



STANDING WITH COMMUNITY SINCE 1986

The Byron Shire Echo • Volume 40 #28 • December 17, 2025 • www.echo.net.au

Hark...

Year 10 student Brodie Hezron in an angelic moment from this year's Wearable Arts performance event at Mullumbimby's Shearwater Steiner School. Marking the event's 25th year, *WAVE 2025: Runway Gods* engaged more than 200 high school students as performers, musicians, designers, makers, stage, sound and catering crew in a student-led extravaganza that delighted more than 1,000 members of the community across four sold-out performances. Photo Jeff 'Harping on and on' Dawson



Mullumbimby's carpark sold for \$1 for housing

Hans Lovejoy

Freedom of information documents released to *The Echo* have revealed that Byron Shire Council (BSC) agreed with government development agency Landcom to sell the much-used Mullumbimby car park at 57 Station Street to a yet-to-be confirmed community housing provider (CHP) for \$1.

The information only came to light after *The Echo* paid for a Government Information Public Access (GIPA), otherwise known as freedom of information application.

The Echo argued the information was in the public interest, as it is public land being

bought and sold between two government agencies, and is very contentious within the community given the lack of transparency and arguably poor process.

When *The Echo* asked BSC's Greens Mayor, Sarah Ndiaye, for the documents before applying for the GIPA, she deferred to BSC's General Manager Mark Arnold, who declined to provide the documents. He said it concerned Landcom as well as Council so BSC could not release them.

Previous mayor, Michael Lyon, signed the documents provided to *The Echo* via the GIPA, who throughout the process led closed-door meetings to negotiate the sale

and development of the site.

Council's plans to redevelop 57 Station Street, Mullumbimby into 29 'affordable units' with 24 car spaces and 150m² of commercial space, has been roundly criticised by the community, with multiple petitions and a large volume of objections to the development application (DA) tabled.

The Mullumbimby Residents Association (MRA) called for BSC's own carpark to be developed instead.

Yet councillors – including the Greens – have doubled down, refusing to answer questions or provide transparency to the community or *The Echo* around the project.

Instead, councillors attacked the MRA, and said the project will go ahead no matter what, regardless of community consultation feedback and despite arguably poor planning practice.

The Echo is one of many local businesses that would be adversely impacted should the development go ahead – the narrow rear alley McGoughgans Lane will be used as the sole vehicular access for the development and which will increase congestion on a laneway that is used for newspaper deliveries, as well as large truck deliveries for the IGA supermarket.

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Brunswick Visitor Centre gets a lifeline

Paul Bibby

The doors of the beleaguered Brunswick Heads Visitor Centre will remain open, at least for now, after receiving a \$45,000 funding advance from Byron Shire Council (BSC).

The Council approved the payment at last week's meeting after the cash-strapped centre had an urgent sit down with Council's general manager to discuss its future.

It is the second \$45,000 cash advance that the centre has received in the last 12 months.

Last week's meeting heard that the payments were keeping the centre afloat.

'Without these funds we would have closed the doors of the visitors' centre,' Centre Coordinator and Brunswick Head Chamber of Commerce President, Peter Wotton conceded.

The meeting heard that, even though 45,000 people a year attended the visitors' centre, its revenue streams had dwindled significantly.

'Our local economy is facing major pressures since we lost our major music festivals which were held at Yelgun, and the introduction



The Brunswick Heads Visitors Centre received \$45,000 to keep it going for another year. Photo supplied

of paid parking,' Mr Wotton said.

'The loss of our Bruns Memorial Hall contract, worth several thousand dollars a year, was also a significant loss of revenue.

'We are finding it more difficult to gain financial sponsors and support, and our visitors' centre merchandise retail sales are down about 40 per cent.'

What is the future of visitors' centres?

While the latest funding boost will keep the centre's doors open for at least another year, questions

remain over its long-term future, including the viability of the traditional visitors' centre model in the digital age.

'Is there a collective of visitor centres talking about how to adapt to this new economy where people who once would have made bookings for different activities at a visitors centre are now doing so online?' Byron Mayor, Sarah Ndiaye asked.

'Is that conversation happening about how we adapt these. Obviously, we've seen Byron Visitor Centre go through a big decline in that engagement as well.'

