

# the byron wave

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Community news for the Byron Shire

Issue 28 | March 2025

An elderly woman with white hair and glasses is lying in a red hammock, looking at a tablet device. The background is a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting.

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# from the editor

Dear Readers



As we step into March, change is in the air. The seasons shift, summer's intensity softens, and a new energy emerges. It's a perfect time to re-evaluate your goals for the next quarter, or just to reflect and reset for the cooler months ahead. March is also the month of International Women's Day (IWD), a global celebration of women's achievements and a call to push forward on gender equality. This year's theme, *For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.*, reminds us that real change happens when we ensure no one is left behind.

With events like the Adaptive Pro Byron Bay surf comp, Bangalow Film Festival, and *Vagina Conversations* all taking place this month, the power of diversity and storytelling will be at the forefront of our minds. Whether you're celebrating the achievements of women, engaging in important conversations, or simply enjoying the beauty of our natural landscapes, take a moment to appreciate the vitality of our community.

In a world that often prioritises the individual, it's of vital importance that we find solidarity, truth, and adoration in our local spheres. Change happens when we come together – whether through storytelling, activism, or everyday acts of kindness, everyone can make a difference.

Happy reading.  
Until next month  
Charla Rallings, Editor.

Happy reading.

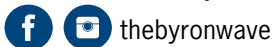
Until next month  
Charla Rallings, Editor.

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## Acknowledgement of Country

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

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From the Editor ..... 3

This issue ..... 5

Around town ..... 7

News..... 8

Community..... 10

Local legends ..... 18

In focus ..... 20

Historic Byron..... 22

Travel..... 24

Lifestyle ..... 25

Family ..... 28

Education ..... 29

Arts ..... 31

Health and wellbeing ..... 30

Pets and animals..... 32

Environment ..... 33

Sport ..... 34

Entertainment..... 35

Horoscopes..... 39

Entertainment answers ..... 38



18- Local legends | Westpac Rescue



20 - In focus | Ghosts in Byron



22 - Historic Byron | Heritage House

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# Justine Elliot and Labor will fund CCTV and crime prevention infrastructure for our area.

## Dear Resident

I've been working with police, councillors and locals to improve community safety. **Now, I've secured a \$3 million commitment to deliver CCTV and other much needed security upgrades for our area.**

As a former frontline police officer, community safety is my main priority, and this is part of **my plan to keep our community safe**. Full details at:

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

### Justine Elliot MP

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For serious action to address crime & community safety

**VOTE JUSTINE ELLIOT**

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



**What:** Bangalow Film Festival  
**When:** Thursday 6 to Sunday 16 March  
**Where:** A&I Hall, Bangalow

See exclusive world and Australian premieres of critically acclaimed feature films, award-winning documentaries, beloved classics, plus masterclasses with industry experts. Ticket and info: [bangalowfilmfestival.com.au](http://bangalowfilmfestival.com.au)



**What:** International Women's Day (IWD)  
**When:** Friday 8 March  
**Where:** Worldwide

This year's IWD theme is *For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment*. Celebrate women's achievements and raise awareness about discrimination. Use #ForAllWomenAndGirls. More info: [un.org/en/observances/womens-day](http://un.org/en/observances/womens-day)



**What:** *Vagina Conversations #10*  
**When:** Thursday 13 – Sunday 16 March  
**Where:** Brunswick Picture House

Funny, sad, challenging and celebratory, the *Vagina Conversations* is a contemporary evolution of the *Vagina Monologues*, bringing a courageous fresh local flavour to our community. Tickets and info: [brunswickpicturehouse.com](http://brunswickpicturehouse.com)



**What:** *Life Without Me*  
**When:** Weekend shows until 15 March  
**Where:** Rochdale Theatre, Lismore

Lismore Theatre Company brings to the stage a heartfelt, funny, and thought-provoking story, by award-winning playwright Daniel Keene, set in a quirky two-star hotel. Tickets and info: [trybooking.com/CSJAW](http://trybooking.com/CSJAW)



**What:** *Boy & Bear: Great Southern Nights* tour  
**When:** Friday 21 March, 8pm – 11:30pm  
**Where:** Beach Hotel, Byron Bay

With five consecutive top 10 albums, over 250 million streams, and as one of Australia's finest live acts, Boy & Bear bring their signature sound to Byron for an unforgettable night of music. Tickets and info: [moshtix.com.au](http://moshtix.com.au)



**What:** ArtsNational Lecture  
**When:** Monday 24 March, 6pm  
**Where:** A&I Hall, Station Street, Bangalow

*Hans Feibusch: The Artist in Glowing Palette*, presented by International Lecturer Marc Allum, gives insight into the life and work of German-Jewish artist Hans Feibusch, who escaped Nazis to become one of Britain's most celebrated muralists.

### 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](http://visitbyronbay.com)



# Snapshot

## Booyong Road Upgrade

A long-awaited upgrade to Booyong Road, commenced in late January, is expected to continue until mid-March. A 2.9km stretch of road near the Bangalow Road intersection at Clunes will undergo major reconstruction, along with improvements to drainage. The \$1 million project, funded by the NSW Government's Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund, aims to improve road conditions for local residents and motorists.

'I know that people who use Booyong Road every day will be very pleased to hear that we are able to do this work because the section we will be improving is in very poor shape,' said Sam Frumpui, Manager Works.

During the rebuild, Booyong Road will remain open to local traffic, but motorists should be prepared for potential delays at times with work taking place Monday to Friday from 7am to 5pm. For more details and updates, visit the Council website.

## Community divided over crime prevention funding

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visited the North Coast Friday 7 February to

announce a \$3 million commitment to crime prevention infrastructure across the region. The funding, if Labor is re-elected, will be split equally between Tweed, Ballina, and Byron Shire Councils, supporting measures such as CCTV, additional lighting, bollards, fencing, and landscaping to enhance community safety. Local MP Justine Elliot welcomed the announcement, emphasising the importance of these resources in combating crime.

However, not everyone supports the initiative. The Climate Justice Alliance of Northern Rivers (CJA) has criticised the plan, arguing that increased surveillance does not address the root causes of crime. CJA members pointed to findings from last year's Youth Crime Report by Children's Commissioner Anne Hollonds, which states that deterrence and incarceration are ineffective in reducing crime among young people.

CJA member groups agreed that instead of increased policing, communities need increased funding and support for social programs, education, youth support services, and early intervention programs – strategies highlighted in the report on youth justice. Other advocates, argued that taxpayer dollars would be better spent on affordable housing, mental health services, and mitigating the climate crisis.

While some see the investment as a practical step toward community safety, and others believe long-term social investment is the key, multiple actions can be taken today to reduce crime in the community, such as locking your doors, participating in community watch, and reporting suspicious activities.

## Speed limit changes



The following speed zone reductions are now in place:

- The Pocket Road – now 60kph between The Pocket Village and Main Arm Village (was 80kph)
- Wilsons Creek Road – now 80kph between Coolamon Scenic Drive and Alidenes Road, and 60kph between Alidenes Road and Upper Wilsons Creek Road (was 100kph)
- Main Arm Road – now 60kph between Palmwoods Road and Dry Creek Road (was 80kph)
- Goonengerry Road – now 60kph between Coolamon Scenic Drive and Goonengerry Village (was 100kph)
- Left Bank Road – now 80kph between Melaleuca Drive and Frasers Road (was 100kph).

*Transport for NSW is responsible for setting the speed limits on all NSW roads. Information on how you can request a speed zone review is on Council's website.*

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## Chamber fights for Byron's brand

The Byron Bay Chamber of Commerce is warning consumers about a fraudulent online retailer, ByronBay-Boutique.com, which falsely claims a connection to Byron Bay while engaging in deceptive practices. Numerous complaints have been lodged with the Chamber regarding the website's failure to deliver goods, selling of counterfeit products, and lack of transparency. Consumer watchdog sites, including Trustpilot, have flagged it as a likely scam, with victims reporting financial losses, poor-quality products, and difficulty obtaining refunds. Further investigation has revealed that when customers request a returns address, they are directed to a location in China, confirming that the business has no operations in Byron Bay or even within Australia.

### Protecting the Byron Bay name

'The Byron Bay name is globally recognised for its authenticity and quality,' said Matt Williamson, President of the Byron Bay Chamber of Commerce. 'Businesses fraudulently using 'Byron Bay' without any real connection damage our local economy, mislead consumers, and undermine the integrity of genuine local businesses.'

To safeguard the Byron Bay brand and protect consumers and local businesses, the Chamber has taken action, including:

- conducted research on ByronBay-Boutique.com and compiled a detailed report on its deceptive practices
- lodged formal complaints with Fair Trading NSW, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), ASIC, and international consumer protection agencies
- reported the fraudulent website to its domain registrar (Tucows), e-commerce provider (Shopify), and email service provider (Google) requesting its removal
- committed to developing a formal accreditation system to help consumers identify and support authentic Byron Bay businesses.

### A call for consumer awareness

The Chamber urges shoppers to be cautious when purchasing from online retailers using 'Byron Bay' in their name. Consumers who believe they have been scammed by ByronBay-Boutique.com are encouraged to report their experience to the relevant authorities and to contact the Chamber for guidance.

For more information or to access the Chamber's report, contact email: [info@byronbaychamber.com](mailto:info@byronbaychamber.com).

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# Councillor Column

## Cr Janet Swain


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



Source: Mark Seiffert.

I am a musician, teacher, songwriter, event organiser, choir leader, and mother of two adult kids – one lives in Mexico and the other is in Canberra. I have lived in North Ocean Shores for the past 10 years, after living in Singapore, where I worked for the British Council teaching English as a second language.


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I own a small creative music and event business called Song Dynasty Music – I run two large community choirs, and I create community events – including Festival of the Voice in Brunswick Heads, and the After Disaster Project in Mullumbimby. I organised three local tours of the African Children’s Choir, and many music events to raise money for some great local organisations such as Ballina4Refugees.

For the past six years I have coordinated and hosted the annual Real Carols at the Right Time event at The Brunswick Picture House, and I regularly perform with my band The Loveys, as well as my own solo shows.

Lately, I’ve been feeling the urge to get more involved in social change, to be more engaged with what is going on around me, and in the big wide world. Something is biting at my ankles, and it won’t let go. With much consideration – I decided to run for Council. After 35 years of raising kids, I now have time to be more active in local and national politics. Someone’s got to do this job, and I’m willing to give it a crack.

I believe in politics. I believe that creative people should be involved in politics, and they have been sorely lacking in the past few years. We are a largely untapped group of exciting potential political candidates who are equipped with the lived and professional experience that will benefit public service and policy.

I am firmly committed to maintaining the uniqueness of the Shire with its low-rise development, small villages and diverse natural environment. Byron Bay has a reputation for being a creative hub, forward thinking, full of new ideas, new ways to live, a new paradigm. It is also one of the most beautiful areas in the world, and worth protecting from some property developers who are trying to kick down the door and create another Gold Coast. Local Council is the grassroots of politics where decisions are made really affecting people’s day to day lives, and I hope to especially represent the people of the northern part of the Byron Shire – the area of the greatest population but with the least representation.

Finally, I’m proud to be a member of the Australian Labor Party. I agree with Dr Andrew Leigh MP – it is the beating heart of modern Australia. Labor is the generator of ideas and the force of progress and I will be out pounding the pavements with our local MP, Justine Elliot. So, if I rock up at your door, say ‘hi’.

Our superpower is our imagination – our ability to tell our stories, write our songs, join together and sing, play, make art, and write books – to imagine and create our future on this beautiful planet. I just want to keep doing that until I die, and squeeze every bit of juice I can out of life.

