

New 'village' proposed for the Shire's north

Developer wants to lead 'affordable housing' component, despite a Council scheme

Paul Bibby

A new medium-density village for up to 1,400 people could be built on land between Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby after the owners of a large greenfield site adjacent to Gulgan Road submitted preliminary development plans to Byron Shire Council.

In a move with potential flow-on effects for thousands of people living in the Shire's north, Gulgan Road Property Pty Ltd has submitted a draft planning proposal in relation to a 37.9-hectare parcel of land fronting onto Gulgan Road and Bashforth's Lane.

The planning proposal is due to come before this week's Council meeting, where councillors will decide whether to give it a preliminary tick of approval.

Should the green light be given, and the state government then follows suit by providing a favourable Gateway determination, it would pave the way for sloping paddocks beside Gulgan Road to be rezoned from rural to residential.

A detailed development application process would then occur and then, finally, the commencement of a staged construction process.

The developer says that, unlike 'conventional suburbia', the new 'Gulgan Village' would feature diverse housing types, including lower-cost dwellings, units, larger lots for co-housing and intentional communities, secondary dwellings,

semi- and fully-detached dwellings.

'This is a new exemplar living environment responsive to the needs of modern society'.

Higher density

However, the village will also be of a higher density than Byron's other suburbs, featuring a floor space ratio of 0.9:1 and a maximum height limit of 11.5 metres – 2.5 metres higher than the limit for the vast majority of the Shire.

Arranged in precincts, Gulgan Village will also be integrated with a light industrial area, which is already the subject of a planning proposal by the same developer.

The entire development is predicted to generate between 1,900 and 2,600 additional car movements per day on the surrounding streets.

The nature of the new road arrangements proposed as part of the development means that a significant proportion of this traffic will be funnelled towards Brunswick Heads.

Earmarked by Council

While plans for the new village may come as a surprise to many, they in fact date back to the 2022 floods.

The Gulgan Road site was earmarked for housing by the NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) following this disaster and was subsequently included in the Resilient Lands strategy.

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New digs for plant fair

The upcoming Mullum Plant Fair will be at the Mullum Showgrounds on March 16 from 9am till 2pm. Mullum SEED's Emma-Lee Luther says, 'Moving to a bigger space allows us to grow and cultivate a community of plant lovers! The Mullum Plant Fair is a haven for plant-passionate people, gardeners, and eco-conscious communities seeking a day of inspiration, education, and sustainable living'. There will be plant stalls, expert talks and workshops, and family-friendly activities. For more information visit www.mullumseed.org.au. Pictured is Emma-Lee Luther. Photo Jeff 'Planted And Cropped Since Time Began' Dawson

Greens mayor backs compliance over hippy raids

'Alternative accommodation' still on the cards after homes demolished

Hans Lovejoy

Mayor Sarah Ndiaye (Greens) has defended Council staff's threat of demolishing the homes of a small community after an inspection allegedly found unauthorised activities and dwellings in Upper Main Arm.

As reported last week, Koohinur Pty Ltd is a multiple occupancy (MO), and operates as a company, where the directors of the company are also residents. This MO has been in existence since 1971.

Former magistrate, Professor David Heilpern, told *The Echo* the actions of compliance staff were

'cruel', and that, 'this is a matter for councillors to urgently change policies and guidelines to make priorities clear'.

While Cr Ndiaye acknowledged 'the deep stress this situation is causing', and wanted to improve 'channels of communication', she stopped short of suggesting any reform around how Council compliance operates.

Instead, she repeated the talking points of Director of Sustainable Environment and Economy, Shannon Burt, and said the residents will be provided, 'time to either bring properties into compliance

or, as a last resort, find alternative accommodation'.

She also said, 'I think the characterisation of the director and staff in this matter is also inappropriate and oversimplifies the situation'.

A 'history of non-compliance' by the MO was outlined by Cr Ndiaye, and she suggested there had been a 'breakdown of relationships and communication' on the property.

Yet one shareholder, Charles Boyle, says the mayor's 'history of non-compliance' is inaccurate, and provided *The Echo* with evidence contrary to her claims.

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Penelope finds her musical pathway



Penelope Greenshields. Photo Jeff 'Strings Detached' Dawson

Sixteen-year-old local, Penelope Greenshields, is pursuing her dream job – violinist – and has been invited to travel with the NSW Regional Youth Orchestra in July to perform where some of the greatest classical music was composed – Germany and Austria.

She says the 'once-in-a-lifetime trip' will see her play with youth orchestras from all around the world, 'and see the most historically significant classical music

sites in the world, and be in the heart of musical culture!'

After plucking up the courage to participate in her first youth orchestra at the end of 2022, she says it was the first time she had played with other musicians.

Comfort zone

'I met so many amazing people through extending myself out of my comfort zone, and discovering I do actually have a talent worth sharing and exploring.'

'To achieve this

life-changing experience, I need to raise \$5,000 towards my travel and accommodation. In total, I need \$11,000 for this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

'I would so astronomically appreciate any donation to what is most definitely going to be the most amazing trip of my young life and the furtherment of my musical education.'

To help Penelope, visit <https://tinyurl.com/2m8mpca7>.

Wategos mega-mansion fight goes to court

Paul Bibby

The battle over the future of a stunning, tree-filled mega block at Wategos has ended up in court, with its multi-millionaire owner appealing Byron Council's rejection of his plans for the site.

Court documents confirm that Antony Catalano, a media mogul who also owns Raes on Wategos, has lodged an appeal against the Council's refusal of his plans for 2 Brownell Drive.

The matter has already had two preliminary directions hearings in the NSW Land & Environment Court, and looks set to head to compulsory mediation and, if agreement cannot be reached, a costly and time-consuming trial.

Mr Catalano made waves last year when he submitted his plans for the extraordinary 4,087 square metre site.

The proposal that came before Council was for the construction of two neighbouring mansions: one a multi-level, six-bedroom

dwelling with 'swimming pools', and the other a multi-level, four-bedroom house with a single pool.

Littoral rainforest

The overall development, described as a family home, would have involved substantial clearing of protected littoral rainforest, and the excavation of up to eight metres into the steep hillside.

This excavation and associated work would require 4,078 cubic metres to be exported off site, requiring 30 trucks movements per day for four weeks.

Mr Catalano's planning team submitted a revised development application for the site after being told that the first was unsatisfactory.

This proposal involved a significant reduction in the number of rainforest trees to be removed, and the replanting of native trees around the border of the home.

They argued that their proposed rehabilitation strategy for the property will,

in fact, improve the quality of the rainforest because it will increase the number and quality of the native trees there.

But Council staff say the revised plan is also inappropriate, pointing out that, under state planning laws, a development cannot be approved if it involves the destruction of coastal wetland or littoral rainforest.

Not compliant with planning controls

'It is considered the proposed development is not sympathetic to the environmental constraints of the land, does not comply with the relevant state and local planning controls, is unsuitable for this site in Byron Bay owing to bulk scale and land changes required to accommodate it, and is not in the public interest,' Council staff said in a succinct summary of their objections to the plan.

The matter is due to return to court on March 3.

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Greens mayor backs her staff over hippy raids

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Mr Boyle said, 'Enforcement is such an archaic and unnecessary attitude – especially in a Greens council. There is a significant difference between "legal responsibility" and "safety concerns".'

Survived 50 years

'Many of the older unapproved buildings in Main Arm have survived 50 years of flood and cyclones', he said.

'This issue is about enforcing legal compliance and to punish those who do not submit to the building codes – usually because they simply can't afford the exorbitant costs involved. Some issues are obvious – smoke alarms, grey water and sewage disposal – others less so.

'But the attitude of enforcement through punishment creates resentment, anxiety and ultimately – hostility, which is inevitable.'

So far, Cr Ndiaye has only spoken to Mr Boyle and Council staff.

She said, 'I want to hear directly from them about what's happening on the ground and explore practical ways I can assist within the

legal scope of my role as mayor. I'm not sure what that might entail at this stage but improving channels of communication would be a priority.'

Cr Ndiaye said, 'It is important that the public understand that the mayor and councillors can't direct staff except by resolution of Council. This is a very important feature of local government and helps avoid corruption.'

'That said, I believe in finding solutions through dialogue and mutual understanding and face-to-face always seems to work better as does ground-truthing the site.'

'I want to emphasise that our goal is to find pathways to compliance rather than displacement. That has always been my position, and why I sought to introduce an amnesty in the past.'

Amnesty regrets

A resident contacted *The Echo* last week to say they regretted contacting compliance staff during the 2021 unapproved dwelling amnesty, and would never contact Council again.

They said, 'Two compliance officers and a security

guard turned up at my house – it was pretty intimidating, and I felt I had to do what they said. There is virtually no viable pathway for people to become legal in these old communities. It's a historical issue in the Shire, that previous councils let happen, so they can't expect it to all to magically fix itself.

'Council needs to take some responsibility and genuinely help people, while being transparent about what they are legally required to do.'

Legal obligations

The law that governs council compliance is the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, which contains provisions for flexibility around investigations and actions.

When asked about Council staff's legal obligation around investigating complaints, Director Sustainable Environment and Economy, Shannon Burt, referred *The Echo* to Council's *Enforcement Policy*, which expired on October 21, 2024.

Ms Burt also made conflicting statements around Council's obligations. Last week, she said, 'Once a complaint is lodged and Council

is aware of an unauthorised development or activity we have legal obligations as a regulatory authority to act'.

This week, she said, 'Council has discretion in deciding whether to take enforcement action on the basis of the available evidence and the circumstances of the individual case'.

Professor Heilpern, who is Dean of Law at SCU, said, 'There are no legal obligations in any legislation or case law that require Council to act against unauthorised development'.

He added, 'No other council on the North Coast is threatening to demolish houses on multiple occupancies that have existed on the fringes of legality for decades'.

More pressing issues

'Why? Because they take the eminently sensible view that hippies in shacks do no harm, and there are plenty of more pressing issues than disturbing peoples lives.'

'Lismore Council is the most conservative on the North Coast, and you don't see investigative teams and proposed demolition orders on any of the 100-plus multiple occupancies in that area'.

Get your dahlia fix March 8



Coorabell's famous flower farmer, Stephen Wedd, floated on a sea of dahlias at a previous Coorabell Hall Flower Show. This year's show is on Saturday March 8 from midday till 5pm, and Sunday March 9 from 10am till 4pm. There will be many activities and workshops, and performances by Mana Aloha. See page 15. Photo Jeff 'Are These Edibles?' Dawson

Reconstruction Authority releases annual report

With the third anniversary of the devastating 2022 floods this week, The NSW Reconstruction Authority, a government-run corporation which is tasked to 'build more resilient and prepared communities', has tabled its 2023-24 annual report.

As it was released on print deadline, *The Echo* will compile a report for next week, including comment from Lismore NSW MP, Janelle Saffin (Labor) and local MP, Tamara Smith (Greens).

Federal Greens candidate Mandy Noldan has raised concerns around the lack of progress around its house-raising and retrofit programs, and says the 'number of senior executives has doubled to 50'.

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'Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfils the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things.'
— Winston Churchill (1874–1965)

New 'village' proposed for the Shire's north

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It was then nominated as a future residential area in Byron Council's revamped 2024 Residential Lands Strategy.

This means that while the proposal may be amended as part of the planning process, it is likely to receive approval from both Council and the state government because it is already part of their housing plans.

Gulgan Road Property Pty Ltd has gradually acquired the lots which make up the site of the proposed suburb since July 2021.

The director of the company is Brandon Saul, the developer behind the Habitat precinct in the Byron Industrial estate, and the revamped Fletcher Street Cottage homeless drop-in centre.

He was also instrumental in plans to build a cluster of group homes for at-risk single-parent families, which is also located on the Gulgan Road site.

What's proposed?

The Gulgan Village would feature several interconnected precincts, including the light industrial area and residential precincts featuring different housing types.

The dwellings will typically be two to two-and-a-half storeys, featuring structures which step down the steeply sloped land.

There will be a high proportion of one and two-bedroom dwellings in a variety of forms, including work-live units, micro lots, secondary dwellings above garages, compact houses, apartments, and town houses.

The village will be interspersed with open space areas, community facilities and shops. Parks, walking tracks and community facilities would be owned and managed through an overarching 'community scheme'.

The whole development, including the industrial land, would be managed through a set of nested community plans.

This would allow the community to potentially run its own power generation and backup storage service, and its own composting and garbage collection.

In addition to building a gravity networks water supply and sewer infrastructure, the developer would be responsible for building a new intersection at Bashforths Lane in the north of the site, and a collector road intersection with Gulgan Road including a dual lane roundabout.

The Saddle Road would be closed to cars and used as a key pedestrian and cycle link through the site.

Affordable housing?

While Byron Council staff's assessment of the proposal is broadly supportive, a potential sticking point has emerged in the form of affordable housing and other developer contributions.

Council recently introduced an affordable housing contributions scheme, under which developers are required to make significant contributions to the stock of affordable housing in the Shire.

Staff originally called for 10 per cent of the total housing stock in Gulgan Village to become affordable housing, but late last year, a majority of Byron councillors acceded to the developer's request for a more flexible approach in the form of a private planning agreement between it and the Council.

The planning proposal that is now before Council does not specify how much affordable housing there will be. Rather, this would be determined by an 'affordable housing expert' chosen by Council, and paid for by the developer.

'A potential outcome of this decision, and of the "affordable housing expert" report under the draft planning agreement is that the assessed contribution amount falls below 10 per cent, with five per cent already committed to the Arakwal,' Council staff said in their assessment of the Gulgan Village proposal.

'This presents a risk for Council, as if the final amount is five per cent or less, no additional affordable housing contributions will be required under the draft planning agreement to Council from the development of the site.'

The draft planning agreement also proposes that a management committee be set up to 'consider, manage, and determine the type, timing, and recipients' of all development contributions in relation to the project, including affordable housing.

Council staff opposed

'Council should firmly reject the inclusion of this provision in the final planning agreement,' staff said.

'It is a construct by the proponents, not at the request or direction of the Council. Including this provision would severely undermine the Council's current authority to receive, manage and allocate affordable housing contributions.'

Furthermore, it does not reflect Council's currently adopted implementation procedures for affordable housing contributions...

The issue of how much affordable housing will be included in the new suburb, and how this and the other development contributions will be allocated, promises to be a significant point of contention that is likely to be debated at length at this week's meeting.

Should Byron Council provide preliminary approval of the planning proposal, the matter would then go to the state government for a so-called 'Gateway determination'.

Only once these steps have been completed will the developer be able to submit a Development Application (DA) for the village which would provide specific detail about the type and number of dwellings.

Only once this detail has been worked out would construction be allowed to commence.

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Vale Feros activist, Kate Smorty

Photo & story Eve Jeffery

The spearhead in the fight to save Byron Bay's Feros Village, Kate Smorty, died last week at George's Cottages, five days shy of her 97th birthday.

Kate was born in Paddington, raised in the Sydney suburb of Auburn, and was an army wife in Ingleburn, Sydney and Ipoh, in the Malaysian state of Perak.

Kate was a single mother of four and lived in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney through the 1960s, right up to 2017.

At that time, she moved north and began living at Feros Village, near her daughter Dianne who lives in Byron Bay.

Kate was determined that she and her fellow residents



Byron Bay resident Kate Smorty was instrumental in a campaign by residents to remain at Feros Village after management announced redevelopment plans.

would not be moved from Feros Village when service provider, Feros Care, gave them all an eviction notice in early 2023.

Kate and seven other residents held on, literally for their dear lives, and were

determined not to budge even after eviction notices to Feros residents had long passed their final date.

Stood strong

Kate stood strong and lived at the facility under

very trying conditions when they were all but abandoned, and was there to celebrate the victory when the facility was taken over by St Andrews.

Kate was able to live in peace at George's Cottages for more than a year at the end of her life.

Kate's daughter Dianne, a stalwart support to Kate and the other residents during the fight, said that Kate passed peacefully into a new chapter on her soul's journey last Thursday.

'She was surrounded by love at George's Cottages, the place she loved and where she was determined to stay.'

A community celebration of Kate's life will be held on Sunday, March 16, at Marvell Hall in Byron Bay at 10am.

Fast Buck\$ APVO case against mayor deferred

David Lowe

The case around an Apprehended Personal Violence Order (APVO) against John Anderson, aka Fast Buck\$, will be held at the Mullumbimby Courthouse in April after Magistrate Kathy Crittenden held over the matter at the Byron Bay Courthouse last Thursday.

NSW Police, on behalf of Byron Shire Mayor Sarah Ndiaye, made the APVO application. Anderson strongly denies any threats or violence against Cr Ndiaye and instead claims he is the victim.

The APVO has been in place since May 2021, and was due to expire in April 2024, but Cr Ndiaye requested then that it be extended for two years, owing to 'grave fear that harassment and intimidation would recommence', specifically affecting her role as a Byron Shire councillor.

In June 2024 Mr Anderson sought to have the APVO repealed, alleging he had 'no case to answer', but at that time Magistrate Stafford set her decision back to today, February 20, 2025. Anderson grudgingly agreed to the delay, saying 'if I'm still alive, yes your Honour.'

Anderson has cancer.

Despite the risk of two years in prison or a \$5,500 fine, it was alleged in court that Mr Anderson has since breached the APVO, making this a criminal matter.

That case was already set for Mullumbimby Courthouse in April.

Representing himself, Mr Anderson appeared casually dressed, carrying his belongings in an Aldi bag.

When asked by Magistrate Crittenden if he had filed his evidence, he said, 'What evidence?' A short time later, when the PINOP (Person In Need of Protection) was referred to as a 'victim', he said, 'She's not a victim - I'm the victim here.'

Magistrate Crittenden admitted she was not across the details of the case, but found it very heavy going as she sought to establish the basic facts of the situation.

Cr Ndiaye was present and available to speak as a witness, but was not called upon.

When the prosecuting sergeant mentioned the criminal charge (Anderson allegedly breaking the APVO), she asked the defendant if he was prepared to defend that today. He said no, he was not aware that he would need to do that, as the other side had not filed the relevant documents.

Magistrate Crittenden then said Anderson was potentially putting himself in greater jeopardy by representing himself in the civil case and potentially negatively affecting his forthcoming criminal case.

She strongly urged him to seek legal advice, before adjourning the matter and moving on to other urgent cases, for which the court was closed to the media.

Mayor Ndiaye said she did not wish to make any public comment at this stage.

Mullumbimby railway station still a hangout for teens

With concerns young teens are still accessing the derelict Mullumbimby Railway Station, *The Echo* asked Transport for NSW if they 'will ensure that the site is secured and not accessible given the asbestos dangers.'

The historic building burnt down in April last year, and there is yet to be any movement on its future. *The Echo* reported on the matter again in August last year, which raised concerns that teenagers were accessing the site.

The Echo also asked Transport for NSW: 'Does this site pose a significant health risk to not only these teens, but the surrounding community? Has an asbestos specialist confirmed the toxin is contained?'

A Transport for NSW spokesperson replied: 'An independent assessment on Mullumbimby Railway Station was carried out in November 2024. At the



The Mullum Railway Station burnt down in April last year. Photo Aslan Shand

time of the inspection, the fencing was secure and the site was not accessible to the public.

