregnant wife.

Forced to stay with his parents, the couple's stay extends longer than intended and the parents' become worried that their disappointing son will never leave the house. Desperate



to prove himself, the edges of Cory's reality slip away and he finds an unexpected path to success that detonates the family.

***Birthright* is your debut feature, and it's opening BBFF. How does it feel to launch such a personal project in front of this community?**

The Byron community seems to be fully entrenched in the housing crisis so I'm sure this film will resonate with the Festival audience. I'd say *Birthright* is as political as it is personal; the two are firmly intertwined. It's very much about intergenerational inequality and because I am a millennial I've got a front row seat to how that's shaping the lives of a generation.

**The film explores generational inequality in a darkly funny and unsettling way. What inspired you to tell this story, and why did satire feel like the right lens?**

I kind of can't help but find the funny side of situations, no matter how dire they are. I have a bit of an allergy to films that take themselves too seriously, so satire is where I like to play. The humour also gives me a lot of licence to keep the audience's empathy shifting and show the characters' different perspectives. *Birthright* is very much about the chasm of misunderstanding between the baby boomers and younger generations, but neither generation comes out unscathed.

**You've had a rich career in theatre. How did your background on stage influence your approach to directing this first feature film?**

My background writing and directing for the stage gave me the time and experience to find and refine my style and tone. This meant I came to directing *Birthright* having already drilled into the dark and irreverent tone where I want to play. I like to dance right on the line between comedy and tragedy and I got to experiment with how to do this in my theatre work which meant I had confidence in executing the unique tone of *Birthright*.

**You've said *Birthright* channels your generation's fears around stability and success. What do you hope audiences will take away after watching it?**

*Birthright* is a really fun ride for audiences. It's been interesting to see which characters audience members relate to or despise – it's very varied, which is great, because those differing experiences of the same film make for great conversations. I hope the film sparks debate about this divide between generations.

*Birthright* makes its Byron premiere at the Festival's red-carpet gala at Palace Cinemas on Friday 17 October. The film will be followed with an after-party at Byron's Tokyo Doll. For more information and tickets visit: [bbff.com.au](http://bbff.com.au)

### Long Lunch With Mates by Bangalow Men's Shed

Over the last four years Bangalow Men's Shed, supported by the NSW Police, has been hosting annual Men's Mental Health lunch events around the Byron, Ballina and Lismore Shire. Over 150 people attended the last event, held at the Northern Rivers Hotel in Lismore, with well-known identities speaking. Everyone had a great afternoon of fun with loads of belly chuckles whilst raising awareness of men's mental wellbeing.

David Noakes, President of the Bangalow Men's Shed said that the Byron and Lismore Shire have the highest suicide rates per head of population in NSW – highlighting the importance of raising awareness for men's mental health.

The next lunch will be held at the Bryon Bay Services Club on Friday 17 October, 12pm–3:30pm. Ticket price is \$150 per person for a delicious two course meal with drink included. Come along and listen to two outstanding guest speakers.

- John Gibbs, rugby league great who represented Manly, NSW, and Australia in his playing career. He has since built a successful media career and continues to inform and entertain in his commentating on *ABC Grandstand Sport*.
- Pat Howard, former Wallaby with 20 Test caps, brings a wealth of experience both on and off the field. He played a pivotal role in shaping elite performance, as former General Manager of Team Performance, for the Australian cricket side.

Funds raised will be shared amongst The Byron Shire Rebels Rugby Club, juniors' division, and Bangalow Men's Shed for further community initiatives.

Bookings are to be finalised and paid for by 10 October with limited spaces available. Book online at: [stickytickets.com.au](https://stickytickets.com.au) and search 'long lunch with mates'. Or book directly with Bryon Bay Services Club on ph: 6685 6878.

### Byron Bay Hospital Auxiliary by Mary Webb

September was a busy month for members, with planning for the annual Golf Day. Members were out and about in Byron Bay knocking on business owners' doors inviting them to contribute to prizes for the Golf Day fundraiser.

As usual they were more than generous and it was very much appreciated. The Auxiliary received a gift of a pizza oven for

the main prize from Bunnings. A big thank you goes to all who helped make this a bumper day in raising funds to aid our local hospital, with equipment donations.

The Auxiliary has agreed to support Byron Central Hospital with the purchase a bedside ultrasound machine for the A&E department. This will offer a faster, more cost effective, non-invasive first line assessment for a wide range of conditions. The ability to perform these evaluations at the bedside will significantly improve patient care.

Our next meeting will be held on Monday 20 October at 2pm at the Byron Bay Services Club. New members are always welcome. Please contact Maureen for further information on ph: 6685 3162.

### CWA Brunswick Heads by Mary Webb



Another successful market day was held in September and besides all the usual goodies for sale, we incorporated some locally grown garden produce from members' gardens. We also handed out recipe cards for our seasonal vegetable slice (pictured).

This was all part of CWA Awareness Week on 7–13 September, which promoted the benefits of seasonal eating with

an urgent focus on how we think about purchasing and consuming food, emphasizing the economic, environmental, and health benefits that can come from this. It also highlights the importance of reducing food waste in Australia and improving food security for all of us.

Our branch AGM will be held on Friday 3 October at 9am. All are welcome to come along and hear about what has been happening at Brunswick Heads branch, over the past year. Our regular weekly Craft session is held every Friday, bar public holidays, from 10am to 2pm, all welcome.

A gold coin donation is all we ask, this helps with the upkeep of the Hall and also provides morning tea. For further information and membership contact email: [brunscwa@gmail.com](mailto:brunscwa@gmail.com)



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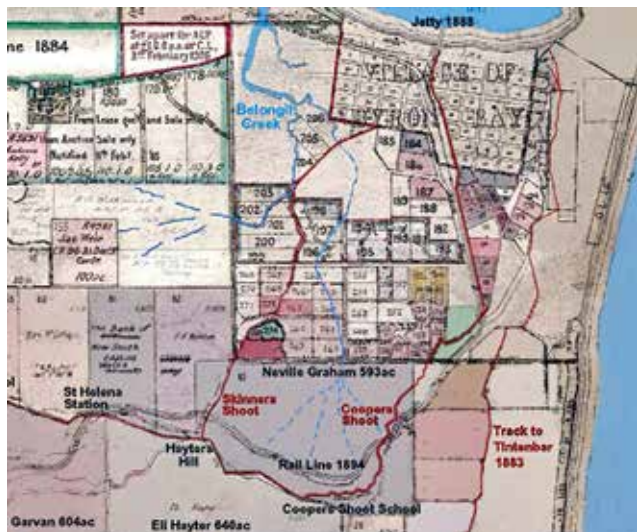
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# All about the shoots

by Peter Tsicalas, Brunswick Valley Historical Society



Pictured: Portion of Parish Map of Byron Bay, Edition 5, in use 1894–1906. Source: Brunswick Valley Historical Society.

The Wikipedia entry for Byron Bay says that the timber industry is the origin of the word ‘shoot’ in many local names – such as Possum Shoot, Coopers Shoot and Skinners Shoot – where the timber-cutters would ‘shoot’ the logs down the hills to be dragged to waiting ships.

Maurice Ryan in his book *Time and Tide; A History of Byron Bay* (1984), asserts that, ‘These shoots were highland places overlooking the coastal plain where the early cedar men dragged their logs to a convenient spot and dropped them over the precipice to the lowland below,’ adding that the Coopers, or someone, conceived the idea of shooting the logs from the hills. Various other publications also accept that the cedar-getters originated the ‘shoots’. In his *Thematic History of Byron Bay*, Dr Brett Stubbs says, ‘The historical record is relatively silent about the details of how... the shutes were used,’ but Robert Douglas Carr’s *More about Shoots and Shutes* (1973) provides the following rare descriptive account:

‘To shoot a log, it was sent over end first, although it sometimes changed course. But with no mechanical aid other than handspikes and cant-hooks, it wasn’t always easy to send them end first, so they were rolled over. It was not a good way, because even the best logs have a taper, and so they could veer off to left or right, and get lost or stuck half-way down a mountain-side..., which presumably had been cleared of all trees, stumps and rocks to create a wide path.’

Carr (1899-1977), was a farmer of Kyogle who married widow Elsie Smith (1885-1970) – the daughter and granddaughter of the timber-getting Coopers who gave their name to Coopers Shoot.

There doesn’t appear to be any newspaper references to ‘shooting’ logs, but you’ll need a lot of patience to



Pictured: Bullock teams for Cedar Getters. Source: RTRL.

trawl through Trove to confirm it. Nor does cedar-getter Dick Glascott ever mention shoots/shutes as a means of expediting the process of getting his logs from the Possum Creek/Coorabell ridge area to the depot at Tyagarah.

He seems to have dragged his logs out of the scrub by bullocks, down tracks cut by Bundjalung people, and probably aided by single bogie once they got down to the flats. Glascott of Tintenbar first encountered ‘Drumble Charlie’, a Bundjalung man, in 1865, subsequently relying on him to organise work parties, mostly employed on road cutting. The original cedar shoot in the Possum Creek area doubled as a road, serving as such until the new vehicular road was cut across the slope in 1885 by colonial labour. So it’s a fair assumption that early newspaper references to ‘shoots’ simply implied steep roads, which were in fact the shortest and least steep routes for getting from the plateau to the beach, the cedar getters’ tracks progressively developed into pukka roads.

The earliest reference to Possum Shoot as a location name occurred in *The Northern Star* of 27 May 1882 when selector George Glissan gave his address as Possum Shoot, Brunswick Road. The 640 acre property was still known as Possum Shoot when a 10 acre business reserve was carved off in 1889, half a mile from what is now known as Possum Shoot. The Glissan reference was the only mention of Possum Shoot until 25 October 1884, when George Jarvis proposed a coach run to Byron Bay and Brunswick River ‘when two at present impassable places have cuttings made, one at Wilson’s Creek and the other at Possum Shoot...’

On 17 July 1889 tenders were called for a new school building at Granuaile, near Possum Shoot, on Denis Garvan’s selection encompassing McLeod’s Shoot. The first reference to a Possum Shoot Road was 25 January 1890.

The shoots were also a place of many expeditions. On 25 November 1885 *The Northern Star* reported the exploits of a couple of adventurers from Lismore who, after apparently taking the right-hand fork at Coorabell:

‘Struck the clear track through the dense scrub, but it appeared to be seldom used as it was all overgrown with tall weeds peculiar to this district. However, on we went up hill

and dale for miles, thinking we should never see the ocean, but turning a bend came upon a house and clearing, with a charming view of Byron Bay and sea, and riding for another hour, and leading our horses down a steep shoot (probably Skinner's, but could be Cooper's), we came upon the open sandy beach, and could not see a house in any direction, but after riding up and down the beach, we at length saw a faded finger-post saying, 'This way to Accommodation House,' and following a narrow track, came upon two houses nestled under the shadow of a hill, one being Mr Jarman's Accommodation House, and the other, Mr Daniel's Store....