If you’d like to contact Cr Janet Swain, email: [janet.swain@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:janet.swain@byron.nsw.gov.au)





# At the Library: Brunswick Heads

by Mark Seiffert, Branch Technician, Brunswick Heads Library



Pictured: Artist Julie Pretyman and her friend Jen create artworks and resources that connect people with the language of colour and showcase their mutual love of nature. They believe our wellbeing is connected to how we care for the earth. Source: Supplied.

## Recap of 2024

### Arts section

Within a community of vibrant and artistic individuals, we have been lucky to have the opportunity to exhibit a wide and varied range of art on the library walls. Works are rotated approximately every eight weeks, and all have their own unique style. From the captivating lino prints of the *Visible*

*Invisible* exhibition and the stunning embroidery works of award-winning artist Bonnie Shore, to the wistful photographs and positive affirmations by the Hummingbirds Connect group, it has been a visual feast.

### For the kids

Children's Book Week 2024 saw the construction of a magic portal and doorway into the children's area. Two doors covered in vines and golden strands of glitter had to be opened before entering the realm of reading and books. Gorgeous Book Week related artworks from Brunswick Heads Primary School (BHPS) students adorned the walls and were integrated into the Library display.

Always a busy and exciting event on the calendar – it kept young and old enchanted for months. Programs for children, from babies through to high school feature on the regular calendar and are always well attended. Some highlights from our school holiday sessions include watercolour landscape and botany painting, mixed media collaging, creating a zine, a recycling workshop and the local fire brigade coming in for a Q&A session. Author and illustrator extraordinaire

Sami Bayly *The Illustrated Encyclopedias Of Ugly Animals; Extinct Animals; Dangerous Animals* kept Yrs5 and 6 students from BHPS totally entranced, revealing her author journey, reading from her stories and giving tips on illustrating animals.

### Staff favourites from 2024

- *The Vegetarian* by Kang Han
- *The secret lives of booksellers and librarians: true stories of the magic of reading* by James Patterson
- *Creative first aid: the science and joy of creativity for mental health* by Caitlin Marshall and Lizzie Rose
- *Limberlost* by Robbie Arnott
- *James* by Percival Everett
- *Edenglassie* by Melissa Lucashenko

### Tech Savvy Seniors

2025 is another busy year – here's just one of the activities underway. A program designed to give seniors skills and confidence when using computers, tablets and smartphones has proven popular at the branch. One-on-one sessions with trained staff, the program is delivered in partnership with the NSW State Government and NSW State Library.

# Right to protest: protecting protest in a time of crisis

by Tamara Smith MP

The right to protest is a cornerstone of democracy, yet it is under siege and we live in a country where non-violent protest action and protestors are increasingly impacted by hostile laws and regulations. Last year we saw a rise in the number of environmental protestors who were subjected to State and Federal Government's increasingly repressive laws around our democratic right to protest.

In NSW, the Rising Tide protestors, despite seeking police clearance, faced attempts to stifle their 'protestival' and were charged with disrupting major facilities. Around the same time, we witnessed the traditional owners of Tiwi Islands challenging the construction of an export pipeline from the Barossa field off the Northern Territory. This action outrageously resulted in a \$9 million charge.

The Northern Rivers has a history of successful protests, including the Bentley blockade, Terania Creek protest, Double Duke State Forest protest and more recently the ongoing attempts to Save Wallum. These actions, though often met with persecution, demonstrably protected our natural treasures.

Across NSW, environmental activists, raising their voices for a planet in crisis, are increasingly met not with dialogue, but with draconian laws and repressive tactics. The recent surge in such measures demands our attention. Community non-violent direct action and activists who are brave enough to stand up for the voiceless should be supported at all costs.

As we continue to be affected by a changing climate, it is crucial that we stand behind those who are at the frontlines taking action on the issues that affect us all.



# Bangalow Film Festival



Pictured (above): Bangalow Film Festival (BFF), 2024. Pictured (below): Films *The Tracker*, *Milano*, and *Flow*. Source: Supplied by BFF.

The Bangalow Film Festival is set to return from 6–16 March with an exciting lineup of critically acclaimed films, special guests, and immersive events to the region. With 24 international and Australian films alongside short film screenings, masterclasses, and panel discussions, the Festival promises to be a rich experience for cinephiles (film lovers) and storytellers alike.

A number of renowned filmmakers and actors will be in attendance, including Rolf de Heer, Warwick Thornton, Mark Leonard Winter, Molly Reynolds, Mara Jean Quinn, Eliza Cox, and Nays Baghai; as well as Gary Sweet, Aaron Pedersen, and Damon Gameau; offering audiences the opportunity to hear directly from those behind the stories on screen.

The Festival will open on Thursday 6 March with the Australian premiere of *Milano: The Inside Story of Italian Fashion*, a documentary that explores Italy’s rise as a global fashion powerhouse. Featuring Helen Mirren, Sharon Stone, Tom Ford, and Gianni Versace, the film sets the tone for a program filled with compelling storytelling across a range of genres.

Among the many highlights is a special screening of *The Tracker* on Saturday 8 March, 3pm, with directors/actors Rolf de Heer, Gary Sweet, and Damon Gameau attending for a Q&A discussion on its impact. Other filmmaker Q&A conversations will also take place around *The Rooster*, Thursday 13 March, 7:30pm, and *The New Boy*, Saturday 15 March, 5:15pm, offering insights into the creative processes of directors Mark Leonard Winter and Warwick Thornton.

Families will also find something special on Sunday 9 March with *Flow*, a critically acclaimed animated feature that tells a story of resilience and adventure—all without a single spoken word.

Music and creativity will play a strong role throughout the Festival, with screenings like *Music for Mushrooms*, which explores the intersection of psychedelics and sound. A special short film showcase in collaboration with Fungi Film Fest will continue the theme. Following the screening of *Living Bach*, audiences will be treated to a live choral performance by the Amatori Choir, creating an immersive experience beyond the screen.

Other standout films include *I Am The River*, *The River Is Me*, which tells the story of New Zealand’s Whanganui River – the first river in the world to be granted legal personhood; *Queens of Concrete* which follows three teenage girls on their journey to Olympic skateboarding history; and *Maya and the Wave* which captures the highs and lows of champion big-wave surfer Maya Gabeira as she carves out a place in a male-dominated sport.

The Festival will also host a range of industry events, including an intimate filmmaker luncheon with Rolf de Heer, two days of panels in partnership with Byron Writers Festival and Screenworks, and discussions on the art of underwater photography featuring leading NSW filmmakers.

With such a varied and engaging program, this Bangalow Film Festival is one not to be missed. More details on the full screening program, special guests and events can be found at: [bangalowfilmfestival.com.au](http://bangalowfilmfestival.com.au)

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# Adaptive Pro Byron Bay: 23-30 March

by Surf Correspondent, Sandpit Danny (aka Danny Salfield)



*Pictured: Mark 'Mono' Stewart.  
Source: @nextlevelsurfcoaching.*

Last year I had the privilege of working as a co-commentator at the inaugural Adaptive Pro Byron Bay. The event was organised by six times Adaptive World Champion and Byron Shire local Mark Mono Stewart. The sport is growing at an exponential rate and giving a pathway for surfers from all corners of the globe

with various physical challenges to test themselves against the ocean and their fellow competitors. To spend a week with the raucous tribe of adaptive surfers last year and hear of their incredible tales of overcoming adversities was so inspiring, I simply cannot wait for this year's edition. I put a few questions to the legend himself Mark Mono Stewart.

### **G'day Mono. So what dates will the event run and how can people go and see it?**

We're kicking things off on Sunday 23 March, with a Street Parade at 3pm, led by the Byron Taiko Japanese Drummers. It'll start from the top end of Jonson Street, make its way along Bay Street, and finish at the main event site on Lawson Street, just east of the Surf Club. That'll roll into the Opening Ceremony, a Welcome to Country, and some live music to set the vibe. The competition itself starts on Monday 24 March, and runs through to Sunday 30 March. If you can't make it in person, we'll be webcasting the action from Wednesday to Sunday, so you can still catch all the highlights online.

### **Who are the big names to watch out for in some of the divisions?**

- Jesse Billauer, USA, Prone assist Division, men.
- Matt Formston, Australia, Visual Impaired Division, men.
- Alena Nichols, USA, Sit/Ski Division, women.
- Kye Colless, Aus, Prone unassisted Division, men.
- Sam Bloom, Aus, unassist Prone Division, women.

### **Will this event potentially be a qualifying event for the Paralympics in Brissy?**

We've got delegates from the Australian Paralympic Committee coming to check things out and learn more about the sport. There's a real chance that what they see here could help push adaptive surfing towards inclusion in the Brisbane 2032 Paralympics, and which would be a game-changer for the sport.

### **What does it mean to you as a para-athlete to have an event in your hometown, and how does winning last year's inaugural event compare to your other achievements in the sport?**

Honestly, getting this event off the ground has been a dream of mine for almost 10 years. I wanted to bring an

international adaptive surfing event to Byron Bay, not just to compete, but to give our community the chance to see firsthand what these incredible athletes can do. It's hard to put into words the feeling you get watching, talking, and experiencing these amazing people and seeing their view of the world. You walk away from it a better person. To be honest, winning the event last year was the last thing on my mind. I was obviously stoked, but I just wanted the event to run smoothly, for everyone to have an amazing experience, and to show off our beautiful town and surf to the world.

### **Event details**

**What:** Adaptive Pro Byron Bay 2025.

**When:** Sunday 23 – Sunday 30 March.

**Where:** Byron Bay, with events taking place along Bay Street and Lawson Street, near the Surf Club.

**Key Events include:** Street Parade on Sunday 23 March, and the Surf comp, which begins Monday 24 March, ending Sunday 30 March, with webcast from Wednesday to Sunday.

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

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



Byron, get your sequins ready, Lennox is going to be hosting Rafiki Royale, a spectacular fundraising event supporting Rafiki Mwema, a local charity dedicated to providing safe homes, therapy, and education for vulnerable children in Kenya.

With a Las Vegas-inspired theme, this dazzling evening, on Saturday 17 May at the Lennox Head Cultural Centre, promises to be the social event of the year, all for a truly life-changing cause. So, grab your mates, book your Uber and get ready to walk the red carpet.

### An unmissable night for a worthy cause

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

### Why Rafiki Mwema needs your support

Rafiki Mwema provides a safe haven for 65 children and employs 45 dedicated staff, including Maasai guards and trained German Shepherds, to ensure their security. The work extends to a vital street program in Kenya, offering safety, education, and a daily meal to 100 homeless children.

With no government funding, the charity relies on fundraising and donations to cover their \$55,000 monthly operating costs. Due to the rising cost of living, donations have significantly declined, placing their essential services at risk.

Founding Board Member Claire Harding shares, 'People are struggling to feed their families, and we understand why they need to pause donations. Unfortunately, this means we are losing donors daily. It breaks my heart to think that without enough funds, we may not be able to provide the only meal these street children receive each day.'

### How you can help

- Become a sponsor: Exclusive sponsorship packages are now available, providing businesses with premium brand exposure while supporting a meaningful cause. Industry-exclusive sponsorships are offered on a first-come basis.
- Buy your tickets: Gather your friends, family, and colleagues for an incredible night.
- Donate and share: Spread the word about Rafiki Mwema and contribute to their mission.


### About Rafiki Mwema

Rafiki Mwema, Swahili for Loyal Friend, is an Australian-registered charity founded in 2012 by three Northern Rivers women who wanted to make a difference.

What started as a small rental home for 22 young girls has now grown into a 14-acre farm providing care, therapy, and education to 65 children, some as young as 18 months and who have endured unimaginable abuse.

Rafiki Mwema is committed to healing these children and reintegrating them into safe and loving communities.