Mr Wotton said that

there was a discussion about moving away from traditional methods of information sharing taking place, including placing greater emphasis on social media.

'However, when you've got 45,000 people each year coming into the centre, it indicates that people do want information,' he said.

'They want local information. They do want to talk to people. We also do publish maps and they are all picked up by people within a couple of months.'

The Brunswick Heads Visitor Centre plays a significant role in supporting the town's tourism economy. This includes coordinating major events such as the Old & Gold Festival and the Mullum to Bruns Paddle. It also provides scores of referrals to local businesses each week, and has a significant role in promoting the town as a destination where families can experience the 'Simple Pleasures' of a coastal holiday.

Nevertheless, given Byron Council's precarious financial position, the centre will continue to face an uncertain future if it cannot stand on its own two feet financially.

Ashleigh Grice's accused murderer to face court

A man accused of murdering 23-year-old Ashleigh Grice in Mullumbimby in September is to face court again in the new year.

Police arrested 29-year-old Jai Oden-Jenkins on 20 September and charged him with Ms Grice's domestic violence murder.

Officers said the two had been intimate partners.

Mr Oden-Jenkins was refused bail and is to remain behind bars after appearing by video link in the Lismore Local Court on 26 November.

The matter is due for mention in the same court again on 14 January.

Family-friendly NYE in Byron

Byron's Soul Street New Year's Eve celebrations will get underway at 4pm for the alcohol-free, family-friendly event.

Jonson Street is closed to cars, creating a wonderful, fun, and safe environment for the kids to run and play and reclaim the streets!

Roving performers, kids' workshops and activations get underway from 4pm on Jonson Street, which is closed to cars, in a program aimed at younger families before the focus moves to the foreshore at Denning Park around 6pm.

Music and fun

The main stage at Denning Park will have a rolling line-up

of live music, performers providing top-notch entertainment from dusk, the always popular silent disco, and lighting installations, along with a variety of food vans to suit everyone's tastes.

'Soul Street is all about celebrating together safely so bring your friends and family, look after one another, and enjoy the amazing local entertainment that makes Byron shine on New Year's Eve,' Byron Shire Mayor, Sarah Ndiaye, said.

'As Soul Street is an alcohol-free event, we ask everyone to respect our beaches and foreshore — no drinking, just dancing, laughter and great music under the stars.'



Two opportunities to help shape Byron Shire's economy

Special Entertainment Precinct Working Group

We're seeking Expressions of Interest from a range of individuals for the new Precinct Working Group for Byron Bay:

- Up to **four business** owners running a business based within the SEP boundary (not a current member of Byron Bay Chamber of Commerce).
- Up to **four residents** living within or adjacent to the SEP boundary
- Up to **four creatives** representing a Creative Industry such as music, art, entertainment etc.

The SEP Precinct Working Group will guide and provide feedback on the trial's establishment, operation, and evaluation.

The Group will include a large and diverse group of members. See Council's website for full details.

Meetings begin in March 2026 and a quarterly commitment is required until June 2027.

Expressions of Interest close 31 January 2026.



Apply now

Find out more about what's involved for members and how to apply at <https://yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au/SEP>

Byron Shire Economic Activation Group

We're inviting Expressions of Interest from local business leaders who'd like to be part of Council's new Economic Activation Group (EAG).

This group will play a key role in shaping economic activation across the Byron Shire.

Why get involved?

- Help shape Action Plans for business, destination management and events.
- Have collaborative input on priorities for local economic development.
- Collaborate with Council and industry leaders in supporting and implementing actions.

Expressions of interest close Saturday 31 January 2026.