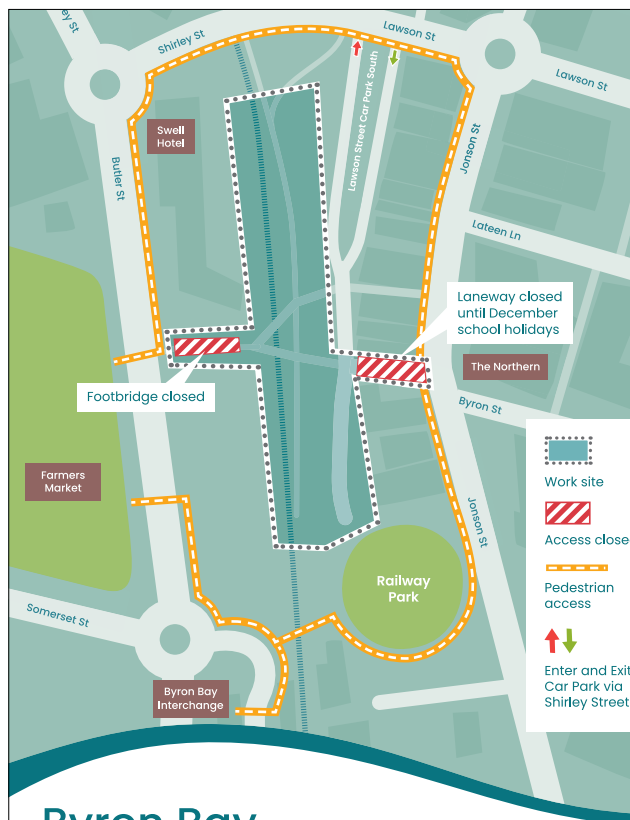
'On the return journey ...and saying farewell to the ocean, we crossed the Belongil Creek twice, and after cantering for a few miles over a sandy heath, entered the scrub, where Mr Daniel kindly put us upon the right road (probably another route to Skinner's Shoot road), and left us, and on we went up hill and dale as aforesaid, getting blocked at one time by a large fig tree laying across the road, making it necessary to go through the lawyers and stinging trees to get round it. ... we plodded on ... and reached Strong's Hotel (at Eureka) about six o'clock....'

At much the same time, an intrepid traveller left the Bay for Ballina and reported in the *Daily Telegraph* of 28 November 1885 that, 'For a distance of four miles the country was of the most barren description.... Leaving it with the pleasure of greeting an old friend, the scrub is again entered, and we at once climb up on to high land by what is known as Cooper's Shoot. The name is significant, and it is only possible to get an idea of this almost perpendicular road by a personal ascent or descent. The descent is the more disagreeable, especially in wet weather, for then it is like an ice slide. Lead your horse, and he will probably roll down and crush you. Ride him, and you have an equal chance of sliding over his head as he slips, or of keeping him company as he turns summersaults and other acrobatic feats on his journey to the bottom.... The track winds in and out, up hill and down dale, like the tail of a huge serpent....'

November 1885 was a busy month for travellers to the Bay, another bloke reporting in *The Northern Star* of 21 November 1885 invited you to '...mount and come with me, and within 3 minutes having crossed Belongil Creek, we are in the midst of this almost impenetrable forest.... We then travel up the range, going along the track up Cooper's Shoot, we get on to the top of the Range, near Mr Hayter's selection...', possibly confusing the shoots of Skinner and Cooper, but Eli Hayter of Cooper's Shoot was the address used by *The Northern Star* 24 August 1904.

Eventually, the route down McLeod's Shoot and along Ewingsdale Road eased the excitement of excursions to the Bay.

For references, information, and more fascinating historical stories head to: [mullumbimbymuseum.org.au](http://mullumbimbymuseum.org.au)



## Byron Bay Drainage Upgrade

The upgrade to Byron Bay's town centre drainage system has begun.

The upgraded drainage system, once complete, will significantly reduce flooding impacts to the town centre.

In October one lane of a section of Jonson Street will be closed for up to four weeks. Vehicles will still be able to access Jonson Street under traffic control, but detours will be in place for through traffic.

Please support our town centre businesses, they remain open and are ready to welcome you.

### More information

For more information and to sign up for email updates visit Council's website:

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## Dogs on tour

by Milt Barlow

When you take off for a short break, sometimes it's hard to leave a family member – your woofers – at home. And it can be expensive to board them. But that's all changing rapidly, in the air and on the ground.

Virgin Australia will start allowing small dogs and cats to travel in the cabin from December 2025. This new pet policy permits passengers to bring one small cat or dog per person, provided the pet is at least eight weeks old and fits comfortably in a soft-sided, ventilated, airline-approved pet carrier that fits under the seat in front of the passenger. Pets must remain in their carriers during the flight and are limited to two designated economy rows on select domestic routes. The pet carrier and pet count toward the passenger's carry-on baggage allowance, with a combined weight limit of 8kg. There is an additional charge of around \$30 per one-way flight for pets in the cabin.

This move follows approval from aviation regulators and is designed to cater to the high demand from pet owners, with research showing that 70% of pet owners would travel with their pet in the cabin and 57% would fly more often if this service were available. The policy includes strict health and safety requirements, such as the need for a veterinary certificate for pets under 12 weeks or over 12 years old, and only certain breeds are permitted under Australian regulations.

On the ground, bringing a furry friend along on a short getaway is also easier than ever with many hotels, resorts, and caravan parks embracing dog-friendly hospitality. Whether seeking a luxury retreat, beachside resort, or rustic caravan park, this guide highlights some top spots from South East (SE) Queensland to Sydney and inland New South Wales where your dog isn't just tolerated, but truly welcomed.

### SE Queensland: coastal and hinterland havens

Queensland leads with a variety of pet-welcoming places catering to all styles of travelling dog owners. The Spicers group offers luxurious stays across the region – from urban New Farm in Brisbane to rainforest serenity on the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. Their Pooch Package includes cosy dog

bedding, bowls, treats, and a warm welcome, making dogs feel part of the family.

Popular pet-friendly hotels on the Gold Coast include Quest Robina that offers rooms with dog beds and private courtyards. Additionally, BIG4 Gold Coast Holiday Park provides great caravan and camping options that allow pets with spacious dog-friendly outdoor spaces.

Restrictions are usually a maximum of one or two dogs per room, with fees varying between properties. Always check ahead for size or breed restrictions, but many Queensland spots welcome all breeds happily.

### Sydney: stylish stays for dogs and owners

In Sydney, dog-friendly luxury hotels are rising in popularity, blending high-end comfort for both humans and pooches. Pier One Sydney Harbour offers a Puppy Package that supplies in-room dog beds, food and water bowls, and even a doggy minibar. Dogs can join outdoor dining areas with special dog menus, ensuring a pampered city stay.

Other top options include Kimpton Margot, a boutique hotel with no pet fee, providing plush pet beds, mats, and concierge services pointing to the best nearby dog parks and cafes. QT Sydney welcomes dogs with their Pup Yeah! Package for dogs under 20kg and offers a special in-room doggie dinner menu and pup mini-bar.

Across the board, Sydney hotels usually set a two-dog maximum per room, with mandatory booking on special dog packages to guarantee a dog-focussed experience.

### Inland NSW and along the coast: caravan parks and nature escapes

For those preferring a more outdoorsy or budget-friendly approach, many caravan parks in NSW proudly welcome dogs. Discovery Parks - Forster features fenced off-leash areas, dog washing stations, and pet-friendly cabins. BIG4 Saltwater Yamba offers enclosed decks on cabins, off-leash dog parks with agility equipment, and washing facilities for dog bedding.

The Double D Caravan Park in Peak Hill boasts two off-leash areas and a do-it-yourself doggy spa. Most parks permit one dog per cabin, sometimes more on campsites, and charge nominal nightly fees. Check park policies for specific breed restrictions or seasonal limitations.

### Common pet policies and tips

Though dog-friendly accommodations are increasing, common rules include:

- leashing dogs in public areas
- restricting dogs from dining indoors
- cleaning up after pets
- pet fees ranging from \$5 to \$25 per night depending on property and dog size
- usually limiting the number of dogs per room or site.

Booking directly with the property is advisable to ensure current dog policies and availability.



Pictured (left): Jan Olley at home and a rainy day out in the field. Pictured (right): Byron Bird Buddies surveying local bird-life. Source: Supplied.

# Birds of a feather: Jan Olley and the Byron Bird Buddies

by Charla Rallings

Jan Olley has become a familiar figure to many in Byron Shire, recognisable by the binoculars slung around her neck and her broad-brimmed hat. For more than two decades, she has dedicated her time, knowledge and passion to the protection of local birdlife, guiding Byron Bird Buddies (BBB) from its early days into a respected conservation group recognised across the region. Byron Bird Buddies' story stretches back to the 1970s with local conservationist Jack Willows, who first monitored and tagged birds at the Belongil Estuary. Originally formed as Belongil Bird Buddies in 2003, the group has grown from a handful of volunteers into an active network dedicated to protecting migratory and resident species. From safeguarding the breeding grounds of Pied Oystercatchers and Red-capped Plovers to hoping for the return of Little Terns, BBB has long championed the Shire's estuaries, wetlands, and coastal habitats. At the heart of it all is Jan Olley, whose passion has inspired countless people to stop, look closer, and listen to the birds – a dedication recently recognised when she was named 2025 Byron Shire Community Member of the Year.

'I was initially very surprised but deeply honoured,' said Jan. 'And I thank Byron Shire Council and everyone who supported me along the way. The recognition means a great deal – not just to me personally – but to the incredible network of people who make the work of BBB possible.'

Jan grew up in the Northern Rivers, born in Lismore and raised on a dairy farm in Larnook – just northwest of town. Although she left the region in 1964, the desire to return home was too great to ignore. 'Returning to the North Coast after a lifetime of work and travel felt entirely natural,' she said. 'My family was still here, and my partner shared a passion for the creative industries. Familiar with the region and drawn by its natural beauty, strong environmental values, community spirit, and the freedom to live and work with purpose, I came home.'

Jan has been involved with BBB for over 20 years, stating that she was inspired to join the group after a lifetime of being

immersed in nature. The moment that sparked her love of birds and the natural environment, was found in Tin Can Bay, Queensland. 'The environmental spark truly lit in Tin Can Bay,' she said. 'We'd sailed into that quiet fishing village aboard *Dorje*, our 30-foot cruising boat and home for the past year. We bought a small house and stayed anchored there for 13 years.'

