



Kinked by crayon

It was a sultry night of fun, extravaganza and artistic expression last Friday at the Brunswick Picture House with the performance of Kinky Draws. They drew voyeurs, artists and the Darling Muffs of May, who raised money for homeless women. The night was a great success, with over 100 people enjoying the night. Organiser, Kathy Toka, from Follow Your Art, put on the evening. She also runs weekly life drawing at the Bruns Picture House - to find out more, email her on art@followyourart.net.au. Pictured are Sophie Rising, Molly Snell, and Saucy Moon. Photo Jeff 'Kinky Is My Art' Dawson

Contractor withdraws

Staff reporters

Local civil contractor, J&M Bashforth & Sons, has withdrawn from its contract to construct infrastructure for the Wallum urban estate, located on low lying land next to Simpsons Creek in Brunswick Heads.

In a media statement, they said it was a difficult decision for the third generation family business, who has operated since 1946.

And while there had been respectful and constructive conversations with those blockading the site, they said, 'sadly, there has been some not-so-respectful and threatening interactions as well'.

'The stress of worrying about abuse to our staff, and our family members, brand damage, vandalism to our yard, and machines has ultimately led to the decision of withdrawing from the project.

'We believe we can walk away with our heads held high, and wish everyone involved on both sides of the fence all the best'.

Save Wallum co-organiser, James Barrie thanked the company for withdrawing, and acknowledged they were 'respectful and non-confrontational with the community protesting the development of threatened species habitat and sacred land'.

'They certainly can walk away with their heads held high. We are all part of this community and it was hard being pitted against each other for the sake of outside developer interests and profits...'

In a statement from Clarence Property (CP), its CEO Simon Kennedy said they 'respect and appreciate the difficult decision'.

'Where possible Clarence Property prefers to use local contractors

to support local jobs and local communities, however the safety of staff and contractors remains paramount.

'Unfortunately, the ongoing threats and intimidation being used by the extreme political activists against local contractors mean some of those jobs and opportunities will now go to contractors from outside the area, discussions with whom have already commenced.

'We are disappointed that an experienced local civil contractor like Bashforth's will not be part of what will be an incredible, ecologically sensitive development and we wish them every success for the future.'

Not a set back, say CP

The Echo asked Mr Kennedy, 'how long the set back is expected to be in terms of continuing the works, given CP needs to secure new contractors?'

He replied in part that 'it will not set back the planned works of the project'.

The Echo also asked, 'given Bashforth's have withdrawn, who supports this development other than Clarence Property and those who have bought the lots prior to construction?'

While Mr Kennedy did not answer that question, he defended the process which led to the DA being approved by all government agencies. He was asked if CP would be able to get such a development through under current laws.

Mr Kennedy replied 'Clarence Property has not received any information from any government agency advising that the Wallum development would not be approved under current laws'.

'The site has sat within land

Children at risk: caseworkers raise alarm

Aslan Shand

Lismore and Ballina child protection caseworkers stopped work to protest outside the defunct Community Services Centre (CSC) in Lismore last Wednesday, April 24, after two years of working without an office. They were joined by Ballina child protection caseworkers, who had their office shut in January.

Child protection caseworkers in the Northern Rivers say the failure to find them a fit-for-purpose premises from which to work are a symptom of a broader crisis in the department.

They explained that child protection caseworkers in the

Northern Rivers report chronic understaffing and staff burnout.

Highest vacancy rate

'One in four child protection caseworker positions are unfilled in the Northern Rivers. That means the Lismore CSC is ten child protection caseworkers short, the highest vacancy rate in the state,' they said in their press release.

'Only one in six children reported to authorities in the Northern Rivers as at risk of serious harm (ROSH) is seen by a child protection caseworker, the worst response rate in the state, well below the state average of one in four which is

already dismal. Right now, if cases are allocated, they are the most serious, and will likely lead to removals, as there simply isn't enough staff to intervene early so as to keep children with their families.'

Ballina MP, Tamara Smith, told The Echo that she has met with the new Minister for Families and Communities, Kate Washington, several times, including with the full Ballina team of the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

'Our child protection system was chronically underfunded and devalued and put in the too-hard basket under 12 years of the coalition

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Mother's Day tree planting returns ► p4

Accountant and journalist face deportation ► p9

Time to get your mum something lovely ► p18

Mullum's laneways come to life this weekend ► p24

Harvest Food Trail ► p26

Culture vultures rejoice! Arts feature ► p30






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Alarm raised over child protection services

► Continued from page 1 government in NSW. Labor have inherited a system in crises and are struggling to act with the financial, systemic, and cultural shifts required,' she said.

'I do not think the minister is shying away from the reality of a very damaged system that is not supporting children and young people, or the worth of our dedicated workforce that have case-loads bursting at the seams, and whose own mental health is at risk as they watch vulnerable children in harm's way that they cannot assist.

'I've offered to the Minister to assist in finding suitable office premises if mould and flood impacts are the issue.'

Housing shortage issue, says DCJ

Recognising the fact that Northern NSW has a high vacancy rate for child protection workers a spokesperson for the DCJ told *The Echo* that, 'The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a key priority of the DCJ.'

'The caseworker vacancy rate in the Northern NSW region is owing to multiple factors, including ongoing



Lismore and Ballina child protection caseworkers stopped work to protest outside the defunct Community Services Centre (CSC) in Lismore last Wednesday. Photo supplied

housing shortages following the Lismore floods. The spokesperson said efforts to recruit caseworkers to this area 'is occurring in the context of a housing shortage'.

'DCJ has a Caseworker Workforce Strategy specifically designed to address the attraction and retention of caseworkers.

'Northern NSW has an attraction and retention plan tailored to address local needs.'

Responding to questions from *The Echo* Minister Washington said that 'The NSW Labor government is embarking on significant structural reform to fix the

broken child protection system. A critical element of our reform will involve the attraction and retention of caseworkers.

'Last year, when the NSW Labor government scrapped the punitive wages cap imposed by the former coalition government, child protection caseworkers gained their largest pay increase in over a decade.'

Child protection caseworkers and the Public Service Association (PSA), are demanding another 500 caseworkers be employed, a 'substantial' increase in pay, and to de-privatise foster care.

HECS debts to increase by 4.7 per cent

Hans Lovejoy

What does local Federal Labor MP, Justine Elliot, think of the expected increase of HECS loans, which are set to soar by 4.7 per cent on June 1?

The Australia Institute says the federal government collects more in HECS repayments annually than it does in tax from oil and gas, and experts say hiking those taxes could pay down the HECS debt within three years.

The Echo asked Mrs Elliot, 'Do you support a full 10 per cent tax on oil, gas, and coal exports - without loopholes - to pay off the entire HECS debt within three years?'

Her spokesperson replied that she endorses recent comments on the matter by the Labor prime minister.

On April 18, a reporter asked PM Anthony Albanese whether it was unfair that the younger generation are having to pay back HECS at credit card interest rates, whereas before it was one per cent.

The reporter also asked, 'What's the incentive to go to university anymore?'

PM Albanese said, 'There's a range of areas where we need to do much better with the younger generation basically, and HECS is one of them.'

PM Albanese also said, 'The idea of HECS is a good

one. It's one that has led to a massive expansion, the number of people being able to do university degrees.'

'We've introduced fee free TAFE that benefited over 300,000 people last year. So that's making an enormous difference in the vet sector.'

Free uni 1974-1989

From 1974 until 1989, tertiary education was free for students, with many current and retired politicians benefiting from the Labor initiative.

PM Albanese added the government is examining the recommendations of a universities accord review, 'and we'll be making announcements pretty soon.'

Contractor withdraws from Wallum

► Continued from page 1 zoned for residential development for decades, the Wallum DA was approved just 12 months ago in 2023, the approved development satisfies the requirements of the local, state and federal government and it will preserve 18ha of ecologically sensitive habitat into perpetuity.'

While Mr Kennedy

described the Wallum estate as an 'incredible, ecologically sensitive development', Save Wallum's James Barrie told *The Echo* it wasn't.

'Current legislation wouldn't allow them to cut down the old growth scribbled gums, employ minimalistic and contentious offsets for threatened species, nor kill threatened species so easily', said Mr Barrie.

'They have not self-referred the DA under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) for threatened species, as they should under federal law.'

Mr Barrie added the use of offsets has enabled CP to 'throw out updated ecological assessments, and supplant them with an outdated ecological assessment'.



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Byron Shire honours Anzac Day

Anzac Day services were held across the Byron Shire on Thursday, April 25.

Dawn services, breakfasts and marches were held in Byron Bay, Bruns, and Mullum, and a march was also held in Bangalow from 10.30am.

Michaela Stirton from Brunswick Heads RSL told *The Echo*, 'As the dawn broke over Brunswick Heads on Anzac Day, the town stirred with a sense of reverence and gratitude.'

'At the Brunswick Heads-Billinudgel RSL subbranch, anticipation hung heavy in the air, as old and new members alike gathered to honour the fallen heroes.'

'This year marked a poignant moment for the subbranch, as it neared its end, but the spirit of camaraderie and remembrance burned brighter than ever.'

'Thanks to the tireless efforts of new and enthusiastic individuals, the day



John Ward at the Bruns march on Anzac Day. Photo Jeff Dawson

unfolded seamlessly, a testament to the resilience and dedication of the community.

'From the solemn dawn service to the spirited marches through the streets, every moment was infused

with a deep sense of respect and appreciation for those who had sacrificed so much for their country.

Pride and unity

'As the last notes of the bugle faded into the morning

air, there was a palpable feeling of pride and unity among the residents of Brunswick Heads. It's legacy will live on in the hearts of those who remember and honour the Anzac spirit', added Ms Stirton.

First guests revealed for Byron Writers Fest

The first wave of authors set to grace the Byron Writers Festival stages for the 2024 event have been announced.

The annual event attracts local and interstate visitors and will be held August 9-11 at the Bangalow Showground.

New Artistic Director, Jessica Alice, says the festival's theme is 'From the ground up', and will feature: international bestsellers Trent Dalton and Jane Harper; acclaimed writer and farmer Bruce Pascoe; Booker Prize winner Richard Flanagan; Irish novelist Caoilinn Hughes; PEN award-winning author and poet Nam Le; playwright and novelist Suzie Miller; investigative journalist and debut novelist Louise Milligan; and local speculative fiction writer,



Trent Dalton

Mykaela Saunders.

Ms Alice says the first announcement of celebrated guests gives a taste of things to come, and the full program of more than 100 writers, thinkers and commentators will be revealed on June 19.

She says, 'The festival will host literary luminaries whose work represents deep wisdom, radical insight and thoughtful engagement with



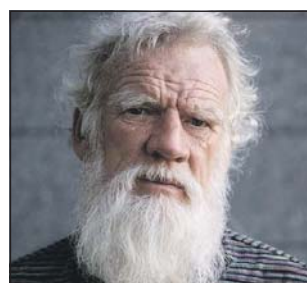
Jane Harper

their readers.'

'This first release is a glimpse of a richly diverse program with some of the biggest names and brilliant voices to discover.'

From the ground up

'Our theme 'From the ground up' will connect with Country, community and culture, from environmental movements to First Nations



Bruce Pascoe

self-determination and the futures we build for ourselves today.'

Early bird three-day passes are now on sale at www.byronwritersfestival.com.

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Mother's Day tree planting returns

Brunswick Valley Landcare's (BVL) celebrated, and much-loved, annual Mother's Day tree planting returns on Sunday, May 12, with plans to plant 1,500 trees alongside live music, a barbecue, cakes, coffee and a very special community feel.

Organisers told *The Echo*, 'Join us for the 13th year that Brunswick Valley Landcare gathers the tribe to plant trees in honour of our wonderful mums, and our Mother Earth'.

'We have the perfect site for 2024 - we'll be revegetating an internal stream with 1,500 plants and trees going in the ground.'

'The landholders have been so supportive, fencing off the stream and planting area from livestock, to give the little plant gems best chances of success. Once big and tall, those trees will create shade along the fence lines to help keep the cows cool.'

'The 1,500 carefully selected seedlings will include a diverse mix of trees, shrubs, sedges and grasses endemic to the area, suitable for creating a riparian buffer. This will in turn improve the health of the



The Tyrrell family: mum Aine with Tullan, Kalloni and Taylor at a previous Mother's Day planting. Photo Jeff Dawson

stream and create habitat for the native fauna species living in and around it.

'We'll have the usual delights, including the famed delicious barbecue, home-made cakes and sweets. Plus

this year we have two local and brilliant musical artists to play for us as we plant - give it up for Jesse Witney and Abbie Cardwell!' say the BVL team.

'This year, BVL gratefully

acknowledges Northern Rivers Community Foundation, Little Valley Distribution, Mullum Chamber of Commerce, *The Echo*, Bay FM, Byron Shire Council, Stone & Wood, Wanganui Green and the fleet of arborist teams generously donating woodchip mulch.

'The next special ingredients are you and your mums!'

'Sunday's event goes from 9am till 12pm, and is located at 215 Main Arm Road, Mullumbimby. Once in the drive, follow signage to designated parking area,' say organisers.

'Make sure you dress for the weather be it sun or showers.'

'Bring a hat, sunscreen, gloves, sturdy boots, water bottle and keep-cup'.



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Public housing forum/doco May 16

A documentary exploring the devastating impacts of losing one's home owing to the privatisation and demolition of public housing assets will be screened May 16 at the Palace Cinema.

House You organiser, Chels Hood Withey, says the doco 'highlights why public

housing is the backbone of a cohesive connected community'.

'Did you know there is not a single public housing property in the entire Byron Shire? For the region with the highest number of rough sleepers in NSW and over 10 years waiting list for social

housing, this is an absolute travesty,' she says.

Chels says for the event to proceed on May 16 at Palace Cinema, they need to sell 31 more tickets by May 6.

For more info, see www.fan-force.com/screenings/things-will-be-different-palace-cinemas-byron-bay.

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Record unfair – big fine for sign

Hans Lovejoy

Local small business operator, Matthew Bowden, aka the Vinyl Junkie, says he is shocked at a \$1,500 Council fine after placing signage on the corner of Ewingsdale Road to direct record lovers to his recent Easter record fair at Ewingsdale Hall. He says he also received a \$300 parking fine for a vehicle he had put a sign on.

Bowden told *The Echo* it was another successful event at Easter 'that drew a great crowd of music lovers'.

'Every day, I placed signage on the corner of Ewingsdale Road to direct record lovers to my event, which is slightly off the road and in need of directional signage.'

'Every day, I had signs removed and ended up paying a retrieval fee for signs, as well as a \$300 parking fine for a vehicle I had put a sign on.'

No warning for \$1,500 fine

'It was with shock when a week after my event, I found a \$1,500 fine in my PO box. I am a small business owner, and have lived in the area for close to 20 years. Business at the moment isn't easy. After hall hire, advertising costs, etc. a \$1,500 is a massive fine, which came with no warning, or no consideration for what I do. It's simply just kind of mean and petty.'

Mr Bowden says he has asked for the fine to be reviewed, 'as I wasn't given any warning'



Matthew Bowden, aka the Vinyl Junkie. Photo Jeff 'Turn Down The Fines' Dawson

Given there is latitude for compliance officers to be flexible when fines are issued, as per the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, *The Echo* asked Council staff, 'Why was there was no warning for these fines, as claimed by Mr Bowden?'

Acting Director Sustainable Environment & Economy, Sarah Nagel, replied, 'Council does not generally comment on matters relating to specific individuals. Mr Bowden can contact NSW Revenue to seek further information about specific infringement notices, or he can call Council to talk to staff about the regulations relating to signage.'

'Rules surrounding signage are

outlined in the Development Control Plan (DCP) and councils in the Northern Rivers have similar policies in relation to signage on public land.'


'It is unlawful to place advertising signs on public land without approval, and these signs must be approved and in relation to community events or community notices relating to non-commercial activities. Council receives a lot of complaints about signage and the Enforcement team issues regular fines.'

Mr Bowden says it isn't clear what the \$1,500 fine was for.

He added that after speaking with Council staff, 'they said the \$1,500 fine still stands for my signage.'

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School's long-awaited bus stop on the way

Paul Bibby

For years, catching a bus to or from Goonengerry Public School has been a potentially perilous activity.

With no proper bus stop, young students have had to use a steep grassy bank to get onto or off the bus.

Children have been known to slip under the bus when attempting this manoeuvre in wet weather.

The school's principal has been asking Byron Shire Council and Transport for NSW for action on the issue for years, to no avail.

Until now.

Thanks to funding from Transport for NSW, Council has been able to design a



Goonengerry Public School. Photo supplied

proposal to help improve road safety in and around the bus stop

Two weeks ago, the members of Council's traffic committee unanimously endorsed the proposal paving the way for works to commence later this year.

The proposed new bus stop will include an accessible footpath from the school gate to the bus boarding point, the installation of a new bus waiting area, and bus zone signage. The matter will now come before a full Council meeting for final approval.

Piggery plans on exhibition

Paul Bibby

It was once the largest piggery in the southern hemisphere – a sprawling operation covering 33 acres.

Now, the former Yager's piggery looks set to host an exclusive high-end restaurant and an artisan food and drink business to cater for Byron's changing tastes.

The proposed \$22.2 million redevelopment is currently on public exhibition, with locals invited to comment via the Byron Council website before May 1.

Located at 103 Yagers Lane, the 'Garden House' proposal includes significant building works, car parking, earthworks, retaining walls, landscaping, wastewater disposal, public art, solar panels, and vegetation management works.

The restaurant would reuse part of the former piggery building and have a maximum capacity for 60 people. It is described as being 'a journey of the senses.'

'Exteriors in timber, steel, glass and repurposed



Illustration from DA 10.2024.24.1.

concrete from the existing pig sheds will connect to the site's history,' the description states.

'Interiors will house a meticulous curation of artisan ceramics, glass and utensils. The menu will celebrate seasonal abundance, with natives and locally grown foods playing a starring role.'

The nearby artisan food industry area will include two separate, newly-constructed buildings that will be used for the manufacture of food products, primarily for sale online.

The proponent, listed as Maggie Schreiber, has included 52 submissions from the public in the development application – all of them supporting the proposal.

However, not everyone is in favour of the plan.

During consultation with the local community that occurred prior to the lodgement of the DA, some locals expressed concern about the impact of traffic on the surrounding road network.

The developer says that it amended its plans in response to this feedback, deleting plans for a roadside stall, capping the number of patrons who can attend the artisan food industry area, and requiring that they must first make a booking.

Attendance at the restaurant will also be by booking only. The project's biodiversity assessment asserts that there will not be any adverse impacts on significant flora or fauna species. DA 10.2024.24.1 can be found at www.byron.nsw.gov.au.

Reflections yet to reply on court orders update

Long-standing court orders placed upon NSW government-run corporation Reflections, appear to be not fulfilled.

The Echo reported in December last year that it had yet to fulfil court orders around its management of the Terrace Holiday Park in Brunswick Heads, after it

took Council to court over a deemed refusal.

No time frame for fulfilling the court orders was provided by either party at the time.

Residents in the area had campaigned for decades over encroaching riverbank boundaries, and accused the corporation of killing off protected cypress pine trees.

A Reflections spokesperson was asked on Friday if they had fulfilled its court orders, 'and if not, why and does Reflections have a time frame for when it expects to?'

The spokesperson replied they were unable to make the 10am Monday deadline, 'but will work to get a response to you early next week.'

Northern NSW Local Health District

Tweed Hospital services are moving

8am, Tuesday 14 May 2024

Public hospital and emergency services are moving to Tweed Valley Hospital.

If you need emergency medical treatment **after 8am on 14 May** go to the Tweed Valley Hospital Emergency Department at **771 Cudgen Road, Cudgen.**

The Tweed Hospital, Powell Street, will close at 8am on Tuesday 14 May 2024.

Dial triple zero (000) for an ambulance if you require urgent medical assistance.



Public interest litigation under threat

Paul Bibby

Australia's peak environment groups have slammed a Federal Court decision which allows mining company Santos to pursue environment groups that were not directly involved in a recent court case against them.

The decision means that the Environment Centre NT, Sunrise and Jubilee must hand over documents to Santos, and face a potential costs order, even though they were not directly involved in the case.

Jacqui Mumford, CEO of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW described the decision as 'staggering'.

'None of these groups were parties to, funded or

conducted the litigation,' Ms Mumford said.

'The judge has found that their common interest in wanting to stop the Barossa project may be grounds for a non-party costs order against them.

