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Community news for the Byron Shire

Issue 27 | February 2025



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THE REAL ESTATE MARKET HAS CHANGED DRAMATICALLY OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS.

The real estate market has experienced remarkable momentum, showcasing an influx of eager buyers actively searching for their dream homes. This surge in demand has created unparalleled opportunities for both buyers and sellers, particularly in Northern NSW, where the allure of premium properties remains steadfast.

The region continues to attract a diverse range of buyers, from local families upgrading to larger homes to interstate and international purchasers seeking luxury coastal lifestyles.

Now is the perfect time to act, as market conditions align to benefit both buyers and sellers. With interest rates stabilising, many buyers are locking in their decisions with confidence, knowing that the financial landscape is less volatile. Additionally, the continued wave of interstate migration, particularly from NSW and Victoria, is adding fuel to the market's vigor.

These buyers are keen to make their move before competition intensifies further, creating a robust environment where properties are selling quickly, often with multiple offers. In Northern NSW, the sale of '36 Ruskin Street, Byron Bay,' for a street record of \$6,100,000 further emphasises the region's appeal to premium buyers. These successes are not only a testament to the thriving market but also to the power of leveraging local expertise and innovative marketing strategies.

With summer fast approaching and the end of the year in sight, buyers are eager to secure their ideal properties before the holiday season. Whether you're considering selling or purchasing, the current market dynamics offer a unique window of opportunity. At Amir Prestige, we're here to guide you every step of the way, ensuring you achieve exceptional results in this exciting real estate climate.

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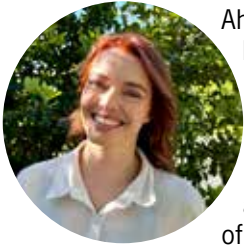
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Dear Readers



Ah, February, the month of romance, the last of summery days, and the shortest month of the year – because why wait any longer for the year to get away from us? After an exciting holiday period full of joy and celebrations, and as we all head back into routines of school and work, it's easy to feel a tad glum. But have no fear, the Byron Shire offers a smorgaebord of experience and joy.

From events like V-Day Byron Bay, where we come together to dance for change, to chess tournaments along the foreshore, this edition is packed with inspiration, ideas, and a touch of magic. February isn't just about roses and chocolates, or trying to remember if it's a leap year – it's about celebrating what we love most: our people, our places, and the unique spirit of Byron Shire.

This is also the time to recharge after the whirlwind of January and reflect on the year ahead. If you've already lost sight of your goals for 2025, there's no time like the present to realign and re-set your intentions. Every small step you take shapes a brighter tomorrow.

So kick back, relax, and enjoy the read. Here's to love, laughter, and living boldly.

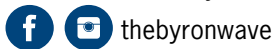
Until next month
Charla Rallings, Editor.

Contact us

Got a story? Get in touch.
Phone: 0432 285 223
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Acknowledgement of Country

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

The fine print

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TAMARA SMITH MP
MEMBER FOR BALLINA

HELP US UNDERSTAND HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS OLDER COMMUNITIES

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t. 02 6666 7522 w. tamara.smith.org.au e. ballinagip@parliament.nsw.gov.au f. Tamara Smith MP



What: Seriously Funny Comedy Fundraiser
When: Thursday 6 February, 6:30pm
Where: A&I Hall, Bangalow Showground

Headlined by the ever-hilarious Jimeoin and Mandy Nolan, this fundraiser will help bring Bangalow Koalas closer to its goal of planting its 500,000th tree by the end of this year. Tickets and info: tinyurl.com/seriously-funny



What: The Alternative Comics Workshop
When: Friday 14 February, 2pm–5pm
Where: Byron Bay Library

Local artist and comic creator, Holly English will be hosting a free event teaching the basics of making a comic book. This is a part of Byron Library’s event Library Lover’s Day. More info: Page 11



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

All are welcome to gather at dawn in solidarity with women and the One Billion Rising movement and dance to end violence against women and children in human history. Wear red and be loud. For more info visit Facebook: @V-Day Byron Bay



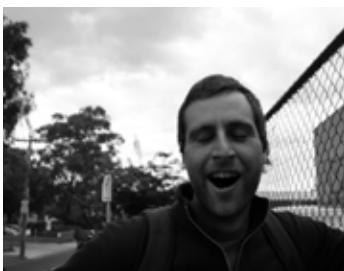
What: The Sugar Mill: Real and Imagined
When: Thursday 13 February to 26 March
Where: Uki Art Post

Artist Michael Maleedy’s latest exhibition is a re-imagining of the Condong Sugar Mill. Enormously playful and enthralling, this exhibition is sure to delight young and old. For more info: artpostuki.com.au



What: Tracy Chapman Tribute Show
When: Friday 21 February, 7pm
Where: Mullumbimby Civic Hall

Australian/Fijian singer-songwriter Andrea Kirwin and her band are bringing the Tracy Chapman Tribute Show to Mullumbimby. Fans can sing along to iconic tracks in celebration of her music. Tickets and info: tickets.oztix.com.au



What: Lewis Garnham: *Stream of Contentedness*
When: Monday 24 February, 7pm
Where: Byron Services Club

After a sold out show at the 2024 Byron Comedy Festival, stand-up comic Lewis Garnham returns to Byron with a brand new show for one night only. Tickets and info: mandynolan.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
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



Snapshot

\$2.7m upgrade of South Beach Road to start early February

Council's road upgrade of South Beach Road, Brunswick Heads, will get underway in February 2025, at the end of the summer holidays. This \$2.7m project has been made possible thanks to more than \$1m from the NSW Government, \$500k from the Roads to Recovery program (Australian Government) and the remaining \$1.2m from Byron Shire Council.

Council's Director of Infrastructure Services, Phil Holloway said, 'This major upgrade includes the complete pavement reconstruction of South Beach Road, along with improved drainage, kerb and gutter works and line marking.' The current works will not include the resurfacing of South Beach Lane, however, Council will be looking for funding for road and drainage upgrades in future.

Six local events receive \$26K in Council funding

Byron Shire Council has announced funding for six local projects under its Events and Festival Sponsorship Fund for 2025, providing \$26,000 to support a diverse range of community events and festivals. The funded events are:

- Old and Gold (\$3,000)
- Byron Coastal Charity Walk (\$4,500)
- Kaleido Mullumbimby (\$5,500)
- Byron Bay International Film Festival (\$5,500)
- Disco Ball (\$5,000)
- Heaps Good Open Mic (\$2,500)

The Council's sponsorship fund supports events with positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes. Learn more about the fund on Council's website.

V-Day Protest – 14 February



On Friday, 14 February, the Byron community will come together for a powerful show of solidarity with women around the world. The V-Day Protest, part of the global One Billion Rising movement, will take place at 6:30am at Main Beach. Everyone is invited to join the movement to end violence against women and children.

Participants are encouraged to wear red and bring their voices and energy to the gathering. In addition to the iconic Break the Chain dance, this year introduces a special offering: The Bolero Project. Run by local dancer Kimberley McIntyre, the Bolero dance is a blend of ritual, meditation, and movement.

You can learn the Bolero through a video on the V-Day rising Facebook page or through one of Kimberley's by donations workshops prior to the event.

For more details visit Facebook: /V-Day Byron Bay

Know the rules: Byron Shire's dog-friendly spaces

Byron Shire Council is reminding residents and visitors with pets to understand the local rules for taking dogs into public spaces to avoid hefty on-the-spot fines. Some areas, including national parks, sporting grounds, and popular beaches like Main Beach Byron Bay, prohibit dogs entirely. However, there are off-lead areas at Tallow Beach, Belongil Beach, Brunswick Heads Main Beach, New Brighton, and South Golden Beach, along with parks in Suffolk Park, Mullumbimby, and Bangalow. Council's website lists all off-lead locations.

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Community Strategic Plan 2025

Byron Shire Mayor, Sarah Ndiaye, is calling on the local community to have their say on the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2035 (CSP), a vital document outlining the vision and objectives for the Shire over the next decade.

The CSP is currently on extended public exhibition for two months, with feedback being accepted until 9 February. Residents are encouraged to share their thoughts via an online form on Council's website, by phone, or in person at the Customer Service Centre in Mullumbimby.

'This is one of Council's most important documents and it must be reviewed after an election,' Mayor Ndiaye said.

The draft plan incorporates feedback from local surveys, pop-up stalls across the Shire, and community workshops. As a result, several changes have been made to how Council plans to achieve the community's goals, with greater clarity on who will be involved and how the objectives will be carried out.

'Now is the time to have a look at the vision statement, have a look at the strategic objectives we're proposing and tell us what you think – does it reflect what you want for the future of the Byron Shire? Have we got it right?' she said.

The five strategic objectives in the draft plan are:

- Effective Leadership – We have effective decision-making and community leadership that is open and informed
- Inclusive Community – We have an inclusive and proactive community where diversity is embraced and everyone is valued
- Nurtured Environment – We nurture and enhance the natural environment
- Ethical Growth – We will responsibly and resiliently navigate growth and change
- Connected Infrastructure – We have connected infrastructure, transport, and facilities that are safe, accessible, and reliable.

The CSP will also inform Council's four-year delivery program and annual operational plan, both of which are being developed for adoption by June this year.

For more information or to have 'Your Say' visit:
byron.nsw.gov.au/Council/Report-Requests-Feedback/Your-Say/Community-Plan#feedback

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Councillor Column

Cr David Warth

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



It was a great honour to be elected as a Byron Shire Councillor in September last year. During my campaign it became clear that there were many issues of great concern to our community needing to be addressed. I made my campaign promises and on being elected, I started working on a range of issues.

Mullumbimby water supply

The decision to de-commission the Laverty's Gap facility and permanently connect to Rous Water by the previous Council created a serious backlash from our community. The new Council has resolved to put a two year hold on this to allow a

re-assessment of the situation. To avoid any delays I took on the job of finding a workable and cost effective solution.

I travelled to Tenterfield to inspect their Council's new water treatment plant (WTP) which has replaced a similar aging facility to our Laverty's Gap WTP. Their new WTP is a superbly efficient and durable facility, much of the plant is built of stainless steel, it is fully automated and computerised and requires minimal staffing. I then contacted the company that constructed the Tenterfield WTP. They are highly experienced in building WTPs for councils all around Australia and even as far afield as Pakistan. All their WTPs are custom built to suit the requirements of the site. I will arrange for the company's CEO to assess our requirements in the coming months.

Flood mitigation for the north of Byron Shire

A working group has been formed to address this long standing issue. There is deep frustration in our community at the lack of any action on this. Working with this group, I will be tabling a report on flood mitigation in the near future. This will then be opened up for debate as there needs to be constructive action on such a serious issue now. It has been sidelined for way too long.

Nature Kids

In my campaign, I committed to doing something for the kids. I am a very passionate wildlife film maker and I have been filming our local wildlife for many years now. I have recently set up a wildlife filming facility in the Byron Arts and Industry Estate.

To encourage our kids to have a deeper connection to nature, I will be opening the facility to schools and parents to experience a wonderful in-depth presentation on our local wildlife. For kids and adults who are really interested there will be wildlife filming sessions available with all equipment provided. I have had students come from as far away as Germany and the UK to intern with me here in Byron Bay to learn wildlife filming.

We live in one of the most prolific areas for wildlife in Australia. Being at the interface of the tropical and temperate zones we are blessed with an amazing abundance of wildlife to observe and film. There are many other issues that I am working on from a rural residential solution to affordable housing to concerns about the implementation of fire ant eradication and land tax reform. These are all in the early stages and will be reported on as they progress.