Apply now

Find out more about what's involved for members and how to apply at <https://yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au/EAG>





Santa loses Clifford Street dash, again

Attracting some of the finest sprinters in the street and beyond, as usual the Fastest Runner on Clifford Street race this year saw Santa, after a promising start, outpaced by a number of seven-year-olds. The dash is just one part of the Shara Community Gardens Christmas festivities that saw sunshine, live music, and more for the hundred or so locals who gathered in the volunteer-run green space. ‘A lot has gone into the gardens this year, so this felt like a good way to mark that,’ said garden secretary, Alison Bird. Race winners were, Priya (girls), Coco (boys), Cleo (best dressed), Paul Cullen (mens), Cathy Downing (womens), fastest Santa (Santa) and no one remembers second... Alison who? Photo Jeff ‘Out of His Depth of Field’ Dawson

Byron Council looking for youth voices

Are you aged between 12 and 17? Are there things you can see that need to change around the area? More transport? Some actual bike paths, or heaven forbid, actually getting the rail trail up and running? Byron Shire Council is looking for 15 young people to join their new Byron Youth Council to help advise them

on decisions that impact young people’s lives across the Shire over the next 12 months. ‘This is putting young people at the centre of decisions affecting them and gives them a platform for taking action,’ Byron Shire Mayor, Sarah Ndiaye said. ‘The group’s mission will be to advocate and make

sure young people’s voices and views are represented and heard across a huge range of issues.’ **Apply now** Participants will receive a gift voucher up to the value of \$30 for each meeting as a token of appreciation for their time and commitment. The program and meetings

will start early 2026. To apply, complete the Byron Youth Council Expression of Interest form on Council’s website (<https://yoursay.byron.nsw.gov.au/byron-youth-council>) by Friday, 19 December. For application assistance contact Council’s Social and Cultural Planning Team on 02 6626 7073.

Mullumbimby Scout Hall’s future in doubt

Paul Bibby Byron Shire Council has elected not to proceed with plans to fix up the old Mullumbimby Scout Hall, after the budget for the project blew out. But the Council will take one last look at the options for the historic local space before it is consigned to the scrap heap. The two-storey Burringbar Street building was badly damaged in the 2022 floods, forcing it to close pending major reconstruction works. An inspection by flooding engineers identified structural issues with the building’s concrete floor including cracking, subsidence, concrete cancer, delamination, and extensive efflorescence. Additional basic structural concerns unrelated to the

floods were also identified. Council elected to go down the path of reconstructing the old hall, acknowledging its important ongoing role as a community space. However, when Council eventually undertook the tender process for the project, it discovered that the cost of fixing up the building was twice what had been budgeted. The discovery was not only a blow to the Council, but also to the Mullumbimby & District Neighbourhood Centre, who had been awarded the lease for the space just prior to the floods. At last week’s Council meeting, councillors voted not to proceed with the proposed reconstruction. However, they did ask Council staff to come back with a report on what, if any,

options remained for salvaging the hall. ‘It would be great for us to find the money in the next year or two to fix it up and make it once again a vibrant and useable hall for community,’ Labor councillor Janet Swain said. ‘They don’t have much space down at the neighbourhood centre in Mullum, so it would be great if they had that extra room. I think it would be good for us councillors to keep an eye on that and to encourage that work to take place.’ **Possible demolition** Council’s Manager Of Open Spaces and Facilities, Malcolm Robertson, said that the demolition of the existing building and repurposing the site might be an option. ‘We have investigated all

potential options for funding internally,’ Mr Robertson said of the reconstruction plan. ‘We did submit a grant application which was unsuccessful, so just at the moment we haven’t been able to identify another project that can be deferred or funds that will enable this to continue. My recommendation is that we do an options report and come back.’ Byron Mayor Sarah Ndiaye said her preference was for the Council to continue to pursue grant funding, or to find the money within Council’s budget. ‘The longer we leave it there derelict, the harder it is to repair,’ Cr Ndiaye said. Council is to receive the options report on the hall ‘at a future meeting, prior to the adoption of the 2026/27 budget’.

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What is the future of Mullumbimby's carpark housing?

► Continued from page 1

What do the documents say?

On May 4, 2022, a non-binding proposal (Annexure B – Term Sheet) was signed between Landcom and Council, which outlines objectives and conditions of the development.

The term appears to have expired, as it was only six months, however it appears to have been extended with the second Term Sheet (also released under the GIPA).

As for tenure, it states that the housing is to be retained for affordability over the long term through either a long-term (50-year plus) lease, or transfer of title to a CHP to manage.

This is seemingly at odds with repeated statements from Cr Lyon, who said the units would be leased 'in perpetuity'.