Follow Rafiki Mwema on Facebook and Instagram for the latest information: @RafikiMwema. To purchase tickets or make a donation, visit: rafikimwema.com or for sponsorship enquiries email: claire@rafikimwema.com



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## A bloomin' good time: Coorabell Flower Show

by Coorabell Hall



*Pictured: Coorabell Flower Show, 2024. Source: Supplied.*

The 54th Flower Show at Coorabell Hall is set to be a spectacular weekend filled with nature's finest blooms, delicious food, and lively entertainment. Taking place on Saturday 8 March, 12pm – 4pm, and Sunday 9 March, 10am – 4pm, this much-loved annual event is a must for flower lovers and the local community alike. A highlight of the show will be

the breathtaking dahlia display by Stephen and Bruce Wedd, grand champions of the South East QLD Dahlia Society. Alongside the stunning floral exhibits from local growers, visitors can enjoy floral crown making with fresh flowers, as well as flower perfume crafting with Jude and Michael Fanton.

No festival is complete without great food and drinks, and the Show has plenty on offer. Treat yourself to CWA cakes, chai by Kamal, an ice cream and coffee cart, a sausage sizzle run by the Lions Club, and a licensed bar. Saturday will feature Indian street food, while Sunday brings freshly made pizzas. Adding to the festive atmosphere, Mana Aloha, led by local legend Lilith Rochas, will perform a special hula dance on Sunday. Come along to Coorabell Hall at 565 Coolamon Scenic Drive, Coorabell, and immerse yourself in a weekend of flowers, community spirit, and good times. For more information visit: [coorabellhall.net](http://coorabellhall.net)

## Community in brief

### CWA Brunswick Heads Branch by Mary Webb



*Pictured: CWA Brunswick Heads' first meeting of 2025. Source: Supplied.*

The CWA, along with many other women's organisation around the world, will be celebrating International Women's Day on Saturday 8 March. I'm sure we all know many wonderful women past and present who have achieved so much. However, there are many wonderful women in our local communities and who go about their volunteer work, without being recognised, so let's celebrate those we know who quietly achieve so much. If you know someone who is a quiet achiever, give them a hug and say 'Thank you'. It means so much. Thinking of joining CWA Brunswick Heads? We meet for Branch meetings on the first Friday of the month at 9am and also run a weekly craft session every Friday, bar public holidays, from 10am until 2pm. Non-members are more than welcome. A gold coin donation is all we ask. This helps with the upkeep of our hall and also provides morning tea.

### Bangalow Lions Club by Gillian Cornu



*Pictured: Bangalow Lions with comedian Jimoin, in front of Kamal Singh's famous curries, A&I Hall kitchen, Bangalow. Source: Supplied.*

The Bangalow Lions Club kicked off February with a big day supporting Bangalow Koalas' *Seriously Funny* comedy fundraiser event at the A&I Hall. Our Club was hard at work preparing the famous Kamal Singh's curries and keeping things running smoothly behind the bar for a fantastic night of comedy and fundraising.

With comedians like Jimeoin, Mandy Nolan, and Harley Breen bringing the laughs, the event raised much-needed funds to help Bangalow Koalas reach their goal of planting 500,000 trees by 2025. The night also featured an exciting auction, with incredible items including a signed Adam Zampa cricket jersey and luxury accommodation packages. A huge thank you to everyone who attended and supported this important cause. We're proud to have been part of such a fun and meaningful night for our local koalas.

### Brunswick Valley Probus Club by Margaret Newbould



*Pictured: Brunswick Valley Probus Club after seeing Grease The Musical. Source: Supplied.*

The Brunswick Valley Probus Club Inc. is back after the Christmas break, having monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at Ocean Shores Country Club starting at 10am. Each month we have a guest speaker, except for March, as we have our AGM. In January, we went to Brisbane to see *Grease the Musical* and we all had a lovely time. We are also having a bus trip in March to see *Sister Act* the musical in Brisbane. In July we have another Brisbane trip to see *Jesus Christ Superstar* the musical and we still have a few tickets left for July. We also have outings for nearly each month till the end of the year. One of them is a cruise leaving Tweed Heads for three hours with morning tea and lunch included on board. In April we are going for a ride on the solar train at Byron Bay then to the Sun Bistro for lunch. If you are retired or semi-retired or just lonely come along and join us. Probus is all about fun, friendship and fellowship.



# The Shire in photos

## Bangalow Koalas' *Seriously Funny* comedy fundraiser – 6 February



Pictured (left-right): Attendees enjoying some laughs, Bangalow Lions and the Singh family feeding the hungry crowds, and Keith the Koala assisting the auction. Source: Lyn McCarthy @niche\_pictures, website: nichepictures.com.au

## V-Day Byron Bay – 14 February



Pictured: One Billion Rising V-Day event where 200 women, children, and allies danced up a storm on Byron's Main Beach, rising up for justice against domestic violence. Source: Lyn McCarthy @niche\_pictures, website: nichepictures.com.au

# March Moolah!

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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: cmcjanett@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



Pictured: Mick Kerry. Source: Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.



Pictured: Wategos from above. Source: Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

## Lifesaving from above

### An interview with Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service

In times of crisis, every second counts. For those in need across the Northern Rivers, the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service (WRHS) is a vital lifeline, providing urgent medical care and transport when it matters most. Operating from the Lismore Base, the service is crewed by highly skilled professionals who navigate challenging conditions to ensure patients receive the help they need.

Mick Kerry, an Aircrew Officer based at the Lismore Base, offers firsthand insight into the demands of the job and the dedication required to keep this lifesaving service in the air. In this interview we explore the world of rescue operations and the people behind the chopper, committed to saving lives across our region.

#### What does a typical day with the WRHS look like?

The Aircrew are rostered on duty for a 12-hour shift, 7am–7pm for day shift, or 7pm–7am for night shift, and the shifts typically start the same. The aircraft and operational equipment are checked for readiness; personal flight gear (helmets, harnesses etc) are placed into the aircraft.

#### How many members are on the WRHS crew?

Each shift there is a standard crew of four made up of the Pilot, Aircrew Officer, NSW Ambulance Critical Care Paramedic and NSW Health Emergency Doctor.

At varying stages of each mission, each of the four crew members will take the lead role depending at which stage the mission is. The Pilot will safely, and promptly, fly the aircraft to the incident. The Aircrew Officer will operate the winch to insert the Critical Care Medical Team or assist the Pilot with a suitable, safe landing. The Critical Care Paramedic will oversee the medical assessment and treatment of the patient with the doctor assisting or taking over if the patient's condition requires their higher level of medical expertise.

#### What training is required to be part of the crew, and how do they keep their skills sharp?

Aircrew Officers are required to have worked in a Helicopter Rescue or Emergency Service for several years prior to applying for positions with the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. After a three-month initial training program, regular training events occur to maintain the required recencies to remain operational. The training events are either locally in our aircraft or remotely in an approved Flight Simulator.

#### What happens when responding to a call?

We are tasked by the NSW Ambulance Aviation Control Centre (ACC) which is based in Sydney. They are monitoring all the Triple Zero 000 emergency calls in NSW and will assess if a helicopter and/or a medical team (doctor/paramedic) will be of benefit to a patient or patients. This assessment is based on the nature of the incident, location, and distance for that patient to get to the appropriate hospital facility.

When a tasking is received, several stages of planning are required dependent on the location and nature of the tasking. Is additional fuel required due to distance or inclement weather? Is additional medical equipment e.g. blood products needed? Or is specialist rescue equipment required to undertake a rescue from a remote area, from the ocean, or a vessel? Whilst on route to a incident our main consideration is what is the easiest and quickest way of getting the Medical Team to the patient. Is there an appropriate landing site nearby or do we need to winch the team to the area to commence patient care?

#### What are some unique challenges or incidents you face in this region?

School holiday periods, and particularly the January holidays, represent a 20% increase in taskings. This is challenging due to the increase in temperatures and storm activity during the





summer months. Coastal and ocean-based incidents also increase during these times as the population increases with tourists to the region.

### What is the most rewarding aspect of the job?

The unknown nature of the aeromedical industry is one of our biggest challenges, but also one of the biggest rewards. What will today's shift bring, what challenges will we face and what positive stories can come from what we achieve today?

### How does the WRHS connect with the Northern Rivers and its people?

Having a smaller population base in the northeast corner of NSW, most locals have a direct connection to someone who has been assisted and/or been transported by our service. They could be related or they could be friends. This connection, and the financial support that our community provides our service, instills an ownership of our service – which is here to serve our community.

### If there's one thing WRHS wished more people knew about the service, what would it be?

The service is here to support the local community, operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In addition to the assistance we receive from the NSW Government, through the NSW Ministry of Health and NSW Ambulance and our major partner Westpac Bank, we receive generous

support from the community. Collectively this provides funds that ensure the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service can deliver world-class aeromedical emergency services to the communities of Northern NSW.

### Byron Coastal Charity Walk - 3 May

Beyond emergency missions, the WRHS team is also passionate about community engagement. The Byron Coastal Charity Walk on 3 May plays a crucial role in raising awareness and funds. Held annually, this incredible walk offers participants the choice of three distance options: 12, 24 or 36km, along the breathtaking Byron coastline. 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 for a terrific day out on our beautiful coastline, all in support of this vital service.

No matter your pace, every step you take will directly contribute to the important operations of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

For more information or to register visit: [rescuehelicopter.com.au/events/](http://rescuehelicopter.com.au/events/)





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Source for pictures (above–below): Local photographer, Jonathan Verdin.

## Echoes of the past: Byron Bay's ghostly tales

by Emma Setterfield-Smith

Byron has absorbed countless ghost tales through the years, weaving them into the land's rich history – stories that will remain forever connected to this place. This small town isn't short of chilling tales that remain in the whispers of those who reside here.

### The lonely lighthouse



The Cape Byron Lighthouse was built in 1901 by Messrs Mitchell and King, upon the land that has witnessed many haunting tales of the coast. The ocean around Australia's most easterly point has claimed many ships including *The Ellen* (1866) which sank at Tallows Beach, killing nearly all 14 crew members.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that many visitors to the Lighthouse have reported an eerie atmosphere, along with unexplained claims of objects moving on their own.

According to one account in 2023, two photographers were capturing the beauty of the Lighthouse after visiting hours, when they began to feel uneasy and as though they should leave. Simultaneously, both camera shutters began to flicker and the frames taken were all black – except for one.

The female photographer claimed to have captured an image of a ghostly male figure standing in the small Lighthouse window, wearing a hat and an indistinct object in hand. They speculated whether it may have been the spirit of a past Lighthouse Keeper, gazing out onto the Byron waters.

### The phantom hippy hitch hiker

In true Byron style, some of the unexplained ghostly encounters are in regards to a hippy hitchhiker dressed in bohemian clothing. Hitchhiking became very popular in Byron between the 60s/70s and to this day, is still a common way to travel between neighbouring communities. There are many unsolved cases and disappearances from hitchhikers going missing from the Byron area.

Numerous reports exist of drivers picking up a female hitchhiker who seems to be heading north, between Bangalow and Byron Bay. Other accounts claim to have picked up the traveller on the Pacific Highway, in the mountainous area or on Byron's Rainbow Bridge. The stories state that the mysterious spirit always seems slightly disconnected in a brief conversation, before evaporating into thin air after travelling only a kilometre or two down the road.

### Unknown souls on the road

Many locals claim to have witnessed unknown figures at nighttime whilst travelling between the small towns around Byron. One local told how they were passing down Broken Head Road, when they saw an extremely white figure wearing a hooded shroud and his hand in front of him. He began to slowly cross the road, before completely vanishing in front of them.

Another lady tells the chilling tale of how she was driving down Myocum Road when she saw a dark figure hovering about a foot off the ground, floating over an unknown object. As she approached the figure, she slowed the car and steered left to





avoid a collision – but the figure mysteriously vanished. What she did notice though, was the Bandy-Bandy snake in the middle of the road over which the figure had been hovering.

**The land of those gone before**

With the countless communities, legacies and memories that have attached themselves to the land over time, it comes as no surprise that many encounters have occurred within the natural landscapes of Byron.

