

# the byron wave

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Community news for the Byron Shire

Issue 29 | April 2025

A photograph of an elderly woman with white hair and glasses, wearing a red top, relaxing in a red and orange striped hammock. She is holding a tablet computer in her hands. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

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# from the editor

Dear Readers



After the chaos of March, I think we can all agree – hello April – and please be kind. Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred certainly made his presence felt, leaving a trail of damage across the region. Throughout the stress and excitement of it all, our community came together to do what needed to be done, and it's in moments like these that we see the true mettle of our local community. Well done, Byron Shire.

As we move into April, we also get to literally turn back time – by an hour, at least. Daylight saving ends on 6 April, giving us a brief but glorious extra sleep-in (or an extra coffee before the school run). The change marks the shift to shorter days, cooler nights, and the official farewell to the warmer months. And, of course, Easter is upon us from 18–21 April, bringing chocolate-fuelled rampages and a two-week school holiday period for parents to navigate – good luck.

With a fantastic lineup of events, now's the time to celebrate with our loved ones, take a deep breath, and gear up for what is bound to be another great month in the Shire.

Our features in this edition are all about conversation. We sit down with John Singh, the much-loved Bangalow local, and get an update on the Federal Trial for Wallum (development).

Here's to a fresh start, good company, and hopefully fewer weather surprises.

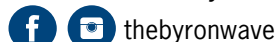
Until next month  
Charla Rallings, Editor.

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Location: Hinterland view of Chincogan.  
Photographer: Bernard Rosa  
Instagram: @bernard.rosa

## 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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**What:** Bluesfest  
**When:** Thursday 17 – Sunday 20 April  
**Where:** Byron Events Farm, Tyagarah

Byron Bay Bluesfest is Australia's Premier Contemporary Blues and Roots Music Festival showcasing music from around the world on the Easter long weekend.  
For tickets and info: [bluesfest.com.au](https://bluesfest.com.au)



**What:** ANZAC Day  
**When:** Friday 25 April  
**Where:** Nationwide

Our ANZACs will be remembered on this day. Dawn Services and vigils will be held across the Shire with marches occurring later in the day. Check your local RSL Club and sub-branches for more details at: [rslsw.org.au](https://rslsw.org.au)



**What:** Malibu Classic  
**When:** Friday 25 – Saturday 26 April  
**Where:** Wategos Beach, Byron Bay

This iconic competition is Byron Malibu Club's main event of the year attracting competitors from all over Australia and New Zealand.

More info visit: [byronbaymalibuclub.org](https://byronbaymalibuclub.org)



**What:** Byron Bay Triathlon  
**When:** Sunday 27 April  
**Where:** Byron Bay Surf Club

Iconic in destination, with a spectacular ocean swim, combined with Byron's much-loved relaxed vibe, it's easy to see why the Byron Bay Tri is one of Australia's favourite end of season celebrations. For more info visit: [byrontri.org](https://byrontri.org)



**What:** Nimbin MardiGrass Festival  
**When:** Friday 2 – Sunday 4 May  
**Where:** Multiple locations, Nimbin

With multiple fun events scheduled for the weekend, MardiGrass will open with a protest on Friday 2 May, followed on Saturday by the Cannabis Law Reform Rally and Parade main event. Tickets and info: [nimbinmardigrass.com](https://nimbinmardigrass.com)



**What:** Byron Coastal Charity Walk  
**When:** Saturday 3 May  
**Where:** Denning Park, Byron Bay

Walk 12, 24 or 36km along picturesque sandy beaches and walking tracks from Byron to Ballina whilst raising funds for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

To register: [rescuehelicopter.com.au](https://rescuehelicopter.com.au)

## Monthly Markets

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

## Weekly Farmers Markets

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

## Byron Twilight Markets

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

**For more information visit**  
[visitbyronbay.com](https://visitbyronbay.com)



## Snapshot



### Community advocates for alternatives to traffic lights

Byron Shire Greens Councillors, led by Mayor Sarah Ndiaye, have thanked the community for their strong advocacy against the proposed traffic lights at Clifford Street and Broken Head Road in Suffolk Park.

'Greens Councillors did not vote for the traffic lights in December because we felt more information and engagement was needed before making such a significant decision,' said Mayor Ndiaye. 'We want to ensure that we choose the best solution for this intersection – one that prioritises safety, pedestrian accessibility, and traffic flow, not just for the present, but for the future.'

At Council's February meeting, Mayor Ndiaye successfully moved the community's petition and added a request to amend the Transport for NSW grant, enabling further exploration of alternative solutions. Councillor Elia Hauge, who has an engineering background, raised concerns about traffic speed, calling for traffic calming and speed

reduction measures, while Councillor Delta Kay emphasised the importance of considering pedestrian safety in any redesign. Council's own data displayed that a roundabout would be a better long term solution, however, the Councillors stressed that any alternative, must include pedestrian safety upgrades near Beech Drive and the Clifford Street shops.



### Heritage Park upgrades near completion in Mullumbimby

The \$850,000 upgrade of Heritage Park in Mullumbimby is nearly complete, with community leaders invited to see the improvements firsthand in early March.

Funded through a \$500,000 grant from the Community Assets Program – a joint initiative of the Australian and NSW Governments – and an additional \$350,000 from Byron Shire Council, the project enhances accessibility and play opportunities for locals.

Improvements include a renewed accessible pathway and boardwalk linking Brunswick Terrace to the Mill Street playground, new seating, and upgraded play equipment designed for older children and nature-based play.

Additionally, a new off-lead dog area is under development.

'On behalf of Council, and residents who told us they wanted these improvements, I am very grateful to the Australian and NSW Governments for providing the funding for this important community project,' said Byron Shire Mayor Sarah Ndiaye.

Mayor Ndiaye also said Heritage Park is a gem in Mullumbimby and it is wonderful to see kids outside, climbing all over the playground and having bucket-loads of old-fashioned fun.

Federal Member for Richmond, Justine Elliot, added, 'Restoring the accessible path in Mullumbimby Heritage Park ensures that everyone, including people with disabilities, parents with prams, and seniors, can fully enjoy this valuable public space. It creates an inclusive environment where no one is left out.'

For more information on the Heritage Park Masterplan visit: [byron.nsw.gov.au](http://byron.nsw.gov.au)

### Byron Yoga Centre announced as finalist in Australian Small Business Champion Awards

Byron Yoga Centre was selected as a finalist in the 2025 Australian Small Business Champion Awards. Adding to this achievement, the Centre has also received the Booking.com Traveller Review Award 2025, reflecting outstanding guest experiences. Despite a challenging year, Byron Yoga Centre has remained strong, thanks to its focused team and loyal community.

'Being named a finalist in these prestigious awards, is a true reflection of the passion and dedication of our entire team,' said John Ogilvie, Founder of Byron Yoga Centre. 'In a year that has been incredibly tough for the yoga community in Byron Bay, we are humbled to continue offering a space where people can come to reconnect, recharge, and deepen their practice.'

To view a full list of award recipients, visit: [championawards.com.au/business](http://championawards.com.au/business)



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## Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred: the aftermath



*Pictured: Byron Main Beach closed. Source: ABC News, Bruce Mackenzie.*

Byron Shire was left reeling in the wake of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, which battered the region with heavy rainfall, damaging winds, and flooding. The

cyclone delivered the strongest gust recorded at Cape Byron in four years leaving a trail of destruction across the community. Supermarket shelves were cleared in a wave of panic buying, and as the cyclone intensified, 16,000 homes and businesses in northern NSW lost power with multiple road closures across the Shire. Schools across the region were forced to shut from Wednesday, 5 March, with plans to reopen early the following week depending on conditions.

Powerful storm surges caused significant beach erosion across the Northern Rivers region, some exposing long-buried shipwrecks along the coastline. Byron Shire Council was also forced to take difficult action to protect public safety, authorising the removal of three iconic Norfolk pines – one in Jonson Street and two in Apex Park – after the sustained winds compromised their root systems beyond repair. Residents of Mullumbimby faced additional challenges as the town's water treatment plant was taken offline, prompting officials to call for water conservation measures, with sewage pumping stations around the Shire impacted by power outages. Many residents were urged to evacuate or prepare for inundation as floodwaters began to rise across low-lying areas, triggering PTSD symptoms and anxiety for many locals reminded of the 2022 floods.

As the slow moving cyclone approached land, its intensity was downgraded and focus shifted to recovery. Council crews worked around the clock to clear fallen trees, assess road damage, and respond to emergencies. Sewer services were quickly returned to basic operation, using portable generators and have since been restored across the Shire. Council also extended extra waste collections to accommodate missed pickups, and offered free green waste drop-offs at the Byron Resource Recovery Centre.

Residents still dealing with flood-damaged household items should contact the Resource Recovery Hotline for more information on ph: 1300 652 625. Courtesy trailers are available for residents in need. The NSW Reconstruction Authority is also coordinating efforts, and affected residents and businesses may be eligible for financial aid through the newly announced Disaster Recovery Allowance. For more information on financial assistance visit: [nsw.gov.au/emergency/recovery/financial-support-for-individuals](https://nsw.gov.au/emergency/recovery/financial-support-for-individuals) or Services Australia: [servicesaustralia.gov.au](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au)

NSW Health authority is reminding residents of the varying health impacts of cleaning up after a disaster, coming in contact with potentially contaminated waters, and protecting against mosquito bites in response to their expected population boom. The community is rallying to support those still facing hardship and for those wanting to help, donations should be made through: [GIVIT.org.au](https://GIVIT.org.au) to ensure resources efficiently reach those in need.

For the latest updates, visit: [nsw.gov.au/emergency/recovery/](https://nsw.gov.au/emergency/recovery/) or Council's website: [byron.nsw.org.au](https://byron.nsw.org.au)

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## Vegas is coming to Lennox Head

by Barefruit Marketing



### **Rafiki Royale: a night of glamour with a purpose**

On Saturday, 17 May, Lennox Head will transform into the Vegas strip for one night only as Rafiki Mwema hosts *Rafiki Royale*, a glittering event in support of a life-changing

initiative. This Vegas-themed fundraiser aims to help Rafiki Mwema build a self-sufficient farm that will provide fresh, nutritious food for over 100 children in their care. Funds raised will go towards purchasing cows, calves, and chickens to produce meat, milk, yoghurt, and eggs, reducing reliance on food donations.

'We already grow our own fruit and vegetables, and adding more livestock will complete our vision of self-sufficiency,' said Claire Harding, the event organiser and a founding board member. 'Not only will this provide substantial cost savings, but it will also offer invaluable life skills for our older children. Through hands-on farming, they will learn how to grow food, care for animals, and even develop small business skills –

empowering them to be independent and support their own families in the future.'

Hosted by Mandy Nolan, guests will enjoy an unforgettable evening featuring real casino tables with professional croupiers, live music, entertainment, delicious food, a cash bar, and the chance to win amazing prizes through raffles and auctions. Every ticket sold and every dollar raised will go directly towards helping the children of Rafiki Mwema.

Rafiki Mwema provides a safe haven for 65 children, offering education, shelter, and care. With no government funding, the charity relies on fundraising to cover its \$55,000 monthly costs, which have become increasingly difficult to meet due to the rising cost of living.

### **How you can help**

- Become an event sponsor
- Buy tickets
- Donate and share

For sponsorship enquiries, email: [claire@rafikimwema.com](mailto:claire@rafikimwema.com). To purchase tickets or donate, visit: [rafikimwema.com](http://rafikimwema.com).

## Let's Talk Dementia


On Thursday 10 April, Let's Talk Dementia will be hosted at the Byron Centre in collaboration with Byron Seniors Club and Byron Shire Respite Service (BSRS). Organiser, Sabine Muschter, is passionate about raising awareness and discussing strategies for dementia care and prevention, not only as a board member of BSRS, but also having witnessed her mother's journey with dementia over the past five years.

Currently, almost half-a-million people in Australia are living with dementia, with over 10 million new cases diagnosed worldwide each year. Dementia is an umbrella term for a range of symptoms caused by various brain disorders, with Alzheimer's disease being the most common. While its effects vary from person to person, dementia generally leads to cognitive decline, impacting memory, thinking, reasoning, and mood. It is a progressive and often debilitating condition with no known cure. However, treatments are available to manage certain symptoms, and there is much that can be done to support individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.