As for the carpark, 'Council is to retain ownership (through either freehold title or 99-year lease) of a carpark with 24 car spaces'.

This appears to allude to the remaining carpark spaces dedicated to the development.

The 'financial commitment' says 'Landcom will perform its obligations on a cost recovery basis, and recover its external and internal (development management and overhead) costs for the project.'

It reads, 'Landcom will have two years to satisfy the conditions, with the right to end the agreement earlier if it considers, acting reasonably, that the conditions will not be satisfied by the end of the two years.'

It reads, 'Landcom will use reasonable endeavours to: Finalise and agree with Council concept designs for an affordable housing project that is generally in line with the project; partner with Council to confirm a CHP partner and enter an agreement to develop and manage the project.'

This is seemingly at odds with comments from Cr Ndiaye, who told *The Echo* it was appropriate for Council to not be involved with the project while Landcom prepared the DA.

Being uninvolved with the project also led to what Cr Ndiaye admitted was an

unacceptable DA, and to the discovery – well into the project – of major drainage issues which has resulted in a complete redesign.

No costings have been provided when asked by *The Echo*.

Landcom will also 'assist the CHP partner secure funding (from NHFIC and/or other parties as required) to deliver the project,' states the documentation.

'In conjunction with the CHP partner, obtain development consent for the project and pay the costs associated with obtaining the development consent (to be reimbursed by the CHP partner upon exercise of the option).'

'Upon the conditions being satisfied, the property will be transferred/leased to the CHP partner for the development of the project.'

As to which CHP partner has been selected, the information has been redacted. Council admitted some time ago that they couldn't attract a CHP, and Landcom refuse to answer whether one is secured for the project.

Further Term Sheet

A further Term Sheet was signed on 3 August, 2023, which set a framework for 'discussions and negotiations' for the potential sale of the property.

While it said there were no legal obligations from the Term Sheet, it stated freehold title of the property 'will be transferred to the CHP'.

A lot of details were repeated from the earlier Term Sheet document, with a few additions.

Following delivery of the project, it states that 'Council will be transferred the freehold interest of two units, through a minimum 50-year lease at market rent.'

'Council is to be offered the retail/commercial space through a long-term lease (10-15 years) at peppercorn rent.'

The Echo has appealed the decision to not disclose certain documents.

They are: Heads of Agreement from May 2024; Memorandum of Understanding from 7 August 2024; and Mullumbimby Affordable Housing Variation letter – extending term.



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Is the 60-day cap ‘ineffective’?

Aslan Shand

A report stating that the 60-day cap for non-hosted short term rental accommodation (STRA) in Byron Shire is ‘ineffective’ has been roundly criticised by the Byron Shire mayor, Victims of Holiday Letting (VOHL), and local STRA researcher, Dr Sabine Muschter, who was part of the research team looking at Airbnb impacts on small communities.

The Frontier Economics report prepared for Airbnb in November 2025 looked at the impact of the 60-day rental cap on the long-term rental accommodation (LTRA) market in the last 12 months. It concluded that, ‘one year after implementation, the 60-day cap is ineffective in achieving its stated goal of increasing long-term rental availability and affordability.’

However, as Byron Shire Mayor, Sarah Ndiaye pointed out, ‘its conclusions are premature and do not reflect the timing, intent, or context of the 60-day cap.’

‘The cap has only just begun to meaningfully apply across much of the Shire, with many properties not affected until September this year (2025). It is far too early to declare the policy ineffective. Housing markets do not

shift overnight, especially in an area as complex and tourism-driven as Byron. We have always been clear that a full understanding of the cap’s impact would take more than a single season.’

Ms Muschter, and VOHL agreed with the mayor and local MP, Tamara Smith that the 12-month timeframe is too narrow to assess the impact of the 60-day cap.

Only just fully implemented

‘The cap has not meaningfully taken effect prior to 2025 for most operators, and there are well-known issues with under-reporting of bookings. Drawing conclusions at this stage is therefore premature,’ Ms Muschter told *The Echo*.

‘It came as no surprise to VOHL to see this Airbnb-funded report, as it is part of a worldwide trend of similar reports funded by Airbnb, where governments at all levels react to the insidious creep of STRA into residential zones and legislate to regulate,’ said VOHL spokesperson David Wallace.

