

the byron wave

thebyronwave.com.au

Community news for the Byron Shire

Issue 25 | December 2024

A photograph of Santa Claus, dressed in his traditional red and white suit, sitting on a motorized surfboard. The surfboard is yellow with red stripes and is mounted on a small motorized vehicle. Santa is on a sandy beach with waves in the background under a blue sky with light clouds.

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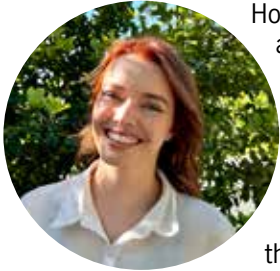


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from the editor

Dear Readers



How excited are you for Christmas and New Year? For me, this season of holiday sillies is my favourite. The long hot days tempered by dramatic summer storms, lounging on the beach, swimming, catching up with loved ones, and spending time with the kids, really makes it the most wonderful time of the year.

Having a rejuvenating break from work will be good too, and being able to finish little projects, books, and all the other things that didn't take priority this year.

After all the excitement of Santa arriving, feasting with family, and falling into a food coma on Christmas Day, we will be ushering in a New Year. In Chinese Zodiac, 2025 will be the Year of the Snake, and hopefully, it will prove to a year of transformation, wisdom, and opportunity. Last year, like many others, I set a resolution: to tick more things off my bucket list. While some items were done, like horse-riding, bull-riding, and become even more active in the community, the list still remains long. As such, my resolution for this year is the same.

During this reflective period, don't be too hard on yourself. Kindness goes a long way, and is worth more than all the ticked boxes in the world. Remember, we can't always live in the comfort zone – life is there for living. As we close off the year, I hope you'll take a moment to reflect on what it is you want out of 2025 – and go for it. Merry Christmas to everyone in this beautiful Shire.



See you next year
Charla Rallings, Editor.

Contact us

Got a story? Get in touch.
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Instagram: [@bernardrosacollection](https://www.instagram.com/bernardrosacollection)

Acknowledgement of Country

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

The fine print

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What: Bangalow Ceramics Market
When: Saturday 30 November – Sunday 1 December, 8am–3pm
Where: Moller Pavillion, Bangalow Showground

Clay Northern Rivers returns, showcasing 45 local potters and their handcrafted ceramics. Enjoy food, coffee, and locally grown flowers.
 For more info: [instagram/claynorthernrivers](https://www.instagram.com/claynorthernrivers)



What: Art Without Limits Showcase
When: Thursday 12 – Wednesday 18 December
Where: M-Arts Precints, Murwillumbah

For International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD), Art Without Limits showcases artists of all ages with disability backgrounds.
 For more info: socialfutures@ndis.gov.au
 Artisit credit (across): Riley Treloar.



What: Carols by Candlelight
When: Sunday 15 December, 6:30pm
Where: Mullumbimby Showgrounds

Sponsored by the Mullumbimby Chamber of Commerce, Carols by Candlelight is a free event, featuring local talent, and a special visit from a certain jolly fat man from the far north.
 For more info email: info@mullumbimby.org.au



What: Twilight Markets
When: Wednesday 18 December, 3pm–9pm
Where: Banner Park, Brunswick Heads

The Twilight Markets by the river is the perfect opportunity to buy all your Christmas presents locally, and have a bite to eat in one of the many cafes and restaurants adjoining the markets.
 For more info: [brunswickheads.org.au](https://www.brunswickheads.org.au)



What: Soul Street
When: New Years Eve, 31 December, 4pm
Where: Jonson Street and Dening Park

Soul Street is a free, zero-waste, family-friendly event with live music, performers, street dining, and kids' activities from 4pm–9pm.
 For more info visit: [byron.nsw.gov.au](https://www.byron.nsw.gov.au)



What: Exhibition: Merge
When: Until 11 January 2025.
Where: Lone Goat Gallery, Byron Bay

Artist Isobel Kingswell imagines the natural environment as an overlapping, intersecting and forceful phenomenon in her landscape works.
 For more info: [lonegoatgallery.com](https://www.lonegoatgallery.com)

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](https://www.visitbyronbay.com)

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Snapshot

Council's Annual Report

Byron Shire Council's 2023/2024 Annual Report is now accessible to the public online. Recording the Council's endeavours and progress over the past year, ending 30 June 2024, the Annual Report focuses on Council's implementation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. There were a total of 422 activities in the 2023/24 Operational Plan, following quarterly amendments made throughout the year, and a completion rate of 81.3% was achieved, a slight improvement from last year.

The report also highlights significant achievements, namely infrastructure projects, such as near-completion of Federal Drive's \$23 million reconstruction, substantial upgrades at Rifle Range Road intersection, and over \$54 million approved for ongoing flood repair initiatives. Additionally, \$641,433 in donations supported 79 local community organisations. The roll-out of the Dogs in Public Spaces Strategy and the launch of Mullumbimby's new dog park were also highlighted as community-engagement successes.

For the full report visit: byron.nsw.gov.au

Byron Bay Chamber of Commerce simply 'Outstanding'

The Byron Bay Chamber of Commerce (BBCC) has earned prestigious recognition at the NSW Business Awards, being named the Outstanding

Local Chamber from a pool of 218 local chambers across the State.

BBCC Vice President, J'aimee Skippon-Volke and Executive Officer, Izzy Durbin proudly accepted the award in Sydney, presented by Business NSW CEO Daniel Hunter, at the 30 October ceremony that celebrated excellence in business across NSW. BBCC stated that its winning approach reflects its commitment to understanding Byron Bay's unique business environment and is founded on three key pillars; advocacy, connection, and promotion. BBCC President Matt Williamson expressed pride in the award, stating, 'Being recognised as the Outstanding Local Chamber, among 218 other Chambers across NSW, is an honour. It validates the hard work we put into keeping Byron's business community strong, resilient, and heard. This is a win for all of us.'

Ironman's swift beach rescue serves as stark reminder



Two backpackers in Byron were recently caught in a dangerous situation and received an unexpected


rescue from Cooly Ironman Champion, Caine Eckstein. This close call highlights the importance of surf safety as the summer season begins. As Surf Life Saving NSW's active core of volunteer lifesavers returns to our beaches, beachgoers are reminded to be cautious, observe water safety advice from lifesavers or lifeguards, and to take responsibility for themselves and their families when heading to the coastline this summer.

Last year, from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, there were 61 coastal drownings in NSW – all of which occurred either outside patrol hours or at unpatrolled locations. On top of this, volunteer lifesavers performed 3,200 rescues, nearly a quarter of a million preventative actions, and over 11,000 first aids.

Minister for Emergency Services, Jihad Dib said, 'Our volunteer lifesavers do an incredible job, and people need to do their bit by swimming in patrolled areas during patrol hours – no matter how strong a swimmer you consider yourself to be.'

Bolstered by funding from the NSW Government, lifesavers across the state have been equipped with new rescue gear and vessels, backed by a fresh government-led water safety campaign.

The volunteer Surf Patrol season runs until 27 April 2025.





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Historic Byron Bay site gets new lease on life



Pictured left (left-right): Tamara Smith MP; Byron Shire Mayor, Sarah Ndiaye; Hon Justine Elliot MP; The Hon Ben Franklin, MLC, President of the Legislative Council, Parliament of NSW; Social Futures CEO Tony Davies. Pictured right: Wordsworth Street Main Entrance and Café Terrace, Byron CoLab on Arakwal Country. Source: Supplied.

Byron Bay’s cherished former hospital site has entered a new era as Byron CoLab on Arakwal Country, officially welcoming the community into this revitalised space. Managed by Social Futures, the CoLab now offers a vibrant mix of community and commercial co-working spaces, along with tenancies aimed at supporting positive social change in the region.

CEO of Social Futures, Tony Davies, praised the collaborative effort behind the project, saying, ‘Over many years, dedicated

local community members have collaborated alongside Byron Shire Council and Social Futures, pouring their heart and soul into the vision for this project. We are excited to see it come to fruition, and for all that its future holds in helping to build an ever stronger and more vibrant Byron Bay.’

Mayor Sarah Ndiaye echoed the sentiment, highlighting the community’s commitment to retaining the hospital site for public benefit. The space is already bustling with activity. Byron Community College will offer accessible local courses, including First Aid and Tech Savvy Seniors with CEO Anne Stovin expressing pride in the CoLab’s shared mission, stating that there is now greater access to education and lifelong learning for Byron residents.

More features like micro-offices available for short-term lease, a Yarning Circle honouring local heritage, and bike hire options, add unique community-oriented amenities. With about 35% of the commercial space leased and additional interest growing, Byron CoLab on Arakwal Country is set to become a cornerstone for Byron Bay’s future.

For more details visit: socialfutures.org.au/service/byroncolab/ or email: bcoacreception@socialfutures.org.au

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Happy 2nd Birthday to *The Byron Wave*



A message from the Publisher CEO of Northern Rivers Media, Milt Barlow

Where did those two years go?

In launching *The Byron Wave* in 2022, our aim was to replicate the style and community connection of *The Lennox Wave* – now in its 21st year. Northern Rivers Media purchased *The Lennox Wave* in early 2021, and we believed the community DNA, which ensured the publication’s success for 18 years, would be welcomed by the Ballina Shire through *The Ballina Wave* – now in its 3rd year. From there, we set our sights on Byron Shire, and I am delighted to share *The Byron Wave*’s 2nd birthday with our readers, contributors, and advertisers.

As with all of our *Waves*, *The Byron Wave* has only one focus – the Byron Shire community. Each month we bring together the communities of Byron Bay, Suffolk Park, Brunswick Heads, Mullumbimby, Bangalow, Ocean Shores – and everywhere

in-between – to share their unique stories, achievements and community news. While we do offer space to the Shire’s Councillors and Local Members of Parliament, we believe in keeping the focus on our community and the issues that matter, without engaging in council-bashing, unchecked rants, and inflammatory or overly politicised commentary. Our goal is to provide a space for thoughtful perspectives and open discussions that respect the many diverse viewpoints in our community, encouraging solutions over conflict. In a world of never ending ‘digital noise’, high quality community print media is as strong as ever.

Although known far and wide for its iconic mix of hippies, surfers, and alternative lifestyles, Byron Shire is more than this stereotype. Beyond our cherished postcard-perfect landscapes, lies one of the most vibrant and interconnected communities in Australia – home to artists, environmental advocates, local families and incredible community groups – all working together with an entrepreneurial spirit to preserve the area’s unique local identity and culture, fostering a true sense of belonging.

The Byron Wave would not exist without the backing of our valued contributors, our advertisers, and you, our readers. Thank you for all your support. My thanks also goes out to our wonderful *The Byron Wave* Editor, Charla Rallings, who’s never-ending enthusiasm and skill delivers the core of Byron Shire’s community into your hands each month. Thank you, Charla.

We look forward to celebrating many more birthdays with you in this fabulous community.

Justine Elliot MP Member for Richmond



Congratulations and a very happy second birthday to the fantastic team at *The Byron Wave*.

For the last two years, *The Byron Wave* has

continued to tell the stories of what makes the North Coast so special.

In this time, *The Byron Wave* has gone from strength to strength, playing an essential role in providing our community with important updates and support.

Thank you for being a strong voice for our region and I wish you all the best into the future.

Tamara Smith MP, Member for Ballina



Congratulations to *The Byron Wave* on reaching your second anniversary.

This milestone is testament to your dedication, hard work and passion

for bringing our people together through insightful stories and engaging content. Your commitment to highlighting local voices and events has helped to create a real sense of unity in our communities.

Since the launch of the first *Wave*, this production has grown from strength to strength. I look forward to seeing how you continue to grow and inspire in the years to come. Wishing you many more successful years ahead.

Sarah Ndiaye, Mayor, Byron Shire Council



A heartfelt congratulations to *The Byron Wave* on celebrating two incredible years of community-driven journalism.

Your dedication to providing an

independent, diverse, and engaging source of local news, events, and information has strengthened our community and brought us closer together. Thank you for your commitment to highlighting the unique voices and issues of our region.

Here’s to your continued success and impact on our beautiful part of the world for many more years to come.



At the Library: Young and Connected

by Stacey Shepherd, Byron Area Librarian



Source: Supplied.

Young and Connected – Peer to peer skill sharing facilitates youth leadership.

An exciting initiative is emerging for young people in the community. Young and Connected is the Library as a platform, for peer-to-peer skill sharing through the facilitation of youth led workshops, exhibitions, and entrepreneurial exploration. The major aim for the program is empowering leadership skills through social and economic opportunity.

The first event in April 2024 was an outstanding sustainable floristry workshop by a school student with passion and skill for botanicals and flower arrangement. This student lead a group of 13-15 year olds to create their own organic floral design using flora from local growers and their own backyards.

Local young person Hannah Rose, said, 'The opportunity was of benefit to me, in that I developed more confidence in myself and connection to my community. It was a good social connection with others. I enjoyed sharing the skills that I've developed with others, in a safe and fun environment.'

'I felt very supported by my community Library and all the kind staff. I was nervous about presenting in front of a group, but I enjoyed it much more than I thought I would, and that was a big achievement for me. I feel that it will give me more confidence in the future to put myself out there and go after opportunities.'

In August 2024, the Library supported a two-week exhibition by a young local SAE technology student, who used various mediums to share with the community an immersive visual and sound journey through the Bundjalung landscape of bush, coast and forest.

The program is an achievement towards new perspectives on the way young people interact socially with their Library, and a revitalisation of our exclusive young adult spaces. We want young people to think of their community Library hub when they are developing or sharing ideas, and need a place to collaborate, become informed, and challenge themselves.

At Byron Bay Library in November, a local young facilitator shared their exciting personal entrepreneurial experiences, with Slow Fashion in a Digital World, for ages 14–24 years old. Centred around the idea of using slow fashion interests

and passions as a driver towards success in small business, participants heard about trial and error, practical steps for getting an idea off the ground, the many roles you play in small business, and how to be resourceful in fulfilling the work that comes with many hats. It was an empowering session for young people to achieve their vision.

What to read – Young Adult edition

Immerse yourself in Isobelle Carmody's standalone new novel, *Comes the Night* – a thrilling cryptic and futuristic read from this renowned Australian author.

I'm not really here by award winning Indigenous author Gary Lonesborough, is a contemporary First Nations romance with navigation of family, friendships, sexuality, grief, and love.

Percy Jackson is back with *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: Wrath of the Triple Goddess*, by Rick Riordan. Fans of the half boy, half god, all hero can revel in this new instalment, filled with Greek Mythology and perfect for lovers of adventure and fantasy fiction.



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Councillor Column

Deputy Mayor, Cr Jack Dodds

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. All comments are those of the author.



Over the past month, I've had the honour of becoming a Byron Shire Councillor and being elected Deputy Mayor. I embrace this role with a deep respect and gratitude for our incredible community, whose support and insights during the campaign were invaluable. Byron Shire truly shines because of the dynamic individuals who call it home.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who volunteered and supported candidates in the recent election. Running a short and lean campaign taught me just how much work, energy, and organisation goes into being a Council candidate. So,

congratulations to all who participated.

It has been a full and demanding first month, but I am taking on the challenge full of energy and dedication. Working closely with Mayor Sarah Ndiaye, we're building on a strong relationship based on integrity and mutual respect. I believe our unique skill sets will complement each other well as we embark on this exciting term. Born and raised here, I've seen the Shire change a lot, and I understand the importance of planning for the future in intelligent and well-designed ways.

Delivering on our Residential Strategy is essential. We must create diverse and well-designed housing options. Planning for smaller lots and multi-dwelling housing, integrating walkable neighbourhoods, prioritising urban design features like walkability, easy access to neighbourhood centres, integrated parklands, active transport networks, flood resilience, water sensitive design, and environmental conservation, all need to be baked into our planning documents.

Having studied architecture and urban design, I'm keen to contribute my skill and insights to Council. We need housing that supports key workers and those at risk of homelessness, while also providing opportunities for young couples and families to enter the market. I'm particularly hopeful about

projects at the former Mullumbimby Hospital site and the Saddle Road precinct, which I hope will set a high standard of which we can be proud.