Having always felt drawn to nature, Jan has spent time in National Parks here and in the Americas, but she says it was on the inlet shores of Tin Can Bay, just south of the Great Sandy Strait and K'Gari (Fraser Island), that she really found the spark. 'It was there, sitting on a sandbank with binoculars and bird books, that I began to understand the stories birds carry. Watching those grey shorebirds feed at the tide's edge, I learned they'd flown all the way from Siberia. That was a 'wow' moment.'

From there, Jan joined a conservation working group and co-founded the Tin Can Bay Coastcare Group. She then created her very first bird walk brochure. 'I had spent hours in the local Wallum (QLD) bushland, trying to decipher the chorus of calls and movement. It was a steep learning curve but I was hooked, not just on birds, but on learning about the ecosystems that support them and the communities that care for them.'

In 2003, Jan moved to Byron Bay. This is where she saw a callout in the local paper for a working bee to protect Little Terns at Belongil Estuary. 'I showed up, and never really left. Becoming coordinator of BBB wasn't something I had planned, it was simply the next step in standing up for what I had come to love.'

The work of BBB has changed and evolved since its inception. Jan explains, 'In the early days, the focus was limited to the Belongil Estuary, where I assisted other members with maintaining the protective fence and, as it was a dog-free area, helped with on-ground education. But my main focus for the group was to observe and record the birds that visited the estuary. I did this on a weekly basis, maintained an Excel spreadsheet, and wrote a monthly report of my observations.'

This, among other things, prompted the name change from Belongil Bird Buddies in 2007 to Byron Bird Buddies, and its purpose was to reflect the broader focus of the group. 'We had been approached by other agencies to conduct bird observations and monitor additional sites in the Shire. It was an obvious transition – there were two other estuaries, the Brunswick River Estuary and Tallow Creek Estuary, as well as extensive bushland, coastal and inland, behind Mullumbimby. We became involved in other projects in these areas.'

The group had become an invaluable resource, and Byron Shire Council requested that BBB monitor the two Byron Shire sewage treatment sites (STP). 'This project became very important to us,' said Jan, 'as we are paid for the results and the report. The money is used to further conservation work in the Shire and 'a very sustainable use of ratepayer funds', as it was explained. We also volunteer to conduct bird surveys on private property when needed, particularly on land being restored through Brunswick Valley Landcare, of which we are a locality group.'

Over the years, Byron Bird Buddies have developed bird walk brochures for five shires, along with brochures, posters, signs and bookmarks. A typical day for Jan is quite varied, with time split between sitting at a computer developing educational resources, overseeing projects, and being out in the field.

'Basically, BBB activity is governed by projects – we develop a six-monthly plan and update it each month. So, my time is spent overseeing these projects making sure they are implemented and the information is recorded and reported as required. Some of the time is behind the desk and some in the field. I am also available to consider new requests and answer bird questions on our social media sites about birds and bird issues.' Jan chuckled, 'Sometimes it feels like a full-time job.'

As a volunteer-run bird monitoring and conservation group, they've worked to protect native bird species and their habitats through ecological monitoring, education, and advocacy. Operating under Brunswick Valley Landcare as a Locality Group, BBB leads projects primarily in Byron Shire, with outreach to surrounding areas. Their work spans wetlands, coastal reserves, sub-tropical rainforests, and urban bushland. Regular bird surveys contribute to long-term datasets used by researchers, councils, and government agencies, and they also deliver school programs, community workshops, and interpretive materials to foster awareness and appreciation of our region's rich birdlife.

The BBB are actively involved in a range of monitoring and conservation projects across the region. These include protecting beach-nesting birds such as Pied Oystercatchers and Little Terns, surveying rainforest species in the Nightcap Range, and monitoring threatened species like the Bush Stone-curlew, Glossy Black-Cockatoo and Albert's Lyrebird. The group also conducts regular shorebird counts, wetland surveys and submits vital data to Council, Cape Byron Marine Park, and BirdLife Australia. Education and outreach are a core part of BBB's work. Volunteers deliver school programs, run information stalls, and provide presentations and materials to raise awareness of local birdlife. They also conduct on-request surveys for private properties involved in habitat restoration, helping landholders better understand and protect the species on their land.

BBB also plays an advocacy role, providing input on development proposals and land-use planning, while contributing to regional committees. All survey data is carefully recorded, managed in Excel, and uploaded to BirdLife's Birddata platform to ensure long-term monitoring and conservation outcomes for Byron Shire's bird populations.

BBB has been involved with some incredible conservation efforts, and while Jan doesn't particularly like the word 'proud' – as she doesn't favour one project over another – she has been fulfilled with the outcomes of particular projects.

'Monitoring beach-nesting and shorebird populations since 2004, and collecting valuable data on the species that nest on our beaches and those that arrive from distant shores,' she says. 'Our work continues to focus on protecting these vulnerable sites from threats such as dogs and inappropriate human behaviour. Our reporting on The Byron Wetlands and Vallances Road STP sites has also been vital, producing detailed information that contributes significantly to conservation knowledge. Education has also been a cornerstone of our efforts, with programs such as Wild About Birds for schools; bird-watching guides and brochures; bird bookmarks; posters including Birds of Gondwana and Big Scrub Rainforest; and engaging PowerPoint presentations all helping to inspire and inform the community.'

As a volunteer group, BBB cannot function without help from volunteers. 'We all pitch in and help in whatever way we can and all efforts are appreciated,' says Jan. 'Some take on big roles like the beach-nesting bird project and collaborate with National Parks and the Council to achieve outcomes for the birds. Many assist with the monitoring program and organise their lives to be available on monitoring days, others may help at community stalls or presentation days.'

One of the biggest challenges facing local bird populations today is habitat loss, as population growth leads to the clearing of bushland, trees, and quiet spaces. Even a single tree can provide vital habitat, so protecting natural areas and planting native species is essential. Increasing numbers of pets also add pressure, says Jan, and managing the impact of dogs and cats is so important. 'If people respected protected areas, kept dogs on leads in public spaces, including our estuaries, and ensured cats were confined at home, local birds and wildlife would thrive, and the work of carers and conservation groups would be made far easier.'

When asked about a favourite bird to spot in the field, Jan's answer comes with a wholehearted love for every species. 'I don't really do favourites, nature is too interconnected for that. Every bird plays its part, and singling one out feels like missing the bigger picture. But I'll admit, the Eastern Spinebill always makes me smile. There's something about its colour, delicate beauty and darting energy that lifts the moment.'

Looking ahead, BBB invites the community to get involved in their upcoming events, with Bird Week at the end of October set to feature guided walks and presentations. Community members can get on the mailing list and receive the program via email: [byronbirdbuddy@gmail.com](mailto:byronbirdbuddy@gmail.com), or go to the Facebook page: [/byronbirdbuddies](https://www.facebook.com/byronbirdbuddies). Anyone is welcome to join, but it's best to check the program via Facebook or the website before attending, as plans can sometimes change. For more information visit: [byronbirdbuddies.com.au](https://www.byronbirdbuddies.com.au)



Pictured: George Greenough at Lennox Head, 2025, and George on his surf mat with camera, late 60s. Source: Supplied.

## Shark Encounters with George Greenough: Part 1

*From the Editor: Few people in Byron Shire need an introduction to George Greenough. A California-born surfing pioneer, revolutionary board designer, award-winning filmmaker, and lifelong ocean adventurer, George's innovations shaped how many experience the ocean. He's been here since 1967, and seen first-hand the changes in our surf culture and marine environment. In this special two-part feature, George shares three unforgettable encounters with sharks. With the recent attacks sparking debate, his perspective offers a rare window into the relationship between us and the surf.*

### Foreword

This is not a pleasant thing to write about. Sooner or later, if you spend a lot of time in the water, it could happen to you. I can still remember when I first came to Australia over 50 years ago and had my first shark encounter. John Witzig was there, along with several others on longboards. I was on the spoon at the Caloundra River mouth and noticed a large black mass of mullet coming out of the river. Someone screamed 'Shark!'. Then you see it in the wave face, there's this rush, and everyone's on their knees stroking for the beach. It was about 15 feet away, the school of mullet enveloped me – bumping and crashing – people on the shore watched helplessly, and then I was safe and glad to be on the beach.

After seeing a bit of the latest horror shark attack on the news, I'm left to wonder where the balance is. White sharks are fully protected, and if you mess with one you risk fines of over \$200,000 or two years in jail. To me, some extreme conservationists have turned the Great White into a 'cash cow', driving a multimillion-dollar industry around research grants, entertainment, shark mitigation programs, and shark-related tourism. This increase of white sharks in the area hasn't helped our local dolphins either. Me and other surfers have seen dolphins with fins bitten off, and while surfing at Seven Mile Beach, we saw a dolphin attacked. I've had three incidents where dolphins have risked their lives to protect me from sharks. In one example, four dolphins came over to me, two under me, the other two on each side, pressing against me, while others in the pod hassled the shark. Numbers are well down from what they used to be, yet all I hear from the conservationists is 'Save the Sharks'.

This phrase has gained strong public momentum in recent decades, but our dolphins don't always receive the same level of advocacy and they need our protection too.

Surfer, Daniel Crockett from England wrote about his shark encounter at Cudgen in 2003, saying he saw something large break the surface before vanishing again. He was 20m away from it and over 200m out from the beach. He screamed like a little girl, scrambled for a little wave, while the water took on a nightmarish black hue. The wave petered out and he didn't stop moving until he was finally at his car. He finished with, 'I know the meaning of fear'.

This is what you want to do – paddle as fast you can for the beach. Screaming 'shark' is not a good idea in some situations. This is the reason I wrote about these four encounters: to educate people through my experiences. I've had other encounters as well, but these were scary and happened in just over a year. In all four incidents I was on a mat, which offered no protection. It's a game of bluff, and making offensive moves against large white sharks, well, the odds are very much in the shark's favour. So, what did I do that stopped these sharks from proceeding with their attacks? I must have done something right. In three out of the four incidents the sharks were spotted in time. I either moved towards them or held my ground. Those sharks didn't risk their physical integrity and broke off their approach. I was pretty shattered by these encounters, but myself and everybody who was in them are still here. That's why I've written this. These stories might save your life or someone else's in a similar situation. So, let's begin with encounter one.