‘VOHL has observed an increase in the number of STRA properties being offered for sale. In one street in the 60-day precinct, seven STRA

have for sale signs. We hope that these homes will have permanent occupancy. We urge all neighbours of STRA who believe that the cap regulation is being rorted to obtain evidence and lodge a complaint with Byron Council’s compliance department.

‘A major flaw in the Airbnb report’s methodology is that only ten business owners or managers were surveyed. Neighbours of STRA were not interviewed.

‘VOHL has been surveying the booking calendars, publicly available on web booking engines, of STRAs found in the 60-day cap precinct. We have concluded that many are exceeding the cap.’

Byron Shire Council has initiated an independent research partnership with Professor Nicole Gurran from the University of Sydney, a leading authority on STRA and housing policy.

‘This will ensure a proper, independent, and rigorous evaluation, something far more substantive than a one-year industry-commissioned snapshot,’ said Cr Ndiaye.

‘This work will provide robust, longitudinal evidence on how the 60-day cap is shaping the housing market before and after its introduction.’

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Vale Uncle Ydo, Lawrence Anthony Walter Miles

Holly Galbraith

The Northern Rivers community is mourning the loss of a beloved Elder, cultural protector, and political activist Lawrence Anthony Walter Miles, affectionately known to many as Uncle Ydo.

A proud Githabul and Midjibul man of the Bundjalung Nation, Uncle Ydo dedicated his life to standing for Country, culture, and justice.

From walking with the Black Panthers in the 1970s, to being part of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, to standing at Bentley in 2014, Uncle Ydo was always on the front line. His activism was lifelong, and his leadership respected. More recently, he was involved with the campaign to protect Wallum at Brunswick Heads where he brought wisdom, humour, and heart to camp.

Those who knew him speak of an infectious laugh, and a fierce love for family and community. He was not only a protector of Country but also a cherished



Uncle Ydo, Lawrence Anthony Walter Miles, 22 August 1956 to 26 November 2025. Photo Beverley Callow

storyteller, jokester, and tea drinker.

Describing himself as a rainbow, he brought both light and strength wherever he went, but he also brought together a rainbow of people.

A fire was lit in his honour last Saturday beneath the ancient scribbly gums of Wallum, a place he cared deeply for. His funeral took place this week, and while he now rests in the arms of his ancestors, his spirit will always echo through the wind, trees, and waters of Bundjalung Country.

To his family Jambi, Kylie, Alana, Sam, Sonnya and his treasured grandchildren the community stands with you in this time of deep loss.

The only way forward is together

His life was one of purpose. His absence will be felt across generations. Vale, Uncle Ydo. Thank you for your wild heart. Thank you for fighting for what mattered. Thank you for walking with us. Always was, always will be. Sovereignty was never ceded.

Community raises over \$100,000 to keep Bangalow Bowlo in community hands

Paul Bibby

The fate of the Bangalow Bowlo could be decided by the outcome of a major club amalgamation deal 50 kilometres up the road, Byron Shire Council has heard.

As hope continues to grow that the Bowlo can be reclaimed by the community, a key figure in the negotiations taking place to save the venue said the rescue mission was dependent on the successful amalgamation of two massive clubs in Tweed Heads.

Byron Councillor, Asren Pugh, (Labor) a key member of the Save Bangalow Bowlo Team (SBBT), said that for the current owners of the Bowlo, the Norths Collective hospitality group, to relinquish ownership of the venue, their plan to sell the Seagulls Club in Tweed Heads to the Twin Towns group would need to come to fruition.

'I think any resolution in terms of getting the club back will probably be dependent on the successful sale, or whatever you want to call it, of Seagulls to Twin

Towns for \$30m, which is about clearing Norths debts,' Cr Pugh said.

It is common knowledge that the Norths Collective has significant debts, some of which were incurred when it took over the Bangalow Bowlo.

Community ready to fight for Bowlo

Should the amalgamation deal fall through, Norths might well decide that it needs to sell the bowlo to the highest bidder, regardless of the local outrage this would incur.