Let's Talk Dementia will bring together experts to share valuable insights into dementia from multiple perspectives, for an evening of learning, discussion, and community support.

The event will be held on Thursday 10 April, 6pm–7:30pm, at the Byron Community Centre – 69 Jonson St, Byron Bay.

For more information visit: [events.humanitix.com/let-s-talk-dementia](http://events.humanitix.com/let-s-talk-dementia)

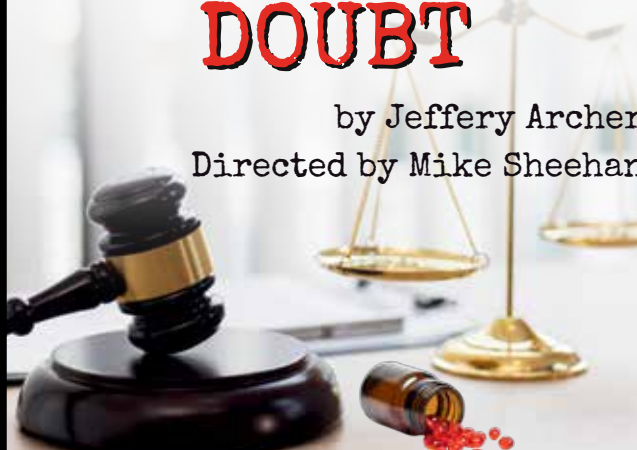


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[www.justineelliot.com.au/communitysafety](http://www.justineelliot.com.au/communitysafety)

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Thank you to everyone who has shared their views with me through my *Community Crime Report*. Have your say at [www.justineelliot.com.au/crimereport](http://www.justineelliot.com.au/crimereport)

Authorised J Elliot ALP 107 Minjungbal Dr Tweed Heads South

## Future Blue Fest: strengthen the ocean community

by Future Blue Fest



*Pictured: The Dolphin, the symbol of the Festival. Source: Sonia Friedrich, soniafriedrichphotography.com*

Future Blue Fest, on Sunday 6 April at the Byron Bowling Club, is an opportunity for the local community to get to know their not-for-profit organisations – who are doing amazing work with the ocean, or for the protection of it. Organised by Dolphin Research Australia, Surfing to Survive

and Surfers For Climate, Future Blue Fest is a grassroots festival with a goal to unite local ocean lovers to protect our unique marine environment.

The event is for ocean lovers of any age and interest, families, water sport enthusiasts, artists, conservationists – essentially anyone who has a passion for our oceans. The program has much variety with workshops, stalls, music, inspiring films, speakers (including special guests), and will offer something appealing for everyone.

Our Q&A Panel will focus on ocean connections and the importance of effective protection. One panelist, Founder of Dolphin Research Australia, Dr Liz Hawkins, will share Byron's current situation as one

of the international Hope Spots, places with high marine biodiversity and significance, and will share her scientific knowledge about Byron's dolphins. The evening will be concluded with the documentary *Wave Medicine*. Afterwards, Karin Ochsner, the film's subject and founder of Surfing to Survive, will be open to questions from the audience, sharing how the healing power of the ocean and the supportive community helped her overcome a severe immune illness.

Come and connect with our community to celebrate the incredible marine environment we have at our doorstep.

For more information and tickets visit: [events.humanitix.com/future-blue-festival](https://events.humanitix.com/future-blue-festival)

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## Byron Bay Malibu Classic



The iconic Byron Bay Malibu Classic is set to make a splash once again on 25–26 April at Wategos Beach. As the Club's main event of the year, the contest draws competitors from all along the east coast, with a strong contingent often travelling from New Zealand to participate. This year marks the 44th edition of the Classic, which has been a staple of the surfing community since its inception in 1980, making it the longest-running event of its kind in Australia, if not the world.

The Classic features 12 divisions for competitors to enter, offering something for surfers of all ages and skill levels on a 9ft mal. One highlight of the Classic is the competitor draw on Saturday 26, with every competitor entered into the draw for the chance to win a beautifully crafted surfboard.

Limited spaces for the Classic are available, so interested participants are encouraged to register promptly to secure their spot. Proceeds from the Byron Bay Malibu Classic and other Club activities go directly to supporting local organisations and charities. For more information visit: [byronbaymalibuclub.org](http://byronbaymalibuclub.org)





## Bluesfest: Thursday 17 – Sunday 20 April

As the Easter long weekend approaches, the anticipation for Bluesfest is growing, with this year promising to be nothing short of spectacular for the iconic festival's 36th, and potentially final, birthday. At the time of print, with more than 93% of tickets sold and camping and onsite accommodation sold-out, their 36th edition is shaping up to be one of the best yet. 2025's lineup already boasts a stellar array of artists. Let's take a look at the incredible headliners lighting up each night.

**Thursday** – The psychedelic grooves of Ocean Alley and the chart-smashing energy of Tones and I will set the perfect tone for the Festival's opening night. But that's not all – guitar legend Tom Morello will bring his signature sound, and Maoli, Hawaii's biggest island reggae group, will add their unique vibes.

**Friday** – Get ready for a classic rock masterclass with Toto, delivering anthems like *Africa* and *Rosanna*, and the legendary George Thorogood & The Destroyers, bringing that bad-to-the-bone energy to Bluesfest. Add to that the blistering blues mastery of Gary Clark Jr. and the timeless melodies of Christopher Cross, and Friday is set to be truly memorable.

**Saturday** – An unforgettable evening with the legendary Crowded House, known for their timeless hits, and Vance Joy,

whose heartfelt songwriting has won over fans worldwide. Joining them is Xavier Rudd, delivering his signature soul-stirring performance, and RY X, whose ethereal sounds are sure to mesmerize.

**Sunday** – Chaka Khan, the Queen of Funk, will bring her powerful vocals to Byron Bay, while Hilltop Hoods, Australia's biggest hip-hop act, close out the festival with a high-energy finale. Also gracing the stage are Missy Higgins, one of Australia's most beloved songwriters, and Rag'n'Bone Man, whose deep, soulful voice will send shivers down your spine.

### Buses

Buses will run from Suffolk Park – Byron Bay on a loop from 11am until the Festival ends. This year, Bluesfest will run buses throughout the day at a specific times; looping from 9pm–12am, from Mullumbimby – Brunswick Heads; Billinudgel – Ocean Shores, South Golden Beach, New Brighton; Ballina – Lennox Head; and Kirra – Kingscliff, Cabarita. To catch a bus from one of these locations, you'll need to purchase a bus ticket online. Bus tickets are on sale now via the website. All routes are priced at \$25 return, except for Ballina, \$50 return, and Kirra, \$60 return. For more information visit: [bluesfest.com.au](https://bluesfest.com.au)



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## Liberation Larder welcomes new President

by Liberation Larder



### Liberation Larder: rescuing food and fighting hunger, every day

Last month, we welcomed John Morgan (pictured) to the position of President for Liberation Larder in Byron Bay. John is an active member of the Byron Shire community and here at Liberation Larder he will be highly valued in his new role as President.

John has been involved with the Larder since 2018 and as you may know,

ran a successful business - MADDOG Surfboards for 40 years prior to that. He continues to volunteer in surfing events and his latest has been with George Greenough in screening his remastered movie *The Innermost Limits of Pure Fun* which was shown in March as a fund raiser at Byron Bay Community Centre Theatre.

### About Liberation Larder

Liberation Larder is a 100% volunteer organisation, not for profit, with collectors picking up donations seven days a week (using their own vehicles) from local bakers, butchers, producers, manufacturers, providores and supermarkets.

We rescue good food that otherwise would end up in landfill and make sure that this food reaches people who need it. Our volunteers also include chefs, kitchen hands and cleaners.

Every Monday and Thursday breakfast is prepared with donations and around 600 lunch meals are served each week for local people in need. No food is wasted. All food that cannot be consumed is given to local farmers to feed their livestock of cows, donkeys, chickens and pigs.

Liberation Larder needs funds to purchase food staples, packaging and cleaning materials and to pay for kitchen running costs. Money donations would be greatly appreciated to allow the Larder to continue its vital service to locals in need. Your support is very much valued and we'd like to thank all the local businesses for their generous contributions.

For more information or to donate, email: [liberationlarder@gmail.com](mailto:liberationlarder@gmail.com) or contact us directly on ph: 0435 879 778.

## Ousama needs a job

by Northern Rivers For Refugees



Pictured: Ousama Bloudani at home in Brunswick Heads. Source: Supplied.

Ousama is skilled at cement rendering and all aspects of nursery and horticulture. His family recently arrived in Australia on a humanitarian visa after escaping war-torn Syria and Lebanon. After their home and livelihood were destroyed by civil war, Ousama Bloudani's family have settled in Brunswick Heads. Now he needs a job.

Ousama is highly skilled and also has a wealth of knowledge and experience growing fruit trees and herbs on his farm back in Syria. The Bloudanis were driven off their farm during the civil war and lived for years as refugees in Lebanon. They were granted refugee status by the United Nations and

accepted into Australia under a Government program known as Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot.

Ousama, his wife, Walaa, and their daughters Sana, 12, and Ghina, 11, are being hosted for a year by the Mullumbimby Refugee Support Group. They are being financially assisted by Northern Rivers For Refugees.

'I passed my driving test this week, and I have a car, so I'm ready to work,' said a beaming Ousama at his Brunswick Heads home. The drivers license was crucial to the family because of the poor and expensive public transport system in the region. Every trip on the bus cost the family \$20.

The family has settled well into the area, with both girls thriving at local schools. Ousama has been improving his English skills rapidly since taking lessons at TAFE. His dream is one day to start his own landscaping business.

'I can combine my gardening and building skills,' Ousama said.

If anyone can help, please contact Ousama on ph: 0484 578 864, or Delhove Blennerhassett from the Mullumbimby support group on ph: 0434 007 276.

For more information on refugee settlement in the Northern Rivers visit: [nrfr.org.au](http://nrfr.org.au) or email: [communications@nrfr.org.au](mailto:communications@nrfr.org.au)



## Mullumbimby Residents Association

by Dale Emerson, Convenor



*Pictured: Concept design. Source: Supplied.*

Not everyone who visits the Historic Township of Mullumbimby knows that they are in a Heritage Conservation Area. Fortunately, a previous Byron Shire Council saw the benefits of Mullumbimby's Heritage and worked hard to declaring it a Conservation Area. One would be forgiven for thinking this should preserve the township from high-rise and development.

Unfortunately, Mullumbimby is now under threat of non-compliant

development. Residents have been made aware that they stand to lose a shaded public carpark, that allows residents and visitors an easy walk to the main streets, shops and eateries, in order to accommodate a unit block in the township's Heritage protected area. LandCom have submitted a three-storey conceptual design, categorised as 'affordable housing'. It will be a block of units and is planned to be built on the carpark. The Gold Coast style block is to be situated at the very entrance to the Historic Township at the roundabout providing a very bad welcome.

Over 100 residents recently attended a meeting, along with Byron Shire Councillors, to advise that there were less-problematic sites available to alleviate the nation-wide shortage of housing. Three sites near the town, but

not within the Heritage Conservation Area, were put forward with negative reception from the Mayor. There is also a new housing development of various sizes and affordability being considered, for up to 1,400 people, outside of the Heritage Area. This makes the building of 32 units on the flood prone, traffic challenged public carpark site, a non-starter. We also lose the only public toilet block within easy distance for our very young, elderly and homeless.

Hurry and visit our unique town before it turns into Gold Coast Mark 3. Alternatively sign our e-petition, thereby expressing your displeasure and help preserve our town as it is – unique.

For more information: [parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/epetitions-list.aspx](http://parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/Pages/epetitions-list.aspx)

## Save the date: Bangalow Billycart Derby 18 May

The Bangalow Lions are proud to again be hosting the Bangalow Billycart Derby on Sunday 18 May. The event will see the main street of Bangalow transformed into a racetrack, with bales of hay lining the street to keep the daring billycart racers on course. From homemade contraptions to sleek speed machines, competitors of all ages will take on the hill, cheered by the crowd.