We live in a wonderful place and our community needs to work with Council to achieve the best outcomes, especially for the future of our children. I will do my best to help this happen.

To get in touch with Cr David Warth, email: david.warth@byron.nsw.gov.au

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Saturday 3 May by joining the Byron Coastal Charity Walk, a stunning event that raises vital funds for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. Held annually, this incredible walk offers participants the choice of three distance options: 12, 24 or 36 km, along the breathtaking Byron coastline.

No matter your pace, every step you take will directly contribute to the vital operations of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service, which plays a crucial role in saving lives across Northern NSW, through urgent inter-hospital transfers, responding to pre-hospital emergencies and search and rescues in regional and remote areas.

By joining the Byron Coastal Charity Walk, you're not just challenging

yourself physically but making a tangible contribution to saving local lives in your community. As a social, non-competitive walk, participants can walk or run at any pace and choose to enter individually or in teams. The event is fully supported with snacks, drinks, marshals on track, medical assistance and lots of great entertainment.

Gather your friends, family, and colleagues to support this worthy cause and experience the beauty of Byron Bay like never before. Together, we can help save lives – one step at a time.

For more information and to register visit: rescuehelicopter.com.au/events/

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Flickerfest 2025: Mullumbimby



Pictured: Flickerfest 2024. Source: Supplied.

Flickerfest is getting ready to shine on the big screen at Mullumbimby Civic Hall from Thursday 27 February – Saturday 1 March. Get ready for three big days of cinema. With four fantastic film programmes on offer from Australia and around the world, including a local shorts competition, this event will showcase the talents of the global filmmaking community.

Now in its 34th year, Flickerfest 2025 is sharing its strictly great short films and paying tribute to Australian classic *Strictly Ballroom* in its third decade as testament to the enduring

impact of Australian cinema. This year’s smorgasbord of over 40 incredible short films is handpicked from a record 3,500 entries received for Flickerfest’s Academy and BAFTA Qualifying short film festival screened recently in Bondi, and Northern Rivers audiences are the first in Australia to experience the best of Flickerfest on tour. Highlights include recent Academy nominees, enjoying their Northern Rivers premieres, and much loved festival award winners – all chosen to excite and inspire our local audiences with the best Australian and international short films the world has to offer, screening alongside exciting, fresh local talent.

As Australia’s leading The Academy Qualifying and BAFTA recognised short film festival, Flickerfest continues to be a platform that nurtures emerging talents in the filmmaking industry. Mark your calendars and view tickets and the official full program at website: iq.org.au

Don’t miss your chance to be a part of this cinematic extravaganza in the heart of Mullumbimby.

Bobby Fischer Chess on the Beach Tournament

by Byron Bay Chess Club



Celebrate the legacy of chess legend Bobby Fischer with a spectacular tournament set against the stunning backdrop of Byron Bay Main Beach on Sunday 9 March, 9am–5pm. Honour one of the greatest players of all time while enjoying the game we all love

right on the foreshore. Whether you’re a seasoned grandmaster or a casual player, there’s a place for you at this exciting event. Engage in friendly competition, connect with fellow chess enthusiasts, and vie for fantastic prizes.

Participants will have the chance to challenge one another in matches inspired by Fischer’s legendary strategies. Special activities will occur throughout the day, including chess workshops, commentary sessions, and discussions on Fischer’s extraordinary impact on the game.

The tournament consists of seven rounds of play, 20 minutes per player. A lightning tournament of five minutes per each player will follow. Pre-register now to secure your spot in this unforgettable celebration. Pack your chess set, sunscreen, and bring your competitive spirit – free entry with prizes for winners. Let’s make great moves together in honour of Bobby Fischer.

Event Details: Sunday 9 March, 2025, 9am – 5pm, Apex Park, Byron Bay. For more information and to sign up email: chess.byron.bay@gmail.com



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At the Library: Library Lovers Day

by Bronwyn Miller, Branch Technician, Byron Bay Library.



In Byron Bay Library, February is a highlight, as it is in libraries throughout Australia with Library Lover's Day on Friday 14 February. Libraries have claimed this familiar date of Valentines Day for a long time now as a chance for people everywhere to celebrate how they love their libraries. In 2025 we have something special planned with a workshop aimed at adults with Byron Bay's very own Holly English presenting the Alternative Comic Workshop.

Holly is a contemporary artist, comic book and zine creator, cartoonist, illustrator, photographer, and inclusive model. She has been shortlisted for The Australian Comics Award, and twice for the International Broken Pencil Zine Awards (Comics Section). Holly is freshly back from the Other World Comic and Zine Festival.

Holly says, 'My work is autobiographical, about my own personal experience, family and about the things society usually doesn't talk about: shame, trauma, mental health, failing to achieve one's hopes and dreams. However, I can't help but filter the tragedy of (my) life with humour. I find life so ridiculous sometimes, it makes for great storytelling.'

Speak your truth and get a grip on your own comic strip

From absolute beginners to experts, with no technical drawing skills needed, this workshop is in hard copy and is a hands-on event. All materials are provided for the free afternoon. Come along and draw your heart out between 2pm-5 pm on Friday 14 February. Bookings are essential through website: rtrl.nsw.gov.au or via the branch on ph: 6685 8540. Light refreshments provided.

Quick Reads

Keep an eye open for *Gunnawah* by Ronni Salt, *The Cicada House* by Ella Ward and *The Group* by Sigge Eklund. Too hot to reserve, these are a seven-day loan.

Focusing on our elders

by Tamara Smith MP

As the NSW Greens Spokesperson for Older People, I am proud to collaborate with the Council on the Ageing (COTA), an organisation that advocates for the rights and wellbeing of older Australians. Through detailed submissions to Government and Parliamentary Inquiries, COTA tirelessly protects and promotes the interests of older people.

One recent initiative involves developing a focus group to examine the impacts of climate change on older Australians. This group will provide essential insights to inform policies, guide infrastructure and service decisions, and ensure older

people receive clear, reliable and accessible information.

The focus group will run for about 1.5 hours via Zoom and aims to strengthen resilience among older Australians in the face of a changing climate. Insights shared will shape how we respond to future challenges and improve support where it's needed most. Together, we can work towards a more resilient future.

If you would like to participate and share your valued perspective, simply visit: tamarasmith.com.au/campaigns





Community in brief

CWA Brunswick Heads Branch by Mary Webb

The Country Women's Association (CWA) of NSW has around 8,000 members and is part of the largest organisation of women in Australia. All CWA of NSW members share a commitment to improving the lives of women and their families by fundraising, lobbying government on important issues and teaching life skills. Members also form strong friendships, build networks and contribute to their local community.

Our first meeting of the year will be held on Friday 7 February at 9am in our rooms at the corner of Park and Booyun Streets, Brunswick Heads. We are looking to increase our membership and will be holding a membership drive on Saturday 22 February from 9am–12pm, you could be part of this amazing group organisation.

Brunswick Heads branch was established over 76 years ago and has seen many changes since. Members come and go but there has always been a strong core who keep it going. However, times are changing and we are looking for the next generation to keep our Branch alive, maybe take on some

of the office bearer roles or to assist current office bearers.

Membership is open to all women. Please come along and listen to what we do. We are more than just tea and scones, although we will be tempting you with them on the day. For further information please contact Mary Webb on email: brunscwa@gmail.com or ph: 0431 908 063. Our Crafty Women meet every Friday (barring public holidays) from 10am–2pm. All we ask is a gold coin donation, this goes towards helping us with the upkeep of our rooms. Morning tea is provided.

Byron Bay Hospital Auxiliary by Mary Webb



We are off for another year of fundraising for Byron Central Hospital. Our first meeting will be held on Monday 17 February at 1pm. Much of the year has already been planned with garage sales, raffles, a golf day, and more to come.

It was good to catch up with fellow members recently at Bangalow Farmers Market. Maureen, our Secretary, and her assistant, Joy, were in their new location in Bangalow's Piccabean Park collecting for the Auxiliary. The Auxiliary collects at the Market on the first Saturday of the month. So next time you are there, stop by and say 'hello'. Remember, all money collected goes to providing equipment for Byron Central Hospital.

As with many organisations, new members are always needed and the Auxiliary is no different. The future of such organisations depends on new people coming through and carrying on the mantle of supporting our local hospital. That could be you. We meet the first Monday of the month at 1pm. The location varies, either the Byron Central Hospital or the Byron Bay Services Club in Jonson Street. Meetings last an hour or less depending on whether the Director of Nursing, Tracey, is attending as she generally provides an update on hospital activities and if any new equipment is required from the hospital Wish List. Afterwards we stay for a coffee and a chat with fellow members.

For further information please contact Maureen Wier on ph: 6685 3162.

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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

Association of Independent Retirees

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

Australasian Order of Old Bastards

When: 10am–1:30pm first Saturday of the month
Where: When and where we can – contact us
Contact: Henri Rennie, Treasurer, email: aooob.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: Secretary Jenny 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

Community Crime Report

CALL OUT

Have you been affected by crime locally?
What are your views on local community safety?

HAVE YOUR SAY NOW

www.justineelliott.com.au/crimereport

As a former frontline police officer, I know first-hand the hard work that our police officers do to keep our community safe - but I'm pushing for more resources across our region and the need for serious consequences for those committing serious crimes.

While investing in programs that divert young offenders away from a life of crime is important, when it comes to those serious hard-core repeat criminals they must be held to account.

I've launched my Community Crime Report so locals can share your stories and views on local crime. The responses will be sent to the NSW Police Minister, Police Commissioner and NSW Attorney-General.



Justine Elliot MP

Your Federal Member for Richmond

- ✔ Former frontline police officer
- ✔ Serious about community safety
- ✔ Here for you





130 years of being local

by Byron Community Centre



Celebrating Byron's past, present and future

As the Byron Community Centre celebrates its legacy of connection, the Be A Local campaign invites everyone to reignite the vibrant heart of Byron's unique culture.

In 2025, the Byron Community Centre marks a significant milestone, 130 years as the original hub of Byron Bay. Since its establishment in 1895 as the Byron Bay School of Arts, the Byron Community Centre has been a gathering place for locals, hosting a library, skating rink and the first silent movie theatre. Over the years, it has evolved alongside the town, playing a key role in shaping Byron's cultural identity.



'This 130 year anniversary celebrates the unique culture of the Byron Shire with our colourful characters, rich culture and unique vibe,' reflects Kate Love, Communications Manager of the Byron Community Centre. 'For 130 years, this space has brought people together. Our celebrations throughout 2025 aim not only to honour the past but to inspire the future and the authentic heart of Byron Bay.'

After falling into disrepair in the 1980s, the community centre was revived thanks to the vision of Jan Dawkins and dedicated volunteers. Reopening in 1981, it quickly re-established itself as the community's beating heart. A turning point came in 1987 with the introduction of the Byron Markets, securing a sustainable future. Further growth led to Byron Theatre's opening in 2003, and later the launch of Fletcher Street Cottage in 2022.

The Be A Local campaign will accompany the anniversary celebrations, inviting locals and visitors to connect with Byron's



authentic community spirit. The campaign highlights the importance of meaningful engagement through programs such as Shop Local at the Markets or Give Local at Fletcher Street Cottage. With events, activations and collaborations throughout the year, Byron Community Centre aims to reconnect the community and visitors to the original Byron Bay. Whether you live here or are visiting, this is your chance to truly be a local - because Byron's story belongs to everyone.