One local who grew up here in Byron, described their unexplained experience that happened just outside of Mullumbimby. On what he suspects is old cult land, he and a couple of friends went for a stroll up one of the hills nearby. Halfway to the top, the friends stopped as they all saw a ghostly apparition of a lady appear suddenly, standing in a long white dress staring back at them in silence. After a few seconds of feeling very uncomfortable, they began to run back down the hill away from the unknown figure. When they turned back around, the lady was still just behind them staring and had somehow transported down the hill rapidly behind them.

When uncovering tales from community members, it's surprising how many unexplained encounters are centred around the bushland surrounding Byron. One case was near to Minyon Falls, around the time when doof parties were becoming more popular during the 1990s. One local

recalls attending a party and as soon as the music started, mysterious lights, that seemed to come from the Falls, hovered over the party. Some party goers recalled the glowing orbs floating down into the crowd. The party had around 300 people attending and it seemed that it was a unanimous experience between many of people there. Whether it was a mass hallucination or an encounter with the land's spirits, it remains an unexplained phenomenon to this day.

It seems that many people have reported feeling uneasy in some of the bushland around the local area, with one tale of an individual walking alone through the bushes near Angels Beach, Ballina, and suddenly feeling very uncomfortable. He then began hearing what sounded like ancient chanting and clapping sticks, even though he was alone and there was nobody in sight.

The area around Ballina and Byron Bay holds a very significant history. Through its prominent Bundjalung heritage and its communities who have left legacies over the centuries, it is not hard to believe that the memories of the past still live with us today. The countless local tales remind us that Byron is as rich in its deep-rooted folklore, as it is in its ability to adapt.

From acts of the paranormal or strange co-incidences, to the eclectic nature of the town, Byron continues to captivate its audience and leave us asking even more questions.


# WHERE MOMENTS BECOME MEMORIES

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# The early life of Bangalow’s Heritage House

by Bangalow Historical Society



*Pictured: Heritage House being transported from Brunswick Heads to Bangalow. Source: Supplied.*

### If only the walls could talk

Some homes, like some people, live interesting lives. Take, for example, Heritage House, situated in Bangalow’s Piccabeen Park. This beautifully restored timber house with its three-tiered roof and wide shady verandah, has a colourful past that dates back to the 1890s, making it a fitting museum

for the Bangalow Historical Society. In this day and age of busy lifestyles and rapid developments, an historic museum like Heritage House can provide us all with the opportunity to take a nostalgic look into our township’s history, and compare the progression, or maybe the regression, we have created since that era. The house was initially built sometime in the late 1890s on Fingal Lane, Brunswick Heads, just behind the original old timber-slab hotel. Older Brunswick residents say there was a period of decline after the new railway service had opened in 1894, diverting much of the town’s passing trade from the road to the new rail system, so its first owner most likely built it as a holiday home.

Harry Wraight, an ex-Shire Councillor who lived in Brunswick Heads, was a robust young man in his early teens when he lived next door to the house during the 1920s. He vividly recalled one of its first landlords, Samuel George Shepherd, who was a virile dairy farmer from Casino with 17 children: 12 sons and five daughters. He was nicknamed ‘Daddy’ by all for obvious reasons. Daddy and his remarkable wife, Letitia, spent their well-earned retirement in this house throughout the Roaring 20s, no doubt, being swamped by the family and many lively grandchildren visiting from Casino during Christmas and school holidays. They were a blessed family in many ways. During the WW1, six of Samuel’s sons enlisted and served overseas. All returned home safely. Samuel, ‘Daddy’ Shepherd, passed on in 1930.

In 1932, the house was purchased by a snowy-haired and moustached gentleman, called Ebenezer McKeown – a retired dairy farmer from Coorabell. Dubbed ‘Pardie’ by family and friends, he was renowned for his splendid vegetable garden. He was also a keen fisherman. His wife, Eliza, worked tirelessly for the local Red Cross. Pardie had the house raised on poles in the 1930s. His granddaughters Ruth and Betty (nee James) recalled many warm and magical evenings spent sitting on the balcony steps with their Pardie, making up funny stories or poems about people passing by, cloud shapes, and life in general. Pardie passed away in 1946. A few years later, Eliza moved out to live with her daughter, Alice James, beloved wife of Ernie Frank James, who served as Mayor of the Municipality of Mullumbimby, before it was amalgamated with Byron Shire. The house was then leased out until 1965 when it was once again sold. This time, the owner is believed to have been a well-liked old digger by the name of Mr Brierley, who divided the upstairs area into two flats. He later sold it to Mr Bob Burns, who rented the flats out on a permanent basis.

From around 1988 to 1992 the property was owned by a Dr Ian Patterson, an enigmatic fellow who hailed from Sydney. He was a doctor of unknown talents, receiving his diploma – so rumour has it – through an American mail order catalogue. He built three illegal flats underneath and rented them out but then decided to convert the house into a brothel. All the bedrooms were painted in raunchy mauve, pink and black. There were six bathrooms, three upstairs and three down. As all the walls in this building were only a single plank thick, it must have been a very difficult place to keep a secret. The brothel enterprise only





lasted a short time before the bank repossessed the property, then it was bought by Byron Shire Council. Dr Patterson moved south to try and pursue a career as a politician, and Council boarded up the old house until further notice.

After 100 years of absorbing the daily lives of many owners and their children's laughter, plus the frolic and drama of holiday-makers and working girls, the old house was starting to show her age and decline. But fate was about to intervene. In 1993, five members of the former Bangalow Pride committee formed the Bangalow Historical Society under the presidency of Betty Dengate. They had been bequeathed a large collection of fascinating old photographs taken around Bangalow in the early pioneer days. With these, and many other significant artefacts of Bangalow's history stowed in members' garages collecting mould, they earnestly began looking for an appropriate building to display their treasures.

They approached Byron Shire Council for assistance and were generously granted the block of land near pool park, previously occupied by the old Bangalow preschool. The search then began for a suitable building. Within a few months, Council came to their aid, offering them the rundown house in Fingal Lane, otherwise fated to be demolished. It had been left in a poor state of neglect over the years and seemed well beyond restoration. However, with no other options in the wind, the dedicated Society members decided to accept the challenge and restore it.

A benevolent grant of \$30,000 was made available, and the awesome task of relocating the building began. The house was removed from the stilts, cut down the centre, and transported on two low loaders to its present site. Over the next few months, several local tradesmen and volunteers gave their time in working bees to transform this decrepit house into its current colonial simplicity. The lovely spotted gum floorboards were sanded and polished, the lurid risqué walls repainted, two bathrooms removed and replaced by a lobby and serviceable kitchen, and a wide veranda was added. Finally, the fine collection of old photographs were hung, and all the historic artefacts and furniture were placed on display for its grand opening on Australia Day 1995. The Society's historians maintain records of the town's history and its early inhabitants. This provides an excellent source of information for educating the young, as well as providing a database for anyone pursuing their family tree.

Heritage House is surrounded by lush green lawns and the cool, shady trees of Piccabeen Park. It's a popular tourist attraction set in a relaxing environment that is ideal for a picnic lunch. When you step inside the front door for a visit, take a quick peek on the right-hand side door frame. Hanging there, is an in-out peg board for Rosy, Sheila, Cuddles and Zoey, a memento from its wild days as a colourful bordello: just a small piece of time in this building's interesting life.

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

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Pictured: Lighthouse Beach, Ballina. Image credit: @discoverballina

## Play in your own backyard

by Kate Parry

As the cost of living rises, many of us are looking a bit closer to home for entertainment. And given we live in one of the most sought after destinations in the world, the Northern Rivers is the perfect place to stay put and explore. From moving your body to creative pursuits there's something for everyone, so grab the family and head out to discover what's on offer in your own backyard.

### Get moving

#### Ride

Love the feeling of the wind in your hair? The Northern Rivers is a cyclist's paradise. For a scenic ride, take on the Ballina Island Loop, an 11.5km journey with stunning views of the river, ocean, and creeks. There are plenty of cafés along the way for a quick breather, and if the kids are in tow, a pit stop at the Pop Denison Playground is a must. For those looking for a longer ride, check out the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. This award-winning trail takes you through lush countryside, charming towns, historic bridges, and tunnels alight with glow worms. Currently, two sections are open: Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek (24km) and Casino to Lismore (30km).

#### Hike

Prefer to explore on foot? The Northern Rivers is home to some breathtaking National Parks with trails to suit all fitness levels. Whether you want a short bushwalk or a challenging full-day trek, pop online for a full list of trails, distances, and estimated times: [nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do](http://nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do)

#### Skate

If the kids are bursting with energy or you're keen to get on some wheels yourself, consider carving up some of the region's skateparks. The Ballina Skatepark features three bowls, rails, ledges, and river views – plus shaded seating for parents to relax. Check out the brand-new Byron Bay Skatepark, a \$2.6 million facility boasting two bowls, mini ramps with a spine, and

an open-flow street section. Just down the road, the Suffolk Park Pump Track is a hit with BMX riders, skateboarders, and scooter enthusiasts. It's an asphalt circuit designed for speed, skill, and loads of fun.

#### Walk

For a touch of whimsy, follow the Brunswick Heads Fairy Trail. Scattered throughout the town are tiny fairy houses - beautiful little sculptures made from recycled and found objects. Each fairy has a message of kindness, simplicity, and love for nature. It's a delightful adventure for kids and adults alike. Need help finding them? Stop by the Brunswick Heads Visitors Centre for a clue sheet.

### Get inspired

Offering a change of pace are the region's many museums and galleries. A visit to the Ballina Maritime Museum uncovers the region's seafaring past or take a trip to the Evans Head Heritage Aviation Museum which offers a dedicated tribute to the legacy of Australia's largest WWII RAAF base through carefully curated exhibits, preserved aircraft, and interactive displays.

If art is more your thing, explore the Northern Rivers Community Gallery in Ballina, showcasing incredible local talent and fresh exhibitions every few months. And if you're up for a scenic drive, the Tweed Regional Gallery is well worth the trip, featuring rotating exhibitions and a stunning Margaret Olley Art Centre.

### What's not to love?

The Northern Rivers is a playground of free and low cost activities just waiting to be explored. Whether you're cycling along scenic trails, skating at world-class parks, uncovering fairy magic, or diving into history and art, there's something for everyone - without breaking the bank. So grab your gear and get adventuring.





# From feeding family to feeding community

by Kylie McGregor, Byron Farmers Market



*Pictured: Farmer Nicole Dayman at Byron Farmers Market. Source: Supplied.*

Farmer Nicole Dayman is one of the newest members of Byron Farmers Market, having joined the market earlier this year. Her passion for gardening and growing her own food for her young family has evolved into a full-time farming gig where she now feeds the community of Byron. Nic, as she is known, and her husband, Monty, grow

a range of certified organic produce and flowers on the family farm at Goonengerry. And while neither of them grew up on a farm, they have had a love of growing since they were kids.

‘Monty has been growing potatoes since he was a little boy,’ she says. ‘His parents (teachers) farmed a few acres in Dural in Sydney with a market-style garden, stone fruit, sheep and a milking cow. My parents were avid gardeners, but we didn’t live on a farm. However, my sister and I were pretty free-range and nature-loving growing up.’

Today, the couple, along with their two children, live and work on their 75-acre property, named *Rockwall Farm*, where they use a range of organic and regenerative farming practices. ‘We initially had a small market garden growing seasonal

vegies, and a flock of laying hens, selling via a roadside stall,’ Nic says. ‘Fast forward to now, and we are concentrating our time growing ginger, turmeric, garlic, onions, potatoes, citrus and flowers for the market. We are certified organic, and farm with regenerative practices. We care for the land and encourage biodiversity through our farming practices, planting cover crops to increase organic matter and improve soil fertility, rotating crops and using no chemical inputs.’