'You can't beat a beautiful May day with kids and families everywhere and bilycarts zooming down the main street. There is a real buzz in the village and we can't wait,' said Greg, President of the Bangalow Lions Club.

The event is a fantastic fundraiser which supports the 2479 community. On the day, Bangalow Public School will hold their annual Madhatter Tea Party which is always a fun event and big fundraiser for the local public primary school. The Bangalow Lions Club also invites all interested schools in the Northern Rivers to compete in the Schools Challenge for which there is a \$1,000 School Challenge race prize.

Limited merchandise stock of truckers' hats and t-shirts are available to purchase online. You can buy your tickets and find more information on website: [bangalowbilycart.com.au](http://bangalowbilycart.com.au)



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MEMBER FOR BALLINA

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Approved by Tamara Smith MP  
Member for Ballina. Printed copy  
on tamarasmith.org.au



## At the Library

by Susan Cubis, Library Assistant



Wind back your clocks and get ready for a busy month at the Library.

### Youth

Junior book worms are invited to join our Junior Book Club, held on the second Thursday of each month 4pm–5pm. Children can choose their own books according to the selected genre. Bookings for the next one, Thursday 10 April, are essential.

Youth Week runs from 9–17 April. The initiative provides an opportunity for

12 to 24 year olds to come together in their local communities, celebrating their unique strengths, and power as a present and future influencer.

Or pop into the Byron Bay Library for a creative display from the Glimmer Lab of the Byron Youth Centre.

### School holidays

Each Wednesday in the school holidays we are providing free activities for children and families.

Wednesday 16 April, 10:30am: Join us for the Wildlife Twins show. The Wildlife Twins show features Australian wildlife such as lizards, dingoes, snakes and much more. The Twins aim to teach us about the unique survival skills of each animal and hope to inspire us to help our wildlife.

Wednesday 23 April: Watercolour workshop with Jasmine, a watercolour artist who is inspired by the landscapes,

flora and fauna of the Byron area. She will share her skill and love of watercolour with the children.

There are limited spaces so book online: [rtrl.nsw.gov.au](http://rtrl.nsw.gov.au) or ph: 6685 8540.

Reminder: Libraries will be closed for the public holidays which include Good Friday 18, Easter Saturday 19 and Easter Monday 21 April, and ANZAC Day Friday 25 April.

You can still return items via the external chute and use E resources through the website: [rtrl.nsw.gov.au](http://rtrl.nsw.gov.au)

### Quick Reads

April brings three new Quick Reads to our shelves. Look out for *The Unquiet Grave* by Dervla McTieran, *The Surgeon of Ryaumont* by Susan Neuheuas and *The Burial Place* by Stig Abell.

Happy Easter and happy reading.



*In Loving Memory*

**Stephen John Leslie**

29 November 1968 - 19 February 2025

Late of Eltham.

Passed away unexpectedly aged 56 years.

Dearly loved Husband of Natalie.

Much loved Father of Jessica, Keira and Harry.

Cherished Son of John (dec'd) & Beryl.

Loved Brother of Julie-Anne, Kim, Paul and John (dec'd).

Stephen's family take comfort in knowing

that he was with the love of his life.

in his favourite place on earth in his final moments.

A man who taught his children everything it is to be alive.



## Community in brief

### Brunswick Valley VIEW Club by Andrea Danvers



The Brunswick Valley VIEW Club elected its new office bearers for 2025 in early February. The newly appointed team includes: seated (left to right) Margaret Keating, Treasurer; Rita Strong, President; and Brenda Caligeros, Delegate. Standing (left to right) is Denise Batson, Welfare Officer; Wenda Lawrence, Assistant Treasurer; Lorraine Smith and Pauline Bullard, Program Officers; and Andrea Danvers, Publicity Officer.

With the new year underway, our regular meetings are back at 10:30am on the second Thursday of each month at Brunswick Bowls Club, Tweed Street, for lunch and an engaging guest speaker. New members are always welcome.

### CWA Brunswick Heads Branch by Mary Webb

We recently held a very successful card making class where members and non-members created some amazing greetings cards. These will be on sale at our Easter Market, on Saturday 5 April where we will be selling all your favourites: jam/pickles, cakes, flowers, plants and craft work. These market

days have become a firm favourite of the Brunswick Heads scene. So, why not drop by and pick up some goodies? We are open from 8am–12pm and can be found on the corner of Park and Booyun Streets, Brunswick Heads.

On 25 April we will remember all our fallen service men and women, but we should always think of the sacrifice they made, not just on this day. Lest We Forget.

Anyone wishing to join CWA Brunswick Heads from April onwards can do so at a reduced annual rate of \$27.50; the annual subscriptions are payable in October each year. Our Branch meetings are on the first Friday of the month at 9am with a weekly craft session every Friday (bar public holidays) from 10am–2pm. Non-members are more than welcome. A gold coin donation is all we ask, helping with the upkeep of our hall and also providing morning tea. For further information email: [brunscwa@gmail.com](mailto:brunscwa@gmail.com)

### Brunswick Valley Probus Club by Margaret Newbould

The Brunswick Valley Probus Club meets the first Tuesday of the month at the Ocean Shores Country Club, 10am for meetings and guest speakers. The meeting finishes about 12pm, then if you like, you can join us for lunch in the restaurant. So come along and enjoy.

On 4 May, we have the Rainforest Cruise from Tweed Heads for three hours with morning tea and lunch

provided. Cost is \$130 each and a \$50 deposit is required. We are also having a Brisbane trip to see *Jesus Christ Superstar the Musical* on Wednesday 23 July. There are still some tickets left – cost is \$105 for the return trip and the show. The bus leaves The Hub at Ocean Shores at 9:30am and returns about 6:30pm – it is a long day but a fantastic one.

We have just had our AGM with most officers and committee members re-elected, and we have one new assistant secretary. Probus is about fun, friendship and fellowship in retirement. To contact us, see page 17.

### CWA Mullumbimby Branch by Colleen Cook

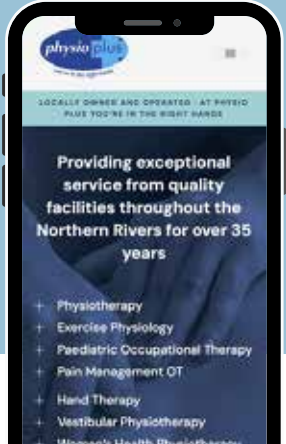


*Pictured: Elna Bostock (seated) Life Member Luncheon. Source: Supplied.*

The Mullumbimby Country Women's Association (CWA) has much to celebrate and reflect upon this month.

Long-time member Elna Bostock has been awarded Life Membership in recognition of her 60 years of service – an historic first for the branch. Since joining in 1964, Elna has served as President, Secretary, and Handicraft Officer, and played a vital role in branch

...continued on page 16→





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...continued from page 15

activities. Her work as the Room Attendant, managing hall hire and ensuring the CWA remained a welcoming space, is particularly remembered.

The Branch also remembers Betty Byrnes, a cherished Branch Patron, who recently passed away. Members catered for her funeral and formed a Guard of Honour, reflecting the deep respect and gratitude they had for her service. Betty was a dedicated member and a passionate artist whose paintings and handcrafted works were treasured by many. The Presbyterian Church also extended their thanks for the Branch's support during this time.

The CWA is more than just tea and scones – we are a group of women from all walks of life passionate about making a difference in our local, state, and national communities. Our Handicraft Mornings are on the fourth Wednesday from 9:30am–11:30am for a friendly morning of craft and conversation – no experience necessary and everyone is welcome. Come along and see what the CWA is all about. See page 17 for our monthly meetings or to get in touch.

### **Byron Bay Rotary by Joanne Gorman**



Community organisations are the fabric of strong communities. Towns where people come together through groups and activities, and where volunteers help those in need, are known to be healthier, more resilient and more connected.

And that's why Rotary is so important to Byron Shire. Whether it's supporting farmers through droughts, distributing cash and food to flood impacted families, teaching school children how to protect bees, supporting the Wildlife Hospital (with a recent \$4,000 donation) or campaigning against Family Violence, Rotarians in Byron Bay have community at heart.

It's been an incredible six months for Rotary's community activities, starting with Random Acts of Kindness where each month, a deserving community service organisation is surprised with a morning tea to say thank you for their work. The Respectful Relationships program has gained momentum following the hugely successful student led film project in partnership with Cape Byron Steiner School, and a recent partnership with DV Safephones, which has already seen 25 phones re-purposed to help people safely leave violent homes. And with a commitment to developing young people in the Shire, the Body Bloom girls body image education program, Bravehearts Child Safety program and Rotary youth development camps will help hundreds of local youth in the next three months. We also sponsor the local Nippers' water safety crew with bright new rashies.

A strong Rotary means a strong Byron and new members are extremely welcome. Just look at these smiles. Visitors and new members are welcome to any meeting, Tuesdays at 6pm, Byron Services Club.

### **Connecting Generations by Gillian Cornu**



On Sunday 9 February, on a perfect summers day, Connecting Generations held their seasonal summer event at Heritage House, Picabeen Park, Bangalow and the parents and kids loved it, with over 80 people interacting with each other throughout the day.

The local fire brigade also drove their truck over for the young and old to investigate. It was a spectacular day and the kids kept cool on the slip and slide with icy poles on hand. To add more excitement, the local furies also used the fire hose to spray water over the slip and slide. After a good few hours of slip and sliding the group waved the fire truck goodbye. Thank you Bangalow Fire Brigade, you certainly brought many a smile to all the

faces attending the event, especially with the farewell horn blasts. There were also lots of interactive games/activities, rainforest tree planting, face painting and even a fire engine was built. Jools and her band got everyone on their feet dancing and singing.

The next event will be the autumn event on Sunday 4 May from 2pm, at Heritage House, Picabeen Park, Bangalow. Anyone wanting to come along or partake in our future events please contact Ruth on ph: 0413 261 011

### **Byron Bay Hospital Auxiliary by Mary Webb**



*Pictured: Mollie Strong, branch President, at 2024 garage sale.*

It was great to catch up with members at our first branch meeting of the year and also to hear news from the Director of Nursing, Tracey, who reported back on how the summer had seen an influx of patients to the A&E unit. This was due to the normal number of tourists in the area during the holiday period, which the Hospital is well equipped to handle. We would also like to thank Ray Costigan for his kind donation of \$750 from his Christmas light display.

Fund raising activities got off to a good start with a brilliant turn out for our Easter garage sale on 16 March. Our Ladies in Red were also outside Woolworths in Byron during March, selling tickets for the Mother's Day raffle in early April. On Saturday 12 April we will be holding our Easter garage sale, where we will be selling all our amazing cakes and pickles, plants and bric-a-brac. You can find us at 105 Beech Drive, Suffolk Park from 8am–12pm. Come early to avoid disappointment and remember, every dollar raised goes to provide equipment for our local hospital.

Our meeting this month will be held at the Byron Bay Services Club on Monday 14 April at 2pm. Volunteers are always welcomed by our Branch.