Chilling effect

If this proceeds any further it could have a chilling impact on campaigning and public interest litigation across the country.'

The groups want the decision overturned and are demanding that the right of organisations to defend nature and communities must be protected.

'This is a staggering decision that the public should be very concerned

by,' the Executive Director of The Conservation Council of Western Australia, Jess Beckerling said.

'These sorts of legal suits are designed to deter public participation and they are profoundly anti-democratic.'

Jono La Nauze, CEO of Environment Victoria, said that by 'hounding' organisations not even involved in the case, Santos was 'trying to send a message to every

community group in Australia that they were safer remaining silent'.

'This is a chilling move by one of Australia's biggest polluters, it is the kind of corporate bully-boy tactics that have no place in a functioning democracy.'

'If Santos were actually proud of their environmental record they would not be afraid of defending their actions in court.'

Byron biz breakfast on May 14

The Byron business community are invited for a networking breakfast on Tuesday, May 14 from 7.30am at Fishheads.

The Byron Business Chamber say the restaurant and take-away cafe has a scrumptious new menu.

BayFM fundraiser

'It's [also] a chance to give back to your local community radio station, as we'll be fundraising for BayFM'.

'Don't miss this perfect blend of flavour, fellowship, and philanthropy!'

Vegan, vegetarian, and other dietary requirements may be accommodated with advance notice upon booking.

Tickets for breakfast is \$25, and can be booked at <https://events.humanitix.com/business-breakfast-fishheads>

Fishheads is located at 1 Jonson Street, Byron Bay.

Bancks shortlisted for children's book awards

Local author Tristan Bancks's novel *Scar Town* has been shortlisted for the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards Book of the Year.

Inspired by his childhood in the Blue Mountains and family holidays in Jindabyne, he says the crime-thriller novel was also recently shortlisted by the Australian Booksellers' Association Book of the Year Awards.

'I've always been fascinated by drowned towns. I wrote this book over 13 years, coming back to it between other books. It wouldn't let me go. I kept wondering what it would be like if three kids

swam out to a house that was poking out from a lake and they found something inside, something scary and mysterious that changed the way they saw their small town, their families and themselves.'

Bancks recently ran a writing workshop for young people at Brunswick Heads Library, as part of their Youth Week celebrations, drawing on writing tools he used to complete the novel.

The CBCA 2024 Book of the Year Award Winners and Honours will be announced Friday, August 16.

For more information go to www.tristanbancks.com.

Save Wallum fundraiser film night, May 5

In an effort to get a delegation of First Peoples and activists to Sydney and Canberra to lobby politicians to save Wallum from being bulldozed, Save Wallum will be holding a film night on Sunday, May 5 at the Picture House in Brunswick Heads.

Co-organiser, Lisa Sandstrom, says the night starts with a short film by local activist and filmmaker, Adriano Pantaleo, which celebrates the Save Wallum campaign activities so far.

Doco screening

It will be followed by the new documentary for the Rising Tide campaign film *The Final Wave*.

A panel discussion with MC Ilona Harker will end the

night, including activists from Saving Wallum and Rising Tide.

Sandstrom describes it as a 'celebration of peaceful protest and civil disobedience'.

She says, 'At the end of the hottest year in human history, a Rising Tide of everyday people shut down the world's largest coal port for 32 hours.'

'Here's how we did it. Revisit the epic people's blockade with footage from the beach, the water, and the sky - and hear from Rising Tide blockaders about how this historic event came together.'

Doors open at 5.30pm for 6pm start.

Tickets on sale via www.brunswickpicturehouse.com.

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15 camping groups 'moved on' in Tweed Shire

Local police say they'll continue to work with the Tweed Shire Council to reduce anti-social behaviour after a two-day blitz last week that included campers told to move on.

Housing not industrial precinct say Lismore locals

Locals from Goonellabah and Lindendale have called out the proposed Goonellabah industrial precinct at 1055A Bruxner Hwy (Lot1 DP957677) and 245 Oliver Ave (Lot1 DP 1285218) as being the wrong use of the site.

Menacing dog declaration revoked

After an emotional deputation from the owner of the dog involved, Ballina Shire Council has this morning revoked a menacing dog declaration for the kelpie Lilo, which was brought into effect following a bite in July 2022.

Rebuilding communities from Lennox and Evans Head to Coraki and Woodburn

The economic impact of a natural disaster can be felt far beyond the damage to housing and infrastructure. In the two years after the 2022 flood event, some Richmond Valley communities have seen a reduction in median weekly household income of 44.1 per cent.

Anzac Day memorials 2024

Across the Northern Rivers people gathered on Anzac Day to remember, to reflect and acknowledge the cost of war.

Celebrating Tweed Museum's 20th anniversary with all and everything

A stunning new exhibition has opened to celebrate the Tweed Regional Museum's 20th anniversary – Omnia: all and everything.

www.echo.net.au

Search continues for missing Tweed man

Local police say officers, the State Emergency Services (SES) and family members of missing Tweed Shire man Patrick Liedke are continuing their search.

More than 20 SES members are said to be part of the operation, which started last week, and on Sunday focused on the Piggabeen area, about 15km west of Tweed Heads.

39-year-old Mr Liedke's most recent known appearance was between 1pm and 2pm on Monday 22 April at Gray Street, Tweed Heads West.

Police say they hold



Missing Tweed Shire man Patrick Liedke.
Photo NSW Police

concerns for his welfare due to a medical condition.

Mr Liedke is described as 183cm tall, with Caucasian

appearance and a solid build, short brown hair and brown eyes.

Mr Liedke's car was found on a property at Cherry Bush Drive, Cobaki, last Friday morning but officers say they believe it may have been there since last Tuesday.

Police inquiries have reportedly confirmed Mr Liedke was seen outside a property near Piggabeen last Tuesday.

Police are urging anyone with information about the incident to contact Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000 or <https://nsw.crimestoppers.com.au>.

Connecting people, rivers, and the night sky in Kyogle

The youth of Kyogle were asked what their number one priority was and they said it was 'looking after the health of the river and they want to be involved in healing it.'

'The Rivers and Stars project is a year-long, community-led project run by Kyogle Together. The project uses story to bring stronger connection between people, the rivers and the night sky across the Kyogle LGA, to help improve the health of all.'

explained Ilka Nelson, Project Coordinator for the Rivers and Stars project.

Free events coming

Brendan Cox from River Ecology Australia will be holding a citizen science workshop for anyone interested in helping monitor the health of the Richmond River on May 2.

This will be followed by an evening with Duane Hamacher, discussing his book *The First Astronomers*

at the upcoming Kyogle Readers and Writers Festival on May 17.

All projects are free to participate in and registration is required. If you would like further information or you have a story to share about the Richmond River, Clarence River or the Night Sky. Get in touch by emailing events@kyogletogogether.org.au.

■ Read full story in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au.

Ballina's Cr McCarthy versus the macaranga

David Lowe

Ballina Shire Council recently heard a motion from Cr Steve McCarthy to remove the native macaranga tree from the list of approved species for planting by Ballina Council area.

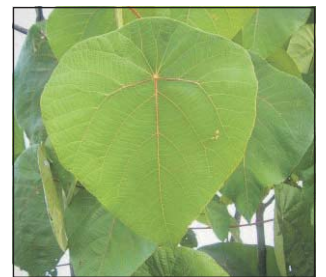
A common sight throughout the Northern Rivers, *Macaranga tanarius* is a rainforest tree which can grow up to 10 metres tall, with large heart-shaped leaves.

According to Cr McCarthy, without competition the tree 'becomes more aggressive in speed of growth and size', taking over other native species. Getting to his main point he said: 'Its tall height blocks iconic views from the surfers car park, Pat Morton car park, the Coast Road, views from residences etc.'

Cr McCarthy ended his anti-macaranga motion by calling for the species to be ripped out.

Staff response

Ballina Council staff seem unwilling to join in the anti-macaranga crusade, saying in their most recent *Councillor Bulletin* on the



Macaranga leaf. Wikipedia

matter: 'the macaranga is a pioneer species providing a very important first stage for the restoration of cleared, degraded and weed-infested lands', as well as 'providing food for many native birds, and habitat for local frogs and butterflies.'

'They provide a fast-growing canopy with beneficial shade for slower growing, longer-lived successional rainforest species to grow underneath. Over time, the successional rainforest species typically shade out the macaranga.'

Meanwhile throughout the Northern Rivers, major imported weeds like giant devils fig, lantana and many others run riot.

■ Read full story in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au.

Kingscliff and Cudgen communities to be betrayed?

Aslan Shand

When NSW Health unexpectedly changed plans and pushed forward to develop the Tweed Valley Hospital (TVH) on State Significant Farmland (SSF) on the Cudgen Plateau near Kingscliff, the Kingscliff community was given an 'iron clad' promise that no further development would take place on the designated SSF.

Developer Allan Larkin bought the neighbouring property to the TVH site just days before the approval went through for the TVH in 2019 in the full knowledge that the land was protected and could only be used for agricultural purposes. Since that point he has been pushing the development of the site against clear community opposition and 'iron clad' government promises from state member for Tweed Geoff Provest that they would not approve any further rezoning of the site from SSF.

Broken promises?

This Thursday the proposal to rezone the site at 741 Cudgen Road in Cudgen will be looked at by Tweed

councillors with Tweed Council staff recommending 'progressing the planning proposal to the Gateway Determination'.

President of the Kingscliff Ratepayers Association Peter Newton told *The Echo* that they are 'disappointed that the Council report has recommended approval. The position of the Association remains unequivocally opposed to the loss of this valuable land, once it's gone, it's gone.'

The Cudgen Plateau was set aside for the future in the early 2000s with strong community support and they fought strongly to maintain the integrity of the area since.

'The fact remains that this proposal is on legislatively-protected farmland that can only be used for agriculturally-related purposes, something the developer knew from day one when he moved to "bank" the land,' explained Mr Newton.

'During the recent growth management and housing strategy community consultation, our community was told many times to "think of the future". This is exactly what we are doing now and we ask our Council to do the same

– concreting drought proof, climate resilient, protected farmland for a proposal which is no more than a speculative development, providing a grab bag of community "hot topics" is condemning access of future generations to a vital food bowl.

'Other land bankers have been holding precious and protected agricultural land for some years just waiting for a decision like this.

'Our federal and state members, and local councillors have, over some years now been falling over themselves guaranteeing and reinforcing to our community that none of the remaining State Significant Farmland will be lost. Now is the time for them to stand up for what is right,' he said.

You can address councillors on this issue at public access. To apply to speak at a public forum, you must contact Council by phone or email before 12 pm (noon) on the Wednesday preceding the meeting or watch the meeting online at: www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/council/councillors-meetings/council-meetings. The Tweed council do not livestream public access.

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Bobb currency launched



David Warth with the Bobb and half Bobb. Paul Waters from Fundies is in the background. Photo Jeff Dawson

An emergency means of exchange, or EME, was officially launched at the last 'What's Going On' event at the Byron Services Club on April 8.

Organiser, David Warth, told *The Echo* that, 'The Bobb coins are Ainslie Bullion's own one ounce and half ounce silver coins.'

'The value for purchases with the Bobb and half Bobb will be set on the first of each month. At present, they are \$50 and \$30.'

He encouraged locals to get involved, and pointed to the 2022 floods when EFTPOS was out of action

and cash was unable to be drawn from the banks.

'A few hundred dollars of these coins can make the difference in an emergency', he says.

Accepted locally

'The coins are now being accepted at Fundies in Byron Bay, Edens Landing in Mullumbimby, Locavore in the Byron Arts & Industry Estate, and Lulu's Cafe in Mullumbimby.

'The Bobb and half Bobb can be ordered at Fundies in Byron Bay or Edens Landing in Mullumbimby, or direct from Ainslie Bullion in Brisbane.'

Accountant, journalist face deportation

Afghanistan couple face certain danger with Taliban unless accountancy work offered

Russell Eldridge

If there is an accountancy firm out there willing to offer a job to a highly qualified Afghan refugee, you may be saving two lives.

Amir and Sahar (not their real names) are a young couple living on temporary student visas in Iran after escaping the Taliban.

Thanks in large measure to the efforts of Ballina woman, Sue Milne, the Australian government has recognised their humanitarian visa application as valid – but there's a catch: Amir must have a job offer before the visa is issued.

The clock is ticking for Amir and Sahar. They have less than nine months left on their student visa in Iran. When it expires, they will be deported back to Afghanistan, where they face certain danger.

Amir is an experienced accountant who was working for the Supreme Audit Office of Afghanistan. Sahar is a journalist, who ran her own newsagency in Kabul.

In June last year, she was arrested for a second time



Sue Milne has been assisting Amir and Sahar in securing their visas. Photo supplied

by the Taliban, detained and tortured for 17 days.

Arrest and torture

After Sahar's arrest and torture, the couple were fortunate to get a temporary student visa for Amir to study a Master of Economics Degree in Iran.

Enter Talent Beyond Boundaries, a global non-profit organisation which works with governments to match skilled refugees with jobs in a new country. They succeeded in having Amir's application validated based on his accountancy skills.

But someone in Australia has to offer Amir a job first, before they are granted

permanent residency. He speaks perfect English and comes with strong references, including a police clearance.

I spoke with Amir on a WhatsApp call about their circumstances:

'It will be very hard for both us if we are sent back to Afghanistan,' Amir said.

'The Taliban see us as the enemy. My wife was a journalist. To go back is very risky for her – also for me as her husband.'

'We are living on our savings, and only have enough for a few more months. We have run out of options.'

Talent Beyond Boundaries has relocated hundreds of refugees globally under their skills matching scheme.

They have been active in Australia since 2021.

Its team leader, Vincent Tackoen, explained how a prospective employer could help Amir and Sahar.

'Anyone who can offer Amir a job simply needs to contact us, and we'll explain how it works. Once he gets a job offer, that's it; he meets the requirements of the skilled migration program

and is issued a visa.'

The person instrumental in helping Amir and Sahar is Ballina woman, Sue Milne, who is already involved in settling refugees in the Northern Rivers.

She heard about the couple through a young Afghan man who stayed at her home as part of a home stay program run by Ballina Region For Refugees.

Visa one step away

After hearing of their danger, Sue set in motion the long train of events which led to Amir and Sahar being just one step away from being issued their visa.

'Over the last two years I've found Amir to be an intelligent man with high integrity and I believe he'd be a fantastic employee,' Sue said.

'These are very vulnerable people and it would be a wonderful thing if someone could offer Amir a job. They wouldn't regret it.'

So, if you run an accountancy business and can offer Amir work, email Vincent Tackoen at info@talentbeyondboundaries.org.

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RICHARDSON MURRAY



The Byron Shire Echo
Volume 38 #47 • May 1, 2024

The prince of technofeudalism

Facebook turns 20 this year!

It started in 2004, and is now ubiquitous among older generations who are addicted to its shifting algorithms that keep them stuck like insects on fly paper.

Remember when Facebook deleted news content from its app in Australia in 2021?

The behemoth US tech company wasn't happy with the Morrison government's proposed media bargaining code at the time, and as a result, they restricted publishers and Australian users from sharing, or viewing Australian and international news content.

It was that easy for CEO Mark Zuckerberg to control us.

Fast forward to earlier this month, and its parent company, Meta, removed the news tab in both Australia and the US.

The Guardian reported at the time, 'Meta announced the closure of its news tab in February, along with its decision not to enter into new deals to pay Australian news publishers for content [the code] once current agreements expire this year'.

The 'news media bargaining code' was aimed at pushing tech companies like Meta and Google into subsidising local journalism.

It turns out that if you gift corporations loads of money, their CEOs will keep it for themselves.

So it's no surprise that mainstream media took the agreed \$250m and went quiet on it.

As a small independent publisher in operation since 1986, *The Echo* did not apply for the code because of the complex red tape.

The Echo almost entirely relies solely on advertisers, who recognise that a home-delivered newspaper with a high circulation

each week is of proven value in reaching their audience.

And independent media has value, given how stark the perspectives are between this masthead, for example, and mainstream corporate media.

The Saturday Paper's Rick Morton wrote last week, 'The Albanese government is now hesitantly contemplating the possibility Facebook will pull its entire platform from Australia, with huge implications for business and all kinds of transactions'.

While Facebook's self-removal may see screen addicts spiral into withdrawals, there is no doubt another platform would emerge. And maybe that would be a good thing?

In 2018, Cambridge Analytica were exposed manipulating and exploiting Facebook user data for political gains. As a platform, they are not held to the same standards as publishers.

Earlier in February, CEO Zuckerberg apologised to the parents of children who killed themselves after being subjected to online sexual exploitation during a US senate hearing.

As interesting as a feed might be for some, for others it can reinforce negativity and lead to depression and even suicide.

\$1.1b shifted offshore

And just last week, the *Fin Review* (Nine) reported 'Facebook shifts more than \$1.1b offshore as local profits rise 36 per cent'.

They also just reduced its local workforce by 16 per cent.

Do you believe Facebook builds an informed community, and cares about Byron Shire?

Local media does!

Hans Lovejoy, editor

People power must prevail market failures

The Wallum fiasco exemplifies all that is wrong with our current neoliberal economic system, one that thrives on pitting nature and community against 'progress and development'.

The dollar so often wins.

It is very obvious that housing should not be built on this wetland, already home to so much life, including endangered species.

While other countries are busy protecting and regenerating vital wetlands, ours are still at risk of destruction.

The developer, Clarence Property, is determined to push ahead, out of step with community wishes, trumpeting its 'long-standing reputation for delivering high quality residential communities'.

This is not about building community, nor providing homes for hundreds of people barely existing in pods, tents, cars and doorways. It's exclusively for millionaires.

The developer will bring in metres of dubious fill to raise housing sites, pushing flooding elsewhere. Which insurance company will take the risk of insuring houses built in a wetland in a worsening climate emergency? It's certain to flood within a few years.

Valiant young people are putting their bodies on the line as an act of love to save this precious area – and losing income to do so. The current system is loaded against them, yet they are determined to win.

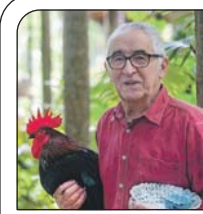
The 'law' is on the side of the developer, but the law is an ass in this case and so clearly wrong. Bad laws need challenging and changing.

The Minns government could, and should do it.

Neoliberalism and its winner-takes-all ideology has been an increasing disaster since its introduction by Reagan and Thatcher just over forty years ago.

It brought massive tax cuts for the rich, crushing of trade unions, deregulation, privatisation, outsourcing and competition in public services.

Then-Labor Treasurer, Paul Keating, followed suit, and introduced radical changes, including selling our national airline QANTAS and the



'Neoliberalism and its winner-takes-all ideology has been an increasing disaster since its introduction by Reagan and Thatcher just over forty years ago.'

Richard Jones

Commonwealth Bank, under the banner of 'economic rationalism'.

It worsened under former Liberal MP John Howard, who attempted to cripple Medicare and force people on to private health insurance.

The public health system still hasn't recovered.

The mantra is: 'private good, public bad'.

This hard-right-wing ideology was accepted as normal by the general populace. Younger generations have known nothing else, and are experiencing its worst impacts. Apparently, the marketplace should not be interfered with, or even regulated. It must be 'free to compete' and come up with the best solutions. Interference in the marketplace is regarded as socialist, or worse 'communist' as if it were an either-or situation.

Now, we've ended up with a catastrophic meta-crisis.

The 'market' ideology has been a shocking failure.

Global uncontrolled, unregulated laissez-faire capitalism has brought the entire planet to its knees, not just for humans, but millions of species brought to the brink of extinction. Oceans are filled with plastic, dangerous chemicals and pesticides are everywhere.

Fossil fuel corporations continue to operate virtually undisturbed by governments and pay minimal tax.

The discredited 'trickle-down' theory, where tax cuts for the wealthy supposedly mean they can afford to employ more people, has proven to be a giant con.

Now we have a world run by billionaires, whose power and influence control media and governments.

This massive rise in wealth for the already wealthy has divided our society into the super-rich and poor,

who can't afford to buy or even rent a home. Feudalism has returned.

So, what's the answer?

Voters once believed they had little choice, as both major parties remain wedded to this failed ideology. The tide is changing and voters are now turning increasingly to alternatives like Greens and independents.

Some are calling for the end of capitalism. Defenders of the system say those opposed to capitalism are 'communists' as though that's the only alternative.