Nic says that while they have faced their challenges, the rewards have far outweighed any diversities. ‘We love being out in the paddocks with the animals and the plants, and seeing our kids enjoy the space and freedom that living on a farm allows. There are challenges, of course, mostly climate related, and we are finding over the years that good planning can soften the blows that inevitably occur. Growing clean food for people and our family is a real privilege, as is being available to our kids and watching them grow and learn from nature.’

And it seems the couple’s shared passion for sustainable living has been passed on to their two children. ‘Our youngest daughter has been growing herbs, dehydrating them to make teas for a school project, and our son is working on his tractor driving and slashing skills,’ Nic says.

You can find Nic and her range of certified organic produce and flowers, along with dehydrated citrus, rosella tea and the ever-popular immune booster shots, at the *Rockwall Farm* stall at Byron Farmers Market every Thursday morning.

## Flow unveils new beekeeping invention



to 30-40kg, making hive inspections a difficult and often a two-person task. Utilising a leverage mechanism, the *Super Lifter* makes opening the hive a much easier task for keepers, and a gentler experience for bees. As the Australian beekeeping community

faces the newly introduced threat of the parasitic *Varroa* mite, the *Flow Super Lifter* provides a valuable tool for hive management and enhances the accessibility of beekeeping as a profession or hobby. For more information visit: [honeyflow.com.au](http://honeyflow.com.au)

On 11 February, beekeeping enthusiasts gathered at Flow’s centre of operations in Newrybar to witness the unveiling of a new beekeeping invention. Seven years in the making, father and son founders and inventors of *Flow Hive*, Stewart and Cedar Anderson, revealed the *Flow Super Lifter* – a nifty contraption that takes the heavy lifting out of beekeeping. Bee boxes can weigh up

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# On the Cover

Photo and words by David Cope



I have always been searching for deeper meaning in life, on a quest to understand the real purpose of our existence and why we as humans do and behave the way we do.

I was raised by my single mother to whom I give my deepest admiration for shaping me into the man I have become today. It was no easy task and for that I am deeply thankful beyond words. Growing up I was always a visual person. I would spend hours observing insects and cobwebs and fully immerse myself in my surrounds. I was known for being quite the day dreamer at school and would often drift to another land gazing out the class window.

It was in my early teens I was given a little camera as a gift from my dad. In many ways I am grateful for this stepping stone which would follow on to become a fully-fledged passion. I was mostly self taught and recall reading countless photography magazines, spending hours experimenting through trial and error, using light, and observing how it would change the visual characteristics of an image.

I soon established a little dark room in the home laundry which became my second home as I would spend hours amazed by the magic that unveiled before my eyes.

Later on, I decided to pursue my passion and did a Bachelors degree in Photography. It helped shape the areas of photography I was most passionate about and I was starting to pick up a few photography gigs on the side. This was a real boost to my confidence at the time. I then went on to shoot fashion and weddings for a number of years and witnessed the importance of capturing time, not just for our own sake, but for that of our loved ones. Now, I am the official photographer for *The Byron Coast Times*.

Even though over the years I have captured pretty much most genres of photography, I am always drawn back to nature and this beautiful world in which we live. Byron has been my place of regenerative growth and a place of belonging.

It is hard to describe, but the people and energy which abide here is beyond words. And, to those of us privileged to live here, know its power and ability to bring peace and healing for the many who pass by its shores. It is a place to be shared and respected by us and its custodians. It is a place where the visual senses ignite and where photography and nature just align.

This shot was taken along Midgen Flat Road in the beautiful Byron Hinterland after a large storm front had passed over, and surprisingly, left with a reminder of the beauty that abounds – even in the midst of turmoil. It shows us that there is always a way to the other side, and the best way to arrive there is through remaining positive and loving to our people and planet. We all weather our storms but we all have that silver lining if we choose to find and flourish in it.

To see more of David's work visit Instagram: @davidcphotographer



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# Reflections of a longboarder

by Teresa Ramos



## What longboarding teaches me

My name is Teresa Ramos and I am from Spain. I grew up in Santander, a coastal city between Basque Country and Asturias. I was 12 years old when I first had a surf lesson. Since then, intermittently, I've been surfing on shortboards and my connection with the ocean and surf has become stronger.

I arrived in Byron Bay a month ago as I felt like I needed a break from work and

some time to just stop. My first idea was to settle down in Sydney, but some friends strongly recommended Byron Bay instead, and thank God they did. I've been so welcomed here. During the flight from Sydney, I met a lovely local woman called Teres (the very same name as my closest friends in Spain call me) and she is taking care of me as if we're family. I've found that people here are so open-minded, and it has been an incredibly interesting experience and I've allowed myself to be surprised by reality. Finding new friends like Rosalind, Amy or Josine, and unexpectedly finding a former co-worker from Spain, Luis, makes me think that coming to Byron has been a very good idea.

Last August, I tried longboarding with Jose Luis Berasaluce, two-time Spanish champion. He introduced me to this latest passion, teaching me valuable

lessons like being patient when waiting for a wave. It's impossible to surf all waves, you have to be selective. The very same as in love, there are waves that are better left to pass.

Longboarding has given me the opportunity to enjoy surfing, and also life, more than I used to do with shortboards. I've been able to stop fighting against myself, seeking for more speed, higher waves, and living as I lived everything: under pressure. I've found in longboarding the joy of having some natural abilities and a rhythm that makes me connect naturally with myself, the ocean, nature, and other people who share this feeling and generously help me to improve, like my Brazilian friend Roberta.

My mind breathes, my heart expands, my spirit gladdens, and my soul prays. I knew coming to Byron would be a great idea, but I did not imagine that it could be so fulfilling.

## March Tide Times, Brunswick Heads

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>31</b> 0419 0.24 1034 1.62 MO 1631 0.17 2307 1.84					<b>1</b> 0339 0.15 1021 1.87 SA 1634 0.17 2241 1.57	<b>2</b> 0427 0.18 1100 1.78 SU 1710 0.17 2326 1.62
<b>3</b> 0516 0.26 1140 1.64 MO 1746 0.21	<b>4</b> 0013 1.64 0612 0.38 TU 1221 1.46 1824 0.28	<b>5</b> 0103 1.62 0716 0.51 WE 1305 1.27 1905 0.38	<b>6</b> 0204 1.58 0838 0.62 TH 1402 1.10 1957 0.47	<b>7</b> 0319 1.54 1016 0.65 FR 1527 0.99 ☉ 2110 0.55	<b>8</b> 0445 1.54 1150 0.61 SA 1714 0.99 2240 0.57	<b>9</b> 0558 1.58 1255 0.54 SU 1830 1.06 2359 0.52
<b>10</b> 0657 1.63 1340 0.47 MO 1923 1.16	<b>11</b> 0058 0.45 0744 1.67 TU 1415 0.42 2006 1.26	<b>12</b> 0145 0.39 0824 1.69 WE 1446 0.38 2044 1.34	<b>13</b> 0224 0.35 0859 1.69 TH 1515 0.35 2117 1.40	<b>14</b> 0300 0.34 0930 1.66 FR 1541 0.34 ☉ 2150 1.45	<b>15</b> 0336 0.35 1000 1.61 SA 1605 0.33 2221 1.49	<b>16</b> 0411 0.39 1028 1.55 SU 1630 0.33 2252 1.52
<b>17</b> 0447 0.44 1056 1.46 MO 1654 0.35 2325 1.54	<b>18</b> 0525 0.51 1124 1.36 TU 1719 0.39 2359 1.53	<b>19</b> 0607 0.58 1155 1.26 WE 1746 0.44	<b>20</b> 0037 1.50 0656 0.65 TH 1230 1.15 1817 0.51	<b>21</b> 0122 1.45 0759 0.71 FR 1315 1.05 1856 0.58	<b>22</b> 0222 1.41 0922 0.74 SA 1421 0.98 ☉ 1956 0.64	<b>23</b> 0343 1.41 1056 0.71 SU 1600 0.97 2128 0.66
<b>24</b> 0503 1.46 1203 0.62 MO 1729 1.04 2257 0.60	<b>25</b> 0608 1.56 1251 0.52 TU 1831 1.16	<b>26</b> 0005 0.50 0700 1.67 WE 1330 0.41 1922 1.29	<b>27</b> 0100 0.39 0745 1.76 TH 1407 0.31 2008 1.44	<b>28</b> 0150 0.29 0829 1.81 FR 1443 0.22 2053 1.58	<b>29</b> 0239 0.23 0911 1.80 SA 1518 0.17 ☉ 2137 1.70	<b>30</b> 0329 0.21 0952 1.74 SU 1555 0.15 2221 1.79



# Kids Corner

## Jokes

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

## Puzzle

Can you help the pirate get to the desert?



Puzzle from Kids Academy

# Queer events in Byron Shire this month

by Queer Family Inc



Queer Family has an incredible lineup of events coming your way. All are welcome to come along, make connections, find community, and have some fun.

### Rainbow Creatives Art Course – now, until 4 April

Let your creativity shine. Join us for six weeks of artistic exploration, running every Friday from 10 am – 3 pm, starting 28 February. Whether you are a seasoned artist or just love to experiment, this is a fantastic opportunity to express yourself in a supportive, queer-affirming space.

### Bush Walking Club – 22 March

Get outside and connect with nature (and fellow Queers) on our Bush Walking Club outings. These walks are a great way to enjoy the beauty of our region, get some fresh air, and meet new friends.

### Sprouts – 29 March

Our beloved Sprouts program, designed for Queer kids aged 8-12, and their families, runs every month. Join us for a day of fun, connection, and activities that celebrate the magic of growing up Queer, in a supportive and nurturing environment.

### Young Queerios – 29 March

Calling all Queer and questioning young people aged 12-24. Young Queerios is a space for self-expression, fun, and connection. Come along, take part in engaging activities, and find your people.

### Trans Day of Visibility – 29 March

Join us for a huge celebration of trans pride, visibility, and resilience. This event is all about honouring our trans and gender-diverse community, uplifting voices, and fostering solidarity. Expect incredible art, performances, and community vibes.

Come along and be part of the Queer Family magic. For more info on all these events check out Queer Family's socials Instagram: @queerfamilyinc or Facebook: @queerfamilynorthernrivers. Tickets and info about events can be found at: [humanitix/QueerFamily](http://humanitix.com/QueerFamily)

*These events are possible by the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Program. This program is funded by Healthy North Coast through the North Coast PHN Program.*





# Welcome back to another fabulous year

by Nicky Greenlaw, Class Teacher, Byron Bay Public School



Pictured (left-right): Vice Captain Louis, Captain Jesse, Relieving Principal Ms Melissa Morris, Captain Nina, and Vice Captain Oliver.

Our new Relieving Principal Ms Melissa Morris welcomed students, parents and staff to the start of 2025. After a long summer break, students were excited to see their classmates and there were smiles all round as we dived headfirst

into the year with the Swimming Carnival at Byron Memorial Pool on day two of the term. House Captains encouraged their teammates to participate in events, competing for house points with loud, enthusiastic war cries resonating around the poolside.

School Captains, Nina and Jesse, and Vice Captains, Louis and Oliver, stepped into their roles with confidence as they led the first school assembly of 2025. This year's Kindergarten cohort is already settling happily into new routines and Yr6 students are demonstrating responsibility as they help to make the school experience a happy one for

their Kindergarten buddies.

Our Senior School Choir is looking forward to performing at Sydney Opera House in August after learning that they had been successful with their audition tape sent in at the end of last year. They have a busy few months of rehearsals ahead of them to ensure they will be performance ready and fully able to enjoy this wonderful opportunity. The Choir will also be participating in The North Coast Compass Festival at Coffs Harbour in June.

2025 promises to be another fabulous year of fun and learning at Byron Bay Public School.