### Shark Encounter One

**Place and time:** Seven Mile Beach, 1.5 miles north of Lennox Head Surf Club, 11am  
**Conditions:** Bright sun with scattered clouds  
**Water clarity:** Good – 20 feet of visibility  
**Surf:** Head high  
**Season:** Spring 2007 – October

Earlier that day, I picked up Martin Sprickle who'd arrived from New York City the night before. A friend of Peter Maguire, Martin was over to help me complete the surf

rescue boat I was building. A 6'2" former semi-pro fighter, he was very good with his hands and was a great help. I picked him up in Byron, and we drove down to Seven Mile Beach. We rubbered up (wetsuits) and went out on air mats. Meanwhile, one and a half miles south, someone spotted the white shark cruising near Lennox Head Surf Club. The lifeguards cleared the water as the shark headed north. We had been out for an hour and a half. The incoming tide had just about stopped the surf and we were just floating around having a chat. At this point, we failed to notice there was no one in the water in front of the Surf Club. I was still in shallow water on the outer edge of the gutter, while Martin was about eight feet away in deeper water, just over the drop off, with his legs moving slightly to hold position. We were facing each other, sitting offset, and I could see behind him. It was a beautiful day, the last thing on my mind was sharks.

Then I saw the water darken behind Martin. I didn't wait for a positive ID and said what you don't want to hear – 'Martin, there's something big behind you'. He moved quickly, joining me on the shallow bank facing the shark. The shark made a slight course change, turning away from Martin, staying in deeper water. I got a good rush when I first saw it side-on 15 feet away. The image of a big, thick, dark shape is still burned in my mind. Just when I said 'big shark' to Martin, it turned northeast, staying in the deeper water on the edge of the shallow bank we were on. It maintained the same speed and course, and was in no hurry, moving with confidence across the sand bank toward deeper water. There was a bit of hope it would keep going. My focus was intense watching the shadow move away, and at this point, I could only just make it out. I was about to say to Martin, 'let's get the f\*\*k out of here', when the shadow began to elongate and the shark turned back toward us. If it had gone a little bit further before turning back on its final approach, we would've lost sight of it and headed in, and in doing so, been in deeper water when it returned.

The shark was no fool and on its final approach it came out of the sun, making us front-lit, while staying at a depth where its dorsal and tail fins were beneath the surface. The only thing visible were swirls on the surface left by its tail. Backlit, the shark is harder to see, but I could make out its course – heading slightly to my left toward Martin. He is still the primary target. It's not backing off, the shadow's getting bigger, and there's no waves in sight, no escape, no time. I was going to have to deal with it. Moving toward the south side of the shallow spot, Martin shadowed my moves. It was around half a metre shallower than the rest of the bank. White sharks have a symmetrical shaped tail, if the shark came onto the shallow bank where we were, it would rise closer to the surface, slowing it down. Now it was time to act.

I moved to intercept it. My timing was important and I waited until the shark had closed to less than 20 feet and had underwater vision of us. Coming out of the sun, the thickness was impressive and it was moving like a submarine. Slowly, I got underway, paddling at 30% power, moving toward it on an intercepting course. When it could only see me with one eye, I changed course, targeting the head, increasing the pressure on the shark. I was not moving fast, but like I owned that piece of water. The shark continued to hold its course and speed toward Martin, and we could now see the details on the shark as the light patterns rippled down its side. The

shark was still in deeper water while approaching the shallow spot. Martin and I moved slowly toward it, very close to eye contact at a distance of 8–10 feet at the edge of the shallow bank. Then, the shark turned away, breaking off its approach and heading north, staying in deeper water.

Martin's martial arts training did not fail him. Like a wingman he remained to my left slightly behind me. He was backing me up, but also leaving me room to manoeuvre. When the shark was out of sight, we headed across the deep water for the beach. We were going about 75% now, watching our backs the entire time. I was glad to reach the beach and I bet Martin was too. Back at the car, I said to him, 'Well you haven't even been here 24 hours and had a full life and death experience'. On the way back, we stopped at the Surf Club to warn them about the shark. I parked next to a cop car and there was no one in the water, but the place was fizzing with activity. The lifeguards, whose eyes were big and round, said it was 15 feet long and I told him we'd seen it further up the beach. It took a few days for it to sink in on how big the shark really was. I told a friend it was around eight feet long, but when I went back to the Surf Club a few days later and checked their logs, there were two entries: 15 feet and five metres.

Everybody's going to ask me, 'what would you have done if the shark kept coming?' First, it was still in deeper water approaching the shallow spot as Martin and I were moving slowly toward it. If the shark came onto the shallow spot, I wanted to intercept it just inside the shallow, so the shark would be close to the surface. If it came onto the shallow spot where we were, with deeper water to its right, it would have a chance to break off its approach and turn into deeper water if it didn't like the situation. Had it kept coming, I would've held the same course and reduced speed, so the shark would be in shallow water and approaching us on the surface. No fast movements. Everything's slow so as to not excite the shark but instead draw it in close thinking I'm an easy pickoff. Then, you go for the eye, driving your fingers in, using your other hand to fend yourself off. Depending on the position of the tail, the head may swing toward you as it tries move away. The eye is the most vulnerable part. If it feels the eye is in any danger in any way, even though it's covered by a protective membrane, it won't like it.

Fortunately for us, the bluff worked. Had the shark called it and kept coming, the odds aren't good for a successful offensive against a shark of this size. If you look at it from the shark's point of view as a top ocean predator, preserving your physical integrity is important. You don't want to take chances with prey that may cause you injury. In this encounter, Martin was an easy pick off with the shark coming from below and behind. Thankfully, I saw it in time. From the shark's point of view, it was apparent we knew it was coming. Now your prey is approaching on an intercepting course. It was two on one. The move on our part was less than six feet, and the shark decided to play it safe. The intercepting move spooked it, and it turned away with a burst of speed. This was an older shark and no fool. If I was the shark in this situation, and this moved towards me in the shallow water – creating a shadow of doubt – I wouldn't risk my physical integrity either.

*Stay tuned for part-two in November's edition, where George covers two more encounters and offers shark-safety tips. To read the full, unedited version of George's story visit: [georgegreenough.com](http://georgegreenough.com)*

# On the cover

Photo by Marc Wilson

Local photographer Marc Wilson is a well known presence on our Instagram feeds, posting daily shots and videos of our beautiful town for the last five years. He and his wife have called Byron Bay home since 1988, when they moved here to run the family business – the Backpackers Holiday Village, a 200 bed home-base for travellers from around the world.

'In the early 90s,' Marc said, 'I started doing morning beach walks before work, which quickly became a daily ritual. About five years ago, I began taking photos and videos on those walks. One of my sons had encouraged me to start capturing Byron's beauty and share it online, which led to the creation of my Instagram account, @marcsbaywatch.'

Today, the page has grown into a community of almost 10,000 followers from across the globe. Marc and his wife now run The Cape Beach House at Clarkes Beach, a five bedroom bed and breakfast that continues their connection with Byron's hospitality. 'My mornings still begin with a sunrise beach walk,' said Marc, 'Followed by a surf check story that I share on Instagram. Photography has become my creative passion, a way to celebrate the beauty of Byron and share it with people both near and far.'

The cover photo on this edition of *The Byron Wave* was taken in December 2024, not long after sunrise using his drone.



'It captures The Pass, which for me is Byron's most iconic beach. No matter the tide or the weather, The Pass always looks spectacular. On this particular morning, the light and perspective came together perfectly to show off its magic.'

Marc says his favourite thing about Byron Shire is the connection between nature and community.

'Every day feels like a reminder of how lucky we are, with whales on the horizon, surfers at The Pass, the markets, and the laid back lifestyle,' he said. 'There is a sense of magic here that never really fades. I feel grateful every day to live here and to be able to share Byron's beauty through my lens. What started as a morning ritual has turned into something much bigger, and I am humbled that so many people from around the world want to see Byron through my eyes.'

You can find Marc's photography on Instagram: @marcsbaywatch, and soon, prints will be available for purchase on his website: marcsbaywatch.com.au

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# Life on the lamb

by Kylie McGregor, Byron Farmers Market



*Pictured: Sheep farmer, Warren Wiggins, at Bangalow Farmers Market. Source: Supplied.*

The Northern Rivers may not be traditional sheep country, yet local farmer Warren Wiggins has established a successful stud on his 80-acre farm in Bexhill.

His secret? The breed of sheep. 'Dorpers are suitable for almost any climate and grazing conditions, and I've always loved the breed so it was an obvious choice,' says Warren. 'They're fast growing, adaptable and you don't have to shear them. And they taste great. Dorpers are also one of the only breeds of sheep that have genetic marbling in the meat. A bit like a sheep version of the Wagyu. The flavour is slightly stronger than average lamb – closer to mutton or hogget.'

This flavour has proven popular not only with Warren's regular customers at the local farmers' markets, but also with a number of local cafes and restaurants who feature the lamb on their menus. That's pretty impressive considering the farm is just over 10 years old.

Despite not growing up in an agricultural family, Warren always wanted to be a farmer. After leaving school he worked on a sheep and wheat farm in Moree, but when the work dried up, Warren went in a different direction, including the hotel industry and Coles supermarkets.

Ironically, it was Coles that led Warren to the Northern Rivers and farmers' markets. After marrying and having a young family, he decided he needed a better suited job and took up a position with Coles. When the supermarket chain transferred Warren to Ocean Shores the move took him full circle – back to farming, only this time with his own farm.

'I didn't like the way Coles was operating and I still wanted to get back to the land, so we looked around the area and ended buying land at Bexhill, which is the farm where we still live,' Warren says. 'It took some time to build up our breeding stock, but we're really happy we made the move. I think this is God's country.'

More recently, Warren has started using regenerating farming practices, incorporating fermented seaweed, which he makes himself, into his farm plan. 'It's about getting good microbes into the soil, which improves the pasture,' he says. 'Instead of spraying it, I feed it directly into the sheep's water. It gives them a good hit of probiotics, which helps them fight off worms. In turn, their excrement, including those microbes, go back into the soil. It's great.'

You can find Warren at the Local Dorper Lamb stall every Thursday at Byron Farmers Market and every Saturday at Bangalow Farmers Market. Byron Farmers Market is held Thursdays 7am–11am at Butler Street Reserve and Bangalow Farmers Market is held Saturdays 7–11am in Piccabeen Park.

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Delivering all the hallmarks of this sought after community with the added advantage of being the best valued land North of the Bruxner.

Between the privilege of hinterland views, the accessibility of town services and the proximity to both Ballina and the East Coast, Northridge may be your last opportunity to build an affordable, quality home on slice of land large enough to grow into.