Integrating social and affordable housing into these new projects will be critical to providing the desperately needed supply of more affordable, and accessible, housing in our Shire. Retaining the dynamism and character of our community will require diverse and different approaches to ensure everyone has a place to live. Getting the big picture right is vital.

The Rail Trail project is another key aspect of this vision. Council has applied for a significant Federal grant to fund the design and construction of sections of the trail, and I'm crossing my fingers that the application will be a success.

There are so many other issues I'm excited to support, and that I hope we can deliver over the next four years, such as: beautifying our towns and villages with world-class place-making; improving pedestrian safety; restoring the Sandhills wetlands; enabling small new festivals and events; keeping our night-time economy vibrant and affordable; supporting more youth mental health and sexual health services; and helping our business community.

As an independent Councillor, my focus will be solely on Byron Shire. I promise to focus on local issues, and work hard to bring a balanced, professional perspective to our Council.

Together, I hope we can create a dynamic, diverse, and exciting future for Byron Shire.

Thank you for your support, and I look forward to working together.

To get in touch with Cr Jack Dods email: jack.dods@byron.nsw.gov.au



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Merry Christmas

by Tamara Smith MP, Member for Ballina

I want to take this opportunity to wish the community of Byron a peaceful and happy Christmas and New Year, and a festive season filled with warmth and goodwill. For most people in our region and across the State and country, 2024 has been a very challenging year to make ends meet. It constantly perplexes me that the basics of a happy, safe, and enjoyable life such as secure and affordable housing, meaningful and rewarding work, and time to enjoy the people and activities we love, are becoming harder and harder to attain for a large number.

This comes down to the decisions and policies of governments and elected representatives in so many ways. We can prioritise

our happiness and enjoyment of life but we need those we elect to prioritise community – not the big end of town, or the 1%. Hand-in-hand with our personal fulfillment is how we respect and treat each other and our precious planet. Even though it's been a year with a lot of turmoil, and struggle for humanity, please don't lose faith, as I genuinely believe we are turning a corner towards truly valuing what matters in life.

Please reach out at any time if you think there is something on which I should be focusing. My office details are email: ballina@parliament.nsw.gov.au or phone: 6686 7522

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours.

Mullum Roots 2025 announces first artists

by Lyn McCarthy



Pictured: The Waifs. Source: Supplied.

The inaugural Mullum Roots Festival is set to take over all our favourite venues in Mullumbimby on 12–13 July, 2025, and we're beyond excited to announce the first wave of incredible artists who will grace the stages.

Leading the charge are the original independent avant-garde folk heroes

The Waifs, headlining what is sure to be an unforgettable weekend of music.

Joining them is an incredible mix of talent including: Shane Howard, Dog Trumpet, Robert Forster, David Bridie, Claire Anne Taylor, Jeff Laing, and many more artists to be announced.

Festival Director Lou Bradley – fresh from the success of the 9th Nimbin Roots Festival that wrapped on 27 October – shares her enthusiasm for this new venture.

'We can't wait to bring the same celebration of original music and artistic expression to Mullumbimby with our sister festival. The experience we've gained with Nimbin Roots has taught us

how to craft an unforgettable Festival, and Mullum Roots will also deliver a world-class event while staying true to our deep sense of community.'

World-famous artist Reg Mombasa, who is also a member of Dog Trumpet, has designed the exclusive festival artwork. Tickets are limited and already available for purchase. Don't miss your chance to be part of the very first Mullum Roots Festival.

This is just the beginning – stay tuned for more exciting artist announcements as we get closer to the 2025 Festival.

For more information or to book tickets visit: mullumrootsfest.com

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Christmas Cheer in the Bay

by Stephanie Rake, Christmas Community Initiative



After last year's successful return of Christmas festivities to Byron Bay, we are once again striving to bring the holiday spirit to our beautiful community. With the support of our incredible volunteers, local

schools, Council and community, we were able to light up the town in 2023 with a stunning Christmas tree, handmade decorations by our talented school children, and a beautifully illuminated heritage cottage at the Byron Visitors Centre. Our Christmas concert featured local entertainers, and was a highlight for residents and visitors.

This year, we face a new challenge. Unfortunately, our grant application was unsuccessful, but we are determined to continue spreading Christmas cheer. To keep the festivities alive, we are launching a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds

and ensure that Byron Bay remains a joyful and festive destination for all during the holiday season. In an exciting addition to lighting the Byron Visitors Centre cottage and the Christmas tree this year, we are featuring the Byron Youth Activity Centre which will be involved in designing a vibrant Christmas banner to display at the Byron Visitor Centre wishing a 'Happy Christmas to All' and showcasing the creative spirit of our youth.

We invite our community and visitors to support this initiative by contributing to our GoFundMe campaign at: gofundme.com/f/bring-christmas-cheer-to-byron-bay

Every little bit helps in making this holiday season special for the hardworking residents of Byron Bay, and the many visitors who come to experience the magic of our town. Together, we can ensure that Byron Bay shines bright this Christmas.

For more information email: christmascheerbb@gmail.com

Give local: Fletcher Street Cottage Christmas appeal



This Christmas season, as we come together to celebrate, many in Byron Shire face challenges beyond what most of us can imagine. Fletcher Street Cottage (FSC) is calling on the community to support their Christmas Appeal, aimed at raising essential funds to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, domestic violence and financial hardship. Your donation can help offer hope and practical aid to those doing it tough this holiday season.

'Christmas is a poignant time for many in our community, especially for those feeling isolated or struggling with significant challenges,' says Damian Farrell, Manager at FSC. 'With every donation, we're able to provide essential services, basic needs and

emergency relief – which make a real difference, especially during what can be a difficult time of year.'

FSC provides vital services to the community's most vulnerable, providing not only physical necessities like food and laundry, but also emotional support and a safe place for connection. Community Support Workers offer advocacy and referrals, while 15 specialist services provide medical care, legal aid, counselling, and much more. These services are particularly important over the holiday season, which can be truly challenging for those facing hardship and isolation.

'Every person who walks through our doors has a story,' says Maddi Powell, Assistant Manager and Community Support Worker.

'Our goal is to create an environment where people feel respected and supported, whether they're here for housing support, escaping domestic violence or simply to find someone who cares. This Christmas, your donation to FSC can give individuals and families hope during the holiday season, and a sense of belonging.'

The FSC team is committed to providing continuous care and support to those in need and relies on the generosity of the community to maintain these essential services. From providing a warm shower and nourishing meals to offering referrals and support services, every donation goes directly toward impacting the lives of those facing some of life's hardest circumstances.

By giving to the Fletcher Street Cottage Christmas Appeal, you'll be providing more than just money, you'll be showing local families and individuals hope, comfort, and community when they need it most. Donate to support our locals in need and make a difference in their lives this holiday season at: fletcherstreetcottage.com.au.

Holiday Season Services

Fletcher Street Cottage is open Tuesday – Friday during the holiday season (except for public holidays). For more information visit: fletcherstreetcottage.com.au

For Byron Community Centre's Christmas Hamper Appeal visit: byroncentre.com.au



Brunswick Heads Christmas Events

by Brunswick Heads Visitors Centre



Picture: Carnival on the Brunswick River.
Source: Daniel Pyke.

Brunswick Heads is a special place to be coming up to Christmas. There are so many great family activities to fill your heart

with Christmas spirit. Mullumbimby Rotary is once again holding a Christmas Window Display Competition in the lead up to 25 December. So, pop into town and enjoy the festive window displays.

Brunswick Picture House - 3 December

Celebrating Simple Pleasures: Fundraiser. For 18 years, the beloved Visitor Centre has been a welcoming hub for locals and visitors alike, sharing the 'simple pleasures' of Brunswick Heads through community events like Kites and Bikes and Mullum2Brunns Paddle. However, recent economic challenges have made it increasingly difficult to run, and we are seeking your help to keep this treasured resource going. Supporting our fundraiser are some amazing local performers including

Goodrich with their classic tunes, bush poet Ray Essery, and performer Ilona Harker. Book at: brunswickpicturehouse.com

The McGregors Family Carnival - mid December

For over 60 years, The McGregors Family Carnival has been rolling into town. The carnival is open nightly from mid-December until mid-January 6:45pm to 9:45pm on the banks of the Brunswick River. This family-friendly, night time carnival offers lots of rides, amusements, and good old-fashioned fun.

Twilight Markets - 18 December

Fun for the whole family, and a great opportunity to get some last minute locally made gifts. See page 6 for more information.

Christmas Eve, 24 December

Santa will drop by to the McGregors Family Carnival at 8pm on Christmas Eve. Don't forget, there will also be the famous \$2 night for locals.

Woodchop Carnival - January

How much wood can a woodchop chop, if a woodchop could chop wood? Find out in January when the famous Woodchop Carnival is held in Banner Park. Dates are to be confirmed so contact the Brunswick Heads Visitor Centre for more information closer to the time at: brunswickheads.org.au

Bangalow Christmas Eve Carnival

by Bangalow Lions Club

Bangalow's annual Christmas Eve Carnival, proudly presented by the Bangalow Lions Club, is on again Tuesday 24 December, 4pm-8pm at the Bangalow Showground. Enter via the main gates with a gold coin donation at the gate. Parking available in the Showgrounds, \$5 per vehicle.

Bangalow Lions Club, who celebrated their 50 year anniversary on 31 October, will be running the Bangalow Lions Bar and BBQ at the Showgrounds Kiosk. It was noted at the 50th birthday celebrations, officiated from the Brisbane Lions Assistant District Governor Lion Jonathan Chen, that the current long standing Bangalow Lions service team have an aggregate of over 270 plus years of service.

Volunteers from the Bangalow Lions Club and local population work together to create this family-friendly event each year. Full of community spirit, the event gets the village

together to celebrate with family, neighbours, friends and tourists alike.

This long running, incredible atmosphere event is a celebration of Christmas, Bangalow style. It's family focussed with Santa, street performers, children's entertainments, food vans, and the traditional fireworks at 7:45pm.

'See you all there,' said Nashy, President of the Bangalow Lions Club. 'Lets pray for good weather. There really is something for everyone to enjoy in the beautiful Bangalow Showgrounds, transformed into a Christmas playground.'

For more information visit Facebook: [/Bangalow Lions Club](https://www.facebook.com/BangalowLionsClub).

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The true spirit of Christmas: Free Shop

Each Christmas, local man Dennis Stevenson borrows an empty shop and gives away thousands of new presents to help make sure no one goes without. This year's shop, his 9th at Ocean Shores, will open 9am to 6pm for eight days on Monday 16 December to Christmas Eve Tuesday 24 December (excluding Sunday 22 December for a church service). The shop is located in the Hall at the rear of the Baptist Church, on the corner of Rajah Road and Bindaree Way, Ocean Shores – next to the K-Hub.

Not only are the thousands of presents freely donated, everything needed to run a successful Christmas shop is donated and all supported by wonderful volunteers. Dennis says, 'My joy in life comes from helping people. I feel that giving isn't just the fastest way to change ourselves and our world. It's the only way. For instance, your smile can really brighten someone's day.'

Where do the free presents come from? Dennis says, 'We rely on local people. We've found that every community can find thousands of brand new, unused items in their homes, available to be shared at Christmas. People are surprised by just how much they find when they search cupboards, drawers, linen press, storage boxes, and the garage. Some people ask

friends, neighbours and workmates to join them in collecting. Last year we gave away over 7,000 presents. This year with so many people doing it tough, our goal is over 10,000.'

With a generous community, anything is possible. Volunteers help in the shop for two to four hours. Dennis says, 'It's a lovely feeling giving presents away. Everything is free, everyone is welcome and everything is new. We don't accept money, just lots of presents. Anything new like toys, clothing, accessories, sports, and camping gear, and things for the house like kitchen or garden equipment, books, games, electronics, movies – anything. Just this week, I met a neighbour who will donate over 100 new printed T-shirts. Bags of lovely 'home made' craft items, or even books people have printed are great gifts too. Some people can't afford a Christmas meal, so we also take non-perishable things for people to make a lovely Christmas dinner. This endeavour is all about locals helping locals and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to have a special family time at Christmas.'

The Spirit of Christmas team look forward to people gathering presents and volunteering. To discover the joy shared by this free shop, view Den's site at: spiritofchristmas1.com or email: spiritofchristmas@mail.com

Beach Patrol times

It's beach season and that means it's time to slip, slop, slap and swim between the flags. The Australian Lifeguard Service will be providing the services to the Byron Shire during the 2024/2025 summer season from 9am–5pm (see schedule).

For information and updated patrol times visit: surflifesaving.com.au or: beachsafe.org.au/beach/nsw

BEACH	DATES	PATROL TIMES
South Golden	19 December 2024 to 30 January 2025	9am – 5pm
Brunswick Heads Main Beach	19 December 2024 to 30 January 2025 Surf Life Saving volunteers will patrol Brunswick Heads beaches on Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays during the 2024/2025 season.	9am – 5pm
Clarkes Beach	19 December 2024 to 30 January 2025	9am – 5pm
Byron Bay Main Beach	All year. Extra roving patrols will be provided during: - NSW Christmas from 10 December 2024 to 30 January 2025, from 9am to 6pm. - New Year's Eve from 6pm through to 2am (an additional 2 Lifeguards). Surf Life Saving volunteers will patrol Byron main beaches on Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays during the 2024/2025 season.	9am – 5pm
The Pass	19 December 2024 to 30 January 2025	9am – 5pm
Wategos	19 December 2024 to 30 January 2025	9am – 5pm
Tallowas	19 December 2024 to 30 January 2025	9am – 5pm
Suffolk Park	19 December 2024 to 30 January 2025	9am – 5pm
Broken Head	19 December 2024 to 30 January 2025	9am – 5pm



10 Minutes of Fame



Coming to Drill Hall Theatre, Mullumbimby, on 5–8 December and 12–15 December, is an hilarious, thought-provoking play titled *10 Minutes of Fame*.

Written and directed by acclaimed local playwright Michael Sharmon, *10 Minutes of Fame* brings together a vibrant cast of unforgettable characters, navigating their way through the treacherous waters of modern

fame – where a single viral moment can define, or destroy, a person.

At the centre of this play is Margo, a poised political wife who suddenly finds herself thrust into the viral spotlight after an unexpected gas-related incident on live TV. As Margo grapples with newfound fame and the chaos it brings, her personal and professional life unravels in hilarious and shocking ways. What follows is a fast-paced, comedic exploration of celebrity culture, public scrutiny, and personal redemption. Fans of sharp dialogue will love the witty exchanges and unexpected reveals.

With a stellar cast of local performers, each character is on the edge of their own 10 minutes of fame, trying to figure out what to do with the spotlight. From Tim, the washed-up pop star trying to stay relevant, to Susan, the

superhero actress with a secret, and Linda, the once-beloved but forgotten icon, all explore the power, vulnerability, and dark side of public life.

10 Minutes of Fame is relatable, timely, and laugh-out-loud funny. Audiences will recognise the absurdity of today's viral culture while connecting with the human stories behind the headlines. Whether you're a lover of drama, local theatre, a fan of biting satire, or simply in need of a good laugh, this show promises to entertain, provoke, and leave you wanting more.

Dates: Eight shows across 5–8 and 12–15 December, 7:30–9pm, with matinee performances on Sunday.

Venue: Drill Hall Theatre, 4 Jubilee Avenue, Mullumbimby

Cost and tickets: \$21–\$32
drillhalltheatre.org.au/category/shows/

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Celebrating 79 legendary parties with a purpose

by Laura Peck, Nudge Nudge Wink Wink, Cunning Stunts



Pictured: Partygoers gathered around the best sounding shed in the southern hemisphere. Source: Supplied.

Cunning Stunts' *Nudge Nudge Wink Wink* parties have become legendary for uniting the community through music, fun, and a deep commitment to positive change. Known as 'parties with a conscience', these events seamlessly blend vibrant entertainment and community connection with impactful charity work, supporting various local causes.