# A mural that connects us to Country

by Tony Cross, Principal, Byron Community Primary School



Byron Community Primary School (BCPS) has always held a deep commitment to reconciliation and honouring the traditional custodians of this land. This dedication is now visually represented in a new mural that has transformed our school space. Inspired by the works of renowned

Gumbaynggirr/Bundjalung artist Otis Hope Carey, this artwork stands as a powerful acknowledgment of connection to Country and the importance of cultural storytelling.

Carey, a celebrated contemporary artist and professional surfer, has dedicated his practice to expressing the spiritual and totemic identity of the Gumbaynggirr people through bold, flowing linework. His signature style reflects tidal movements, ceremonial dances, and the healing spirit of the ocean – Gaagal. His series *Ngiinda Darrundang Gaagal, I Thank The Ocean*, has been the foundation for the mural, drawing from traditional symbols of dance, waterways, and the life-giving connection between land and sea.

The mural, painted with vibrant energy and intention, symbolises the flow of rivers into the ocean, the spiritual significance of sacred fishing spots, and the gratitude the Gumbaynggirr people hold for Gaagal. Layers of interconnected shapes and sweeping lines evoke movement and storytelling, just as Carey's works do. For our school

community, this piece is a reminder of our place within this landscape and our responsibility to respect and nurture it.

At BCPS, reconciliation is not just a statement – it is embedded in our everyday actions, learning experiences, and relationships. We are proud of our strong ties with local custodians and our ongoing commitment to truth-telling, cultural respect, and learning from First Nations knowledge. The mural is more than just art; it is a living expression of these values, an invitation for all who see it to reflect, appreciate, and connect. We invite the community to take a moment to stand before the mural, to listen, and to learn. Let this artwork serve as a continual reminder of the land we stand on, the histories we honour, and the future we are building together.

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## International Women’s Day

International Women’s Day (IWD), held annually on 8 March, is a global day of recognition and action, celebrating the achievements of women while acknowledging the ongoing fight for gender equality.

Under the UN Women’s theme, *For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.*, IWD 2025 calls for action to unlock equal rights, power, and opportunities for all. This year’s focus highlights the importance of empowering young women and girls as catalysts for lasting change, urging leaders, businesses, and communities to invest in a future where no one is left behind. Use the hashtag #ForAllWomenAndGirls to join the conversation and inspire action for IWD.

As part of the local IWD celebrations, the Northern Rivers Community Foundation (NRCF) is hosting its annual Women’s Giving Circle: International Women’s Day event on Friday 14 March, at Frida’s Field. The event will feature a panel of inspiring changemakers discussing the power of storytelling in driving progress.

- Annabelle Hickson (Galah Press) – championing rural storytelling and media innovation.
- Mindy Woods (Karkalla on Country) – a proud Bundjalung woman and restaurateur, advocating for First Nations culture through food.
- Tarla Lambert-Patel (Women’s Agenda) – a journalist and advocate for gender equity in media.
- Odette Barry (Odette & Co.) – a PR strategist dedicated to amplifying women’s voices.

Guests will enjoy a shared seasonal lunch made with local produce and drinks, available for purchase. The event also supports NRCF’s Women’s Giving Circle, which funds initiatives empowering women and girls across the Northern Rivers.

For more information or to book a ticket, visit NRCF’s website: [nrcf.org.au/womens-giving-circle/](http://nrcf.org.au/womens-giving-circle/)

## World’s Greatest Shave this March

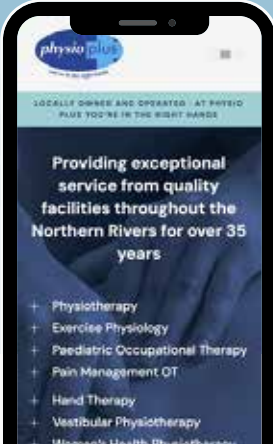


Source: Worlds Greatest Shave.

The Leukaemia Foundation’s World’s Greatest Shave is back this March, inviting Australians to shave, cut, or colour their hair to support those affected by blood cancer. With 53 Australians diagnosed daily and 17 lives lost each day, the need for support and research is critical. Participants can choose to shave their heads, opt for a new haircut, or add a splash of colour, turning their personal transformations into powerful statements of solidarity. Funds raised provide essential services for families and fuel vital research initiatives.

The Leukaemia Foundation is working towards a goal of zero lives lost to blood cancer by 2035, by offering wraparound health services, powered by a team of trained healthcare professionals who provide emotional and practical support, and funding leading-edge research for life-saving new treatments. The event has also partnered with Sustainable Salons to repurpose donated hair. Longer ponytails may be crafted into wigs for cancer patients, while shorter clippings are transformed into compost or used in environmental projects like oil spill clean-ups.

To participate, sign up on the official website, set your fundraising goal, and schedule your event. While March is the primary month for the campaign, you can choose a date that suits you. For more information or to register, visit the website: [worldgreatestshave.com](http://worldgreatestshave.com)





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## Climate Conversations awarded to Karla Dickens



Pictured: Karla Dickens, photo by Michelle Eabry. Image courtesy the artist and Lone Goat Gallery.

Byron Shire Council has announced local Indigenous artist Karla Dickens as the recipient of this year's Climate Conversations commission, awarding her \$5,000 for her project *Rise and Fall*.

Climate Conversations is a biennial creative initiative that invites Northern Rivers artists to collaborate with the community and explore ways to adapt, re-organise, and evolve in the face of climate change. The 2025 theme, *Rising*, calls on artists to reflect on resilience, action, and shared responsibility.

'We received a number of excellent applications that were engaging, thought provoking and innovative,' Byron Shire Council's Gallerist, Sarah Harvey, said. 'Given the urgency of

our climate situation, it is very encouraging to see so many artists exploring ideas around climate change to generate these important conversations.'

As a Wiradjuri woman who has lived on Bundjalung country for many years Karla explores climate catastrophe from a First Nations' perspective and through her own lived experience. Using large-scale installations, she conveys the urgent ideas of what it means to fight for survival and change, where shared responsibility for action is crucial.

'We are very excited to have this project coming to Council's Lone Goat Gallery in Byron Bay and the opportunity to work with Karla, who is a nationally recognised artist,' said Ms Harvey.

As part of the project, the gallery will present a series of events, talks and workshops to help generate deeper conversations and immersive experiences, highlighting the growing sense of urgency and consciousness to meet climate challenges.

*Rise and Fall* by Karla Dickens, curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, and presented by Bondi Pavilion, was proudly commissioned by Waverley Council. The exhibition will be reimaged for Climate Conversations 2025 and presented at Lone Goat Gallery in July 2025. Karla is represented by STATION Gallery. For more information on this project and events email: [lonegoatgallery@byron.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lonegoatgallery@byron.nsw.gov.au)

## Fundraiser for *A Midsummer Night's Queen*

by Drill Hall Theatre



Pictured (left-right): Rees Laird, Michael Sharmon, and Tia Nelson. Source: Carlos West.

### Support local arts

Byron Bay's vibrant arts scene is gearing up for a special fundraiser on 28 March, supporting the much-anticipated musical *A Midsummer Night's Queen*.

Inspired by William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, this innovative production celebrates LGBTQ+

culture within the Northern Rivers and is the brainchild of local playwright Michael Sharmon. Known for his works showcased at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, including *Auditions* and *Arabian Dreams*, Sharmon brings a fresh perspective to this classic tale.

The enthusiasm for *A Midsummer Night's Queen* was palpable during the Tropical Fruits New Year's Eve party, where two original songs from the musical debuted to acclaim.

The upcoming fundraiser at the beloved Drill Hall is more than just a means to raise funds; it's an opportunity to unite and support the arts meaningfully.

The event promises to be a celebration of community and creativity, essential for the continued success of local cultural initiatives. The cabaret

spectacular will feature dance and music, including several numbers from *A Midsummer Night's Queen*, offering audiences a sneak peek before the show premieres in September.

Additionally, the Drill Hall is preparing for *Ghosting The Party*, an Australian play directed by Liz Chance, set to open in September, adding another layer of excitement to our dynamic arts offerings.

Join us on 28 March to support the development of *A Midsummer Night's Queen* and celebrate the rich tapestry of arts that Byron Shire offers. Your attendance will help bring this musical to life and ensure that our local arts scene continues to flourish.

For more information and to book tickets, visit: [drillhalltheatre.org.au/](http://drillhalltheatre.org.au/)



## A day in the life of a veterinarian

by North Coast Veterinary Services

Being a veterinarian is more than just a job – it's a passion, a calling, and sometimes, a whirlwind of challenges and rewards. Every day is different, filled with unexpected cases, joyful reunions, and difficult decisions. Here's a look at what a typical day in the life of a vet might involve.

### Morning: the day begins

The clinic doors open early, but the vet's day starts even earlier. Before the first appointment, there's a quick review of the day's schedule—routine check-ups, vaccinations, surgeries, and the inevitable emergency cases that always seem to arise. Often farm animals will have been seen before the clinic even opens.

The first patients of the day are often wellness visits—puppies and kittens getting their first vaccinations or older pets coming in for health checks. These visits are a chance to educate pet owners about preventive care, nutrition, and behaviour. It's also an opportunity to build relationships with clients and their pets, which is one of the most rewarding parts of the job. Usually there is also a surprise case, where a patient needs to be admitted to hospital for urgent care or procedures to make a diagnosis of why they are so sick.

### Mid-morning: surgery time

Once consultations wrap up, it's time to head to the surgery room. Routine procedures like desexing (spaying and neutering) are common, but some days bring more complex surgeries—tumor removals, orthopedic repairs, or emergency procedures like removing an ingested foreign object. Surgical work requires precision, teamwork, and the ability to stay calm under pressure. Every animal under anesthesia is closely monitored, ensuring their safety throughout the procedure. Once surgery is complete, the recovery team ensures the pet wakes up comfortably while post-operative care instructions are prepared for the owner.

### Lunchtime: or not

In theory, there's a break for lunch, but in reality, emergencies don't follow a schedule. A dog hit by a car, a cat struggling to breathe, or a snake-bitten pet might arrive at any moment. When an emergency case comes in, the vet team jumps into action, stabilising the patient, running tests, and determining the best course of treatment.

### Afternoon: more consultations and follow-ups

The afternoon is often a mix of scheduled appointments and afternoon emergencies. These might include itchy dogs needing allergy treatment, senior pets showing signs of arthritis, or pets with chronic conditions like diabetes or kidney disease that require ongoing management.

There are also follow-ups with pets recovering from surgery or illness. Checking a dog's progress after a cruciate ligament surgery or adjusting a cat's thyroid medication is part of ensuring long-term health. Between consultations, phone calls with pet owners, reviewing lab results, and answering emails take up any free moments.

### Evening: wrapping up the day

As the clinic winds down, there's time to check on hospitalised patients, ensuring they're comfortable and stable overnight. Notes and medical records are updated, and the team discusses any cases that need further attention the next day. But even after the clinic doors close, the job isn't always over. Some vets are on call for after-hours emergencies, meaning a late-night trip back to the clinic isn't out of the question.

### More than just a job

Being a vet is emotionally demanding, physically exhausting, and requires a deep commitment to animal welfare. But despite the long hours and tough cases, it's also incredibly rewarding. Every wagging tail, purring pussycat, grateful owner, and saved life makes it all worthwhile.

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## Low gentle flames and the crackle of tussock grass

By Dr Anne Stuart, Chair, Zero Emissions Byron



*Pictured (left-right): Bundjalung man Oliver Costello, and Bundjalung and Nyangbal man Marcus Ferguson, Koonyum Range, 2023. Source: Julie Ryan.*

To watch the low gentle flames and listen to the crackle of the tussock grass as it ignites and quickly dies, to know and watch the animals escape, and the insects jump to higher ground, is to witness the re-introduction of traditional Indigenous cultural burning into contemporary land management strategies. Indigenous cultural fire practices in Australia have been used by Aboriginal peoples for thousands of years, passed down orally through generations and deeply connected to environmental stewardship. Cool fire helps maintain habitats for native plants and animals and reduces fuel

loads, lowering the risk of catastrophic wildfires. The ash from controlled burns replenishes nutrients in the soil.