'UGL Regional Link (UGLRL), Transport for NSW's asset manager, has advised they are arranging for a contractor to re-secure the Mullumbimby Railway Station to prevent access.

'A monthly inspection will be carried out to confirm the site remains secure

moving forward until a long-term strategy for the station has been determined.

'As asbestos has been identified within the site, it may pose a risk to health for anyone accessing the building without following Safe Work NSW and the NSW Environmental Protection Authority requirements.

'Living or working with asbestos, or just being around it, is a low risk to health if the asbestos is in good condition and not damaged. If asbestos is damaged and the fibres inhaled, it may be a risk to health. Breathing in a small amount of fibres is unlikely to make a person sick.

'UGLRL has completed its initial assessment of the Mullumbimby Railway Station and has submitted a recommendation to Transport for NSW for consideration. Transport for NSW will keep the local Council and community informed of its next steps.'



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Bob Brown sells out M'bah show



Over 400 people packed out the Murwillumbah Civic Centre last Friday, to hear environmental legend Bob Brown give his backing to Greens candidate Mandy Nolan. Photo Kurt Petersen

Traffic lights vs roundabout saga continues

Paul Bibby

Will Byron Council reconsider its decision to install traffic lights at a notorious intersection in Suffolk Park?

This is the call coming from nearly 1,100 signatories to a petition that arrived on Council's doorstep last week.

The question of what to do to address the longstanding safety and traffic management issues at the intersection of Clifford Street and Broken Head Road remains a matter of great contention in and around Suffo.

Council's decision in November last year to use a big bag of government grant funding to install traffic lights rather than a roundabout at the troubled spot appears to have divided the locals in the Shire's south.

The petition reads, 'We the undersigned petition the Mayor and councillors of Byron Shire Council to rescind their vote in favour of traffic lights at the Clifford Street-Broken Head Road intersection in Suffolk Park, and urgently investigate a roundabout as an alternative

before any work begins on traffic lights.'

For such a move to even be on the table, one of Byron's new crop of councillors would have to move a rescission motion so that it can be debated and then voted upon by councillors.

So far, no councillor has put their hand up to make this happen, something which is unlikely to earn them too many friends among those fighting to 'Keep the Flow in Suffo'.

This group argues that a roundabout is the only viable long-term solution, and that traffic lights will ultimately make things worse.

They say that, in the meantime, Council should consider an interim solution such as a mini-roundabout or a so-called 'Seagull' traffic management measure, until plans for a roundabout can be brought to fruition.

However, in an extended response to the petition published in the agenda to this week's Council meeting, Council's Director of Infrastructure Services, Phil Holloway argues that installing

traffic lights remains the 'best possible outcome for the community'.

Mr Holloway said that Council staff explored various options in response to demands for an alternative to the traffic lights but found each of them wanting.

In particular, the option of a mini-roundabout was found not to meet the 'core objective of improving safety for all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists..'

Key issues with this option reportedly included the fact it would not be sufficiently wide or high to force motorists on Broken Head Rd to slow down, meaning that they would approach the intersection at unsafe speeds.

A further issue, Mr Holloway said, was that it would not improve pedestrian safety, unlike traffic lights, which would include a pedestrian crossing.

Mr Holloway then reiterated Council's arguments against a full-sized roundabout as a long-term solution to the Clifford St problem – most notably land acquisition.

Calls for urgent support

Byron Bay Men's Shed needs dedicated space

Byron Bay Men's Shed Incorporated are highlighting their urgent call for support in securing land for a Men's Shed in Byron Bay.

Secretary Bryan Frew says, 'With 4,651 men aged between 50 and 80 in the 2481 postcode (2021 census), the need for a dedicated space to address social isolation and mental health risks has never been greater'.



Byron Bay Men's Shed President, Garry Eastburn and Secretary, Bryan Frew. Photo Jeff 'Sheds' Dawson

Waiting for audit

'Despite ongoing discussions with Byron Shire Council and a review of several possible sites, we remain in a holding pattern awaiting the results of the Council audit into potential community sites.'

'Given the delays, we have now formally approached the Minister for Lands and Property, Hon. Stephen Kamper MP, seeking state-level intervention.'

'This issue is not just about securing land – it's about supporting the well-being of local men, reducing social isolation, and creating a lasting community asset

that benefits Byron Bay as a whole.'

Garry Eastburn, President of Byron Bay Men's Shed, says, 'We understand that Crown Land allocations involve complex processes, but this is a health emergency for the men in our community.'

'We need leadership and action – not endless delays.'

The Byron Bay Men's Shed is calling on local residents, businesses, and community leaders to voice their support by writing to Minister Kamper (office@kamper.minister.nsw.gov.au) urging

immediate action; contacting local Byron Shire Councillors to reinforce the importance of securing land; spreading the word to ensure this issue stays in the public spotlight

'This is about saving lives,' said Frew. 'If we want our older men to stay engaged, active, and mentally healthy, we need to give them a place to connect and contribute.'

'We're asking the community to stand with us and make sure we don't lose this opportunity.'

To get involved visit <https://byronbaymensshed.org.au>.

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News from across the North Coast online ► www.echo.net.au

Police seek owners of seized bikes, boards and tools

Police have been trying to find the rightful owners of some allegedly stolen items found and seized at a property in Kingscliff last week.

Kyogle Council looking to community to help direct future

How your local council engages with its community through its strategies and engagement policies is a key element in how you as a ratepayer, resident, and member of the community can get your voice heard.

Tip-off from public leads to arrest in Murwillumbah

Police say information from the public led them to two arrests in Murwillumbah last week.

Lismore squatters negotiate with NSW RA over buyback houses

The people occupying buyback houses in Lismore were able to come together with the NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) on Friday to talk about potential ways to move forward following the RAs attempt to disconnect water to some of the premises.

Will bulk billing increase in Murwillumbah after Labor action?

How much financial support your local doctor and local GP clinic gets from the government directly affect how much you pay for your visit to the doctor, and whether doctors are able to bulk bill pensioners etc.

Ballina Croquet Club's Mike Gidding selected for NSW state team

Competing in Canberra in the state event at the end of January, Ballina Croquet Club's Mike Gidding not only made it to the finals but has been selected for the NSW state team.

130 new parking spaces for Tweed Valley Hospital sorely needed

For anyone who has to go to the new Tweed Valley Hospital, parking is a significant problem. It is such a problem that when you speak to staff to arrange your appointments they highlight the issue and remind you to come early to see if you can get a park so you are not late.

Bail-refused inmates 'locked up for days' in police stations

NSW Police Commissioner Karen Webb has called an emergency meeting with the Commissioner of Corrective Services over inmates she says are languishing in police cells.

www.echo.net.au

Tweed residents 'disappointed' option 5 not adopted for Hastings Point Wastewater Plant

Aslan Shand

Thursday's Tweed Shire Council (TSC) meeting saw the decision on the contentious Hastings Point Wastewater Treatment Plant proposal deferred.

Tweed Council staff had recommended option 4 for adoption while a strong community opposition had been pushing for option 5 which they stated would have better environmental, noise, and odour outcomes.

Nationals candidate for Richmond in the upcoming federal election, and Tweed Shire councillor, Kimberly Hone, was quick to propose the community supported option 5.

'I am confident, based on the numerous correspondence that I have received personally from locally-affected residents, that they are happy to have their rates increased if it means protecting their beach and their waterways,' said Cr Hone.

At this point Cr Hone did not have a seconder for her motion.

Independent Mayor Chris Cherry followed this saying, 'At the risk of upsetting everybody, I'd like to move an amendment. Which, unfortunately, isn't going straight to option 5, but is doing some of the things that the peer review has asked us to do.'

Cr Cherry then acknowledged the community petition that had around

3,000 signatures, before telling the meeting that, 'as we heard from the public speaker today on this, the peer review clearly highlights that insufficient work has been done to date to justify the selection of option 4, I believe the same is true of option 5.'

Increased rates?

'At the moment, I don't feel like we, as a council, have got enough information to be able to just go straight to option 5, as much as I'd like to, I'd like to be popular. I'd like to be just saying, "yes". But at the end of the day, we are talking about maybe \$20 million.'

Cr Dr Nola Firth emphasised the need to talk to the 'whole community' about the potential increase of rates.

The question of the rate increase being across the whole community, or just the rate base benefiting from the upgrade, was also raised.

Cr Cherry said that she believed further investigation of option 4 and 5 was the best way forward so that more information was available for councillors to make a decision.

Staff made clear that to achieve increased clarity on cost estimates, and on the two options, would cost between \$400,000 to \$500,000. Councillors voted to investigate the two options, 4 and 5, with Cr Hone voting against.

Community 'disappointed'

Community campaigners made it clear they were 'disappointed' with the TSC decision to commission a further report and seek more information about the options available.

'This decision will cause a delay of at least three months before the upgrade can proceed.'

'Almost 3,000 petition signatures were tabled from the communities of Pottsville, Cabarita/Bogangar, Round Mountain and Hastings Point, urging the council to choose the best available option for the environment,' they stated.

'Option 5 is the preferred community option.'

Campaign leader David Buick says the cheaper option 4, pushed by TSC officers, will never deliver the environmental performance the community is happy with.

Round Mountain campaigner Michael DeGood believes that community representation and collaboration with TSC in the next round of consultancy is crucial.

'Every Tweed Coast residents' association and relevant environmental group, and thousands of residents, have provided Council with a resounding message. Not only is this issue of paramount importance but fierce support backs the best-performing option 5,' he said.

Local and NSW art students exhibit in Lismore for ARTEXPRESS



The Lismore ARTEXPRESS exhibition opened on Friday, February 21 and runs through to Sunday, April 20. Photo supplied

Lismore Regional Gallery is hosting one of the ARTEXPRESS shows that is showcasing year 12 art from local students and students from across NSW.

'From the late 1950s ARTEXPRESS has showcased the artistic orientation of young people and presents

a selection of outstanding bodies of work submitted for the 2024 HSC examination for Visual Arts by NSW students,' said the press release.

The Lismore show will feature 'local student artists from the region - from Ballina Coast, Banora Point, Byron Bay, and Cape Byron

Rudolf Steiner schools - in addition to those from far and wide NSW'.

The exhibition opened on Friday, February 21 and runs through to Sunday, April 20 and can be viewed Wednesday to Sunday 10am to 4pm and Thursdays until 6pm at 11 Rural St, Lismore.

New measles alert for Lismore

Northern NSW Local Health District is advising people to be alert for signs and symptoms of measles after being notified of a second person with measles who was infectious while visiting Lismore Square Shopping Centre last week.

The new case is a family member of a person who had recently returned from overseas and was confirmed on February 9, 2025 to have measles.

Northern NSW Local Health District Director of Population and Public Health, Dr Valerie Delpech, said the locations pose no ongoing risk to the public.

Dr Delpech said if you or someone you know, visited the following locations at during the specified times they should monitor for the development of symptoms:

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 - Lismore Square Shopping Centre, from 8.40am to 2.45pm, in particular, time spent in Woolworths, Coles, Cotton On Body, and Pet Barn.

Thursday, February 13, 2025 - Lismore Square Shopping Centre, from 8.45am to 5.25pm, in particular, time spent in Cotton On, Cotton On Body, and Coles.

'Symptoms to watch out for include fever, runny nose, sore eyes and a cough, usually followed three or four days later by a red, blotchy

rash that spreads from the head and face to the rest of the body,' Dr Delpech said.

'It can take up to 18 days for symptoms to appear after an exposure, so it's important for people who visited these locations to look out for symptoms up until March 3, 2025.

'We want to remind the community to make sure they are up to date with their vaccinations. The measles vaccine can prevent the disease even after exposure, if given early enough.

'Anyone born after 1965 needs to ensure they have had two doses of measles vaccine.'

The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe and effective, and is given free for children at 12 and 18 months of age. It is also free in NSW for anyone born after 1965 who hasn't already had two doses.

People who are unsure of whether they have had two doses should get a vaccine, as additional doses are safe. This is particularly important prior to travel. MMR vaccine is available from GPs (all ages) and pharmacies (people over five years of age).

For more information on measles, view the measles factsheet: https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Measles_Factsheet.aspx.

Man charged after fatal crash - Ballina

A man has been charged following the death of another man in a two-vehicle crash last year.

About 5.45pm on Wednesday 18 September 2024, emergency services were called to Tamarind Drive, Ballina, following reports of a crash.

Officers attached to Richmond Police District attended the scene and found two vehicles - a Honda Accord and a Hyundai i30 - had collided.

Police removed the 62-year-old driver of the Hyundai from the vehicle before he was treated at the scene by NSW Ambulance paramedics; but he was unable to be revived.

The 18-year-old driver of the Honda was also treated at the scene before being

transported to Lismore Base Hospital for treatment.

A crime scene was established as specialist officers attached to the Crash Investigation Unit commenced an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the crash.

Following inquiries, the now 19-year-old driver was charged with dangerous driving occasioning death - drive manner dangerous, negligent driving - occasioning death, negligent driving and drive on /over continuous line near painted island.

He was given a Court Attendance Notice on Tuesday 18 February 2025, to appear before Ballina Local Court on Thursday 1 May 2025. The man's licence has been suspended.



Bangalow film fest on decks for March 6

Festival Director Christian Pazzaglia with screenwriter and story producer Deb Cox were at last Thursday's launch of next month's Bangalow Film Festival, which runs March 6 to 15. This year, the festival will premier 20 international and Australian feature films and award-winning documentaries. There will be panels, discussions and workshops featuring filmmakers and actors, including Rolf de Heer, Warwick Thornton, Molly Reynolds, Gary Sweet, Aaron Pedersen and Mark Leonard Winter. Full details at www.bangalowfilmfestival.com.au. Photo Jeff 'Waxed Up Decks' Dawson

Women's Emergency Relief Program launched

Byron homeless hub, Fletcher Street Cottage, will launch its Women's Emergency Relief Program on International Women's Day, March 8.

'With the number of women seeking help increasing dramatically, it is clear that more must be done,' said Maddi Powell, Assistant Manager and Community Support Worker.

'Many of these women are fleeing abusive situations. In those moments, they need urgent assistance, and that's exactly what the Women's Emergency Relief Program allows us to provide - critical support, immediately.'

'Women now account

for a significant proportion of service users at Fletcher Street Cottage. Community Support Workers and visiting specialist services offer personalised support, advocacy and referrals, but there is a rising demand for emergency relief for vulnerable women.

'The Women's Emergency Relief Program is designed to respond swiftly and effectively, ensuring safety and stability during times of crisis.'

Practical support

Ms Powell says, 'The program provides discreet and rapid assistance, including immediate transport to safer

locations for women escaping dangerous situations; food vouchers for women and children facing hunger; emergency financial assistance for urgent expenses, such as overdue bills; and support provided discreetly and rapidly, ensuring safety and dignity.'

The program is entirely funded by community donations, she says.

'One of the first major contributors is the Bangalow Country Women's Association (CWA), which has committed a \$10,000 donation.'

Contributions can be made directly at www.fletcherstreetcottage.com.au.

Foreign home investors banned

The Albanese Labor Government will ban foreign investors from buying established homes for at least two years and crack down on foreign land banking, says local federal Labor MP, Justine Elliot.

The policy originated within the Liberal party.

Mrs Elliot said, 'The Albanese Labor Government is banning foreign purchases of established dwellings from April 1 until March 31, 2027. A review will be undertaken to determine whether it should be extended

beyond this point.

The ban will mean Australians will be able to buy homes that would have otherwise been bought by foreign investors.

'Alongside the ban on foreign purchases of established dwellings, Labor will tackle land banking by foreign investors.'

'The ban on foreign purchases of established dwellings, strengthened compliance activity by the ATO to enforce the ban, and an enhanced compliance

approach by both the ATO and Treasury to discourage land banking by foreign investors will help ensure that foreign investment in housing is in our national interest.'

Other countries, notably third-world countries, do not allow complete foreign ownership of their land, but offer 100 year leases.

The Echo asked Mrs Elliot's office why this policy took so long to be implemented - a reply will be published if received.

Byron's Badass Women of Business, March 4

In honour of International Women's Day (IWD), The Byron Chamber of Commerce and Byron Bay Spirit Company are presenting Byron's Badass Women of Business, 'an event celebrating the incredible local women leading the way in business.'

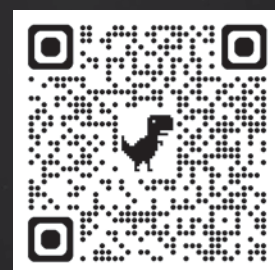
A roundtable discussion will include Mindy Woods (Karkalla on Country), J'aimee Skippon-Volke (Byron Bay International Film Festival), Ashlea Griffin (The Happy Therapist) and Kylie Mowbray-Allen (Hello Media).

The event will be held at the Byron Bay Spirit Company (88 Centennial Cct, Byron Bay) on Tuesday, March 4 from 4.45pm to 6.45pm. For tickets, visit <https://events.humanitix.com/byrons-badass-women-of-business>.

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The Byron Shire Echo
Volume 39 #38 • February 26, 2025

Media negatively frames Labor's achievements

We have become accustomed, not too happily, to a form of political journalism in which opinion and news have increasingly merged, blunting the essential distinction between political commentary and detached objectivity.

With journalists now routinely writing both news and opinion this distinction has become impossibly blurred, undermining the impartiality and accuracy on which political journalism depends.

Nowhere is this decline more apparent than in the response to two very different, yet equally significant, events in our election-tuned political landscape this week.

Firstly, the much-anticipated interest rate cut of 0.25 per cent, the first in four years, and second, the Albanese Labor government's announcement of its signature health policy with the largest investment in Medicare and bulk-billing since the Hawke Labor government created Medicare 40 years ago.

Both these announcements, you might think, would be considered unalloyed good news for the Albanese government and covered extensively given their importance. Well, think again.

Interest rate cut

The interest rate cut had barely been announced, let alone acknowledged as a welcome relief for mortgage holders, before it was promptly swept away in a tide of confected media negativity.

This 'line-ball decision' as the *Australian Financial Review* (Nine) incorrectly termed it, was a unanimous Reserve Bank board decision.

It was quickly depicted as a 'one off' or, as the ABC proclaimed 'miserly, as good as it gets'.

The long-awaited rate cut soon became lost in reports of the Reserve Bank Governor, Michele Bullock, having 'ruled out another pre-election interest rate cut' – which she had not actually said.

Bullock, quite properly, refused to be drawn on when the next interest rate cut might be. To do otherwise would have risked the



[Labor's Medicare policy] was fully costed and articulated over the next five years. The Coalition, on the other hand, is a policy void and in health policy, it had done nothing.

Professor Jenny Hocking

markets acting in advance. If anything, Bullock's speech left open the prospect of further interest rate cuts this year, which the markets are already pricing in. Not so for our troubled media, whose perennial fear of appearing 'biased' by reporting good news objectively as just that, good news, had created a negative out of a positive.

Medicare expansion

And, as if that wasn't bad enough, the media's response to the government's Medicare expansion announcement was even worse – perverse to the point of surreal.

The prime minister announced a centrepiece of the government's re-election campaign, a \$8.5 billion commitment to extend bulk-billing from 11 million to 26 million people, with nine out of 10 GP visits to be bulk-billed by 2030.