Clearly neoliberalism needs to be junked urgently and there are hesitant signs the Albanese government is starting to moderate it, with the recent announcement of the Future Made in Australia legislation to support Australian industries. Protectionism may no longer be a dirty word after all.

The upcoming May budget is an opportunity for the Albanese government to show it understands the depth of the meta-crisis.

It needs to make major changes, for example scrapping HECS indexation altogether. HECS debts are due to rise 4.7 per cent in June.

How about re-introducing free tertiary education? It was free from 1974 until 1989. Yes, we could afford it, if capital gains tax and other taxes were reformed. We need this Labor government to be true to Labor principles, as Gough Whitlam was.

We need to work together as a community to ensure there is a future for those young people working to prevent the destruction of the precious Wallum habitat. We need to elect caring representatives who will work to bring back the joy and fulfilment of living on this beautiful planet. We have the voting power. We can do it.

■ Richard Jones is a former NSW MLC and is now a ceramicist.



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Nicholas Shand
1948-1996
Founding Editor

The Echo acknowledges the people of the Bundjalung nation as the traditional custodians of this land and extends respect to elders past, present and future.

Disclaimer: *The Echo* is committed to providing a voice for our whole community. The views of advertisers, letter writers, and opinion writers are not necessarily those of the owners or staff of this publication.

'The job of a newspaper is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.'

- Finley Peter Dunne 1867-1936

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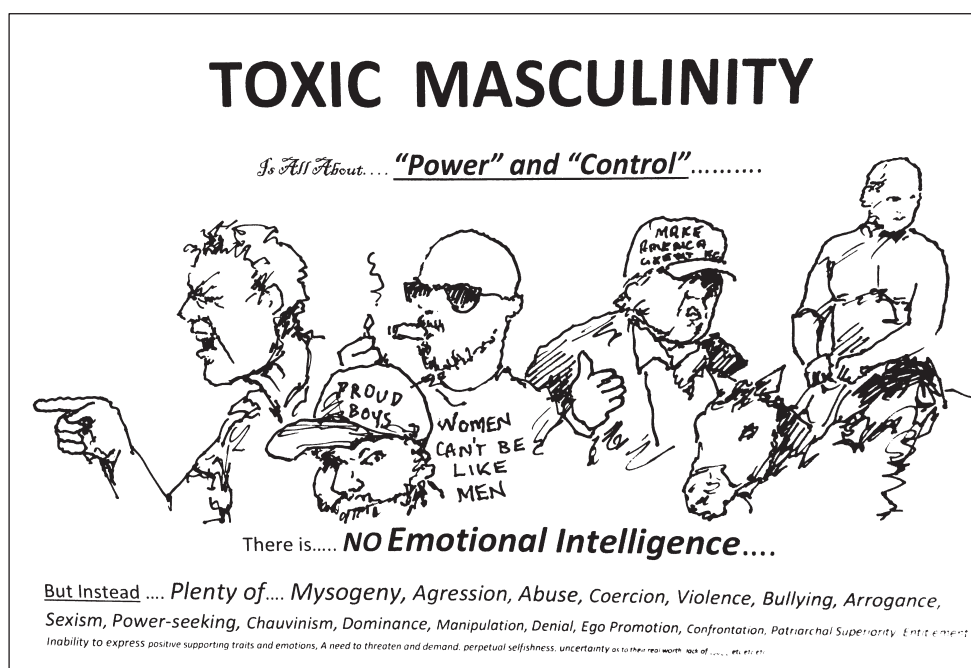
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Special Wallum

An ABC News article regarding developers that keep trying to build on Australian wetlands (22/4) highlights threats to our coastal environments with the pressure for more housing. It is allowing developers into areas of environmental significance to go ahead unless the local people speak out. Saving Toondah, where a tourist development was planned in the Moreton Bay wetlands, is a successful outcome of such action.

What makes Wallum so special? The 'wallum heathland' is bordered by Simpsons Creek, Brunswick River's estuary, starting at the walking bridge in Bruns. Under the sandy soils a porous layer of 'coffee rock', originating from layers of rich organic matter over thousands of years, absorbs tides and floodwaters, helping to protect the neighbouring Bayside from possible flooding. And it's this soil profile that sustains the unique wallum wildflower heathland ecology.

Clarence Property's claims in its real estate ads that '60 per cent of the site will be protected and rehabilitated to save Wallum's flora and fauna habitats' – is a bit misleading, as you don't guarantee the survival of the wallum sedge frog and wallum froglet by digging their fragile habitat with



Cartoon by Jamie Hoile

earthmoving machinery to create artificial ponds. Twenty-seven mature scribbly gums and swamp mahoganies are to be removed and, despite replanting double the number, the saplings would take 30 years to mature into suitable habitat for our struggling local koalas and endangered birds.

Their development requires several layers of fill, hopefully without fire ants, to create the community garden spaces. Sewerage and drainage works would disturb the coffee rock layer leading to acid sulphate soils leaching into Simpsons Creek. There is no mention of pet restrictions for the

proposed 124+ dwellings, not to mention the increased traffic that would need to exit via Bayside.

The branding 'ecologically sensitive' is a farce. There are several other so-called developments by Clarence Property in the Tweed Shire. Ballina Shire has also developed crucial wetlands habitats. We should be focusing future housing in areas not so crucial to endangered species, flood mitigation and coastal health. And more affordable housing, where a block much smaller than those in Bayside, will not cost as much as \$700,000 upwards.

Sue McLeod
Myocum

head-scratches, light-bulb moments and chuckles.

As Mandy Nolan writes, he was a great journo and a great wordsmith.

Happily for us, his posthumous puzzles have kept him with us just a little bit longer.

Pam Timms
Suffolk Park

Dunes and trees

The point of my letter in last week's *Echo* may have been missed because the photo to which it was addressed was not included.

I wrote it in response to a Council sign which read BUSH REGENERATION in an area where Council are purportedly trying to rebuild – 'Main & Clarkes Beach Dune Recovery Project'. It states Council's aim is to build up the natural defences of the dunes against erosion in the future. This aim I applaud.

Yet Council's actions and signage along this stretch of beach clearly contradict this aim, e.g. 'Bush Regeneration' instead of 'Dune

Regeneration', and 'Shhh, dunes are for plants' instead of 'Shhh we are growing our dunes'.

Apart from beach scraping and reconstructing a small incipient dune, Council seems fixated on planting out and reforesting the original swale and foredunes instead of regenerating them. This defeats their natural modus operandi.

It's clearly pictured on Council's own Recovery Project signage where trees and bush belong – on the HIND DUNES (under and behind the holiday accommodation lining Lawson Street). Council should be removing remaining old growth trees on the foredune, not planting more.

Why are they ignoring their own illustrated signage? Why repeat past and mistaken ideologies about 'fixing' and hardening a shoreline against future wave attack? Healthy dunes are the best protection against erosion. Why are we planting a forest instead of growing our dunes?

'The roots of plants and trees have virtually no capacity to reduce the loss of sand from the beach caused by wave attack' the Queensland Government Environmental Protection Authority and the Beach Protection Authority *Coastal Technical Series 2*.

'Stable healthy dunes do not need to contain thick dense tall trees and shrubs if a good ground cover exists'. – *A Manual of Coastal Dune Management and Rehabilitation*, Department of Land and Water Conservation.

'Low growing plants, such as grasses, are more effective at stabilising sand than trees or shrubs' – *Tasmanian*

Coastal Works Manual. I despair!

Jan Hackett
Byron Bay

Drug summit needed

On May 17 it will be the 25th anniversary of the Sydney drug summit in 1999 and we are all waiting desperately for an announcement by the NSW pPremier for the date of the promised one this year.

There is a meth epidemic happening all over the country and after a very expensive inquiry with good recommendations we need this ASAP. The Liberal/National government left the report for two years in the drawer, not acting on the advice at all. That's how much they cared for their citizens.

This Labor government decided against allowing pill-testing at festivals, which would have cost them nothing, but will save lives. Look at the policies of the new Victorian Labor Premier Jacinta Allan, who just sent 60 officers to Flagstaff Park in Melbourne on April 20, where, for years, thousands gathered on that day and smoke cannabis peacefully. This year there were over 39 arrests and you really wonder which way she is going.

After the very successful establishment of the injecting room in 2018 in Melbourne, 63 death avoided and 7,000 overdoses with no fatalities, she rejected the advice of the experts and from former police commissioner Ken Lay. The government received the report a year ago and only released it ten days ago. The advice was to establish a second injecting facility in the city, ► Continued on next page

Letters to the Editor

Send to Letters Editor Aslan Shand, fax: 6684 1719 email: editor@echo.net.au Deadline: Noon, Friday. **Letters longer than 200 words may be cut.** Letters already published in other papers will not be considered. Please include your full name, address and phone number for verification purposes.

Mungo's last crossword

I was sorry to read that last week's *Echo* contained Mungo's final crossword. Sitting down with a cuppa and Mungo's quirky cryptic has always been a delight, involving various



HELLO, NEIGHBOURS!

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This was circa 2010, after starting 2 live on my own.
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 Safely stored in the locked ammo section, of my double locked,
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A Decade 2 get Back on my Feet!

But this 10 yrs. was filled with many +ve, constructive, rewarding things,
 not just creating Ads, but finding ♥ and aggressively improving my farm.

EVERY 2.5 Hrs - 1 GOOD AUSSIE Suicides

Recent 2022 ABS Stats. tell us 3,249 people decided that; at that moment in
 their time, their *situation was so *BAD, they self-destructed. While this is all
 ages, stages and genders: 75% or 2,435 deaths R Males.

My RJA shows 2.5 hrs after midday/night; **sadly such a tiny *Time** between!

***Learned eIQ of *Swift *Intervention!**

Lifeline IS totally up with the times; Google **Lifeline Toolkit for helping
 someone at risk of Suicide**, Pg 1 of 4.
 Unless someone tells you, the only way to know if a person
 is thinking of suicide is to ask.

Lifeline gets my 5 Star ***** **AWARD** for the best eIQ I've seen.

Our Whole Aussie Community needs 2B Comprehensively educated.
 In my lifetime, I've always got *Professional *Help when I *needed it,
 and still led a rich, productive life.
 If this old dog can do this...

😊 ***UCAN2!*** 😊

*Emergency 000, *Any Doctor, *Lifeline 13 11 14
 Written by sheep farmer Tim Barritt. Barossa Valley, S.A.

► **Continued from page 11** but she announced that they couldn't find the right place. There was \$95 million allocated in 2020 to tackle the overdose problem with an action plan. This weekend is the Nimbin MardiGrass which has been running for 32 years fighting and educating for drug law reform. There are now 1.2 million people using cannabis as a medicine in this country.

Chibo Mertineit
 Lillian Rock

The good news?
 I try to keep myself informed about local matters so that I can try to accommodate the (mostly depressing) news. My grandmother reached a point in her life when she could barely watch the news or read a paper: she found it upset her too much. I try to follow Thomas Hardy's dictum: 'If a way to the better there be, it entails a full look at the worst.' I have now lived longer in this area and town than I spent growing up in England; but I have grown increasingly disappointed about the way Byron Bay and environs has been subjected to ill-considered, inappropriate development, and little attention is given to the ongoing living quality of many residents. The reported comments by some developers (and the current mayor) in this newspaper this week (24 April) glossing over what is being perpetuated here are no surprise. They ring hollow as a cracked bell. The claim that the centre of town will always have a bright future is one risible statement in my book. Bright future for whom? As a cash cow, I presume.

It mystifies me why any visitors could find contemporary Byron Bay town centre an attractive place. It is overcrowded and ugly. All the useful shops seem to have migrated out of town now. I should hazard, squeezed out by so-called developments (because they don't meet the glossy image the developers wish to promote and/or because the rentals are so high). As ex-councillor Jan Hackett points out, the beach is neglected and degrading. One would think it one of the place's true assets. The symbolism of Australia's rarest butterfly, and its fragile place in the wallum area, is testimony to how greed and development, not only here but elsewhere, is leading to extinctions from destruction of habitat. And the election system is too inadequate to try to remedy any of this in any hurry. If indeed it is capable of remedy thereby. The wolves are in the fold.

David Morris
 Byron Bay

Violence and women
 In reply to Duncan Holmes' criticism of Mandy's Soapbox about violence against women (April 17) as being 'too extreme', it seems that men such as Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus (SMH, April 19) and Senior Counsel Geoffrey Watson (SMH, April 24), accompanied by Anthony Albanese, are joining her on her 'Soapbox'! These men are expressing alarm about a 'crisis of male violence'. Dreyfus says it is a 'scourge in our society, and it must end. Women can't be expected to solve violence against women alone. It's

time for men to step up'. I wonder if these men will be subjected to the unprintable trolling that Louise Milligan, experienced senior journalist with the ABC, was, when she also dared to post a reaction to the Bondi stabbing with the heading 'Women are sick of being afraid'. (Saturday Paper, April 20).

Like Mandy and Dreyfus, she was sickened by the footage of the Bondi attack and was reminded of the times when she was a young mother going to the same shopping centre pushing her new-born around. And, as if in response to Duncan Holmes' outraged reminder in *The Echo* that the attacker was 'blatantly' mentally ill and therefore not responsible, Milligan cites ABS statistics about male versus female violence, including the fact that 'when women are angry, isolated, depressed or mentally ill, they don't resort to violence'—certainly not mass violence attacks in public places. I'm sure that many women, and enlightened men, will feel hope to hear men of the stature of men mentioned above, leading the way in conversations on calling out male violence. It's obviously a complex problem requiring changes not just in laws but in social attitudes, but it clearly needs men to lead the changes. Just to finish – when was the last time any male readers felt anxious while going on an early morning run or walking in the dark at night, about being attacked and murdered by a woman?

Christine Willmot
 Byron Bay

Mandy's fears real
 In response to Duncan Holmes' criticism of Mandy Nolan's Soapbox article, Shopping Centres Scare Me, may I ask if Duncan has ever been raped or sexually assaulted? I'm guessing the answer is no, otherwise he'd know something about the trauma of not feeling safe and the fears that come with that. You only need to be raped once to suffer PTSD and the real or imagined fear that persists thereafter. Then for Duncan to suggest that Mandy needs long-term therapy, is unbearably condescending, insulting, lacking empathy and toxic. Maybe it's you who needs help. Duncan, the next time you feel entitled to lash out at someone else's expressed fears, I suggest you do some research on the subject given your lack of lived experience in this realm. As a functioning society, we need good men to speak up against gendered violence, such that occurred at the Bondi Junction Shopping Centre, with the murderer targeting women and girls. We need men to speak out about the over 30 women who have been murdered by their intimate partners or exes just this year to date, often murdered in their own (unsafe) homes. We need men to be proudly and proactively on our side, the side being raped, controlled and murdered by men who say they love us. If this culture of male control and violence is to change, we need everyone on board. Most definitely, we

► **Continued on page 14**

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State of the Hempire revealed at Nimbin MardiGrass

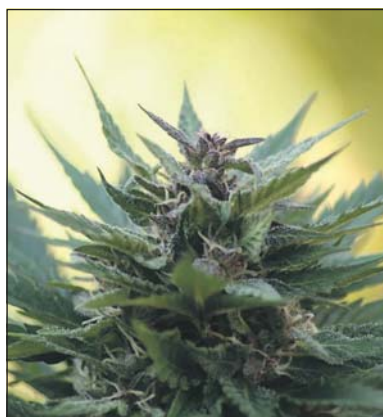
Gerald Taylor

The state of the Hempire in the Northern Rivers is healthy. In the last two years many changes have come about, both strategically and tactically.

Many of these changes are political; the Legalise Cannabis party has won many seats in many states with the chance of at least one seat in federal parliament a very high probability in the next federal elections.

Here in NSW, Jeremy Buckingham, parliamentary leader of the Legalise Cannabis party is punching well above his weight as our representative senator. Jeremy is actively championing hemp growers in the Northern Rivers and, in cooperation with the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Labor minister for agriculture Tara Moriarty, created a hemp task force to support and expand the hemp industry in NSW. The task force has been selected from leaders in the industry.

The Northern Rivers Hemp Growers Co-Op (NRHGC) has been chosen as one of these leaders. At the upcoming MardiGrass this weekend



This weekend Nimbin MardiGrass gets underway and Jeremy Buckingham from the Legalise Cannabis party will be hosting a panel.



Jeremy will be hosting a panel in the town hall to tell us how the taskforce was formed, its aims and timeframes, and to answer any questions from the community.

These are the strategic changes that have put the wind into NRHGC's sails and given us an interface with the political wheels of power.

Tactically great changes have occurred as well. NRHGC is philosophically built on the premise of cottage farming, this is our point of difference from all other hemp industry enterprises. At NRHGC we believe that hemp, because of its versatility, is ideally suited to cottage farming and after two

years of hard, co-operative endeavour we believe we have proved it. Our dream is to have 1,000 small holdings here in the Northern Rivers producing 5,000 superior products, bringing sustainability to the farming community and resilience to our small towns and villages.

What is being produced?

To date NRHGC and associated businesses and artisans are producing: our own indigenised hemp seed stock for broad acre replanting; hemp seed oil and protein powder; hemp soap from the plant's flower as well as hemp flower oil as

a pet or animal dietary supplement. We make a range of cosmetics from infused hemp flower and several products for the wellness industry.

From the bast, the long, strong fibre, we make hemp carbon fibre products from Martin Ernegg's marvellous matrix; Hempstone. From the bast we also make paper of the highest quality and supply our local weavers with raw thread for their looms. From the hurd, the pithy core of the plant, we are making chips to be used in hempcrete and other hemp-based building materials and, more importantly, we are using the hurd chips to feed the pyrolysis oven.

What's the pyrolysis oven?

Well I'm glad you asked because the pyrolysis oven is the final piece in the global hemp puzzle.

Pyrolysis is the cooking of carbon-based materials in an oxygen-free oven.

Done correctly this process separates carbon from the volatile elements carbon likes to associate with. A good example of this is methane – a gas given off by rotting or burning carbon biomass. The chemical name for methane is CH₄ or one carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms.

Pyrolysis dumps the carbon atom in the oven while releasing the four hydrogen atoms back into the wild. Or, in our case we grab the hydrogen atoms and use them as fuel to heat the oven to extract more carbon. It's a cycle, a beautiful, clean, carbon-sequestering cycle whose only emission is a smoke-flavoured water; wood vinegar. Pyrolysis hurd makes the best possible soil mix or can be dug directly back into our depleted soils to perfectly sequester carbon from the atmosphere permanently. With this technology, which has come from Robbie Tonks who will also be speaking at MardiGrass, we

have achieved the holy grail of farming; a circular industry that may be transplanted into any rural community to create resilience, productivity, and employment back to our farms and villages.

Forty years ago the hippies were blathering on about how pot could save the planet, another hippy pipe dream of course, yet today we stand at the threshold of making the old dream a reality.

This year we will build a processing facility to separate hemp into its component parts as well as sequestering vast amounts of carbon. We will build workshops for the refining and value adding of our plants products to enrich and enliven our communities.

The process has begun now and because it's a grass roots revolution in farming practice it cannot be stopped. NRHGC welcomes all fellow travellers on this path we tread, in the Hempire all people of good heart are welcome. Come see us at MardiGrass, we would love to share our visions of a better world built on HEMP. The possibilities are endless and the journey has just begun.

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► **Continued from page 12** don't need anyone sniping from the sidelines when someone is brave enough to express her fears.

Jan Lavis
East Ballina

Youth crime

Again I appear to be at odds with the thoughts of Chairman Heilpern.

Firstly and critically, David omits one of the most essential ingredients of the situation, namely the victim. David, these are not victimless crimes. They have severe consequences to the victims, their families and the community. It doesn't help if the magistrate ignores the pain and suffering of the victim.

Unfortunately we don't have a justice system in this country, we have a legal system which allows the legal fraternity to hide behind poorly-crafted legislation to make excuse after excuse for the alleged offender.

To use David Heilpern's own words here, 'this just kicks the problem down the road in the worst possible way'. When will we ever see a magistrate who gives equal concern to a victim?

David, the possible answer to your questions,

'what is causing this crime wave, and what to do about it', is perhaps the magistrate's revolving door has a bit to answer

Tim Harrington
Lennox Head

A change will do us good

David Heilpern raised some important issues in his article about youth crime on the rise. He also alluded to problems stemming from methamphetamine use, domestic violence, violent video games, the cost of living and housing, racism, social media, climate-change anxiety, poor treatment of young offenders, and stringent laws.