Find out more at byroncentre.com.au

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The Infinite Game: A conversation with Jane Hanckel

by Charla Rallings



Local filmmaker and author Jane Hanckel (pictured) has dedicated her career to exploring the intersection of education, well-being, and societal change and the impact it has on children. Her latest award-winning documentary, *The Infinite Game*, examines how young people are coping with the challenges of a rapidly changing world shaped by the

current and out-dated education system, climate anxiety, and social media. Through the lens of three young Australians, the film delves into their resilience, creativity, and the innovative approaches taken by educators and visionaries to help children thrive in an uncertain future. Jane's extensive experience in education reform and her passion for empowering communities make this a vital conversation.

The Infinite Game centres around three young Australians navigating adolescence in a complex world. Can you tell us more about the process of making this film?

Over the years, I've heard countless stories from parents about the challenges their children face. They'd say things like, 'My children are addicted to social media or computer games, and they're struggling at school.' Anxiety has become the new learning disorder. I wanted to explore solutions to these issues, but to do so in a way that people could connect with on a deeper, emotional level. I chose to follow three young Australians, each representing archetypal challenges that children face today. These three kids are beautiful, relatable, and full of questions, navigating their unique journeys through adolescence. It was important for me to show their context – they live in families, go to school, and experience life much like kids around the world. My hope was to create a heartfelt connection between the audience and their stories – their struggles and triumphs.

One of the challenges of *The Infinite Game* was weaving together the multiple, interconnected issues into a cohesive narrative. I wanted to explore solutions and present a broader, picture of the challenges children face today. Financing the film was also a significant hurdle, but I felt strongly about the film's importance and so found innovative ways to bring it to life. The message I hope viewers take away is that the solutions to many challenges facing children today are surprisingly simple. However, they require a shift in thinking, away from the old paradigm of prioritising material and academic success as being a criteria of happiness. It's clear that these are not true predictors of well-being or happiness, yet many parents still prioritise them for their children. The challenge lies in envisioning what this difference could look like, and that's what the film aims to show. Many viewers have told me, 'This is the film I wish I'd seen when my children were growing up,' because it addresses their concerns and offers tangible solutions.

How do you think society's current systems, especially education, are failing children? What does a re-

imagined, child-centred system look like to you?

Educators often have little time to think outside the box. Because of the way the system is set up, they've become administrators, driven by the demands of standardised testing. Many enter teaching out of a love for children and a passion for sharing knowledge, but the system redirects their focus toward performance metrics, creating a loop where teachers, parents, and policymakers perpetuate the same cycle. If we want a society where everyone can fully contribute, we need to re-imagine education systems for young people. Finland provides a powerful example. With a population of just five million and limited natural resources, they realised their survival depended on bringing everyone up to their fullest potential – not letting 70% of their population fall through the cracks. By contrast, many systems, including Australia's, prioritise the top 20% of students who excel at passing tests, perpetuating a structure that can leave the majority of children feeling like failures.

It's heartbreaking because these children are so young and lack the perspective to see beyond school. Education shouldn't be a finite game with winners and losers. It's about fostering lifelong creativity and resilience, not forcing children into rigid moulds that flatten their potential. One of my visions for the future is that those types of systems are more sustainable, replicable and better for the long term, because children thrive on intergenerational learning and unlimited access to nature and creativity. There's no doubt that a learning environment is necessary, but they also need to learn about their community and about what's happening. This goes back to Indigenous knowledges of education in smaller, more localised ways, and is also why home-schooling has had a recent resurgence. School refusal rates have sky-rocketed since the pandemic, here in Australia and overseas. The international research is out there confirming the importance of creativity and well-being for children to reach their fullest potential – outside the rigidity of the current system – we need to gather together to bring that knowing to the decisions makers.

You interviewed experts and visionaries across the globe for this project. What were some of the most surprising insights you uncovered?

I discovered that the solutions to many challenges facing childhood today are surprisingly cost effective and sustainable. However, they require a shift in thinking. As Professor Dr Anne Bamford explains, integrating arts-based creativity into curriculums is economical and impactful. Yet, in a world where STEM subjects dominate, arts and creative disciplines are undervalued. The real challenge lies in breaking the status quo and embracing this shift. Another surprising insight came from Stephen Scheeler, the former CEO of Facebook Australia and New Zealand. He was completely emphatic about the link between social media and the rise in anxiety, stress, and depression among young people. What shocked me most was his admission that companies like Facebook/Meta have data proving the harmful effects of social media, but are not releasing it – simply because no one has demanded it. It's reminiscent of



the unregulated pollution by industrialists in the 1950s. Today, social media companies are spreading, knowingly, a digital toxicity with little accountability. That needs to change.

Climate anxiety and social media are key themes in the film. How do you see these factors shaping the experiences of today's children?

Social media poses unique challenges for today's children, partly because parents too are often absorbed in the online world. While these tools are useful for connection, young children observing this behaviour are affected in subtle but significant ways. When parents use devices around children and babies, it can affect how they connect with them, so, even though parents are physically present, they may be emotionally absent. Social media also acts like a drug, as Professor Dr Peta Stapleton points out in my film. Studies show it triggers dopamine spikes in the brain, similar to those seen in cocaine/heroin addiction, creating a cycle of constant craving. This is a major challenge for our young people, as devices are now central to daily life. Having a phone on the table can significantly divert our attention away from the present moment. Many are returning to basic phones, calls and text, to prioritise their presence and connection.

On climate anxiety – the climate has always been changing. I question the role of media in engaging youth in the conversation. They are essentially manipulating the narrative to a point where children are so anxious. In reality, it's the economic systems and the world's largest corporations, not individuals, driving climate change. One of the solutions to this is to actually feel a connection to nature, and to do so out of love rather than fear. The younger generations have also witnessed massive global change, such as the pandemic and conflicts. The effect these have had on young people is huge, and use of anti-depressants in under 18s has increased by 60%. Professor Dr Peta Stapleton speaks in my film about mirror neurons – when we talk, we see, we reflect each other – and because young people see everyone being anxious and stressed around them, they go 'oh, okay, I am feeling it too'.

Adults can better support young people in navigating these issues by building relationships. We're wired for connection, which is why I developed the iValue app as part of *The Infinite Game's* social impact strategy. The app helps families and communities strip away distractions and focus on forming meaningful, lasting relationships. A strong sense of family and community is essential, and it helps people step out of inward thinking – often a hallmark of depression – and fosters empathy and connection. One of the benefits of living here in the Northern Rivers is that there's a community of like-minded people, and that gives a sense of feeling of belonging, which is essential for young people. Face-to-face interactions are vital, because most communication is non-verbal – expressions, body language, and presence are things you can't replicate through a screen. While online communities offer connection, they can also become harmful spaces, with issues like cyberbullying.

Mindfulness is explored as a critical tool for young people. How does practising mindfulness help children build resilience, and what are three changes parents can make to improve their children's health and brain function?

Practising mindfulness is phenomenal in building resilience. The film showcases how children, through mindfulness, can learn to self-regulate their emotions. It's about helping kids understand

that while emotions are natural, they don't have to overwhelm us. Professor Dr. Peta Stapleton and Dr. Joe Dispenza conducted an a test pilot study on mindfulness meditation program in schools and its effects on children's behaviour and emotional awareness. They found that just five minutes of daily mindfulness and meditation significantly improved self-regulation, increased happiness, and reduced emotional and behavioural issues. As explained in the film, anxiety had already been rising before the pandemic and then increased tenfold during it. Factors like standardised testing add to this pressure. This stress often is related to parents unknowingly valuing external achievements – grades, awards – over building relationships with their children. The film, supported by the iVALUE app, encourages parents to step back from this results-driven mindset and focus on truly knowing their children and fostering their individual strengths.

Parents can also support their children by implementing ensuring adequate sleep, nutrition, and connection to each other and nature. In the film Dr Leila Mason, a consultant paediatrician, highlights the importance good nutrition, avoiding toxins and getting enough sleep – especially in today's age of increased screen use and particularly for children with ADHD, autism, and challenging behaviour. Blue light from devices can disrupt sleep, so keeping kids off screens in the evening before bedtime is crucial. Establishing family routines that replace devices with bonding activities can calm the brain before sleep. A diet rich in seasonal, local, and organic whole foods is essential with avoidance of ultra-processed foods, as they can hinder developing brains. Studies reveal that food on supermarket shelves lose substantial vitamin and mineral contents, so supporting farmers' markets and local growers not only provides better nutrition, but also promotes better health and sustainability. Engaging in arts, crafts, music, or collaborative activities like board games, can strengthen family bonds and nurture mental health. It's also vital to get out of the house and explore nature. Parents modelling these behaviours can inspire children to develop healthier habits.

What are your hopes for the global impact of *The Infinite Game* and what's next for you?

The global premiere from 9–12 May, will have a four day free online screening, activating a larger social impact campaign aimed at supporting children and communities worldwide. The film has won the UNESCO and Global Institute for Creative Thinking, Excellence Award for Creativity in Education. I'm in talks with Make Mothers Matter and the Alliance for Childhood European Network about a screening at the UNESCO and the European Parliament. As all filmmakers know, financing is one of the biggest challenges and as such, I am currently fundraising for the social impact of the film and preparing for the next film in *The Infinite Series*, where I explore the neuroscience behind how children's consciousness is shifting. I'm also developing *Children & The Infinite Game* podcast series to discuss how human intelligence far surpasses AI machine intelligence. Ultimately, *The Infinite Game* is just the beginning. Through screenings, discussions, and ongoing projects, I hope to inspire communities to focus on solutions and reconnect with what truly matters: our children, their well-being, and their futures.

For more information visit: infinitegamefilm.com or documentaryaustralia.com.au/project/the-infinite-game/ or email: jane.hanckel@proton.me



Pictured (left): Col Jones. Source: Supplied.

Pictured (right): Norco Butter Factory, Byron Bay, 1947. Source: State Library of New South Wales.

Looking back to Byron Bay: 1935-1948

An interview with Col Jones by Charla Rallings

Colin Jones – known fondly as ‘Spike’ during his childhood in Byron Bay – celebrated his 89th birthday on 13 September 2024. A long-time resident of the Northern Rivers, Colin’s memories offer a vivid window into life in Byron Bay during the mid-20th century. Born in 1935, Colin reminisces about his lucky beginnings: ‘One cannot choose the time or the place of one’s birth, but gosh I was one of the lucky ones being born on the most easterly point of Australia on a black Friday which, in my day, was an unlucky harbinger. Being born in The Bay put paid to that superstition, along with walking under ladders, breaking mirrors, and such. I was the fourth child to arrive in the Jones family, although the first born, a sister, had died four years before I emerged. Two more boys and a girl would follow before we left town, so I guess I was the jam in the sandwich.’

The Bay of Colin’s childhood was a very different place from the thriving tourist destination it is today. The town of 4,500 residents was centred around the dairy industry, with a touch of beef production. Industries like zircon rutile works, an abattoir, and a piggery dotted the area, long before Byron Bay’s evolution into a hub of culture and tourism.

‘We lived just across the road from the Norco butter factory which later, during WWII, became a source of under the counter deals with extra butter and milk without coupons. My mother made sure we stayed in good favour with the staff there.’

The Jones family home stood on the corner of Ruskin and Johnson Streets, surrounded by a bounty of fruit trees. Colin recalls: ‘Our house had a mass of fruit trees – mulberries, passionfruit, peaches, loquats, grapes, pineapples, guavas (both cherry and yellow), and monstera deliciosa. We only had the one vegetable, choko, which grew just about everywhere if you weren’t vigilant enough. It featured a lot in our meals. I avoided it as much as possible unless under the threat of no sweets. I ate the choko usually laced in butter or

white sauce to disguise its taste, or lack of.