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Town sewerage  
Mains power  
NBN ready  
CDC\*

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Bill Johnston  
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Max Mulcahy  
0422 277 756

**LJ Hooker**

Michael Shay  
0427 862 711

Luke Shay  
0416 275 607

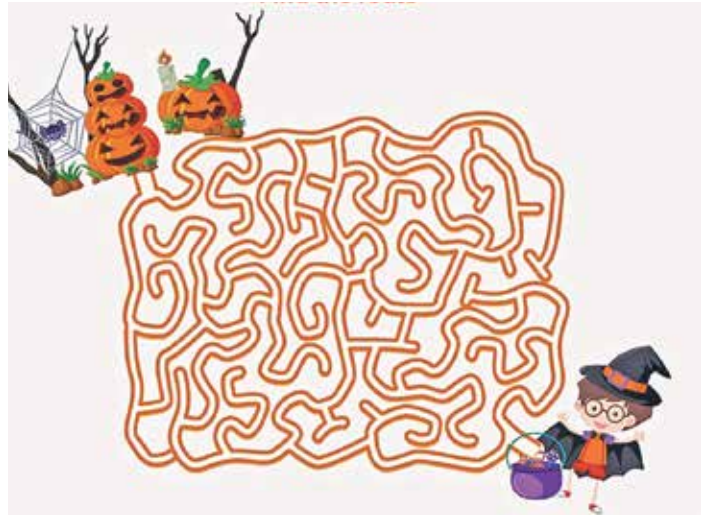
### Kids Corner

#### Jokes

- Q. What do ghosts use to clean their hair?  
A. Sham-BOO.
- Q. Why did the skeleton go to the party alone?  
A. Because he had no body to go with.
- Q. Why was the mummy so tense?  
A. Because he couldn't unwind.
- Q. What do you get when you cross a vampire with a snowman?  
A. Frostbite.
- Q. Why don't witches ride their brooms when they're angry?  
A. They're afraid of flying off the handle.
- Q. What's a ghost's favourite fruit?  
A. Boo-berries.
- Q. What do you call a monster who loves to dance?  
A. The boogie man.
- Q. Where do ghosts go on holidays?  
A. The Boohamas.

#### Puzzle

Can you solve this maze?



## School holiday adventures



#### Byron Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

During the holidays your children can become Wildlife Guardians or a Keeper for a Day with the Sanctuary's specialised holiday programs.

Spend the day with the keepers behind-the-scenes, learning about conservation and caring for our wildlife. Find out what working in a wildlife sanctuary is all about. Or you can come spend the day and play mini-golf, splash in the water park, see the animals, and drop into the cafe for some great food.

Visit: [byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au](http://byronbaywildlifesanctuary.com.au)



#### Byron Solar Train

The Byron world first Solar Train is open to all, warmly welcoming the community to ride on the immaculately restored 1949 era two carriage heritage train. The solar powered train journey takes 10 minutes one way or 25 minutes return.

Relax on vintage lounge seats in first class or chat to fellow passengers in coach, as you pass through littoral rainforest, endangered coastal wetlands and over the stunning tea tree Belongil Creek.

Visit: [byronbaytrain.com.au](http://byronbaytrain.com.au)



#### Brunswick Heads Fairy Trail

Fairies have taken up residence in Brunswick Heads. They have made lovely little homes in interesting locations around Brunswick Heads. Can you find them all?

There is a clue sheet available at the Visitors Centre to guide your exploration of the Fairy Trail. The fairy houses are made of recycled objects, and each house carries a positive message from the fairies. This is a delightful and free activity for the whole family.

Visit: [brunswickheads.org.au](http://brunswickheads.org.au)

# National Science Week at St John's

by David Birmingham, Principal, St John's Primary School, Mullumbimby



*Pictured: Science Week experiments.*

## Science Week

Recently, our Stage 3 students became scientists and teachers, leading the whole school through a series of exciting hands-on experiments to celebrate National Science Week. Students explored ice cream in a bag, led by Charleen, Ella and Samara; sherbet – led by Josie,

Edie and Talullah; edible slime – led by Joseph, Arlo and Finn; colour wheel – led by Alexander, Eligh and Billy; marshmallow launcher – led by Rose and Ghina; and marshmallow milk swirl – with Tiana, Harper and Alariah. It was a fun-filled day of science, curiosity and discovery, all made possible by our fantastic Stage 3 leaders.

## Brisbane trip

Recently, our Stage 2 and 3 students embarked on a highly anticipated and action-packed camp. We were so excited to see them connect, explore, and create lasting memories together. Our three-day adventure was packed with a wide variety of activities designed to be fun, engaging, and educational. The journey began with a stop at Bounce in Burleigh to burn off some energy before we headed to Brisbane. Once we arrived, the

students cooled off with a swim at Streets Beach and enjoyed a movie at Cineplex. They also explored some of the city's most iconic locations, including a ride on the Wheel of Brisbane and a riverside walk to enjoy the Brisbane skyline.

Throughout the camp, students got a taste of Brisbane's rich culture and natural beauty. They discovered new things at the QLD Museum, took a relaxing City Cat ferry ride, and enjoyed some playtime and lunch at New Farm Park and Roma Street Parklands. The fun didn't stop there. Students also got a chance to see the NRL game and enjoyed a delicious dinner at the Normanby Hotel. On our final day, we headed to Movie World for a day of thrilling rides and entertainment before returning to school. We are so proud of our students and the positive energy they brought to every activity.

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# Creativity, colour, and talent at Ocean Shores Public

by Ocean Shores Public School



At the northern end of the Byron Shire, Ocean Shores Public School is home to a vibrant and diverse school community of learners, teachers and families. Public Education Week recently showcased a broad range of opportunities for learning and celebration for students across all our stages and in all areas of the curriculum, allowing them to embrace the theme of Ignite Your Potential.

An annual highlight of Education Week is our Book Week Parade, which was bursting with creativity, colour, and characters. Dressed as characters from much-loved classics and new favourites, students explored the power of reading, imagination, and storytelling. The parade not only celebrated a love of books but also reminded us that stories have the power to ignite potential, inspire curiosity, courage, empathy, and imagination. In the same week, our Kindergarten students commemorated an exciting milestone – completing their first 100 days of school. This was marked with a colourful 100 Days Brighter celebration, and the classrooms were buzzing as our youngest students engaged in fun and creative

activities designed around the number 100. It was a colourful and meaningful way to honour how far our little learners have come, and shine a light on the exciting journey ahead. Our Kindergarten students also had their much-anticipated turn attending the Farmers' Market at New Brighton. They enjoyed the opportunity to shop for farm-fresh produce from the stalls of local producers. After this enriching outing in our local community, they later worked together to prepare their spoils into a delicious and healthy shared meal.

Students from Yrs2–6 enjoyed a fantastic opportunity to attend an iconic local event at the Byron Writers Festival. They began the day with a captivating sculpture walk and then heard from a range of inspiring children's book authors, who shared their experiences, motivations, and journeys to becoming writers. Guest speakers included Peter Helliard, Maxine Beneba Clarke, Sally Rippin, and Sarah Armstrong. It was a wonderful creative experience for our students.

Finally, in sport, 50 of our talented athletes made their way to the Cavanbah Centre for the Headlands District Athletics Carnival. Competing against students from other local primary schools in track and field events, our students enjoyed a very successful day, with several first, second and third places achieved. A team of qualifying students will go on to represent our district at the Far North Coast Athletics Carnival.

Congratulations to all our amazing athletes and to our whole school community for embracing Public Education Week 2025 with all its fabulous learning opportunities.

## Book Week: A magical celebrations of stories

by Nicky Greenlaw, Teacher, Byron Bay Public School



*Pictured: Indigo and Sierra, Book Week.*

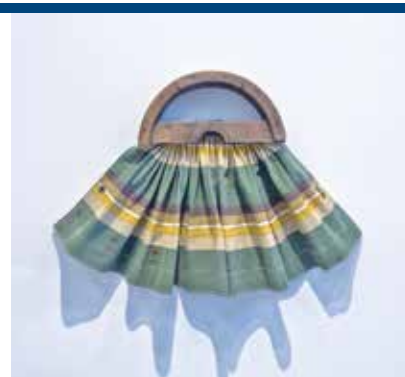
Our recent Book Week was a joyful celebration of all things literary and creative. The much-anticipated **Book Week** parade turned our school into a storybook come to life, with students and staff dressing up as their favourite characters, from classic heroes to quirky creatures. The event was more than just a fun dress-up day – it was a chance to dive into the world of books, spark imagination,

and share the stories that inspire us. It was wonderful to see our whole school community come together to celebrate the magic of reading and the timeless power of storytelling.

Eight of our senior students travelled to Pottsville Beach Public School to take on the **Premier's Debating Challenge**. With topics ranging from student leadership to canteen jobs and lunchtime sport, our debaters tackled tough arguments with confidence and teamwork. Bangalow Green and Gold teams delivered strong performances, narrowly defeating our teams in earlier rounds. Byron Bay Blue then took the win in an exciting face-off against Byron Bay Red, finishing third overall in our zone. A huge shoutout to all our speakers for their enthusiasm, quick thinking, and brilliant teamwork.

Yr4 student Bonny will proudly represent our school as part of the **QLD State Equestrian** team at the **National Interschool Competition** in Sydney. Riding her pony, Rocky, Bonny earned a top four spot in the State for Novice Dressage and Show Horse – an amazing achievement. With riders allowed to compete in just two events, we're thrilled to see Bonny showcasing our school on such a big stage.

Yr6 student, Jett, was selected to represent the **North Coast** at the prestigious **NSW PSSA Football Championships**. This is a fantastic achievement that highlights his hard work, dedication, and exceptional skill on the field. We're incredibly proud to see Jett compete at such a high level and represent our community with passion and sportsmanship.



Pictured (left-right): Dean Stewart, and artworks – *Catcher*, and *Ruffle* from *Material Lines* series, 2025. Source: Dean Stewart.

## Artist Profile: Dean Stewart

by Charla Rallings

Dean Stewart is an artist whose work transforms found objects into striking assemblages of wall pieces and sculptures. His family ties stretch from Tumble Creek to Nimbin, where his parents once built a home and ran a banana plantation, before moving to Sydney. Making regular trips back to the Northern Rivers throughout his youth, he found a deep connection to the landscape and community, and it always felt like home.

When the time came to care for his parents in Ballina, Dean established his art practice locally and has been holding exhibitions for the last five years. His work can be found in private collections in Lennox Head, Ballina, Mullumbimby, Sydney, Melbourne, and Oxfordshire, UK. *The Byron Wave* spoke to Dean to find out more.

**You've worn many creative hats as a designer, sign writer, and visual merchandiser. What drew you to take the leap into becoming a full-time artist?**

I've always been creative. From signwriting at TAFE to interior design at Enmore Design Centre, I've explored this in different ways, but not always with full focus.

In 2022, I enrolled at Byron School of Art (BSA), and those three years gave me the confidence to take risks, pull together everything I'd done before, and approach galleries and prizes as a working artist. I've always been drawn to found and discarded materials – the patina, the wear, the mix of dull and shiny surfaces. Using them feels like a

natural extension of my background in design and visual merchandising.

**Your current exhibition, *Material Memory*, transforms salvaged objects into artworks that feel deeply personal. When did you first realise this could be your artistic voice?**

I've always been a bit of a bowerbird with an eye for form, colour, and material. As a kid I spent hours in Dad's shed surrounded by timber and oddments. My sister did leatherwork, which also influenced me. The shift happened gradually, but it crystallised when I started at BSA in 2022.