I have been watching the world since *Time* magazine displayed a new topic, 'The Environment', in the late 1960s and then printed two new words, 'Ecology', and 'Pollution.' I notice that not much has changed in the solution of any of those topics in the last 60 years considering that in the Amazon, Australia, Malaysia and many other countries thousands of acres of land are destroyed for profiteering businesses like palm oil production and cattle rearing. We read of plastic entering our waterways

and bodies, but annually businesses make billions of plastic bags. How many billions of plastic bags are made versus how many go into landfill or oceans? How do we stop that?

Has anyone done the maths to see how toxic fume generation versus oxygen production over how many years will allow life on the planet?

We have at least two major wars going on, where politicians with no communication skills at all are having a punch up, and we wonder why domestic violence occurs. More people are communicating by screens – not face-to-face – culminating in places like Japan where young people don't know how to date anymore and the country faces a population crisis. Elsewhere, some relationships are becoming weirder with sex workers online (not even meeting); young people getting a skewed internet education where racism and sexism are rampant, and television glorifying dysfunctional relating.

The war on drugs was lost in the 60s and people aren't solving the issues associated with drug addictions. Or all addictions. Or the housing crisis or violent video games

or violent internet porn.

So no, David. It's no good 'buckling in for a while,' hoping all the problems will be fixed. I can see some changes for the good. But babies being born today will face these problems when they have 60 years of experience. Until each problem becomes untenable and necessitates radical change.

Raphael Lee Cass
Byron Bay

Pointless and tragic

The death of a bottlenose dolphin who suffocated while tangled in the shark nets off Bondi Beach is not only pointless but tragic. Dolphins can live 40-60 years and are highly intelligent, social animals.

Shark nets have been shown repeatedly to be ineffective in protecting humans from the extremely rare incidents of shark bites. In NSW, shark nets only reach halfway to the ocean surface and stretch merely 150m long, and sharks can easily swim over, under or around them.

Animals caught in shark nets exhaust themselves trying to break free before dying an agonising death from asphyxiation. Virtually every dolphin found in a net dies there and 92 per cent of

animals caught in the nets in the decade to 2023 were not targets of netting, including dolphins, turtles and rays.

Humans kill around 100 million sharks every year, while shark sightings regularly see humans quickly going back into the water – often before beaches are officially reopened – well aware that the sharks present an infinitesimally smaller risk than driving their cars to the beach.

Shark nets don't work. Now they are being removed for the end of the season, they should be scrapped for good.

Dr Desmond Bellamy
PETA Australia

No Elliot meet up

Julian Assange's local supporters received a bitter 'slap in the face' last week when Justine Elliot refused to meet four representatives of their group, 'Free Julian Assange', in a scheduled meeting.

Our federal MP Justine Elliot cancelled at the last minute with no reason provided. Justine's political slogan, 'Here for You', is like a rash all over the *Tweed Valley Weekly*. Looks like Justine needs to update her political slogan to 'Here for You: When I feel like it?'

Our democracy works

on the principle that local voters have access to their government representatives to voice concerns and ask for support. It is their basic democratic right.

Justine Elliot as the federal member of Richmond holds the honour of representing her electorate in the highest form of government, the House of Representatives, as a part of the ALP Albanese government.

Justine should immediately publicly apologise to the four representatives she snubbed last week, then meet with them as was scheduled. Richmond voters are watching closely.

T Sharples
Tweed Heads

Authoritarianism

I know two elders over 80 years old. These women have spent their life as direct pacifist activists. They attended non-violent direct action training in support of the Wallum protectors, First Nation peoples, the rights of nature and future generations of sentient beings facing the horrors of ecological/cultural/ social/ national demise as we attempt to come to terms with the insertion of unknown climate change realities upon existing life. ►



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► It was beyond shocking to learn that riot police were recently called in to deal with Wallum activists. The police were also ideologically and physically supported by security guards. It must be remembered that activists have a right to protest and one questions why this issue resulted in one male person being directly punched on the nose by riot police? This brutal action ratifies the fact that elder pacifists supporting the Wallum protests could have been 'in the wrong place at the wrong time' and faced such direct brutalisation, sanctioned by whom?

As this weapon of social control is extremely dangerous the community asks, is this state sanctioned violence, is this Byron Shire sanctioned violence, is this developer and state sanctioned violence and finely, who pays the riot police? A response sanctioned by the legal dictates of human rights entitles the community to a democratic right of reply?

In the midst of a climate crisis we witness the demise of human rights as authoritarian structures are asserted in the Byron Shire.

It is also important that Byron Council supplies the public with the response and information that guides the current decisions of Byron councillors. Namely, the directives of the Northern Regional Planning Panel (NRPP), an organisation that the ex-mayor, Simon Richardson joined upon leaving Byron Council, and had direct input into supporting the current zombie development of Wallum. The community is entitled to a response. Council please supply responses to the public?

Jo Faith
Newtown

Future AI

What is AI, an artificial intelligence, a reproduction acumen or an imitation judgement? That gives a simulated conclusion and a replicated decision, using duplicated assessment and copied consideration.

An unoriginal reflection or an imitative echo, a second-hand rebound causing a recycled echo. A recovered reverberation of a regained echo. Does this mean that AI or artificial intelligence will be used as a reflection of the intention of those who organise the programming of the AI computer? What intention will the AI computers be programmed with, when they are applied to the systems they govern is there transparency of governments intent? The secrets are kept for our benefit, we are not allowed to know?

We have our own personal intelligence, made possible because of a system, with a containment field that has been manufactured for us, and here we are while we continue to use it. We are alive and it's intentional. Is MyGov aware of this fact?

Robert Podhajsky
Ocean Shores

Fairy dust

Just as the sun's burning rays can be pin-point focused by a magnifying glass, so it is with Israel. Missiles, drones, bombs, bullets, white phosphorous, viruses, microbes, famine, drought, AI killing programs like Lavender and Where's Daddy? Physical and psychological torture, are melded together to form a perfect killing machine, whose immense power is focused on Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel is on an extermination quest to fulfil its oft repeated mantra, 'A land without a people, for a people without a land'.

At this very moment Israel is busy converting Palestine

into 'a land without people' and is doing so in full view of the world community and the UN Security Council. The world has become blind, deaf and dumb, like the three monkeys, as it witnesses genocide.

Platitudes from Israel apologists like Danny Wakil, who jabber on about peace, love and harmony, are just so much fairy dust designed to obscure Israel's heart of darkness and blunt our moral outrage over what is being done with our taxes and in our name. Perhaps, Danny, you'd like to daub 'Peace is the only solution' on the mass graves recently unearthed at the Shifa and Nasser hospitals, where many corpses had their hands tied behind their backs!

Gareth W R Smith
Byron Bay

Israel Gaza

Danny Wakil, an ardent supporter of Zionist Israel, demeans and dehumanises the Palestinians include calling Hamas 'a death cult' and 'a vile terrorist organisation' that 'values death more than life' and 'couldn't care less about Palestinian civilians' but simply uses them as 'human shields'. Danny's diatribe, could be lifted straight from Israel's *Hasbara Handbook*.

What Danny doesn't mention is that Hamas is the government of Gaza and hence employs many civilians who work in civil administration and have no role in the armed factions of the Palestinian resistance. Labelling everyone in Gaza a terrorist supporter of Hamas, as Israeli president Herzog has done, is an attempt to blame Palestinians for the carnage that Israel is inflicting on them.

Since October 7, the Hamas leadership has been willing to negotiate a prisoner exchange in return for

some relief from the illegal occupation and crippling siege of Gaza. No one needed to die, all hostages could have returned home safely if Israel had simply agreed to negotiate in good faith and abide by international law. But typically and predictably Israel chose to commit mass murder instead and call it self defence. Israel claims to be seeking peace and security by slaughtering innocent civilians and destroying civilian infrastructure, but really it's just trying to drive Palestinians from their land.

John Scrivener
Main Arm

Iran is to blame

The horror show that is the ongoing war in the Middle East is not about land, it is about an extremist ideology that is being financed decade after decade by Iran and Qatar. In simple terms, one side has no tolerance for a non-Muslim state in the Middle East (Israel).

The Iranian leaders have never tried to hide this fact and were heavily involved in the planning of the October 7 invasion of Israel, and the tragic war in Gaza that has followed.

Iranians are beautiful people and a large percentage of her population do not support the Mullahs in their obsessive war against Israel, their suppression of women and many other issues, but they are met with crushing force if they voice a counter opinion.

Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates are also actively against Iran and what she represents.

Israel has no interest in a war with Iran, as it had no interest in a war in Gaza (I am not saying that Israel is perfect and some changes are needed). Let's hope the war in Gaza will end soon.

Danny Wakil
Billinudgel

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Australia's political culture needs to be depolarised

Klaas Woldering

In a recent issue of *The Saturday Paper* the editor described Dutton as leader of the 'Noalition'. Naturally this was not just the result of the decision to block the referendum on the Voice but of a longstanding cultural divide between the two major parties in Australia's system of governance. Even the seating arrangements, sitting opposite each other, is part of that culture. Surely, Australia can do much better.

The basic culture of the political society, that essentially derives from the electoral system in the UK, US and here, is the dominant Single Member District system. That produces a two-party system with a polarised political culture. Its origins lie in political and economic developments during the second half of the 19th century creating major conflicts between business owners and workers.

European system has more parties

These groups/classes formed political parties: Conservatives and Labour in the UK and US as well. In the European continent this also happened but was less class-based, while other groups represented included various religious parties.

In Europe this resulted politically mostly in proportional representation. That made the emergence of more parties possible and greater political plurality the norm. In the Nordic countries in particular this also encouraged employee participation in business decision-making starting in 1930s, in Norway, but elsewhere as well after WWII. This democratising development did not happen



Entrenched partisanship – in the Australian Parliament the leading party and opposition sit opposite each other in the chamber. Photo www.aph.gov.au

in the English-speaking countries, least of all in the UK which had a strong economic and social class division. That was typically reflected in the TV program *Upstairs, Downstairs*.

Polarisation

The electoral system for the lower houses in parliament, taken over from the UK (with some improvements), is the basis for the polarised two-party system in Australia.

In societies starting as English colonies, like Australia and NZ, political and industrial systems were taken over as they were in the UK. Other European systems were not considered. Remarkably, many Australians hardly understand that the dominant electoral system in Australia is also reflected in their industrial relations system. As Australian society is changing dramatically and has become very multicultural already, the time has come to introduce reforms.

Similarly, the industrial relations system needs to change to reflect that as well. It should create much greater participation in decision-making by staff, at all levels. Works councils are the answer here. Research by the UNSW in 2011 strongly recommended workplace democracy.

Support for major parties in decline

I made a major submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) in late 2022 (Nr 219), the third such submission. The JSCEM is actually dominated by the major parties. It is therefore certainly not an independent reform commission!

The problem here is obvious: the major parties are not interested in reforms that could reduce their numbers. While their voter support has been declining for the last 20 years the time has come to demonstrate that there is nevertheless

a need for electoral system change. We read about a lot of criticism in the media but next to nothing about serious system reform. However, a recent survey by the Greens found that the support for proportional representation is actually growing in Australia, regardless. Without any support in the media 35 per cent of respondents indicated they favoured such a change.

The Voice Referendum became a clear victim of the electoral system of Australia. That is the principal explanation why that referendum failed. It went entirely against the development of Indigenous recognition by the society and growing awareness of the need for improvement.

If we look at the many progressive aspects and general acceptance of the need to assist the Indigenous people in Australia the outcome of the Voice Referendum is almost completely out of character.

There are many indications of growing support for the Indigenous people. This is quite apart from the general acceptance in Australia of the reality of the 60,000 years of existence of a large number of Indigenous groups referred to as First Nation people. This is now widely acknowledged at most public meetings; the existence of the Aboriginal flag at many official occasions is further evidence. The fact that no less than 11 MPs and senators represent political parties in parliament federally are Indigenous people; the amazing world-class performance of Indigenous sports men and women; all these realities make the 'No' vote quite ridiculous are quite unexpected even by the cautious PM.

The Single Member District electoral system creates the two-party polarising culture in Australia. The opposition party regards it as its duty to oppose whatever the government comes up with as new policy proposals.

The recent grudging acceptance of the

amendments to the Stage Three tax cuts provided another example. Of course, it was a sensibly broken promise, that could not be denied, but several opposition speakers managed to heavily criticise the economic and tax policies of the Albanese government nevertheless.

The primary function of the opposition in this system is to OPPOSE. That's an important reason to change to a proportional system-party list where parties, after the election, come together to form a government.

The emphasis here is on COOPERATION. Occasionally, that can be difficult, and can take time, but effective majorities are generally formed as a result of cooperation. There is no official opposition, the seating arrangements in parliament is not opposite. Proportional representation reform movements are happening even in the UK and the US, for very good reasons. Moreover, proportional representation is clearly a fair and therefore more democratic system. The ALP even introduced a proportional representation system for the senate in 1948! An improvement to the system as a whole.

Albanese is widely regarded as risk-averse. There seems to be little doubt that he did not expect that there would be a 'No' campaign. After the failure of the Voice Referendum, he announced that in future referendums would only be held if government and opposition agreed on the issue. This obviously means that there has to be complete agreement between government and opposition on the next referendum for a republic. This doesn't look promising at all for the Republic issue. The case for a new Constitution is obvious. This is not just a matter of doctoring Section 128 which would have to be done in terms of Section 128 again; that failed before. The time for a wide-ranging governance systems inquiry has arrived.

Political responses to violence

David Lowe

Tens of thousands of people marched against gendered violence on the weekend. As the eSafety commissioner's fight with Elon Musk over censorship of violent terror continues, the Albanese government sought to do something positive about gun violence by funding the long-discussed National Firearms Register.

Women and men are looking to governments, state and federal, to make them safe. Are they up to the task?

The man at the centre of all this in a political sense is Federal Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, whose father's family fled Nazi persecution in Europe to come to Australia – he understands what happens when violence gets out of control. Mr Dreyfus has spent his life in the service of the law, which was invented by humans to deal with this problem, even if it often fails.

National emergency

This year, women have died violently, on average, every four days at the hands of men in Australia – a grim record. Both Mr Dreyfus and Mr Albanese spoke in support of rallies against gender-based violence, but stopped short of agreeing with calls for a royal commission into domestic violence.

Labor insists that their national plan of 2022 to end violence against women is up to the job, if given more time, but critics have pointed out that only 17 of the promised 500 frontline domestic violence (DV) workers are on the job, and much more needs to be done to end a dangerously accelerating cycle of violence.

'We need to be working harder on the kinds of actions that have already been identified,' said Mr Dreyfus, throwing the ball back to the states.

It's yet to be seen if next month's federal budget will include extra money for women's refuges, emergency housing (especially in rural areas), community development,



A woman in Australia dies violently every four days at the hands of a man. Image Cloudcatcher Media

education programs or mental health support, aimed at addressing what is overwhelmingly male violence towards women.

National Firearms Register

Meanwhile the government has flagged \$161.3 million over four years to implement the long-discussed National Firearms Register, which appears to have been jolted into existence by the tragic events at Wieambilla in December 2022, although it probably wouldn't have prevented it, with many unlicensed weapons involved.

Supported by Walter Mikac, whose family were murdered at Port Arthur, Attorney-General

Dreyfus said the register would bring together all the information held by different police forces and authorities in a single, modern system.

'Once established, police will know where firearms are, who owns them, and what other risks to the community and police may exist,' he said.

The February murders of Jesse Baird and Luke Davies by an off-duty policeman wouldn't have been stopped by the register, and it's hard to see how the new system will do anything about the growing number of unlicensed weapons in circulation, with the Australia Institute estimating there are now twice as many of these weapons in Australia than before the Port Arthur massacre.

Still, a national register is surely a step in the right direction.

Horror movie, right there on your TV (and everywhere else)

In other ultra-violence news, the US government has approved more weapons for Israel, with no strings attached, and the Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles popped up in Kyiv last week to say Australia would be providing another \$100m of military support for Ukraine, on top of the billions he announced last week to keep Australia safe, presumably from our largest trading partner, China.

Elon Musk is refusing to back down on Australian government



Federal Attorney-General and Member for Isaacs, Mark Dreyfus.

calls to remove video of a violent terrorism incident from X's servers (and the victim Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel agrees with him), and there is a possibility that news of a traditional kind will soon disappear altogether from social media in Australia, although violence will undoubtedly remain.

In Romania, the trial of alleged human trafficker and rapist Andrew Tate inches closer, but the ripples of damage from this international influencer and others like him continue, with the normalisation of extreme violent sexism in every corner of the internet adding to long-standing cultural problems like endless rape scenes in movies, and murder as entertainment on television each night.

Sexism is at its worst when women become faceless and generic, and are no longer considered as someone's mother, sister or daughter – individual human beings.

As the cost of living rises, and things get tougher for the majority, there is the age-old problem of men kicking those they perceive as weaker, hence the rising violence towards women, children and animals. It's a problem bigger than governments, or maybe even cultures.

Everybody hurts, and we all have to do what we can to stop it.

David Lowe can be found in *The Echo* online every Monday at: www.echo.net.au.

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Happy Mother's Day



12th May



Mullumbimby Newsagency

Find the perfect gift for your mum at Mullumbimby Newsagency in the beautiful Splish impressions range, new in store this week. With candles, diffusers, large prints and gorgeous inspirational magnets, there will be something for every mum to treasure. They also stock Mother's Day bags and a core range from Darrell Lea just to add some extra sweetness.

At Mullumbimby Newsagency they pride themselves on their friendly service, and their staff are always willing to help you find that special something for your special someone!

44 Burringbar Street, Mullumbimby
02 6684 2127

Bangalow Wellness Hub

Bangalow Wellness Hub is celebrating all mothers, step-mothers and carers this Mother's Day by offering 20% OFF treatments, packages and two-person infra-red sauna sessions until May 31.

Bangalow Wellness Hub is a locally-owned, doctor-led clinic specialising in skin and body rejuvenation. Dr Meera provides evidence-based treatments in a safe, tranquil and luxurious space where your privacy is paramount.

Consultations available with Dr Meera for medical grade anti-aging treatments, skin rejuvenation, hair restoration, TMJ pain, headaches, and IV vitamin infusions.

Promo code & gift card available online. See website for details. T&Cs apply.

www.bangalowwellnesshub.com.au
96 Byron Street, Bangalow
0477 287 112

Heart and Song

Join Byron Music Society for an enchanting afternoon as they proudly present 'Heart and Song.' Prepare to be immersed in a program meticulously crafted by the Gold Coast Chamber Orchestra, showcasing a world premiere composition.

Well-known soprano, Gaynor Morgan, will be premiering a setting of poems by Seamus Heaney and Robert Graves skilfully arranged for soprano, harp, cello, and string orchestra by prominent Northern Rivers musician Nicholas Routley.

Gaynor will perform soul-stirring arias by Handel and Mozart, and the Gold Coast Chamber Orchestra will shine in one of Mendelssohn's delightful string symphonies.

'We are extremely lucky to have in our midst harpist Margaret Curtis. Margaret and her beautiful harp will also grace the stage.'

Celebrate Mother's Day with music! Treat your mother or mother figure to a delightful afternoon of music.

Event details

Date: Sunday, May 12

Time: 2:30pm

Venue: A&I Hall, Bangalow

Don't miss this extraordinary celebration of music and artistry!

GCCO presents Season 1 Concert 1 - Heart and Song. Tickets at byronmusicsociety.com

MULLUMBIMBY NEWSAGENCY



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What are you waiting for? Allow Beautopia at Ocean to pamper you today!

15% discount applies when purchasing online gift vouchers. For Mother's Day promo, valid until May 12 use code MOTHERSDAY24.

All clients will receive 15% off when booking online with promo code NEW24, valid until June 30.

www.beautopiaatoccean.com.au

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Happy Mother's Day



The Book Warehouse

Let the staff at your local Book Warehouse shops help you find the perfect Mothers Day gift. There are so many beautiful books, art supplies, games and puzzles for your purchasing pleasure. Local businesses are the lifeblood that flow through our community and your custom means the world to them.

The Book Warehouse staff are dedicated and knowledgeable booksellers who can advise on books or gifts, suggest greeting cards and make sure that your gift is just the right fit.

Show your mum some love and support this locally-owned business.