Throughout 2024, *Nudge Nudge Wink Wink* has continued this legacy, bringing even more creativity, connection, and purpose to each gathering. December's event marks their 79th at The Billinudgel Hotel and the middle of their 9th season. This year's events have been remarkable, drawing dance music lovers and change-makers alike. Every party features renowned DJs and artists who transform the experience into an electric celebration and the gatherings also feature innovative lighting, performers and surprises, creating a truly immersive experience that leaves partygoers energised.

A standout feature of *Nudge Nudge Wink Wink* in 2024 has been its significant fundraising efforts. With a substantial portion of profits going to charity, these events have collectively raised considerable funds for numerous causes across the Northern Rivers region, supporting non-profit organisations (NFPs) from Lismore to Tweed. Beneficiaries include neighbourhood and community centres, homeless support services, youth and domestic violence programs, and mental and physical health initiatives.

Since its inception in 2015, *Nudge Nudge Wink Wink* has generated over \$416,500 for 39 local charities, embodying its core values of connection, community, great music, and even better, causes. Named Byron Shire's Community Event of the Year in 2020, *Nudge Nudge Wink Wink* continues to be a highly anticipated monthly event, with DJs playing in the 'best sounding shed in the Southern Hemisphere' while funds are raised for vital local charities. By attending, you're supporting grassroots services essential to the community.

This month brings an international flavour to the 7 December event with DJs Nick Field (Sydney/Bali/UK), Scott Pullen (flying in from Bali), and surprise guests from Sydney. Tickets for the 7 December *Nudge Nudge Wink Wink* may still be available here: cunningstunts.com.au/event/nudge-nudge-wink-wink-07-12-2024/

January's event will be held on 11 January 2025 (the second Saturday of the month) and will celebrate their 9th birthday, complete with a raffle, silent auction, performers, DJs, and more. To get advance notification of ticket sales, sign up for the e-newsletter at: cunningstunts.com.au



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20th anniversary of Boxing Day tsunami



Pictured: Sue Whiteman at Nam Khem refugee camp with children who were left orphaned or disabled as a result of the Tsunami. Source: Supplied.

This year marks 20 years since the catastrophic Indian Ocean Tsunami on 26 December, 2004, one of the most destructive natural disasters in modern history. Triggered by a 9.1-magnitude earthquake off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, the Tsunami devastated communities across 14 countries, causing immense loss of life, displacement, and destruction in Southeast Asia and beyond.

Sue Whiteman, who ran the Mullumbimby Dance Studio for over 20 years, had her life changed forever after the Boxing Day Tsunami. 'I never thought I'd see and smell death like that. It was the most tragic thing I've ever experienced,' she said.

As a professional dancer with the Bangkok Dance Company, Sue had choreographed the annual New Years Eve Thai Cultural show for 15 years, and was on a flight from Bangkok to Phuket to rehearse when the Tsunami happened. The flight was re-directed and Sue, being fluent in Thai, was later flown to southern Thailand by the army. She ended up at Wat Yan Yao, one of Thailand's temples, that was converted to an emergency centre. There, she worked with the foreign bodies and disaster victim identification specialists in the makeshift morgue, and sadly, identified one of her ex-dance students from Mullumbimby – Moi Vogel.

Pregnant with her first child, Moi and her husband Chris Nott were honeymooning in the region when the Tsunami hit. Sue based herself in Nam Khem south of Khoa Lak in the Phang Na province, a popular tourist destination, and the hardest-hit with the most foreign casualties. She was joined by Moi's grieving mother, Joy Vogel (now passed), in the village of Nam Khem.

The duo started projects to support survivors, and the army's legacy of single mothers, in the Tsunami refugee camp. Due to their work, Sue and Joy became the subject of several documentaries and Joy is quoted as saying that she felt she could pay tribute to her daughter Moi by helping survivors. 'Moi lost her, and her baby's life, and I lost my daughter and grandchild, but giving some hope for survivors is a way for me to still connect with them,' Joy said.

Sue learned many lessons post Tsunami. She had never seen a dead body before, had not written a grant, managed

infrastructure projects, and didn't know of the EU's work. Thrown into a world of NGOs, international fundraising and disaster relief, she was shocked to discover the poor inner workings of these charity systems, and was inspired to set up her own projects – ensuring that the money raised went direct to those affected. She spent 10 years working with the EU and visited many Tsunami affected countries, telling her own story and presenting at EU annual conferences.

Leading numerous local fundraising initiatives, including a massive dance-a-thon and Heart to Heart hip hop groups, Sue devoted significant time and personal funds to ensure her projects thrived and evolved. Donations from The Brunswick Hotel, the Byron Surf Life Saving Club, combined with those from a German fishing village, Cuxhaven, contributed to the construction of two houses in Nam Khem for volunteers and EU delegates, who continued their work for 10 years after the Tsunami.

Sue is currently in Thailand for the 20 year memorial service and will be joined by many Australians and Europeans, who continue to return to Southern Thailand to honour the anniversary of the Boxing Day Tsunami.

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Community in brief

Calling all 'Good Buddies' in 2479 by Bangalow Resilience Network



Pictured: Example of a CB radio device. Source: Crystal Mobile.

The Bangalow Resilience Network (BRN) is a group of residents from the 2479 postcode who identified from the works and learnings of the 2022 Floods aftermath, that there was a need to build an action plan for the first three days after a disaster event. The BRN have linked in with Byron Shire Red Cross, Mullumbimby SES, and Byron Shire Council's Local Emergency Management Committee to achieve this.

Most recently, BRN has obtained 30 CB radios, thanks to donations from Bangalow Lions, CWA, Bowling Club, and Op Shop. The CB radios operate by line of site up to five kilometers, and are to be used in the event of a disaster. So far, a little over half of these radios have been distributed to volunteers in the 2479 postcode. A CB radio test trial took place on 8 September, and although successful, it was identified with the landscape of our 2479 postcode of valleys and hills, there is a need to expand the communication network.

More CB operators are needed, outside the town of Bangalow, in the surrounding hills and valleys of 2479, and we welcome them to join our CB radio network. Anyone interested in becoming involved, or joining the CB radio network can connect to the group through the Facebook page: /Bangalow Resilience Network or call Ruth Winton-Brown on ph: 0413 261 011

Our next meeting is 4 December from 5pm at Bangalow's Heritage House.

Byron Bay Hospital Auxiliary by Mary Webb



Pictured: Sandra Fleming receiving her Life Membership award from the NSW State President of the UHA, Sally Cronberger, at the recent State conference. Source: Supplied.

We recently received a request from Byron Central Hospital for 12 large, analogue clocks with calendars, costing \$2,940. These clocks are readable from up to 15 metres away, the automatic calendar self-adjusts for leap years, and the flip card display remains readable under fluorescent light, unlike many LCD clocks. They will be ideal for the 12 hospital rooms in which they will be located. Our Auxiliary members were more than happy to fund this request.

Another great Christmas Garage Sale was held on 30 November with all the usual Christmas goodies on display to tempt the passing public. A special thanks to all those members who helped in the arranging and setting up of the stalls. On 2 December, our members will unwind and enjoy a lovely Christmas lunch at the Byron Bay RSL. One of the traditions at the Christmas lunch is to make a donation to a charity of choice; this year it's the Westpac Helicopter Rescue Service.

Branch President Mollie Strong and Secretary Maureen Weir will be visiting the Byron Central hospital on Christmas Eve, to distribute presents to patients who, unfortunately, have to spend their Christmas in hospital.

The giving of presents to patients has been a regular event each Christmas, alternating between the two Hospital Auxiliary branches in Byron Shire – Mullumbimby and Byron Bay.

We would like to wish all our supporters and members a very Happy Christmas, and say thank you to our dedicated team who have worked hard over the year raising funds for Byron Central Hospital.

Byron Bay Rotary by Joanne Gorman

Every month we have news to share about our initiatives supporting local youth. We've said it before, but the future of our community sits with the next generation, and the more we can help them flourish, the brighter it looks. Whether that's sponsoring 1,000s of children to participate in the Bravehearts' personal safety program, our recent Respectful Relationship's film project with the Steiner School, or last month's talent development program to support emerging young musicians and raise funds for Byron's Youth Activity Centre – it's all about young person power.

So what better way to end the year than offering sponsored places to Rotary's award-winning Youth Leadership programs?

Be quick for our six day RYTS program, for Yrs 11 and 12 (or ages 17–18), which commences mid December. Or consider RYLA – a personal and professional development program in January for ages 19–29 years old. Our fantastic RYPEN program, for ages 14–16, is also held in January.

All are residential, offer world class activities and speakers, and we have never sponsored a participant who hasn't raved about the experience.

Check out the details on website: rotary9640.org/page/youth-programs-summary

To learn how the Club can support you, get in touch with me, Jo, at email: gormanjoanne@gmail.com



Community in brief continued

CWA Brunswick Heads Branch by Mary Webb



Pictured: Donna Wornes and Delwyn Radcliff, the great organisers of the branch's Melbourne Cup Lunch. Source: Supplied.

Well, the Melbourne Cup lunch proved yet again that the CWA members of Brunswick Heads know how to enjoy themselves. We were joined by members from Mullumbimby CWA, and we all met at the Mooball Roadhouse in Mooball, for fun and games and, of course, the obligatory dressing up for such a prestigious event. Donna and Delwyn organised all the games and purchased prizes from their own funds. The amazing people at the Mooball Roadhouse very kindly allowed us to take over part of the café, as we needed room to prance around and show off our party frocks and hats.

The branch Christmas lunch will be held on Saturday 7 December at the CWA rooms, and we are delighted to welcome back our past President, Beverly Masters for the occasion. Readers of *The Byron Wave* will know of the many great articles and recipes Beverly has produced over the past couple of years.

Our Friday Crafty Women session will be finishing on 13 December and re-opening on 17 January. So, make a note in your diaries if you are interested in learning a new craft. Come along to our Crafty Women session, from 10am–2pm every Friday, except public holidays, or just pop in for a chat. Non-members are more than welcome to join, all we ask is that you bring a gold coin donation. We will provide morning tea. The Brunswick Head CWA rooms are located on the corner of Booyun and Park Streets, Brunswick Heads.

For more information, visit page 23 for community meetings. We wish all our members, supporters, and their families a very happy Christmas. If you are travelling, stay safe on the roads.

Happy Christmas.

Connecting Generations by Gillian Cornu

Throughout 2024, Connecting Generations has held multiple seasonal events, successfully connecting old and young families around the Shire.

The event was formed after a group of 10 retired friends discussed how they were feeling about all aspects of aging. It became apparent that loneliness and isolation was being experienced, not just by elders, but by many in the community, such as young families who moved to the area without extended family. It was the perfect opportunity to create an event that brought people of all ages together to share in the joys of each generation, offer support, and enrich each other's lives. Since then, a series of intergenerational seasonal gatherings has been held in Bangalow, and participation has continued to grow and grow.

Most recently, on Sunday 20 October, the Bangalow Bowlo played host to the Connecting Generations Spring event, which saw around 70 attendees

gathering together outside, playing in the sunshine. Big smiles, squeals of joy, and lots of laughter echoed amongst the group throughout the afternoon. Everyone had fun clowning around with Dr Sera Tonin who taught young and old how to be jesters, helping to make juggling balls, garlands and masks. Jules, Mish and John entertained everyone with their musical talent and the songs and musical games delighted the crowd. Ruth Winton Brown, co-founder of the event, said, 'It was great to see everyone connecting, and we even had a family of four generations attend – just incredible.'

Reflecting on 2024, the organisers are thrilled to have the local community gathering and interacting in such a wholesome and organic way. Ruth added, 'We would love any grandparents, aunties and uncles, to come along to future events to connect with our Shire's young families.'

Their first event of 2025 is scheduled for 9 February, after the school holidays, at Bangalow Heritage House, 4 Ashton Street, from 2pm. The event will be fun-filled with activities for all to enjoy, and there is even talk of building a fire engine with real hoses.

'All are welcome and we hope to see you there,' said Ruth.

For further information, please contact Ruth on ph: 0413 261 011



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The Shire in photos

Rally for Native Forests – Sunday 3 November, Mullumbimby



Pictured: Crowd listening to speakers and calling for an end to native forest logging.



Pictured: Little possum with MJ Johnston, local bush regenerator and climate activist.



Pictured: March through Mullum for Native Forests. Source: Mark Seifert.

Mullumbimby Show - Friday 8 to Sunday 10 November



Pictured: HLS trick riding and equestrian performance team showed the crowd amazing stunts. Source: Sarah Archibald.



Pictured: All three days of the Mullum show had Horse trots, offering the highest prize money on their circuit. Source: Sarah Archibald.



Pictured: Airtime FMX rider doing a no hander superman freestyle jump. Source: Sarah Archibald.

Bangalow Show – Friday 15 to Saturday 16 December



Pictured: Crowds enjoying the atmosphere.



Pictured: Monster trucks taking kids for a ride.



Pictured: Prized pigeon and rooster posing.

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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: aob.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: cmcjannett@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



Equity Crowdfunding explained

Tim Eisenhauer, Managing Director, OnMarket

What is Equity Crowdfunding?

Equity Crowdfunding enables a large group of individuals ('the crowd') to invest in early-stage businesses in return for part-ownership of the business (equity).

The ability for everyday investors to gain part-ownership of early-stage businesses in Australia was enabled by legislation in late 2017. Traditionally, this space has been dominated by wealthy individuals, venture capitalists and 'angel investors'. Today, everyday investors can handpick, invest and gain a stake in businesses they feel passionate about. Investors can invest from \$50 and up, with a \$10,000 cap per retail investor per company in any 12 month period. The \$10,000 limit does not apply to sophisticated investors.

What are the benefits of Equity Crowdfunding for investors?

Equity Crowdfunding enables investors to:

- get involved in the next big thing and share in the success. Equity Crowdfunding enables investors to choose businesses they feel passionate about and be part of a business's progress as it grows
- gain part-ownership. Equity Crowdfunding is the simplest way to gain part-ownership of a business. Since it involves investing in return for equity, if the business invested in succeeds, the value of the company increases and the shares owned will be worth more than what investors initially put in. If the business makes an 'exit' at a higher value than invested, investors receive a return on their investment
- invest as little as they want. A low minimum investment threshold allows investors to participate from as little as \$50. This means that investors don't take on as much risk as they would if they were to invest a hefty amount in only one business.

What is the difference between Equity Crowdfunding and the stock market?

Equity Crowdfunding differs from investing in the stock market in four key ways.

Unlisted vs listed companies - investing through Equity Crowdfunding involves gaining part-ownership of an unlisted company, often at an early stage of its growth.

In contrast, investing in the stock market involves investing in a listed company which is trading on the ASX, NYSE, NASDAQ or a similar exchange.

Liquidity and investment horizon – unlisted Equity Crowdfunding investments are less liquid than listed stock market investments, because there is no active secondary market for them. The implications of this liquidity constraint means that investors tend to invest for a longer amount of time (or

'investment horizon'). This differs to the stock market, where investors have high liquidity and can, in most cases, sell a company's shares at any time after purchase.

Low minimum investment threshold – Equity Crowdfunding has a very low minimum investment requirement. The minimum investment is \$50, and the maximum is \$10,000 per company per year for a retail investor. Investing in an initial public offering (IPO) on the stock market has a much higher investment threshold, that being \$2,000.

No fees – unlike the stock market, there is no broker acting as an intermediary between an investor and a business. At OnMarket, this means no brokerage fees for the equity crowd funding investor. We are a completely free platform for investors to connect with businesses that are making an impact. Instead, we charge the businesses raising capital a fixed percentage of the amount of capital they raise.

Using OnMarket to invest in Equity Crowdfunding

How does it work? Five simple steps.