This is the largest investment in Medicare in its 40-year history.

The government's policy not only expands bulk-billing rates and availability but also increases GP training and nursing scholarships. It was fully costed and articulated over the next five years. The Coalition, on the other hand, is a policy void and in health policy it had done nothing – there has been no policy development, no consultation with medical providers about best practice, and no budget details.

Nevertheless, despite the absence of policy work, the Coalition immediately claimed that it would match the government's Medicare expansion 'dollar for dollar' – note the careful wording.

This reflex political response, designed only to head off the obvious electoral positive for the government in prioritising universal health care, was scarcely worth a journalistic footnote. Yet it was this,

not the government's announcement, but the Coalition's five-word response to it, that became the story – not just in one or two media reports, but in them all.

The same framing, the same wording, and – hey presto! – the Albanese government's Medicare announcement had been 'neutralised', 'the wind taken out of its sails', and the government's policy on Medicare was gifted to the Coalition by a media struggling to maintain any semblance of independent thought. Peter Dutton has since promised to fund the Coalition's Medicare expansion by sacking 36,000 public servants.

False equivalence

What should have been a day of focused media coverage and analysis of the largest financial commitment to Medicare since it was created, became instead a false equivalence between Labor's detailed and costed policy, and the Coalition's cheap knock-off. Little wonder that a recent opinion poll showed most people are unaware of the Albanese government's policy achievements in office.

It was a breath of fresh air to hear an informed and engaged conversation with Anthony Albanese from an entirely unexpected quarter, radio presenter and podcaster Abbie Chatfield. Her podcast *'It's a lot'* is one of the most popular in Australia, and Chatfield puts every jaded, cynical, tired old legacy journalist to shame. She's interested, she wants to hear more, she doesn't interrupt, she's not trying to get a gotcha moment.

At last, media worth listening to.

■ Emeritus Professor Jenny Hocking is an historian, political scientist and award-winning biographer.

The biggest little carpark in Australia

A packed house of residents turned up Monday night at the Mullumbimby Services Club to hear Byron Shire Council's plans to plonk 32 units and shops over a busy Station Street carpark at the town's entrance.

It was an opportunity for a mature, informed discussion around the town's future with Council's best and brightest, given the proposal comes with a myriad of issues.

Instead, the assembled crowd of long-term locals were forced to endure lecturing, and at times angry gibberish from a four-pack of tone deaf, entitled, develop-anything bozo councillors.

Pack of four councillors

They were 'Greens' Mayor Sarah Ndiaye, Cr Michael Lyon (who apart from facing DV charges, is the former mayor who created this mess), wealthy developer-connected Cr Jack Dods and the shrill and angry Cr Asren Pugh, representing the shambles of local Labor.

Okay, so you see where this is going.

Yet anyone with an impartial view – and there were many there – appeared shocked at not only how rude they were to the assembled residents, but also how they were unable to answer the reasonable questions asked of them.

For example, there is no solution on the table for the considerable impact it would have on surrounding businesses.

It's no pleasure at all to be reporting on the real-time collapse of local political integrity.

And these clowns are in power for another three-and-half years. Ugh.

At least the Mullum Residents Association did a commendable job of holding it all together!

A theme from the 'councillor pack of four' was an emotional appeal to everyone's guilt around homelessness, and that residents should accept

poor planning on flood-prone land to house them, no matter how ridiculous and unviable the project appears.

Councillors also said that car parking (and the public toilet) will be relocated further away, somewhere unspecified in the rail corridor.

The space opposite Carsburg would also accommodate 40 cars, making it an inspiring landmark entrance to the town.

Alternative locations, such as Council's own carpark, were not suitable, we were told, but there appeared little effort by councillors to make sure.

Other highlights from the gruelling two-hour combative 'us vs them' event included 'Greens' Mayor Sarah Ndiaye berating locals with such gems as 'raise your hand if you own your own home'. Most did of course, and she was booed.

At another low point, Cr Asren Pugh angrily yelled at the crowd: 'I dare you to go and talk to people who live in their cars!'

Throughout the night, the councillor pack of four repeated that the public should wait until the DA is submitted by government agency Landcom, and ignore the monstrous designs presented so far.

Yet a Landcom spokesperson told *The Echo* the bulk and scale needs to remain for it to be economically viable, so there goes that talking point.

Meanwhile, the former Mullum hospital site is earmarked for 'affordable housing', and similarly low-cost homes could be built for up to 1,400 people in a new Saddle Road precinct, located between Mullum and Bruns (see page 1).

Given all that, why these councillors are prepared to die on this (raised) hill is a mystery.

Maybe it's because these 32 units will also house a few precious Council staff members, and councillors do whatever they are told by staff.

Hans Lovejoy, editor



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Nicholas Shand
1948–1996
Founding Editor



David Lovejoy
1944–2024
Co-founder

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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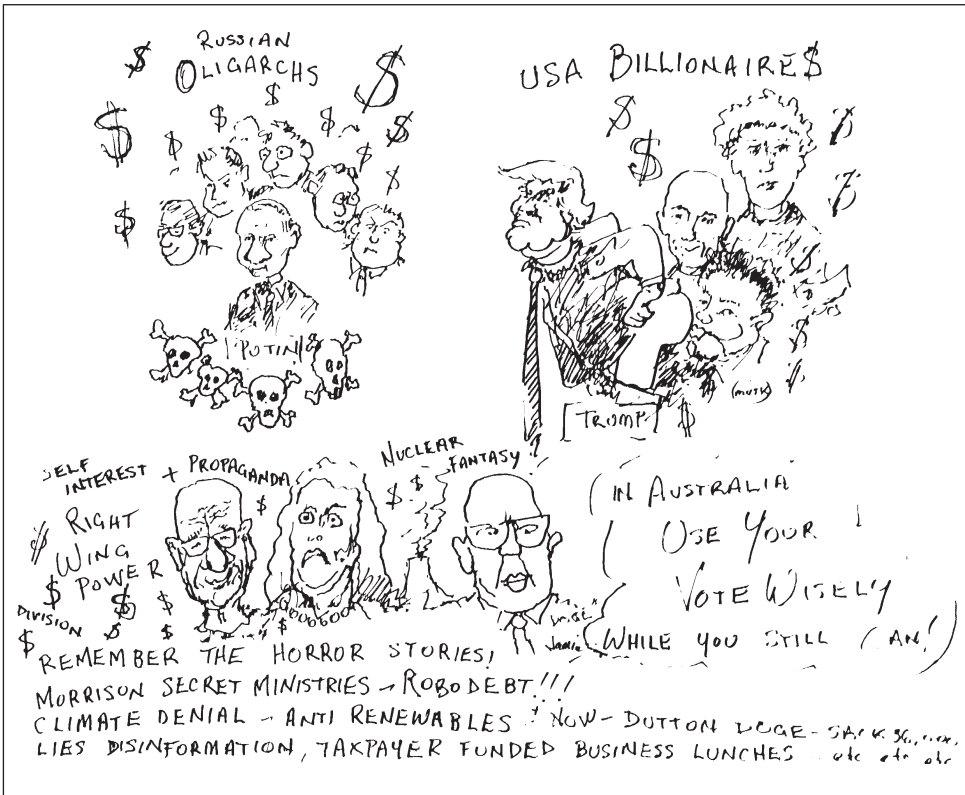
byron healing

VOLUME 7 ~ 2024

Your free guide to the flourishing health and wellbeing industry of Byron and the Northern Rivers



byronhealing.com.au



Cartoon by Jamie Hoile

Kindness and awareness

A special thanks to a lovely lady, man, and dog who were strolling down the Spit Beach at Ballina on a sunny Tuesday morning. You warned us in quick timing as our clothes and phones, etc: were taken by a rogue wave transporting them out to sea while we were swimming blissfully, completely unaware.

You are all treasures and you make the world astonishing and beautiful.

Greg & Deb McLeod
Ballina

Fakes and liars

So, everyone's happy with Australia propping up a two trillion dollar deficit economy (according to Elon Musk) and pouring billions into the US war machine, while its leader, convicted on 34 felony counts, consults with a convicted war criminal wanted by the International Criminal Court, as they conspire to end a war the Russians began but are trying to blame Ukraine?

When people are finished voting for fakes and liars, the Greens are honest and sincere and are not corporate puppets of the super wealthy.

Only corporate puppets would maintain negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions while claiming to improve housing supply.

Only corporate puppets would claim they are helping the struggling workers and fighting inflation while banks make record profits.

Rod Murray
Ocean Shores

Imminent damage

In *The Echo* June 26, 2024 Detective Chief Inspector Matt Kehoe stated that police were 'implementing a program in the coming months', regarding illegal 'pushbikes.' Cr Michael Lyon proposed a motion that Council write to state and federal MPs. Nothing happened.

In *The Echo* February 19, Richard Hughes of East Ballina loves that more people are cycling. The distinction he lacks is that some of the bikes he is seeing are not e-bikes. They are illegal electric motorbikes, with accelerators, over-powered motors and the ability to travel over 25kph. Mandy Nolan is concerned about helmetless riders suffering brain damage and suggests - albeit whimsically - that mothers confiscate the bikes in question. She can help politically.

I just wrote to MP Tamara Smith requesting:

Licence the riders or have some kind of test for road law knowledge.

Register the motorbikes and enforce third party insurance.

Enable police to blitz these illegal riders for legality and helmets.

Enable police to seize illegal motorbikes.

Put signs on foot and bike paths with speed signage.

Put signs on foot and bike paths banning electric motorbikes.

It's a matter of time before children/people will be killed, maimed or suffer brain damage.

Raphael Lee Cass
Byron Bay

People not donors

Australia needs a large crossbench of people in government committed to representing us. That would help to persuade the major parties to serve us and not their donors that are large corporations and oligarchs.

Both major parties betray us by providing tax concessions and subsidies to their donors, the banks, supermarkets, mining companies, insurance providers, property developers, and more, at our expense.

The Greens and most independents are against those concessions and subsidies.

A third of large corporations pay no tax. Imagine

the great work that could be achieved if that money was collected. We wouldn't see tents in our parks or people without teeth.

Our people are getting poorer while the corporate bludgers' wealth increases. Our votes can make a difference if we use our preferences to put people who want to serve us and not donors first.

Our vote is powerful and I believe we can save our democracy with a large crossbench.

Sue Kelly
Lennox Head

Dangerous profession

In Australia we have some of the best journalism in the world. For citizens of this country it is easy to be informed.

In this rainbow region we are blessed to have two free newspapers, one weekly the other monthly, both with a range of local and national highly relevant news.

We also have access to the online free Australian edition of independent *The Guardian*. And then there is the weekly *Saturday Paper* and *The Monthly*, again independent, though not free.

No journalists have been killed in Australia. Several have faced court for doing their jobs, recently, James Waugh, Cheng Lei and Antoinette Lattouf.

In the last year 32 journalists have been killed in regions without an active conflict, 47 journalists have been killed in regions where there is an active conflict.

Three very good websites document and discuss these deaths. cpj.org

▶ Continued on next page

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'It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it.'

- Upton Sinclair

WED 26 FEB	DAMIEN COOPER
THU 27 FEB	ANIMAL VENTURA
FRI 28 FEB	AMONG THE RESTLESS
SAT 1 MAR	THE WHISKEYS
SUN 2 MAR	RAILS RECOVERY SESSION 1PM-5PM LIVE DJ MAJESTIC NIGHTS
MON 3 MAR	STEPHEN LOVELIGHT
TUES 4 MAR	ELLA JONES
WED 5 MAR	SUNSTONE DUO

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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.

The *Echo* is committed to providing a voice for our whole community. The views of letter writers are their own and don't represent the owners or staff of this publication.

ATTENTION ALL LETTER WRITERS

In order to run more letters on different topics, from this week we are only going to publish the first 200 words of your letters in print. Readers will be able to read them in full (if a reasonable length) in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au/letters.

Closure of free government run dispute resolution service

Graeme Gibson & Meg Bishop

The Echo's report (February 18, 2025) of the state government decision to close its dispute resolution service from June 30 is disturbing news indeed. Community Justice Centres (CJC) were established in 1980 and have an enviable record in resolving disputes.

Professor David Heilpern, Dean of Law at Southern Cross University and formerly the Senior Civil Magistrate for NSW, says the CJC is 'an integral part of the justice system in this state, particularly in civil law... the ability of CJC mediators to settle small claims matters was legendary and essential. Similarly, they are an invaluable method of alternate dispute resolution in neighbourhood and low-level AVO (apprehended violence order) matters.'

The government proposes an in-house mediation service, but this will only accept court-referred mediations. This means that people will no longer be

able to self-refer, including small commercial claims matters and neighbourhood issues like noise, abuse, fences and overhanging vegetation. Many people do not have the resources to pay for mediation, or the capacity to resolve their conflicts. This will put increased pressure on both the police and the courts.

No consultation

President of Local Government NSW, Mayor Phyllis Miller OAM, says the decision to close was made without consultation with councils, who are regular users of CJC mediation.

'We have both worked as CJC mediators for CJC for many years and can report the decision to close was made without any inquiry or evaluation of its service, and with absolutely no consultation with anyone – including senior CJC staff,' said Mayor Miller.

The Echo's report quoted a government spokesperson claiming 'many state agencies now offer mediation as an



There is no wait list and no cost to the parties through the Community Justice Centre. This is a free, fair, and flexible service. Photo Cytonn Photography / unsplash.com

alternative'. We have heard versions of this several times, and on two occasions have asked the minister, Attorney-General Michael Daley, to explain these alternatives. On both occasions the minister has avoided the question. This is clearly because there is no other freely available mediation service in NSW.

The government spokesperson also said 'less than nine per cent of inquiries [to CJC] proceed to mediation'. This conveniently

overlooks what is well known within CJC. Many initial inquiries are dealt with over the phone, providing conflict coaching so people are able to approach the issue in a better informed manner, resolving the issue without mediation. Some issues are not suitable for mediation, for example where serious mental health issues are present or one of the parties is not able to represent themselves. Obfuscation appears to be the minister's strategy.

CJC mediations take place in person where possible, though sometimes by video or phone, at a time convenient to the parties.

Cost effective

There is no wait list and no cost to the parties. This is a free, fair, and flexible service. It helps keep people out of court, can alleviate personal stress and reduces the burden on police. Mediation can preserve relationships and the importance of this cannot be overstated where the parties have ongoing interactions, such as families and neighbours.

CJC mediators spend a lot of time on conflict coaching, helping people to present their case and to listen to the other's case. 'Do your best listening,' is one of the guidelines for mediation. Exploring options and reality testing are at the heart of a successful resolution.

When people reach agreement over their disputes in person it's likely to last. When a court makes a determination there is a winner and a loser and the relationship is likely

to deteriorate further. CJC mediators are well qualified, and do this work for \$45 an hour. The satisfaction that comes from helping people, sometimes changing their approach to personal relationships, cannot be measured.

Over the last decade there has been a declining level of support and steady withdrawal of CJC services, including closure of regional offices and staff reduction. The mediator panel has shrunk from around 200 in 2017 to 65 at present. Information sessions and outreach with local councils, Housing NSW, Community Legal Centres, the police and others was once commonplace, but no more.

That this contraction of resourcing for a vital community service commenced under a Coalition government should surprise no-one. That it has continued under a Labor government is unexpected.

■ Graeme Gibson has been a mediator with Community Justice Centres since 2011, and Meg Bishop since 2013.

► Continued from page 9 (the Committee to Protect Journalists), unesco.org (Observatory of Killed Journalists) and rsf.org (Journalists Without Borders).

In discussing a slight drop in the numbers of journalists killed in non-conflict zones in 2024 UNESCO comments: 'It suggests that progress may have been made in some non-conflict countries in fighting attacks against journalists for their reporting

in peacetime, which peaked in 2022 with 60 killings.'

► Please read full letter in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au/letters.

Robert Durand
Goonellabah

Indicate, mate!

A friendly reminder to my fellow motorists: those little orange flashing things on your car aren't just for decoration!

All too often, I dutifully

stop and give way to a car on a roundabout because they're indicating right, only to watch them veer off at the exit to the right of me. Conversely, I often think it's safe to enter because a motorist on the roundabout isn't indicating only to be nearly T-boned, usually by some monstrous LandCruiser or Jackaroo-type ute. One might have presumed they were going straight; by not indicating, even though we should always indicate left when leaving a roundabout.

I can't be the only one that's noticed this, it happens all the time in Byron! But hey, at least it keeps the panel beaters in business. Indicators aren't just for common courtesies, it's the bloody law! That's my two cents done – now have a nice day and drive safe.

Englebert Bumperdink
(Alasdair Purves)
Byron Bay

Where were you Noelle Maxwell?

Immediately after the floods, Justine Elliott hit the ground running, touring the area with then opposition leader Anthony Albanese.

Justine immediately challenged former PM Scott Morrison when he excluded flood-ravaged residents in the Tweed, Byron, Mullumbimby and Ballina regions from federal disaster relief payments, and was successful in procuring them.

Justine has helped procure \$800 million for the Resilient Homes program with a further \$90 million recently added. Another recent federal government funding boost has been \$100 million for over 50 local infrastructure projects including: Mullumbimby Ambulance Station, the Heritage Park upgrade, Mullumbimby Recreation Ground car park

restoration, and the Petria Thomas Memorial Swimming Pool upgrades.

The Albanese government has also committed \$618,869 under Round 1 of the Growing Regions Program to construct a Men's Shed, environmental centre, performance stage and commercial kitchen, as well as provide upgrades to existing infrastructure at the Mullum SEED Eco Hub in Mullumbimby. The Roads to Recovery program is progressively increasing from \$500 million to \$1 billion per year; the Road Black Spot Program is increasing from \$110 million to \$150 million per year, and \$200 million per year is available under our Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program...

► Please read full letter in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au/letters.

Keith Duncan
Ballina Labor

Disaster insurance. We all deserve it.

Our region is one of the worst to be hit by climate disasters. The 2022 floods were the costliest in Australian history at an estimated \$3.5 billion. But underneath these figures are the people who bear the brunt. I recently had the chance to speak to people

in a Murwillumbah street that had been severely inundated. I heard how very few houses had been eligible for the buyback scheme. The rest had suffered massive damage – many unable to afford the repairs. People were uninsured due to unaffordable premiums after the 2017 floods. They now face premiums over \$18,000 per annum! I felt their pain but couldn't suggest anything to ease it.

So, I was elated to hear The Greens' announcement this week that they have a plan to bring down premiums and make housing insurance accessible to all. Abolishing government stamp duty on premiums will return \$4 billion to householders. Expanding the cyclone pool for reinsurance to include all disasters will return \$10 billion. Their Senate inquiry found insurance calculations to be too opaque. Premiums are rising without clear explanation whilst insurance companies' profit margins are still growing.

The Greens want a freely accessible National Disaster Risk Map.

► Please read full letter in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au/letters.

Marion Riordan
Nunderi



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WHAT DOES THE CURRENT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SOLAR DISCOUNT MEAN FOR YOU?