Ballina and Lismore
thebwh.com

Mother's Day Buffet Brunch in Forest

On Sunday, 12 May, Forest Byron Bay will host a Boujee Buffet Brunch, featuring a lavish spread of artisanal pastries, locally-sourced delicacies, and bottomless mimosas. Set amidst lush greenery, the event promises to be an unforgettable way to honour mothers on their special day.

Guests can enhance their Mother's Day experience with a spa treatment at Eléme Day Spa or extend their stay with Crystalbrook Collection's nature-inspired Rise and Shine package, offering a 15% discount for the weekend.

Visit crystalbrookcollection.com/byron/special-offers/mothers-day to learn more.



Kissed by nature, *nurtured by us.*

Celebrate Mother's Day at Eléme Day Spa with restorative treatments that reflect our passion for natural healing.

Breathe in, reconnect to the magical benefits of the rainforest, and restore balance and calm to body and mind.

15% off for locals, Monday - Thursday.

eléme^{spa}

crystalbrookcollection.com/eleme-spa/byron





Elements of Byron

This Mother's Day, Elements of Byron Resort invites guests to indulge in an elegant High Tea experience on Sunday, May 12.

Set against the backdrop of the Azure Terrace, guests will be treated to a lavish spread featuring traditional delights such as freshly baked scones, delicate finger sandwiches, and an array of sweet and savoury treats meticulously prepared in-house by their talented culinary team.

This year, they are delighted to introduce a glass of Louis Roederer champagne, adding a touch of sophistication to the festivities.

elementsofbyron.com.au
144 Bayshore Drive, Byron Bay
02 6639 1500

North Byron Hotel

Nothing says 'I love you mum' like a Bottomless Lunch at North Byron Hotel this Mother's Day.

For only \$45 (on the wagon) \$69 (off the wagon), guests can tuck into a bespoke sharing-style feast with a two-hour endless pour of Limoncello Spritz, Rosé or Balter Cervesa. Dishes include in-house focaccia, freshly-caught baked market fish, radicchio salad, tender Persian lamb shoulder and ever moorish roast chat potatoes. There will be live music and a special MUMosa cocktail available all-day long. They're even throwing in a complimentary gift for mum. You're welcome.

northbyronhotel.com.au
61 Bayshore Drive, Byron Bay

Clay Organic Beauty

Clay Organic guarantee mum will float out of the salon feeling nurtured, revitalised and refreshed with their Signature Mindfulness Facial. It is like nothing you've tried before, and in fact, it is literally the first of its kind. This unique experience features a guided ten-minute meditation mindfulness session (through large, soft headphones) that will allow you to forget the noise of the outside world and focus on calming, refreshing and inspiring your mind. It's ultimately an opportunity to relax and focus on you – your attitude, your gratitude and feeling the best version of yourself.

Gift vouchers available.

97 Dalley Street, Mullumbimby
02 6684 6532

Lennox Head Pizza & Pasta

Celebrate Mum in style with an exquisite Mother's Day lunch special! Indulge in a delectable 3-course set menu, complete with a glass of bubbles upon arrival, all for just \$69 per person.

Plus, when you reserve your table, you'll automatically enter the draw to win a luxurious getaway: one night's accommodation at Dunes Lennox Head and a dinner for two at Lennox Pizza, sponsored by Lennox Luxury Homes.

Treat Mum to a memorable day filled with delicious food and the chance to win big!

Book your table now at www.lennoxpizza.com.

Honey Hunt Style

Embrace slow fashion – travel in style with Honey Hunt.

Honey Hunt's effortless easy-care dresses, skirts, tops and travel towels are the ultimate travel essentials, with gorgeous fabrics for all adventures.

Treat your mum - and yourself - to the comfiest fashion EVER with velvety soft fabrics. Your mum will adore the unique patterns from original artworks in luxuriously comfortable clothing designed locally and made in Australia.

With great tummy support, their clothes are known for the flattering fit and, available in sizes XS-XXL, they're a go-to choice for any occasion.

Give your mum the freedom to choose with a voucher for in-store or online shopping.

Support local small businesses this Mother's Day and experience the essence of slow clothing: Empowering talented women in crafting comfortable, high-quality garments.

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Mother's Day lunch special 3-course set menu & a glass of bubbles upon arrival \$69 per person. Plus, when you reserve your table, you'll automatically enter our draw to win a luxurious getaway.

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6686 2353 | 151 River St, Ballina | www.lingerieno5.com.au | Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat 9-3

Happy Mother's Day



Introducing Byron Bay's newest boutique store!

THE LOCAL Store is an innovative concept brought to life by Australian fashion designer Dui Cameron and her team.

Dui was inspired from a young age to be bold and bright, and to have fun with what she wore, and this love of colour and style developed into a feel-good philosophy of 'Big Love. Big Life' within her Boom Shankar fashion brand. Her latest boutique store is no exception to this rule - stepping through its doors is like a soulful exchange into the world of creative masterminds.

This boutique store is the second of its kind, with the first LOCAL shop being opened last year at Peregian Beach on the Sunshine Coast. Each store is slightly different and provides a unique shopping experience. The LOCAL Byron sells a combination of Boom Shankar fashion and the best of Australian-owned brands set out in a luxurious and colourful display.

Their team is passionate about supporting locally-owned labels and ethically-made products. Discover a thoughtful and eclectic mix of apparel and footwear, beauty, accessories, giftware, and homewares for mum this Mother's Day. The LOCAL encapsulates an eye for design, fun and inspiration.

Shop 5/21-25 Fletcher St, Byron Bay

Lingerie No.5

Find the perfect Mothers Day gift for your mum - or the mother of your children - at Lingerie No.5.

Located in River Street, Ballina, Lingerie No.5 offers a one-on-one professional fitting service in store whilst catering for all shapes, sizes and categories.

Not only do they stock underwear but precious silks, cotton sleepwear, bamboo sleepwear and more!

Visit them to find all your favourite brands including CK underwear, Berlei, Triumph, Simone Perele, Primadonna, Elomi, Goddess and Wacoal, Marie Jo, Chantelle, Papinelle and many more!

Lingerie No.5 specialises in fittings such as prosthesis fittings, maternity, shapewear, everyday wear, etc!

Shop local at Lingerie No.5.

151 River Street, Ballina
02 6686 2353
Instagram: @lingerie_no_5



THE LOCAL

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MULLUM LANEWAYS 2024

CELEBRATING ARTS, MUSIC AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT



Mullumbimby, a town known for its abundance of artists and creatives with a passion for what drives them, will host the Laneways Festival 2024 on May 4 and 5. Inspired by the resounding success of the inaugural 'Blue on Burringbar' event in 2023, which aimed to aid the community's healing process after the devastating floods, this year's festival promises an even more immersive experience.

Sunday, May 5 is a FREE twilight event (see program details below). Burringbar Street and its laneways will be transformed into a haven of creativity, offering an eclectic mix of music, dance, theatre, art, food, and fun.

In order to fund Sunday's free day, Saturday evening, May 4 is a fundraiser in the shape of a Progressive Dinner Party. Hosted by none other than the master of circus antics and

comedy, the dazzling Daniel Oldaker, aka Dandyman, this will be a night of laughs, culinary delights and world-class music that you won't want to miss. Join in for a fusion of food and fun guided by Dan's unmatched wit and versatility.

Start at the Rock and Roll Coffee Company at 5.30pm for canapés and drinks and entertainment by Ian Date and George Washingmachine, then move to the Courthouse Hotel at 7.30 for dinner and a Mexican fiesta with music by Felicity Lawless and MsEleneous. The night culminates with a dance party hosted by The Versace Boys and their 7-piece band at the Ex-Services Club.

Tickets for Saturday's Fundraiser, with special prices for groups of 4 and 10, as well as information about Sunday's free festivities, can be found at www.kaleidomullumbimby.org.au.

SUNDAY MAY 5

MUSIC CENTRAL	MAIN STAGE AT THE WESTERN END OF BURRINGBAR STREET	
3.55 - 4.00pm	Opening and Welcome to Country	
4.00 - 4.45pm	Bunny Racket A wonderfully unique brand of punk rock for all ages	
5.30 - 6.15pm	The Loveys A grown up girl band that deliver great songs and powerful harmonies	
6.45 - 7.15pm	The Dandyman Take a holiday for your imagination at the 'Ding Hotel' with your host, Dandyman, the overworked hotel manager. Fabulous and family friendly	
7.15 - 8.15pm	Soul'd This 10-piece party band will have you up and dancing with their eclectic mix of classic soul, rock and blues	
MULLUM SQUARE	SECOND STAGE AT THE INTERSECTION OF BURRINGBAR & STUART STREETS	
4.45 - 5.15pm	Spaghetti Circus The Spaghetti Performance Troupe returns to the Mullum Laneways Festival with stilt walkers and a 25 minute street performance exploring how kids play and maintain their sense of fun and adventure as they venture into adult life	
6.15 - 6.45pm	Jaardu, the Magic of India A colourful, energetic show of intrigue, suspense, mystique and humour, encompassing astounding magic, beautiful sleight of hand, and a very original snake charming routine	
CARNIVALE	LANEWAY BETWEEN BAKER & DAUGHTERS AND OP SHOP	
A magical laneway full of wondrous things for young children to do and explore		
ALL	Chalk on the Pavement	Pick up some coloured chalk and create some magic on the pavement
4.00 - 6.00pm	Face Painting	Two face painting stations where your face becomes a living canvas
	Crown Making with Mullum Preschool	Weave some magic into your own special headpiece
	Little Lantern Making with Mullum Preschool	Followed by a Lantern Parade to showcase your luminous creations at 6.00pm
5.00 - 6.00pm	Ziggy & Zumba Circus Show	A participative circus show including games, puppets, juggling, clowns, kids prizes, and more
6.00 - 8.00pm	Fairy House Building with Bush School	Build your own Fairy House out of natural materials - bark, leaves, sticks and moss - with guidance from the local Bush School
ART NOIR	BETWEEN BANYA BATHHOUSE AND CHINNY STORE	
Cinematic, abstract, intriguing, romantic & moody. A laneway of contrast, shadows & reflections		
4.00 - 6.00pm	Henna Tattoos with Henna Harem Byron Bay	A fresh-made paste from an age-old recipe is bringing the live art experience of henna drawing to the velvet chairs. Rest and be adorned
	Botanical Printing Workshop with Katie Alleva	Immerse yourself in the enchanting world of botanical cyanotype printing . Capture the beauty of local flowers and unleash your creativity in this inspiring hands-on experience
6.00 - 6.45pm	The Lady Lynx Gatekeeper	Moving with timeless grace & elegance the Gatekeepers aim to inspire & uplift as they engage with the space and the people who witness their dance
6.00 - 8.00pm	Mini Film Screenings	Sit back and enjoy: Mullum Magic and Mullum Madness
7.20 - 8.00pm	Lady Renea & Melanie Moon	Moonshine cabaret style theatre & dance performance. An exploration of light and shadow

THE SNUG	BETWEEN IGA AND NAB	
A night in with family and friends, games, stories, singalongs, tricks, jokes and antics		
ALL	Board Games	Chess, Backgammon, Jenga and more
4.00 - 6.00pm	Piano	Spontaneous performances welcome!
	Mandala Workshop	Weave your own mandala with wool
6.00 - 7.00pm	Nina & Zeus in Surprise!	A meaningful story about a girl that was feeling alone and a swan that wanted to be a dove. The story subliminally teaches about loving who you are and finding ways to do what you love, even if it seems impossible
7.00 - 8.00pm	Ode to Story with <i>Luminous Youth</i>	Grandpapa Adashku at 152 years old hails from Polish shores, having arrived in Mullumbimby the day a zebra crossed the road. As a listener to wind, praying mantis and the trees, he carries a bag full of stories, stunts and songs from his travels deep into Bundjalung Country.
L'ATELIER	KIVA SPA LANEWAY	
Studio vibes, eclectic sounds, expressive live models, paints and brushes, canvases and sketches		
ALL	Art Station	Draw, paint and sketch at a long table filled with art materials to encourage your creativity
	Chalk on the Pavement	Pick up some coloured chalk and create some magic on the pavement
4.00 - 6.00pm	Face Painting Station	Two face painting stations where your face becomes a living canvas
	Mullum Rocks	Paint your own Mullum Rock - create it, photograph it, hide it, gift it ... spread the love and the smiles
4.00 - 6.30pm	Community Canvas	Have your figure painted onto a large canvas
	Live Painting	Watch a local artist transform a canvas into an artwork
6.30 - 7.00pm and 7.30 - 8.00pm	Life Drawing with Hot Mess - In the Flesh	A decadent life drawing experience designed to ignite your creative fire and release you from normality. Be immersed in a fictional world of costume, sound, lighting and performance as you are playfully nudged to question the fabric of life through emotional experiences
ROVING PERFORMERS - ALONG BURRINGBAR STREET		
4.00 - 5.00pm	Bubble Fairy	Wonder at the giant bubbles , and blow some bubbles of your own
4.15 - 4.45pm	Spaghetti Circus Stilt Walkers	The fabulous Spaghetti Circus stilt walkers will amuse and entertain, towering above everyone else in their colourful costumes.
5.15 - 5.30pm	The Cassettes	80s dance at its best. Jump up and join in the Painter Sisters Flash Mob!
5.45 - 6.15pm	Spaghetti Circus Stilt Walkers	Look up! It's those Stilt walkers again!
6.00 - 6.15pm	Lantern Parade	Make your own handmade lantern at the Little Lantern Making playspace in the Carnivale Lane (4.00 - 6.00pm) and parade down Burringbar street at dusk
7.00 - 8.00pm	Madame Sally	A fun an interactive puppet experience when Mr Antoin and his quirky fortune teller owl will read your future through the oracle cards

ARTIST MARKETING

MALLAM & EDWARDS PROPERTIES

The BANYA Creative MULLUM

BRIDGLANDS Betta

MULLUMBIMBY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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STEWART'S MENSWEAR Since 1929

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LINENHOUSE OUTLET

SUN
May 5
4-8pm

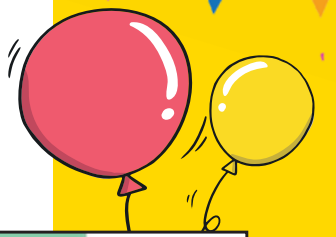
MULLUM LANEWAYS 2024



Join in for a day of celebration and connection as we welcome the entire community, to this FREE day of festivities. Explore the laneways filled with art

installations, interactive exhibits, and family-friendly activities. Delight your senses with the diverse array of food stalls offering special menus for the day

and immerse yourself in live music, street performances, and workshops showcasing the talent and creativity of Mullumbimby and surrounds.



FOOD, FOOD FABULOUS FOOD

BRING A PICNIC RUG or TABLE AND CHAIRS, set up in the street, and indulge in some of the many tasty eats from our best food spots around town:

- **Rock & Roll Coffee Co:** Gochujang chicken wings pad prik tofu
- **The Patch:** Fish, spicy chicken and vegan soft tacos
- **Chinny Store:** Festival pasta and a rainbow of drinks
- **The Banya:** Chicken, pork and vegan dumplings
- **Baker & Daughter:** Banquet food with a surprise!
- **Empire Café:** Veggie, pork belly and beef burgers
- **The Tavern** (Courthouse Hotel kitchen): Festival chilli con carne and a variety of hard-shell tacos
- **Devine Quality Meats:** Smoked ribs
- **Heaps Good Food Store:** Chicken congee beef kimchi jjigae slow cooked vegan italian stew
- **IGA:** Chicken and fried rice
- **Buon Appetito:** Pizza



Connect at:
www.kaleidomullumbimby.org.au

A WASTE-FREE & ALCOHOL-FREE FAMILY EVENT
NO DOGS PLEASE



HARVEST FOOD FESTIVAL



WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS:

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MAP YOUR DELICIOUS JOURNEY ACROSS FOUR FOODIE DAYS THURSDAY-SUNDAY • 2-5 MAY



SUMMERLAND BANK TASTE THE HARVEST THURSDAY & FRIDAY 2 & 3 MAY

- 1. Azure Bar and Grill**
Elements of Byron, 144 Bayshore Drive, Byron Bay
- 2. Mullum Farmers Market**
Mullumbimby Showground
62 Main Arm Road, Mullumbimby
- 3. Potager**
502 Carool Road, Carool

TWOMEY DISPUTE LAWYERS HARVEST HUB SATURDAY • 4 MAY

- 4. HUB: Bangalow Bowlo**
21 Byron Bay Road, Bangalow
- Australia's Manuka**
- Birds of Isle**
- Bunker Distillery**
- Byron Jams**
- Grumpy Grandma's Olives & Olive Oil**
- Hiatus Beers**
- I'm a Catch**
- Pyewackets Traditional**
- Rainforest Foods**
- Richmond Mushrooms**
- Salumi Australia**
- The Australian Native Bee Company**
- Winding Road Distilling Co.**

HARVEST TRAIL • SATURDAY & SUNDAY • 4 & 5 MAY

- 5. Azure Bar and Grill**
Elements of Byron, 144 Bayshore Drive, Byron Bay
- 6. Brookfarm**
68 St Helena Road, McLeods Shoot
- 7. Cape Byron Distillery**
80 St Helena Road, McLeods Shoot
- 8. Casino Lions Farmers Market**
Crawford Square Cnr Light & Centre Streets, Casino
- 9. Dhezi Deli**
87 Coleman Street, Bexhill
- 10. Duck Creek Macadamias**
145 Brooklet Road, Newrybar
- 11. Forest Byron Bay**
77-97 Broken Head Road, Byron Bay
- 12. Harvest Deli**
18-22 Old Pacific Highway, Newrybar Village
- 13. Lord Byron Distillery**
4 Banksia Drive, Byron Bay
- 14. Marquis Macadamias + Avilla Farm**
432 Wardell Road, Lynwood
- 15. Nimbin Valley Dairy**
392 Tunttable Falls Road, Nimbin
- 16. North Byron Hotel**
61 Bayshore Drive, Byron Bay
- 17. Revell Farms + Bonito Peruvian**
145 Victoria Park Road, Dalwood
- 18. Richmond Mushrooms**
370 Woodburn Evans Head Road, Doonbah
- 19. Santos Organics**
105 Jonson Street, Byron Bay and
51/53 Burringbar Street, Mullumbimby
- 20. Spangled Drongo**
13 Thornbill Drive, Murwillumbah
- 21. Sunshine Sugar Clift Sugarcane Farm**
35 Frame Road, South Gundarimbah
- 22. Sunshine Sugar Twohill Sugarcane Farm**
8750 Tweed Valley Way, Tumbulgum
- 23. Tweed River House**
131 River Street, Murwillumbah South
- 24. Waliz Nuts**
193 Broken Head Road, Newrybar
- 25. Zentveld's Coffee Farm and Roastery**
193 Broken Head Road, Newrybar

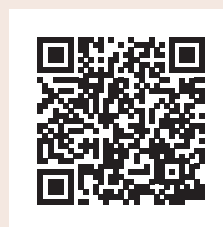
WIN!

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VALUED AT APPROX \$2,000+



NORTHERN RIVERS FOOD

HARVEST FOOD TRAIL



FIND FULL INFORMATION +
TICKETS + INTERACTIVE MAP

Good Taste

Eateries Guide

BYRON BAY




Loft Byron Bay
4 Jonson Street,
Byron Bay
6680 9183
Book online:
www.loftbyronbay.com.au

Signature cocktails, and casual dining with ocean views.
Happy Hour | Every day from 4–6pm.
\$8 loft wine or lager, \$10 spritzer,
\$14 margaritas & \$30 house wine bottle
Half price deli board & \$2.50 fresh oysters
Espresso Martini Nights | Every day 9pm–close,
2 for \$25 Classic Espresso Martini.
Open 7 days from 4pm. Sat lunches from Noon.



Liquor Merchants
61 Bayshore Drive,
Byron Bay
6685 6500
liquor@northbyronhotel.com.au
Open 10am–8pm daily and
10am–9pm through Summer

'Byron's boutique bottle shop'
Local service
Old and rare wines
Natural wines
Craft beers
Specialty tequilas




Main Street
Open for takeaway daily,
12 midday until dinner.
Menu, more details –
@mainstreet_burgerbar
18 Jonson Street
6680 8832

Open for takeaway daily, 12 midday until dinner.
Menu and more details
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'Make a meal of it'
Add chips and a drink, just \$5.