*For contact details of all Clubs, see page 17.*





## Community Meetings

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

When: Various times across the Northern Rivers  
Where: Local meetings held throughout the Shire  
Contact: AA Byron Shire District, ph: 0401945671, aa.org.au

### **Australians in Retirement, Far North Coast Branch**

When: 10am, first Friday of each month  
Where: Ballina RSL Club  
Contact: Jill Huxley, ph: 6686 8958

### **Australasian Order of Old Bastards**

When: 10am–1:30pm first Saturday of the month  
Where: When and where we can – contact us  
Contact: Henri Rennie, Treasurer, email: aoob.nr@gmail.com

### **Bangalow Lions Club**

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

### **Bangalow Men's Shed**

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

### **Bangalow Quilters**

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

### **Brunswick Heads Progress Association**

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

### **Brunswick Valley VIEW Club**

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

### **Brunswick Valley Probus Club Inc.**

When: 1st Tuesday of the month 10am–12pm  
Where: The Ocean Shores Country Club  
Contact: Margaret Newbould, Secretary, ph: 6680 3316

### **Byron Bay Hospital Auxiliary**

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

### **Byron Rotary**

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

### **Byron Cavanbah Toastmaster Club**

When: 6:15–8:30pm, first and third Mondays of the month  
Where: Byron Services Club, 132 Jonson Street Byron Bay  
Contact: Email: temcmahon15@outlook.com

### **CWA of Bangalow**

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

### **CWA of Brunswick Heads**

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

### **CWA of Mullumbimby**

When: Second Wednesdays at 10am  
Where: Cnr Tincogan and Gordon St, Mullumbimby  
Contact: cwamullum@gmail.com or ph: 6684 7282

### **Friends of the Libraries**

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

### **Lions Club of Brunswick/Mullumbimby**

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

### **Mullumbimby Men's Shed**

When: 9am–12pm, Fridays  
Where: 84 Yelgun Rd, Yelgun  
Contact: Geoff Harris, mullumbimbymensshed@gmail.com

### **Mullumbimby Rotary**

When: 6pm for 6.30pm every Thursday  
Where: The Sunset Room, Ocean Shores Country Club  
Contact: Sue Stirton. Email: susanstirton10@gmail.com

### **Northern Rivers Day Prostate Cancer Support Group**

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

### **Ocean Shores Community Association Inc**

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

### **Repair Cafe Mullumbimby by Shedding Community**

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

## Other monthly events

### **Northern Rivers Animal Services - Adoption Day**

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



Pictured: Activists outside Federal Court. Source: Jones King Photography.

## Save Wallum Inc. v Clarence Property Corp update

by Holly Galbraith

The Federal Court of Australia is currently hearing a significant environmental case as Save Wallum Inc. (Save Wallum) challenges property developer Clarence Property Corporation over the proposed Bayside Brunswick Heads development. The trial, which began on 21 February, objects to the proposed Bayside

Brunswick Heads development (formerly 'Wallum') under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*, seeking a permanent injunction due to its potential impact on nationally protected species.

Save Wallum, a grassroots community group, argues that the housing estate

threatens critical habitat for endangered species, including the Wallum Sedge Frog, South-Eastern Glossy Black Cockatoo, Long-Nosed Potoroo, koalas, and the critically endangered Mitchell's Rainforest Snail. The group is seeking a permanent injunction to halt the development, citing concerns over flood risks, bushfire hazards, and destruction of old-growth scribbly gums.

Clarence Property Corporation, a major developer, contends that the project has been approved through the proper planning and environmental assessment processes and complies with all relevant regulations. The company argues that the development will provide much-needed housing and that environmental considerations have been thoroughly assessed and managed.

Luciana Bowen, President of Save Wallum, emphasised the community's determination. 'This is about more than just one development. It's a test of

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Australia's national environmental laws and whether they genuinely protect biodiversity or simply rubber-stamp destructive projects.'

The case has drawn widespread public support, with a rally outside the Federal Court in Sydney on 26 February, which saw activists, scientists, conservationists – including 14-year-old conservationist Spencer Hitchen and Ocean Alley guitarist Mitch Galbraith – standing side by side with passionate locals.

Among those speaking at the rally was NSW Greens MP and former environmental lawyer Sue Higginson, who called the case a 'David and Goliath battle,' stating: 'When you have ecologists, scientists, young people, community members, artists, and First Nations advocates all saying 'not this development, not on this Country, and not now' – but the planning system still

gives the green light to developers – you know something is deeply wrong.'

The trial has already seen intense legal debate, particularly around hydrology and ecological evidence. Expert witnesses have been closely questioned with one scientist's evidence removed from the case.

'How does an independent expert who has gone into bat on a voluntary basis – speaking up for threatened species and criticising the Government planning process – have their independence and their capacity to be an independent witness questioned before the court, yet not question the independence of paid experts? I think we've hit a system error,' stated MP Sue Higginson.

### Key dates

The hearing schedule continues with the remaining ecological expert evidence 28–30 April, and the hearing


dates of 1–2 May are set aside for the purpose of hearing the Section 43B Defence. There will be two days for closing submissions on 26–27 May.

The outcome of this case could have significant implications for how Australia enforces environmental protections under the *EPBC Act* and could set a powerful precedent for communities fighting to protect high-biodiversity areas from urban development. It also raises the broader questions about balancing development with conservation.

With both sides firmly standing their ground, the Federal Court's decision will be closely watched – not just by those directly involved but by communities and developers across the country.

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*Pictured: John Singh and John on his farm. Source: Supplied.*

## Generations of farming: an interview with John Singh

by Gillian Cornu

For over 50 years, John Singh and his family have been tending the land, raising pigs, and upholding a legacy of hard work and dedication to sustainable farming in the Byron Shire. As a third-generation Sikh and the eldest of four sons, John's roots in the region run deep, tracing back to the late 1800s when the first members of his family arrived in Australia.

His father and grandfather settled in the area in 1938, working on sugar cane farms near Maclean before expanding into pineapple and banana plantations. 'Manpower was needed in those days,' said John. 'As many of the local men had gone off to war.'

In 1952, John's father, Manga Singh, purchased land in St Helena, followed by Talofa in 1961, and later expanded the family holdings to include land from Fowlers Lane to Coolamon Scenic Drive, where the family currently resides.

Growing up in Bangalow, John remembers a close-knit rural community where everyone knew each other.

'I feel very lucky to have grown up in the small country community of Bangalow. Everyone knew each other and around our area, the Indian community was, and still is, made up of us – we're mostly all related to each other.'

Over the years, he has witnessed significant changes in the region's agricultural landscape, in an area that was once dominated by cattle and dairy farms.

'There has been an increase in biodiversity, with various kinds of farming been done now given the nutritious fertile soil we have in our Shire.'

But as John notes, maintaining a successful farm requires resilience and adaptation.

'I'm up at sunrise seven days a week to feed the pigs. Around midday, the pigs like to rest for several hours or dedicate themselves to extensive bathing, wallowing, and rolling around in our fertile soil. In the early evening hours I set up their sleeping areas – bringing together fresh material such as grass, leaves and thin twigs.'

John has embraced sustainable farming practices to ensure high-quality pork production for his company Byron Bay Pork, and to ensure that his pigs are happy.

'There are 40 breeding sows at Coorabell,' he explains. 'The sows are in an eco-shelter, run freely, bedded on saw dust and straw which makes for free range, antibiotic and hormone free meat. We have now introduced Berkshire pigs over traditional pigs, because Berkshire meat is like wagyu in the beef industry. It's marbled, moist, and retains its flavour when cooked,' says John.

With growing consumer awareness around food sourcing, John has seen a shift in how customers engage with locally farmed meat. 'At our Mullumbimby butcher where our meat is sold, along with the other meats that are sourced locally from Casino and Lismore, we find our customers want to know the products' background. Hence why keeping all of it locally sourced, free range, and hormone and antibiotic free is very important to us.'



## Community at the heart of it all

Beyond farming, John has been an active member of the Bangalow Lions Club since 1978. His commitment to community service has earned him numerous accolades, including the prestigious James Richardson Honours Award for his dedication to Lions in 1995.

'I joined the Bangalow Lions nearly 46 years ago and was President of Lions by 1989, then zone Chairman,' he said. 'It was the local chemist who got me into volunteering at the Bangalow Show, and as the comradery was so strong I decided to join the Lions. It's like a family helping family.'

From supporting local initiatives to providing aid to those in need, John believes giving back is simply part of the Bangalow way of life. 'Being an instrumental part of the Bangalow Lions and helping people in need within in the 2479 community, is the reason I am still a part of it to this day. I can walk down the street anywhere in the Shire and have a yarn with anyone and everyone – even if I don't know them, though they seem to know me. It is a very caring community made up of all sorts. The Byron Shire folks are always on hand to help out at any time.'

The Singh family's presence in Bangalow extends beyond farming and community work. In 2004, John's father played a key role in establishing the Sikh temple (Gurudwara) in Bangalow, providing a cultural and educational centre for the local Sikh community.

'It means a lot to have a place where families can gather without having to travel too far,' John shares. 'My Sikh traditions are deeply rooted in my family and me. These traditions are encouraged and upheld within my family unit with great respect and honour.'

The temple has become an important hub for Sikh families in the area, allowing them to practise their faith and maintain cultural traditions within the heart of Bangalow.

## Looking to the future

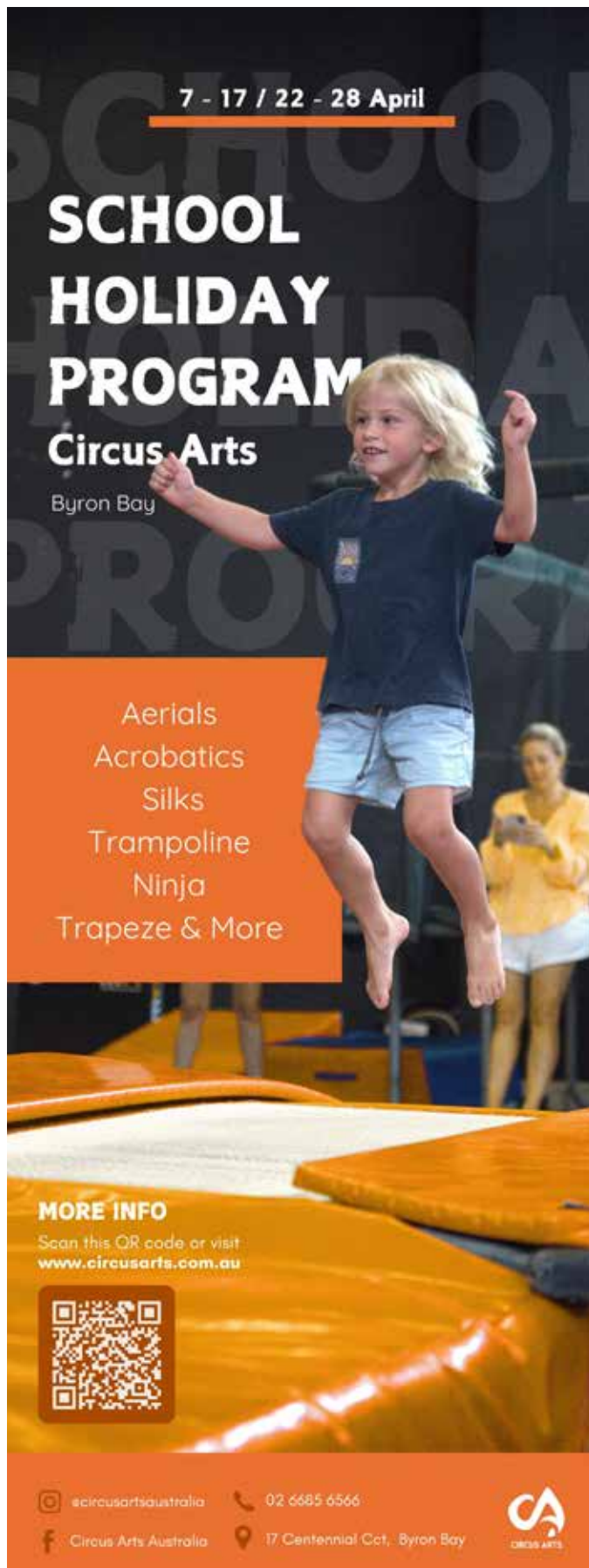
Recently, John was honoured by the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS), recognised as a Champion for his dedication and contributions to the Sydney Royal competitions. This year he was nominated by the PIG committee.

'I feel very honoured to receive this award,' said John, 'especially given this is my second recognition from the Agricultural Society.'

The award is testament to his lifelong commitment to the industry, but for John, the future isn't about awards – it's about continuing the work his family has done for generations.

'We'll keep farming, making new friends, helping out the local community,' he says with a smile. 'And, of course, keep the Singh family name around for many years to come – synonymous with having the best pigs around.'

As Bangalow continues to evolve, John Singh and his family remain a steadfast part of its story – preserving traditions, embracing change, and ensuring that the region's farming heritage endures for generations to come.