‘The house was a weatherboard with a galvanised iron roof, on a sloping block. In that same house I was born, as the Lismore Base Hospital was too far away under the circumstances of my birth and so our family doctor, Dr Muriel Barnes, presided over my entry into this world. On a recent trip to The Bay I stayed directly opposite the house, although it has been sectioned and two properties now. My daughter who was visiting from the UK booked me in not knowing the significance. Serendipity, I guess?’

The heart of the house was the kitchen, complete with an iron stove and a large table flanked by two bench seats, perfect for family meals. On the left side of the entrance was the living room. This space housed a cabinet gramophone (an HMV model), an old German piano with an iron frame and under dampers, and a couch, which Colin’s father commandeered each evening to listen to the 7 o’clock news on their cabinet HMV electric radio.

In the home, the gramophone was a constant source of amusement and enjoyment, suffering one extreme limitation.

‘The spring was broken,’ Col explained, ‘And as war was waging, we could not find a replacement. Necessity being the mother of invention, I used my fingers to rotate the recordings, moving from one digit to the next after soreness and fatigue enveloped the finger being abused. I am pretty sure that is where I developed my almost perfect pitch. Dad had a small collection of the likes of Richard Tauber, Fritz Kreisler, the Two Black Crows, Casey, and Victor Sylvester among others.’

Colin explained that he would climb onto a chair to reach the lofty heights of the gramophone, his curiosity often leading to playful experiments. Occasionally, he would speed up the record, transforming the singers’ voices into high-pitched



tones that sounded like leprechauns. At other times, he would start the record from the inside and wind it backward, producing a cacophony of distorted sounds that filled the room with laughter. 'When the war finally ended, we managed to find a replacement spring. Dad was happy again not to put up with my tricks, and my fingers thanked me.'

A bond with Kooka

Colin's father worked for the railway as a ganger, and would take his motorised trolley every Sunday to inspect the length of railway line under his care, checking for faults on the track. Occasionally, Colin would accompany him, relishing the ride from The Bay up St Helena Hill, which offered panoramic views of their hometown. Along the way, they would stop at a farm owned by the Clarke family to collect fresh eggs, a perfect complement to their own source of 'cackleberries' supplied by a dozen hens and one rooster.

One memorable day, Colin's dad rescued an injured baby kookaburra from the tracks. 'Dad was soft on animals, as we all were in the Jones household. He brought the little bird home and we had it in a shoe box for a few days until it became accustomed to its surroundings, then we perched it in the loquat tree where he stayed for his bedtime.'

The bird, affectionately named Kooka, quickly became a cherished member of the family. Colin spent a great deal of time with Kooka, often perching the young bird on his shoulder, where it seemed comforted by the experience. Whenever his father dug for worms for fishing trips, Kooka would perch on the blade of the shovel, eagerly grabbing at the occasional wriggling worm as it emerged. True to its nature, the bird would go through the motions of breaking the worm's back before swallowing the unfortunate creature.

'Mum would walk to Hodges butcher shop about half a mile away, and Kooka, without a word of a lie, would sometimes hop all the way over behind her. I think he knew there was some mince in the offing when she came back. I could never get over that – what with this young bird hopping all the way over and back behind Mum.'

Tragically, Kooka's life was cut short after an attack by the neighbour's blue heeler dog: 'One of the worst days of my young life came when Dad told me Kooka had been killed. I was in the living room listening to David Rose playing his song *Holiday for Strings*. I tear up, even now when I hear that song. I buried my little mate under the peach tree down near the slit trench Dad had dug in 1942.'

Byron's music scene

Another indispensable source of entertainment was the radio. 'Dad always had the wheel when it came to listening every night, come rain, hail or shine, to the news from the ABC at 7pm. After that, us kids got to listen to a steady diet of serials either on 2LM Lismore or 2NR (ABC Northern Rivers) when Australian radio was in its hay day. 'Shows like *Dad and Dave*, *Martin's Corner*, *Mrs. Obbs*, *First Light Fraser*, *the Lux Radio Theatre*, *Dick Fair's Amateur Hour*, *the Quiz kids run by John Dease*, *Lost in Space*, *The Phantom Drummer*, *The Search for the Golden Boomerang* and the list goes on. That radio never let us down,

although we'd have to replace the occasional valve.'

Colin says he and his elder sisters also played, or tried to play, the piano. 'We were taken on by the local nuns who used to promenade daily by our house. They obviously heard our playing and decided we needed help. Our knuckles could have done without their intervention.'

Byron also had its very own band, the Byron Bay Silver Band with Army (Arnold) Adamson conducting. His son, Lloyd, later went on to great success playing trumpet in Sydney alongside Bob Barnard. 'Band nights were Wednesdays and I remember us hosting a 'band Sunday' where several bands on the North Coast were invited along to strut their stuff. The bandstand was right up top facing the main surfing beach. As the host band we played last, and unfortunately for us, but fortunately for our listeners, killer whales were having a go at a whale off Julian Rocks, so we played to no one.'

Childhood in The Bay

The local Literary Institute served as a multi-functional venue, housing the library, a cinema, and a stage for live performances. Within the cinema, seating reflected three distinct social levels. Colin explained that at the front, closest to the screen, was 'Peanut Alley,' where viewers had to crane their necks to see. Tickets for this section cost 6d. The rear stalls, with canvas deck chairs for seating, offered a slightly more comfortable experience at 9d. For those who had truly 'arrived,' the dress circle upstairs provided the ultimate viewing experience for 1/6d. 'I rarely got to sit up there, being content to mix it with the hoi-polloi. Besides, my pocket money wouldn't extend that far – not if I intended to have an ice block (1d) or a milk shake (4d) during interval.'

Exploring the sand dunes, helping fishermen haul in nets of fish, and playing Cowboys and Indians with his brother and making model boats were hallmarks of his carefree days. The new jetty was also a popular destination for play, fishing and watching the docked ships. Byron was also served by two regular passenger trains and numerous goods trains. The northbound North Coast Mail, designated as No. 11, passed through The Bay around 6:30pm, while the southbound train, No. 14, followed the next day at approximately 7:45am. However, the timetables were notoriously unpredictable. 'A standing joke about the mail (train) was that it stopped at every telegraph pole. One of the privileges of my father's employment was four free passes per year, which came in handy whenever we wanted to visit the big city of Lismore, or for the occasional trip to the really big smoke – Sydney.'

Colin says Byron Bay Public School was a happy place for him, and while Byron lacked a high school, Colin enjoyed travelling to Mullumbimby each morning and afternoon on the train.

The Jones family left The Bay in 1948. 'It was well before the whaling factory opened, and I am forever grateful for that.' Reflecting on his upbringing, Colin acknowledged the privilege of growing up in Byron Bay, surrounded by family, the railway, and the ocean. While the simplicity of the era came with its challenges, it also provided Colin a rich foundation of values, resilience, and appreciation for life's small joys.

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Rydges Port Macquarie

a review by Charla Rallings

A cruisy 3.5 hour scenic drive south of the Northern Rivers, nestled along the picturesque Hastings River waterfront, is Rydges Port Macquarie. Offering the perfect blend of relaxation, comfort, and convenience, with stunning water views and thoughtful touches throughout, Rydges ensured my stay was nothing short of delightful.

Accommodation and amenities

Stepping into the Deluxe Water View King room, the first thing that caught my attention was the private balcony, offering sweeping views of the Hastings River. Though the weather was wet and overcast, the dramatic stormy views draped the river, and view beyond, in a gentle, silver haze – it was quiet, serene, and unexpectedly enchanting. The room itself was beautifully refurbished, combining modern coastal design with functionality. The refreshment station, with complimentary Nespresso coffee machine and all the usual features (mini-bar, fridge, kettle), was clad in oak wood-laminate paneling which beautifully complimented the soft sage-green of the living space. Undoubtedly, one of the highlights was the signature Rydges Dream Bed, which provided a restful sleep each night, but in truth, it was the extra large, super-plush pillows that provided maximum comfort. The generous lounge area with couch, coffee and dining table created a welcoming space to unwind in front of the view, or enjoy a coffee before the day's adventures. Thoughtful additions like free WIFI, Thank You bath products, multiple power-points, and all the usual in-room amenities – including a large flat screen TV – made the experience seamless and stress-free.

Rydges Port Macquarie also ensured we were well catered for recreationally. The heated pool and spa on the first floor were the perfect places to unwind, and were open from 6am to 9pm. Complimentary overnight parking also added convenience, and the bar, open from 10am until late, was an

ideal spot to enjoy a well-deserved drink after a long day of adventuring. Rydges also has an inclusion for breakfast (\$32 for adults), which runs from 6:30am–10am, and is located in Zebu Bar & Restaurant (Zebu). The buffet breakfast was an elevated version of the standard hotel-breakfast, and included all the expected continental and full-English delights, with added extras like waffles, a fresh fruit and yoghurt bar with chia pudding, and an automatic pancake making machine.

Food

On our first night, we dined at The Boathouse Bar and Restaurant at Sails Port Macquarie – Rydges' sister location. Located just a five-minute drive or a scenic 20-minute walk along the foreshore, The Boathouse space boasted immersive architecture and decor that my guest described as 'a modern take on the renaissance painting *The Birth of Venus*', creating an elevated sea-side look. The Boathouse is located on the Port Macquarie Marina, providing beautiful water-front views and eye-candy for yachting enthusiasts. The menu was seafood inclined with many land-based options including the herb chicken, which we overheard another patron praising. My guest and I had margaritas and we then shared the seafood tower (\$165). Perhaps we are spoiled in the Northern Rivers with our seafood, as this was not up to our local standards and quite underwhelming. However, the lemon balm pana cotta dessert was simply exceptional and perfectly balanced.

The next night, we dined at Zebu which is the in-house restaurant at Rydges Port Macquarie. The restaurant's modern Australian menu was a true delight, offering fresh, locally-sourced flavours and a welcoming ambiance. For drinks we ordered a passionfruit mojito and a margarita, which were exactly to our liking. For entree we had Kilpatrick oysters – baked in-shell with smoky BBQ bacon – and we also indulged in the hiramasa kingfish. This was a ceviche-style dish, and



quite honestly, we almost ordered another plate for dessert. The delicate amalgamation of the Forster sourced kingfish with sliced fennel, orange, and a dash of chilli, all laid in a citrus and fennel seed olive oil blend was extraordinary. To elevate the culinary experience further, we then had the scotch fillet steak with dutch carrots and red-wine jus (\$51) – cooked to my preference – and my guest ordered the slow-cooked pork belly, with crackling, apple, and wild rocket (\$36). Anyone who is a fan of pork belly knows how difficult this dish can be, but this was sublime and incredibly well-balanced with bold flavours accompanied by more subtle ones to titillate the palate. To finish, we had the tiramisu which, much like the kingfish, was an absolute standout. Made in house from scratch, it was light, fluffy, and fresh – completely delectable. The menu was very well-priced given the quality of the dishes and the service.

Staff

The staff at Rydges Port Macquarie provided an exceptional experience during our stay. Attentive and well-presented, they went out of their way to accommodate us and ensure our comfort. Delphine from The Boathouse was warm, welcoming, and checked in regularly to meet our needs. At Zebu, Lara and Victor’s friendly personalities and extensive knowledge made our dining experience even more enjoyable. Their attentive service, paired with conversation and a dash of banter, truly enhanced our visit. Overall, the staff’s kindness and professionalism made for a memorable stay, and their dedication to guest satisfaction is evident.