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Ground Floor, Hotel Marvell
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Breakfast Daily 8am – 12pm
Laneway light lunch Daily 12pm – 5pm
Dinner Tuesday – Saturday From 5pm
Book hotelmarvell.com.au/restaurant
Call 6685 7385 | @bonitobyronbay

Enjoy breakfast, coffee or light lunch in our casual dog-friendly laneway or treat yourself to a comfortable elegant seafood dinner experience.



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OPEN TO THE PUBLIC 7 DAYS
Horizon Rooftop, Hotel Marvell
4 Marvell Street, Byron Bay
Open Daily | 3pm – 9pm
NO BOOKINGS REQUIRED
Call: **6685 7385**
@horizonbyronbay

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Byron's newest rooftop bar.**
Enjoy hinterland views, stunning sunsets and signature cocktails showcasing local distilleries and breweries.



Success Thai
Open Lunch Wed–Fri
12–2.30pm.
Dinner Mon–Sat 5–8pm.
Closed Sunday
3/31 Lawson St, Byron Bay
www.facebook.com/pages/Success-Thai-Food/237359826303469

All your favourites, every lunch and dinner. Experienced Thai chefs cooking fresh, delicious Thai food for you.
BYO only.
Welcome for lunch, dinner and takeaway.
Menus available on Facebook.



The Rocks
Brunch 6.30am–1pm
Dinner 5pm–10pm
14–16 Lawson St,
5642 0149
therocksbyronbay.com.au
@therocksbyronbay

Happy Hour 6pm–8pm
\$6 Beers & \$7 Wines
\$12 selected cocktails
Live Music Thursdays & Latin Night Sundays
Open for dinner Wed–Sun


BANGALOW



Bangalow Bread Co.
12 Byron St,
Bangalow
6am–3pm weekdays.
7am–2pm weekends.
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Stone baked sourdough, hand rolled pastries, small batch pies, house made cakes.
Your local artisan bakery, specialising in all things sourdough. Serving Old Quarter coffee along with freshly made sandwiches using our own sourdough bread, hand rolled pastries, award winning pies and a variety of house made cakes.

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Open 7 days
Lunch: 12–2pm
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Dinner from 5pm

Views, Brews, Cocktails, Beats, and Eats!
Live Music Friday, Saturday, Sunday.
Bookings essential.
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MULLUMBIMBY



The Empire
20 Burringbar St, Mullum
6684 2306
Open for brunch and lunch,
seven days 8am–3pm
FB/Insta: EmpireMullum
empiremullum.com.au

The seasonal menu features classic and modern dishes with innovative twists. Find something for all tastes, from epic burgers to vegan delights. Enjoy delectable treats and good vibes at this Mullum icon.

CATERING



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Cakes by
Liz Jackson**
lizjackson@gmail.com
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Symbiosis in the Byron Shire

In the evolving landscape of the food industry within our Byron Shire, a paradigm shift towards sustainability and collaboration is essential. As consumers increasingly seek healthy, ethically-sourced products, whole-food stores such as Santos Organics (SO) have a unique opportunity to not only meet these demands, but also to catalyse positive change within our community.

At SO, Andrew Haig (Purchasing and Business Development Manager) sells ingredients to many local Byron Shire businesses, including Puremelt, Rice Culture, Spice Palace, Knox and Aya, Flora Foods, Baraka, Sol Ghee, Sprout Lovers and Conscious Ground, who in turn sell their products back to the store. 'We believe this symbiotic relationship fosters a sustainable food ecosystem with far-reaching benefits for all involved', says Andrew.

At the heart of this concept lies the principle of circularity, wherein resources are kept in use for as long as possible, thereby minimising waste and maximising value. By selling ingredients to local businesses, SO also extends the life cycle of their products, creating a closed-loop system that promotes resource efficiency and reduces environmental impact.

From the perspective of local businesses purchasing ingredients from SO, the advantages are equally compelling. By sourcing ethical, high-quality, organic ingredients from a trusted local supplier, they can differentiate their products in an increasingly competitive market and appeal to discerning consumers who prioritise health and sustainability.

'I have always supported Santos Organics and wanted to buy organic, and as local as possible. I can get ethically-sourced cacao and coconut sugar from a local distributor; and I know and trust that all I buy at Santos is ethically sourced,' says Sarah Wheeler, owner of Puremelt Chocolate.

And Tomoko Onuki from Rice Culture says, 'We have been purchasing organic rice and other ingredients from Santos Organics for ten years now and we cannot be more thankful! Santos found us when we were selling miso at the farmers' market and supported us to go to the next step by purchasing our miso and supplying us with the rice.'

'Through the years, Australia has gone through a number of droughts where we had difficulties sourcing Australian organic rice but Santos Organics has always supported us by sharing their precious stock with us. Andrew has always been very considerate and transparent with the pricing as well.' We feel blessed that we had the good fortune to work with Santos Organics as our supplier and customer and hope we can continue with our relationship in the next decade!

The mutual benefits of this symbiotic relationship extend beyond economic considerations; they also encompass environmental and social dimensions. By SO supporting local businesses, and vice versa, we can truly say that this type of relationship fosters a resilient community that is able to provide for each other while minimising the environmental impact of food production and consumption.



North Byron Hotel comes alive as 'Caper festival's official watering hole'

North Byron Hotel is the official watering hole of Caper Byron Bay Food & Culture Festival 2024. With a jam-packed schedule spanning over 10 days, the sun-drenched garden is set to come alive with creativity and collaboration, starting on 17 May.

We're talking Pip's Plate taking over the backyard for a fish-focused smoke snack session liquidated by Papa Salt Gin Martinis. Big Byron cheeses, Sam and Ellie Studd (Studd Siblings) leading a fuss-free-flowing tasting, pairing their unique cheeses with Liquor Merchant favourites' to celebrate the launch of their brand new book. Open Skies BBQ with Natural Order Wine dishing out bespoke tinnie tasters. All-star Drag Trivia hosted by a selection of the regions finest queens. Kaleidoscopic patterns of Wandering Folk setting the scene for an Art Kind interactive still-life class. Stone & Wood lighting up



Friday arvo at a Munchies and Beers, 'Get Stoned' BBQ with

meat supplied by Divine Quality Meats. Followed by a 'free to

attend' Family Day, where the gardens will transcend into a

playground for kids and parents alike. To round-off the festivities, Caper Byron Bay's official closing party, We Like to Tiki, that will bring a star-studded line-up of chefs, Louis Tikaram, (The Stanley) Ross Magnaye (Serai Kitchen), Jedd Rifai (NBH) and Karl Kanetani (Beach) around the fire for a paradisiacal island buffet-style feast like no other.

As if that wasn't enough, an extended happy hour will greet guests daily as North Byron acts as the perfect pre- and post-party location. With a mini-bus running for just \$10 from pub to venue and back again, we suggest you buckle-up and ride in style. It's a ready-made excuse to laze beneath the vines and claim a FREE beer on North Byron with every Caper Byron Bay Festival ticket purchased.

Check out the Caper page over at northbyronhotel.com.au for all information and ticket links.

Harvest at Mullum Farmers Market



Try some beautifully prepared bush tucker at the Harvest Trail Experience

Hey, foodies! Prepare for a flavour-filled extravaganza of The Harvest Trails, Taste of Harvest, on May 3 at the award-winning Mullum Farmers Market.

With over 70 stalls, the farmers' market is a feast for the senses. Indulge in fresh produce and artisan goodies and meet the farmers.

The saying 'you are what you eat' holds true when it comes to the quality of food. It's no wonder, then, that the farmers' market is renowned for serving

the best breakfast in town. With a variety of cuisines from around the world, all featuring fresh local produce – choosing between them becomes the only challenge.

There's plenty of seating in this beautiful outdoor location shaded by giant fig trees. It's the perfect place to daydream, listen to live music, and soak up the atmosphere. It's the locals' weekly gathering spot, a celebration of food that is more like a festival than a farmers' market.

This Friday, May 3, we are hosting a Bush Tucker Experience with three very formidable women, Auntie Delta, Mindy Woods and Rebecca Barnes. The event will open at 8.30am with Auntie Delta Kayes 'Welcome to Country, and Culture' – Delta is a proud Bundjalung elder who will share her wisdom and stories. This will be followed by a bush tucker cooking demo at 9:30am with MasterChef finalist and first indigenous hatted chef Mindy Woods. To complete

the experience, at 10:30am, learn to grow bush tucker food with Rebecca Barnes from Playing with Fire, a Rural Women of the Year finalist.

■ Do not miss out on this must-attend event, see northernriversfood.org/harvest-food-trail to find out what else is happening on The Harvest Trail.



Spangled Drongo

Spangled Drongo's Murwillumbah brewery is just one interesting place to visit on the Harvest Food Trail – their tasting room is filled with live music, there are kids' workshops, tastings, brewery tours, a skateboard ramp, great food and more. Book via <https://www.northernriversfood.org/harvest-food-trail/>



In our article last week about Buzz Byron Bay's coffee, which is served from a tuk-tuk, we only had space for one photo. The result was that this gleaming black gem of a tuk-tuk did not receive the exposure it deserved, an omission we've sought to remedy this week. For the full story of how this thing of beauty could be deployed at your event, see last week's paper or www.echo.net.au/2024/04/buzz-byron-bay-brewing-unforgettable-moments-with-a-tuk-tuk-twist/

THE ARTS

ARTIST IN FOCUS

2024 Murwillumbah Arts Trail

The artistic flair and talent of the Tweed and surrounds will be on display through the Murwillumbah Arts Trail on 11 & 12 May 2024.

Weaving in and around Murwillumbah and surrounding villages, the Murwillumbah Arts Trail showcases talented artists from across the region, offering the community a chance to see them at work, participate in creative workshops, and purchase unique works directly from the artists.

Enjoy a drive through picturesque countryside, discovering hidden treasures like the historic church in Uki or the community printmakers in Stokers Siding. Explore the Murwillumbah town centre and pop into the Small Works Gallery.

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail will host an outdoor sculpture exhibition at the historic Murwillumbah station, featuring a diverse range of sculptures highlighting the beauty and diversity of the Northern Rivers region.

A collection of artists will exhibit at The Belle Riverhouse and Husk Farm Distillery, showcasing a range of works that reflect the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of the Tweed region.

Murwillumbah CBD will come alive on Saturday night, with a colourful soiree at M|ArtsPrecinct and Slam Poetry at The Citadel. Explore award-winning restaurants and indulge in great food while enjoying live music.

For the full program and trail map visit www.murwillumbahartstrail.com.au



Together – Arts and Community Wellbeing Day

The Northern Rivers Community Gallery and Ignite Studios hosts 'Together – Arts and Community Wellbeing Day' a day of culture, creativity, and connection in the heart of Ballina. Enjoy Roundabout Theatre's Pop-Up Play Space and the Lollipop Ladies; try weaving with natural fibres with Aunty Tania Marlowe and Deb Cole from Jugan Dandii; get creative with Claudie Frock's Let's Stick Together collage experience; dive into a virtual reality art workshop or explore digital storytelling with Social Futures' Computer Clubhouse; and join in a Dance the Art Inclusive Gallery Movement Tour with interdisciplinary performance artist Katie Cooper-Wares.

This is a free day for the community to try a range of playful and creative activities. No bookings are required, just come to dip in and out of the experiences as you like.

This event is wheelchair-accessible and Auslan-interpreted, and a sensory-friendly quiet space will be available on the day. Please contact us with any access queries: ella.millard@ballina.nsw.gov.au or 02 6681 0530.

Date: Saturday, 11 May 2024
Time: 10.00am–1.00pm
Where: NRCG & Ignite Studios - cnr Cherry and Crane Streets, Ballina
Age: All welcome
Cost: Free. Tools and materials provided.
More info: nrcgballina.com.au

Byron Writers Festival earlybird tickets, on sale now!

Byron Writers Festival is excited to announce its popular 3-day earlybird passes are now open for bookings, until sold out. This year's festival, announced today, will be 'From the ground up', and the first wave of authors confirmed to grace to stage in August comprises of Trent Dalton, Jane Harper, Bruce Pascoe, Richard Flanagan, Caoilinn Hughes, Nam Le, Suzie Miller, Louise Milligan and Mykaela Saunders.

These celebrated guests give a taste of things to come with Byron Writers Festival's full program to be revealed on 19 June.



When: 9-11 August
Where: Bangalow Showground
Cost: Earlybird 3-day passes: \$245 members, \$285 general, plus booking fees

Hurry, there are a limited number of these passes, and once they're gone, they're gone! Visit byronwritersfestival.com to secure yours.

TOGETHER
ARTS & COMMUNITY WELLBEING DAY
Workshops | Kids Activities | Performance
FREE EVENT
Saturday 11 May 10am - 1pm
Northern Rivers Community Gallery
Cnr Crane & Cherry St, Ballina

BYRON WRITERS FESTIVAL 2024 *from the ground up*

Over 120 speakers & 100 sessions
LIMITED RELEASE EARLYBIRD 3-DAY PASSES ON SALE NOW!
 Fri 09 - Sun 11 August
 Bangalow Showground
 Book now at byronwritersfestival.com

CLAY. northern rivers
PRESENTS ANOTHER FABULOUS...

Ceramic Market

LOADS OF STALLS | FOOD FLOWERS COFFEE | GIFTS FOR MUM

SATURDAY MAY 11
8.30AM-3.30PM
CLUNES CORONATION HALL
22 WALKER ST, CLUNES

SCAN HERE FOR MORE DETAILS
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 @CLAYNORTHERNRIVERS

THE ARTS

Celebrate winter exhibitions at Tweed Regional Gallery!

All are invited to join the gallery and celebrate the launch of an exciting winter exhibition program on Friday, 31 May at 6.15pm.

New exhibitions include *Know My Name: Australian Women Artists*, a National Gallery touring exhibition; *Madam Mystery* by Anna Carey; and *Saltwater Currents: First Nations Seascapes and Contemporary Artefacts from Saltwater Country* by Anthony J. Walker.

This is a free, all-ages event – bookings recommended

<https://events.humanitix.com/may31>

02 6670 2790

gallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au

2 Mistral Road, Murwillumbah South



Grace Cossington Smith, *Interior in yellow*, 1962-64, National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra, purchased 1965

Byron School of Art term 2 courses now listed online

Enrolments are now open for BSA's full program of term 2 short courses and weekend workshops which include: painting using mixed-media, oil painting, clay foundations, intermediate ceramics, the figure in clay, drawing from nature, and abstraction.

For more experienced artists who are wanting to develop their practice and presence there is also: professional practice, websites for artists, as well as mentoring which students can do online or in-person. All classes are limited to small groups to maximise one-on-one time with instructors.

Visit BSA's website for more information.

byronschoolofart.com



Clay Northern Rivers annual Clunes Ceramic Market

For ceramic enthusiasts, or those looking for a mothers day present, Clay Northern Rivers presents their fourth Ceramic Market at Clunes Coronation Hall on Saturday, 11 May from 8.30am-3.30pm. With over 30 ceramic artists, this diverse collective showcases local potters from the Northern Rivers and presents their work for sale.

The market will have coffee from Rakavan Bar, food by Ethos Catering, donuts by Happy Donuts and fresh flowers from Blue Gum Flower Farm, just in time for Mother's Day. The flowers can be preordered from the grower and collected from the market. DM orders to 0425 303 080.

There will be kids workshops and a lucky door prize featuring a collection of the artists' work so don't forget to get a ticket.

Wheelchair accessible.

Clunes Coronation Hall, 22 Walker Street, Clunes • claynothernrivers@gmail.com • @ Clay Northern Rivers



Work by Aurelie from Caravane Ceramics



Term 2
Short Courses & Weekend Workshops
now listed online and open for enrolment

byronschoolofart.com

HART GALLERY

Art in the heart
INSPIRED LOCAL ART

Mullumbimby
Comprehensive Health Centre

MURWILLUMBAH ARTS TRAIL

MEET THE ARTISTS

TWEED VALLEY STUDIOS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ONE WEEKEND 11-12 MAY

Join us!
Winter Opening Celebrations
Friday 31 May, 6.15pm

Know My Name: Australian Women Artists
A National Gallery Touring Exhibition

Madam Mystery
Anna Carey

Saltwater Currents: First Nations Seascapes and Contemporary Artefacts from Saltwater Country
Anthony J. Walker.

Photo: Kate Holmes

TWEED REGIONAL GALLERY & MARGARET OLLEY ART CENTRE

The Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre is a Tweed Shire Council Community Facility and is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

Open Wed - Sun | 2 Mistral Road, Murwillumbah South | gallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au

ART GALLERIES

ART KIND

Contemporary art gallery and studio providing engaging exhibitions, art classes and workshops
3/18 Centennial Circuit, Byron Bay
Open Wed-Sat 10am-2pm
0404 946 553
@artkindbyronbay
www.artkind.com.au

ARTIST STUDIO GALLERY

Belongil Beach
Open by appointment
0409 604 405
www.janrae.com.au

ARTIST'S HOME GALLERY

Byron Bay
Landscape inspired works imparting a 'spirit of place'
Open by appointment
02 6685 5317
jaypearse.com

GALLERY COSMOSIS

2/22 Brigantine St
Arts & Industry Estate
Byron Bay
0431 331 205
gallerycosmosis.com
linktr.ee/gallerycosmosisbyronbay

H'ART GALLERY

Local art in the heart of Mullumbimby
Mullumbimby Comprehensive Health Centre,
60 Stuart Street, Mullumbimby
0401 647 325

KARENA WYNN-MOYLAN, FINE ART

World award-winning contemporary realism
art direct from the artist at her Bangalow studio
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LENNOX ARTS COLLECTIVE

painting | photography | woodwork | ceramics
jewellery | classes | workshops
2/72 Ballina Street, Lennox Head
Open Tues-Sun 10am-3pm
lennoxartscollective@gmail.com
FB & Insta: @lennoxartscollective

LONE GOAT GALLERY

28 Lawson St, Byron Bay
(located in the Byron Library building)
Open Wed-Sat 10am-4pm
lonegoatgallery.com.au

MACKAY HARRISON GALLERIES

79 Bayview Drive, East Ballina
Welcome by appointment
Artist/sculptor David Harrison
0412 664 284

MIST GALLERY

Shop 1B-51 Tweed Coast Rd, Cabarita Beach
0419 870 305
mist.gallery.cabarita@gmail.com
FB & Insta: @mistgallery

MULLUMBIMBY CLAYWORKERS GALLERY

Drill Hall Complex,
2 Jubilee Ave, Mullumbimby
Open Thurs-Sat 10am-2pm
mullumclayworkers.com

NIMBIN ARTISTS GALLERY

47 Cullen Street, Nimbin
Opening hours 10am-4pm daily
02 6689 1444
www.nimbinartistsgallery.org

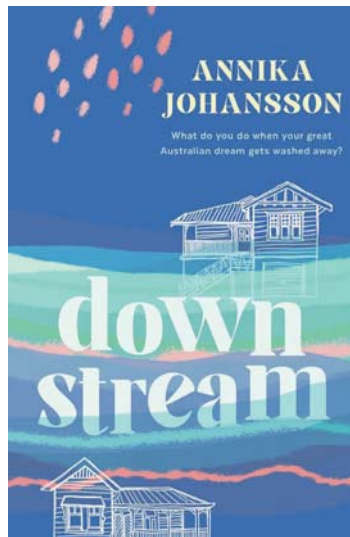
NORTHERN RIVERS COMMUNITY GALLERY

Cnr Cherry & Crane Sts, Ballina
Open Wed-Fri 9am-3pm, Sat-Sun 9.30am-1pm
02 6681 0530
nrcgballina.com.au

TWEED REGIONAL GALLERY & MARGARET OLLEY ART CENTRE

Gallery hours: Wed-Sun 10am-4pm
Cafe open 10am-4pm
2 Mistral Rd, Murwillumbah
02 6670 2790
gallery.tweed.nsw.gov.au

THE ARTS



Downstream

A novel of resilience, humour and hope
by local author Annika Johansson

Lismore resident Rob – a happily married empty-nester, enjoying his late middle age – has always defined himself by the quality of the roof over his head and the state of his family life. Solid. Safe. Stable. But when the 2022 flood hits, he and his wife Sal find themselves homeless, their lives now the very opposite of secure and predictable.