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# Frequent flyer programs: maximise your rewards

by Milt Barlow

Australian frequent flyer programs have become a cornerstone of consumer engagement, with millions of Australians actively participating to earn rewards and benefits. The loyalty programs of Qantas and Virgin Australia stand out as highly popular, offering members opportunities to accumulate points through flights, everyday spending, and partnerships with various businesses. Understanding how to best leverage these points can significantly enhance travel experiences and provide substantial value.

## The popularity of loyalty in the skies

Loyalty programs are widespread in Australia, with a vast majority of consumers belonging to at least one. Supermarket programs lead in popularity, but airline frequent flyer programs like Qantas Frequent Flyer and Velocity Frequent Flyer hold significant appeal. Qantas Frequent Flyer boasts over 16.4 million members, while Velocity Frequent Flyer has reached a substantial 12 million members, making them key players in the Australian loyalty landscape.

## Flights vs shopping: where your points go further

When it comes to redeeming frequent flyer points, members often face a choice between using them for shopping or flights. While the allure of immediate gratification through merchandise or gift cards is understandable, the true value of frequent flyer points is typically realised when redeemed for flights and upgrades. Experts consistently recommend prioritising flight redemptions, especially for long-haul travel and premium cabin upgrades, as this often yields a significantly higher return per point. For example, Qantas Economy Classic Reward flights can offer around 2 cents per point, while Business Classic Rewards can reach approximately 8 cents. Similarly, Velocity economy reward flights range from 1 – 2 cents per point, and business reward flights can be worth 2 – 4 cents. In contrast, non-flight redemptions generally provide less than 1 cent per point.

## Strategic international redemptions

To maximise the value of your Qantas and Virgin points

for international travel, understanding their partner airline networks is crucial.

**Qantas Frequent Flyer:** As part of the oneworld Alliance and with numerous other partnerships, Qantas offers access to over 1,300 destinations worldwide. For long-haul economy flights, particularly to Europe and North America, exploring partners like Finnair (no carrier charges), Japan Airlines (consistent reward seat releases), and China Airlines can be beneficial. Emirates, a non-oneworld partner, offers extensive routes but may have higher redemption rates and surcharges, which are set to increase from August 2025. Searching for reward seats on partner airline websites, like British Airways Executive Club and American Airlines AAdvantage, can sometimes yield better results than the Qantas website.

**Velocity Frequent Flyer:** While not part of an alliance, Velocity partners with airlines like Singapore Airlines, United Airlines, Air Canada, Qatar Airways, and Etihad Airways. Singapore Airlines is a particularly valuable partner, with the option to transfer Velocity Points to their KrisFlyer program for potentially wider reward seat availability. United Airlines and Air Canada provide access to North America, while Qatar Airways offers routes to Europe and the Middle East. Be aware of recent changes to Qantas and Virgin redemption calculators.

## Decoding point value

The value of a single frequent flyer point is not fixed and depends on how it's used. As mentioned, flight redemptions generally offer the best value. Aiming for a redemption value of at least \$20 for every 1,000 points (2 cents per point) is a good benchmark. Redemptions for shopping or using points to offset cash fares typically provide lower value.

## The journey to Los Angeles: a domestic flight tally

For Qantas Frequent Flyer members, a one-way economy flight from Australia to Los Angeles typically requires around 41,900 points. Assuming an average earning rate of 1,000 points per domestic economy flight, approximately 42 such flights would be needed to accrue enough points. Velocity Frequent Flyer members would generally need about 44,800 points for a similar flight. With an estimated earning rate of 800 points per domestic economy flight, around 56 flights would be required. These figures are estimates and can vary.

## Conclusion: fly smarter, not just more

Maximising the benefits of Australian frequent flyer programs involves a strategic approach to earning and redeeming points. Prioritising flight redemptions, especially for upgrades and international travel, generally offers the best value. By understanding the partner airline networks, staying informed about program changes, and diversifying earning strategies, members can effectively leverage their points to unlock rewarding travel experiences.







## Kids Corner

### Jokes

Q. What's orange and sounds like a parrot?

A. A carrot.

Q. What do you call the Easter Bunny the day after Easter?

A. Eggshhausted.

Q. Why shouldn't you tell an Easter egg a joke?

A. It might crack up.

Q. What do you call a Transformer Bunny?

A. Hop-timus Prime.

Q. What do you call a zen egg?

A. An ommmmmmlet.

Q. What do you call a rabbit with diarrhoea?

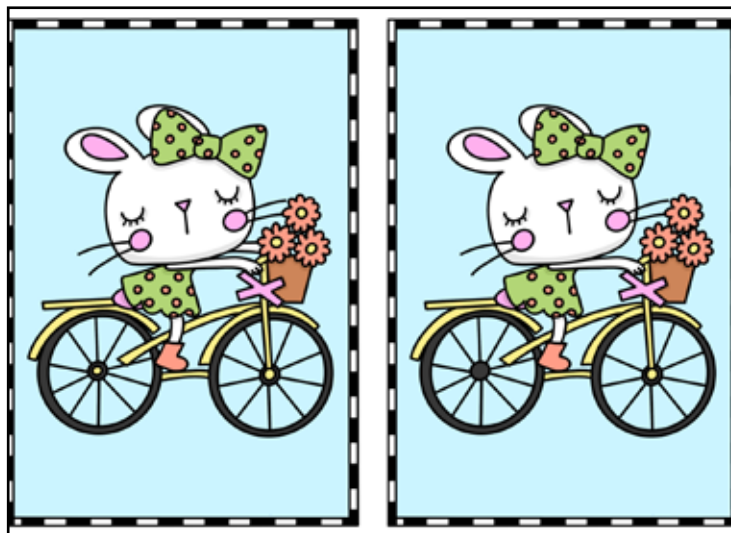
A. A runny bunny.

Q. Where does the Easter Bunny get a hair cut?

A. At the hare dresser.

### Spot the difference

Can you spot five differences?



Puzzle from: [kidspuzzlesandgames.co.uk](http://kidspuzzlesandgames.co.uk)

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	<b>1</b> 0515 0.32 1116 1.46 TU 1709 0.24 2355 1.83	<b>2</b> 0615 0.42 1202 1.29 WE 1749 0.33	<b>3</b> 0046 1.77 0726 0.52 TH 1255 1.14 1834 0.44	<b>4</b> 0146 1.69 0845 0.58 FR 1403 1.03 1933 0.55	<b>5</b> 0300 1.61 1009 0.60 SA 1541 0.99 2057 0.63	<b>6</b> 0318 1.56 1024 0.58 SU 1610 1.05 2130 0.64
<b>7</b> 0429 1.56 1120 0.53 MO 1714 1.15 2244 0.60	<b>8</b> 0524 1.57 1200 0.48 TU 1802 1.27 2341 0.54	<b>9</b> 0609 1.58 1234 0.44 WE 1843 1.37	<b>10</b> 0026 0.49 0646 1.58 TH 1302 0.40 1918 1.45	<b>11</b> 0106 0.46 0721 1.56 FR 1330 0.37 1951 1.53	<b>12</b> 0145 0.45 0752 1.53 SA 1354 0.35 2023 1.59	<b>13</b> 0221 0.45 0822 1.48 SU 1419 0.34 2054 1.64
<b>14</b> 0258 0.46 0853 1.41 MO 1444 0.35 2126 1.67	<b>15</b> 0335 0.49 0924 1.34 TU 1510 0.37 2159 1.67	<b>16</b> 0415 0.53 0956 1.26 WE 1537 0.41 2233 1.65	<b>17</b> 0459 0.57 1030 1.18 TH 1607 0.47 2312 1.61	<b>18</b> 0547 0.62 1110 1.11 FR 1642 0.53 2357 1.56	<b>19</b> 0647 0.66 1200 1.05 SA 1727 0.60	<b>20</b> 0052 1.51 0759 0.67 SU 1311 1.01 1830 0.65
<b>21</b> 0201 1.50 0910 0.64 MO 1440 1.04 1959 0.67	<b>22</b> 0315 1.53 1011 0.56 TU 1559 1.14 2125 0.63	<b>23</b> 0419 1.59 1100 0.47 WE 1700 1.27 2236 0.55	<b>24</b> 0515 1.65 1143 0.36 TH 1753 1.43 2337 0.45	<b>25</b> 0605 1.69 1222 0.27 FR 1842 1.60	<b>26</b> 0033 0.37 0652 1.68 SA 1300 0.20 1930 1.75	<b>27</b> 0127 0.31 0739 1.63 SU 1338 0.17 2015 1.87
<b>28</b> 0221 0.29 0825 1.54 MO 1416 0.17 2102 1.95	<b>29</b> 0317 0.31 0912 1.42 TU 1457 0.21 2150 1.97	<b>30</b> 0416 0.35 1000 1.30 WE 1539 0.28 2240 1.94				

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## ANZAC biscuits

by Beverly Masters

Australian culinary history holds a special place for the ANZAC biscuit, as it is renowned for its association with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) during World War I. The ingredients of the ANZAC biscuits were chosen for their ability to withstand long journeys by sea without spoiling.

### Ingredients for 24 biscuits

- 125gm butter, chopped
- 1 cup plain flour
- ½ tsp bicarb soda
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 2 tbs golden syrup
- 2 tbs boiling water
- ¾ cup desiccated coconut

### Method

1. Combine butter and golden syrup in a pan, stir over heat until butter is melted. Stir in combined soda and water, then remaining ingredients. Mix well.
2. Drop rounded teaspoons of mixture about 4cm apart on greased oven trays and flatten slightly.
3. Bake in a slow oven for about 20 minutes or until slightly brown. Cool on tray then enjoy.



# Health crisis leads chef to farming

by Kylie McGregor, Byron Farmers Market



*Pictured: Organic farmer Pepe Fassos of Five Sixty Farms, and microgreens. Source: Supplied.*

Pepe Fassos grew up in Athena Taverna – a once iconic Greek restaurant that thrived in the heart of Byron Bay, in Lawson Street, for 21 years. He was making coffees at the age of five and was a qualified chef at 18. However, years later a twist of fate led him to farming.

'I had been working as a chef for years and decided to go travelling,' Pepe says. 'It really opened my eyes – I loved the way different cultures grew and enjoyed their food. So when I came back to Australia I was inspired to leave the cooking industry and get into food production.'

Pepe's first foray into farming was on a poultry farm at Casino. It involved fairly large-scale farming, where he was responsible for half a million birds on rotation. After working there for a number of years, two things happened that would change his fate again. Firstly, he was made redundant and



then he discovered he also needed spinal surgery.

'My vertebrae was crushed as a result of a number of things – not bending properly at work and not leading a very healthy lifestyle,' Pepe says. 'This was on top of the redundancy. It all happened at the same time and it was a bit of a wake-up call. I realised I had to change my lifestyle.'

And he certainly did – converting a couple of old sheds on his property in South Gundurimba so he could grow microgreens and sprouts.

'I wanted to grow healthy food and decided on microgreens and sprouts, which are incredibly nutrient-dense superfoods. I knew intensive farming after the chicken farm, and sprouts are also intensive farming. And I was

determined they would be soil grown (rather than hydroponic) and I wanted to do it as naturally as possible. So that was initially a massive challenge.'

But the challenge paid off. Pepe's wide range of microgreens and sprouts are available at the Five Sixty Farms stall at Byron and Bangalow Farmers Markets as well as being supplied to local chefs and restaurants.

'They used to be quite a niche type product and popular mainly with chefs, but more and more people are now aware of them and their health benefits,' Pepe says. 'For example, we have a bag of broccoli sprouts, which I consider makes about two serves. Each serve is equivalent to four heads of broccoli. And people now understand that sprouts and microgreens can be more than just a garnish. You can pile them on sandwiches or wraps or add them to smoothies. You can also add them to a stir-fry at the end of cooking.'

Pepe and the Five Sixty Farms stall also offer certified organic edible flowers and a wide range of leafy greens, root vegies, melons and more.