Location

The hotel’s location is hard to beat, with easy access to Port Macquarie’s vibrant CBD, beach, and attractions like the Glasshouse Entertainment Centre. Everything we needed was just a short stroll away, making it easy to soak up the local culture, explore the shops, and enjoy the region’s natural beauty. Port Macquarie also boasts a number of wineries, adventure parks, family attractions, and unique experiences within walking distance or just a short drive away.

Cost

Rooms range from around \$250–\$400 per night depending on their room type and season. Rydges offer many flexible options including interconnecting rooms for families, twin share choices, and managed apartments, which range from \$300–\$700. Rydges also offer flexible booking options and deals such as family rates, bed and breakfast rates, getaway discounts, and member benefits.

Overall

Rydges Port Macquarie has truly elevated its offering with

the recent refurbishment, creating a space that feels both luxurious and welcoming. Whether you’re visiting for leisure or work, the thoughtful design, exceptional amenities, brilliant food, and prime location make it an excellent choice. For bookings or more information visit: rydges.com

ACCOMMODATION



FOOD (Zebu Bar & Restaurant)



STAFF



VALUE FOR \$



WOULD I RETURN



OVERALL



Author was a guest of Rydges Port Macquarie.



Sweet treat for your sweetheart

recipe from Australian Macadamias



Need a showstopping and romantic dessert that's super simple to prepare? Look no further than this unashamedly indulgent six-ingredient ice cream cake. Featuring layers of creamy vanilla ice cream swirled with luscious caramel, nestled between a crunchy macadamia and biscuit base, this creation is a guaranteed crowd-pleaser that will leave your valentine asking for more.

This cake requires overnight freezing but only takes 30 minutes to prepare. Serves eight.

Ingredients

- 100g (12) Biscoff biscuits (see tip)
- 2½ cups (350g) macadamias, roasted and unsalted
- ½ cup flaked coconut
- 2L of quality vanilla ice cream
- 380g jar Bonne Maman caramel

sauce (see tip)

- ¼ tsp sea salt flake

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C fan forced. Undo the clasp of a 22cm (base measurement) springform pan and release the base from the side. Turn the base upside down and cover with a large sheet of baking paper so it overhangs (this makes it easy to slide onto your plate). Return the side of the pan to the base and use the clasp to lock the base in place. Don't trim the paper.
2. Place the biscuits in a food processor. Process until finely chopped. Add 1½ cups of the macadamias. Pulse until the nuts are coarsely chopped (you still want chunks).
3. Spread the mixture into a shallow

roasting pan and stir in the coconut. Bake for 15 minutes, stirring every five minutes until the coconut is lightly toasted. Set the mixture aside to cool.

4. Spoon half the cooled macadamia biscuit mixture (175g) over the base of the springform pan.
5. Remove the ice cream from the freezer to soften slightly. Using half the ice cream, dollop large spoonfuls over the crumb, taking care not to disturb the crumb base too much.
6. Using half the caramel, dollop spoonfuls over the ice cream. Top with large spoonfuls of the remaining ice cream. Smooth the surface. Scatter over the remaining biscuit mixture, pressing on with your fingertips.
7. Cover with plastic wrap then tightly with foil. Place onto a tray and freeze overnight.
8. To serve, remove the ice cream cake to a serving platter. Warm the remaining caramel in the microwave for 10-20 seconds on high, then drizzle over the ice cream cake. Sprinkle with sea salt flakes. Top with the remaining cup of un-chopped macadamias. Enjoy.

Tips

Biscoff Substitution: If Biscoff biscuits are unavailable, substitute with another spiced or caramel-flavoured biscuit.

Caramel Sauce: Bonne Maman caramel sauce is recommended for its rich flavour, but you can use any good-quality caramel sauce.

For more recipes using Australian macadamias, visit: australian-macadamias.org.





Young farmer creates thriving food forest

by Kylie McGregor, Byron Farmers Market



Pictured: Farmer Tom Bjorksten at Bangalow Farmers Market with freshly harvested onions. Source: Supplied.

A thriving food forest made: new farming method

We're all familiar with 'free-range' chicken, but how about 'tree-range'? Fourth-generation farmer, Tom Bjorksten is one of the first local farmers to embrace a relatively new concept of farming known as syntropic farming which imitates the way a natural forest works.

Having grown up on a cattle farm in Central NSW and witnessing the extreme highs and lows of traditional farming methods, when Tom and wife Nicole bought their 28-acre property at Booyong five years ago, they were determined to find a new way of farming. Enter syntropic agroforestry.

This regenerative agricultural cropping method was developed in Brazil and mimics the structure and function of natural forests to create productive and sustainable food systems. While it is relatively new in Australia, it has proven a game-changer for Tom and Nicole.

The couple has used syntropic agroforestry to transform their farm from a bare open paddock into a thriving forest that supports many species as well as their chickens, which range and forage freely amongst the trees in the forest.

'We grow a few veggies, but mostly it's the chickens integrating with the agroforestry,' Tom says. 'We grow tonnes of different support species to create a forest environment. Then regular pruning produces a forestry floor environment where you have a lot of decaying wood enabling fungi to spread. A forest doesn't need fertiliser or irrigation because it's a self-sustaining system, and the chickens are thriving in this agroforestry environment.'

'Before they were domesticated, chickens were naturally jungle animals. As our agroforest has grown, the chickens spend more time out of their caravans, foraging around for bugs and eating the pasture as well. This reduces our feed costs and gives them more variety in their diet, which improves the flavour and texture of the meat and eggs.'

'This environment is also better for their overall health because they are not exposed to climate extremes as much. And in turn, the chickens are also great to the land – giving back in the way of manure.'

The couple also grow certified organic Brussels sprouts, onions, fennel and flowers, which are available, along with the tree-range chicken and eggs at their Misty Creek Agroforestry stall at Byron Farmers Market every Thursday morning and Bangalow Farmers Market every Saturday morning.

Byron Farmers Market is held Thursdays 7am–11am at Butler Street Reserve and Bangalow Farmers Market is Saturdays 7am–11am in Piccabeen Park.





Kids Corner

Jokes

- Q. Why did the kid throw a stick of butter out the window?
A. To see butter-fly.
- Q. Why didn't the teddy bear eat dessert?
A. He was stuffed.
- Q. What do you give a sick lemon?
A. A Lemon-aid.
- Q. What sits at the bottom of the sea and twitches?
A. A nervous wreck.
- Q. Which hand is better to write with?
A. Neither, it's better to write with a pen.
- Q. Why did the bicycle fall over?
A. It was two tired.
- Q. What has four wheels and flies?
A. A garbage truck.

Maze

Can you help the astronaut get back to his ship?



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Artist profile

by Victoria Ugarte



The ocean and coastline have always been in my blood – perhaps it was destiny. My surname, Ugarte, has Basque origins and stems from the word *huarte*, meaning ‘between waters’. I was born and raised in the Philippines, a country of 7,000 islands, and my February birthday falls under the Pisces sign, the fish. In 1976, my family migrated to Australia – another big island – where we settled in Sydney’s eastern suburbs, surrounded by beaches and the sea.

My creative journey began with a five-year training in fashion and textile design at East Sydney Technical College (now the National Art School). I later added an Associate of Arts degree, majoring in Fashion and Textile Design, from a small college in Florida, USA. Returning to Australia, I spent three decades in the fashion industry, working as a range coordinator, buyer, and agent, roles that allowed me to travel the world and immerse myself in the global fashion capitals.

When the Global Financial Crisis hit in 2007, it marked the end of my time in the ‘ragtrade’ and the beginning of a new chapter. I switched my focus to travel writing and launched my Explore My World Travel website. Travelling the world with my husband Peter, I kept a steady stream of followers updated on travel tips and exciting destinations. Maui became our second home and the more I traveled, the more enamoured I became with capturing the beauty of the world around me. In 2017, I took the plunge into full time photography.

Coastal photography has become my true passion, but it wasn’t until the COVID pandemic in 2020 that this connection fully emerged. During Sydney’s lockdowns, the beaches and ocean – essential parts of my life – were suddenly off-limits. Despite being surrounded by water all my life, I never realised how vital the ocean was to me until we were cut-off. It felt like losing oxygen. When restrictions eased, I approached the coastline with fresh eyes, capturing its beauty with renewed energy. My photographs aim to convey the sense of freedom, peace, and optimism the ocean gives me. I also love photographing people, especially in environments that reflect their passions. From beach portraits to lifestyle and fitness shoots, my mission is to reflect back at my subjects their own authentic beauty and strength – whatever stage in life they may be.

Life in Byron Shire

My husband and I moved to Byron Bay just after Christmas

last year, and it has felt like home ever since. Nature is my number one inspiration, my teacher, my peace, my source of wonder, and the balmy sun-kissed towns around Byron Shire are so much more than its pristine beaches and lush hinterland. It has a unique and magnetic charm that is grounded in acceptance, open-mindedness and a sense of community. It’s for this reason that it has drawn people to its gentle shores from all over the world. Although I return to Sydney occasionally to visit family and friends, Byron is where I feel most at peace. Here, I walk my soul back home.

On the Cover

This cover photo on *The Byron Wave* this month is called *Pampered Pooch*, and was taken on South Belongil Beach, which is a dog-friendly beach. The spot is a delight for dog lovers like me where dogs are allowed to roam on and off-leash and given as much consideration as their humans – as it should be. While walking along, I spotted this pampered pooch lounging under a beach umbrella while its owners played in the surf and I felt it was a scene that is quintessentially Byron.

To learn more about Victoria, or to view her work visit Instagram: @vicugarte or @portraits_by_vicugarte or view her website: victoriaugarte.com.au



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Reclaiming our rites of passages in the modern age

by Moana Moon



Coming of age

The Triple Goddess, otherwise known as the Maid, Mother and Crone, follows the journey of womens menstrual cycles – of menses, motherhood (if they choose) and menopause.

These pivotal stages in a cis-gendered woman’s life, marks our transition from one state to another, a metamorphosis of being. Too often these portals to power are overshadowed by shame, misinformation, and fear. Young women are mostly just given sanitary products and contraception without actually understanding our fertility cycles – which is something we can learn to do from our very first moon cycle.

Starting your first moon cycle is a sacred rite of passage. It is a time of initiation into womanhood. It marks the beginning of a new way of being in a young woman’s life. By creating your own ‘Red Tent’ space at home, you can create a culture that honours and supports a woman’s body in your own family, and ripple that out into your world. Starting your own self-care rituals around your moon cycle, you can also teach and inspire others in the way that honours the Feminine.

Our hormonal cycles make us different to men. As women it is time to understand this forgotten wisdom. This life-long wisdom into womens health will mean you are better equipped to advocate for your own needs.

Women also need to retreat and rest while we release our monthly moonblood. As women, we are raised to be care-givers, so it’s important to begin giving that care to oneself. The world will not end, if we take time out to nourish ourselves.

Women’s fertility cycles have been taboo, meaning unspoken. I believe this is due to the nature of the true essence and power that women possess when they connect deeply to their bodies and moon cycles.

Did you know that a woman’s moon cycle is connected to the 28 day cycle of our moon? And that women have 13 moon cycles per calendar following the moon’s natural 13 x 28 day rhythm?; that women ‘sync’ up to each other, and that our moon cycle is a portal to deeper wisdom and wellbeing?

Correct understanding of our menstrual health can lead to a life of fulfillment and power as women as we reach maturity and go through our other rites of passages of motherhood and crone years. Let’s create a new world, where women’s cycles are honoured and understood, and where our health is something we take responsibility for, by tuning-in to our very own bodies, knowing, and wild nature.