The federal government provides a solar discount to home owners and businesses in Australia that install a small scale renewable energy system (solar, wind or hydro) under the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme (SRES) to help with the purchase cost. Installing an eligible system allows the creation of Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs). The number of STCs created is based on:

- The amount of renewable electricity the system produces or the amount of electricity consumption it reduces.
- The climate region where it's installed.

Under the package, the federal government will pay around \$350 per kilowatt towards cost of a solar system.

ASK ABOUT THE NSW BATTERY REBATE AVAILABLE NOW!



This amount reduces at the end of the calendar year (every year up until 2030 when the program is finished) so the right time to invest in solar is now.



LET'S BREAK IT DOWN

Maxine and Daniel are considering a 6.6kW solar system, supplied and installed by ProSolar for \$7,443. The federal government discount for this system is \$1,944 (at time of publishing). This brings their system cost down to \$5,499 saving them \$1,850 per year enabling them to pay back their investment in 2.98 years!

Alternatively, the same system can be financed for \$29 per week. This can be an attractive way to reduce your bill and put the money you would normally pay your power company into your very own power system on your rooftop.

ProSolar provides advice and guidance in a simple and easy way, to ensure you select the optimal solution for your home and budget. This is the best opportunity Northern Rivers families and business owners have ever had to generate our own power. **For more information, call ProSolar on 02 7912 0760 or 0482 082 304.**

ProSolar has designed three great packages to help you take advantage of the federal government discount.



6.6KW SOLAR SYSTEM

- 15 x JA 440W N-Type BiFacial Panels with a 25-year product and 30-year warranty
- 1 x GoodWe 5kW inverter with a 10-year premium warranty
- **Total cost after discount = \$5,499 or \$29 a week**

8.8KW SOLAR SYSTEM

- 20 x JA 440W N-Type BiFacial Panels with a 25-year product and 30-year warranty
- 1 x GoodWe 8.5kW inverter with a 10-year premium warranty
- **Total cost after discount = \$7,199 or \$36 per week**



10.56KW SOLAR SYSTEM

- 24 x JA 440W N-Type BiFacial Panels with a 25-year product and 30-year warranty
- 1 x GoodWe 10kW inverter with a 10-year premium warranty
- **Total cost after discount = \$8,399 or \$42 per week**

The above prices include supply, installation (standard installation on a tin roof) and GST. The federal government discount is subject to change at anytime.

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Australia's first rocket, built on the Gold Coast, set to launch

Aslan Shand

Australian rocket company Gilmour Space Technologies has had the first Australian sovereign orbital rocket approved to launch.

Based on the Gold Coast and Bowen, Gilmour Space announced that they have 'a launch window starting "no earlier than" March 15 for the maiden flight of Eris, the first Australian-designed and built rocket aiming for orbit'.

Adam Gilmour, co-founder and CEO of Gilmour Space said, 'This will be the first attempt of an Australian rocket to reach orbit from Australian soil'.

The news follows final airspace approvals from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and Airservices Australia, clearing the last regulatory hurdle before launch. It also marks the culmination of years of innovative R&D and manufacturing by the Gold Coast-based company, which developed



Left: Gilmour Space's Eris rocket at the Bowen Orbital Spaceport in Queensland. Right: Adam Gilmour, CEO of Gilmour Space Technologies, *The Echo's* own Electron Wrangler Ewan Willis, and the Gilmour team read *The Echo* as they assemble Eris, the first Australian-made rocket. Photos supplied



the Eris launch vehicle and Bowen Orbital Spaceport in North Queensland.

Gilmour Space made history in March last year when its Bowen spaceport was granted the first orbital launch facility licence in Australia, and when it secured the country's first Australian launch permit for Eris Test-Flight 1 in November. Now, with airspace arrangements

finalised and mandatory notice given to the Australian Space Agency, the company is preparing for liftoff.

First time the hardest

With the March 15 window fast approaching, Mr Gilmour said that, 'it's important to understand that delays or "scrubs" are a normal part of

rocket launches. These can last anywhere from hours to days, or even weeks, and are often caused by weather conditions, technical issues, or other factors. Safety is always the top priority. We'll only launch when we're ready, and when conditions are appropriate.

'Secondly, the first launch is always the hardest. Reaching orbit is a highly

complex engineering challenge, and every successful rocket company has faced setbacks in their early attempts - SpaceX, for one, did it on their fourth attempt. It's almost unheard of for a private rocket company to launch successfully to orbit the first time. Whether we make it off the pad, reach max Q, or get all the way to space, what's important is

that every second of flight will deliver valuable data that will improve our rocket's reliability and performance for future launches,' he said.

'Thirdly, this is the road we must take to build sovereign space capability that will be critical for Australia's future. Launching Australian-owned and controlled rockets from home soil means more high-tech jobs, greater security, economic growth, and technological independence. Only six countries in the world are launching regularly to space using their own technology, and Australia could soon be one of them.

'I want to thank our incredible team at Gilmour Space for all their hard work and dedication in getting to this critical first flight. Whatever happens next, know that you've already made history - we now build rockets in Australia. And this is only the beginning.'

For more information about Eris TestFlight 1, visit www.gspace.com/missions.

Trumposia

If Americans could play cricket, there may be someone who could stump Trump before he, via his mouth, does any further damage to his team and country.

Before common sense evolves, this rhetoric is becoming dangerous to everyone in whatever country. He's got to go.

Peter Walters
Ballina

next to the parking area near Yum Yum Tree Cafe, New Brighton.

Searching for them and finding them the next day, surprised and moved me.

Honesty and kindness are heart warming.

Nicolette Boaz
Bondi

Soul of rural Byron

What's the difference between approving a restaurant in a rural area, and a ten-storey block of shops and apartments in downtown Byron Bay? Sure, the site was once a

piggery, but it would have had limited traffic or human comings-and-goings, and blended into the rural landscape of the local community of the day.

Council's responsibility is to balance development with maintaining the character of a place. Large developments are more suited to land adjoining the outskirts of Byron Bay (and any small town) where development is to be expected, not in a rural area, where preserving the rural charm and lifestyle is so deeply valued by the community.

Approving a luxury restaurant on the old piggery site sets a dangerous precedent. Byron Shire's identity isn't just an opportunity for developers - it's a way of life for its residents. Council must ask itself: are we protecting the heart of our community, or selling it off bit by bit?

Sandy Loyall
Bangalow

Inner sanctum

The inner sanctums of the Labor party are sweating their time in executive government, power is very much in the balance. Labor's primary vote has not just dropped to 30 per cent; it's steadily heading towards 26 per cent or less on a national basis and probably even lower in Richmond.

In our electorate of Richmond, regardless of what occurs nationally, the Greens' 2025 primary vote will finally eclipse Labor and the conservative primary vote, which means Justine is 'toast' and the only interesting electoral issue is how Labor voters cast their preferences between the Greens and Nationals.

Justine has a saying 'every election is different' and that's right.

Labor will go into minority government with Greens' support and my prediction is that Mandy Nolan will become the first minister in that new government in the seat of Richmond since the

55-year hold of the seat by the (Country/National party) clan of Hugo, Dough and Larry Anthony.

Richmond needs change. The country needs change. Voters will vote for change.

Terry Sharples
Tweed Heads

Human rights

As the election time nears, it is disturbing to research the horrors and dismissal of human rights for First Nations people in Australia.

Recent reports (e.g. the *Saturday Paper* February 15, 2025) notes, 'In the past year, governments jailed more of our people, they forcibly removed more of our children, more of our children fell behind in their growth and learning, and more of our people died by suicide.' The NT government shredded the ratified Charter on Human Rights enabling the incarceration of ten-year-old children.

As cruel colonisation continues it is not surprising to note that the NT Close the Gap funding package upholds the law-and-order draconian structures to aid policing. Of the \$842 million announced to Close the Gap, \$205 million is allocated to policing! Thus the prison population grows and incarcerating ten-year-old children, usually removed from their parents, is tolerated by Australian politicians and the Australian public.

Name me one outraged morally consistent Australian politician who upholds children's ratified human rights?

Peter Dutton, an eager student of fact shredding think tank 'Advance' is keen to sanitise the history, well documented, of the Australian frontier wars.

► Please read full letter in *The Echo* online: www.echo.net.au/letters.

Jo Faith
Byron Bay

Herbicide spraying

Byron Shire Council has been spraying us for years, for example in an attempt to eradicate the bitou bush that was planted by the sand miners after mining ceased in early 1970s. The aerial spraying over the lighthouse and Tallow Beach was extensive, there was no escape. All small animals were affected, including two nesting pheasants who lived in the dunes. All gone.

In March 2009 a cyclone was approaching, my husband went to check on the beach. He was confronted by a man in protective clothing who was spraying the bitou bush on the dunes. My husband said it was the wrong time to be doing this with such a strong wind happening as the spray was going over all vegetation. He continued to spray, the spray went over my husband's bare right leg. Of course I rang the

► Continued on next page

Many tracks, one road, sustaining community.
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Help marine life and help clean up in Bruns

Join Positive Change for Marine Life (PCFML) and Byron Shire Council (BSC) in Brunswick Heads for Clean Up Australia Day (CUAD) on Sunday, March 2.

'Last year 80 kilograms of waste was removed near Torakina and Brunswick Heads beaches. I hope we can pick up even more waste with the help of our community this year,' said Lucy Jepson from PCFML.

Join the event at Terrace Park, Brunswick Heads on

Sunday, March 2 from 9am to 12pm.

Help the river

'Some of the key items we'll be looking out for at the event include cigarette butts, takeaway food and beverage containers, bottle caps, plastic sushi fish (soy sauce containers), and microplastics,' said BSC's Jordyn de Boer.

'The Brunswick River flows directly into the Cape Byron Marine Park, so it's

important that we stop these waste items entering our big blue backyard. Attending a clean-up event is always a great way to spend time with family and friends outdoors, while doing something positive for the environment. You can also get a free coffee!'

For more information and to register for the event, please visit Council's What's On page. To register your own event or join another CUAD event go to the Clean Up Australia Day website.

► **Continued from page 12** works department who told me what the spray was. It was a mixture of Metsulfuron-methyl and Roundup, a herbicide containing 24D.

Today we are still being sprayed here in Suffolk Park, every year. In all these years of spraying I have never seen a sign to warn us. My husband died in June 2012 at the age of 69.

Virginia Black
Suffolk Park

Native forest destruction

After waiting for my blood pressure to lower, I felt compelled to make a plea to all those caring *Echo* readers to

reject the latest galling request from the NSW timber industry. The shameless timber industry is seeking compensation, if our long-overdue Great Koala National Park (GKNP) actually goes ahead.

Remember Labor promised this almost three years ago? This brutal and unsustainable timber industry is attempting to further bleed 'us' dry and soon we will all need a blood transfusion (figuratively speaking).

Since 2021 the timber industry has cost NSW taxpayers over \$200 million in direct grants and received decades of public subsidies. Last year alone approximately \$29 million of taxpayers' money

was foolishly granted to forestry industries yet again! As Ms Eaglesham (President Bellingen Environment Centre) so accurately stated, our Treasurer Mr Mookhey must not cave in to further demands of the forestry industry as there is 'no basis in law' for this claim.

Most NSW citizens have no idea what the cost is to them, in relation to this destructive and secretive industry that has demonstrated its brutality not only to wildlife in their way, but to those trying to protect it.

► **Please read full letter in *The Echo* online:**
www.echo.net.au/letters.

Lindy Stacker
Binna Burra

When will staff follow Council policy?

Brutal council

As a former resident of the Byron hinterland for some 30 years, I am appalled by Byron Shire Council's treatment of the Kohinur community as reported in last week's *Echo*. It smacks of the brutal police marijuana raids which led to *The Echo* being set up in 1986 as a voice for civil liberties.

Are the surfers, hippies, musicians, artists and regenerators who made Byron Shire an interesting place to visit and settle, now to be regarded as second-class citizens? Has Byron Council become a nest of little sociopaths and wannabe oligarchs?

Michael McDonald
Bairnsdale VIC

Upper Main Arm compliance stress

No, not again. Staff taking action without councillors' knowledge is against principles of good governance. With a housing crisis, natural disasters, and cost-of-living pressures it's time for compassion and support.

When Upper Main Arm compliance action occurred in 2009, without councillors

being informed, processes changed to ensure that no such action take place without a report to Council. Councillors responded with a meeting with residents at Kohinur Hall, a leaflet to inform about rural housing options and staff assistance to comply.

In 1997 the *Local Government Act* included section 131 orders that make or are likely to make residents homeless, and clarifies 'the council must consider whether the resident is able to arrange satisfactory alternative accommodation in the locality' and 'if the person is not able to arrange satisfactory alternative accommodation in the locality, the council must provide the person with, (a) information as to the availability of satisfactory alternative accommodation in the locality, and (b) any other assistance that the council considers appropriate.'

So why wasn't there a report to councillors to consider 'appropriate action'? When I was mayor, we received reports prior to taking action and then provided support

to residents, not action causing them further stress and homelessness.

Jan Barham
Broken Head

Compliance by Council

When it comes to Byron Shire Council making sure that buildings meet compliance I have to ask why our infrastructure doesn't meet compliance?

Council needs to fix up the stuff-ups of so much of their own infrastructure but of course the funds are not there. I ask how Byron Council can ignore the fact that stormwater drains constructed under their own compliance team do not meet the standards needed to function properly without causing sink holes in roads and on private property?

How then is it okay to harass people for non-compliance when BSC is non-compliant? Oh those houses are hazardous, the compliance team say; but hey sink holes are hazardous too. So is overflowing sewage.

Annie Radermacher
Brunswick Heads

PROPOSAL TO 5G UPGRADE MOBILE PHONE BASE STATION AT THE EXISTING TELECOMMUNICATIONS SITE ON THE ROOFTOP AT 4 JONSON STREET BYRON BAY NSW 2481

- The site at which this works is being undertaken is located at the address above.
- The proposed works include:
 - Replacement of two (2) outdoor equipment cabinets with one (1) new outdoor equipment cabinet (not more than 2.5 metres high; and with a base area of not more than five (5) square metres).
 - Installation of ancillary equipment including but not limited to four (4) radio remote units (RRUs); three (3) rejection filters; and electrical cabling.
 - Ancillary works includes the removal, relocation, and modification of any existing equipment; works within the new equipment cabinet; and any other associated works necessary for the operation and safety of the facility.
- Optus and Vodafone regard the proposed works as a low-impact facility under Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 2018 based on the description above.
- The proposed infrastructure will comply with the ACMA EME regulatory arrangements. An EME Report and further information can be obtained from www.rfnsa.com.au site number 2481013.
- In accordance with Section 7 of C564:2020 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code, we invite you to provide feedback about the proposal. Further information and/or comments should be directed to: CPS Technology & Infrastructure, (02) 9300 1700, planning-vic@cpstech.com.au by **5.00pm on Wednesday 12 March 2025**.

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Mighty Mullum Meerkats win futsal final



The victorious Mullum Meerkats. Pictured from left to right: Jimi, Jaali, Ruben, Remo (holding trophy), Freeman, Jake and Curtis. Photo supplied

The Mullum Meerkats have just topped off their season-long winning streak in the Byron Bay League Futsal Championship under 15s, by beating The Phoenix 3-0

in the grand final, played on Monday night, February 24.

Top of the ladder

Top of the ladder all season, and after now winning

the Byron Bay League, and the State of Origin, they are looking to finish the season with a championship hat trick this Sunday in Ballina at the Champions League.

Cricket: Bangalow's tight win against Byron

Jameson Hinds

The local third-grade cricket derby between Bangalow and Byron went down to the wire on Saturday.

Batting first, Byron were bowled out for 170, with Scott Kilpatrick continuing his impressive season with a solid 48.

He was supported by Chief Wiggem, with some massive

hitting on 35, but tight bowling by the Bangalow cartel kept the total in check.

Connor Redden and Nigel Dornan scored three wickets each.

The chase started briskly, with Brett Macphail hitting 40, and Dan Bensley 28, but Byron cut through the Banga's middle order, before the tail wagged with Connor Redden 41, Hamish Redden

12 and Old Man Redden hitting the winning runs with five balls to spare.

This keeps Bangalow in first place, with the finals approaching.

■ Jameson Hinds is a Bangalow second-grade player.

He took 5 for 35 in their match against Marist Lisimore, taking his season tally to 25 wickets at 11.16.

It's time to join a local netball club!

Ballina Netball Association is gearing up for another exciting season with the LJ Hooker Saturday competition, and registrations are now open for players of all ages and skill levels.

Organisers say, 'Whether you're new to the game or a seasoned player, there's

a place for everyone to get involved, stay active, and enjoy the sport.'

There are three clubs to register with: Lennox Head, Headlands and All Saints.

For young netballers, the 'Net Program' is available for ages 5 to 6.

Key dates for the season

include grading and gala day – April 5, and Round 1 – May 3.

The under 8s to seniors competitions cater for a wide range of players, ensuring everyone has the chance to participate, improve, and enjoy the game. For more information visit www.ballinanetball.com.au.

Open day kicks off 2025 football season

Yari McGauley

The Mullumbimby Brunswick Valley Football Club (MBVFC) open day on February 15 was a huge success, with a great mix of new and returning players, and perfect weather.

With teams likely across men's premiers, champs, and fifth divisions, women's fourths and fifths, plus junior teams in all ages, there's plenty of football happening this season.

As an inclusive, development-focused club, MBVFC welcomes players of all levels, from five-year-olds to first-time seniors. Some teams have started training, and the season officially kicks off at the end of March.

But we need registrations ASAP (by late February) to nominate teams. So if you haven't signed up yet, now's



Players of all levels are welcome to join the Mullumbimby Brunswick Valley Football Club. Photo supplied

the time! Early bird discounts are available until March 1 at mbvfc.com.au/registration.

The club will also take part in the Anzac Cup and McMillan Shield short pre-season comps starting in early March.

A big thank you to every-one who donated old football

boots for our Boots for Kenya collection drive – those boots will be heading to youth girls' teams in Kenya, where they'll be put to good use. The 2025 season is shaping up to be a big one for MBVFC.

■ Yari McGauley is MBVFC secretary.

Point Break BJJ tops regional comp



Point Break Brazilian Jiu Jitsu members. Photo supplied

Rhys Dykes

We are excited to share that our team, Point Break Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, won 'Best Team,' out of 50 plus teams from QLD and NSW, at the 2024 Regional Byron competition, held at the Cavanbah Centre in Ewingsdale.

Here are some of the ways we are helping the local community thrive: we run women's self-defence classes every third Sunday

of the month; kid's classes for ages 4 to 18, focusing on anti-bullying, self-defence, and confidence building; We also offer a recovery program with sauna and ice bath therapies to support overall wellbeing and performance.

The club is located at 62 Stuart St, Mullumbimby.

For more, visit www.pointbreakbjj.com.

■ Rhys Dykes is from Point Break BJJ.



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Eden at Byron

Planting a tree is the easiest way to create a shady garden haven.

You don't need a huge space – plenty of trees will grow in smaller gardens or even in pots.

Crepe Myrtles (*Lagerstroemias*) are gorgeous, with masses of flowers throughout summer. They are deciduous, so you can still enjoy the winter sun.