*Byron Farmers Market is held every Thursday 7am–11am at Butler Street Reserve and Bangalow Farmers Market is held Saturdays 7am–11am at Piccabeen Park.*





## A journey of learning and connection

by Cape Byron Rudolf Steiner School



At Cape Byron Rudolf Steiner School for our Class One students, the new year begins with a heartfelt tradition The Rose Ceremony where last year's Kindergarten children step into the next chapter of their educational journey. This special moment marks their transition into Class One, surrounded by the warmth of their families and teachers.

Hand in hand with their Kindergarten teachers, the children walk through a guard of honour formed by their parents, symbolising the love and support that will accompany them throughout their schooling. At the end of this path, they are greeted by their new Class Teacher who will journey with them from Class One to Class Six.

The Class Teacher relationship is a cherished and unique aspect of our School. For six years, these dedicated educators nurture, inspire, and support their students, forming deep and lasting connections with the children and their families. This continuity provides a strong foundation for learning, growth, and pastoral care, reflecting the core values of Steiner education.

As the students reach the end of their primary years, another profound moment awaits—the closing ceremony of their Class Teacher journey.

This poignant event honours the years of shared experiences, challenges, and achievements, celebrating both an ending and a new beginning as the students step forward into High School.

From the first steps into Class One to the farewell as they embark on the next stage, this journey is more than just an education, it is a meaningful and deeply rooted experience of community, care, and lifelong learning, an essential element of Steiner Education.



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## Student leadership and achievement at BBPS

by Nicky Greenlaw, Teacher, Byron Bay Public School (BBPS)



### National Young Leaders' Day

Newly appointed school leaders from our Yr6 cohort attended the National Young Leaders' Day in Brisbane where they heard from some inspiring speakers. Australia's 28th Governor General, Her Excellency

The Honourable Sam Mostyn AC spoke on leadership within the community. Dayne Zorko, Brisbane Lions superstar and former team captain, talked about the importance of resilience. Artist and author, Kasey Rainbow shared how creativity can encourage positivity, and champion supercar driver, Todd Hazelwood, spoke about overcoming challenges.

A special highlight was when our School Captains, Jesse and Nina, were invited on stage to thank Kasey Rainbow. Students also had the incredible opportunity to take a photo with the Governor General, making the day even more memorable.

One key takeaway was that leadership is about setting a positive example, supporting others, and believing in yourself. Students left feeling inspired and ready to apply these lessons in our School community. On their return to School, students were animated in their recount of the day and were unanimous in agreement that it had been an unforgettable experience.

### Excellence in sport

After house points from our Swimming Carnival were counted, Cavanbah House Captains Mattia, Gigi, Onni and Summer proudly stepped forward at assembly to receive the winning shield for first place. Nineteen students qualified for the Far North Coast PSSA Championships with special congratulations going to Hazel, Orlando and Mattia who were awarded Age champions in their relevant age categories.

Congratulations also go to Sonny from Yr6 who has demonstrated his skills on the tennis courts. Sonny has been recognised and selected for the Far North Coast Tennis team and will be representing BBPS at the North Coast trials. We look forward to following his achievements at this next level.

## Village Vibes Baby is back

by Charlotte Teague, NRP



At Northern Rivers Preschool, Village Vibes Baby is a fresh take on your traditional mums' and bubs' group aimed at supporting all people caring for babies under 12 months.

The weekly group is delivered by our beloved Early Childhood Educator

Nat McCabe, who has over a decade's experience with Byron Bay Preschool. Parents can expect to be greeted with a smile, made a cup of tea and welcomed into a safe and supportive space to share the unique experience of caring for a baby. The sessions are free with no booking required, making it easy for parents to drop by anytime between 9:30am – 11:30am each Tuesday (during school terms).

Byron Bay Preschool's Coogera Centre is now our Early Childhood hub, offering playgroup Monday mornings, the Toy Library, Monday and Thursday mornings, Shaping Outcomes (early intervention), and the Coogera Preschool rooms, running five days a week. If you are a parent, grandparent, carer, or *au pair*, looking after a baby and want a causal and informative session to attend, this is the place to come.

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



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## Richard Mordaunt showcases a lifetime of stories



Award-winning filmmaker Richard Mordaunt has called Byron Shire home for many years, living and documenting the shifting tides of its culture, community, and creative spirit. Now, Byron Theatre is set to honour his remarkable career with a special two-day retrospective on 25–26 April, offering audiences an exclusive opportunity to revisit four of his most compelling films.

Mordaunt studied at the London Film School in 1964, drawing inspiration from the French New Wave before founding Lusita Films in London. His work spans documentary, music, and visual arts, and he has long been a champion of storytelling.

Reflecting on Byron's past, he notes: 'In the 70s and 80s this region became home to numbers of artists who chose to make this their new home. There were many new intelligent voices creating this new community, but over the last few years real estate has definitely been winning out and houses and rents have become unaffordable. The culture of this area is suffering badly. Luckily, we have a strong community belief at work which has been holding our communities together.'

### A journey through art, activism, and music

Hosted by the Byron Community Centre, this retrospective will feature screenings of *Battle for Byron*, *Salvatore Zofrea: Master of Light*, *Otis Redding and the Battle for Civil Rights*, and *Brushes with Fame*. Each session will include a Q&A with Mordaunt himself, offering audiences a rare chance to gain insight into the stories behind the films.

Mordaunt's documentaries are testament to his deep commitment to art and activism. Split into two sessions, the retrospective will open on Friday 25 April with *Battle for Byron*, co-directed with David Bradbury – a gripping chronicle of Byron Shire's grassroots movement to protect its natural beauty from the encroachment of large-scale development. This film, which captures the historic fight against the Club Med proposal, remains as relevant today as it was when first released. Also screening is *Salvatore Zofrea: Master of Light*, an intimate portrait of one of Australia's most celebrated painters, charting his artistic journey from Italy to Australia.

Session two, on Saturday 26 April, will open with *Otis Redding and the Battle for Civil Rights*, a newly restored documentary featuring rare footage of Redding's final UK performance in 1967, interwoven with the story of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. The retrospective will close with *Brushes with Fame*, a behind-the-scenes look at nine exceptional artists as they create works for the prestigious Archibald Prize.

Mordaunt's films serve as a powerful reminder of the need to protect, not just the environment, but also the cultural identity of our communities. As he puts it, 'Storytelling is what keeps a community alive and strong. This world is becoming a dangerous place, and now, more than ever, we need to support and uplift one another.'

### Event details

**Where:** Byron Theatre, 69 Jonson Street, Byron Bay

**When:** 25–26 April

**Tickets:** [byron.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/144347](https://byron.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/144347)

## Flickerfest: Byron All Shorts winners



Celebrating 34 years, Flickerfest concluded its highly successful three-day Mullumbimby event this March, drawing full houses throughout the weekend. Enthusiastic audiences embarked on a cinematic journey, experiencing a diverse selection of short films from Australia and around the world.

The films showcased at Flickerfest Mullumbimby were selected from over 3,500 entries submitted for

Flickerfest's Oscar and BAFTA-qualifying festival competitions, originally held at the Festival's 10-day event in Bondi during January.

Mullumbimby is one of over 40 venues on Flickerfest's national tour, with festival organisers, Bronwyn Kidd and Shane Rennie, thrilled to once again bring the event to Byron Shire for the 28th year, and Byron All Shorts for the 20th year. This year saw 11 local finalists chosen from over 40 entries from the Northern Rivers region, competing for hotly contested prizes.

### And the winners are...

- iQ and Flickerfest – Jury Award for Best Short Film: *Suvira*, written, directed and produced by Sam Clarke from Mullumbimby.

- SAE University College – Jury Award for Emerging Talent: *High Tide, Low Tide*, written and produced by Stephen Muldoon, directed by Jordan Edmeades from East Ballina
- iQ and Flickerfest – Audience Award for Best Short Film: *Suvira*, written, directed and produced by Sam Clarke from Mullumbimby.

Among their individual prizes, all award winners also received a Screenworks Membership and a Season Pass +1 to Flickerfest 2026. Organisers, Bronwyn and Shane, also extended a heartfelt thank you to all who joined them for a weekend of great short films.

*Flickerfest Mullumbimby and Byron All Shorts is presented with iQ Inc, and is a fundraiser for the Island Quarry Reserve.*





## Finding the sweet spot



### Easter, chocolate, and your health

Easter is a time of joy, family gatherings, and, of course, chocolate. From foil-wrapped eggs to indulgent Easter bunnies, it's easy to overdo it – especially for kids. While chocolate itself isn't the enemy, excessive consumption can leave little ones (and adults) feeling unwell. But with the cold and flu season approaching, could the Easter chocolate binge also contribute to a post-holiday immune slump?

### The sugar overload effect

Chocolate itself, particularly dark chocolate, contains antioxidants and can even have some health benefits in moderation. The real issue comes from the added sugars and fats in many commercial Easter treats. When kids (or adults) consume too much, they may experience sugar crashes, digestive discomfort, and possibly even mild inflammation – all of which could contribute to feeling run down. Pair that with late nights, social gatherings, and a shift into cooler months, and it's no surprise that many people find themselves battling sniffles soon after Easter.

### Does chocolate really lower immunity?

A well-documented study from *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that consuming 100 grams of sugar (the equivalent of a few Easter eggs) can significantly impair the ability of white blood cells to fight viruses and bacteria for up to five hours. This can contribute to inflammation and suppressed immune function, making the body more vulnerable to infections. Most Easter chocolates are high in sugar, and while a little treat is perfectly fine, large amounts of sugar can potentially make us more susceptible to colds and flu. Additionally, a study from *Frontiers in Immunology* suggests that diets high in refined sugars can disrupt gut bacteria, which plays a crucial role in immune function.

### Supporting your immune system post-Easter

If you or your family tend to get sick after Easter, consider these simple ways to balance indulgence with wellbeing.

- Opt for quality over quantity – choose dark chocolate with a high cocoa content (70% or more) for a treat that's rich in antioxidants and lower in sugar. This one is more for adults than kids, given that dark chocolate can be an acquired taste.
- Enjoy treats in moderation – encourage mindful chocolate consumption. Instead of an all-at-once sugar fest, spread treats out over a few days. Excess Easter chocolate can be stored in the fridge and used in baking throughout the year.

- Pair chocolate with protein or healthy fats – encourage kids to enjoy their chocolate alongside nutrient-dense foods like fresh fruit, nuts, and yogurt to slow sugar absorption and maintain stable energy levels.
- Stay hydrated – drinking plenty of water can help flush out excess sugar and support overall health.
- Boost nutrients – load up on fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole foods to give your immune system the vitamins and minerals it needs.
- Get enough sleep – rest is key to immune function, so prioritise good sleep habits after a busy Easter weekend.
- Dress for the season – with the shift to cooler nights, make sure everyone is dressed warmly to avoid catching a chill.

### The bottom line

Chocolate isn't the culprit – it's how much and how often we eat it. By enjoying Easter treats in moderation and supporting the body with good nutrition and healthy habits, you can savour the sweetness of the season without the post-holiday sniffles.

So go ahead, enjoy your Easter eggs – just remember to balance the fun with a little extra care for your health.

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## Pets and cancer: understanding the silent threat

by North Coast Veterinary Services



Our pets hold a cherished place in our hearts, providing companionship, joy, and unconditional love. Yet, as they age, our beloved animals become susceptible to various health issues, with cancer being one of the most daunting.

The sobering reality is that cancer, also known as neoplasia, is one of the leading causes of death in pets. Approximately one in four dogs will develop neoplasia at some point in their lives. For dogs over the age of 10, the risk escalates, with nearly half being diagnosed with cancer. Dogs develop cancer at roughly the same rate as humans, highlighting the significant health risk it poses to our canine companions.

While there is less comprehensive data on the rate of cancer in cats, certain types of cancer, such as lymphoma, are notably more common in cats than in dogs. This underscores the necessity for vigilance and regular veterinary check-ups for our feline friends as well.