For more information visit: sacredmoonjournal.com.au



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Young men: knowing your place in the world

by Daniel Burges, Kinsmen Global



Right now, life presents many challenges for you as a young man. Everything is coming at you hard and fast, and which can seem relentless. These obstacles can cause you to doubt your place in the world and feel alone and isolated. However, obstacles are not just a part of life but also the way forward. Embrace and seek challenges, for they forge your path to greatness. You may have seen those drawings of the pathway to success, and it's never a straight line.

Imagine your dream at the pinnacle of a mountain, and you're at the base, looking up. The path to the top is strewn with obstacles. Yet, with the right mindset, determination and commitment, each obstacle transforms into a stepping stone, a rung on the ladder leading to your dream. Every challenge you overcome shapes you into the man you need to be, worthy of your dreams. Success demands a price - the willingness to overcome setbacks. Our ability to face and conquer each challenge measures our readiness for success. Abraham Lincoln encapsulated this ethos perfectly: 'You can have anything you want if you want it badly enough. You can be anything you want to be, do anything you set out to accomplish if you hold to that desire with singleness of purpose.'

When young men are lost, lacking motivation and drive, it often signifies a loss of hope. As hard as life can be, there is always hope, and everything you are going through is building a foundation for you to create your dream life. Like a sword forged in fire, a young man's life is forged by the challenges he faces and overcomes. We all start our journey at one point; our dreams await us at another. What matters is not just achieving these dreams but the man we become in the process.

You have worth, you are relevant, and you have a place in this world. All you need to do is believe it. Embrace challenges and allow them to shape you into a man who can and will achieve anything he desires. It's your birthright.

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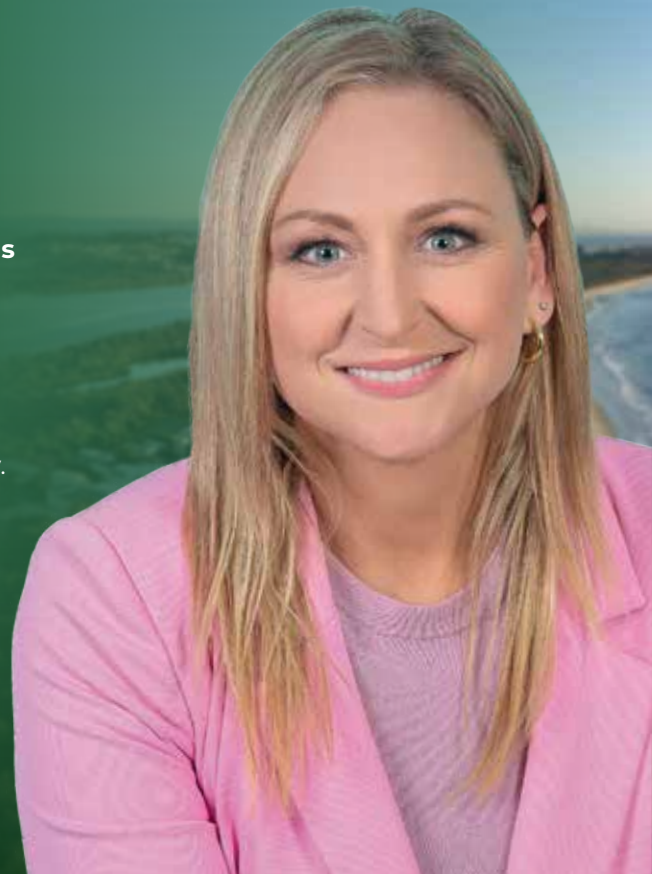
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Authorised by V Mentshelyi, National Party of Australia - NSW, Suite 3, Level 7, 50 Pitt Street, Sydney 2000





Navigating marine hazards for dogs

by North Coast Veterinary Services



Byron Bay and surrounding beaches offer an ideal playground for dogs and their owners. However, amid the beauty of our coastal paradise, there are hidden hazards that pet owners need to be aware of to keep their furry companions safe.

Bluebottle jellyfish: stingers of the sea

One of the most well-known hazards along Byron Bay's shores is the bluebottle jellyfish, also known as the Portuguese man o'war. These striking creatures with their vivid blue colouration and long tentacles can deliver a painful sting to unsuspecting beachgoers and their canine companions. Dogs may be particularly curious about bluebottles, but it's important to keep them at a safe distance to avoid stings. Common signs of sting include vomiting, drooling, and pain behaviours.

Blue button jellyfish: tiny organisms, big risks

Lesser-known but equally dangerous are blue button jellyfish. These small marine organisms resemble jellyfish, with their bright blue tentacles and symmetrical coin-like centre. Blue buttons can wash up after winds and be very interesting to dogs. Their tentacles contain stinging cells that can cause immediate pain and discomfort. If mouthed or ingested by dogs, you may see vomiting or pawing at the mouth.

Pufferfish: beware of toxicity

Another potential hazard lurking in Byron Bay's waters is the pufferfish. They can have sharp barbs and possess a potent toxin called tetrodotoxin. Ingestion of even a small amount of this toxin can be fatal to dogs, causing symptoms such as weakness, vomiting, difficulty breathing, and seizures. Keep a close eye on your dog and prevent them from investigating or consuming any pufferfish they may encounter.

Fishing hooks: silent threats

Beyond marine creatures, fishing hooks pose a silent threat to dogs exploring Byron Bay's beaches. Discarded fishing lines, hooks, and other tackle can easily entangle or injure unsuspecting pets. Always be vigilant when walking your dog near fishing areas and steer clear of any debris or equipment left behind by anglers. Hooks often require surgery to remove when ingested. Hooks and line are also a huge hazard for our marine wildlife, so responsible disposal of hooks and lines helps wildlife too.

Staying vigilant: tips for pet owners

If you're planning a beach outing with your dog, it's essential to take a few precautions to minimise the risk of encounters with these marine hazards. Spend a few minutes inspecting the shoreline before removing your pet's leash, especially after periods of strong onshore winds or large tides. Look out for washed-up bluebottles, blue buttons, pufferfish, and fishing debris, and keep your dog leashed to prevent them from investigating too closely.

Seeking veterinary care

In the unfortunate event that your dog encounters any of these hazards or experiences injuries or symptoms of toxicity, seek veterinary care promptly. Your veterinarian can assess the situation and provide appropriate treatment to alleviate your pet's discomfort and prevent any complications.

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Class of green thumbs

by Cape Byron Rudolf Steiner School



Congratulations to our Class 3 gardeners who have lovingly prepared, planted and nurtured a Pick-and-Play garden where all primary students have a green space to be creative and interact with the plants.

Led by Venetia, our amazing gardener who has a background in permaculture, the Class 3 students tend the garden with Venetia twice a week for sewing, weeding and harvesting. The produce is then sold at the school's market on Friday afternoon, from a stall they designed and built earlier in the year in their building main lesson. Carrots and snow peas are always a favourite, as is digging up the turmeric.

Other gardens include our canteen garden which is filled with herbs and greens that are used to cook delicious meals at our Steiner Diner canteen. The High School garden consists of six raised garden beds, designed for teaching and food production. These gardens are situated next to the composting bays, a small nursery and an undercover outdoor kitchen for High School food tech class.

Lastly, our flower garden which is designed for seasonal cut flowers to bring colour to the school, enables the students to pick bunches of flowers for their classrooms. Venetia and groundman Sam help to keep these gardens looking and producing all through the year. Garry, our site manager, along with Sam keep the 4.5 hectares of native garden in tip top shape. Thanks to our three Gardening Gurus and Class 3.

Summer gardening: beat the heat

by Plateau Landscape Supplies



Summer gardening in our region can bring challenges such as drought, flooding rains and high temperatures but there are plenty of ways to manage in these conditions.

Mulching

We are experiencing high rainfall now, and it can be hard to imagine the need to conserve water, but you will be grateful for planning ahead when the dry inevitably comes.

Mulching is a great way to store moisture while you have it, and it also keeps the weeds at bay.

Watering

Water in the morning if you have fungal problems so the sun dries off the leaves; or the evening if you want your plants to have all night to soak it up. Either method will reduce evaporation and the amount of water you use.

Plant for your climate

Choosing plants that are native to your area is a great way to cut down on maintenance in the garden. Natives will largely look after themselves as they are evolved to thrive in your environment. If you want to introduce other species and feature plants, do your research to ensure they will cope in your climate.

Garden in the early morning and late afternoon

Protect yourself from the heat by doing any heavy lifting during the cooler hours. Passionate gardeners

will always find a way to get their fix, even in the summer. Pop on a large hat and drink lots of water.

Don't forget your indoor plants

If you are going away, give your pot plants a good soaking before you leave. Put a plug in your laundry sink and line it with newspaper. Leave your plants in a few centimetres of water for an hour so they are well watered before you leave. You may find your plants are a little stressed when you return but they will perk up quickly with a good recovery drink.

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The Unnatural Disasters Tour: The case to turn the tide

by Chels Hood Whithey



Pictured: Uncle Paul and Uncle Pabai with farmer Glenn Morris.

From Wednesday 4 to Friday 6 December 2024, Uncle Paul and Uncle Pabai, First Nations leaders from remote islands in Guda Maluligal in the Torres Strait and lead plaintiffs in the Australian Climate Case, visited the Northern Rivers to connect with climate-impacted communities in the region.

The Australian Climate Case is a class action suit by Uncle Pabai Pabai and Uncle Paul Kabai, the plaintiffs, against the Australian Federal Government for failing to meet their legal duty of care to protect Torres Strait Islander communities from climate harm, by significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Australia is one of the biggest contributors to global emissions and this action aims to hold the Australian Government accountable for their lack of action, and secure the future of island communities while setting a precedent for stronger climate policies.

On the tour, the Uncles were joined in the Northern Rivers by Senior Torres Strait Elder and climate advocate, Aunty McRose Elu. Organised by Grata Fund, funders and campaign partners of the Australian Climate Case, the tour aimed to unite communities facing diverse climate impacts and build community power for stronger government action on climate change.

Day one: Wednesday 4 December

On Wednesday, the tour began with a Cultural Welcome event at Brunswick Heads Memorial Park, where Bundjalung Traditional Owners and Elders met and welcomed Guda Maluligal Elders and Leaders in a relaxed gathering and picnic. Uncle Col Appo (Minjinbal) led a smoking ceremony.

Following this, was the Building Community Power headline event, at 5:30pm at Bangalow A&I Society Hall, Bangalow, where over 115 people attended. The night began with free catering by Yulli's Byron Bay, and live music from Benja & the Deadly Good.

A Welcome to Country by Delta Kay (Arakwal) preceded a panel discussion and Q&A session. The panel featured a diverse group of speakers, including Oli Costello from Jagun Alliance; Kate Stroud, the storyteller behind *When the*

River Rose; regenerative farmer Glenn Morris; Chinderah Community Hub leader Sandra Gilbert; and Aunty McRose Elu, a Torres Strait Island Elder and the 2021 QLD Senior Australian of the Year. The discussion was facilitated by Isabelle Reinecke, Executive Director and Founder of the Grata Fund. The night concluded with interactive action stations, where attendees engaged in activities such as letter-writing, contributing to an art station, supporting local campaigns, and sharing their own climate stories.

Day two: Thursday 5 December

On Thursday, the Uncles toured Bundjalung Country from Grafton to Lismore – connecting climate-impacted communities. In Grafton, the Uncles met with regenerative farmer Glenn Morris, where Glenn described the ways he is farming in a sustainable way, the changes he is seeing on his farm, and his long-standing climate advocacy. The Uncles related to the way that Glenn nurtures land rather than extracts from it. Glenn put on a farm lunch for the tour crew.