Found objects give me a starting point. I've always loved op shops, tip shops, and places like Reverse Garbage. Sometimes I leave with materials and sometimes just ideas. And often, years later, I'll pull something off the shelf and suddenly the idea clicks.

**You describe your practice as acknowledging the origins of materials while reshaping them into something new. How do you balance honouring an object's past while giving it a fresh life?**

For me, the story begins when I find the object but keeps evolving as I work. I keep its essence intact.

I might clean or strip it back, but I don't erase. The fresh life comes through how I arrange things: multiples of the same object, bold compositions, or sometimes deconstructions.

**Artists often face challenges and doubts. What hurdles have you faced, do you have any rituals to spark creativity, and how has the region influenced your journey?**

Confidence has been a hurdle, along with balancing time, money, and making art. I've always had a strong sense of what works, but sometimes it takes time to get there. Studying at BSA gave me a big lift. I get inspired when driving, or wandering through an op shop or Reverse Garbage. Travel, galleries, architecture, and design also feed into my practice – but so do the small, everyday details most people don't notice.

I feel a deep connection to this region, through my family history and the creative community. The natural environment is endlessly inspiring – the mix of coast, hinterland, small towns, and flora and fauna. As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, I also find the region especially welcoming and inclusive.

**Where can we learn more about you and your work?**

My current exhibition, *Material Memory*, is at the Tweed Regional Gallery and Margaret Olley Art Centre, until 30 November. I'm also excited to share that my next exhibition will be at Northern Rivers Community Gallery in Ballina in March, 2026.

If readers want to follow my journey, they can do this by joining my mailing list at website: [deanstewartart.com](http://deanstewartart.com) or following me on Instagram: @deanstewartart

And finally, I want to say a big thank you to *The Byron*, *Ballina*, and *Lennox Wave* magazines for supporting local artists. Publications like yours keep our creative culture thriving.

# Wolfman Howls

by Mario, Howl and Moan Records

The heart races, beating faster and faster... the hairs on your arms tingle... a sweat breaks out... what can cause such fevered activity? Finding that long searched 'needle in a haystack' record that popped up at your local record store. These are the sensations we live for in the record collecting world. The thrill, the excitement, the joy – and then months of celebration – 'I've got that on vinyl,' will ring out of your mouth much to the annoyance of family and friends.

These sensations are unique in the modern world. The art of collecting has shrunk, and shrunk, and we find more and more that the digital world has taken away the thrills, the egotistical nature of human to say 'I own that.' Be it a record, a book, a piece of art, a model car etc. These items will do more and more to define your personality and tastes than the thousands of selfies on your Instagram page. Whether it is investing \$1 or \$100 on something that you will keep and treasure, hopefully passing it down to your children or donating it to a good cause when it is no longer needed – this is what keeps a healthy and functioning society. Unique shops run by individuals, not webpages and faceless chain stores. We each have the obligation to support our local businesses and physical attractiveness of our towns. Keep supporting these family owned businesses because it sure is hard to keep surviving in the present economic and political situation.

Likewise, supporting local live music events also adds to the fabric of our society. One of our favourite events is happening over the weekend of 4–5 October at the Civic Hotel in Lismore. It is Festy-Ville No.4 featuring close to 20 bands across Punk, Metal, Hardcore and Alternative music, including some of our all-time favourites.

So get out there and go support the unique local businesses our region has long been famous for – you many just find that needle in a haystack.

## What's been spinning on vinyl recently in the Wolf's Den

**Bleak Squad, Strange Love** – Melbourne's newest supergroup and possibly album of the year.

**Osees, Abomination revealed at Last** – San Francisco's Garage/Psych rockers return to their heavy past.

**Fugazi, First Demo** – A true 'I've Got that on Vinyl' release.

**Mazzy Star, She Hangs Brightly** – Finally reissued on vinyl and still sounding hauntingly beautiful.

**Rick Snowden – The Electric Acid Surfboard Test** – Stunning debut album from local artist.

Until next month, rock on.

# Groove Terminator at Nudge Nudge Wink Wink



After a sold-out September opener, Nudge Nudge Wink Wink (Nudge) returns to The Shed at Billinudgel Hotel on Saturday 4 October, with a stellar line-up. As one of the region's most iconic community dance events, Nudge blends feel-good rhythm, heart-led impact, and an atmosphere like no other. Now in its landmark 10th season, Nudge continues to deliver unforgettable dance-floor moments while raising vital funds for local charities. Since 2015, the monthly party has donated more than \$433,000 to 41 local organisations.

Proceeds from September and October events support Liberation Larder, a grassroots organisation powered by over 50 volunteers.

From sourcing and cooking meals to delivering food directly to those in need, Liberation Larder provides vital, judgment-free support to people facing homelessness, hardship, and the rising cost of living. Every ticket sold helps keep their essential work alive.

October's headliner, Simon 'Groove Terminator' Lewicki, is a pioneer of Australian electronic music and one of its most celebrated DJs. The first DJ signed to a major label, Groove Terminator (GT) broke through with *One More Time* and later hit No.1 on the Australian and US Billboard dance charts. Beyond the booth, GT helped shape dance culture with Ministry of Sound Australia and his groundbreaking History of House live show with the Grammy-winning Soweto Gospel Choir, earning an ARIA nomination and a spot in KCRW's Top 30 Albums of 2024. In 2025, *Rolling Stone Australia* ranked him No.22 in their *50 Greatest Electronic Artists of All Time*. Now, for the first time, GT brings his iconic sound to Nudge.

Also joining for his first time in the Shed is Peppin. Known for his seamless blend of disco shimmer and tech-house drive, Peppin has been moving dance floors for more than a decade. His sets are high-energy, full of groove, and crafted to keep the vibe alive from first beat to last.

As co-founders of Cunning Stunts, Lord Sut and Dale Stephen will bring their trademark Balearic, funk, twisted disco and house to the Shed each month. Also adding their signature spark to select events this season, Brunswick Picture House performers will once again surprise us with cabaret, comedy, and theatrical flair – on stage or roaming the crowd.

Missed out on this event? Season 10 continues on the first Saturday of each month through June 2026. The following event will be Saturday 1 November. Subscribe for ticket updates on website: [cunningstunts.com.au/subscribe/](https://cunningstunts.com.au/). For further information visit: [cunningstunts.com.au](https://cunningstunts.com.au)

# Why pet insurance matters in Byron Shire

by North Coast Veterinary Services



*Pictured: Dog choosing an insurance policy. Source: Pexels.*

Our pets are part of the family, and with so much outdoor space to explore in Byron Shire, they're often living their best lives. But along with that outdoor lifestyle comes exposure to risks like accidents, tick paralysis, infections, and as they age we see the usual chronic conditions. This is where pet insurance can make all the difference.

Pet insurance helps cover the cost of veterinary care when your pet is sick or injured. It is not the membership or wellness plans many veterinary services offer, instead pet insurance can be used at any veterinary clinic.

Policies vary, but most reimburse a percentage of eligible expenses including surgery, diagnostics, emergency treatment, and hospitalisation. It's designed to help pet owners manage unexpected veterinary bills without compromising on care.

Whether you own a dog, cat, or horse, pet insurance can be a wise investment. In Byron Shire, we commonly treat pets for paralysis tick toxicity – especially during the warmer months. Treatment can be intensive and expensive, involving anti-serum, oxygen support, ventilation, and prolonged hospital stays.

For dogs, cruciate ligament disease is another frequent and costly condition. Surgery is often required, followed by a period of rehabilitation.

Certain breeds, like dachshunds, are also prone to intervertebral disc disease (IVDD). IVDD is a serious spinal condition that can cause paralysis and may require surgery and long-term care.

For horses, accidents and colic are among the most common emergencies. Equine vet bills can quickly escalate, particularly if referral or hospitalisation is required.

## What to look for in a policy

Not all pet insurance is the same, so be sure to review:

- coverage for paralysis tick treatment
- coverage of orthopaedic conditions including specifically cruciate disease
- breed-specific cover for issues like IVDD, or airway surgery
- annual benefit limits and exclusions
- optional extras such as routine or dental care which you may or may not require.

Importantly, it's best to start insurance while your pet is young and healthy, before any conditions arise.

Unlike in human health insurance, most pet insurers will exclude pre-existing conditions, even if diagnosed just before your policy starts.

Modern veterinary care offers excellent outcomes, but unexpected costs can be overwhelming.

Pet insurance provides peace of mind so you can focus on what matters most: your pet's health and wellbeing.

If you're unsure where to start, speak to your preferred veterinary team. They will be happy to help guide you on what to consider when choosing cover for your furry companions. There are even some options for exotic pets available.



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## The hidden life in our wetlands: Eastern Spinebill



If you've ever wandered through Byron Shire's wetlands or native gardens and caught sight of a flash of chestnut, white, and black darting among the flowers, chances are you've met one of our most delightful locals – the Eastern Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*).

For local bird watcher Jan Olley of the of Byron Bird Buddies, the sight of a spinebill never fails to bring a smile. 'There's something about its colour,

delicate beauty and darting energy that lifts the moment' she said.

Eastern Spinebills are a type of honeyeater, with a long, thin down-curved beak, perfectly adapted to sipping nectar. In Byron Shire, you'll often spot them feeding on native grevilleas, banksias, or gum tree blooms, playing an important role as pollinators in our local ecosystems. They will also eat insects or other small creatures. Though tiny, only 13–16cm long, they are quick and have a distinctive piping call that's sharp and cheerful. It will often announces its presence before you even see it darting through the undergrowth.

Our local wetlands provide crucial habitat for the Eastern Spinebill who is a common visitor. These spaces

offer dense cover for nesting and a year-round supply of food. Protecting these habitats means safeguarding the wellbeing of this charismatic bird and many other species that call the wetlands home.

Eastern Spinebills will sometimes live close to people. Gardeners who plant native flowering shrubs may be rewarded with regular visits – with the little bird flitting in and out.

The presence of species like the Eastern Spinebill is a sign of healthy wetlands and gardens. By valuing and protecting these green spaces, we ensure that future generations can enjoy the same wonders. So next time you find yourself near a wetland, keep an eye out for this little bird. You may just find yourself smiling too.

## Sandhills restoration to be complete this October



The long-awaited restoration of the Sandhills Wetlands in Byron Bay has entered its final stage. The 1.8 hectare site, tucked between Lawson and Massinger Streets, was heavily sand-mined in the 1960s, leaving the wetlands destroyed and degraded. For decades it was overgrown and neglected, attracting anti-social behaviour. Now, thanks to years of planning and consultation with the Arakwal, the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council and Crown Lands, the wetlands are being returned to life.