The signs and symptoms of neoplasia vary depending on the tissue involved and the severity of the growth. Common indications that a pet may have cancer include:

- abdominal swelling
- bleeding from the mouth, nose, or other body openings
- difficulty breathing
- change in appetite

- lumps, bumps, or discoloured skin
- non-healing wounds
- persistent diarrhoea or vomiting
- sudden changes in weight
- unexplained swelling, heat, pain
- lameness.

Unfortunately, the exact causes of cancer in pets are not well understood. Environmental factors and genetic predispositions are believed to contribute to the risk.

This complexity mirrors the challenges faced in human oncology, where pinpointing the precise cause of cancer often remains elusive.

Early detection and treatment are crucial in managing cancer in pets. The earlier cancer is identified, the better the chances of successful treatment and improving the quality of life for our furry friends. Regular check-ups are vital for early detection. Pet owners should consult their veterinarian if they observe any of the signs listed above.

Veterinarians may use a combination of diagnostic tools such as blood tests, X-rays, ultrasounds, and biopsies to diagnose cancer in pets. Treatment options vary depending on the type and stage of cancer and may include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy. Advances in veterinary medicine have made these treatments more effective, providing hope for pets diagnosed with cancer.

The diagnosis of cancer in a pet is a challenging and emotional experience for any pet owner. However, understanding the risks, symptoms, and treatment options can empower owners to take proactive steps in caring for their beloved animals. Monitor for the signs of cancer, and always consult with a veterinarian if you have concerns about your pet's health.



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## Pet of the month

by Northern Rivers Animal Services



**Owners:** Dawn and Rodney

**Pet name:** Jax

**Age:** Five months

**Breed:** Staffy cross

**Favourite food:**

He loves most food – roast chicken is a favourite, eggs, and pumpkin.

**Favourite toy:**

He has lots of favourites – his little bear, his rubber ring for teething and ball for playing. He loves a squeaky toy.

**What does this pet enjoy?**

'Jax loves affection and cuddles as well as playing with other dogs. He will come ready with a waggy tail and nuzzle into you. When other dogs are around he wants to play and get close. He has been amazing; introduced to all kinds of dogs and is quick to learn when they tell him enough. He loves playing ball and is slowly getting used to the beach though the waves are scary.'

**Why are they a great addition to the family?**

'We brought Jax home just before Christmas as a foster and completely fell in love with him. His nature is so calm and loving and he won our hearts. We previously had a beautiful dog Izzy who passed away seven months ago and he has helped us through that by being playful and goofy and coming

for a cuddle. He works well with our lifestyle and has been the perfect fit.'

**What's are some anecdotes you can share about your pet?**

'Jax loves being a part of everything and being the centre of attention. He steals the toilet paper and enjoys getting in the middle of cuddles. He has a look that says I'm not doing anything wrong and then cheekily tries again. He's at that naughty puppy stage but he also listens well, sits and comes when called. We are doing lots of training and he loves being at home in the garden, meeting new friends at our coffee shop or just being with us wherever we are going.'

*Looking to foster or adopt a companion animal? Drop into the regular Adoption Days at the NRAS Rescue Shelter – 61 Piper Drive, Ballina on the 1st Saturday of the month, 10:00am – 1:00pm or visit: [nras.org.au](http://nras.org.au)*

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## Wild Space: wildlife filmmaking and education



Local wildlife filmmaker and Byron Councillor, David Warth, has recently begun a new venture, at 1 Centennial Circuit in Byron's industrial estate, called Wild Space – where wildlife filmmaking meets education, mentorship, and hands-on experience. As a dedicated wildlife filmmaker, with award winning ABC documentaries like *Tarkine the Forgotten Wilderness* and *Rainforest the Secret of Life*, and in the last stages of filming his stunning blue-chip documentary on the Shire's amazing wildlife community called *Wild Byron* – David is keen to share his extensive knowledge and expertise.

### About Wild Space

Wild Space aims to ignite a deeper connection between children, adults, and nature. In today's digital age, many are disconnected from the natural world. Whether you're a beginner, a family looking to bond over nature, or a filmmaker seeking to refine your skills, Wild Space has something to offer with unique courses tailored to your needs. With hands-on courses and mentoring, participants will learn the ins and outs of filming animals in their natural habitats. David offers full support, providing top-of-the-line equipment and guidance out in the field. Along the way, David will share his insights on camera angles, hiding setups, and how to read the natural world. He will also be offering half-day filming experiences for those who want to just have a go.

'Knowing how to read wildlife means knowing exactly where to find an animal

and the best time to observe it,' says David. 'It's all about tuning into the natural world around you. Once back at Wild Space, participants can complete a rough edit of their footage in the editing-suite, followed by a draft screening of their work. Past participants have been amazed by what they have filmed.'

Wild Space will also double as an educational facility. Equipped with powerful microscopes, large screen viewing, and an extensive natural history library, the space offers an exciting opportunity for adults and kids to examine the micro-details of natural specimens. David also plans to host Natural History Presentations, where like-minded individuals can gather to view footage and discuss topics of wildlife, nature, and conservation.

For more information contact David on ph: 0429 809 130 or email: davidwarthproductions@gmail.com

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Worried about climate change and the housing crisis? You're not alone. Labor have approved 32 new coal and gas projects, while Dutton distracts with nuclear. **We can't keep voting for the same two parties and expecting different results.**

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**Build more public housing**, stop unlimited rent and mortgage rises



**Stop new coal and gas projects**, protect the environment



**Put dental and mental health into Medicare**, make GP visits free



**Make billionaires and big corporations pay their fair share** of tax



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Authorised by A. Croft for The Greens NSW. 19a/1 Hordern Place Camperdown NSW 2050.

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## Covered loads lead to safer roads

by NE Waste



*Pictured: Uncovered loads are a danger to other road users and create litter along our roadsides. Source: Supplied.*

As road users, at some point we've all witnessed objects fall from an unsecured vehicle load, had to dodge fallen hazards whilst driving or noticed the litter scattered along the roadside. Some of us have even had serious accidents due to that fallen item from other drivers' unsecured loads.

It's important to know that if you do plan to transport any

loose items, whether it be by truck, trailer, ute or roof rack, it needs to be properly secured so that nothing will fall or blow from the vehicle. This is not only good practice to ensure our roads are safe, but a legal requirement which if ignored, can lead to heavy fines.

### How to secure a load correctly

Securing your load is easy and can be done with a purpose-built cover, cargo net, or tarpaulin in combination with ties such as rope, ratchet or occy/bungee straps.

Even if your trailer, ute or truck has high sides, it's important to ensure no loose material can blow out or fall from your vehicle.

In NSW, it is an offence to drive your vehicle with an unsecured or overhanging load. Uncovered loads incur an on-the-spot fine of \$481 and three demerit points.

Let's keep our roads and community safe.

Find out more on how to properly secure a load before you drive visit: [newaste.org.au/coveryourload](http://newaste.org.au/coveryourload)

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- Completing adoption paperwork
- Friendly team
- WORD & EXCEL experience preferred
- Good organisational skills
- An eye for detail
- Based at the NRAS Rescue Shelter, Ballina

Email: [secretary@nras.org.au](mailto:secretary@nras.org.au) for details

## Byron Bay Pickleball Club

by the BBPC Committee



Hello fellow Picklers. We are not alone in believing that pickleball is a life-changing sport. The hype is real, after all, there are so many reasons to love this game. It's easy to learn and doesn't require

a sporty background – it's great exercise, and for every age. It can be a great competitive outlet, if competitions and tournaments are your thing, and best of all – pickleball is a party sport. For anyone looking to get their pickle-on, our Club offers fun and engaging sessions for players of all skill levels. Social sessions are held at the Cavanbah Sports Centre outside courts on Monday and Thursday nights from 5:30 – 7:30. On Saturday mornings we have intermediate and advanced play from 8 – 9:30 and social play for all levels from 9:30 to 11:30. Booking your spot is essential through Open Sports.

### Doubles competition

The BBPC inaugural Wednesday night mixed doubles summer series competition was a huge success with 14 mixed

doubles teams participating over a six week period. The last weeks final series showed the unbelievable improvement in our picklers games with a very high standard of play. The team of Emma and Mark were too good and won the final, with runners up Scott and Jane, Matt and Lisa.

### Autumn competition

Our autumn competition series commenced on Tuesday the 11 March 5:30 to 7:30pm for a six week period, with mens, ladies and mixed doubles teams to participate.

### QPT Gold Coast Tournament

The QPT Gold Coast pickleball tournament was held on the 21 – 23 February. BBPC had 10 participants competing in singles, doubles and mixed doubles. A great time was had by all with gold won by Emma and Mark in the mixed doubles and silver won by Dave and Mark and Fernanda and Emma in the mens and ladies doubles. All our participating players showed great pickleing skills and sportsmanship, and thoroughly enjoyed the competition and socialising with other pickleball players from around Australia and overseas. Until next month, keep pickleing.

For more information visit Instagram: @byronbaypickleball

## All about tennis

by Mullumbimby Tennis Club

It's an exciting time for tennis in the Northern Rivers with the launch of the North-East Tennis League (NET League), an inter-club competition back by Tennis NSW designed to unite local players, provide affordable competitive opportunities, and create crucial development pathways for juniors. The league caters to social and elite club-level players and is divided into two divisions – A grade for experienced competitors and B grade for developing players – NET League also allows young players to transition smoothly into senior competition. Now in its fifth round, NET League is

well underway, with teams from Mullumbimby, Suffolk Park, Alstonville, Brunswick Heads, Bangalow, Ocean Shores, and Pottsville competing for regional bragging rights.

For those looking to get involved in NET League, or tennis outside of competition, Mullumbimby Tennis Club offers a welcoming community with plenty of opportunities to play. With six newly resurfaced courts, upgraded fencing, and a successful open tournament held last year, there's never been a better time to pick up a racquet. We host social tennis on Monday Ladies' Night; Tuesday Mixed Social Tennis evenings; Wednesday Morning Ladies; and Friday evening and Saturday afternoon Mixed Social Tennis.

For more information or to join visit: [mullumbimbytennisclub.com](http://mullumbimbytennisclub.com) or email: [admin@mullumbimbytennisclub.com](mailto:admin@mullumbimbytennisclub.com)



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# Trust me, I'm a vacuous influencer

with Billy Bob Thoughtson



Pictured: Leonardo Da Vinci, artist, inventor and influencer.

I don't mean to take the wind out of anyone's sails but long before Instagram, TikTok, YouTube etc we had some pretty good influencers who left an impact on the world. They shaped the way we think, live, and interact with one another, and they wielded plenty of global influence. Today's social media influencers don't realise it, but they are part of a long tradition of influencing, and influencer marketing, some of which stretches back centuries. Of course there are some key differences, but one could argue that influence knows no boundaries in terms of time, geography, or your area of expertise.

Think of an iconic influencer like Leonardo De Vinci (1452–1519) – he left an enduring mark on the world through his mastery of art, science, and invention. Leo exerted his influence through collaborative networks where intellectuals, artists, and scientists exchanged ideas and fostered a community of innovation. This networking spread his influence and integrated his ideas. He would demonstrate his scientific experiments and artistic techniques publicly, showcasing the practical applications.

If Leo had a presence on social media it would be nothing short of revolutionary – his bearded face would be iconic, and he'd likely have a cult following that would call themselves the Nardos, like Taylor's Swifties. His Instagram feed would be a treasure trove of stunning images of in-progress works and

followers might even get an intimate look at the creation of the *Mona Lisa* or *The Last Supper* in time-lapse form. Alongside his art, da Vinci could post sketches and notes from his scientific studies. Leo's TikToks might break down complex scientific principles into engaging, bite-sized videos, or maybe he'd take a more Gen Z approach:

'Yo, what up, fam? It's your boy Leo, comin' at ya live from Florence. I've been cooking up some wild ideas, but today... man, this sh\*t be bussin – like bussin-bussin. Check it out – this bad boy right here is a flying machine. Yeah we talkin' 'bout taking flight. No cap, only fax. But hey, I ain't doing this for me. Nah, I'm doing it for the people of Florence. The vibe recently has low-key been lacking. I'm talking major Ls. When I hit the skies, it's gonna be pure rizz. My aura be like 10,000. These peeps gonna see me gliding by in my Renaissance drip – all of Florence gonna be shook.' #RenaissanceRizz #FlorenceFyp

Anyway... The influencer world is not new, nor is influencer marketing. The first influencer marketing collab dates back to the 18th century when a potter, Josiah Wedgwood, who was also a pioneering marketing strategist, created a lovely tea set for Queen Charlotte, the wife of King George III. Then there was Dale Carnegie's timeless 1936 classic, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, which had a significant impact on influencer marketing, emphasising the importance of building authentic relationships, understanding consumer needs, and communicating effectively. Mark Zuckerberg said the book 'is a must read for anyone who wants to succeed' – but that kind of sounds like a marketing ploy to me.