Ivory Curl trees (*Buckinghamia celsissima*) are local native trees, looking magnificent in full bloom right now. Silk Handkerchief trees (*Maniltoa lenticellata*) are spectacular small to medium trees with cascades of soft pink new growth. They are native to north Queensland but grow well here.

Fruit trees such as mangoes and lychees create productive shady garden hideaways.

Let the friendly Eden at Byron team help you choose the perfect tree for your garden.

140 Bangalow Road, Byron Bay
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www.edenatbyron.com.au



Coorabell Hall Flower Show

Do you love flowers? Be immersed in flowers at the Coorabell Hall Flower Show. Grand champion dahlia growers, Bruce and Stephen Wedd, will be displaying a huge range of their award winning dahlias, and there will be flower displays by local flower growers, including Lilli Forrest, Holly Shiach, Hannah Robertson, Carolene from Pikt Flowers, and Liz Grey.

Lilith Rochas and her Mana Aloha Hula troupe will be doing a hula display at 3pm on the Sunday, and at 4pm all the flowers will be sold.

There will be pizzas, Pocket Curries, a sausage sizzle, coffee, chai, cakes and a licensed bar, and a team of volunteers will be making flower crowns. A great weekend for flower lovers!

Saturday 8 March, 12 – 4pm
 Sunday 9 March, 10am – 4pm

Coorabell Hall,
 565 Coolamon Scenic Drive
 0407 848 054
 Enquiries: coorabellhall@gmail.com.



Unprecedented Demand for Battery Installations

ProSolar is installing home battery systems across the Northern Rivers at a record pace as demand surges. Locals increasingly recognise the importance of storing solar energy for use at night, ensuring energy independence and lower electricity bills. With the NSW battery rebate making storage solutions more affordable than ever, households are seizing the opportunity to maximise their solar investment. ProSolar's expert team is leading the charge, equipping homes with cutting-edge battery technology that enhances energy resilience and sustainability. As power prices fluctuate and grid reliability concerns grow, more residents are turning to solar storage as a smart, long-term

solution. The Northern Rivers community is embracing the future of renewable energy, and ProSolar is proud to be at the forefront of this transition.

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workingwindows1@gmail.com

Transform Your Space with JC Painting



With years of experience in the painting industry, JC Painting is dedicated to delivering high-quality finishes for both residential and commercial projects. Their attention to detail and commitment to excellence ensure a smooth and professional result every time.

Whether you're looking to refresh your home or you're a builder in need of skilled painters for your projects, JC Painting is ready to help. From small touch-ups to large-scale transformations, they take on jobs of all sizes with precision and care. Fully insured and equipped with industry expertise.

If you're looking for professional, reliable painters who take pride in their craft, get in touch today.

jc.painting@outlook.com.au
 0433 526 530

Good Taste

Eateries Guide

BANGALOW



Bangalow Tuckshop

Open: Wed to Sat, noon till late.
43 Byron Street, Bangalow
bangalowtuckshop.com
hello@bangalowtuckshop.com.au
@Bangalowtuckshop

Tuckshop serves up elevated comfort food and familiar favourites featuring locally sourced produce with super salads and seafood, wagyu steak, vegetables cooked on charcoal, and refreshing wines and cocktails that cater to today's foodie culture.

BILLINUDGEL



Rosefina's Mexican

Thursday, Friday, Saturday
Lunch 12pm-2:30pm
Dinner 5pm-8:30pm
Sunday 12pm-8pm
8/10 Wilfred St, Billinudgel
www.rosefinas.place

Rosefina went retro and bought a Club Lounge to eat tacos and drink tequila.

BYRON BAY



Horizon Rooftop

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC 7 DAYS
Horizon Rooftop, Hotel Marvell
4 Marvell Street, Byron Bay
Open Daily | 12pm - late
NO BOOKINGS REQUIRED
Call: 6685 7385
@horizonbyronbay

Welcome to Horizon,
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.

BYRON BAY OYSTER BAR & SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Oyster Bar

4 Marvell St, Byron Bay
OPEN 7 DAYS
Breakfast 7-11:30am
Lunch 12-4pm
Dinner 5-10pm
Book
byronbayoysterbar.com.au

Hotel Marvell's Newest Seafood Destination

OYSTER HOUR

Tuesday to Saturday 5-6pm
Serving \$3 oysters

LIQUOR MERCHANTS

NORTH BYRON HOTEL

North Byron 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

BYRON BAY (continued)



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
@mainstreet_burgerbar

'Make a meal of it'
Add chips and a drink, just \$5.



Three Blue Ducks

The Farm, 11 Ewingsdale Rd.
6190 8966
enquiries@threeblueducks.com
threeblueducks.com/byron
Open 7 days from 7am.
Mon-Thurs: breakfast & lunch
Fri-Sun: breakfast,
lunch & dinner

Delicious new winter dinner menu, live jazz every Sunday arvo, happy hour 3-5pm Friday to Sunday & our famous Sunday roast.

Enjoy a wander in the fields, meet the pigs, and picnic in the sun... there really is something for everyone.



Roca Byron Bay

Open: 6.30am - midnight
14 Lawson St, Byron Bay
(02) 5642 0149
www.rocabyronbay.com.au

Latin Fusion All-Day Dining

Join us in celebrating our opening, with free prosecco or tap beer with the purchase of any ceviche.

Available daily from 2:30pm to 5pm.

LENNOX HEAD



Lennox Pizza

4/74 Ballina St, Lennox Head
Open Mon-Thurs from 3pm
Fri-Sun from 12pm
Online pick up orders available daily 12pm
HAPPY HOUR: 3pm-5 pm daily

Views, Brews, Cocktails, Beats, and Eats!

Live Music Friday, Sunday.

Bookings essential.

Head to lennoxpizza.com

Follow on Insta: @lennoxpizza

MULLUMBIMBY



The Empire

20 Burringbar St, Mullum
6684 2306
Open for brunch and lunch,
Mon-Fri 8am-3:30pm
Sat & Sun 8am-2pm
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



Celebrations Cakes by Liz Jackson

lizzijackson@gmail.com
0414 895 441

GLUTEN FREE AND SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS CATERED FOR.



Harvest Festival will be bigger than ever

It's going to be the biggest Harvest Festival yet, and it's about to launch for 2025.

Sporting a new month-long format across the month of May 2025, over four weekends Northern Rivers Food, the organisers of the festival, will shine the spotlight on a different sub-region of the Northern Rivers - giving its farmers, producers and restaurants a chance to shine:

- 3-4 May: Byron and Ballina
- 10-11 May: Lismore, Kyogle and Richmond Valley
- 17-18 May: The Tweed
- 24-25 May: The Clarence

Each weekend will feature a two-day Harvest Trail, an under-cover producers' hub (based on the rip-roaring success of last year's Bangalow-based hub) and a long table community lunch or dinner.

The dedicated website (harvestfestival.org.au) will launch soon, offering loads of information for festival goers, plus competitions and online ticketing. Stay tuned for more information.



Peppers, chillies and capsicums are in season

Victoria Cosford

Out on our balcony the Bishops Crowns are flourishing, yellow flowers opening from buds promising an endless supply. So-called because of their resemblance to – well, bishops' crowns (other names are Jokers Hats and Christmas Bells), they are a type of chilli which, once red, can be extremely spicy. So far, mine remain obstinately green so shall stay on their vine until the colour changes. They were a gift from Mad Mountain, whose stall bears an assortment of chilli seedlings in an assortment of heat levels.

It's very much the season for chillies, capsicums and peppers. Botanically berries, they're members of the nightshade family, native to South and Central America. At Jumping Red Ant you'll find bulbous glossy capsicums in red, yellow, green, orange, sometimes black, along with bullhorn peppers in red and yellow and green-black, elongated and perfect for stuffing and serving as antipasti.

But I love stuffing capsicums and serving them as a main, especially this vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free dish; Stuffed Baked Capsicums. Start by soaking 250g of Arborio rice in cold water for two hours, then drain. Toast 50g of pinenuts and place

in a large bowl with 40g currants, one cup chopped parsley, mint and dill and 1tbs dried mint. In a frypan cook one finely-diced onion in olive oil till translucent,

add 2tbs tomato paste, cook for a minute then add a 440g tin of crushed tomatoes and simmer for five minutes. Season and add to the other ingredients along with the drained rice. Cut the tops off five red capsicum and hollow out, reserving the 'lids'. Arrange in a high-sided oven tray and spoon in the rice mixture three-quarters full. Heat 400ml vegetable stock, add the juice of two lemons and 6tbs EV olive oil and pour into each capsicum. Cover with baking paper then alfoil, wrap tightly, and bake at 180C for 30 minutes. Remove paper and foil and bake another 20 minutes. Serve with a dollop of garlicky Greek yoghurt alongside.

■ Jumping Red Ant are at New Brighton Farmers Market every Tuesday from 8am to 11am and at Mullumbimby Farmers Market every Friday from 7am to 11am.

■ Mad Mountain are at New Brighton Farmers Market every Tuesday from 8am to 11am.



Peppers: enticing, delicious and in season.

New gourmet grocery store opens its doors in Byron



Monica and Mathew Cassidy sharing the food they love.

It was a love of good food and speciality retail that inspired Monica and Mathew Cassidy to open their new gourmet grocery, stocked with the best in locally-sourced goods, and award-winning and distinctive regional and international finds in one curated space.

Mathew is a third-generation local who grew up in hospitality, while Monica says her love of food stems from her Italian and Peruvian heritage and its foods which she loves to share. The store's main goal is creating a space where a passion for cooking, entertaining, and a love of the small shopping experience can come together, making it the perfect spot for locals and visitors alike.

A charming little store, located on the ground floor of the Mercato complex,

Byron Bay Providore is both a supporter of the region's exceptional local merchants and dedicated to bringing the best-of-the-best from elsewhere – with a continuing expansion of products. They stock quality ingredients, ready-made meals, award-winning cheeses, sauces, salumi and sweet treats and pastas from Australia and Italy.

With exclusives such as award-winning brownies, sauces, olives and oils, shelf items are designed to complement each other to make an easy shopping experience with options for gluten-free, dairy-free, organic, and non-seed oil products as well.

And coming mid-March, you'll be able to dine in, get take-away coffee, along with sweet treats and some light savoury fare. Outside

will be a dog-friendly space with free pup cups while indoors offers an air-conditioned, or heated, space for a relaxing cosy meeting spot. The addition of coffee will bring about a space where people can rest and recharge.

'Our store's essence is based on attention to detail, and a love of the small shopping experience, with our space and products reflecting this. It is a combination of our favourite gourmet grocery items, merchandised with beautiful care. We hope to make everyone feel welcome and excited about food and help them find that special something,' say Mathew and Monica.

■ Byron Bay Providore is open 10am till 5pm Monday to Friday, till 4:30pm Saturday and 1pm Sunday.

Bimbi
COFFEE SHOP

Open 6am – 12pm
Monday – Saturday
Shop 6/108 Stuart Street
Mullumbimby.
@bimbi_coffee_shop
ALLPRESS ESPRESSO

BYRON BAY
PROVIDORE

FINE FOODS
MEATS CHEESES

Truly the Bay's best selection of award-winning local & international speciality foods.

10am – 4:30pm Mon – Sat
10am – 1pm Sun

Ground Floor, 110 – 114 Jonson Street, Byron Bay

@byronbayprovidore

Authentic Vietnamese cuisine

Open 7 days 11:30am – 8:00pm.

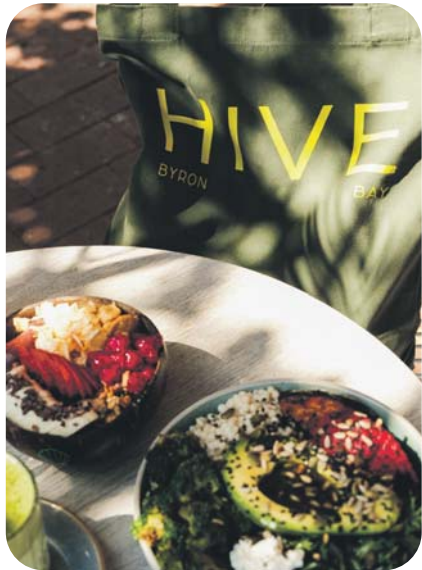
72a Burringbar Street, Mullumbimby.

4/16 The Terrace, Brunswick Heads.

pinklotusfood.com.au
@pinklotuseatery

Pink Lotus
VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT

BYRON ARTS & INDUSTRY ESTATE



1. HIVE BYRON BAY

Discover the buzz at Hive Byron Bay! This vibrant precinct is your go-to for delicious food, unique drinks, and exciting activities. Whether you're grabbing a coffee before work, meeting colleagues for lunch, or unwinding after hours, Hive has it all. With trendy spots and new eateries opening soon, there's always something fresh to explore. Experience Hive Byron Bay today!

92 Centennial Circuit
hivebyronbay.com.au



2. McTAVISH SURFBOARDS

McTavish is the ultimate destination for all things surf. Grab a pre- or post-surf coffee and browse the range of handcrafted surfboards (all made on-site in the factory behind the showroom), surf accessories and apparel, or borrow a demo board for the weekend.

Surfboard Factory, Surf Shop & Cafe
91 Centennial Circuit
www.mctavish.com.au
@mctavishsurf



3. NORTH BYRON HOTEL

North Byron Hotel is a meeting place for friends and families to get together and indulge in sustainable Northern Rivers produce, and local musical talents. Showcasing the best of the rainbow region, the sun-drenched garden welcomes locals and holidaymakers for restaurant quality food at pub prices. Check out the website for a jam-packed events calendar, fit for the whole family.

61 Bayshore Drive
02 6685 6500
www.northbyronhotel.com.au



4. MR VINTAGE

How you dress is representative of your personality. You are unique, one in 7 billion, born out of the death of a star.

Life's too short to wear boring clothes. Recycled and vintage clothing sourced from around the world.

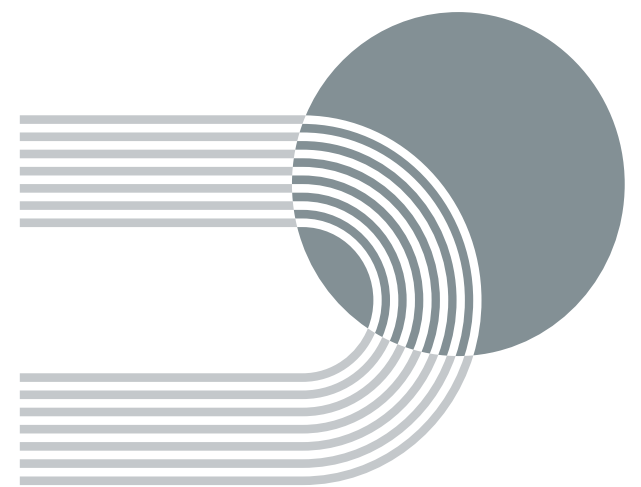
3/6 Centennial Circuit
02 6680 8640
@mrvintageaustralia



5. BYRON BAY CAMPING AND DISPOSALS

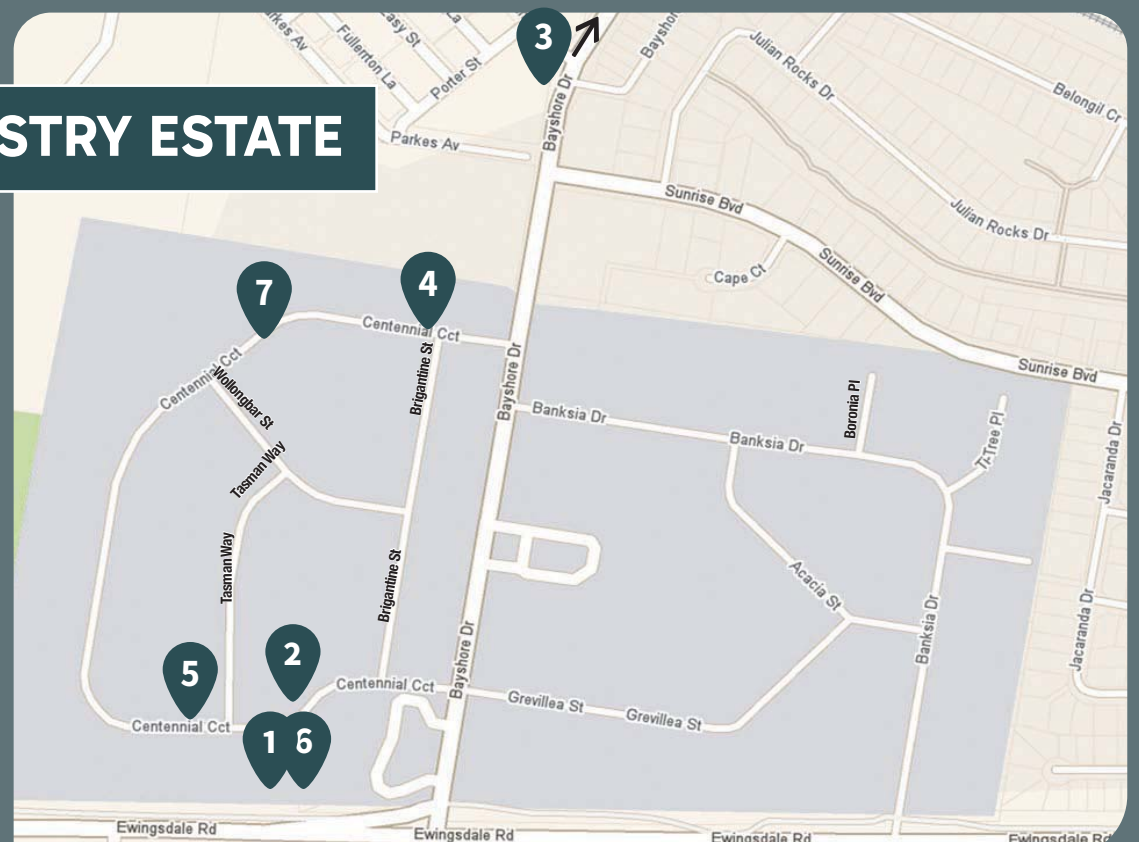
Make the most of these beautiful summer days for all those fun outdoor activities. Byron Bay Camping and Disposals have most of your bait and tackle needs, with brands in store like Okuma, Zman, Halco, Platypus and Jaz lures. They also have a huge range of snorkelling and spearfishing gear for those who prefer spending their time in the water.

1/1 Tasman Way Byron bay.
www.byron-camping.com.au
0439 212 153



BYRON ARTS & INDUSTRY ESTATE

Creative, small-batch, hand-made, state-of-the-art, artisan, innovative, ethical, imaginative, hyper-local, leading-edge, quality, EXPLORE premium, master, handcrafted, accomplished, cutting edge, organic, designer, eclectic DISCOVER ingenious, beautiful, unique, sensational, avant-garde, original, visionary, inspirational, expert, brilliant, gifted, ahead of the curve. YOU wonderful, compelling, THERE experiencing, witnessing, engaging. NOW.



HABITAT PRECINCT



6. PARADISE GOLF

Paradise Golf is Byron Bay's ultimate indoor virtual golf bar, where fun meets the fairway! Experience top-tier simulators, play world-class courses, and perfect your swing – rain or shine. With a laid-back vibe, curated cocktails and delicious locally-made pizza, it's the perfect spot for golfers and non-golfers alike. Swing into Paradise Golf and make every shot a hole-in-one!