1. Sign up – join OnMarket as a registered investor for free, with no obligation to invest. The registration process is simple and you only need to do it once. It involves agreement to our OnMarket member terms and conditions, identity verification and setting up your investor profile.
2. Discover businesses making an impact – browse our selected offers and handpick the businesses you want to invest in.
3. Invest from \$50 and up – OnMarket carefully selects the businesses that are offered through our platform, based on key criteria. Join other investors and invest from \$50 to \$10,000 per business. In return, as an investor you will receive equity in the businesses you choose. Start building your diversified portfolio of companies.
4. Offer close – OnMarket sorts out the paperwork that ensures you are allocated shares and conducts any final checks.
5. Receive your share certificate – in your invested company.

Northern Rivers Media to participate in Equity Crowdfunding in 2025

Northern Rivers Media Pty Ltd will launch an Equity Crowdfunding campaign in 2025 with Expressions Of Interest (EOI) in February 2025 and the public ECF scheduled for March 2025.

If you would like to be notified during the EOI period email your contact details to: community@northernriversmedia.com.au



Become an owner of *The Waves*

Northern Rivers Media has become one of Australia's most successful community media publishers.

After purchasing the much loved 18-year-old *The Lennox Wave* in 2021, the company has expanded its unique community focused model into The Ballina Shire with *The Ballina Wave*, The Byron Shire with *The Byron Wave*, and has recently begun its expansion into the Gold Coast with *The Burleigh Wave*.

Many regional towns and suburbs were left without their local community newspapers and magazines when NewsCorp either closed or moved online over 100 publications.

While we believe that of course online is now an accepted part of our lives, over the past few years with fake news, AI, scammers and just too much online 'noise' there has been a strong move back to reliable print

publications, particularly those that are deeply connected and supportive of their local communities.

In March 2025, Northern Rivers Media will be instigating a CSF (Crowd Source Funding) campaign through ASIC licensed intermediary OnMarket.

Our aim is to raise funds to continue the expansion of our community magazines by issuing shares that will allow investors and members of our communities to share in our ownership.

An Expression Of Interest (EOI) campaign will commence in February 2025 followed by the CSF in the following month.

If you would like to be advised and presented with further details, please email us so that we may contact you with appropriate documentation in early 2025 for your consideration.

Please register your interest in receiving further information
by emailing: community@northernriversmedia.com.au



Byron Shire's history of Christmas cheer

by Byron Bay Historical Society



From the records, little can be discovered about Christmas time in Cavvanba from its earliest pioneering days, but it is likely to have been actively celebrated as a Christian tradition when white settlement occurred. This was after the *Robertson Land Acts of Free Selection* in the 1860s, and families began to populate the district.

Sarah Flick, who arrived in Ewingsdale about 1889, was the wife of a timber getter and mother of eight

children. Like other timber getter wives, she was left on her own for extended periods of time. Sarah converted her shed once a month into a church and, when the family's new home was built, services of all denominations were held there until suitable venues and church buildings were erected. It is improbable that these families and services did not celebrate Christmas, no matter how humbly. At this stage, the town of Byron Bay existed merely on paper.

About 20 years later, Byron Bay was developing in earnest. In 1888, the jetty opened with great pageantry, followed by the coming of the railway in 1894. Both were crucial to the economic development and life of the district. In 1903, a year after the town produced its own paper, *The Byron Bay Record*, the editor proclaimed in an extended piece that the business community could more than guarantee a roaring trade during the merry festive season. Whilst not going in for the lavish display of larger towns to catch the nimble and slippery shilling, its goods were up-to-date, and at proper prices – nay, in some lines, unreasonably low.

Supplying everything from a needle to an anchor, the paper's 19th century tone of moral rectitude as well as pride in this commerce is unmistakable. Sober people could purchase sober articles of useful commodity, whilst frivolous folk could gratify their fancy. Everything fitting with the Season could be acquired, from Christmas cakes and puddings to Christmas frocks and ties – although most women in town and from the hinterland undoubtedly made their own. The business people of the Bay provided for a good trade: from burgeoning holidaymakers setting up in camping grounds, as well as the seaside excursionists aboard special trains. These visitors were assiduously courted as well as the district's local farmers and residents.

Rapid growth in the township was accelerated following the election of a local Council in 1906 and establishment of a Citizens' Association. The 1912 Great Christmas Fair in aid of the Methodist Church was a sign of things to come, taking place at the School of Arts which later changed its name to the Literary Institute. Patronised by the Shire President, Festive Fair Fund-raising was not without its Fun. Fancy dress parades, music, competitions, prizes, and a whirl of other amusements contributed to the colourful atmosphere of gaiety and good will.

Organised Christmas celebrations in Byron Bay through the first half of the 20th century were primarily the work of religious, quasi-religious and philanthropic institutions that built community, and looked after the interests and welfare of the citizenry. Some had special interests such as the children of Returned Soldiers or those of the unemployed following the Great Depression. A key focus for celebrations during these years was functions that naturally revolved around the Christmas tree, laden with Toys and Good Things for the Children. Bedecked with fairy lights and tinsel, these trees and the activities around them were organised by volunteers, and supported with the donation of funds or gifts from the community. They included the churches, with





the Presbyterians, Methodists and the Church of England featuring prominently in newspaper reports. The Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) was active, along with the Freemasons, Loyal Orange Lodge members, and the Buffs (Buffalo Lodge).

Break-ups and Christmas celebrations took place at the Byron Bay Public School with parties held in the school classrooms. The Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Brownies combined their functions. Numerous parties occurred over a two-week period to entertain the youngsters, and many of them occurred during the evening hosted by the Literary Institute.

Religious observance took the form of carols and hymns sung by children and the choirs; a dramatised lesson on occasion; the Sunday School prizes that were awarded. There were lots of treats including ice-cream, ginger beer, and sweets. Santa Claus was the highlight for the young, arriving and distributing the presents. These included Christmas stockings; gifts, some of which were home-made, including especially beautiful dolls at one Methodist function; books for the older children; and bagged lollies. After this, there may have been a children's 'romp' or a dance; some enjoyed cartoon shows. If outdoors during an afternoon, there were races and sand-castle competitions; a treasure hunt if the kiddies were particularly lucky.

Perhaps the biggest event was held in 1947. Two Christmas trees, complete with snowmen and fairies, were attractions

at a Christmas party organised by the local RSL and its Women's Auxiliary. The function was free to all children of Byron Bay. Santa Claus arrived at the party in a sleigh drawn by 'reindeers' and gave each child a parcel and a 'jazz cap'. Pictures, dancing and community singing were enjoyed by about 500 children (the estimated resident population of Byron Shire at the time was around 8,800). Ice cream and drinks were additional treats. By 1954, in view of the fact that parents were called on for so many functions at this time of the year, it was decided by the school's P&C Association that presents be limited to the value of 4/- (shillings, today's value – 40c).

Fast forward to 2007, when Byron Bay received its first Community Christmas Tree under the auspices of the local Chamber of Commerce, Byron United. The 10-metre tree first went up adjacent to the town clock and was the focal point of a Christmas campaign as well as community spirit. Hundreds of people, including many children, enjoyed the first lighting-up ceremony. The tree was expected to last a decade or two, so it could have been up even now. It was sold after three years due to escalating costs associated with insurance and vandalism.

Local history can teach a great deal about a community's identity, values and change. This is true of Christmas as at any other time. Seasons' Greetings.

For more information visit Byron Bay Historical Society: byronbayhistoricalsociety.org.au

Ch-ch-ch changes

by Christobel Munson, Bangalow Historical Society



Pictured (left-right): Andy, Delta, Tony, and Trisha at the Uncovering Our Past Exhibition. Source: Supplied.

The Piccabeen Park precinct in Bangalow is opening up to even more changes to benefit residents of Bangalow, and visitors.

From Saturday 7 December, the weekly Bangalow Farmers Markets will now be located along Wetlands Way – the unofficial name of the road leading from Deacon Street through to the well-used amenities block in the park.

The Farmers Markets have been held in the carpark behind the Bangalow

Pub for nearly 20 years – courtesy of owners Tom and Cathryn Mooney – but with renovations being proposed for the pub, holding the weekly farmers markets at Piccabeen Park will now be trialled until October 2026. At that point, Byron Council will consider its impact, with a view to it being included in Council's Sustainable Markets operations.

To celebrate the change, the latest exhibition being held at the museum by the Bangalow Historical Society will focus on the History of the Bangalow Farmers Markets. After a rocky start – initially main street shops and the Chamber of Commerce weren't wild about the idea of a fresh food market up the street – it has become a regular and welcome weekly event where shoppers can speak directly to the farmers who grow the wide range of food on offer.

Reflecting on 2024, Historical Society President, Trisha Bleakley, said, 'We

have had a successful and productive year at the Museum. We've held a diverse range of exhibitions through the year appealing to varied audiences – locals and visitors alike. We are also noticing more and more people taking advantage of the pleasant gardens and open space around the Museum, not to mention having the beauties of Piccabeen Park at our doorstep.

'Visitors are a welcome to come to the Museum to find out about the history of the town, on display within our walls and our volunteer guides are always happy to chat.'

The Bangalow Museum is open from Wednesdays to Saturdays, from 10am to 2pm. The Museum will be closed for the summer holidays between Friday 20 December, reopening Wednesday 8 January 2025.

To get in touch ph: 6687 2183
or ph: 0429 882 515



Pictured: Mullumbimby 388 Station Crew. Source: Supplied.

Day in the life: Mullumbimby 388 Station

by Charla Rallings

Every day, as we go about our regular routines, there is a dedicated team standing ready—prepared to respond to any emergency at a moment's notice. Fire and Rescue Station 388 of Mullumbimby is the quiet yet vigilant force that protects and informs our local community. Whether through community education to prevent emergencies or responding swiftly to fires, accidents, and hazardous situations, the firefighters at Station 388 are always ready to act. Serving the people of Mullumbimby and the wider Northern Rivers, they bring courage, care, and professionalism to every call. In this Day in the Life feature, we step inside their world to understand the commitment, courage, and camaraderie that define these local heroes.

What does a typical day at Station 388 look like for you and your team?

A typical day of a 388 Firefighter is the same as any other person in town: the routine of getting ready for work, taking the kids to school, going to the gym, or whatever it is that the individual does. It's when the pager goes off that it all changes. When it buzzes, we drop whatever it is we are doing in that moment, no matter what time of the day, jump in the car and get to the station. If you are lucky, you might already be at the station doing some work when it happens. From there, you head to the watch room and hit the acknowledge call button, which gives us a print out with all the details of the call, and open the front roller door for the rest of the crew. We then gear up with our uniforms and personal protective clothing (PPC), jump in the truck and respond – all of this takes around seven minutes. As an on-call crew, when there are no emergencies, we are going about our usual routines such as work and family. If we are at the station when there is emergency call, it's usually because we are getting some work done like checking the equipment on the truck, performing some engine maintenance, mowing the lawns, cleaning the station, attending training, or writing fire reports.

What actually happens when the team arrives at an emergency call?

When an emergency call comes in, the firefighting crew immediately gears up according to the fire type. For bushfires, they wear lighter, longer bushfire coats, uniform pants (blues), firefighting boots, and lightweight helmets and gloves, while for structural fires, they switch to heavier, more protective gear, including breathing apparatus (BA) if smoke levels are high. During transit, the Incident Commander (IC), who sits in the front passenger seat, is collecting information about the fire and forming an incident action plan to enable us to deal with the emergency. The crew is skilled, and our training ensures that when we are given our tasking, we can achieve it. We also adapt on the fly as the situation changes and progresses, relying on our knowledge to ensure the best possible outcome.

Upon reaching the site for a bushfire, the IC analyses conditions, prioritising crew safety, water access, and any potential evacuations. If the driver has local knowledge, they already have a rough idea of where they can safely park the truck up-wind, for a quick getaway if it becomes too dangerous, and in consideration of a water source – as the water on the truck can be drained in as little as 10 minutes. It's vital that we have another water source as soon as possible – even if that means calling another truck to the scene if there are no hydrants, rivers, water tanks, or pools around. The driver then deploys the main hoses and connects them to the truck, nearby hydrants, or other available water sources. For bushfires, the crew uses a yellow 38mm percolating hose, which lets water seep to protect it from heat, and we often use rakes to cover flames with dirt when water is scarce.

In a structural fire, before arriving the crew will be preparing to wear their breathing apparatus (BA), discuss using the thermal imaging camera (TIC) and the Breaking and Entering tools. They will then receive their specific tasking from the IC, such as fire attack or search and rescue. Once at the



site, the IC will send their arrival message to firecoms and adjust the incident action plan based on the overall scene and hazards. They'll also turn off the power at the fuse box, speak to bystanders (if there are any), and look for signs that determine if there are people inside or if the fire can spread to other houses. The IC will then relay the updated information to radio comms and the crew, and might call for more resources such as fire trucks, hazmat van, Police, Ambulance, and Essential Energy to isolate the power. While the crew prepares to fight the fire, the driver has a series of tasks to complete such as turning the pump on, rolling out the hoses and locating/connecting to water sources. The driver then has to get the BA board which tracks the crew members wearing the breathing apparatus while they're inside the building. It has their names, location, their task, air level, and how long they can safely be in BA. This task is up to the driver to monitor that until there is a BA officer appointed. The BA crew will also conduct buddy checks to make sure everything is put on correctly and no skin is exposed. They will then do radio checks, because once in the fire, they are the only way the IC knows what is going on inside.

In both scenarios, the IC maintains an overview, adjusting the action plan as the scene develops, and remains in regular contact with our fire communication centre in Newcastle, as they may need to call for additional support, and coordinate with other essential services.

What kind of training does the team undergo and how does teamwork play a role in ensuring successful outcomes during fire and rescue operations?

We drill twice a month as a minimum. We also regularly have to update our qualifications on all of our skills such as first aid, breathing apparatus, rescue and flood rescue – just to name a few. Our drills are critical to not only building and maintaining our skills and qualifications, but as an opportunity to build on our teamwork. We learn how to work with each other, so that while on a job, we know each other's strengths and weaknesses. We have a crew of 15 who come from all different backgrounds, varying in age and life experience. Having those differences in a team setting means we are learning all sorts of skills from each other, which makes the team dynamics even stronger. Teamwork and strong communication are the key to making the station work, and for achieving the best outcome for whatever situation we attend. Thankfully, our team gets along really well and works together seamlessly.

Firefighters often have to work long and irregular hours. How do you maintain a work-life balance?

At 388, family is as much a part of the crew as the firefighters. We are a very family friendly station and it isn't unusual for crew to be in the office doing paperwork with the kids in the backyard kicking a soccer ball. Having the support of family also means they understand that sometimes you have to leave at inconvenient times, such as in the middle of dinner, and they know that you might not get home until the early hours of the morning. As a crew we communicate on WhatsApp and have a strong support system for each other. If someone needs a break, they just communicate that, and there is always someone happy to jump in and fill the gap. We

get leave and sick pay and all those benefits, so we can take paid breaks when needed. A lot of us also have a second job too. No firefighter is on 24/7 and it is up to them to find the balance of work, family, and brigade, which is achievable with communication across all parts of their life.

Can you share a memorable or impactful moment you've experienced while on duty?

It's hard to think of just one moment – there are so many things that have happened throughout every crew member's time and experience in the Brigade. Some of our more harrowing experiences have been during the 2019 bushfires seeing the amount of damage done, and the 2022 floods in Mullumbimby where we witnessed our own station, the main street, and so many houses underwater. We spent weeks working with the town and locals to clean up as much as we could, and get our town back.

We also recently celebrated our Centenary. Being a part of the celebrations with the whole town getting involved was so awesome. We also had old 388 members and the Commissioner come for the event, and the town decorated their shops and dressed up. This was such a special moment and it was so nice to share it with everyone.

Can you tell us about any community outreach or fire safety programs in which Station 388 is involved?

388 is proud to be a part of the community and the local events held here. We work with the Chamber of Commerce regularly for events such as the Chinny Charge, Carols by Candlelight, and the street festival held earlier in the year, and we provide fire protection for the demo derby and fireworks at the Mullumbimby Show.