Yet, when wildfires take hold these fires release large amounts of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide – all potent greenhouse gases. Forests act as carbon sinks by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. When forests are destroyed, their ability to sequester carbon is lost until the vegetation regrows.

Fire has always been part of Australia, but what that means has been upended since 1788. The practices of Australia's First Peoples were ignored. Under their stewardship, burning was done when conditions were good for low-intensity fire, creating a mosaic-like patchwork, carefully timed to reduce fuel loads, regenerate native plants, and create pathways for animals. In the Byron Bay region of New South Wales, Indigenous cultural burning continues to shape our ecosystems, including open eucalyptus and paperbark forests, grasslands, and heathlands. These landscapes provide habitats for threatened and fire-dependent species. As we saw with the climate change induced mega-fires in Los Angeles, wildfires are increasingly

interacting with humans and the things we value. What Indigenous people did before 1788 changed when European settlers arrived. Unfamiliar with the Australian environment, they viewed fire as destructive rather than as a tool. The result was the accumulation of fuel loads in forests, leading to more intense and destructive wildfires.

Today, traditional fire management in northern Australia by the Yolnu and Ganggalidda people focuses on early dry-season burns to maintain open woodlands and grasslands. In southeast Australia the Gunditjmarra people combine fire practice with aquaculture, using fire to clear vegetation around the ancient stone eel traps of Lake Condah. In building local knowledge of landscapes with our Indigenous communities, Zero Emissions Byron, Jagun Alliance Aboriginal Corporation and Byron Shire Council have created a successful program over several years for landholders to develop a Good Fire Plan for their property.

Interested landholders can register an EOI to Reinstate Good Fire for Country on the Byron Shire Council website or for more information, email: [landuse@zerobyron.org](mailto:landuse@zerobyron.org)

## Asbestos – from miracle to menace

by Karen Rudkin, NE Waste

Australia has a long and complicated history with asbestos dating back to the early 1900s when it became known as the 'miracle mineral'. This was thanks to its remarkable heat and fire resistance, durability, and low cost, resulting in its use in many building materials including roofing, wall and floor sheeting, plumbing, fencing, guttering, insulation, decorative coatings, lino and much more. It was discovered in its natural form in Australia in the 1930s and mined in WA and NSW. Those mine and mill workers, who, having been exposed to high levels of airborne asbestos fibres, later experienced the first wave of asbestos related diseases. From the 1940s to 1980s, asbestos use grew, eventually making Australia the highest consumer of asbestos per capita, in the world.

Despite the dangers of inhaling asbestos fibres being known since the 1950s, regulations to control its use only began in the late 1970s. A nationwide ban took effect in December 2003, making it illegal to make, use, sell or import asbestos into Australia. The problem we continue to face, is in dealing

safely with the enormous legacy of asbestos from these past construction practices. Safework NSW estimates one in three homes still contain asbestos and if your house was built before 1990, it's likely to be present somewhere.

Spotting asbestos is near impossible for the average householder. Laboratory testing is the only way to be sure. If you're looking to renovate, planning is essential to keep safe and avoid delays and unexpected costs. Start by contacting a licenced asbestos professional if you aren't trained to locate, manage, or remove it yourself. As part of an ongoing regional scheme aimed at reducing the unsafe removal of asbestos by homeowners, Byron Shire Council offers subsidised household asbestos testing kits. Results are sent directly to homeowners. If asbestos is identified and requires removal, residents are urged to use a licenced removal contractor.

For further information on household testing kits, contact Byron Council on ph: 6626 7000 or visit: [byron.nsw.gov.au/Services/Waste-and-recycling](http://byron.nsw.gov.au/Services/Waste-and-recycling). For information on all aspects of asbestos safety, visit: [asbestos.nsw.gov.au](http://asbestos.nsw.gov.au)

## Byron Bay Pickleball Club

by the BBPC Committee



Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the world. Often described as a hybrid of tennis, badminton, squash, and table tennis, pickleball's accessibility is one of the key factors driving its growth.

The rules of pickleball are simple and easy to learn, making it a great sport for people of all ages and skill levels.

- Hit the serve underarm from the baseline into the diagonal square on the opposite side of the court.
- The serve must land outside the kitchen (which is the area 2m from the central net on each side).

- The ball must bounce once on each side at the start of play. All shots must land within the court's external lines.
- You cannot hit the ball on the full (volley or smash), in the kitchen, but you can step into the kitchen if the ball bounces first.
- Continue to serve until you lose the point.

BBPC run three weekly social sessions at the Cavanbah Sports Centre. (Monday and Thursday nights 5:30pm – 7:30pm and Saturday mornings 9am–11am).

We welcome new players to try our sport in a friendly environment, with instruction and gear provided.

For more advanced players, we are currently running a Wednesday night mixed doubles competition, with an autumn comp just started.

For players wanting to improve their game, coaching clinics are available for BBPC members.

BBPC is a not-for-profit community sports club, reliant on our committee and members' ongoing support. We are always looking for volunteers to help organise and set up our play sessions. Please speak to any committee members if you would like to get involved at any level.

Huge thanks go to our generous sponsors, McGraths and HumpyCo, whose support has allowed us to purchase vital equipment and merchandise. Your contributions have made a significant impact and we are grateful for your belief in the BBPC and its potential.

## Northern Rivers Revolt 2025



Source: Richard Tompsett.

The high-speed, hard-hitting action of roller derby is set to take over Byron Bay once again as the Northern Rivers Revolt 2025 tournament rolls into town on 22–23 March at The Cavanbah Centre. Now in its fifth year, the tournament promises two full days of adrenaline-fuelled competition, with teams from across Australia and New Zealand battling it out for glory.

Hosted by Tweed Valley Rollers (TVR) and Northern Rivers Roller Derby (NRRD), the event will feature a round-robin format, with each team playing five games across the

weekend. Games will consist of two 20-minute halves with a five-minute halftime break. Matches kick off at 9am, running hourly, with a one-hour lunch break at 1pm each day.

One of the highlights of the weekend will be the Open Gender Game on Sunday 23 March, where teams of skaters, of all gender identities not already participating in a team at Revolt, will take to the track for fast-paced rounds of derby.

Last year's tournament saw The Red Kennedys from Brisbane City Rollers claim their third consecutive title in a nail-biting final. With teams from across New South Wales, Queensland, and beyond expected to return, the competition is set to be fiercer than ever.

Spectators can catch all the action for just \$5 per day, with kids under 13 encouraged to donate a gold coin for entry. Tickets and merch will be available at the door (cash and card) with all profits from entry going to Kids In Need charity.

For the latest updates and team announcements, head to Northern Rivers Revolt's Facebook: /NorthernRiversRevolt





## Double up or double down?

with Billy Bob Thoughtson



There's something about doubling-up that we just can't seem to resist, we love to double-up, in all facets of life, and sometimes it just happens naturally. In a whirlwind day, you wake up and do a double-take as you check your wrinkles in the mirror and oh s\*\*t, look at the time – you're late for an important meeting.

As you scramble to get ready, you experience double-vision, it's just too early to be awake. Then, at work, you're faced with a double-edged sword: your project is praised, but others criticise its flaws. During lunch, you get hit with a double whammy – your boss calls to dazzle you with a double entendre, then you find out you've been double-booked and booked for double parking. By the end of the day, you're fed up with having to double-back on everything.

Speaking of doubling back, let's talk about lunch. When we eat, we're often doubling-up. For example, double espresso, double-decker cheeseburgers, followed by double cream cheesecake. Then at corporate or family events, there is the insidious world of double-dipping. Who could forget that scene in *Seinfeld* when George is at a wake and he takes a corn chip, dips it in the dip, takes a bite, and then dips the same corn chip again? A guy at the wake calls him out and George tries to explain it away, but the more he doubles-down, the worse it gets.

Donald Trump is the undisputed guru of the double-down. It's his signature move: never backing down, no matter how controversial the situation. I'd wager that at his fancy inauguration dinner, he double-dipped the Mexican salsa, and if called out, he would have denied it or maybe he built a wall of double-crunch corn chips to hide his *faux pas*. But here's the real double whammy of irony: while indulging in a cultural dish that is celebrated across the world, he was also pushing policies that targeted the very people behind it. When Donald goes to work, it's all about the double-down, mixed with double-standards, double-talk, double-bluffs. It's a whole lot of double trouble if you're in the firing line – because with him, everything's in twos (including his face), except the facts and accountability. Imagine, if he received a lifetime ban from the snack table for double-dipping. He would likely declare the snack table a disaster without him, suggest the dip was interfered with, or start his own brand of salsa 'Tremendous Dip' or 'Deportation Dip'.

I do think it's funny that when we talk to each other, we don't just say things once – we say them again and sometimes

again, just to be sure. We say things like step-by-step, or bit-by-bit. This kind of linguistic echo isn't just a habit; it's a deep-seated instinct, a rhythmic pull that makes language stick. It's why we love a good sing-song, a wishy-washy excuse, or a super-duper deal. If one word can do the job, two words can do it better, right?

This doubling phenomenon comes in many forms, the most charming being reduplication – those delightful repeated words that make language sound playful, musical, or just plain fun. We see it in exact reduplication, where the word stays the same (bye-bye, night-night, choo-choo, poo-poo, and wee-wee) and ablaut reduplication, where the vowel shifts (zig-zag, flip-flop, criss-cross, chit-chat). There's even schmreduplication, that Yiddish-inspired twist that lets us mock or downplay a word – fancy-schmancy, logic-schmologic, editor-schmeditor. It's language at its cheekiest, a way to play with meaning while keeping things light.

But not all doubling-up is effective – sometimes it's just plain redundant so enter the world of tautologies, where we repeat ideas unnecessarily. Rex Mossop, the legendary Australian rugby league commentator, was famous for his unintentional tautologies and mangled phrases. He once said, 'They've kicked the ball too early in the tackle count and, in my opinion, that was a premature kick.' His tautologies only made his commentary more entertaining. But there are plenty of world famous tautologies out there like 'It ain't over, till it's over'. This phrase is redundant in meaning, but became iconic for emphasising persistence in sports and life. Another well-known example, 'It is what it is', is often used to shrug off criticism or an unavoidable situation. Both phrases have stuck in popular culture because they sound profound while saying something self-evident. Then we have the 'free gift'. Isn't a gift always free? Then there is past history, as opposed to future history, and don't get me started on close proximity. It's as if we don't trust words to carry their own weight, so we double up for security.

Sometimes doubling-up just feels right. After all, language loves a little razzle-dazzle. However, be warned, doubling-up (or down) isn't always a good thing – sometimes, it lands you in double trouble, or worse, double jeopardy. That's right even legal language gets in on the act – null and void, cease and desist, will and testament – because in a courtroom, redundancy serves a purpose. Some crimes may not land you in court, but they still come with consequences. Take double dipping, a social offence that won't trigger double jeopardy protections, but could get you a lifetime ban from the snack table. That's when the serial double dippers (like Donald, George et al) hopefully, get caught red-handed, maybe mid-scoop, with every eye at the party watching. No retrial, no appeal – just the swift, undeniable judgment from the court of public opinion.

Sometimes, doubling-up comes at double the cost.



# This Month

with Milt Barlow

## At the movies

March brings quite an eclectic range of movies to the cinema, with something for everyone. Opening 3 March is *Mickey 17*. This sci-fi flick is directed by Bong Joon Ho (*Parasite*) and has an all-star cast of Robert Pattinson, Toni Collette and Mark Ruffalo. The story tells of 'expendable' people who are sent on the most dangerous, even suicidal, jobs. When an expendable dies, a new body is regenerated with most of the memories intact. It's a good watch with plenty of action.