Uncle Pabai Pabai said, 'What I've seen and heard about the floods that happened here has shocked me. Just like you, we have had hardly any government support for the climate impacts we're facing. Just like you, we've been fighting to keep our homes, to stay on our Country. We believe the islands were made for us, they are our identity. It has been very special meeting people on the Tour who are supporting us. We must assist each other, because the Government isn't helping us.'

Next, the Uncles visited the *Koori Mail* office in Lismore, where they learned about the devastating impacts of the Lismore 2022 floods. They then visited the Resilient Lismore office, chatted with staff about the floods, and went on a tour of Lismore to see flood impacted areas.

Day three: Friday 6 December

On Friday, the Uncles hosted two storytelling circles, inviting local residents to come along and share their stories of climate change, connect their stories, and strategise for the future. The first storytelling circle was on the Richmond River Foreshore, Ballina, and the second was on the Tweed River Foreshore in Chinderah. The Ballina event had about 30-35 local residents attend to share their stories.

Uncle Paul Kabai said, '*Mura Kalmel Sipa* means everyone, together we stand. This court case that we have taken won't just help people in the Torres Strait, it will help everyone. We must understand each other and help each other. That's what this tour is about. We need to make one big voice to the Government, to help all of us facing climate disasters.'

The verdict of the case will be handed down in the first quarter of 2025. More information about the Australian Climate Case can be found at: australianclimatecase.org.au/



Safe battery disposal

by NE Waste



Pictured: Items with embedded batteries such as vapes, electric toothbrushes and eScooters can now be recycled for free at the Lismore Recycling and Recovery Centre.

Community Recycling Centres and safe battery disposal: a crucial step to reduce fires

In an age dominated by technology, batteries have become an essential part of our lives. From powering our smartphones to running electric vehicles, their significance cannot be underestimated.

However, with this growing reliance on batteries comes an alarming increase in battery-related fires. Between 1 January and 1 August 2024, there have been 193 battery-related fires reported in NSW, an 18% increase on the same period last year. In the last few months, a further two fires and a very close call were reported from Northern Rivers recycling facilities, along with a truck that almost caught alight as a result of batteries being incorrectly disposed of in kerbside bins.

To tackle this issue, there are a number of options available to residents of the Northern Rivers to safely dispose of batteries, depending on whether they are a removable or embedded battery.

Removable batteries

Many products have removable batteries. When these loose batteries are finished with, tape battery terminals with clear sticky tape, store them in a safe location out of reach of children and then drop them off at your nearest battery recycling collection point.

Loose handheld (AA, AAA, C, D, 9V, 6V and button cell) batteries can be recycled at the following locations:

- your local Community Recycling Centre – newaste.org.au/crc
- any B-cycle drop off location including Coles, Woolworths, IGA, Aldi and Bunnings Find your nearest location at - b-cycle.com.au/drop-off.

Car batteries can be recycled at any Community Recycling Centre. To find out how visit: newaste.org.au/crc

Embedded batteries

The NSW EPA has established a trial in partnership with Lismore City Council, to accept products with embedded batteries at the Lismore Recycling and Recovery Centre, 313 Wyrallah Road, East Lismore. It is open Monday to Friday 7:30am – 3:30pm and Saturday and Sunday 9am – 4pm. To contact ph: 1300 873 387.

Northern Rivers residents can drop off items containing embedded batteries at the Lismore Community Recycling Centre (CRC) for free, however all other household problem waste including handheld and car batteries, paints, oils, fluoro bulbs, gas bottles and smoke detectors need to be taken to your local CRC (up to 20L or 20kgs per material type).

More information on the trial and other approved trial locations available to all NSW residents can be found at the NSW EPA Website: epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/recycling-and-reuse/household-recycling-overview/embedded-batteries

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BJJ National Australian Open

The mats are ready, the athletes are primed, and the stage is set for the 2025 Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) National Australian Open, happening on Sunday 23 February at the Cavanbah Centre in Byron Bay. This year's event, a prestigious BJJAOL League 6x Star competition, promises an exhilarating showcase of BJJ talent, featuring a mix of skill, determination, and passion.

The Cavanbah Centre will provide the perfect canvas for BJJ athletes to show their skills. Competitors from across Australia and beyond will converge

for this high-stakes championship, adhering to the rigorous International Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation (IBJJF) rules. The tournament caters to all ages and skill levels, with divisions for kids, juveniles, adults, and masters in Gi and No-Gi categories.

Kids will battle it out in a Round Robin format, while older divisions engage in Single Elimination matchups. Adding to the excitement, this year's event includes cash prize divisions worth \$9,000, offering significant rewards for top competitors. Female and male

open-class Gi divisions, as well as No-Gi cash categories, promise fierce competition and high stakes.

Matches will begin at 9am and run throughout the day. Standard registrations are available until Monday 17 February and late registrations are available on Tuesday, 18 February only.

The comp is an unmissable event for enthusiasts and families. For more information, including registration, schedule, and tickets visit: bjjaol.smoothcomp.com.

Pickleball takes off in Byron Bay

By the BBPC Committee



Join the Fun at the Byron Bay Pickleball Club

Byron Bay Pickleball Club (BBPC) is growing rapidly, and it's easy to see why. What started as a small group of dedicated players back in August 2024, has blossomed into a thriving community. We now have a regular attendance of 40 players at our three weekly social sessions at the Cavanbah Sports Centre. So, what exactly is pickleball?

Pickleball is a racquet sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis. It's played on a badminton sized court with a net similar to tennis. The ball used in pickleball

has holes in it to slow it down and make it easier to control. The rules of pickleball are simple and easy to learn, so it is an excellent sport for people of all ages and skill levels. Pickleball is low-impact, which means that it's easier on the joints than many other sports, making the game an excellent choice for people who want to stay active and healthy.

For anyone looking to be involved, our Club offers fun and engaging sessions. Social sessions are held on Monday and Thursday nights from 5:30pm–7:30pm and Saturday mornings from 9am–11am. These are perfect for meeting fellow locals, improving your skills, and enjoying the friendly, competitive atmosphere for which pickleball is known. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced player, you will find a welcoming environment to play and have fun.

For more details on session times and how to be involved, visit the Byron Bay Pickleball Club's website, Facebook or Instagram: [@byronbaypickleball](https://www.facebook.com/byronbaypickleball) or drop by our social sessions and say 'hello'.

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Not another Billy Bob

with Billy Bob Thoughtson



Pictured: John Hancock's large signature on the Declaration of Independence. Source: Supplied.

Recently a friend of mine asked me about my legacy. I was a little surprised by the question, as I still consider myself a young and spritely fellow. I responded with a bouquet of throw away lines like 'it's a bit premature mate', 'I'm still working on it', 'I'm not too worried about it', and the classic 'as long as people smile when they think of me, I'll be happy'.

Strangely this conversation reminded me of the great Tina Fey, the renowned comedy writer, who once said, 'I think the greatest legacy you can leave is to make people laugh. And if you make people laugh, you'll make them think, and if you make them think, they'll make the world a better place.'

Well, I'm thinking I am one of those under-employed comedic writers, so the concept of a legacy is quite daunting, I won't ever be as famous as Larry David (*Seinfeld*) or John Cleese (*Monty Python*) but I suppose I could, if I'm really lucky, end up as one of those unsung lost souls of the English language. You know, just like Thomas, Richard or Harrison aka 'every Tom, Dick and Harry', or Bob from 'Bob's your Uncle', or Larry from 'Happy as Larry'. These people are the unsung heroes of everyday expressions, the immortals of the idiom, figures whose names have transcended their lives to become woven into the fabric of our language. In some ways it's poetic, as their true identity is swept away into obscurity. And there are plenty of these lost souls to profile.

Bob, for example, is believed to reference Robert 'Bob' Cecil, a 19th-century British Prime Minister, who reportedly used nepotism to secure a key government role for his nephew, Arthur Balfour. The implication is that if Bob is your uncle, things are conveniently sorted. Then there was Murphy from 'Murphy's Law'. Murphy was believed to be Edward A. Murphy Jr, an engineer who worked on military projects in the 1940s. His phrase, 'Anything that can go wrong will go wrong' became immortalised. Then there is Gordon Bennett, his name became shorthand in Britain for expressing astonishment or exasperation. The real James Gordon Bennett Jr. (1841–1918) was a flamboyant American newspaper magnate known for his wild antics and extravagant lifestyle.

Speaking of Americans, what about John Hancock (1737–1793) who was a key figure in the American Revolution, and is best known for his giant, elaborate signature on the US Declaration of Independence. His name has since become synonymous with the word 'signature,' thanks to

his grand, sweeping strokes. When it comes to pulling off a truly remarkable John Hancock, it's all about BDE (Big Dick Energy). Do you have that effortless confidence to stylishly release your ink, make your mark, knowing that 55 other blokes are watching and waiting to sign?

Of course there are many more lost souls like Fanny Adams (Sweet Fanny Adams), and Mr McCoy (The Real McCoy), Elijah McCoy (1844–1929) was an African American inventor whose high-quality oil lubricators were widely imitated. Buyers asked for 'the real McCoy' to ensure they got the genuine article. And finally, there is 'Nosy Parker', the origin is debated, but it likely refers to Matthew Parker, a 16th-century Archbishop of Canterbury, known for his inquisitive, meddling nature in religious reforms.

Australia does not have as many 'lost souls' immortalised in idioms as some older western cultures. It seems we prefer to celebrate humour, understatement, and egalitarianism in our idioms rather than glorifying individual figures – such as 'being a whinger' or 'going off like a pork chop'. Our best one is probably 'Happy as Larry'. Larry was actually Larry Foley, a 19th-century Australian boxer, who reportedly won a fortune in prize money and was, understandably, very happy. 'Buckley's chance' also sneaks in, referencing William Buckley, a convict who escaped and became synonymous with situations that seemed impossible to overcome.

Speaking of hopeless odds, what are the chances of getting my Editor to not act like a nosey parker, sign off on my articles using her John Hancock, making me as happy as Larry? Yep, you guessed it, I've got two chances: Buckley's and none. However, she did say something of note the other day after reading a naughty paragraph of mine. She said, 'Not another Billy Bob' and started laughing. My bawdy use of the English language and quick-witted quips normally end up on the cutting room floor, but over time, the Editor has mellowed and become less prudish. After this subtle and unexpected praise, things quickly returned to normal, and she fired off another electronic hand grenade: 'Stop acting like a Gatsby – throwing around idioms just to impress people.'

Anyway she got me thinking. Maybe the phrase 'Not another Billy Bob' might just catch on. I could try and build a grassroots movement. After all, naughty humour is often spread socially at the pubs, clubs, and BBQ's. Maybe I'll start dropping the phrase 'Not another Billy Bob' into my writings, encourage friends, fans, and followers to use it conversationally or online. After all the phrase 'Doing a Bradbury', shows how modern Australian figures can sneak into idiomatic territory, proving that even in a culture which celebrates collective humour, some characters can shine through. If all else fails, 'Not another Billy Bob' can simply live in my writing and its followers. Not every idiom needs mass adoption to feel meaningful, and most of my readers tell me I'm a legend in my own lunchtime – whatever that means. I might not have the timelessness of Larry or Buckley, but maybe, just maybe 'Not another Billy Bob' can carve out a spot in Australia's colourful vernacular.