Fire and Rescue NSW and 388 over the years have also held fundraisers for the burns unit at the Childrens' Hospital in Westmead with the Beat the Burn campaign. We also have a huge focus on community education and prevention. We go out and install smoke alarms in the homes of the elderly and speak to them about home fire safety and escape plans. We have programs where we visit kids from pre-school to high school and educate them on fire safety and what to do in the event of an emergency.

There is a lot more to this job than the obvious, like putting out fires and cutting up cars. For someone interested in joining – drop into your local station and have a chat to a firefighter. Ask them about the job and have a think about if it is something that you can do. Go onto the Fire and Rescue website and have a look at the recruitment package and the necessary requirements to begin process. It's also important to chat to your family and see if it is something they are happy to support you in doing. In the last 100 years, Mullumbimby's 388 has seen a million different kinds of jobs. We try and train the best we can for every situation possible – and more. So long as we take the time to brush up on every kind of skill and scenario, we know we will be ready for what ever happens next.

For more information on 388 and to stay up to date with the crew visit Facebook: /mullumbimby.fire.station
To support the Beat the Burn campaign visit: beattheburn.org



Monet Shortland: A voice for our youth and oceans

by Charla Rallings



Pictured: Monet Shortland at the Byron Shire Community Awards.

Monet Shortland, a passionate young environmental advocate and co-founder of Ocean Voices, is inspiring the Northern Rivers community with her drive for ocean conservation and youth empowerment. Since moving to the Byron Shire as a child, Monet has dedicated herself to sustainability initiatives, from leading her school's environmental awareness team to hosting impactful events for World Ocean Day. As a Young Ocean Leader and Youth Collective organiser, she empowers local youth to champion ocean health and make positive, lasting changes in their communities. Recently awarded the Young Community Member of the Year at the 2024 Byron Shire Awards, Monet was recognised for her outstanding contributions to the community, with her love for the Shire and the environment commended. I spoke to Monet to find out more about who she is, her passions, and future visions for the Shire.

How did your passion for the ocean and environmental activism first begin?

I have been lucky enough to call this beautiful place home since I was one. So I have had a whopping 15 years experiencing the beauty of nature and the marine ecosystems of the Bay. Living in such a nurturing environment, with extremely supportive parents and step-parents, I have always been taught to do my best as well as look after the environment – as that is what makes our beautiful home so magical. I developed a type of silent activism, always trying to limit the amount of packaging I consumed, and always picking up my rubbish, as well as other litter around. When the opportunity to become a Young Ocean Leader arose, I didn't hesitate and grabbed it with both hands.

Now, I am the co-founder of Ocean Voices and I am currently transitioning into my first term of Yr12 at Mullumbimby High School. Being elected School Captain, and creating the first

ever environmental awareness team at my school, I plan for 2025 to be filled with opportunities to educate my peers on proper waste management. I also hope to gather with like minded students and create mini projects to be implemented throughout the school (and so far, it has been a blast).

Once I finish my HSC, I would like to go to university, however, I'm aware that there is this weight of assumptions from many that university is the only way to become successful. As a young person, I feel this pressure all the time from teachers and parents, but being a part of community-run initiatives, I have realised that there are many other pathways available to us.

Now that I look over it, my love for the environment and the protection of it has always positively influenced others to do the same. I am extremely grateful that I have had the ability to influence others in this way, and I will forever use this super power to make the world a better place.

As a co-founder of Ocean Voices, and a Young Ocean Leader, can you tell us more about the organisation, how it was formed, and why it is important for young people to get involved in Ocean Health?

Simone, the other co-founder of Ocean Voices, had heard me on BayFM, presenting a speech that I wrote for an English assignment. The speech covered how angry I was at the politicians and their lack of follow-through on climate promises. After being in contact for a very short period of time, there was an opportunity for Simone and I to apply for a grant from the Vincent Fairfax Foundation *Backing the Future, Caring for the Environment Sector*. After being successful applicants, Ocean Voices was formed with the purpose of engaging youth around the Northern Rivers to have more ability to speak out on environmental issues.

As I learned from being on radio, young people have a tendency to be heard as most recognise that the future rests on our shoulders, and we are the future leaders. Before Ocean Voices, there wasn't a platform for young people to talk about the future of our environment, or be educated on the importance of speaking up for issues that matter. Giving young people the ability to be involved, empowers them to speak up, and it is important that we learn these skills so we can become competent future leaders.

How does Ocean Voices support young people to make impactful changes on the future sustainability of our oceans?

Ocean Voices has hosted its first event at the Byron Youth Activity Centre (YAC) in recognition of World Ocean Day. I was the emcee for the event which consisted of three parts: firstly, presentations by key speakers; followed by a group of fantastic panellists; ending with an interactive



workshop to empower students to make their own campaign to stop single use plastic as well as other harmful plastics. It also included mentoring the students on how to create informational yet creative posters. The day was a huge success and everyone left feeling inspired and optimistic. I truly believe that through the right education and access to supportive mentors, young people have the ability to speak out about issues that matter most to them.

Ocean Voices' newest project, the Youth Collective, consists of a group of eight other young students from around the Shire, meeting monthly to discuss projects such as campaigns with Councils, future events, and conducting interviews with local MPs. This is a very exciting time, meeting up and collaborating, and highlights that young people have an important role in solving environmental challenges, and that supporting youth is crucial for this to succeed. It has been a joy being the primary organiser of this Youth Collective.

What advice would you give to young people right now who might like to become advocates for the ocean's health?

If you're keen on advocating for our oceans, my advice is to start with small, consistent actions. Reduce your plastic use by choosing reusable bags, bottles, and packaging, and make a habit of picking up litter, even if it's just a piece or two each day. Look for groups like Ocean Voices or similar community projects to connect with others who share your passion. Use your voice: whether it's at school, on social media, or at local events; speak up for what matters. The more we talk about protecting our environment, the more we inspire others to act, too. Each step you take, no matter how small, contributes to the bigger goal.

You've been volunteering at BayFM for more than two years and have created, produced, and hosted multiple radio shows. How has your experience in this sphere shaped your perspective on community engagement and storytelling?

Being a part of the 'talking heart' of our community (BayFM), has made me treasure how lucky we are to have such active and engaged locals who primarily focus on doing their best for the community. I have been surrounded by kind souls, such as my much loved mentor Rasela – host of *The Belly Show* on BayFM, who has supported me in co-creating the *Young Legends* flood podcast. I have been taught by the best and the boldest, and have gone up to strangers and interviewed them on the streets of Byron, as well as close family and friends.

I am a naturally curious person who, even when working at the newsagents, can turn a small conversation into a mini interview. I truly believe that no matter what your story, you deserve to be heard. Being on radio has given me a voice that I can share with my community and in doing so, I have understood the importance of this voice. It has made me realise how crucial it is for young people to stand up about their passion. Meeting other young passionate environmentalists within the Shire and hearing all their

opinions about what is happening to the state of the environment, and listening to the solutions they share, proves to me how beneficial Ocean Voices is. We can all now share the weight of the future and work to create solutions today.

Being awarded Young Community Member of the Year is an amazing achievement. What does this recognition mean to you and what are your plans for the future?

It's an honour to have been recognised within my community for all the work I have done. This accolade has only fueled my passion, commitment and enthusiasm to continue being an influence within my community and to work harder to preserve the environment.

For the next year, while completing my final year of school, I plan to continue engaging with my community, and being a part of Ocean Voices. My focus will be on making sure young people know about the prevalent opportunities that are available within the community, and I will continue to provide a listening ear at the regular Youth collective meetings. Together, we will make sure that our community is doing its best to protect the ocean – and that we are too.

If you would like more information about the Youth Collective, visit website: oceanvoices.com.au/ or visit Instagram: @oceanvoices01

BALLINA Players Look what's coming... **2025**

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<p>SPAMALOT AUG 22 - SEP 7 Directed by Pippin Goodsell</p>	<p>GEORGY GIRL the Sockers musical NOV 7-30 Directed by Paul Belsham & Leanne Broadley</p>	<p>DEC 19-21 Directed by Peter & Karen Harding</p>

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Rich Christmas fruit cake

by Brunswick Heads CWA



No Christmas is complete without a delicious fruit cake.

Ingredients

- 450g butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 10 eggs

- 450g of sultanas, currants, raisins
- 125g mixed peel
- 115g of chopped pitted dates and glace cherries
- 45g chopped preserved ginger and dried figs
- 55g chopped pitted prunes and blanched almonds
- 1 tbsp orange zest
- 1/4 tsp fresh grated ginger
- 3 1/2 cups of flour
- 1 tsp bi-carb, cinnamon, and mixed spice
- 1/4 of nutmeg, curry powder, and salt
- 1 1/2 cup of rum
- 1 tsp of vanilla, almond, and lemon essence.

Method

1. Cream butter and sugar in a bowl.
2. Beat the eggs well, and add to the butter and sugar mix. Combine.
3. In a separate bowl, mix the fruits, nuts, ginger and orange zest.
4. Sift together the flour with bi-carb and add the spices.
5. Add the fruits to the butter mixture alternately with the flour, mixing well before adding more.
6. Add 1/2 a cup of rum and the essences, stir to combine.
7. Spoon into a greased tin and bake for five hours at 160 degrees.
8. Remove cake from oven and pour over 1 cup of rum. Cool in tin.

Don't let heat spoil your Christmas feast

With Christmas celebrations coinciding with peak summer heat in Australia, it's crucial to handle food safely to avoid spoilage and food poisoning.

Keep it cool and keep it hot

Store cold foods like prawns, oysters, and salads below 5°C until serving time. Using ice trays or eskies for outdoor gatherings is a good idea to keep your food cold. For any hot dishes, like roast turkey or ham, serve it right away or keep it warm in the oven until ready to serve. When outdoors, it's also a good idea to cover food with cling-film, foil, or a food net, to keep off any flies and bugs.

Avoid cross-contamination

In the mayhem of prepping your Christmas feast, it can be easy to cross-contaminate, especially when there are too many cooks in the kitchen. Remember to use separate utensils and boards for raw meats, especially seafood, and try and keep track of them. Cleaning as you cook can also prevent this.

Leftovers rule

Any leftovers should be refrigerated quickly and used within the next couple of days.

Stay mindful of food temperatures, and you'll have a safe, delicious summer feast.

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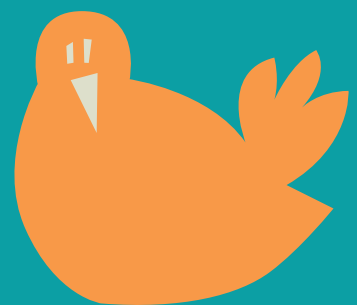
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Pictured: Tweed Holiday Parks. Source: Supplied.

Tweed Holiday Parks Tweed Heads

reviewed by Milt Barlow

I'm a great fan of the southern Gold Coast. It's a fabulous weekend, or extended, getaway destination for the family, and only an hour's drive (or less) from the Northern Rivers. While we often think about hotels, motels, and apartments for holiday accommodation, don't overlook the value and convenience of a caravan/holiday park. And these days, you don't need to have a caravan or tent to stay at some of the best ones.

Tweed Holiday Parks Tweed Heads is one of seven holiday parks in the Tweed Holiday Parks group. Located just across the border in Tweed Heads, the park offers a delightful blend of natural beauty, relaxed atmosphere, and family-friendly amenities. It's a five to six minute drive to Cooly Beach, and right on the river.

Recently, I was fortunate to spend a night at one of their delightful three bedroom bungalows. These are perfect for the family, or two couples looking to have a getaway. The air conditioned bungalow was spacious with three bedrooms, two of which hold double beds, and the other with two single beds. Complete with two spacious bathrooms, including the main bedroom ensuite, the bungalow also had a fully equipped kitchen, a comfy lounge room with TV, private parking, and a big outdoor deck.

This holiday park caters to a variety of accommodation needs – from spacious powered sites for caravans and campers, to more luxurious options such as self-contained cabins and villas. For those staying on powered sites, the grounds are well-maintained, with plenty of shade and grassy areas. Whether you're a seasoned camper or prefer the comfort of a cabin, the park offers a good selection to suit different preferences and budgets.

One of the highlights of this holiday park, is its range of facilities designed to enhance guests' experience. The park

boasts a well-maintained temperature controlled swimming pool with slide, perfect for a refreshing dip after a day at the beach. There's also a large, modern camp kitchen with BBQ facilities, allowing guests to prepare meals in a relaxed outdoor setting. For families with children, the park offers playgrounds and ample open space for the kids to explore and enjoy.

Another notable feature is the well-kept amenities block. Clean, spacious, and regularly maintained, the showers and toilets are of a high standard, providing comfort and convenience for guests staying in powered sites and cabins. Additionally, there is an on-site laundry which is handy for longer stays.

This park offers direct access to the river with a private boat ramp to the Terranorra inlet, where you can enjoy activities like fishing, kayaking, or simply relaxing by the water. The surrounding area also boasts a number of walking and cycling tracks, ideal for those who enjoy outdoor exploration.

Overall, Tweed Holiday Parks Tweed Heads is an affordable, well-equipped, and family-friendly option for those looking to stay in Tweed Heads and the southern Gold Coast area.

For more information, visit: tweedholidayparks.com.au/location/tweed-heads

ACCOMMODATION



LOCATION



STAFF



VALUE FOR \$



WOULD I RETURN



OVERALL



Author was a guest of Tweed Holiday Parks Tweed Heads.



Kids Corner

Jokes

- Q. What do elves learn in school?
A. The elf-abet.
- Q. Why did Santa go to music school?
A. So he could improve his wrapping skills.
- Q. What kind of photos do elves take?
A. Elfies.
- Q. Why was the Christmas tree so bad at knitting?
A. It kept dropping its needles.
- Q. What do you call a snowman's dog?
A. A slush puppy.
- Q. What do you call a greedy elf?
A. Elfish.
- Q. Why did Rudolph get a bad grade?
A. Because he went down in history.

Christmas Wordsearch

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

- Word list:
- BELLS
 - CANDLES
 - CHRISTMAS
 - FAMILY
 - GIFT
 - JINGLE
 - MERRY
 - REINDEER
 - SLEIGH
 - SNOWMAN



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- FRI 06 Raffles + 10 EXTRA Hams @ 6.30pm
- FRI 13 Raffles + 10 EXTRA Hams @ 6.30pm
- SAT 14 "MEGA" HAM RAFFLES - 60 x Hams 6.30pm
- TUE 17 HAM RAFFLES - 40 x Hams @ 6.30pm
- FRI 20 Raffles + 10 EXTRA Hams @ 6.30pm...& then...
- FRI 20 LIVE MUSIC: 7.30pm - "EPIC"
- TUE 24 SEAFOOD Raffles @ 2pm - \$1,750 worth!
- SAT 28 LIVE MUSIC: 7pm - "The FERAMONES"



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A night to shine: Creative Arts Showcase

by Jessica Eke, Head Teacher CAPA, Mullumbimby High School



Pictured: Mullumbimby High School CAPA Showcase. Source: Supplied.

This year's Creative and Performing Arts Showcase (CAPA) was an unforgettable celebration of our students' talent, dedication, and creativity. The evening offered an incredible opportunity for each participant to shine, and it was inspiring to see their hard work so beautifully presented to an enthusiastic audience of families, teachers, and friends.

The event began with a professionally curated art exhibition, displayed across multiple rooms to highlight the range and sophistication of each piece. From the stunning HSC major works – showcasing impressive technical skill and personal expression – to vibrant and imaginative works

from younger students, the exhibition was true testament to the talent within our school. A special highlight was the large-scale jellyfish installation created by Yr8 students, designed to raise awareness about plastic waste. This intricate and powerful piece reflected artistic skill and a commitment to important environmental issues.


The musical performances that followed were equally captivating. Students from Yrs 7–12 took the stage, delivering a diverse array of solos and ensemble pieces that filled the room with energy and emotion. It was inspiring to witness the bravery and confidence these young musicians displayed as they performed in front of a large audience of their peers, families, and teachers. Each performance showcased the students' passion, skill, and hard work, creating a truly celebratory atmosphere that left the audience cheering.