Now we have social media influencers, who are basically ordinary people knowledgeable about specific issues or have a personality that's enjoyable to consume. You also don't have to look far to find influencers in the wild – there's plenty around Byron – who leverage the vibrant culture of our great community

for online views. But don't get me wrong, some of these influencers are incredible, and have harnessed the global power of social media in every niche. They build engaged communities who follow their lead and listen to their opinions. The lifestyles of some of these influencers are also achievable, making them relatable to us – the unwashed masses. Brands notice this and partnerships blossom as they seek authentic ways to connect with their target audience. I'm not a doctor, but according to Matter Communication, 69% of consumers trust influencers, friends and family over information coming directly from a brand.

Then you have the other side of the coin – the vacuous influencer. These are the ones who don't practise what they preach, take up an obnoxious amount of public space for content, fabricate stories for online clout, and some even steal baby wombats from their mothers, or do other such stupid things. Diving down to the very bottom of this rabbit hole, nothing compares to that vacuous Netflix 'docu-soap' *Byron Baes*, which I'm sure you all remember. It stands as a true disservice to the real hardworking influencer, and unfortunately, reinforced the negative stereotypes about influencers being shallow and disconnected from the real world. The show completely overlooked the substantial and positive contributions many influencers make. Not to mention these characters were representing a stereotype of Byron Bay, not the authentic, eclectic, and alternative place we know and love.

I'll finish with old mate Leo. If he was around to witness social media, I reckon he would repeat one of his most famous quotes. 'The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding,' which is relevant to those who create content that informs, educates, and fosters genuine interaction, rather than simply seeking followers. We are reminded that each of us has the potential to be an influencer in our own right, contributing to positive change and leaving a lasting impact on the world.



## This Month

with Milt Barlow

### At the movies

Reflecting the quiet US season prior to the big summer releases, April is a bit lackluster for blockbusters but still has some interesting viewing.

Opening 10 April is critically acclaimed *Small Things Like These*, an historical drama starring the wonderful Cillian Murphy (*Peaky Blinders*). Set in 1985, this confronting film has Murphy playing a devoted father who discovers disturbing secrets being kept by the local convent, along the way discovering some shocking truths of his own. It's riveting, although at times confronting, cinema.

Fans of Neil Young will not want to miss *Neil Young Coastal* (17 April), a fascinating behind-the-scenes documentary following Young's

recent solo tour. Directed by his wife, Daryl Hannah, the film captures this legendary performer for his first shows post COVID. It's a great nostalgic trip.

Also opening 17 April is *The Penguin Lessons*. If you're looking for something light and easy to put a smile on your face, then this is it. Starring Steve Coogan (*The Reckoning*), it follows the story of a British teacher who takes up a job in Argentina and finds his life transformed when he rescues an orphaned penguin from the beach. No Oscar winner but it's cute.

And it must be the month for music nostalgia as 24 April sees the release of *Pink Floyd At Pompei*. This original 1972 concert film has been completely remastered in 4K. The band performs a typical live set from the era but there is no audience apart from the basic film crew. It was shot in the ancient Roman amphitheatre in Pompei, Italy.

### On the couch

My favourite watch over the past

month would have to be *Fargo* Season 5 (Stan). I missed this on its 2023 release, so with nothing much I wanted to watch this month it was a great catch up. I've always been a *Fargo* fan with its quirky storylines, great cast and superb direction, and this season doesn't disappoint. Midwestern housewife Dorothy 'Dot' Lyon (Juno Temple) faces a never-ending series of life threatening dramas as North Dakota Sheriff Roy Tillman (Jon Hamm) and his loyal but out-of-control son, Gator (Joe Keery), set out to track her down. Endless mayhem ensues along the way. A word of warning – this, like all *Fargos*, is not for the faint hearted.

The other great watch is the second sequel to *Yellowstone* – *1923* (Apple TV+). With Helen Mirren and Harrison Ford continuing their roles, it's a great watch. The only downside is that one episode is released per week, however given it started 23 February, they should all be available and ready to binge by the time you read this.

# Don't be a tosser!

Cover your load



## Heavy penalties apply.

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## April crossword

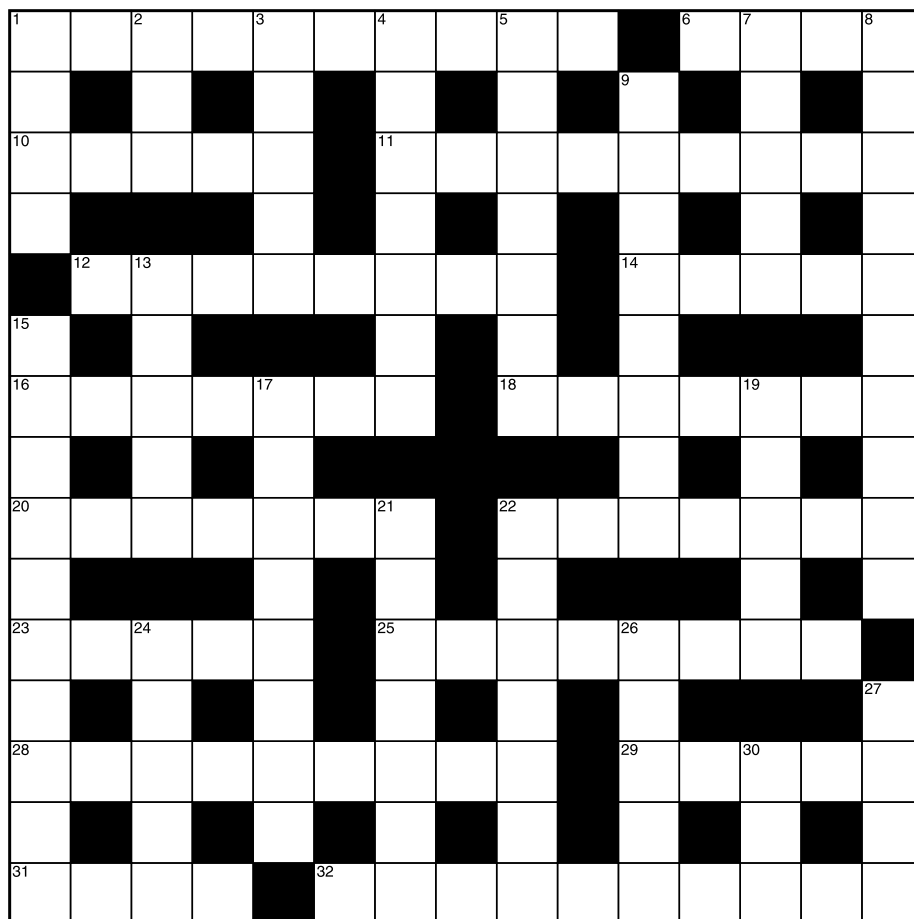
© Lovatts Puzzles

### Across

1. Explained further
6. Early Peruvian
10. Seaweed-wrapped snack
11. Goes berserk (6,3)
12. Bring to a close
14. Craves
16. Wastes away
18. Ill-fated ocean liner
20. Spotted great cat
22. Ski-lift cabin
23. Execute (law)
25. Blackberry shrubs
28. Inoculated
29. Urban
31. Earns
32. Planet watcher

### Down

1. Otherwise, or ...
2. Beast of burden
3. Spirit contact board
4. News & current ...
5. Cooker ring
7. ... & crannies
8. Unfriendly
9. Body frame
13. Lead-in
15. Stifling
17. Praising highly
19. Lariat
21. Humiliates
22. Stately
24. Allow entry to
26. Breakfast rasher
27. Disfiguring mark
30. Vigour



## Tricky Trivia

### Easter and ANZAC edition

1. The first Easter eggs were dyed what color?
2. Who was the 'man with the donkey'?
3. When did the first ANZACs land at ANZAC Cove?
4. What baked good is a Good Friday tradition?
5. In Switzerland, what animal delivers Easter eggs to kids?
6. What is the Victoria Cross?
7. Who wrote the poem *In Flanders' Fields*?
8. How many ANZACs were killed on the first day of the Gallipoli battle, 25 April 1915?
9. In what country did the tradition of the Easter Bunny originate?
10. Easter Island is part of which country?



## Horoscopes

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



### Aries

The recent eclipse season kick-started a fresh chapter in your personal life if you were born in March, and a fresh work or health schedule if you were born in April. Your home life and creativity will also be a focus in April, and your usual zest and vitality will return – all a reason to be positive.



### Taurus

If you experienced an intense March, you'll be pleased to hear that in April, as long as you are careful with communications until at least the 8th, interactions can become less stressful. You'll enjoy a trip or get-together around Easter and an increasing sense of progress.



### Gemini

Your long-term domestic and career direction will benefit from fresh initiative, which will help you to improve finances, so be sure to be proactive and bold with your projects. But if you found communications challenging in March, be careful this month; be clear and avoid over analysis.



### Cancer

April is a good month for negotiations, travel and adventure. Just ensure you base your decisions on facts and not suppositions. Mars continues to provide you with the energy you need to succeed in your career and love life but if you're finding life stressful, it's time to find ways to unwind.



### Leo

Mars enters Leo on the 18th, providing a boost in energy and even an ideal development for some. Be prepared to take the initiative, especially with passion projects and your personal life. Be patient with communications and strategic with finances to stimulate positive long-term outcomes.



### Virgo

This month will be excellent for revitalising your health as your efforts are likely to succeed. The full moon on the 13th will spotlight which aspect of your health will benefit from most focus. The end of April brings the chance to anchor your projects, but be careful with talks towards the 27th.



### Libra

This is a romantic month, so be sure to take advantage of this phase. However, you must avoid seeing someone idealistically, as this could bring disappointment. Be realistic. It's a busy time, so find ways to be practical with scheduling to avoid frustration, delays and misunderstandings.



### Scorpio

A fresh chapter in a key personal or business relationship will proceed, but you must be careful this month, as otherwise a rash word spoken out of turn could cause unnecessary ripples. Adventure beckons towards the end of the month, and a fun venture could materialise.



### Sagittarius

You may enjoy a memorable upturn in domestic matters so be sure to take the initiative. Your career and finances could progress, but you must avoid being idealistic and gambling, both financially and emotionally. Mid-month, travel and fun ventures will appeal, so plan ahead.



### Capricorn

Where do you mostly derive a sense of purpose and direction? You'll gain the opportunity to invest in activities that lead to a feeling of achievement, but you must avoid simply making changes now due to boredom or frustration. You may be drawn to a new social or work circle as you grow.



### Aquarius

You'll be attracted to something new in April. However, if delays arise, be patient and diligent as you'll see progress by the end of the month. In the meantime, avoid pressuring yourself or others to achieve a set outcome; you may be more pleased by an unexpected path that opens as a result.



### Pisces

You'll notice a shift in your focus so be prepared to leave behind aspects of your past that no longer resonate. For some, there will be a degree of frustration, so pace yourself where needed. The new moon on the 27th will help you to anchor ventures that require financial or personal attention.





## Trivia answers

### Easter and ANZAC edition

1. Red.
2. John Simpson Kirkpatrick. Better known to Australians as Jack Simpson.
3. 4:28am on Sunday 25 April 1915.
4. Hot cross buns.
5. The cuckoo.
6. The highest British Commonwealth award for the most conspicuous bravery in the presence of the enemy.
7. John McCrae.
8. 2000.
9. Germany.
10. Chile.

## Crossword solution

### March

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

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**KIMBERLY HONE**

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