88-94 Centennial Circuit
www.paradisegolf.com.au



HABITAT PRECINCT

A cleverly-designed village where people live, work and play, all in one place, combining old-school Byron (community, creativity) with new thinking (live+work spaces, car sharing) and good times (food, shops) to create a little oasis for locals and visitors alike.



7. BODHI LIVING

Bodhi Living showcases a carefully curated collection of furniture, homewares, rugs and lighting, sourced both locally and globally. They have introduced a range of collections designed in-house, including sofas, dining tables and seating using natural and sustainable materials such as rattan and wood. The brand encapsulates the freedom of spirit and the soul of the individual as represented through their home.

www.bodhiliving.com.au
 IG @bodhi.living
 Shop 1/18 Centennial Circuit



8. BYRON FAMILY LAW

Byron Family Law is a boutique family law firm established in Byron Bay. Through collaborative and resolution-focused practices, they support clients to separate more kindly and to rebuild following divorce or separation. They work in collaboration with local counsellors, conveyancers, accountants, mediators, and health and wellness professionals to support you and your family to not only survive but thrive following a separation.

18 Parkes Avenue
 02 6687 2774
www.byronfamilylaw.com.au



9. RICHARDSON MURRAY LAW

Practicing exclusively in family law, Richardson Murray offers legal advice and guidance in matters of separation, divorce, parenting arrangements and property settlements. With considerable experience in all matters of relationship breakdown, including domestic and family violence, Richardson Murray are known for their compassionate approach and commitment. Their dedicated team aims to deliver the best possible outcomes for clients.

42 Parkes Avenue
www.richardson-murray.law



10. ARCAA

Visit Arcaa to discover the latest collection of timeless and versatile pieces, made from sustainable, lightweight fibres of organic cotton and natural linen. The boutique also offers a curated selection of accessories, jewellery, gifts and lifestyle products.

Open Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm and Sat, 9am-3pm, or shop anytime by visiting the online store.

@arcaa_movement
 Shop 10, 1 Porter Street, Byron Bay NSW 2481 Habitat Retail & Lifestyle Precinct
arcaamovement.co



11. SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY BYRON BAY

Driven by quality buyers, extensive reach, and a fresh approach, Sotheby's International Realty Byron Bay team of experienced agents stand as the market leader. Whether maximising the value of your property or helping you find your next home, the Sotheby's team offer personalised service and expert guidance, delivering a seamless experience and exceptional results throughout your real estate journey.

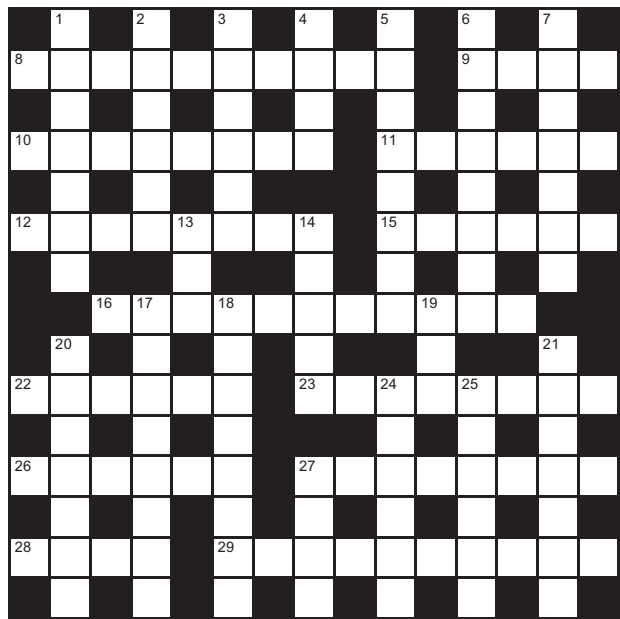
37-38/1 Porter Street
 02 6610 9892
byronbaysir.com.au



HABITAT

Get out of town! Visit Habitat where you can shop, eat, drink and recharge, all in one place. They've carefully curated every flagship store, independent boutique and fashion label, so you can find the iconic style you'd expect from Byron, hassle-free.

Plus, they've got all your favourite health and wellness studios and good food galore.



Cryptic Clues

ACROSS

- 8. Don't fall for revealing style of clothing (3-7)
- 9. Socially acceptable callback from Balinese tourist town (4)
- 10. Projected to have caught the eye (5,3)
- 11. Italian men seconds away - pay no heed (6)
- 12. Clue man sorted out about end of Democrats is America personified (5,3)
- 15. Cup holder of brass beginning to rust (6)
- 16. Good shots spring into movement (6,5)
- 22. Scots guide has a breather every other time (6)
- 23. PM, an idiot, hugs swinging gentleman (8)
- 26. Tag line a big hit in cricket article (6)
- 27. Japanese dictators store mid-Eastern firearms (8)
- 28. Legendary ship with freight Charlie dumped (4)
- 29. Belonging to a group of - for example - arms, legs and a joint (10)

DOWN

- 1. Charles is one who imbibes exotic tea with PM (7)
- 2. Merchants finally put on fish at promenade (6)
- 3. Othello perhaps, spinning, involved in falsehoods - sweeping ones! (6)
- 4. Wager on boat (4)
- 5. String was twisted to make a tool (8)
- 6. Spin lies to PM (8)
- 7. Fourth part of house (7)
- 13. Roger, deprived of rights, turned to one of Freud's ideas (3)
- 14. She runs a very old business, whichever way you look at it (5)
- 17. Belief system, in part mostly deception (8)
- 18. Entry code to ensure changes, including Abbott's earliest introduction to ministry (8)
- 19. Listener sacks her, but it's still the Listener (3)
- 20. Government leader at forty-nine, then fat PM (7)
- 21. Foolishly, Eliot accepts novice's first article about part of foot (7)
- 24. Top tradesperson has a jumper to iron before Rudd's initiation (6)
- 25. Just joking at pronunciation of swallow (6)
- 27. Mouse battered and drained of energy by wrestling (4)

Quick Clues

ACROSS

- 8. Transparent; easily understood (3-7)
- 9. Balinese town popular with tourists (4)
- 10. Was noticeably different (5,3)
- 11. Pay no attention to (6)
- 12. Personification of the US government (5,3)
- 15. Small dish for a teacup (6)
- 16. Gradual build-up of public opinion (6,5)
- 22. Scottish hunting or fishing attendant (6)
- 23. Former Australian prime minister (8)
- 26. Catchy phrase used in advertising (6)
- 27. Firearms with short barrels (8)
- 28. Ancient Greek mythological ship (4)
- 29. Status of belonging to an organisation (10)

DOWN

- 1. Australia's 24th prime minister (7)
- 2. Leisurely walk (6)
- 3. Cleaning tools with long handles (6)
- 4. Flat-bottomed boat propelled by a pole (4)
- 5. Power tool for cutting trees (8)
- 6. Australia's 29th prime minister (8)
- 7. One-fourth of something (7)
- 13. Sense of self-importance (3)
- 14. Polite form of address for a woman (5)
- 17. System of spiritual beliefs and practices (8)
- 18. Online identity for accessing accounts (8)
- 19. Organ for hearing (3)
- 20. Australia's 27th prime minister (7)
- 21. Protective covering on end of toe (7)
- 24. Worker who repairs and installs roofs (6)
- 25. Take in food or drink (6)
- 27. Japanese form of wrestling (4)

Last week's solution #43



It's All About Connection

Mandy Nolan

I sometimes wonder how to make life simpler.

I look at the devices, meant to make our lives more convenient, but realise what a slave I've become to them. They're great for efficiency but they are also time wasters. I spend a lot of time looking for my phone.

It's a good part of most people's day. The moment of panic when you suddenly go, 'I can't find my phone.' It's like leaving your baby in a supermarket. There's a sense of white-knuckle terror. And then you realise. It's in your bag. The phone. Not the baby.

That never happened with the rotary phone (or the rotary baby). You never lost it. It was attached to a cord and plugged to the wall. In some cases it was fixed to the wall. It was inconceivable that you'd take your phone out. People popped in unannounced when they visited and directions were something committed to memory, not Google Maps. It made life a lot less convenient but a hell of a lot less stressful.

I tell my kids about the dark ages, when dogs and phones were kept at home. God forbid you ever had a personal call in your family home. Everyone was witness to the drawn out, 'you hang up', 'no you hang up', 'you hang up' phone-play of young lovers. Generally my mum would hit the disconnect. 'I hung up'.

We didn't have a phone in our home until I was about 12. We couldn't afford it. If we wanted to make a call we had to go next door and ask the neighbours if we could use their phone. How did we even survive? It's like an episode of *Alone*, except even they get to use their phone to tap out.

Phones in country Queensland went through an operator. My friend's mum Maureen was on the switchboard. You'd turn a dial; it rang the switch, and you'd ask Maureen to put you through to '29'. That was my grandmother's number. In my town, people had two numerals, sometimes three. It was a lot like using two cans and a string. (We couldn't afford that tech either).



MANDY NOLAN'S SOAPBOX



Here's an idea for mental health. Maybe for every hour we spend on the phone we spend an hour in nature. Now that's a good connection.

When we got a phone I thought it was the most exciting day of my life. I loved putting my fingers in the round holes of the dial and just letting them slip all the way around. I loved the recall of the dial. I realised when we got a phone I didn't know anyone to call. Our phone rang about once a week. It was a metallic throb. The excitement was unbelievable. I'd say, 'Hello, Mandy Nolan speaking, can I help you?' It was never for me.

Mobile phones were phone booths. And they were everywhere. Now only drug dealers use them. After I left home - I'd grab a bunch of 20 cent coins and once a week I'd call my mum for proof of life. I text my kids daily. If they don't answer I start to fret. I don't know how our parents

coped with the anxiety of waiting for the Sunday call.

The idea of phones being more than speaking devices was not even on the radar. They weren't cameras. Cameras took 24 or 36 photos and you took the film to a chemist, and if you were lucky, at least three would be in focus and it would cost you \$14.99 or some ridiculous price. And you certainly didn't send dick pics. Occasionally you'd get a heavy breather. We had a heavy breather who used to call one of my first all-girl sharehouses. Turns out it wasn't a sex pest. It was an asthmatic with the wrong number. Or as he liked to call himself, the landlord.

Apparently we spend an average of four hours and 37 minutes every day on the phone. Which is approximately one day per week. Six days per month. In one year, that's 70 days on, or looking at, the phone.

Here's an idea for mental health. Maybe for every hour we spend on the phone we spend an hour in nature. Now that's a good connection.

■ Mandy Nolan's Soapbox column has appeared in *The Echo* for almost 23 years. The personal and the political often meet here; she's also been the Greens federal candidate since before the last federal election. *The Echo's* coverage of political issues will remain as comprehensive and fair as it has ever been, outside this opinion column which, as always, contains Mandy's personal opinions only.

STARS BY LILITH

The celestial quintet of the sun, Mercury, Saturn, Neptune and Friday's new moon in sensitive, empathetic Pisces opens a portal to extrasensory perception, intuitive flashes and psychic downloads, so stay tuned...



PISCES THE FISH

ARIES: Venus in your sign asks if you know how lovable you are, because the galactic glamazon wants to make sure you do. As this week's planetary energies pull you inward for reflection and correction of unkind self-talk, look for positive ways of morphing frustration and irritation into user-friendly responses.

TAURUS: This is a peak week for forming supportive alliances, so stay open to exploring different perspectives. Keep your eyes open for people's hidden potential. Go ahead and ask the not-so-obvious questions which might reveal synergies, compatibilities and skills you'd never have suspected.

GEMINI: This week could be the year's most valuable for tapping into your own intuitive wisdom. So try to find at least a few moments each day to go somewhere quiet, ditch the devices, tune out the 3D world, be still and listen. Whatever drops into your mind will be worth taking note of.

CANCER: With ardent, assertive Mars rocketing out of retrograde to energise your sign, motivation and drive are likely to be high this week. The only caution for Cancerians is to check a tendency to dwell too long on the past, especially around 28 February's super-sensitive new moon.

LEO: There's no 'I' in team. If you've been caught in a tangled web with a friend or colleague, this week's compassionate vibes support mending fences. Staying open to various viewpoints and exploring a broader approach can help resolve conflicts, and bring about the peace of mind you need.

VIRGO: As your celestial GPS, the messenger planet Mercury, cranks up the volume on everyone's intuition. Yours will be buzzing, especially after dark and around water, so make some quiet time to relax the mind and tune into receiving insights. Before sleep, try inviting messages from your dreams.

LIBRA: This week's balancing act is a particularly intricate one for Librans: it's to align the passionate push and creative fire of Venus, with the zodiac's season of feeling and healing. Best approach? Try sitting with uncomfortable emotions, identifying your triggers and finding the most graceful way of expressing them.

SCORPIO: Group dynamics may have more stop/start flux than you expected this week. But as windows of opportunity open, close and reopen, seesawing between forward thrust and aggravating gridlock, your mission is to move through mischief, mishaps and uncomfortable synchronicities to find whatever gold's sparkling in the garbage.

SAGITTARIUS: There couldn't be more planetary support available right now than Jupiter making current choices less about expectations, and more about enjoying partnerships. This week brings your chance to be the calm in the storm: to shine as truce-maker and conflict-breaker as well as the zodiac's cocktail shaker.

CAPRICORN: The current planetary power charge in your sector of communication and community could see you networking and trading ideas about giving back. But with Venus and Mercury approaching retrograde in your foundational zone, don't neglect home, family and personal life. Is it necessary to start setting some boundaries?

AQUARIUS: This week's concentration of celestial energetics highlight Aquarians' sector of values and financial security, but don't get too over-focused on the material world, because there's plenty of astral magic at work. Take notice of your own soul wisdom even if doesn't quite make sense - because it will.

PISCES: This year's new moon, in Pisces, on February 28, forms a fabulous planetary quintet in your sign which offers a marvelous start to your new solar cycle. Its invitation? To let go of people-pleasing patterns and step into your own unique style of leadership, so tune in for illuminating clues about how to proceed.



seven days of entertainment

Eclectic Selection

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK



✿ **Shmoné** is a multi-instrumentalist and singer-songwriter – his musical inspiration is drawn from the people and places on his journey, and is largely reflected in his always-evolving and captivating performances. Conveniently kosher and generously groovy, it is a show not to be missed!

Wednesday from 7.30pm at the Beach Hotel, Byron Bay. Free show.



✿ **Estampa** is a Brisbane-based quartet that blends elements of world, folk, and jazz music. Their performances evoke the charm of Parisian streets, the passion of South American culture, and the haunting beauty of Swedish folk music.

Sunday from 2pm at Lismore City Bowlo. Tickets from \$15 at the door.



✿ **BoomChild** is a core collective composed of lead vocalists Charbel and Rico, with producers Sumatra. Together they've joined forces to captivate Australian ears with the release of 'Every Little Thing'. This single is the official introduction of BoomChild to the music industry.

Thursday from 8pm at the Beach Hotel, Byron Bay. Free show.

✿ **Hashimoto's Cactus:** their music is said to be hatched from a core of simple, yet complex, melody and rhythm. Band member, **Stephen Lovelight**, we're told, was the mushroom that ate a misty night and spewed out the stars and dark matter that begat **Michael DiCecco**, the finger-licking man on drums, and **Hans Lovejoy**, the super-hands behind the bottom end of this weird foetus.

Friday from 10pm at The Northern, Byron Bay. Free show.



HASHIMOTO'S CACTUS



✿ Created by the **Bowerbird Collective**, and inspired by leading ornithologist Tim Low's award-winning book, *Where Song Began* is a musical celebration of Australia's birds and how they shaped the world. The concert encourages the audience to contemplate the origin of birdsong and the importance of Australia's rich and colourful bird history.

Saturday at 3pm at the Byron Theatre. Tickets from \$20 at byroncentre.com.au.

✿ Hosted by **Mandy Nolan, RAW Comedy** gives beginner comics the spotlight – it's where comedy stars are born. The night is hysterical, exciting, unexpected. National winners have come through RAW's heat doors a few times – could this be the heat where our next comedy luminary is revealed?

Monday from 7pm at Mullum Ex Services Club. Tickets \$20 from mandynolan.com.au.



✿ **Steve Banks** and the fabulous **Sidemen** return to the Brunswick Picture House spotlighting **Rick Fenn** – regulars **Jeff Burstin** and **Mike Mills** are back, with Sidemen **Brendan St Ledger** and **Pete Wilkins**. Steve's out front for a rockin' program of historic hits, some deep, and a few favourites – bring your dancing shoes!

Friday from 7pm at the Brunswick Picture House. Tickets from \$46 at brunswickpicturehouse.com.



We are stronger together

Resilient Lismore is hosting a community gathering on **Saturday from 3.30pm to 7pm**, and are inviting the whole community to spend a few hours listening to good music, letting the kids play, and enjoying some food together.

Music includes the **All in a Chord Choir** led by **Imogen Wolf**, soulful harmonies by **Tapestry Road** and grooves by the popular **Lismore Supper Club Soul Band**.

People can: colour the paths with 'The Chalkies'; decorate flags which will be joined together in community bunting; play with Roundabout Street Theatre and other games; and partake in some free food.

Executive Director of Resilient Lismore, Elly Bird, says it's been three years since the floods and landslides that changed our community. 'We know for some folks it's helpful to spend time with others as we move past that milestone. We are very grateful to our major event sponsors Southern Cross University and NORCO, and to sponsors Social Futures and Simply Clean. Several local organisations are contributing to the event; it's another way they each continue to support the community more broadly.'

Stronger Together – A Community Gathering from 3.30pm on Saturday at the Lismore Quad. For more info and to RSVP, please go to: resilientlismore.org.au/event/stronger-together.

nudge nudge Wink wink
 PARTY WITH A CONSCIENCE
 FEATURING DJS
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Music with meaning

Cunning Stunts invites you to an exciting March edition of **Nudge Nudge Wink Wink**, showcasing an electrifying mix of local talent. This stellar DJ line-up will set the dance floor on fire!

DJ Pob is a Northern Rivers icon and internationally-recognised DJ, bringing his signature blend of house and tech-infused beats back to the Shed. Known for his inventive mixing style and deep passion for the craft, he creates immersive soundscapes that captivate.

DJ Sahaja is known for her deep, soulful, and genre-blending sets. Her musical foundation is rooted in nu-global, organic house, tribal rhythms, and afro beats – all the while staying true to her original love of disco, house, and funk.

Esteemed resident DJs, **Lord Sut** and **Dale Stephen** will also be on board. As always, this event is more than just a party – it's a celebration of music, community, and philanthropy, with every beat making a meaningful impact.

This March and April, Nudge Nudge Wink Wink is raising funds for **Queer Family**, a Northern Rivers-based not-for-profit dedicated to reducing social isolation and improving mental wellbeing for LGBTQ+ individuals and allies.

Nudge Nudge Wink Wink is on Saturday from 4pm – this is a ticketed 18+ event at The Billinudgel Hotel.

Lucky last bird tickets are available here: https://bit.ly/Tickets_Nudge_March1.