Drama performances by Yr10 and Yr12 students added depth and intensity to the evening. Through compelling

monologues and engaging scenes, the students demonstrated their ability to portray complex emotions and stories with maturity and conviction. Each performance drew the audience into its unique world, illustrating the students' growth as performers and their commitment to their craft.

The entire showcase was testament to our students' exceptional talents and to the dedication of the CAPA Faculty. It was a joy to see each student excel in an atmosphere that celebrated creativity and achievement. The pride felt by parents, teachers, and friends was unmistakable, making this year's event a truly memorable celebration of the arts in our school community.

A heartfelt thank you to the large audience of families, friends, and teachers who attended and supported our students and the CAPA Faculty. Your presence and enthusiasm made the evening even more special and memorable for everyone, with grateful thanks to the CAPA Faculty, MHS.




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Celebrating outstanding HSC achievements

by Cape Byron Rudolf Steiner School



Pictured: Lottie, creator of contemporary easel study desk. Source: Supplied.

We are immensely proud of every student who completed their HSC exams this year. It is testament to the unique spirit of innovation, passion, and dedication that thrives at our school, on every level, through the students educational journey.

We are so pleased that our students have been recognised by the assessors of HSC Exams, from the NSW Department of Education across all of NSW. Celebrating an extraordinary 11 nominations for exemplary works across a variety of disciplines, (except Art which hasn't been assessed as yet), these nominations are an acknowledgment of the dedication, creativity, and hard work of our students and the support of their teachers and families.

Young Writers Showcase English Extension 2, nomination

Creative non-fiction composition, *Apoptosis*, is a piece which examines the effect of illness on the family dynamic in a creative, lyrical and darkly humorous style. This work drew on the student's love of science, framing the deleterious effects of trauma on the family unit with the cellular disintegration process of the eponymous *apoptosis* function in the human cell. The result is beautifully crafted, moving and deeply personal, yet appealing to any reader who has experienced significant family trauma.

This work demonstrates the student's commitment to achieving excellence in the Extension 2 course, being the result of months of work over several drafts.

Encore - Music nomination

The student was recognised for exceptional talent as a singer and songwriter. The student's powerful voice and emotional depth have made a lasting impact on peers, teachers, and audiences alike. This nomination highlights the student's versatility as a performer, ability to connect deeply with music, and a passion for creating meaningful work. If selected, the student will have the extraordinary opportunity to perform at the Sydney Opera House.

Shape - Design and Technology three nominations

The nominations include a contemporary easel study desk, developed after recognising the staggering 48,000 tonnes of furniture discarded in Australia each year. There was an eco-conscious surfboard design, developed after concerns with the environmental impact of traditional surfboard materials such as fibreglass and foam. The student developed a board made from a recycled surfboard blank, with paulownia wooden skins and cork rails. Lastly, a student developed a busking guitar case, which addresses the needs of street performers. The all-in-one design incorporates an inbuilt amp, speakers, and a money pocket, allowing buskers to perform with ease and efficiency.

OnStage - Drama, seven nominations

Students delivered outstanding performances in Drama. Nominations included a solo performance that interwove historical and creation stories of the Solomon Islands. A powerful adaptation of *Prima Facie*, a two-hour play, was transformed into an intense eight-minute performance inspired by the devastating impact of domestic and family violence.

Additionally, a group performance received a nomination for their self-devised physical theatre piece, exploring the heartbreaking journeys of individuals whose experience of love had spiralled into abuse. Their raw portrayal of this deeply human experience moved the audience.

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End of year fun at Byron Bay Public School

by Nicky Greenlaw, teacher, BBPS



Pictured: Mae and Bronte at the colour fun run. Source: Supplied.

Colour Fun Run

A vibrant array of fluorescent colours was on display in the back playground for the first ever Colour Fun Run to be organised at our school. It was a fabulous afternoon of fun and fitness, with Chase the Cheetah making an appearance and encouraging students to run the course. Those who rose to the challenge were showered with

different non-toxic coloured powders as they ran. This activity was a fundraising initiative of the P&C who worked tirelessly with students and staff to ensure its success. The money raised will go towards purchasing some exciting new playground equipment at the school.

Grandparents/Grand Friends Day

Celebrating grandparents is always a special event at Byron Bay Public School and this year was no exception. The morning started with a whole school assembly under the COLA where visitors were entertained by our wonderful intermediate and senior school bands and Kindergarten sang a delightful song. This was followed by classroom visits where students led their grandparents and grand

friends to their classrooms to join in the morning's activities. After a busy session, grandparents were provided with a delicious morning tea in our school hall where they were treated to a musical repertoire from each of our Stage 1 and Stage 2 Choirs. It was a memorable morning for all involved.

Kindergarten Orientation

Yr5 students were excited to meet their Kindergarten buddies for 2025. The new Kindergarten cohort had a fun day getting to know their friendly buddies and the school environment in preparation for a smooth transition next February. We look forward to welcoming new students and their families to our school next year. Anyone who has yet to enrol can call the school office to arrange a visit.

Tackling homelessness through innovative solutions

by St John's Mullumbimby



Stage 3 students tackle homelessness through innovative solutions

At St John's Mullumbimby, our Stage 3 students embarked on a journey to understand how environmental factors shape the way we live in the Northern Rivers. Through their learning, they delved into the features of places, the environmental impacts that shape and change places, the environmental influences on lifestyle, and people's connections to places. This comprehensive investigation led them to identify a critical local issue: homelessness.

The students began by examining the unique features of the Northern Rivers and how environmental aspects such as climate, natural disasters, and urban development impact.

They investigated how such changes can affect housing stability

and availability and looked into how socio-economic factors, as well as environmental challenges, can lead to housing insecurity.

Motivated by their findings, the students turned their focus to solutions. They were particularly inspired to address the issue of homelessness in their local community. Through brainstorming and research, they developed innovative ideas for tiny homes and shared facilities. These solutions aimed to provide sustainable, affordable housing options that could withstand environmental challenges, while fostering a sense of community, connection, and stability.

The culmination of their hard work was a presentation to Byron Shire Council Mayor Sarah Ndiaye, and other Council staff members who work in the area of homelessness and housing affordability. The students showcased their ideas with conviction, proposing practical and compassionate solutions to homelessness. Their innovative approach and dedication were met with admiration, proving that even young minds can contribute significantly to solving complex local issues.

At St John's Mullumbimby, we are incredibly proud of our Stage 3 students. Their commitment to learning and their drive to make a positive impact exemplify the values we cherish. Their project not only raised awareness but also offered hope and feasible solutions to a pressing community problem. We look forward to seeing these bright students continue to shine and lead with compassion and creativity.

Artist Profile: The Versace Boys

by Emma Setterfield-Smith



The Versace Boys are the magnetic duo comprising Will Henderson and Alex Johnson. The two have built a unique musical identity through their energetic performances and an unfiltered approach to life and art.

The story of Versace Boys (who only wear designer) began in an unexpected place – Berlin. Will and Alex met at a Sticky Fingers concert in 2019, a chance encounter that led to the creation of their first single, *Gin & Cucumber*, written during a sunset session in a park. Both artists come from musical families, but they forged their path in Europe’s vibrant music

scene before returning to Australia.

‘We began busking around Byron and Mullum after leaving massive shows with other bands in Europe. We started playing each other’s songs and Coasty (Alex) got me freestyling. We started recording and videoing ourselves to get better,’ Will commented.

Drawing inspiration from a wide variety of genres and artists, ranging from Snoop Dog to Bill Withers, the Versace Boys’ artistry embodies a blend of humour and introspection.

Despite the playful nature of many of their songs, they aren’t afraid to explore deeper emotions. One of their most personal tracks is *Vains*, a song that took Alex a long time to come to terms with emotionally. ‘Some songs you have to battle with to make happen,’ Alex reflects. ‘*Vains* hit me hard in the feels, and every time I play it, it brings up so much emotion.’

The duo thrives on spontaneity and raw creativity, frequently relying on freestyle and improvisation during live shows. ‘We often do three-hour gigs where the first two sets were completely freestyle,’ Will reveals. ‘Our show has become a whole heap more flamboyant, and less politically correct of late. We used to worry about what people would think, but if we are true to our own comedic satire, people froth harder than if we tone it down.’

In the studio, they also push boundaries with marathon recording sessions. ‘We go for five days straight, fueled by adaptogenic mushrooms and 70,000 coffees,’ Alex explained. ‘By the end of it, our new EP has taken shape.’

The duo has experienced numerous career highlights, playing at iconic festivals like Splendour in the Grass, Party in the Paddock, and they are favourite in the Australian ‘Doof’ scene. They are booked to play Strawberry Fields and Culture jam festivals later on in the year, have just landed a huge Google ad featuring their track *Nails*, and have signed their debut album *Get Rich or Cry Trying* to Origin records and which was released on 8 November.

Both artists are deeply inspired by their personal lives and the world around them. For Alex, music is a form of healing and expression. ‘When I’m deeply moved, I express that through music,’ he shares. ‘Music is powerful. If someone who loves my music hears it, it could save, inspire and heal.’

Similarly for Will, ‘Living in Berlin for 10 years was incredible, but being here with the beautiful air, waves and crew has helped my mindset massively.’

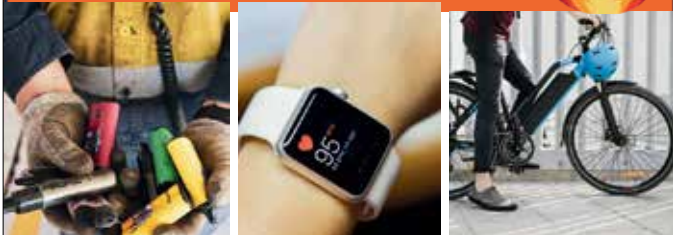
With their infectious energy, unique sound and a commitment to staying true to themselves, the Versace Boys are destined to make waves not just in Australia, but around the world.

Instagram: @theversaceboys



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Work Of Art for local artists



Pictured: (left-right) Suzanne Whiteman and Susan Fell, *Blackwall Range Ballina*. Source: Andy Bambach.

Three remarkable local artists – Susan Fell, Charlotte Haywood, and Suzanne Whiteman – were successful applicants for the Work of Art (WOA) program, a Regional Arts NSW (RANSW) initiative supported by Women NSW. Designed to empower regional female artists, WOA provided a dynamic platform with professional development, mentorship, peer support, and networking. Regional Arts NSW CEO Tracey Callinan, developed the WOA program to address issues of access and equity for regional female artists, who historically, have been side-lined in creative industries.

In November, these artists participated in the Work of Art Showcase and Forum held in Orange, NSW, alongside 80 other women artists from across the state. As a culmination of the 17 month WOA program, the showcase offered an opportunity for the artists to share their work and foster meaningful conversations about the future of regional arts.

Local participant Suzanne Whiteman stated, ‘Tracey has been amazing in delivering the program – mindful, considerate, caring, creative, and inclusive. She has nurtured all of us and it has been fantastic to be part of the WOA Cohort, as she so lovingly refers to us.’

Featuring the creative practice of 80 women from across NSW, many varied art forms were represented, including film making, projections, textiles, music, dance and various forms of creative and visual arts. There was also a cabaret, pechakucha, workshops, and panel discussions, all designed for the participants to share the process of their artistic expressions and practices. Each artist brought something distinctive to the showcase.

Susan Fell from Byron Shire, and Suzanne Whiteman of Ballina Shire, collaborated on a contemporary documentary shot among the eucalyptus of Suzanne’s Blackwall Range property in Ballina. Titled *Praxis: Work of Art*, the short film is part performing arts, land art, with usage of textiles. Susan Fell, a contemporary textile artist and owner of Gondwana Slow Textiles Studio in Mullumbimby, utilised her knowledge of traditional Japanese shibori techniques and eucalyptus dyeing to advocate for conscious consumerism, and art practices that have sustainable principles as core values. Blending local film production and the contributions of fellow WOA participants, including Dungog sound artist Jane Richens, pianist and composer Keva Abotomey from Goulbourn, with production

from local Andy Bambach of In your Face Productions, the film conveyed a message of active hope, deep connection to land, and joy in creativity and collaboration. Suzanne also performed in the cabaret and taught an inclusive dance workshop.

Charlotte Haywood, an interdisciplinary artist from Byron Shire, showcased a selection of her diverse works. Her pieces included a unique sculptural tapestry weaving as well as an assemblage of video installations that explore themes central to her creative expression. Adding depth to her exhibit is a mini-documentary about her artistic process, crafted by local filmmaker Hamish McCormick, offering viewers an intimate look at her creative journey and the stories behind her work.

All the women took part in panel discussions, each bringing unique insights from their disciplines. Charlotte contributed to a panel titled *Regional Women: The Pros and Cons of Regional Practice*, while Susan lead the *Slow Textiles* panel. Suzanne, alongside panel chair Lois Randall of Magpie Pictures, spoke on the *WOA Film Showcase and Panel* film, and hosted a disability arts workshop.

For more information visit: regionalartsnsw.com.au



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From thinning to thriving: Understanding hair loss

By Dr. Adam Ellerby, GP specialising in Hair Restoration, Mercato Medical



Hair loss can be a distressing experience, affecting self-confidence and quality of life for many men and women. As a GP specialising in hair loss treatments, I often see patients struggling with *androgenic alopecia*, commonly known as male or female pattern baldness. This is one of the most common causes of hair loss, affecting around 50% of men by age 50 and a significant number of women, particularly after menopause. This genetic condition is linked to the hormone DHT, which weakens hair follicles over time, leading to shorter growth cycles and, eventually, hair loss.

Understanding the condition

In men, *androgenic alopecia* typically begins in the 20s or 30s, often presenting as a receding hairline or thinning at the crown. For women, it usually starts with diffuse thinning at the central parting, becoming more pronounced over time. Though it's sometimes dismissed as a cosmetic issue, hair loss can have a profound impact on emotional well-being, affecting self-esteem and occasionally contributing to anxiety or depression.

Supporting hair health through lifestyle

While lifestyle adjustments alone can't reverse *androgenic alopecia*, they can help slow its progression. I recommend a balanced diet rich in biotin, zinc, and iron to support hair health. Managing stress, which has been linked to hair thinning, can also make a difference – activities like meditation or yoga can be beneficial. Additionally, avoiding tight hairstyles that put excessive tension on hair follicles can help prevent further breakage.

Treatment options for *androgenic alopecia*

There are several effective treatment options available:

- Medications: Two medications – minoxidil and finasteride – have shown lasting benefits for many individuals. Minoxidil, available over the counter or on prescription, increases blood flow to the scalp, promoting regrowth and slowing hair loss. Finasteride, primarily used by men, reduces DHT levels, which can slow follicle shrinkage and sometimes encourage regrowth.
- Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Therapy: This involves using the patient's own blood to create a plasma rich in growth factors, which is injected into the scalp. PRP therapy shows promise for stimulating hair follicles, though results can vary, and multiple sessions may be needed.
- Emerging therapies: Exosome therapy is a newer treatment option. It uses micro-needling alongside topically applied exosomes to deliver proteins that encourage follicle regeneration. While still in early stages, initial studies suggest it may improve hair density and prolong the hair growth cycle.
- Hair transplants: For those seeking a more permanent solution, hair transplants can be effective. This procedure involves relocating hair follicles from areas resistant to DHT-related thinning. While this approach often delivers natural-looking results, it's essential to maintain surrounding natural hair to ensure the transplant blends seamlessly.

Androgenic alopecia can be a challenging condition, but there is a wide range of treatment options available today offering hope. Consulting a healthcare professional can help determine the best approach – whether it's medication, PRP, exosome therapy, or a combination of treatments. With ongoing advancements in the field, there are more options than ever for those facing hair loss, allowing for a tailored approach that fits each individual's needs.

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Gut health mistakes

By Reed Nutrition, Byron Bay

The gut plays a pivotal role in your overall health, influencing everything from digestion to immune function and mood regulation. Poor gut health can manifest in various symptoms, including abdominal discomfort, irregular bowel movements, low energy, and even skin issues. Maintaining good gut health is often the key to overall well-being, but sometimes, in our enthusiasm to optimise our digestive system, we can make some missteps.