'This project sees the wetlands restored, which will not only benefit the environment, but the quality of water flowing to Clarkes Beach will be better, and it will be a place for the community to walk, sit and enjoy,' Mr Soulsby said.

Three new ponds have been excavated, removing some 15,000 cubic metres of material and vegetation, and already the wetlands are filling with water and attracting birdlife. Work in September focused on creating interconnected paths, landscaping and tree planting. The project is scheduled for completion in October and is funded by the Australian Government through the Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program, and the NSW Government through the Public Spaces Legacy Program.



# Discovering the healing work of the medical medium

by Sheri Buob, The Green Fairy

I first discovered Anthony William, widely known as the Medical Medium, after watching the documentary *Heal*. I'd often seen his books at my local Santos health food shop, but it wasn't until I saw Anthony himself on screen – a man with what seemed like a gift beyond explanation – that I felt compelled to pick one up. His first book, *Medical Medium*, immediately captured me. With a background in Nutritional and Dietetic Medicine, I was fascinated by his claims and insights. In August 2019, I decided to try his most famous protocol: freshly juiced celery every morning. To my surprise, the results were immediate. My adult acne, which I'd battled into my late 30s, began to clear. I had just given birth earlier that year and was utterly exhausted, but the celery juice felt like a tonic for my brain and body. Anthony explains this is because celery is rich in unique mineral salts that nourish cells, support the adrenals, and cleanse the system.

The changes didn't stop there. My long-standing IBS symptoms improved, and a mole I'd had on my neck since childhood turned into what looked like a pimple and then literally disappeared. I began incorporating the full Medical Medium Morning Cleanse: lemon water to flush the liver, celery juice for detoxification, and the heavy metal detox smoothie to draw out toxic metals.

At the time, I was also struggling with severe anxiety – to the point where I couldn't even drive without panic attacks and IBS 'attacks'. Through Anthony's work, I learned that heavy metals in the body can trigger anxiety. Following his protocols avoiding troublemaker foods, like eggs, dairy, and gluten, and focusing on healing foods, my anxiety completely vanished. Even the arthritic pain in my hands and feet, linked to lingering Epstein-Barr virus, began to ease.

What strikes me most about Anthony, is not just his knowledge but his humility. Now in his 60s, he looks decades younger, a testament to his lifestyle. Despite criticism in mainstream media – largely, I believe, because his information empowers individuals rather than corporations – he continues to share generously through free podcasts, recipes, and articles on his website.

For me, Anthony has been the missing piece in my lifelong passion for health and longevity. His simple yet profound protocols have given me energy, clarity, and freedom from conditions I thought I'd carry forever. If you or someone you love is struggling with their health, take a look at the work of Medical Medium. For more information visit: [medicalmedium.com.au](http://medicalmedium.com.au)



## Grill'd helps dancers to the world stage

by Jennica Fernstrom

Byron Bay locals have once again shown that community spirit comes in many flavours – this time served with a side of fries. Thanks to the Local Matters initiative at Grill'd Byron Bay, dancers from Heart of Dance (Lennox Head) have raised hundreds of dollars to support their dream of representing Australia at the World Dance Masters Championships in Blackpool, England, in July 2026. Each month, Grill'd restaurants donate \$500 to local community groups through their Local Matters program. Customers are given a token with their meal and invited to vote for one of three groups by placing their token in the jar of their choice. At the end of the month, the donations are split according to the votes.

For the Heart of Dance girls, every

token dropped into their jar was a step closer to the world stage – and Byron diners delivered. Team coordinator, Jessie Kernaghan, says the support from Byron Bay has been incredible. 'It might look like a simple token in a jar, but every vote made a real difference. The community has been so supportive, and we're so grateful to Grill'd and everyone who chose to back the girls.'

The funds raised through Local Matters will help cover the huge costs involved in travelling to England, from airfares and accommodation to costumes and training. Combined with other events across Shires, it's part of a growing fundraising effort to ensure the girls can proudly step onto the Blackpool stage wearing the green and gold.

**How you can help:** The Heart of

Dance team is now calling on the Byron business community to get involved, if you'd like to

- host a country-themed fundraising night at your venue. Whether it's line dancing, raffles, or a themed dinner, email: [heartofdance2@gmail.com](mailto:heartofdance2@gmail.com) to chat about ideas, or
- sponsor the team by coming on board as a corporate partner. The immediate need is support for team shirts as the girls prepare for international competition.

With the help of Grill'd and Byron locals, the Heart of Dance girls are steadily building the funds they need for the trip of a lifetime. There's still plenty of work ahead, but knowing the community is behind them gives the team the confidence to keep pushing toward Blackpool 2026.

## Byron Bay Pickleball Club's first birthday celebration

by Byron Bay Pickleball Club Committee



At Byron Bay Pickleball Club (BBPC) we've just celebrated our very first birthday. When we started out, we had only three nets and a handful of players (four to twelve) turning up for two sessions a week. Fast forward to now and the BBPC has grown into a thriving community of 145 members, five sessions a week, and regular skills coaching. But our Club has been about so much more. It has sparked new friendships, connected newcomers and long-term locals, built a sense of belonging, and created an inclusive, supportive and fun community we're proud to call our own.

A huge thank you to Voila French Patisserie for the incredible birthday cakes, and to the North Byron Hotel for hosting us and keeping everyone fuelled with your legendary pizza.

But the celebrations don't end here. In September, BBPC had three teams compete in the Minor League Pickleball Championships (Divisions 18, 16 and 14) with two of those teams qualifying for Nationals with the chance to go even further and compete in Las Vegas. Huge congratulations to all our teams, and an extra thank you to Rob Wentzel for sponsoring the event.

Pickleball's taking Byron by storm, so come and join the pickle party. For more information and to book a session, visit our page on opensports: [opensports.net/Byron-Bay-Pickleball-Club/tab/events](https://opensports.net/Byron-Bay-Pickleball-Club/tab/events) or head to our Instagram: [@byronbaypickleball](https://www.instagram.com/byronbaypickleball)

Until next month, keep pickleing.

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# Aye Eye My Botty

with Billy Bob Thoughtson



Every time something new shows up some expert declares it's the end of critical thinking. Calculators were going to kill mental arithmetic, spellcheck was the death of spelling, Google made us lazy, and now AI is apparently turning classrooms into techno-mush.

Just listen to those old farts with their furrowed brows and academic gowns, 'kids will never learn anything again because robots will do it all for them'. Funnily enough, these academics decry AI in classrooms then quietly use it to draft papers, check citations, and translate obscure journals. Academics love to forget that even the humble pencil was once a scandal. 'If kids use pencils,' they moaned, 'they'll never learn the noble art of quill sharpening.' Yeah, right. Nothing screams intellectual rigour like goose feather.

Then came calculators and teachers acted like students had smuggled Harry Potter-like sorcery into class. Whiteboards showed up next, chalk disappeared faster than you could say 'where's the duster?' And let's not forget the great 'Casio Watch Panic of 1980' where Johnny strolls into Yr4 with a watch that plays Für Elise and the whole school goes into lock down.

So, it's official. AI is the new scapegoat in a long line of technological bogeymen and nobody gets it. Blame it for cheating, shortcutting, and doing your homework while you scroll TikTok.

AI hasn't killed effort it's just made plagiarism slightly more polite. But let's be honest. If a student can't explain what AI just wrote for them the jig's up faster than Elon Musk's bro-mance with the President. I reckon AI will give you an answer to anything in two seconds, so isn't it better to use your brain to ask a better second question in the advancement of learning? You learn the answer to your first question then you go again and learn more?

If you listen to the critics one of the supposed real dangers of AI is that we'll stop being curious because we think the machine is smarter. But it's not smarter, it's just faster and doesn't get distracted by eating a bag of Twisties, or falling in a research rabbit-hole about an semi-unrelated subject. AI can spit out facts and can even write a poem. But it can't teach you why your poem made your English teacher cry, laugh, or write 'See me after class, Jonny' in their demoralising red Kilometrico pen – no offence to our proofreader.

No doubt progress is messy, but it's bloody delicious, and that's the best bit. For example, AI is turning your average consumer into a miniature CEO. Do you want to compare 10 insurance policies, translate the fine print, and figure out if the salesperson is smiling because he's winning? AI's got you covered.

It used to take a weekend, three coffees an hour, and a spreadsheet just to switch energy providers. Now you can get a full market comparison while flossing your teeth. Consumers have gone from confused and cornered, to sharp-eyed and spreadsheet-ready with better breath.

AI is giving everyday people superpowers. It reads contracts like a top-tier lawyer, negotiates like a seasoned diplomat, and reviews products with the cold precision of a machine built for truth. For years, greedy corporate banks counted on no one reading the fine print,

sneaking in immoral fees and dodging accountability. Not anymore. AI is forcing them to clean up their act.

Next up? Real estate agents. The ones who forget buyers are human beings, not just commissions. The ones who play gatekeeper for their vendors and hope no one notices the cracks. Well, buyers have now got *caveat emptor's* ultimate enforcer in their pocket.

Now for the downside. When it comes to real humour, actual wit with bite and nuance, AI is still bobbing around in the safe harbour. Sure, it can crank out knock-knock jokes, pirate gags, and repackage clichés 'til the seagulls start quoting them, but satire? Sarcasm? That delicious human blend of irony, timing, and cultural instinct? AI is lost at sea.

Comedy lives in the choppy uncharted waters of human experience, and try as it might, AI's still flapping about with no compass, no crew, and no idea where the punchline's anchored. I called this story 'Aye Eye My Botty' and it didn't even twig I was talking about AI – it thought I was writing a bawdy double-entendre laden pirate story on the high seas.

Anyway don't get too comfy asking the robot for free advice. Just like Netflix went from 'share your password, mate' to 'that'll be \$22.99 a month,' AI's heading the same way. The good stuff, such as it knows-your-style and answers, will end up behind a paywall quicker than you can say 'freemium model' or 'Billy Bob's your uncle'.

Soon you'll be paying a subscription just to argue with your own chat-botty about why your refund hasn't come through. It's the digital circle of life where they dazzle you with freebies then quietly charge you to keep the magic going. In the end, AI might help us work faster, shop smarter, and win arguments with bots, but if it ever learns to land a punchline better than Billy Bob after two beers – then I'll start to worry.

# This month

with Milt Barlow

## At the movies

October sees a diverse line up of new movies catering for all tastes. Here's a rundown on some of the best.

*The Smashing Machine* (2 October). This action-packed biographical drama chronicles the life of MMA legend Mark Kerr. The movie stars Dwayne Johnson, known for blockbusters like *Fast & Furious* and *Jumanji*, alongside Emily Blunt, famous for *A Quiet Place* and *Edge of Tomorrow*. Their compelling performances delivers a gritty, emotional journey into athletic glory and personal struggle.