AN EVENING WITH

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The magic of cinema in Mullum

Bringing the magic of cinema from Australia and the world to Mullumbimby, **Flickerfest** and iQ Inc are back for their 28th year, kicking off their three-day festival of short films at the **Mullumbimby Civic Hall**.

With just over 40 incredible short films to share, handpicked from a record 3,500 entries received for Flickerfest's Oscar and BAFTA-qualifying short film festival, the festival promises to delight audiences with the most creative, inspiring and entertaining shorts on offer, including Oscar nominees and award-winners, screening alongside exciting, fresh local talent.

On **Thursday** raise a glass to 28 years of Flickerfest in the Northern Rivers at the festival's **opening night party** with delicious craft beer, organic wine and organic juices, sumptuous snacks from Yaman and tunes from **Diego Zaragoza and friends**.

Following at **8pm**, Flickerfest will take you on a trip across the world from Sweden to Ireland, China, Belgium and beyond, including the delightful Belgian film *Beautiful Men*, hot off its nomination for the upcoming Oscars.

On **Friday at 8pm**, Australian films shine, honoring our unique identity and culture.

Catch: the stunning *Marcia And The Shark*, winner of **Best Australian Film** at Flickerfest 2025; heartwarming and delightful *The Fix-It-Man And Fix-It-Woman*, set in the bright lights of Alice Springs, from a talented group of Yarrenty Arterre Town Camp artists, winner of **Best Australian Animation** at Flickerfest 2025; and meet Lismore-born-and-raised director **Naomi Fryer**, whose moving film *The Sax* will also feature, fresh from its Flickerfest world premiere.

On **Saturday at 2pm** join Flickerfest for a **free workshop** on the journey from shorts to features and go behind-the-scenes with award-winning Flickerfest alumni, director **Nick Waterman**, whose recent first feature *How To Make Gravy*, honours the famous Paul Kelly song.

At **4pm**, Flickerfest and iQ Inc will shine the spotlight on a host of local talent at the 20th year of **Byron All Shorts Competition**, as 11 incredible Northern Rivers short films roll out on the big screen, celebrating our local stories. Don't miss fun surf film *Vibrations*, moving drama *Hold Steady*, heartwarming short doco *Old Man And His Dogs*, and the colourful *The Yesmads*, about the subculture of van-living – and meet the filmmakers.

On **Saturday at 8pm**, don't miss the **Short Laughs** comedy program – laugh out loud at the delicious Australian black-comedy *Candy Bar* from director Nash Edgerton (*Mr Inbetween*), written by, and starring, award-winning actor **Damon Herriman**; and the highly humorous Dutch film *Nelson the Piglet*, about a family whose miniature pig becomes the talk of the town, winner of the Jury Prize for **Best Short Documentary** at Flickerfest 2025.

Flickerfest runs from Thursday to Saturday. For the full Flickerfest Mullumbimby and Byron All Shorts program and tickets go to: www.iQ.org.au.



seven days of entertainment

GIG GUIDE

It's **FREE** to list your gigs in the gig guide.
gigs@echo.net.au w: echo.net.au/gig-guide



WEDNESDAY 26

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **DAMIEN COOPER**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 4.30PM **INO PIO + SHMONÉ**
- NORTH BYRON HOTEL 1.30PM **DJ NAT WHITE**
- TREEHOUSE, BYRON BAY, 5PM **ANIMAL VENTURA**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6PM **JOCK BARNES DUO + DAN HANNAFORD**
- CLUB PARADISO, BYRON BAY, 7PM **HENRY WEST**
- BANGALOW BOWLO 7.30PM **BANGALOW BRACKETS' OPEN MIC SESSION**
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 6PM **MATT BUGGY**
- THE PADDOCK PROJECT, MULLUMBIMBY, 4PM **CURRY AND JAM**

THURSDAY 27

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **ANIMAL VENTURA**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 8PM **BOOMCHILD**
- NORTH BYRON HOTEL 2PM **DJ GYOM DIOP**
- CLUB PARADISO, BYRON BAY, 7PM **GARIUS, ZAC & JOE, DINGO BALEARICO & FRUMOSUL**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 8PM **BEAST MACHINE, VOLA INERTIA & NU EXIT**
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 6PM **HERMANOS GUTIÉRREZ**
- BRUNSWICK HEADS PICTURE HOUSE 7PM **NURSE GEORGIE CARROLL**
- MULLUMBIMBY CIVIC HALL 7PM **FLICKERFEST OPENING NIGHT PARTY + SCREENING: BEST OF INTERNATIONAL SHORTS PROGRAMME.**
- LENNOX HOTEL 8PM **JAM NIGHT**
- BALLINA RSL LEVEL ONE, 7PM **THE BIG GIG COMEDY NIGHT – FEAT. LEWIS GARNHAM + PAUL MCMAHON – MC MANDY NOLAN,**
- ELTHAM HOTEL 6PM **BLUEGRASS JAM, 7PM BONNY LIGHT HORSEMAN**

- LISMORE CITY BOWLO 7PM **THE SUPPER CLUB SOUL BAND**
- THE CITADEL, MURWILLUMBAH, 7PM **THE BROTHER BROTHERS TOUR**

FRIDAY 28

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **AMONG THE RESTLESS**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM **GUY J, PATRICE BÄUMEL & KHEN**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 6.30PM **MATTY ROGERS + HASHIMOTOS CACTUS**
- CLUB PARADISO, BYRON BAY, 7PM **PUMAH, AFRODISEA & TABS BROTHERS, 7PM LEON DREAM, HOUSE PLANT & YETI**
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 6PM **HERMANOS GUTIÉRREZ**
- BRUNSWICK HEADS PICTURE HOUSE 7PM **STEVE BANKS AND THE SIDEMEN**
- WANDANA BREWING CO., MULLUMBIMBY, 4PM **DJ AFRODESIA**
- MIDDLE PUB, MULLUMBIMBY, 8PM **KRAPEOKEEE WITH JESS**
- MULLUMBIMBY CIVIC HALL 8PM **FLICKERFEST – BEST OF AUSTRALIAN SHORTS**
- CLUB LENNOX 7PM **SARAH GRANT**
- BALLINA RSL BOARDWALK 6PM **CARLY & ROO**
- MURWILLUMBAH SERVICES CLUB 6.30PM **PHIL & TILLEY**
- POTTSVILLE BEACH SPORTS CLUB 6PM **THE COMPLAINERS**
- KINGSCLIFF BEACH BOWLS 6PM **ADAM BROWN**
- SALTBAR, KINGSCLIFF, 6PM **LEIGH JAMES**

SATURDAY 1

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **THE WHISKEYS**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 10PM **DAFT PUNK TRIBUTE SHOW**
- BYRON THEATRE 3PM **BOWERBIRD COLLECTIVE**
- THE NORTHERN, BYRON BAY, 8PM **PANDAMIC**
- BANGALOW HOTEL 4PM **ELLA JONES**

- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 4PM **CARNAVALE**
- WANDANA BREWING CO., MULLUMBIMBY, 4PM **TUFFTONE SOUNDSYSTEM**
- MULLUMBIMBY CIVIC HALL 4PM **BYRON ALL SHORTS, 8PM FLICKERFEST – SHORT LAUGHS COMEDY**
- BILLINUDGEL HOTEL 4PM **NUDGE NUDGE WINK WINK – DJS POB, SAHAJA, DALE STEPHEN & LORD SUT**
- AUSTRALIAN HOTEL, BALLINA, 9PM **DJ DAVI**
- THE QUAD, LISMORE, 3.30PM **TAPESTRY ROAD, LISMORE SUPPER CLUB SOUL BAND AND THE ALL IN A CHORD CHOIR.**
- LISMORE WORKERS CLUB 5PM **JON J BRADLEY**
- MURWILLUMBAH SERVICES CLUB 6PM **STOCKADE**
- KINGSCLIFF BEACH BOWLS 6PM **GREER SULLIVAN**
- SALTBAR, KINGSCLIFF, 6PM **KYLE LIONHART**

SUNDAY 2

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **THE MAJESTIC NIGHTS**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 4.30PM **THE FILTHY ANIMALS**
- TREEHOUSE, BYRON BAY, 2PM **LUKE BENNETT**
- YULLI'S, BYRON BAY, 3PM **YULLI'S OPEN MIC**
- BANGALOW HOTEL 4PM **LOKI HOUGH**
- HOTEL BRUNSWICK 4PM **SUB-TRIBE**
- MIDDLE PUB, MULLUMBIMBY, 3PM **OPEN MIC**
- WANDANA BREWING CO., MULLUMBIMBY, 3PM **DJ DIOP**
- BILLINUDGEL HOTEL 1PM **RUBY PHILLIPS**
- LENNOX PIZZA **LUKE YEAMAN**
- LENNOX HOTEL 3PM **GUY KACHEL TRIO**
- BALLINA RSL LEVEL ONE 10.30AM **THE BALLINA COUNTRY MUSIC CLUB, BOARDWALK 2.30PM SUNDAY BLUES CLUB SESSIONS FEAT. SOREN CARLBERGG QUARTET + DENNIS WILSON**

- WHARF BAR, BALLINA, 3PM **JB'S BLUES BREAKERS**
- AUSTRALIAN HOTEL, BALLINA, 3PM **THE DUSTIES**
- ELTHAM HOTEL 2.30PM **AZO BELL & THE NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL**
- LISMORE CITY BOWLO 2PM **ESTAMPA**
- TYALGUM HOTEL 1PM **PHANTOM LIMBZ + LIZ NEWMAN**
- CUDGEN SURF CLUB, KINGSCLIFF, 3.30PM **PRESTON**
- SALTBAR, KINGSCLIFF, 6PM **ALISHA TODD**
- KIRRA BEACH HOTEL 3PM **JON J BRADLEY**

MONDAY 3

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **STEPHEN LOVELIGHT**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM **INO PIO**
- BYRON THEATRE 7PM **GANAVYA**
- MULLUMBIMBY EX-SERVICES CLUB 7PM **RAW COMEDY HEAT 2**
- ELTHAM HOTEL 6.30PM **BUCK MEEK + GERMAINE DUNES**

TUESDAY 4

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **ELLA STONE**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM **ALEX TILLEY**
- TWIN TOWNS, TWEED HEADS, THE SHOWROOM 11AM **THE SWELL SISTERS**

WEDNESDAY 5

- RAILWAY HOTEL, BYRON BAY, **SUNSTONE**
- BEACH HOTEL, BYRON BAY, 6PM **JASON DELPHIN**
- TREEHOUSE, BYRON BAY, 5PM **JOSH LEE HAMILTON**
- BANGALOW BOWLO 7.30PM **BANGALOW BRACKETS OPEN MIC**
- THE PADDOCK PROJECT, MULLUMBIMBY, 4PM **CURRY AND JAM**
- ELTHAM HOTEL **NOT QUITE FOLK JAM**

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SPECIAL SCREENINGS

ACO: THE FOUR SEASONS – A MUSIC FILM (R15) Sun: 1:00PM, Wed: 11:00AM

THE FALL – 4K RESTORATION (M) Mon: 6:00PM

HARD TRUTHS (M) Fri, Sat, Sun: 3:50PM

SPIT (M) Fri, Sat, Sun: 3:10PM

FAMILY FILMS

10 LIVES (G) Daily: 10:50AM

THE LOST TIGER (G) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 10:45AM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 10:45AM, 12:40PM

ALL FILMS

A COMPLETE UNKNOWN (M) Daily: 11:00AM, 3:20PM, 7:00PM

BABYGIRL (M) Daily: 8:10PM

BECOMING LED ZEPPELIN (PG) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 10:50AM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 5:20PM

BRIDGET JONES: MAD ABOUT THE BOY (M) Daily except Mon: 11:15AM, 1:50PM, 3:20PM, 6:00PM, 8:15PM, Mon: 11:15AM, 1:50PM, 3:20PM, 8:15PM

CAPTAIN AMERICA: BRAVE NEW WORLD (M) Daily: 12:50PM, 4:30PM, 8:30PM

CONCLAVE (PG) Daily except Sun: 12:45PM, 8:30PM, Sun: 8:30PM

I'M STILL HERE (M) Daily except Sat: 10:45AM, 1:30PM, 4:15PM, 5:45PM, 7:00PM

IN THE LOST LANDS (M) Daily: 2:00PM, 6:20PM

INSIDE (M) Daily: 4:10PM, 6:00PM

THE BRUTALIST (M) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 11:15AM, 3:15PM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 11:15AM

THE LAST JOURNEY (PG) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 12:30PM, 3:50PM, 6:15PM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 11:00AM, 3:50PM, 6:15PM

THE LAST SHOWGIRL (M) Daily except Wed: 10:50AM, 1:50PM, 8:30PM, Wed: 1:50PM, 8:30PM

THE MONKEY (M) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 3:50PM, 8:30PM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 8:30PM

THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG (M) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 10:45AM, 2:30PM, 7:15PM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 10:45AM, 2:30PM, 7:45PM

WHITE BIRD (M) Daily: 1:20PM, 6:00PM

BALLINA FAIR CINEMAS

A COMPLETE UNKNOWN (M) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 1:20PM, 7:00PM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 12:00PM, 7:00PM

BRIDGET JONES: MAD ABOUT THE BOY (M) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 10:45AM, 2:10PM, 4:20PM, 7:00PM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 10:00AM, 2:10PM, 7:00PM

CAPTAIN AMERICA: BRAVE NEW WORLD (M) Daily: 2:30PM, 4:45PM, 7:10PM

HARD TRUTHS (M) Fri, Sat, Sun: 2:45PM

PADDINGTON IN PERU (PG) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 10:15AM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 10:00AM

SPIT (M) Fri, Sat, Sun: 4:50PM

THE LAST JOURNEY (PG) Daily: 12:30PM, 5:00PM

THE LOST TIGER (G) Thurs, Mon, Tues, Wed: 10:30AM, 12:20PM, Fri, Sat, Sun: 10:10AM, 12:20PM

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF TWEED BYRON LOCAL ABORIGINAL LAND COUNCIL EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING LAND DEALING APPROVAL

DATE: Friday 7th March 2025

TIME: 12.30pm

VENUE: Minjungbal Museum & Cultural Centre, Tweed Heads South

Agenda:

1. Open Meeting & Acknowledgement
2. Apologies
3. Consideration to approve the creation of a Biodiversity Stewardship Site over for Lot 1 DP1218057, being Boyd Street, Cobaki Lakes NSW 2486, by entering into a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)
4. Close Meeting

At this meeting, it is proposed the members will decide whether or not to approve of the land dealing, after being asked to consider the impact of the proposed land dealing on the cultural and heritage significance of the land to Aboriginal persons.

All enquiries should be directed to Tweed Byron LALC's office during business hours.

Authorised: Tweed Byron LALC Chairperson

Contact: 07 5536 1763



Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre
Connecting the Byron Shire Community

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Kitchen Hands -
- Retail Assistants -
- Drivers and Co-driver -
- Community Support Assistants -

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In the Ballina Presbyterian Hall



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AGMs

PERIWINKLE COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL AGM
26th February 6:30pm –7:30pm
5 Sunrise Blvd, Byron Bay

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10am Osho Discourse
12md Osho Dance meditation
2pm Osho Humming meditation
4pm Osho shaking meditation
6pm Osho Evening meditation

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DEATH NOTICES

Edith Busch

always known as Johnnie
Died 19.2.2025 aged 82 years



An engaged member of the Ocean Shores community for the past 39 years, Johnnie died very peacefully at home with family at her side.

Very much loved partner of Peter and wonderful mother to Priscilla, Jennifer and Phillip and mother-in-law to Gabriel, Greg and Shannon. Adored Granny to Gabriel, Isabella, Frances, Oliver, Archie and Mendel.

Johnnie has been privately cremated and a celebration of her life will be held on 16 May at St Martins Anglican Church, Mullumbimby, followed by refreshments at the Ocean Shores Country Club. Further details will be advised through *The Echo* closer to the date.

LIFE CELEBRATIONS

TISH



In celebration of Tish's fun-loving nature ... and whose warmth and light touched so many hearts ... a gathering is being held at the Brunswick Hotel on Saturday 8th March at 11am for friends and family to meet and share in her memory.

MUSICAL NOTES

GIUITARS, RECORDS, HI-FI
WE BUY AND SELL 66851005

SUN, MOON & TIDES

- TIMES FOR NEXT 2 WEEKS

DATE (Feb/Mar)	DAY/MOON PHASE	SUN RISE / SET	MOON RISE / SET	HIGH TIDES, height (m)	LOW TIDES, height (m)
26	W	6:35 / 19:21	4:11 / 18:18	0820 1.77; 2030 1.28	0121 0.34; 1447 0.35
27	TH	6:36 / 19:20	5:19 / 18:56	0902 1.85; 2114 1.39	0208 0.24; 1523 0.26
28	F	6:37 / 19:19	6:26 / 19:31	0943 1.89; 2158 1.49	0253 0.17; 1559 0.20
1	SA	6:37 / 19:18	7:33 / 20:05	1021 1.87; 2241 1.57	0339 0.15; 1634 0.17
2	SU	6:38 / 19:17	8:40 / 20:39	1100 1.78; 2326 1.62	0427 0.18; 1710 0.17
3	M	6:39 / 19:16	9:47 / 21:14	1140 1.64	0516 0.26; 1746 0.21
4	TU	6:39 / 19:15	10:56 / 21:53	0103 1.64; 1221 1.46	0612 0.38; 1824 0.28
5	W	6:40 / 19:14	12:06 / 22:38	0103 1.62; 1305 1.27	0716 0.51; 1905 0.38
6	TH	6:41 / 19:13	13:15 / 23:28	0204 1.54; 1402 1.10	0838 0.62; 1957 0.47
7	F	6:41 / 19:12	14:21 / 23:19	0319 1.54; 1527 0.99	1016 0.65; 2110 0.55
8	SA	6:42 / 19:11	15:21 / 02:25	0445 1.54; 1714 0.99	1150 0.61; 2240 0.57
9	SU	6:42 / 19:10	16:12 / 1:27	0558 1.58; 1830 1.06	1255 0.54; 2359 0.52
10	M	6:43 / 19:08	16:56 / 2:30	0657 1.63; 1923 1.16	1340 0.47
11	TU	6:44 / 19:07	17:34 / 3:32	0744 1.67; 2006 1.26	0058 0.45; 1415 0.42
12	W	6:44 / 19:06	18:07 / 4:32	0824 1.69; 2044 1.34	0145 0.39; 1446 0.38

Data sourced from Bureau of Meteorology. Times adjusted for Daylight Savings when applicable.