Many people fall into the trap of thinking that more is better. Whether it's loading up on probiotic supplements or consuming copious amounts of fermented foods like kombucha and sauerkraut, the belief that overindulgence equates to better gut health can lead to unnecessary measures. In reality, if you don't have any specific digestive issues, you likely don't need probiotic supplements. Similarly, you don't need to overconsume fermented foods to maintain a healthy gut. Keeping it simple by incorporating a variety of plant-based foods into your diet and consuming small amounts of fermented foods daily can often suffice.

It is important to note that long-term neglect of your gut health can increase your risk for developing certain conditions including chronic constipation, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), Gastro-oesophageal Reflux Disease (GORD) and Diverticular Disease. These conditions can significantly impact your daily life but often can be improved and managed through dietary and lifestyle interventions.

What can you eat for general gut health?

Here are a few standout foods that can support a healthy gut.

- Oats – loaded with soluble fibre known as beta-glucan, oats serve as a prebiotic, fueling the growth of beneficial gut bacteria.
- Black Beans – protein-rich and packed with prebiotics, black beans are an excellent choice for gut health.
- Walnuts – high in fibre and a good source of (plant-based) omega-3 fatty acids, walnuts possess anti-inflammatory properties that can benefit gut health.
- Chia seeds – rich in fibre and other essential nutrients like calcium, chia seeds can aid in digestion and promote regular bowel movements.
- Broccoli – this cruciferous vegetable contains fermentable carbohydrates that stimulate the production of beneficial fatty acids, supporting gut health and reducing inflammation.

Maintaining good gut health is essential for general well-being. Avoid over-indulging in supplements or fermented foods, and instead, focus on a balanced diet rich in fibre and diverse plant-based foods to support a healthy gut microbiome.

If you think you might have one of the above mentioned conditions, see your GP and dietitian for individualised investigations and advice.

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Common aging diseases in cats: Part 2

by North Coast Veterinary Services



As cats age, they become more prone to various health conditions, many of which can affect their comfort and quality of life. Last month in Part 1, we covered hyperthyroidism, chronic renal failure, and osteoarthritis. This month we will be focussing on other health challenges aging cats face, such as diabetes, pancreatitis, and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Early detection of these diseases is key to effective management, ensuring your cat enjoys a happy and healthy senior life.

What is diabetes in cats?

Diabetes mellitus is when the body doesn't respond properly to insulin, leading to high blood sugar levels. Diabetes is a growing concern in aging cats, especially those which are overweight or obese. While it is manageable, early detection is critical to avoid serious complications. If you suspect diabetes, visit your veterinarian for blood and urine tests to confirm the diagnosis. Treatment typically involves insulin therapy, diet adjustments, and regular monitoring of blood glucose levels to keep the disease under control.

Like hyperthyroidism and kidney disease, diabetes causes increased drinking and urination as the body tries to eliminate excess sugar through urine. Cats with diabetes often lose weight even if they eat more, as their bodies cannot efficiently process nutrients. Diabetic cats may

become weak and lethargic due to their cells not receiving the glucose needed for energy. A cat with untreated diabetes may also have a poorly groomed coat, and some may develop dandruff or flaky skin. In severe cases, diabetic neuropathy can cause cats to walk on their hocks (the back part of the legs), a sign of nerve damage caused by high blood sugar levels.

What is Pancreatitis?

Pancreatitis involves inflammation of the pancreas, leading to vomiting, diarrhoea, and appetite loss. Treatment focuses on managing symptoms and supportive care. Special low allergen diets, steroids, and anti-nausea medications are used to suppress the inflammation, control and symptoms and tackle the underlying issues causing the pancreatitis.

What is Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)?

IBD is a chronic condition affecting digestion, causing gastrointestinal issues such as vomiting and diarrhoea. Diet modification and anti-inflammatory medications can help manage symptoms. The anti-inflammatory, low allergen diets we use for IBD management are specially formulated to minimise the body's over-reaction to proteins and to settle the gastrointestinal symptoms. IBD comes in a number of forms and some patients respond better to one diet than another so we may trial a few diets to get the treatment right. Supportive care may also involve steroids, antibiotics and probiotics, depending on the underlying cause.

As your cat ages, recognising the signs of common diseases can make a significant difference in their quality of life. While many of these conditions share similar symptoms, early detection through regular veterinary check-ups and blood tests can help manage these diseases effectively.

By keeping an eye on your cat's health and seeking veterinary care when necessary, you can ensure your aging feline companion remains comfortable, happy, and active well into their senior years.

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Pet of the month

by Northern Rivers Animal Services



Owner: Chris and Sarah
Pet Name: Digger
Age: Three years
Breed: Blue Heeler cross
Nickname: Digsy or Digs
Favourite Food: Chicken
Favourite Toy: Black Tug Toy

What does this pet love?

Loves a cuddle on the couch, a tummy scratch, or a ride in the van with his nose out of the window.

Further info on this pet:

Digger (formerly known as Shadow) was in care with NRAS. We saw his profile on the group's website and really wanted to meet him so we went along to one of the monthly adoption days. We were able to spend some time with Digger, take him for a walk, and hang out in the exercise yard sizing each other up. The three of us just felt right.

Why are they a great addition to the family?

Digger is a beautiful, affectionate, smart boy whom we adore. He has

a bit of a naughty side which we are currently working on with training.

Looking to foster or adopt a companion animal?

Drop into the regular Adoption Days at the NRAS Rescue Shelter, 61 Piper Drive, Ballina, on the 1st Saturday of the month, 10am – 1pm. Our last Adoption Day of 2024 will be on 7 December, 10am – 1pm.

NRAS Christmas events

Bunnings Ballina Family Christmas Evening and NRAS info stall – 5 December. Contact us for more details on ph: 6681 1860 or email: shelter@nras.org.au or visit the website: nras.org.au

Festive dog treats

These treats are perfect for celebrating the silly season with our furry friends while keeping their health in mind. Made with simple ingredients like oats, pumpkin, and peanut butter, these biscuits are gentle on dogs' tummies and bring a boost of fibre and vitamins. You can even shape them with festive cookie cutters for an extra holiday touch.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole wheat flour (or oat flour for grain-sensitive pups)
- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin (unsweetened)
- 1/4 cup peanut butter (unsalted, xylitol-free)
- 2 eggs

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a baking sheet with bake-paper.
2. Mix all ingredients in a bowl until a dough forms.
3. Roll out the dough and cut into shapes with a cookie cutter. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until firm.
4. Let cool and serve as a fun, wholesome holiday treat.
For added fun, place the treats in a zip lock bag, wrap it and place it under the tree, presenting it to your pup on Christmas morning.

Please note: this recipe is generally safe for dogs, as it uses ingredients that are well-tolerated by most pups. Just ensure the peanut butter is free from xylitol, which is toxic to dogs. Whole wheat flour is digestible for many dogs, but if yours has grain sensitivities, oat flour can be substituted. Always consult your vet for dietary advice specific to your dog, especially if they have any known food sensitivities.

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Stay off the Dunes



Pictured: Beach stone-curlew, Clarkes Beach. Source: Supplied.

Byron Shire Council, along with Marine Parks, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Byron Bird Buddies have requested that beach goers stay off the dunes this summer as it coincides with the shorebird breeding season.

Working together, the goal is to protect endangered (and critically endangered) shorebird species, who have taken up residence and nesting spaces along the Byron coastline.

Chloe Dowsett, Coast and Biodiversity Coordinator, said, 'We were all so thrilled to see a pair of critically endangered Beach stone-curlews nesting in the dunes on Clarkes Beach, as there are only 13 breeding pairs in NSW.'

Their nests are just a small area of scraped sand and we have fenced the area off and put signage up warning people to stay away.'

Ms Dowsett also highlighted that it's so important that these birds are not disturbed, as they only lay one egg and the chick is cared for by both parents for seven to 12 months. 'We are hoping people will do the right thing and play their part in helping these special birds expand their family.'

On other beaches, Spotted Pardalotes and Rainbow Bee-eaters have been sighted nesting in the dunes. Byron Bird Buddies recently rescued a group of baby Bee-eaters as the area surrounding their nest was being damaged by people trampling and climbing on the exposed dune.

'All of these precious birds are easily disturbed by walkers, joggers, and especially dogs, so we are asking people to be aware and take extra care when they are on the beach,' Ms Dowsett said.

To help shorebirds people should:

- keep to the inter-tidal zone near the water's edge
- stay off dunes and especially away from fenced areas that are protecting nest sites
- exercise dogs only in designated dog areas.

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



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Safe disposal of embedded battery products

by NEwaste

Products with embedded batteries are becoming increasingly prevalent in our everyday lives. They are problematic to dispose of, or recycle, due to the different components and materials they are made of. As they can't safely be removed, extra care is required when discarding of these products.

What to do with an item that has an embedded battery?

A new two year trial funded by the NSW Government has been established to accept products with embedded batteries and it's free.

There are 21 drop-off locations across NSW including one location in the Northern Rivers at the Lismore Recycling and Recovery Centre, 313 Wyrallah Road, East Lismore, open

7:30am – 3:30pm Monday to Friday and 9am – 4pm Saturday and Sunday.

What's accepted?

Bluetooth speakers and headphones, electric toothbrushes, e-scooters, e-bikes and hover boards, and flashing/light up toys – particularly wands or other hard plastic products. They also accept personal care devices such as shavers and other items like powerpacks and portable charging devices, remote controlled and ride-on toys, vacuum cleaners (cordless hand-held and robotic), vapes, and wearable devices such as smart watches, trackers, and medical aids.

For more information on the trial, head to the NSW EPA's Embedded Batteries website: epa.nsw.gov.au

What to do with other batteries?

If they can easily be removed from a product, you can take those batteries to your local Community Recycling Centre: newaste.org.au/crc-online.html or to any Coles, Woolworths, ALDI or Bunnings drop-off location. Find these on: bcycle.com.au/drop-off/

Christmas is coming, and with it, all those gifts with embedded or loose batteries. Battery fires are a real issue. To keep your family and community safe always discard them correctly.

Remember all types of batteries, particularly lithium-ion batteries, are a potential fire risk and should never be disposed of in your kerbside red, yellow or green bins.

Join NSW TurtleWatch by Australian Seabird and Turtle Rescue



Pictured: Turtle hatchling. Source: @merryndunleavy.

Do you love sea turtles? Are you a regular beach walker? With turtle nesting season right around the corner, we need beachgoers to turn their

regular walks on the beach, into important datasets to help save the turtles. We are asking beachgoers to become citizen scientists and monitor their local beaches along the NSW coastline, from the Tweed to the Wollongong area.

Sea turtle nesting season runs from November to March along the NSW coastline and citizen scientists undertaking beach surveys are pivotal to recording where the tracks are, determining species and identifying where possible nests are located. The collection of this data is used to assess the suitability of NSW beaches as viable nesting sites in the future. The early detection of turtle nests is vital in ensuring their protection, with only one in every 1,000 turtle hatchlings surviving to maturity. So, every nest that is protected will make an impact on the survival of our sea turtle species.

Sign up to one of our training workshops today. All you need is a smartphone and a love of turtles. We look forward to having you onboard the TurtleWatch Team. For more information or to join visit: seabirdrescue.org.au/projects

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from Albo & Justine

Albo & Justine's list for Byron Shire

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Byron CoLab (old hospital site)

COMPLETED!

Upgrading mobile reception

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What a year for basketball

by James Short, Byron Bay Basketball Association

As another year comes to an end, it is always great to look back on what has been accomplished. At Byron Bay Basketball Association (BBBA), there is a deep appreciation for all the amazing people who make up this incredible sporting community – from the players, coaches, managers, referees, to parents and carers, supporters, officials, and sponsors. 2024 has had some huge wins and milestones achieved at the Club. Here is a snapshot of 2024.

Our Domestic Juniors are made up from our Aussie Hoops program, Primary School Competition, and High School competition, aging from 5-18 yrs old, boys and girls. We have over 43 teams and each week they battle it out on the court. The last week of November saw the Finals weekend with over 200 people attending throughout the day.

For Juniors wanting to further develop their skills and talents, the North Coast Shield was once again a huge highlight. With over 15 teams, we had more players wanting to join than we were allowed by each Club – a testament to the love of the game. There was also the North Eastern Junior League Representative Competition – this is

the highest club level a Junior can play before they get selected on a State or National level – and this year BBBA represented the community loud and proud. We filled over nine teams, with three of those teams making it all the way to NSW State Cup – this being the U14 Boys, U18 Girls and U18 Boys. A number of these players also refereed and coached Junior teams, so a special shout out to them as their love for the game is infectious. Finally on the Juniors, we had the following players making NSW State and NSW Country Rep teams, these being Jye Barlow, Ethan Johnston, Jere lmasuen, Billy Blair and Lilly Short.

Whilst the Juniors battled it out, our Seniors team also showcased some exciting basketball. We had a Pool A and B Mens Competition, alongside our newly launched Mix Comp. A total of 16 teams play it out each week. In September, we saw a successful BBBA Seniors Carnival tip off, with teams coming from all over the globe to play at the Cavanbah Centre in Byron.

Men and Womens teams played some fierce basketball over the two days, with winners being in A Grade Women, Rimshots and A Grade Men, Beehoys

– and in B Grade Women, Titans, and Men, Byron Beez. A huge shout out to all our sponsors who helped put this together and our very own Jenny Ogle and Paula Daniels. Over the past few months, our Senior Sunshine Conference Competition has seen teams from Coffs Harbour, Lismore, Tweed Heads, Ballina and Valley Braves ball it out. The finals are being played Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 December at the Cavanbah Centre – so come down and watch some talented games.

The growth of basketball each year is incredible, so much so, that BBBA is running out of space. Hence, we are excited to be on a mission to expand the courts at the Cavanbah Centre from two indoor courts to four. This will mean BBBA can continually expand, host major tournaments, and have a multi-use facility for other sports, functions, and activities in the Byron Shire. Check out our Facility Master Plan on our Facebook Group: /ByronBayBasketballAssociation

Community Sport has an incredible positive impact, not only on those who play, but to those who support and within the community. Thank you to all those who have assisted BBBA throughout 2024. We look forward to an even bigger and brighter 2025.

Sporting success at Byron Bay Public School

by Nicky Greenlaw, Teacher, BBPS



Pictured: BBPS Boy's Soccer Team. Back row (left-right): Max, Cooper, Izzy, Quinn, Max, George, Noah, Tasman. Front row (left-right): Levi, Ben, Josh, Onni, Jett. Absent: Noah. Source: Supplied.

Boys Soccer Team Heads to State Carnival

After a win at the quarter finals against Tamworth Public

School in the PSSA Soccer Knockout competition, the BBPS boys soccer team made their way to Sydney to compete in the semi-finals. With a one-all draw at the end of their game against Beacon Hill Public School, extra time was called. When no further goals were scored the rules dictate that it goes to corners which unfortunately meant a loss for BBPS. The team went on to win their final game resulting in them finishing third in the state, a result of which to be extremely proud.

Jumping High

With a jump of 1.5 metres, Yr6 student Jack finished 3rd in the Senior Boys High Jump at the State Athletics Championships in Sydney. Jack has been selected to represent NSW in the National Championships, an outstanding achievement. We wait with eager anticipation to hear how he goes at this next level of competition.



Regret-Me-Not

with Billy Bob Thoughtson



Melbourne Cup has been and gone, and for some of us, we count our losses and regrets. Like many Australians I don't mind a flutter on the gee gees during the Spring Racing Carnival. However, these days when we have a punt, we have to carry more lead in our saddlebags. We are constantly bombarded with messages like 'Is this a bet you really want to place?' or 'What could you be doing with this money instead; chances are you're about to lose'. The impulsive emotional bet is being targeted by these dour warnings. Some say the nanny state is interfering with our freedoms, but the more reasoned know that Australia has a massive gambling problem. About 75% of us have gambled in the last 12 months, and we lose \$25 billion a year – so there are lots of regrets out there.