*Tron: Ares* (9 October). The Tron franchise returns with this sci-fi adventure starring Jared Leto (*Dallas Buyers Club*, *Blade Runner 2049*), Evan Peters (*X-Men* series), and Gillian Anderson (*The X-Files*, *The Crown*). The movie explores a sophisticated AI sent into the real world, delving into the clash between technology and humanity

*The Travellers* (9 October). An interesting Australian drama featuring Bryan Brown and Luke Bracey. This film delves into complex family dynamics during a homecoming visit marked by emotional turmoil.

*After the Hunt* (16 October). Directed by Luca Guadagnino, known for *Call Me by Your Name* and *Suspiria*, this crime drama stars Julia Roberts, alongside Andrew Garfield (*Hacksaw Ridge*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*), the film looks into the tense and layered human relationships of a Yale professor on the path to tenure.

*Black Phone 2* (16 October). The horror sequel stars Ethan Hawke, paired with Mason Thames and Arianna Rivas. Following the chilling success of the original, this second instalment promises more suspense and terror.

*Roofman* (16 October). A biographical crime drama starring Peter Dinklage (*Game of Thrones*), Channing Tatum (*Magic Mike*), and Kirsten Dunst (*Spider-Man* trilogy). The film explores crime and personal redemption with a strong ensemble cast.

*Shelby Oaks* (23 October). A film centred on a woman's frantic search for her missing sister. If horror thrillers are your thing, this one is for you. The suspenseful plot taps into paranormal investigation tropes, perfect for October's Halloween mood.

## On the couch

The 2025 Emmys were recently announced so I thought I would recap some of the big winners and where to find them on Australian streaming.

- *The Studio* (Apple TV+) - Outstanding Comedy Series. Nailed it with 13 Emmys including Best Comedy Series, acting, directing, and writing awards.
- *The Pitt* (Binge) - Outstanding Drama Series. Won three Emmys including Best Drama Series, Best Actor (Noah Wyle), and Best Supporting Actress (Katherine LaNasa).
- *Adolescence* (Netflix) - Outstanding Limited or Anthology Series. Won six Emmys, including the Best Limited Series, acting awards for Stephen Graham, Owen Cooper (youngest male Emmy winner for a supporting role), and Erin Doherty.
- *Severance* (Apple TV+). Highly nominated, with Britt Lower winning Best Lead Actress in a drama series.
- *Hacks* (HBO Max) Jean Smart won Best Lead Actress in a comedy series for this show.

# Book review by Jenny Dowling



## **The Burrow, by Melanie Cheng**

This is an abridged version of the review published by Richmond Tweed Regional Library. For the full review, visit: [rtrl.nsw.gov.au](http://rtrl.nsw.gov.au)

The words that spring to mind after finishing this short book are poignant and melancholic. I read this in a day, and for much of it, I had Judy Collins singing her beautiful ballads in the background, so the combination of the two brought tears to my eyes. Accompanying music or not, this is a book that I guarantee will move you.

Set in inner-suburban Melbourne during COVID lockdown, this story follows Jin, Amy, and their 10 year-old daughter, Lucie. On Lucie's insistence, they purchase a pet rabbit. When Amy's mother, Pauline, comes to stay after a hospitalisation, the household becomes full of unspoken grief and tension. The family has suffered a devastating loss they cannot bring themselves to discuss, leaving Lucie to carry much of the emotional weight while navigating home schooling and isolation.

The short character-titled chapters have very little dialogue but there is a richness in the third-person narrative that exposes for the reader, the tensions, secrets, guilts, and despair

of the characters – with glimpses of positivity. Interspersed between the human chapters, there are a couple of rare short sections from Fiver's – the rabbit – point of view.

*The Burrow* is Cheng's third book. She is a Chinese-Australian writer and a practising doctor in Melbourne. These cultural and professional experiences are reflected in this novel. She also won the 2018 Victorian Premiers Award for fiction.

This is a magnificent book. It is a slow-paced gentle read which will resonate with everyone as it lays bare the pain of loss and finds a glimmer of hope that healing can occur. I urge you to read it.

# Month crossword

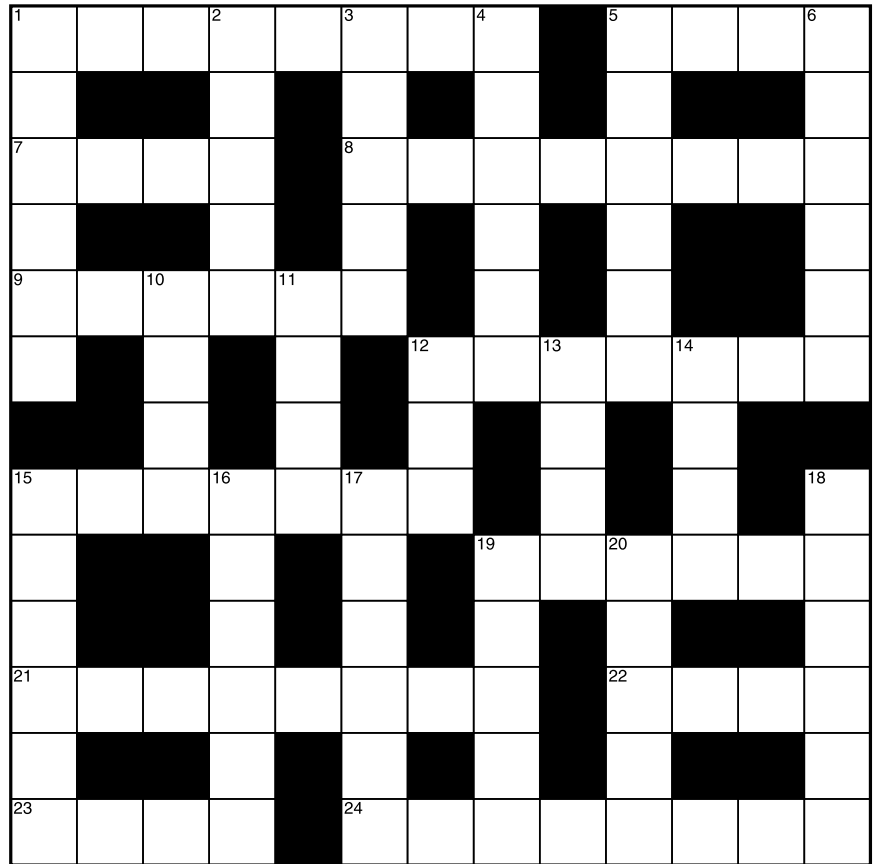
© Lovatts Puzzles

## Across

1. In similar fashion
5. Bee nest
7. India/China continent
8. Sprang (from)
9. Barons & dukes
12. Blind alley (4,3)
15. Non-intellectual
19. Legendary
21. Sang alpine-style
22. Canada's ... Scotia
23. Social misfit
24. Monday to Friday

## Down

1. Ascertains
2. Electronic message
3. Objects
4. Pass (of time)
5. Stacked
6. Curled (of smoke)
10. Make (beer)
11. On any occasion
12. Droplets on lawn
13. Zone
14. Tea, ... Grey
15. Tripoli native
16. Slay by guillotine
17. Criminal
18. High standards
19. Soft confection
20. Filleted



## September solution

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

# October horoscopes

by Patsy Bennett - [patsybennett.com](https://patsybennett.com)

### Aries

The Aries full moon on the 7th brings a fresh chapter in a personal or business relationship if you were born before 4 April; and in your daily and health routine if you were born later. Good communication skills will help things move forward if matters have been stuck recently.

### Taurus

It's time to turn a corner within your general direction and status. Some Taureans will experience renewed incentive at work, others in your personal life. From the 14th Venus will bring out your inner romantic. But at work you must be realistic, and not idealistic now.

### Gemini

October's developments will bring out a positive attitude, especially if some projects have stalled recently. Both the full moon on the 7th and the new moon on the 21st will help you advance at work and in your personal life, but you must be prepared to be innovative.

### Cancer

This is a good month to consider a financial review, as your cash flow will benefit. Also of benefit will be a fresh approach to communications, travel and relationships. As a result, your home and family life will thrive. Activities that broaden your horizons and boost happiness will entice you.

### Leo

You're reaching a key turning point both in your personal life and finances. You may need to go over old ground and review a strategy so that you can step into fresh territory. Beware of power struggles and impulsiveness, especially in the final week of the month.

### Virgo

Consider reappraising your shared commitments such as joint finances. This is a good month to reorganise some of your major agreements and arrangements as your efforts will be worthwhile. Be sure to obtain the correct information with legal matters and to avoid speculation.

### Libra

The new moon will be in your sign on the 21st, ushering in a fresh phase that promises more balance in your life. In the process, you may need to tackle some thorny topics. Mars will bring out the feistiness and passion in someone close, so be prepared to navigate their approach.

### Scorpio

Mars in your sign will fire you up, which will motivate you at work, but could also bring your anger out, so be sure to maintain an even keel, especially in communications. A fresh chapter begins this month in your daily schedule; for some at work and for others health-wise.

### Sagittarius

You'll enjoy embracing springtime by being more sociable and outgoing. You will begin a fresh chapter in your affiliation with an organisation and for some, this will include changes in your personal life. Be prepared to express your values and to act on them.

### Capricorn

A fresh approach to your home life and status will be successful. A choice that requires a cool head concerning making a commitment may arise. Your peers and loyal friends will prove their weight in gold, so be sure to reach out if you need supportive advice.

### Aquarius

Consider exploring your deeper requirements in life. Your personal life will be a focus, and you are liable to make changes to gain more of a sense of stability. For many, this will involve a change of environment or of circumstance that facilitates increased peace of mind.

### Pisces

It's time to make a commitment. For some, this will involve finances, for others, work and your personal life. Research will provide you with insight. Your inquisitive mind will seek expression via travel, study or spiritual enquiry. You'll be drawn to exploration and fresh discoveries.



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DEAN VENABLES

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## *Introducing Dean*

Dean Venables has over 25 years' experience as a Licensed Real Estate Agent working across the Northern Rivers and the prestige Sydney property market. He has built a strong reputation for delivering record-breaking sales and exceptional customer satisfaction. Having owned Century 21 Dural in the Hills District in Sydney as Principal for over a decade, Dean has moved to the Northern Rivers area and chose to be a Sales Agent at Century 21 Alstonville and Century 21 Byron Bay, as they are very dynamic and innovative agencies working with vendors to achieve the best price for their property. Dean is highly regarded for his genuine, honest, trustworthy approach to helping vendors and buyers achieve their goals. His exemplary negotiation skills have achieved his clients amazing results consistently going above and beyond expectations, setting himself apart from the competition.



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