LOST & FOUND

FOUND: Tradies' tools. Byron Bay Uniting Church Op Shop Ph 66855591 9am-1pm

FOUND: Hidden Valley - Just before Tugun if you're going north on the Pacific Highway

LOST: A filling

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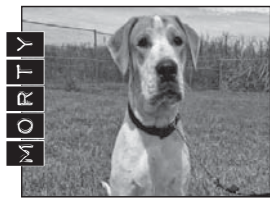
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PETS



Morty is a 1 year old, Bull Arab Mastiff Bloodhound X. He's progressing well with his training and will need a family willing to continue with his education. Morty would do best in a home with older children and would love an active family to bond with.
#99100300244236
Location: Murwillumbah
For more information contact Yvette on 0421 831 128

Interested? Please complete our online adoption expression of interest friendsofthepound.com/adoption-expression-of-interest/

Visit friendsofthepound.com to view other dogs and cats looking for a home.
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Majestic Mario is confident, affectionate and adventurous. At two years old, he is settled and perfectly litter trained. Mario enjoys meeting new people and has shown himself to be adaptable and resilient. His ideal home is out of the suburbs with the ability to live and sleep indoors but also play outside and bask in the sun. He is ready for love and a life of constant companionship.
Rehoming # R251000060.

www.nras.org.au
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Byron Dog Rescue (CAWI)



MAXI
Handsome 7-month-old male Kelpie x Bull Arab 'Maxi' is an exceedingly sweet natured boy. He is very responsive to directions and corrections, is quite submissive and excellent with other dogs. He will no doubt be a mix of very active combined with chilled affectionate couch potato. Maxi would suit life on a property/farm or would be the most charming companion for someone with an active lifestyle with time to exercise and train.
Please contact Shell on 0458461935.
MC: 941000028968305



MAGNUS
Meet Magnus, a 15 week old furry ball of fun, with great black and white markings. He loves to play and thrives on lots of love and attention! He will never cease to amuse you, making a great cat for kids to play with!
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petsforlifeanimalshelter.net

MONTHLY MARKETS

DATE	MARKET	PHONE
1st SAT	Brunswick Heads	0418 400 415
1st SUN	Byron Bay	02 6685 6807
2nd SUN	The Channon	02 6688 6433
2nd SUN	Chillingham	0428 793 141
2nd SUN	Coolangatta	
2nd SUN	Tabulam	
3rd SAT	Mullumbimby	02 6684 3370
3rd SAT	Murwillumbah	0415 328 672
3rd SAT	Salt Village Market, Casuarina	
3rd SUN	Federal	0433 002 757
3rd SUN	Uki	0487 329 150
3rd SUN	Ballina	0422 094 338
4th SAT	Evans Head	0432 275 765
4th SAT	Kyogle Bazaar	kyoglebazaar.com.au
4th SUN	Bangalow	02 6687 1911
4th SUN	Nimbin	0475 135 764
4th SUN	Murwillumbah	0415 328 672
4th SUN	Coolangatta (in a 5 Sunday month)	
5th SUN	Nimbin	0475 135 764

The Echo updates this guide regularly, however sometimes markets change their routine without letting us know. Please get in touch if you want to advise us of a change.

On The Horizon

DEADLINE NOON FRIDAY

Email copy marked 'On The Horizon' to editor@echo.net.au.

Autism and neurodiversity

A free workshop on autism and neurodiversity is being run at the Byron Youth Service (YAC). Parents, carers, and people who work with youth are invited to a free half-day workshop with Jodi Rodgers (counsellor on the TV series 'Love on The Spectrum'), being held on Monday, March 17, from 1pm to 4pm, at The YAC, in Byron Bay. Workshop topics will include the latest insights on autism and neurodiversity; practical strategies for creating inclusive environments; and ways to increase communities capacity to understand and support neurodivergent young people. Bookings are essential. For more information or to book call Rosalie on 0431 524 044 or email rosalie@bys.org.au.

Byron Book Fair

Friends of Libraries Byron Shire are once again holding their annual four-day Book Fair from Friday, July 11 to Monday, July 14. Donations of books of all genres are needed and always gratefully received, in clean and good condition. Highlighting the need for children's books, art and

limited editions to name a few. For more information and to donate call Janene 0407 855 022.

BV Probus Club AGM

The Brunswick Valley Probus Club meeting is on Tuesday, March 4 at 10am at the Ocean Shores Country Club. Our annual AGM is to be held after our normal meeting. There is no guest speaker on the day, only morning tea. Visitors welcome. For inquires and apologies ring Margaret on 6680 3316.

Free health event

Are you interested in improving your health and reducing your cost of living? Come along to the free self-sufficiency talk on Thursday, March 13 from 11am to 1pm at Fairy Hill Hall, 11560 Summerland Way, Fairy Hill. Further information contact: jenjones660@gmail.com.

AGM Sanctuary Northern Rivers

The Annual General Meeting for Sanctuary Northern Rivers Inc will be held on Tuesday, March 11 at 6pm (gathering from 5.30pm) at the Church Hall, Cnr Rous Road and Pleasant Street, Goonellabah.

Regular As Clockwork

DEADLINE NOON FRIDAY

Please note that, owing to space restrictions, not all entries may be included each week. Email copy marked 'Regular As Clockwork' to editor@echo.net.au.

Bruns U3A

Lifelong learning for retired seniors in your third age. We enjoy a variety of interest groups. Tuesday forum, garden group, foodies, movie and lunch group, men's shed, French revisited, Scottish folk dance, mahjong, walkers and talkers, shabashi, table tennis, and chess. Interested? check out bru3a.org or contact Denise on 0423 778 573.

End-of-Life Choices

Voluntary Euthanasia End-of-Life Choices are discussed at Exit International meetings held quarterly. The first meetings of the year will be held shortly. Meetings are held at Robina, South Tweed and Ballina. Attendees must be Exit Members. For further information www.exitinternational.net or phone Catherine 0435 228 443 (Robina & South Tweed) or Peter 0429 950 352 (Ballina).

Byron Toastmasters

Byron Cavanbah Toastmasters Club is a group for public speaking. It meets on the first and third Monday of the month 6.15pm to 8.30pm at Byron Services Club, 132 Jonson Street, Byron Bay. For more information email Tamra temcmahon15@outlook.com.

Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre

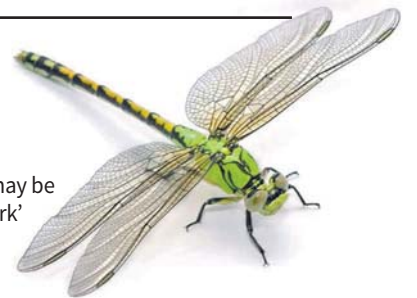
Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre is open Monday-Friday 9am-4pm (closed 12.30-1.30pm for lunch). We offer a variety of services. Everyone is welcome. Call reception on 6684 1286. Some of our services include:
Flood recovery support service: personalised, long-term support for those impacted by the floods.
Community support: food parcels, meals, showers, assistance with electricity bills. Work Development Orders.
Listening Space: free counselling.
More Than A Meal: free community lunch Tuesday-Thursday 12.30-1.30pm.

Eureka Hall AGM

Eureka Hall AGM is on March 15 at 10am. Morning tea to follow. World Day of Prayer 2025 Cook Islands, I Made You Wonderful. Psalm 139:14 - The World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year. The Cook Islands have prepared the 2025 service. The World Day of Prayer for the Brunswick Valley will be held at 10am on March 7 at the St John's Catholic Church, 15 Murwillumbah Rd, Mullumbimby. For more info: worlddayofprayeraustralia.org and biblesociety.org.au/wdp.

Wilson's Park walk

Wander through the beautiful young forest in the Wilson's Park Species Garden on a guided walk with Tim. The plants in this section mirror those originally found in the remnant forest in the Wilson's Park Reserve. It's an easy 1 hour walk on unpaved paths. Wear sturdy shoes and a hat. Bring water. Cost \$5 adults, children free. Morning tea available after the walk in the Visitor's Centre (gold coin donation appreciated). Email booking essential as numbers are limited publicity@friendslrbg.com.au.



12 till 1pm. Fletcher Street end of the Byron Community Centre.

Respite Service

Byron Shire Respite Service delivers high-quality respite care to a broad range of clients throughout the Byron, Ballina and Lismore shires. Donations welcome: Ph 6685 1921, email fundraiser@byronrespite.com.au, website: www.byronrespite.com.au.

Alateen meeting

Alateen meeting every Thursday at 5-6pm. Do you have a parent, close friend or relative with a drinking problem? Alateen can help. For 8-16-year-olds meet St Cuthbert's Anglican Church Hall, 13 Powell Street, corner of Florence Street Tweed Heads. Al-Anon family groups for older members at the same time and place. 1300 ALANON 1300 252 666 www.al-anon.org.au.

ACA

Adult Children of Alcoholic Parents and/or dysfunctional families (ACA) help & recovery group meets in Lismore every Friday 10-11.30am, Red Dove Centre, 80 Keen Street. Byron meetings are on Tuesdays at 7pm via Zoom - meeting ID 554 974 582 password byronbay.

Drug support groups

Call **Alcoholics Anonymous** 1800 423 431 or 0401 945 671 - 30 meetings a week in the Shire - www.aa.org.au. Are you experiencing difficulties and challenges because of the alcohol or drug use of someone close to you? Learn coping skills and gain support from others. **Narcotics Anonymous** is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. For information and meetings call 1300 652 820 or text your postcode to 0488 811 247. www.na.org.au. Are you concerned about somebody else's drinking? **Al-Anon Family Groups** meetings held Fridays at 2pm by Zoom. 1300 252666 www.al-anon.org.au.

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Deadline: For additions and changes is **12pm Friday**
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Display ads: \$70 per week for colour display ad.
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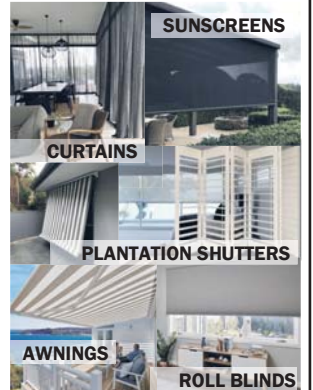


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NEW PRICE



Two Titles, Corner Block with Income Potential

3 Beds 2 Bathrooms 2 Car Spaces 711M²

- Original cottage with polished floorboards and an ornate ceiling
- Quiet location yet within walking distance to town and local schools
- Versatile floorplan with potential to generate rental income
- Exciting opportunity for investment or development

PRICE | \$900,000 - \$990,000
OPEN | Sat 1st March - 10 - 10:30am



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35 AVOCADO CRESCENT, EWINGSDALE



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5 Beds 1 Bathroom 3 Car Spaces 4013M²

- Resort style living with stunning established landscaping creating total privacy
- Expansive, light filled living area, connects to outdoor entertaining area overlooking magnesium pool
- Home office/studio space off the double garage
- Located at the end of a peaceful cul-de-sac, minutes to the centre of Byron

PRICE | Contact Agent
OPEN | By Appointment



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325 RIVERBANK ROAD, PIMLICO



Exceptional Riverfront Living: Space, Privacy & Endless Potential

4 Beds 2 Bathrooms 2 Car Spaces 5 ACRES

- Open plan living, dining, and kitchen area
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- Inground pool and covered entertaining area
- shed, and vegetable gardens, offering endless possibilities

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166 MYOCUM ROAD, EWINGSDALE



30 Acres - Minutes from Byron Bay - Spacious 4 Bedroom Home

4 bedrooms, 2 living areas, 2 bathrooms, 2 cars

30 ACRES

- Rare large acreage this close to the centre of Byron and beaches
- Usable land for agricultural or horticultural pursuits
- Spacious home with open-plan living and dining area and lots of natural light
- Elevated house site offers views over the entire property and creek
- Two large sheds & potential for second home (STCA)

PRICE | \$2.5M
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446 BINNA BURRA ROAD, FEDERAL



One-of-a-Kind, Award-Winning Pavilion Style Estate

5 bedrooms, 3 living areas, 4 bathrooms, 6 cars, 2 pools

95 ACRES

- Awarded NSW House of the Year in 2005
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- French Pavilion-style barn offering versatility as guest accommodation, studio or event space

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5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 2 cars

5 ACRES

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- Ample room to accommodate horses or livestock
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PRICE | \$995,000 - \$1,090,000
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772M²

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First National Byron Bay

- 49 Carlyle Lane, Byron Bay. Wed 12-12.30pm
- 5/43 Belongil Crescent, Byron Bay. Thurs 4.30-5pm
- 16 Pine Avenue, Mullumbimby. Fri 10-10.30am
- 73 New City Road, Mullumbimby. Fri 10.45-11.15am
- 23 Prince Street, Mullumbimby. Fri 11.30-12.00pm
- 1 Driftwood Avenue, Byron Bay. Fri 1-1.30pm
- 480 Left Bank Road, Mullumbimby Creek. Fri 2-2.30pm
- 5 Barby Crescent, Bangalow. Sat 9-9.30am
- 16 Pine Avenue, Mullumbimby. Sat 9-9.30am
- 4/6 Keats Street, Byron Bay. Sat 9-9.30am
- 7 Glendale Crescent, Ocean Shores. Sat 9-9.30am
- 24 Swell Avenue, Skennars Head. Sat 9-9.30am
- 58 Main Arm Road, Mullumbimby. Sat 9.45-10.15am
- 5/43 Belongil Crescent, Byron Bay. Sat 10-10.30am
- 21 Excelsior Circuit, Brunswick Heads. Sat 10-10.30am
- 23 New City Road, Mullumbimby. Sat 10-10.30am
- 11/31 Hayters Drive, Suffolk Park. Sat 10-10.30am
- 132 Lockton Road, Bexhill. Sat 10.30-11am
- 23 Prince Street, Mullumbimby. Sat 10.30-11am
- Lot 1, Wilsons Creek Road, Wilsons Creek. Sat 11-11.30am
- 14A Beachside Drive, Suffolk Park. Sat 11-11.30am
- 325 Riverbank Road, Pimlico. Sat 11.30am-12pm
- 49 Carlyle Lane, Byron Bay. Sat 12-12.30pm
- 35 Avocado Crescent, Ewingsdale. Sat 12-12.30pm
- 231 Sneaths Road, Wollongbar. Sat 12.30-1pm
- 73 New City Road, Mullumbimby. Sat 12.30-1pm
- 23A Gordon Street, Byron Bay. Sat 1-1.30pm

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- 5/112 Bangalow Road, Byron Bay. Wed 11-11.30am
- 7/68-70 Lawson Street, Byron Bay. Thurs 1-1.30pm
- 7A Little Burns Street, Byron Bay. Thurs 2-2.30pm
- 43 Childe Street, Byron Bay. Thurs 3-3.30pm
- 5/112 Bangalow Road, Byron Bay. Sat 9-9.30am
- 1/134 Alcorn Street, Suffolk Park. Sat 9-9.30am
- 7A Little Burns Street, Byron Bay. Sat 10-10.30am
- 43 Childe Street, Byron Bay. Sat 10-10.30am
- 17 Beachside Drive, Suffolk Park. Sat 10-10.30am
- 11 Browning Street, Byron Bay. Sat 11-11.30am
- 9 Bunjil Place, Byron Bay. 11-11.30am
- 7/68-70 Lawson Street, Byron Bay. Sat 11-11.30am
- 161 Tandys Lane, Brunswick Heads. Sat 11-11.30am
- 13/41-43 Shirley Street, Byron Bay. Sat 12-12.30pm
- 15 Little Burns Street, Byron Bay. Sat 12-12.30pm
- 9 George Street, Bangalow. Sat 12-12.30pm
- 5/10 Sunrise Boulevard, Byron Bay. Sat 12-12.30pm
- 70 Foxs Lane, Tyagarah. Sat 12-12.30pm
- 355 Coopers Shoot Road, Coopers Shoot. Sat 1-1.30pm
- 70 Charltons Road, Federal. Sat 1.30-2pm

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- 6 Greenview Place, Skennars Head. Sat 9-9.30am
- 84 Hinterland Way, Tintenbar. Sat 10-10.30am
- 5 Koala Close, Ewingsdale. Sat 11-11.30am
- 41 Hyrama Crescent, Brunswick Heads. Sat 12-12.30pm
- 15 Muli Muli Avenue, Ocean Shores. Sat 1-1.30pm

Tim Miller Real Estate

- 5 Walker Street, Clunes. Sat 9-9.30am
- 480 Booyong Road, Nashua. Sat 10-10.30am
- 1 Parrot Tree Place, Bangalow. Sat 11-11.30am
- 159 Tintenbar Road, Tintenbar. Sat 12-12.30pm
- 598 Eltham Road, Eltham. Sat 1-1.30pm

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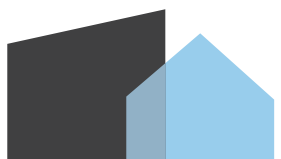
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A warning for teens hanging out at the derelict Mullumbimby Railway Station – breathing in asbestos is a killer, no matter your age. It's a slow and horrible death. Don't hang out there. What's the NSW government doing about it? See page 4.

Remember: A million seconds is around 11 days, a billion seconds is around 31.5 years and Trump's second term is an eternity.

Shameless plug: Stone & Wood's inaugural International Women's Day event, Shift The Frame, is on March 6 from 5pm at their Byron brewery. Organisers say it will be a free celebration of the many talented women in the Byron community, with live music, visual arts, and short films.

A free neurodivergence and autism workshop will be held at the Byron Youth Activities Centre (YAC) on March 17 from 1 to 4pm. Bookings essential – visit www.bys.org.au. See page 25.

Did you know that NSW is the poker machine capital of the entire planet, with 87,454 machines across the state, inflicting a record \$8.64 billion in gambling losses in 2024? Just this weekend, NSW pokies players will throw \$47m down the drain according to new data from Liquor and Gaming NSW.

Last Tuesday morning, a motorist showed *The Echo* video footage of a man being tasered by police on Lavertys Gap, Wilsons Creek, beside the road. The resident says around eight to 12 officers were on hand, and social media posts claimed up to 12 police cars



Byron homeless hub, the Fletcher Street Cottage, is launching its Women's Emergency Relief Program on International Women's Day, March 8. For more see page 7. Pictured from left to right: Amanda Peters (Cottage Keeper), Mary, Stacy and Hetti (breakfast volunteers) Photo supplied

sped through Myocum to attend the incident.

Psst: The St Helena Tunnel on the Pacific Motorway is getting maintenance work done, and will be closed from 7pm to 5am this week and reopen February 27 at 5am. Traffic diversions will be in place.

With Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday March 2, Byron Yoga Studio are again organising a Byron Main Beach clean up. To get involved, meet at the studio, 6 Byron Street, from 9am. It runs until 11am.

What cost-of-living crisis? Chemist Warehouse's Damien Gance has bought a \$33.5 million Byron Bay property, according to Domain.

Billionaire bozo, Clive Palmer, has launched his Trump-inspired party, Trumpet of Patriots. Expect a big campaign spend with the empty promise that dismantling our institutions will help the poor.

Fire ants and cattle ticks will be top of the agenda for the NSW Farmers Biosecurity

problem, and that 'If elected, NSW Labor will take plans for West Byron development back to the drawing board'. The following week we reported that Parkway Drive's Winston McCall led an all-ages community rally to Protect Byron.

Remember: The fact no-one understands you doesn't mean you're an artist.

A record number of road and drainage upgrades are underway for 2025-26, say Council. To see if your road is getting an upgrade, visit www.byron.nsw.gov.au/Council/Projects/Current-works-and-projects/Road-network-grading-and-resealing.

Psst There's a Council meeting this Thursday – starting at 3pm. On the agenda is the future of Mullum's Lot 22.

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