It's been a while since I've watched a good Aussie comedy at the movies, so it's great to see *Spit* (6 March) has turned up for a few laughs. When ex-junkie, Johnny (Spit) Spiteri comes back to Australia on a false passport, he is quickly locked up in an Immigration Detention Centre. But this is the least of his troubles as gangsters, Chicka Martin and Arne Deviers, are hot on his trail. David Wenham is excellent in the lead role with great support from Gary Sweet and David Field. An Oscar winner it's not, but it's a fun way to take a 90 minute break.

The big movie of the month is *The Alto Knights* (20 March). If you want to make a top gangster movie who are you going to ask to play the lead role? Robert De Niro, of course. Based on a true story, and masterfully directed by Barry Levinson, De

Niro plays a dual role as 1950s' mob bosses Vito Genovese and Frank Costello. As you would expect, it's non-stop Mafia violence – I lost count of the number of killings. Don't wait for this to come to streaming - go see it on the big screen.

## On the couch

My favourite watch for the month would have to be *Apple Cider Vinegar* (Netflix). Based on the book *The Woman Who Fooled the World*, this true story follows the Australian wellness guru Belle Gibson who, using social media, cons the world with her fake cancer diagnosis and uses her platform to promote alternative medicine as the cure for all. The series is beautifully produced, and you can see why in its opening release it was No.1 on Netflix. American actress Kaitlyn Denver nails the Aussie accent in the lead role with a great supporting cast. The six-part series was all filmed in Australia and it was cool to see Netflix had taken out huge billboards in New York's Times Square and on Sunset Boulevard in LA to promote it.

The other big watch for the month is *White Lotus*, Season 3 (Binge). Everyone loves this series, and the new season does not disappoint. The only downside is Binge drops an episode a week which is a pain for those of us who like to do the whole lot over a weekend. This time around, the show is set at a luxury resort in Thailand with, as you would expect, intrigue and plot twists all over the place.

# Book review

by Jenny Dowell



## Places That Inspire – Far North Coast Stories of Remnant Forest, Swamp, and Heath by Jo Kijas, Robyn Braithwaite, and Rob Garbutt

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

This beautiful book published by Richmond River Historical Society (RRHS), consists of four stories of significant, but sometimes overlooked places, in our region and the people who have been instrumental in their protection and conservation. Originally conceived as a book connecting historical objects from the RRHS Museum with local stories, the 2022 Lismore floods reshaped the project. The result is a powerful collection of stories highlighting key figures and places—from Marj Henderson's fight to protect the heathlands of Evans Head, to Rosemary Joseph's work restoring Lismore's Rotary Park, and the ongoing challenges facing Tuckean Swamp.

Featuring poetry by Bundjalung woman Kylie Caldwell, and cover art by Beki Davies, this book is as much about connection and resilience as it is about conservation. The author biographies, photos, drawings, endnotes, and index are as detailed as you would expect from the high calibre of other RRHS publications. A must-read for locals and nature lovers alike.

# Tricky Trivia

## IWD edition

1. Which two revolutions were started by women's marches?
2. Marie Curie was the first woman to win the Nobel Prize. But what year did she win?
3. Who was the first woman elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?
4. Who was the first woman to go into space?
5. Who wrote the classic gothic novel, *Frankenstein*?
6. Which country was the first to give women the formal right to vote and in what year?
7. What country had the first female leader?
8. Jane Austen's most famous novels include *Pride and Prejudice*, *Persuasion*, and....
9. Who was the first woman to receive EGOT status (winner of an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony)?
10. Simone Biles is the most decorated athlete in which sport?





# March crossword

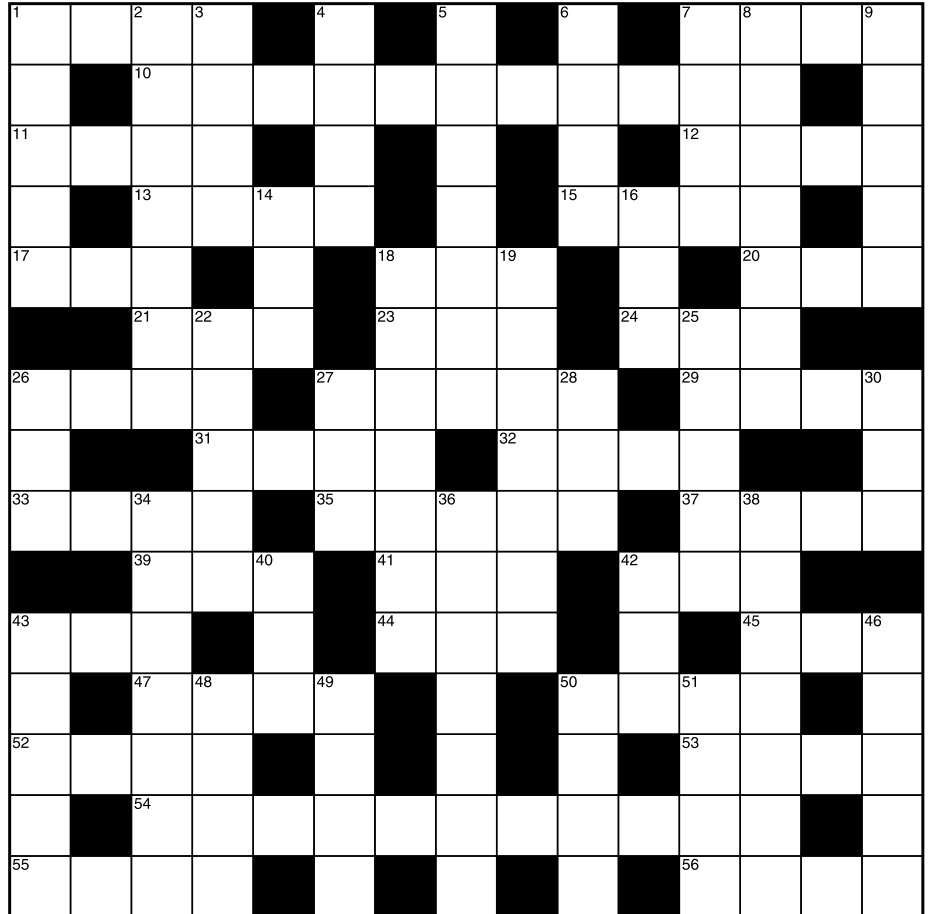
© Lovatts Puzzles

### Across

- 1. Harbour work boats
- 7. Birthday greeting
- 10. Gallopers' tracks
- 11. Astronaut, ... Shepard
- 12. Actor, ... Ifans
- 13. Sweat droplet
- 15. Strike with head
- 17. Capture (criminal)
- 18. Took cover
- 20. River, ... Grande
- 21. Hearing organ
- 23. Alien craft (1,1,1)
- 24. Lamb's bleat
- 26. Auction offers
- 27. Wipe the dishes (3,2)
- 29. Fitness clubs
- 31. Stretched firm
- 32. Char
- 33. Unemployment pay
- 35. Hunker down (3,2)
- 37. Every single
- 39. Form a curve
- 41. French no
- 42. Male or female
- 43. Muppets creator, ... Henson
- 44. Practical joke
- 45. Sphere
- 47. Liver paste food
- 50. Tumble
- 52. Chamber
- 53. Exude
- 54. Sight-tester
- 55. Wrongdoings
- 56. Sleigh

### Down

- 1. Coach (team)
- 2. Snatched
- 3. Logically thought-out
- 4. Indecent
- 5. Appal
- 6. Dirty child
- 7. Sure-fire thing
- 8. Smoker's receptacle
- 9. 70s dance music
- 14. Voice publicly
- 16. Computer port type (1,1,1)
- 18. Inflicting pain
- 19. Extinguishing
- 22. Daisy-like flower
- 25. Go along (with)
- 26. Awful



- 27. Worthless
- 28. Writing tool
- 30. Fah, ..., lah
- 34. Send-up
- 36. Small pointy beards
- 38. Salamander
- 40. Bed

- 42. Therapeutic water tub
- 43. Sudden movements
- 46. Haemorrhage
- 48. Sound boosters
- 49. Greek Cupid
- 50. Golfer's warning
- 51. Profit or ...



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# Crossword solution

February

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

# Trivia answers

IWD edition

1. French and Russian - With the Russian revolution starting on International Women's Day
2. 1903
3. Aretha Franklin
4. Valentina Tereshkova
5. Mary Shelley
6. New Zealand in 1863
7. Sri Lanka
8. *Emma*
9. Helen Hayes
10. Gymnastics

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# KIMBERLY HONE

**THE NATIONALS** for *Richmond* 

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







## Horoscopes

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



### Aries

Venus retrograde from the 3rd will bring a retrospective quality this March. You may even be tempted to make choices based on nostalgia alone, so be prepared to push forward towards the new as a fresh daily routine begins mid-month. Try to have key paperwork signed before then.



### Taurus

You'll appreciate the chance to revitalise your social life and personal life - and even which organisations you associate with, to create more variety and spice. You may be drawn to out of the ordinary activities, and will appreciate the change of pace, but must maintain a sense of direction.



### Gemini

As Jupiter gains pace in Gemini, your energy levels will improve, but you must avoid distractions. Remain clear about your goals. You may go over old ground in your career and direction, so you'll need to pay extra attention to your long-term goals. Finances could improve so be positive.



### Cancer

This is an excellent month to make things happen, both in your career and love life. This is one of your best months in your romantic life - as long as you take the initiative. You must be prepared to let the past go as otherwise this month could be frustrating as feelings of being stuck increase.



### Leo

Be prepared to make a commitment to a fresh agreement or person. The lunar eclipse on the 14th encourages you to take a fresh look at your finances. For some Leos, developments will allow you to move forward from past financial circumstances, so be innovative, but be sure to obtain advice.



### Virgo

The total lunar eclipse on the 14th will be in Virgo and signals a fresh chapter in your personal life. You may find a situation that appears to be fated needs to be acted upon, but you must be your usual circumspect self to remain grounded. It's a month of new beginnings, so choose wisely.



### Libra

You'll gain the chance to enter fresh territory, especially at work and health-wise. The lunar eclipse on the 14th will spotlight aspects of your work and health you are ready to leave behind, and the solar eclipse on the 29th will encourage fresh growth, even if a degree of upheaval is involved.



### Scorpio

You'll gain the opportunity to enter fresh and even ideal-looking circumstances in your personal life, so if you're single, be sure to socialise, and couples find excellent ways to deepen your relationship, especially from the 14th. It's a passionate time, so be sure to maintain perspective.



### Sagittarius

Domestic, property and family matters will be a focus in March, and you may find you need to go over old ground to gain momentum moving forward. It's an excellent time for discussions and contracts, but you must try to get agreements on the table before the 14th for best results.



### Capricorn

This is an eclipse month, which generally opens doors. In the process, some doors will close. For you, this will be principally in the areas of career, favourite activities and learning. As a result, you may be drawn to make changes at home, with family or property. Think long term and be positive.



### Aquarius

If 2025 has already brought change, be prepared to shift a little more now. The March eclipses will fall in your personal, financial and self-developmental zones, the message being that finances and income are important factors to focus on for now, and are a part of your self-development.



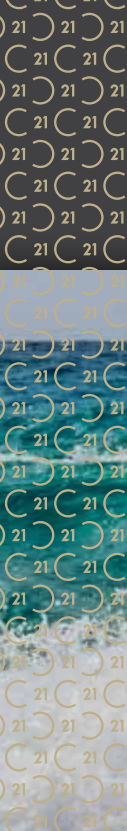
### Pisces

This month crystallises a fresh chapter which will focus attention on a seemingly predestined relationship. Be careful with communications and refresh financial and personal goals. The lunar eclipse on the 14th will spotlight long-term changes in your personal and collaborative priorities.

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