Delving deeper on a per capita basis we are the biggest bunch of regretters (I won't say losers) in the whole world, with Hong Kong second. From the horses to the dish-lickers, sports, pokies, and presidential elections – we're bloody good at regretting. For many punters, regret is an all too familiar feeling and old regrets love to come knocking at any opportunity. Funnily enough old regret reminds me of the legendary poem *The Man from Snowy River* written by Banjo Patterson. It goes 'There was movement at the station, for the word had passed around / That the colt from Old Regret had got away'. Now isn't that bloody typical? A valuable young colt lets everyone down – looking at you, Buckaroo. I originally thought the young colt that had escaped, must have been sired by old 'Regret', who I assumed had the exceptional 'seed laced with speed', but as it turns out, the colt is actually from 'Old Regret' station, a place which has nothing to do with the colt's ancestry.

Speaking of horses, the legendary American comedian W.C. Fields, said, 'Horse sense is the thing a horse has, which keeps it from betting on people.' This quote highlights the irony of human behaviour in gambling, even horses are sensible enough not to do it. Ironically, punters know it's a dumb thing to do, and when a punter loses you often hear them mumbling 'it's a bloody mugs' game'. This normally means they will keep on betting because 'the Mug' is not them, it's a third party – someone else who is easily deceived like the Mug sitting on the other side of the Sports bar. Anyway, the expression underscores the sense of regret and realisation that, in the end, gambling favours the bookies.

The word regret actually comes from the Old French verb

regreter, meaning 'to bewail the dead'. It later evolved to mean expressing sorrow or distress over past actions. No doubt it's fitting that Édith Piaf, a legendary French singer, would create such an iconic song about the word regret. Released in 1960, *Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien* became one of Piaf's signature songs.

All of us have regrets. Sometimes we make choices we regret, while other times we regret the choices we didn't make or the paths we didn't pursue. Regret can be painful. Who doesn't know that sinking feeling that comes with saying, 'if only I hadn't done that or said that?' Some psychologists believe that regret can also be a useful emotion. By learning from our regrets rather than dwelling on them, we can make needed changes in our lives and set ourselves up to make better decisions in the future. Nicole Kidman once said, 'We all have our moments of regret, but regret is a poison that doesn't heal. So let it go and move on.'

Of course, this advice is easier said than done. In this age of social media and fear of missing out, do people have more regrets than they used to and what can you do about it? In 2020, an American called Daniel Pink and his team ran the World Regret Project, the largest quantitative analysis of international attitudes about regret ever conducted. He says that in Australia, the biggest regret is losing touch with work colleagues, with many participants feeling regret about not reaching out. He says to ease the feeling of regret, you should reach out to them. However, I'm more cynical and prefer to go with Nicky K's advice and let them all go, and forget about 'em. Stop dwelling on the past and move the eff on.

But what about regrets around permanent life decisions? There's a special kind of irony reserved for tattoo mishaps involving words like 'regret', 'perfection,' 'strength,' or, hilariously, 'perseverance.' It's the ultimate paradox: a tattoo meant to scream defiance at life's mistakes that becomes a lifelong joke about, well, making one of the most avoidable mistakes. One example is Ariana Grande who in 2019 got a tattoo in Japanese intending to spell out '7 Rings' in honour of her hit song. However, the characters were mistranslated and ended up saying *shichirin*, which refers to a small Japanese-style barbecue grill. It's like the ink gods decided to have a little fun with the whole permanent life decisions thing. Despite the hilarity of these spelling mistakes, it seems 'No Regerts' and the like has become a fashion trend and a quirky part of modern tattoo culture.

It must be awful that first moment of regret when you see what went wrong, or that awkward moment when you realise your tattoo artist has worse handwriting than your doctor. As Forrest Gump would say 'Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get...' – or which tattoo, or punt, you'll regret.



This Month

with Milt Barlow

At the movies

Summer is upon us and a great way to get out of the heat is head to the movies. With school holidays you will find a mixed bag this month, something for all tastes.

Having just opened on 28 November is Disney's *Moana 2*. This time around Moana journeys to the far seas of Oceania after receiving an unexpected call from her ancestors. The production values are every bit as strong as the original and this will be a great treat for the kids and grandkids.

On 5 December, high intensity thriller – *Bad Genius* – will hit the big screen. This is one of my must-see movies for the month. An adaptation of the Thai movie hit of the same name, the story follows Lynn who wins a full scholarship to a prestigious high school. By 'helping' her fellow students she soon develops a sophisticated 'cheating ring' that assists hundreds of kids to cheat, making a lot of money along the way.

A new musical that is getting five-star reviews everywhere is *Girl From The North Country* (5 December). Set in 1934, the musical re-imagines 20 legendary songs from Bob Dylan, wrapped around a story of a bunch of wayward travellers whose lives intersect in a guesthouse filled with music, life and hope. The New York Times called it a 'profoundly beautiful' Broadway production, and it really does deliver.

Lord Of The Rings fans will be looking forward to *Lord Of The Rings: The War Of Rohirrim* (12 December). An anime feature from award winning filmmaker Kenji Kamiyama (*Blade Runner: Black Lotus*, *Ghost In The Shell*), it is set 183 years before the original trilogy. If you're a fan, you will love it. I much prefer the live action versions, and this one didn't quite work for me.

The pick of the holiday bunch would have to be *Mufasa: The Lion King* (19 December). Stunning in every way, this is one you really need to see on the big screen. Told in flashbacks, the story introduces Mufasa as an orphaned cub, lost and alone until he meets a sympathetic lion named Taka – the heir to the royal bloodline. With a stellar cast of voices including Seth Rogan, Donald Glover and Beyonce Knowles-Carter adults and grandparents will enjoy this as much as the kids and grandkids. Don't miss this one.

Boxing Day is traditionally the big opening day for films and this year we have thriller *The Correspondent*, the Robbie Williams bio pic *Better Man*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* and drama *The Room Next Door* with Julianne Moore and Tilda Swinton.


In a nutshell, December is a feast with something for everyone. Enjoy.

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December crossword

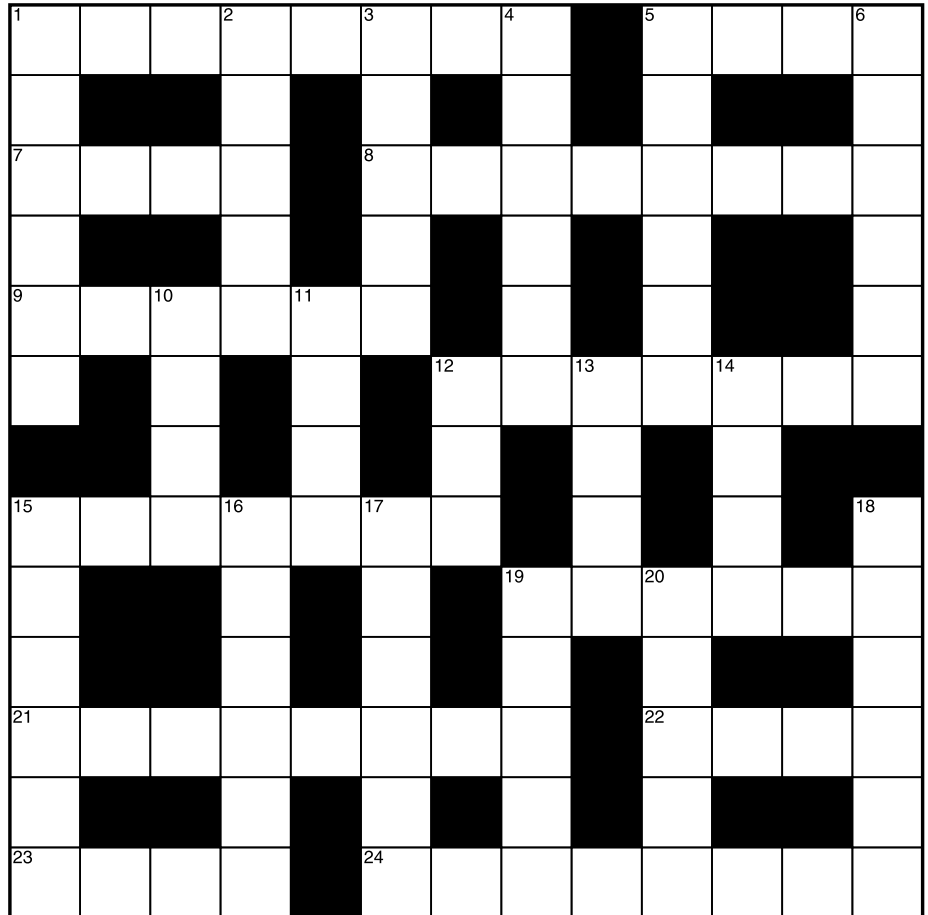
© Lovatts Puzzles

Across

- 1. Bidding sales
- 5. Bop
- 7. Prank
- 8. Fixated
- 9. Crib
- 12. Most beloved
- 15. Leas
- 19. Begin journey (3,3)
- 21. Shares secret
- 22. Bare
- 23. Heavy thump
- 24. Actress, Debbie ...

Down

- 1. Pitiful
- 2. Fashion direction
- 3. Holed atmosphere layer
- 4. Bun seed
- 5. Court clown
- 6. First-born
- 10. Greenish-blue
- 11. Inflatable mattress
- 12. Disc jockeys (1,2)
- 13. Emollient, ... vera
- 14. Italy's currency unit
- 15. Good-luck pet
- 16. Removed (hat)
- 17. Lose concentration
- 18. Volunteers
- 19. Cowardly person
- 20. Passionate dance



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Your Christmas reading list

by Jenny Dowell, OAM JP

Jenny Dowell has been reading and reviewing books for Richmond Tweed Regional Library – and this is her list of favourites this year. These books are perfect additions to your summer reading list, or as gifts for the book worms in your family.

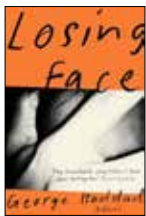
The Women by Kristin Hannah



The Women by Kristin Hannah is a gripping portrait of one woman's journey through the Vietnam War and back. When nursing student Frankie McGrath decides to join the Army Nurse Corps in 1965, she leaves her sheltered life for the chaos of war, only to return to a divided America.

Through vivid storytelling and historical depth, Hannah creates an unforgettable heroine in Frankie, highlighting a crucial yet underrepresented aspect of wartime history. This novel is a tribute to all women who have bravely stepped into harm's way and I highly recommended for readers who enjoy emotional, character-driven stories with historical resonance.

Losing Face by George Haddad



Losing Face is a powerful exploration of family, culture, and identity, unfolding within a Lebanese-Australian community in Sydney's western suburbs. Nineteen-year-old Joey's life begins to unravel after a crime threatens to derail his future. As he faces mounting consequences, family secrets begin to surface.

This is a wonderful novel. It is gripping, edgy, and challenging. The writing carries the distinctive voices of its characters. The star quality of this novel comes from the fact that it tells a story of an often-stereotyped minority in our largest city's west, but does so in a realistic and complex way, rather than the black-and-white versions we often see on TV. The characters' flaws and complexities bring warmth to difficult themes, making this one of the most resonant and thought-provoking Australian novels in recent years. Highly recommended.

Trespasses by Louise Kennedy



In *Trespasses*, Louise Kennedy immerses us in 1970s Belfast, where young Catholic teacher Cushla Laverty navigates life amidst the political upheavals. When she embarks on an affair with a married, Protestant barrister, Cushla's life and loyalties become increasingly complicated.

The title of the book is perfect. Clearly about sin and forbidden love, it is also about land, who belongs where, and who can go where. Kennedy's novel captures Belfast's tense atmosphere, and the novel's deep sense of place and carefully layered themes make it beautiful and harrowing. It was the winner of the Irish Book Awards Novel of the Year in 2022 and a very worthy winner in my view.

Jenny also recommends the following books:

The Valley by Chris Hammer, *The Registrar* by Neela Janakiramanan, and *Our Missing Hearts* by Celeste Ng.

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Aries

You'll enjoy a call to adventure as the new moon on the 1st brings travel, new horizons, visitors and the chance for a little self-development on the way. Just be sure to pace yourself or you risk fatigue and misunderstandings. A fresh approach to your career towards 2025 will appeal.



Taurus

You may experience out-of-the-ordinary developments this month, but rest assured, you are ready for something new. Check you're being realistic at this busy time, or you risk feeling overwhelmed. There will be a fresh shared circumstances to manage such as joint finances or space at home.



Gemini

December's two new moons bring the chance to revitalise both your daily routine and your relationships. Communications will improve towards the end of December, so be patient if some interactions are sluggish or complex. You're entering a new financial era, so plan carefully.



Cancer

The end of 2024 brings a milestone as you turn a corner in your personal life and in your long-term hopes, status and goals. The conjunction of Venus and Pluto on the 8th may bring a fresh love interest for singles, and the chance for couples to ramp up romance – so organise a treat.



Leo

December brings a change of pace and the chance to take an excitingly fresh direction. However, Mars retrograde could produce lack-lustre vitality after the 6th, so be sure to boost your energy levels and focus a bit more on your projects to avoid unintentional mistakes and restlessness.



Virgo

Venus joins Pluto this month, and this will mean changes in your personal life and creativity too. You'll be drawn to improve your skillsets and to schedule time for your favourite ventures and people. A romantic tryst could be transformative, so if you're single, be sure to attend festivities.



Libra

An out-of-the-ordinary change at home or with family and the chance to revitalise these areas will take your focus early December. Be prepared to step into fresh territory in your status, projects or at work, too. The new moon on the 31st will help you to turn a corner with family and relationships.



Scorpio

Developments will open doors, especially regarding your home, travel and relationships. An exceptional circumstance could prove inspiring and takes you in a fresh direction, but you must avoid overt idealism and impulsiveness. The key to success lies in good research and planning.



Sagittarius

The new moons on the 1st and the 31st bring your adventurous nature to the surface and signal changes both in your usual daily routine and in your personal life. It's time to embrace more of what you love in life such as travel and healthy activities. A fresh approach to finances will appeal.



Capricorn

The conjunction of Venus and Pluto on the 8th will bring a fresh financial phase for some; and a fresh romantic cycle for others. Be prepared to consider how both these areas - finances and personal life - could take you somewhere exciting. You may need to review circumstances first.



Aquarius

Venus and Pluto in Aquarius bring the chance to transform your personal life, your health and your usual work routine early in the month. Be prepared to move projects forward, especially those you mooted earlier in 2024. Just be careful with communications to avoid repeating past mistakes.



Pisces

You'll be drawn to associate with a fresh group or organisation, either socially or at work. Singles may be particularly sociable around the 8th, when a get-together could be enjoyable. You can gain ground at work; the two new moons on the 1st and 31st spell a fresh work direction in 2025.



Crossword solution

November

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

Tricky Trivia

Christmas edition



1. What year did the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, now a Boxing Day tradition, first take place?
2. Which native Australian plant found in NSW, known for its red and green colours, flowers with a peak in December and January?
3. On Boxing Day, what major Australian sporting event takes place in Melbourne and is watched by thousands of fans?
4. Which Australian Christmas dessert is traditionally made by boiling a mixture of suet, dried fruits, and spices in a cloth?
5. What is the name of the Australian children's book that re-imagines Christmas with Santa arriving in Australia in a rusty old ute?
6. What NSW town has been growing cherries across the region for more than 170 years? It's also the cherry capital of Australia.
7. Which popular Australian Christmas treat is made from chocolate, marshmallows, and Rice Bubbles or cornflakes, and resembles a small, decorated tree?
8. Which popular Australian artist released the Christmas song How to Make Gravy, telling the story of a man in prison missing Christmas Day with his family?

Trivia answers

Christmas edition

1. 1945.
2. *Blandfordia nobilis* commonly known as Christmas Bells.
3. The Boxing Day Test cricket match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).
4. Christmas Pudding.
5. *An Aussie Night Before Christmas*.
6. Young.
7. Chocolate Crackles or Christmas Tree Crackles.
8. Paul Kelly.



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