This Month

with Milt Barlow

At the movies

After a pretty lackluster summer, February sees some excellent movies showing, offering a good excuse to take a few hours away from the heat. If you have not caught it yet, *A Complete Unknown* (opened 23 January) is definitely worth a watch. Set in 1961 against a vibrant music scene and huge cultural upheaval, a 19-year-old wanders into town with his guitar. His name is Bob Dylan. Little did he, or anyone else, suspect Dylan was about to change the course of American music. Timothee Chalamet gives an electric performance as his portrayal of one of the most iconic singer-songwriters in history.

It's a month for music nostalgia with the release of bio pic *Becoming Led Zeppelin* (8 February). The film traces the journey of Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, John Bonham and Robert Plant through the music scene of the 1960s to their culmination as the number one band in the world with the iconic song, *Stairway To Heaven*. Featuring fascinating interviews with the band and great archival footage, many will line up for this one.

And whilst on nostalgia, you might want to check out *Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy* - perfectly timed for Valentines

Day (14 February). It's the fourth instalment in the franchise with Renée Zellweger, Hugh Grant, Colin Firth and Emma Thompson all back reprising their roles. Nothing really to mentally challenge you here - just a pleasant couple of hours on the same and well-liked Bridget Jones path.

The new movie raising plenty of eyebrows is *Baby Girl* (30 January). This erotic thriller stars Nicole Kidman playing a high-powered CEO who puts everything on the line when she begins an affair with a young intern. Kidman's portrayal is electric and reminiscent of her powerful role in *Eyes Wide Shut* - some of the scenes will definitely make you squirm. The movie was named as one of the top 10 films of 2024 by the National Board of Review and Kidman is hotly tipped to get an Oscar gong in 2025. Hats off also to young British actor Harris Dickinson who is excellent as Kidman's love interest.

Critical acclaim is coming thick and fast for Pamela Anderson for her lead role in *The Last Showgirl* (20 February). The plot focuses on a middle-aged showgirl, played by Anderson, as the Las Vegas revue she starred in for three decades is about to close. Whilst not the greatest movie of the month, it's an interesting couple of hours and Anderson nails the lead role causing Oscar whispers for her performance.

On the couch

My favourite this month would have to be *Lockerbie: A Search For Truth* (Apple TV & Binge). Colin Firth is stunning as the grieving father who loses his daughter when Pan Am Flight 103 is blown up over the town of Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, killing 270 people. The series follows the true-life story of Jim Swire (played by Firth) and his 35 year quest for justice. It's riveting TV and not to be missed.

Tricky Trivia

February edition

1. Why does February typically have fewer days?
2. What is the zodiac sign for someone born on 14 February?
3. Which US president's birthday is celebrated on Presidents' Day in February?
4. What is the name of the rare astronomical event that occurs when February has no full moon?
5. Which leap year rule states that years divisible by 100 are not leap years unless divisible by 400?
6. February is associated with which birthstone?
7. What popular global event often occurs in February, featuring lavish costumes and parades?
8. Which US holiday, celebrated on 2 February, involves a groundhog predicting the weather?
9. In what year was the first recorded Valentine's Day?
10. In February 1942, which northerly Australian city was bombed by Japanese aircraft?

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February crossword

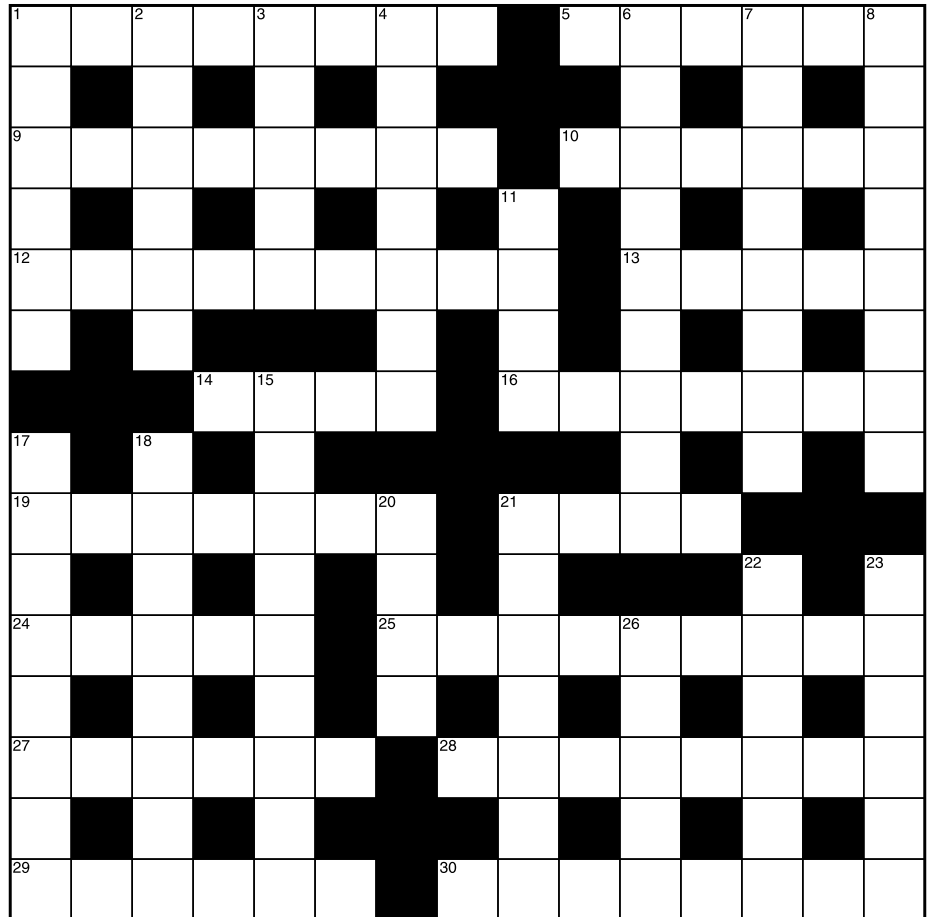
© Lovatts Puzzles

Across

- 1. Crowing (over)
- 5. Levels
- 9. Poppycock
- 10. Llama relative
- 12. Excusing
- 13. Backcomb (hair)
- 14. Rank, ... admiral
- 16. Gunman
- 19. Deficiency
- 21. Soviet Union (1,1,1,1)
- 24. Scratch out
- 25. Peach variety
- 27. Weather map line
- 28. Powerless
- 29. Salutes
- 30. Unmerited

Down

- 1. Sacred Indian river
- 2. Weight measures
- 3. Tether (3,2)
- 4. Not as nice
- 6. TV charity appeals
- 7. From the menu (1,2,5)
- 8. Hobbyists
- 11. Encourages, ... on



15. Full of high spirits

17. Tendering

18. Sleeveless overdress

20. Universal ages

21. Insanitary

22. Homing bird

23. Discontinued

26. First Greek letter



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Crossword solution

January

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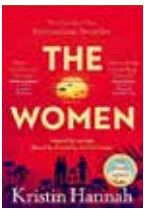
Trivia answers

February edition

1. February was shortened in the Roman calendar to fit 12 lunar cycles, and later adjustments in the Julian and Gregorian calendars kept it at 28 or 29 days.
2. Aquarius.
3. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln's birthdays are often associated with Presidents' Day.
4. A Black Moon.
5. The Gregorian calendar rule for leap years.
6. Amethyst.
7. Carnivale or Mardi Gras.
8. Groundhog Day.
9. 496 AD, when Pope Gelasius declared February 14 as Saint Valentine's Day.
10. Darwin.

Book review

by Jenny Dowell, OAM



The Women by Kristin Hannah

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

'There were no women in Vietnam' is the oft repeated response American nurses received when they returned home after the Vietnam War. This book by Kristin

Hannah is about those women who, not only went to Vietnam and saved lives, but showed 'women can be heroes too'.

More than 50 years after the Vietnam War, this book offers an essential perspective. The war began in 1962, but it wasn't until college in 1968 that I truly grasped its impact, as young men I studied with faced conscription by ballot. Between 1965 and 1972, with 63,000 conscripted and 19,000 sent to Vietnam, this story highlights the women who served and the challenges faced by returning combat personnel. While the war began with public support, by its

end in 1975, opposition was widespread. Even the RSL shunned Vietnam veterans.

The novel is a fictionalised version of 21-year-old American nurse, Frankie McGrath, who signs up to go to Vietnam, shortly before her brother is killed. The brutal reality of the look, feel, and sound of her arrival is conveyed with brilliant word pictures. It's horrific, but young Frankie has found her calling saving lives. She forms friendships outside her white, privileged upbringing, and inevitably falls in love with a soldier. The pain, exhaustion, and trauma that are everyday occurrences build up, and upon returning home two years later, Frankie finds it difficult to re-assimilate. Her parents expectation of marriage, children, and country club lunches, and the inability to talk to anyone about her experience, leads to a dissociated life that spirals out of control. The book spans 40 years, and while often tragic, does end with recognition and a new sort of peace for Frankie and her veteran colleagues.

This book is one of the most significant I have read in years. Whatever your connection or curiosity to the Vietnam War, I encourage you to read this book. It will engage and enlighten you.



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Horoscopes

by Patsy Bennett - patsybennett.com



Aries

The full moon on 13 February will help you to move stubborn issues forward. Financially, you may be surprised by some developments, so be sure to be innovative as well as practical. You'll appreciate the chance to focus on good health and must pace yourself if low energy levels occur.



Taurus

Your love life is set for developments. If you're single, there's a window early February to meet someone significant and couples could deepen your relationship. Be patient with energy levels especially if you have felt a little lacklustre. Renegotiate some financial arrangements if necessary.



Gemini

Travel and socialising will appeal. If you're single, early February could bring someone into your life and this phase is ideal for couples to strengthen your connection. Financially, Jupiter will help you to move circumstances along this month, so look for ways to improve your bank balance.



Cancer

Early February is ideal for boosting your own well-being. This February you could take a key commitment to a new level both in your personal life and professionally, so be prepared to discuss options. If you're clear about your career direction, this is a great time to improve circumstances.



Leo

Mid-February brings the chance to be more adventurous and motivated both in your domestic and personal life. Your love life could take you into new territory, especially on the 1st, 9th and 25th. You'll look for a fresh way to share duties and responsibilities and potentially even space at home.



Virgo

The first week of February is one of the most romantic weeks this year, so be prepared to socialise if you're single, and to invest more time in your relationship if a couple. The new moon on the 28th may be decisive regarding work circumstances, so aim for your goals throughout the month.



Libra

You'll gain insight into your work direction in February, which will enable you to gauge your prospects. You may even receive ideal news. In your love life, there are likely to be considerable changes too, especially around the 12th, when your status could change if this is what you wish.



Scorpio

Set solid groundwork for progress in your treasured ventures, as you could make some dreams a reality. This is a romantic month, but you must avoid throwing caution to the wind, which you'll regret. Financially, this is a good time to grow your bank balance, but you must avoid gambling.



Sagittarius

Ventures and relationships that have been frustrating or slow-moving will pick up pace. It's a good month to re-think some financial arrangements if necessary. Seek to improve communication skills if some relationships have been tough. Singles could meet someone new early, late and mid-month.



Capricorn

Financially you may experience a boost early in February. Developments mid-month concerning a relationship or joint duties will deserve attention. Stability and security are important to you, so make these your priorities. Your energy levels will improve gradually with rest and gentle exercise.



Aquarius

You'll appreciate the chance to bring more of what you love into your life early in February. Aim to schedule more variety in your daily routine. You're ready to deepen some relationships and to distance yourself from others. If an ex draws close, double-check the realities and practicalities.



Pisces

Early February brings positive opportunities both for romance and for work, so be sure to take the initiative in these areas. Key financial developments are also likely, so be prepared to evaluate carefully. You'll appreciate seeing communications gradually improve throughout the month.

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