Rob and Sal are left with no choice but to rent. After a mix-up with contracts, they

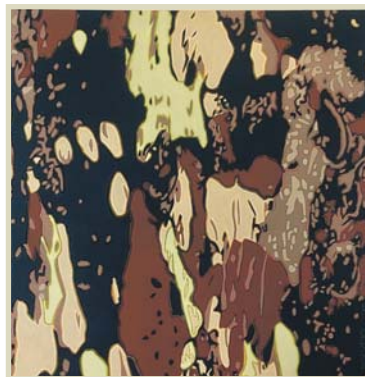
reluctantly agree to share a home unit in Ballina with strangers: a slightly older hippy couple, also impacted by the floods, who couldn't be more different from their new flatmates.

A two-bedroom, one-bathroom flat with very thin walls ... surely they can stick it out for six months? They're all grown-ups, right?

www.echopublishing.com.au/books/downstream

Art in the heart of Mullumbimby

Art lovers need look no further than the Mullumbimby Comprehensive Health Centre, home to the H'Art Gallery. Featuring more than 30 artworks by 10 local artists, the gallery is an absolute must-see.



Graphic impressionist Solveig curates the two-floor gallery and rotates the exhibition every six months. The space provides local artists a platform to display for an extended period and sell their work.

Visitors to the health centre are greeted by the art, which provides a distracting escape from stress and concern while creating a vibrant, healing atmosphere.

Conveniently located on Stuart Street, the H'Art Gallery is art in the heart of Mullumbimby.

Enquire at info@solveig.com.au



Arts Northern Rivers

They say there are more creatives here than any other region in Australia, outside of major cities. But who are we really?

Arts Northern Rivers, supported by the NSW government, has embarked on a two-year research project to uncover what the arts and culture industries in the Northern Rivers look like today, and identify the gaps, opportunities, and potential areas for growth.

To help them understand our creative sector, they are encouraging anyone with an interest in arts and culture to complete their region-wide survey. Participants will even have the chance to win a \$200 giftcard.

This is a once-in-a-decade study, so if you have something to say about arts and culture in the Northern Rivers, now is the time.

Do the survey at: <https://artsnorthernrivers.com.au/project/who-are-we/>

WHO ARE WE?

ARTS NORTHERN RIVERS



A survey to find out what our creative community looks like today – and where we want it to grow in the future.

It's time to have your say!

Fill in our online survey and enter the draw to win one of 3 x \$200 giftcards. Scan the QR code to begin:



This project is proudly supported by the NSW Government.
artsnorthernrivers.com.au/project/who-are-we

Flat-sharing for the first time in decades, with strangers. What could possibly go wrong?

A novel of resilience, humour & hope by local author Annika Johansson

Available in all good bookshops

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echopublishing.com.au

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 1-7 May, 2024
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seven

entertainment



DANIEL OLDAKER (DANDYMAN) JOINS MULLUM LANEWAYS PROGRESSIVE DINNER PARTY

Mullum Laneways is thrilled to announce the addition of Daniel Oldaker, also known as 'Dandyman', to our dynamic weekend of entertainment on May 4 and 5.

Daniel will be the Master of Ceremonies for the Progressive Dinner Party on Saturday, May 4. Proceeds from this event will contribute towards hosting a free day of activities for the community on Sunday, May 5.

Renowned globally as a circus artist, physical comedian, and improviser extraordinaire, Daniel has dazzled audiences around the world with his electrifying performances and unparalleled stage presence. Guided by Daniel's unmatched wit and versatility, this fusion of music, food and fun promises to be a night to remember.

The Progressive Dinner Party kicks off at the Rock and Roll Coffee Company, where guests will enjoy canapés and a drink, as part of the ticket price with entertainment by **George Washingmachine** and **Ian Date**.

The festivities will then move to the Courthouse Hotel for dinner accompanied by music from **Felicity Lawless** and **MsEleneous**.

Finally, the night will culminate with a dance party hosted by the **Versace Boys** and their 7-piece band at the Ex-Services Club.

In addition to his role as MC on Saturday, Daniel will present his hilarious street theatre show 'Ding Hotel' on Sunday May 5. As Dandyman, the overworked hotel manager, audiences can expect laughter, love and gasps as he embarks on an adventure filled with unexpected romance. This family-friendly show combines silent comedy and engaging dialogue for an unforgettable experience for all ages.

For tickets to the Saturday event and information about Sunday's free festivities, www.kaleidomullumbimby.org.au



THE FULL BRIEF ON SISSY KNICKERS!

The Brunswick Picture House is delighted to announce that the Briefs Factory troupe is bringing a brand new show, **Sissy Knickers!**, for a special and exclusive performance next week on Thursday.

The Briefs Factory collective has dazzled audiences here and far beyond – the House's tour paths have intersected many times around the world over the years. It's safe to say that no Australian touring company delivers the sass, attitude, charisma and hilarious irreverence that the Briefs team does!

Many of you would have seen Briefs members light up the Cheeky Cabaret stage as recently as the last season which ended on April 14.

With just the tiniest break in their touring schedule next week, the Picture House welcomes the Briefs back and with **Sissy Knickers!** which audiences here in Brunswick Heads will get to see before they take it out on tour later this year. It is a very rare opportunity to have such an acclaimed troupe launching a brand new show here in Bruns before anyone else... don't miss out! Tickets will sell fast!

Sissy Knickers! On Thursday, 7pm at The Brunswick Picture House.
 Posh table ringside seating available. Tix: brunswickpicturehouse.com.

CHE PRITCHARD PRESENTS

Birds OF Paradise

A COMEDY BIRDLESQUE!

BRUNSWICK PICTURE HOUSE
FRIDAY 10 MAY
 BRUNSWICK PICTURE HOUSE • 7PM
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 DIRECTED BY LIZ CHANCE

MAY 2 - 19
DRILLHALLTHEATRE.ORG.AU
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nudge nudge Wink wink

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FEATURING DJS
DANU (KELLY LYNCH)
ANDREW HAIG
DALE STEPHEN
LORD SUT

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 SUPPORTING LOCAL CHARITIES

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THE BAND THAT LOVES TO CHILL IN OUTER SPACE

North Coast Music industry Award winning Reggae Band **Radio Jupiter** is back with a new line up and a new album. They will be performing live at the **Chillingham Cafe** on **Saturday 4th May** from **3pm**. Put on your dancing feet and experience the intergalactic reggae grooves of Radio Jupiter. See you there!

BIRDS OF PARADISE: A COMEDY BIRDLESQUE

Swooping into its third year, **Ché Pritchard's** hit production **Birds of Paradise: A Comedy Birdlesque!** is back, and this time the flock is covering more ground than ever! The world-class, multi-skilled and clucking amazing cast will be dazzling audiences with their spectacular and hilarious displays for a whole new flock of feathered cabaret and comedy fans! And where better to do it than the renowned Brunswick Picture House, home of epic cabaret and comedy!

There's no need to brave the depths of the Amazon to peek at the mating rituals of the more traditional birds of paradise, when we have our own spectacular (albeit quirky) 'birds of *Surfers Paradise*' right here in Australia. This show will have you laughing like a kooky in a gumtree... happy as an ibis at the tip... excited as a pigeon at maccas... ok, ok, you get it.

We know them and their antics well, but never have we seen them quite like this. Don't be surprised if they pluck themselves on stage, steal your hot chips, or have you ducking for cover under your seats. You might even learn a thing or two about these beautiful birds and their habitats.

So grab a perch and hold on tight as these avian locals show off their plumage and put on an outrageous display that you'll be chirping about for weeks. Gather your flock and get your tickets now www.linktr.ee/birdsofparadise_birdlesque.

Catch a bird on Friday, May 10 at the Brunswick Picture House – doors 6.30pm, show 7pm



MIXARTIST

In the heart of the Byron Shire, just 5 min from Mullum town centre, lies one of the most professional music recording studios on the Australian East Coast. The Mix Artist recording facility is a custom-built recording studio, designed and built by world-class studio designer John Sayers. The large control room and the three independent live rooms are acoustically-treated to the highest standards. The studio has plenty of daylight, and line-of-sight between all studio rooms. The centre piece of the studio is a large scale analogue console with 36 inline channels plus a beautiful selection of high-end outboard gear. The studio is operated by award-winning engineer Jan 'Yarn' Muths (Fyah Walk, Jesse Morris Band), in addition to freelance engineers Jim Bonnefond (Kool & The Gang, Savage Garden, The Cockroaches), Saphia Smereka (Bernard Fanning) and Nathan Stanborough (From Crisis To Collapse).

The studio workflow is inspired by the making of the great classic albums: world-class acoustics, great musicians performing together, impeccable engineering, high-end technology and a shared focus on capturing the best musical performances possible.

The studio specialises in recording rhythm sections or even entire bands live (at the same time), while keeping the instruments perfectly separated. This allows for a clean, modern sound – while maintaining the vibe and feel you only get when musicians play live and groove together. It also means artists get a lot of high-quality recordings done in a day.

Local artists such as The Seeding, Liquidelic and Emily Lubitz love recording there, and even international acts such as UK singer-songwriter Jack Rasmussen come to the Mix Artist Studio for that amazing recording experience.

But it doesn't end there. Hobby singer-song writers are discovering the studio, such as Jackson from Murwillumbah. Jackson, a successful business owner, writes songs in his free time. Jackson brought studio musicians from the Mix Artist Studio team on-board, such as bass player Tom Kelly and violinist Willow Stahlut. Together, they produced full and rich instrumentations for Jackson's songs, leading to the release of his debut album.

More and more local hobby musicians discover the amazing team of studio musicians and utilise them for their own recordings. Now, anyone who dreams of releasing professionally produced songs can achieve a phenomenal sounding album with a solid backup band.

In addition to standard day-rates, the studio also offers complete production packages for fixed, project-based prices. Contact Jan on 0404 768 986 or via the studio website www.mixartist.com.au

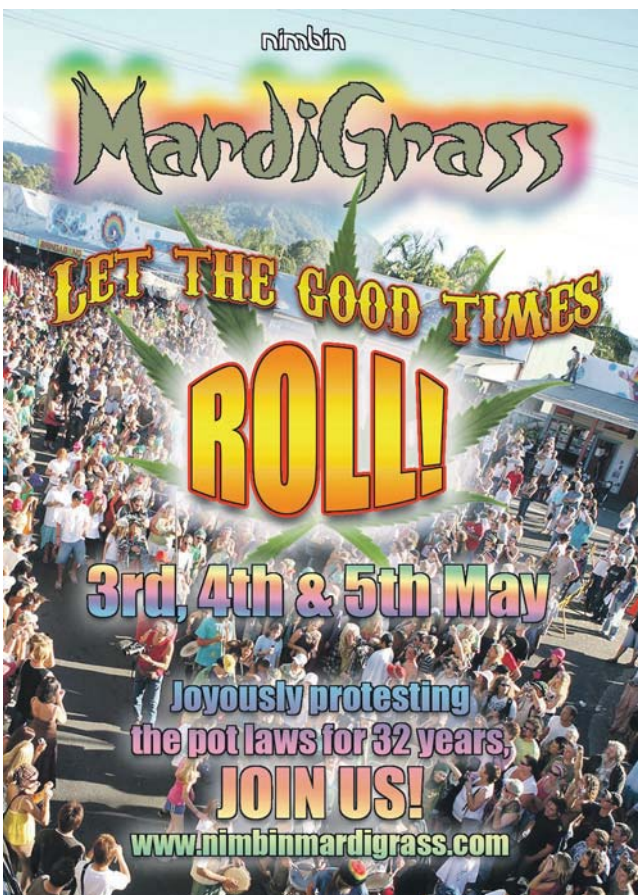


Looking to kickstart your musical career?

You need to be part of BaySounds, the Northern Rivers own songwriting competition – a joint initiative from SAE University College Byron Bay and BayFM to give our local talent the exposure you guys deserve.

Send us your best original track and you could win a professional recording opportunity and headlining spot at SAE's Open Day. PLUS have your music played on BayFM and promoted across our socials.

Entries close June 16th.
Head to sae.edu.au/baysounds.





THE SUPER NONSERIOUS, NONSENSICAL VERSACE BOYS

The Versace Boys were born in the back of a gold-plated Porsche parked at the Versace Palace on the Goldie. They grew up only eating with silver spoons and often crashing expensive automobiles their parents bought for them. They realised young that they weren't only made for the world of fashion but that they could also write sick bangers.

The Versaces, who met at a Sticky Fingers concert in Berlin 2019, have been writing music together ever since. The VBs, Will Henderson and Alex Johnson, are the richest and most famous influencers in all of Byron Bay and the multiverses, and last week they deigned to let *Seven* into their inner sanctum; aka Will's bathroom in ol' Mullum town...

What's happening today for the Versace Boys?

WILL: We've just released a brand new track, 'Perfek'. We wrote it with a really cool producer called Miggy. He's from Sydney and we just did a film clip out near the treehouse on the front lawn. And we're gonna make another one. Hopefully at The Banya and stuff like that. Yep. We have about 20 tracks ready to go this year. So we're trying to get through that. We've got two albums ready.

Are you famous yet?

WILL: We're getting a lot of reach on our Instagram at the moment. Yeah, we're getting like 30,000 people, we're reaching 2,000 people a month, which is pretty cool. That's the most we've ever reached. We just played three really big festivals: Party in the Paddock in Tasmania, Esoteric Festival in Victoria and Gravity Festival.

Will, you are in Mullum – where do you live Alex?

ALEX: Where do I live? I moved here from Wollongong in a van. I met Will while I was living in a van in Berlin in Germany, and then we met up again here and I moved here. In my van.

You're still living in your van?

ALEX: No, I live in Suffolk Park.

Tell me about all your costumes

WILL: We love dressing up. All of our clothes are costumes basically.

ALEX: This one came from the tip-shop in Mullum.

WILL: It immediately puts you in a different space – us AND the audience. It puts EVERYONE in really weird space. Kind of outside yourself. It's like jumping off a springboard.

It's like we're satirical people. And we sort of use all of the elements of wherever we are to create songs about what's going on in the society or whatever.

ALEX: Everyone's been giving us beautiful things to wear, which is super nice.

WILL: Lots of alcohol brands have started talking to us – we've never been offered so many things. We have become tinfluencers you know, they give us so much beer to influence [yes you saw it first here in *The Echo* – TINfluencer!]

What's awesome about the Laneway Festival?

WILL: We're excited. The biggest thing in Mullum this year is the Laneways Festival.

ALEX: This is where we will launch 'Perfek' – launched at Laneways!

WILL: And we've got our big band, which is gonna be really cool.

Do you like the idea of being local and playing a local festival?

ALEX: Yeah we love it, we love Mullum – we'd also love a gig at the Middle Pub...

WILL: ...and a lifetime membership at The Banya.

Are the Versace Boys having enough fun?

ALEX: Yeah, yeah, we are.

WILL: I actually have been having too much. It's been a crazy, crazy summer and I need to cool down. It's been too much fun, which was great, but I've been on a bit of a detox for this month, which is really good...

You can see the Versace Boys in some pretty incredible costumes at Mullum's Laneway Festival this weekend – visit: kaleidomullumbimby.org.au for more information.

MORE THAN A PLAY

Still Here by **Dave & the Daves** is more than a play; it's a 60-minute lifeline on stage that champions mental health through laughter, music, and the art of storytelling. A bit of slapstick, a healthy dose of character comedy, and a few raw truths about navigating life with depression, *Still Here* is an intoxicating blend of uproarious laughter and heartfelt empathy.

Against the background of a society where depression and suicide statistics are alarmingly high – over nine lives are lost to suicide daily in Australia – in steps Dave Houston, mixing up a hilarious brew of clowning, razor-sharp character comedy and live songs from punk to hip-hop to psyched-up folk rock.

Still Here will introduce you to a colourful tapestry of characters, from the showbiz master Uncle David to the charismatic hip-hop sensation Rave Dave. Meet the ever-bumbling Davo, a work-for-the-dole roadie (and let's not forget Byron Bay life coach Darvid Uluru Crystal, stoner Davology, and psychiatrist Davina).

Receiving standing ovations and rave reviews across the country, *Still Here* is showing for two nights this month in the Northern Rivers. On **Wednesday, May 8**, at **The Citadel** in Murwillumbah and **Friday, May 10**, at the **Byron Theatre**.

Check out www.fullon.biz for a preview and to grab your tickets. Spaces are limited.



FREE ENTRY FOR ALL DAVE'S (MUST SHOW I.D.)

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BY DAVE AND THE DAVES

A DEPRESSION COMEDY EXPLORING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES THROUGH STORYTELLING, SONG AND LAUGHTER.

THE CITADEL
MURWILLUMBAH

WED 8 MAY

BYRON
THEATRE

FRI 10 MAY

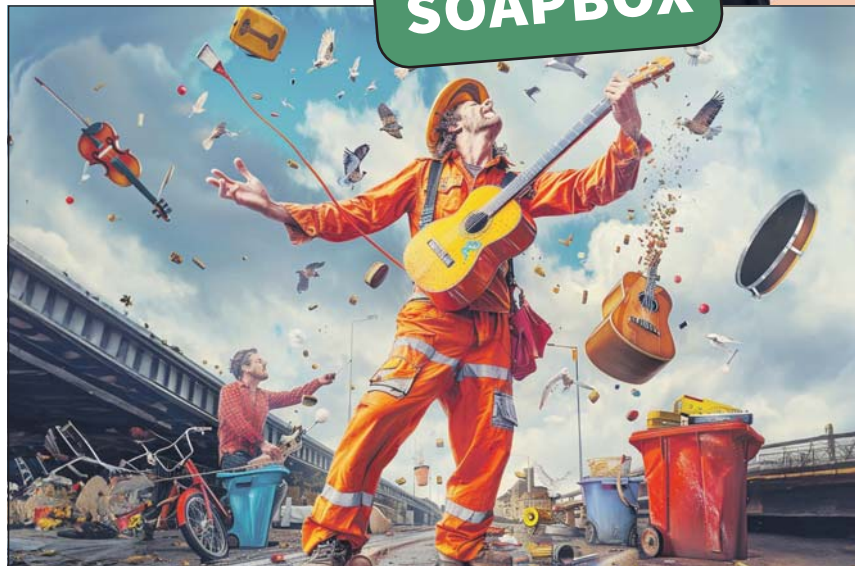
7.30 PM
TIX FROM \$22

WWW.FULLON.BIZ/STILL-HERE

Music to Our Ears



Many musicians can't focus properly on their craft because they have to focus on a 'straight' job to make a living. Imagine if your doctor had to work at a cafe to subsidise their wage?



Imagine a world without musicians.

A world where generative AI creates music according to the algorithms of what we like. A beige supermarket of our bias. I wonder how we even know what we like, if we only hear what an algorithm identifies what we like. It's like being dressed by your mother, forever. Where are the doors to sublime new experiences? The revelation? The inspiration? Where is the moment of wonder? Where is the magic of discovery?

Discovery is facing extinction. It's something we used to have. It was called a gig guide. It was called music programs on Radio National. It was called print media. Music magazines. *Rolling Stone*. *Time Out*. It was little festivals. Big festivals. Pop-up events. It was country halls. It was inner-city pubs. It was artists selling CDs at the end of the show. Now we have Spotify. Music that takes from artists and pays the platform. How do we find out what's happening? Where the new releases are? What bands are breaking? What to see? Does a Facebook event really compare to five minutes on *Countdown*? How do we find artists we might love if the algorithm won't show us?

And if we don't find the music that we resonate with then what happens to us?

Musicians are our emotional avatars. There are songs that have saved me. There are songs that have woken me up. There are songs that have held my hand. There are songs that made me cry. They find us in our despair and tell us we are not alone. They understand heartbreak. They speak to our liminal spaces.

Musicians are integral to our social cohesion. Pubs are boring without music. So why are musos doing it so tough? And why aren't we being more innovative to stop the attrition?

In an annual poll of 550 musicians by the Media and Entertainment Arts Alliance (MEAA), the union that represents the creative sector, they found only 1 in 5 musicians make a full-time living from their music. Half of the entire cohort are earning less than \$6,000 a year. Many musicians can't focus properly on their craft because they have to focus on a

'straight' job to make a living. Imagine if your doctor had to work at a cafe to subsidise their wage?

Being a musician is expensive. You need space to make music. Kind of tricky in a housing crisis. You need equipment, and touring vehicles, rehearsal rooms, session players, public liability insurance, oversized luggage, PAs and sound engineers, recording studios, marketing plans, graphic artists, websites, photo shoots, and of course, you have to find time to make music. To play music. If you are only playing one gig a week then you aren't going to be match fit.

Ireland is trialling the BIA. Basic Income for the Arts. It's \$545 per week to eligible creatives. They asked an obvious question... what would it look like if artists could give up their day job? It's not a cost. It's an investment in musicians and artists to dedicate to their craft. It's not just for them. The musical capital would be enormous. It's an investment in them AND an investment in us.

STARS BY LILITH

With Mars in volatile Aries, the sun/Venus in stubborn Taurus and eruptive Pluto intensifying events on the world stage, this week's volcanic scenario calls for the mantra: *Pause. Breathe. Edit...*



TAURUS THE BULL

ARIES: With full-forward Mars in Aries accompanied by alert Mercury, this could be one of your year's most inspired and dynamic cycles. Though it's definitely worthwhile considering that while cathartic venting can bring a certain relief, best not overdo it or you'll really try peoples' patience.

TAURUS: As Venus and Jupiter, known as planetary benefices for their generous and joyous influence, join the sun in Taurus, the rosy glow of this celestial trinity conjures an image of Ferdinand the bull in a field of flowers, revelling in the delights of the senses, so enjoy this week's party in your heart.

GEMINI: With Mars and your planet guide Mercury both in their most unrestrained placement, conversations could reach epic heights. Also unedited opinions, yours or someone else's, may cause unexpected reactions; in which case, this week's best outlet for channeling explosive emotions is into physical activity.

CANCER: Too much of a good thing might feel like just the right amount during this week's sensual transit, so go ahead; pamper yourself and the ones you love with those favourite luxury indulgences. Enjoy and relish every scent, taste, feel of a hug, sight of a smile, sound of a voice...

LEO: The theme of reinvention continues with the current astro-transit's makeover of your work zone, professional aspirations and career trajectory. Retrograde Pluto could increase power plays in group dynamics, so if you can't broker satisfactory agreements, try an alternative approach rather than attempting to force an outcome.

VRIGO: Been feeling a little burnt out? Venus suggests infusing more self-care into your schedule. No need to spend a fortune; you already know how to find the sweet spot between sensible and expensive with a spa treatment, massage, or simply slowing down and taking time out for a staycation.

LIBRA: We are living in a material world, and your guiding planet Venus in her present placement is a material girl. She's the planet of love and money, so this is an auspicious week to attend to assets, possessions, finances, and planting the seeds of what you want to grow more of.

SCORPIO: Headstrong Mars in its most reactive mode might be tempting you to apply the sarcastic sting. But with so many planets in fixed signs like your own, this isn't likely to attract the results you want, so refine that verbal toxin into a hit of witty wisdom that everyone can benefit from.

SAGITTARIUS: The double dose of rush and fuss from hothead Mars and mouthy Mercury in a trigger-tongued fellow fire sign could make this week's restrained pace feel frustrating. If so, take your impatience out into nature; yours is the sign most capable of observing and learning from her example.

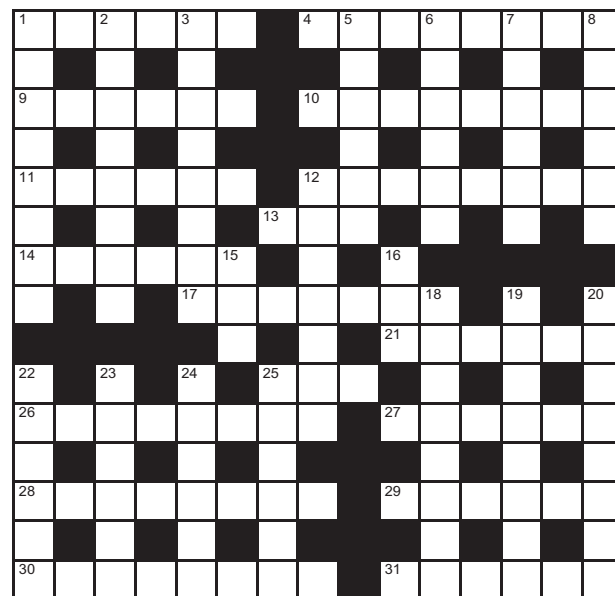
CAPRICORN: This week's celestial emphasis in a fellow earth sign switches on your personal zodiac zone of fun and artistic activity, inviting you to a smorgasbord of earthly pleasures: wine and dining, dancing and romancing – just in time to remind you, all work and no play makes a boring Capricorn.

AQUARIUS: With planet Pluto now retrograde in your sign, you may want to google those increasingly relevant lyrics from the musical *Hair* about harmony and understanding in the Age of Aquarius. Your current job is demonstrating the best aspects of the Aquarian archetype by introducing new ideas to the collective.

PISCES: With Mars galvanising your money zone and professional projects with an injection of motivational energy, the force is with you for taking the initiative. But you're not the only one receiving the red planet's assertive booster shots, so carefully select your best moments to push, pause or pivot.

Crossword by Stephen Clarke

#1



Cryptic Clues

ACROSS

- One-dimensional version of *Alien* by Roger (6)
- Table at pub cleaner than at first (3,5)
- Birds confused many by turning quiet (6)
- Spider has leave to return to entrance (8)
- Artist keeps socks here? (6)
- Lineman one abused on railway (4,4)
- 13, 17. A dog is only a pet if you train it (3,7)
- Constant sign of decay (6)
- See 13
- Greek god returns to family as protector (6)
- Unlimited cash provides unity (3)
- Next to giant, wriggling around but trapped (8)
- Cricketer you wouldn't dismiss! (6)
- A pick-me-up after lap dancing of a spiritual sort (8)
- Contemplate smell coming from pavilion (6)
- Stabler wobbly astride horse's rear (8)
- Opposed to poems being read out (6)

DOWN

- Spooner's *Lady Fortune* not a goer (4,4)
- Iron and yttrium shake, an alternative offered in cafes? (3-5)
- Sportspeople in Seattle assembled outside hospital (8)
- Perhaps nose is gone, harbouring first stages of infectious rhinitis (6)
- Notorious criminal produces top single (6)
- Golden boy starts to admonish directors over novel insurance scheme (6)
- Lies don't originate with right-wingers (6)
- AM radio version of grief (7)
- Unfinished part of church turned up in Bath (3)
- Understanding part played by Gosling (3)
- Tie up judge at Harrow (8)
- Captains of schooners at first get fish (8)
- Huge eastern sunroom renovated (8)
- Tents perhaps on universities, or college buildings? (6)
- August union heads demanded a musical composition (6)
- Canadian writer not caught in act. Deal? (6)
- Passionate about boot (2,4)

Quick Clues

ACROSS

- Relating to length (6)
- Graph with blocks of varying height (3,5)
- Tropical Asian starlings (6)
- Burrowing spider, family Ctenizidae (8)
- Signatory to a cheque or bill of sale (6)
- Trunk route between two points (4,4)
- 13, 17. Small breed of canine with large pendant ears and mottled coat (3,7)
- Tooth rot (6)
- See 13
- Small square of linen used at table for protecting clothing (6)
- Undivided (3)
- Adjacent; contiguous (8)
- A catch worth hanging on to (6)
- Loving without involvement of sexual relations (8)
- Summer house; belvedere (6)
- Firmer; more balanced (8)
- Against (6)

DOWN

- Inefficient or helpless person or organisation (4,4)
- Substitute for milk products (3-5)
- Games participants (8)
- Organised route for plane travel (6)
- Prohibition era gangster 'Scarface' (6)
- Young man loved by Aphrodite (6)
- Conservative British political party (6)
- Daybreak (7)
- Pool or bath of heated water (3)
- Knowledge (3)
- Claw; wound (8)
- Leaders of teams (8)
- Gargantuan (8)
- College grounds (6)
- Song for the dawn (6)
- Author of *Alias Grace* (6)
- Ablaze (2,4)

Last week's solution - Mungo #540



Introducing Stephen Clarke

Stephen Clarke stumbled upon cryptic crosswords as a student at Sydney Uni, along with a subversive coterie of English and Engineering undergrads who convinced him that solving them was a superior distraction from lectures than being thrashed at table tennis by Chinese students. Those puzzles were in the *SMH*, but it wasn't long before he discovered *The Times of London* crossword, and later *The Guardian*, and began to wonder if compiling might be more satisfying than solving. (Reveal #1: it's certainly easier, because the compiler already knows the answers.)

Twenty years on he's published puzzles in the NSW Writers' Centre newsletter, *Crozworld* (the magazine of Aust Crossword Club), *SAM* (the magazine of the Sydney Uni Alumni Assoc), Justinian (Richard Ackland's website), *New Philosopher*, and various blog sites. He's won a number of clue setting challenges in *Crozworld* and *The Times* (Reveal #2: lawyers appear to be better solvers than NSW writers, though only based on a limited sample.)

Stephen lived and worked in the Northern Rivers for ten years (his wife is a professor at SCU) and fell hard for bandicoots, pythons, the Bangalow market, and *The Echo*. He's completely stoked to have the opportunity of publishing in *The Echo*, and very aware that he has big shoes to fill.

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- 30 Kennedys Lane, Ewingsdale. Thurs 2–2.30pm
- 1 Settlement Road, Main Arm. Fri 4–4.30pm
- 5/12 Browning Street, Byron Bay. Sat 9–9.30am
- 11 Dalmacia Drive, Wollongbar. Sat 9–9.30am
- 35 Gordon Street, Byron Bay. Sat 9–9.30am
- 4 Azolla Place, Suffolk Park. Sat 9.30–10am
- 25 Caniaba Crescent, Suffolk Park. Sat 9.30–10am
- 1 Settlement Road, Main Arm. Sat 10–10.30am
- 1109 Coolamon Scenic Drive, Montecollum. Sat 10–10.30am
- 27 Keats Street, Byron Bay. Sat 10–10.30am
- 240 The Manse Road, Myocum. Sat 10–10.30am
- 1/21 Beech Drive, Suffolk Park. Sat 10.30–11am
- 2B/107 Paterson Street, Byron Bay. Sat 10.30–11am
- 146 Alcorn Street, Suffolk Park. Sat 10.30–11am
- 59 Taylors Road, Eureka. Sat 10.30–11am
- 419 Left Bank Road, Mullumbimby Creek. Sat 11–11.30am
- 28 Carlyle Street, Byron Bay. Sat 11.30am–12pm
- 3/7 Keats Street, Byron Bay. Sat 11.30am–12pm
- 3 Sunrise Crescent, Lennox Head. Sat 12–12.30pm
- 13 Coral Court, Byron Bay. Sat 12.30–1pm
- 371 Whian Whian Road, Whian Whian. Sat 1–1.30pm

Harcourts Northern

- 2 Barnwall Street, Cumbalum. Sat 9–9.30am
- 6 Ecology Avenue, Cumbalum. Sat 9.45–10.15am
- 15 Plumeria Court, Goonellabah. Sat 10–10.30am
- 65 Lindsay Avenue, Cumbalum. Sat 10.45–11.15am
- 337 Hermans Lane, Pimlico. Sat 11.15–11.45am
- 19 Hickey Street, Ballina. Sat 11.45am–12.15pm
- 26 Bridge Drive, Wardell. Sat 12.15–12.45pm
- 3 Harrier Street, Ballina. Sat 12.45–1.15pm
- 5/36 Fitzroy Street, Wardell. Sat 1–1.30pm

Mana Re

- 17 Yengarie Way, Ocean Shores. Wed 12–12.30pm
- 9 Green Frog Lane, Bangalow. Sat 9–9.30am
- 5 Kiah Close, Ocean Shores. Sat 9–9.30am
- 119 Commercial Road, Murwillumbah. Sat 9.30–10am
- 2/1 Durroon Court, Ocean Shores. Sat 10–10.30am
- 48 Orana Road, Ocean Shores. Sat 10–10.30am
- 26 Robin Street, South Golden Beach. Sat 11–11.30am
- 4 Brunswick Street, New Brighton. Sat 11–11.30am
- 17 Yengarie Way, Ocean Shores. Sat 12–12.30pm
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- 16 Eloura Court, Ocean Shores. Sat 1–1.30pm

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- 62 Possum Creek Road, Bangalow. Fri 2–2.30pm
- 22/3 Pecan Court, Suffolk Park. Sat 9–9.30 am
- 53 Armstrong Street, Suffolk Park. Sat 9–9.30am
- 71 Bangalow Road, Byron Bay. Sat 10–10.30am
- Units 1–5, 56B Bangalow Road, Byron Bay. Sat 10–10.30am
- 3 Raftons Road, Bangalow. Sat 10.30–11 am
- 69 Brushbox Drive, Mullumbimby Creek. Sat 1–1.30pm
- 79 Robinsons Road, Wilsons Creek. Sat 2–2.45pm

North Coast Lifestyle Properties

- 50 Tristran Parade, Mullumbimby. Saturday 9.30–10.15am
- 6 Park Street, New Brighton. Sat 10–10.45am
- 20 Robin Street, South Golden Beach. Sat 11–11.30am
- 59 Tuckeroo Avenue, Mullumbimby. Sat 11.00–11.45am
- 53 Helen Street, South Golden Beach. 11–11.45am

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- 3 Carnarvon Court, Lennox Head. Sat 11–11.30am
- 4 Coachwood Court, Federal. Sat 1.30–2pm
- 20 Byron Creek Road, Coopers Shoot. Sat 2.30–3pm

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Bangalow Bluedogs miss out on Anzac Day Cup football win, but Byron Bay women show class

The Men's Premier League Anzac Day Cup for 2024 has been won by the Lismore Richmond Rovers after they won a penalty shoot-out against last year's premiers, the Bangalow Bluedogs.

A big crowd witnessed an exciting match, that was decided by a penalty shoot-out after it was locked up 0-0 after 110 minutes of normal and extra time.

Lismore Richmond Rovers won the shoot-out 4-3.

'We just missed out in the end,' Bangalow's coach Joel Rudgeley said. 'We played well but ended up putting ourselves in the position where we could lose.'

'You have to make sure you put the shots into the net. We had a couple off the cross-bars and their keeper made a couple of great saves.'

'He backed that up when he saved a few penalties in the shoot-out too. It says a lot when their goalie [Daniel Hamshaw] wins the man of the match award.'

Bangalow won last year's Anzac Day Cup as well as the premierships.

'It would've been good to chalk up another Anzac Cup,



Bangalow's keeper gets above the attack in their loss to Rovers in the Anzac Day Cup final. Photo Maralyn Hanigan

but that's how the cookie crumbles,' he said.

But Joel is confident for the season, as the team is pretty much unchanged from last year and the side is undefeated after three rounds of the regular season.

Other results

Suffolk Park had a 2-1 win over local rivals Byron Bay in the Anzac Day Open A final, while Tintenbar East Ballina FC were too good for Dunoon United, winning their battle for the Open B final 2-1.

In the Open C final Pottsville Beach FC triumphed over Lismore Richmond Rovers 5-4 on penalties after both sides remained deadlocked at 1-1 following extra time.

Byron women

In the women's top league Byron Bay won the Callan McMillan Memorial Shield final 4-1 playing against Lennox Head at Ocean Shores last Sunday.

The Byron side dominated the game after scoring two goals early in

the first half. Lennox Head responded with a 'spectacular goal' coming into half time, but Byron went on to control the second half with two more unanswered goals, Byron Bay FC's John McKay said.

'Lennox only had the one shot at goal,' he said. 'Byron played well as a whole, but midfielder Maddie Green was a class above.'

Maddie ended up winning the player of the match award.

The team's coach, Jimmy Gill, had to return to England

on a mercy dash just two days before the final.

'He was up early to follow the game and help out the stand-in coaches.'

'The team is undefeated this year and has largely been able to stay together for a couple of years.'

'Expectations are high and so far they have been playing up to those standards,' John said. 'It's a pretty formidable team.'

Byron Bay will be running women's teams in the top three grades and is also strong in the junior ranks.

The club has been working hard to develop the right culture and now it's coming to fruition. 'It has taken ten years, but it is worth it,' John said.



Byron Bay FC's premierships women's side has got the season of to a cracking start by winning the Callan Mac McMillan Memorial Shield last Sunday. Photo supplied

Send us your sport stories!

We would love to run all kinds of local sport on these pages so please send your photos and stories to sport@echo.net.au.

Local teams enjoy home advantage as rugby kicks off for 2024

The Byron Shire Rebels opened the 2024 senior far north coast rugby season with a 62-0 win over Casino playing in front of a home crowd at Byron Bay's Recreation Ground.

The team ran in 12 unanswered tries and were in control 'from the get go', leading at half time 28-0.

The day started well for the Rebels when the women notched up a 15-10 win over Casino. This was followed up by second grade, who scored a 30-0 win over the visitors.

Lennox Head also played at home and were too good for Evans River, beating them



WAR were too strong for Casuarina. Photo Vicki Kerry

24-7. At half time it was close with each side having scored a try but the Trojans pulled clear in the final 40 scoring two tries and a penalty goal.

Lennox Head also got the double with second grade

winning 19-5.

The Ballina Seagulls, also at home on Williams Reserve, held on for a 22-17 win over Richmond Range after the visitors outscored them in the second half,

mounting a comeback from the 17-7 half-time score.

In second grade Ballina beat Kyogle 25-5.

Last year's premiers, Wollongbar Alstonville Rugby (WAR), did travel and continued their winning ways beating Casuarina Beach 40-22. Second grade beat the home side 29-13.

In the final match of the round Lismore had a 45-0 win over newcomers, Southern Cross University.

The Mullumbimby Moonshiners played away to Lismore who proved too strong, winning their second-grade game 27-7.

Top Southern Stingrays team take first AFL win in Ballina

The Southern Stingrays picked up their first win of the season when they beat Coomera 6.5-41-5.4-34 playing at home on Fripp Oval last Saturday.

In a closely fought and low-scoring game, where the lead at the end of a quarter never stretched past eight points, the Stingrays were able to do enough to keep the visitors at bay.

The Reserves didn't fair so well and went down 2.0-12-10.16-76 to the visitors.

The side is yet to truly challenge the competition

but can take solace from scoring the first goal of the game.

In the local women's derby the Ballina Bombers put on a strong performance to dominate across the park and beat the Byron Magpies 12.10-82-0.1-1.

It is the third win on the trot for the Ballina side and they now share the top of the Queensland division two (south) ladder with two other undefeated teams, Burleigh and Palm Beach Currumbin.

They take on these teams in the next few weeks.

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Nimbin's MardiGrass is about to light up from Friday, May 3, and will run until Sunday. Michael Balderstone, president of Nimbin's Hemp Embassy, says military style raids by police helicopters prompted the first MardiGrass protest in 1993. Incidentally, that is why *The Echo* started in 1986 – no media would report on the abuse of power by police who raided hippies in the Shire's hinterland.

Shoalhaven City Council, on the state's south coast, says its roads have taken a battering from natural disasters over the last four years, prompting it to launch an AI trial last year. According to www.governmentnews.com.au, the technology assessed 87 per cent of Shoalhaven's entire 1,700km road network in two weeks, and Council was able to rectify a record 10,688 defects in just over three months.

Byron Writers Festival is seeking volleys for its August 7 to 11 event in Bangalow. Organisers say, 'As a not-for-profit organisation Byron Writers Festival relies on the generous support of our volunteers.' To get involved visit byronwritersfestival.com.

FYI: Those using outdated 3G tech can get assistance from www.regionaltechhub.org.au.

Facebook turns 20 this year! For more on your technofeudalist overlord, see page 10.

NSW Family Energy Rebates are on offer – they aim to help people with dependent children pay their electricity bills. The rebate is up to \$180 per retail (on-market) household, per financial year. Visit



Mullumbimby, a town known for its abundance of artists and creatives, is set to host the much-anticipated Laneways Festival, on May 4 and 5. There are plenty of activities, including a lantern-making workshop at Byron Community College on Saturday, which will set the stage for Sunday's festivities. Pictured are some of the performers: Versace Boys, Will Henderson and Alex Johnson, up front, and behind, Anouk Schlueter from Spaghetti Circus and Vicki Lawrence from The Cassettes, with King Bunny, Andy Walker. For more, visit www.kaleidomullumbimby.org.au. Photo Jeff Dawson

www.service.nsw.gov.au for more info.

Serial Council pest, John Anderson, aka Fast Buck\$, says police are wanting to extend his Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (AVO) against Cr Sarah Ndiaye for two years. Anderson says he is completely innocent, and there has not been any police record of him intimidating anyone. The AVO stipulated Anderson had to maintain a 20m distance from Council buildings.

Vale Bonza airlines (January 31, 2023 – April 30, 2024). It lasted just 455 days.

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