Cr Pugh said the SBBT was ready to fight if Norths decided to go down this path.

'We are ready to relaunch a campaign if needed, if Norths stop the positive negotiations,' he said.

'It's just been an amazing community response, but extraordinarily stressful.'

The community response Cr Pugh was referring to was the remarkable outpouring of financial support from those locals committed to saving their beloved bowlo.

'We put a GoFundMe out to the community asking for pledges that will be returned if we don't get control of the club back,' Cr Pugh said.

'It's at about \$116k, which we got in a bit under a week, plus there's about \$40,000 in offline written pledges as well.

'The community has showed pretty extraordinary support for getting the club back. There should be enough money to fix some of the major defects, including making the roof safe for at least eight to ten years, fixing some of the floor under the stage, and some other changes.'

Buoyed by this financial support, the SBBT have convinced Norths to make them the preferred tenderer to take over the club.

This means they have exclusive rights to negotiate with Norths about returning the club to the community until at least July 2026.

'That gives us a lot of time,' Cr Pugh said.

'There have been positive negotiations over the past couple of weeks.'

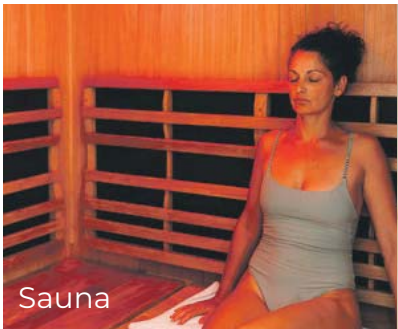


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E-bike clampdown as Christmas looms

Pancho Symes

NSW will soon require manufacturers and suppliers of e-micro-mobility products – including e-bikes – to adhere to extra safety precautions or face up to \$825,000 in fines. This announcement comes after the death of an e-bike rider earlier this month, who collided with a garbage truck in Sydney’s CBD.

Warning to parents

New safety regulations for e-bikes will come into effect on 1 February, 2026. From that date, all e-bikes, e-scooters, e-skateboards, self-balancing scooters, and the lithium-ion batteries they rely on must be certified safe prior to sale in NSW. This is in response to the increased market availability of non-compliant products that can be tampered with to breed high-power, high-speed machines. High numbers of injuries have been sustained for riders, pedestrians, cyclists, and other drivers in the chaos that has ensued from the availability of converted e-bikes.

Sydney Children’s Hospital

has recorded over 100 e-bike related injuries this year. Teenagers – often in gangs – on highly modified, hybrid bikes, have been seen riding 60 km/h ‘hot laps’ around towns and cities.

E-bike battery fires

Converted e-bikes are regular pedal bicycles that have been fitted with electric motors and batteries to increase their speed and power. They are more likely to catch fire because of DIY setups, poor wiring, and low-quality, or second-hand parts. Indeed the 100th recorded e-bike battery fire was sparked this November, causing a Redfern terrace house to be set ablaze.

Legislative change

Prior to this legislative change in NSW e-bikes were allowed to produce 500 watts of power, implying a speed ability of 45 km/h. As of February, 2026 this will be reduced to 200 watts, bringing the state into line with the rest of the country. ‘We’re seeing devices on the market that are far too powerful, too easy to modify, and too hard for parents



E-biker on Shara Boulevard, North Ocean Shores. Photo Tree Faerie

to assess,’ said Minister for Transport, John Graham. ‘This is about making sure the bike your teenager rides behaves like a bike, not a motorbike. ‘Our message to parents is simple: check the sticker, check the wattage, and have a conversation with your kids about staying safe,’ Mr Graham said.

Lives lost

This year, five lives have been lost in NSW over e-bike related incidents and 13 lives have been lost in Queensland. ‘Right now we’re seeing too many powerful, modified devices that put riders, and everyone around them at risk. These changes are about preventing serious

injuries before they happen,’ said Minister for Roads and Regional Transport, Jenny Aitchison. ‘Road safety is a shared responsibility. Government is tightening standards and cleaning up unsafe behaviour, but we need retailers, parents, and riders to help keep our communities safe,’ she said.

E-bikes crushed in clampdown

In response to these growing concerns, police have in some cases, taken to confiscating the bikes of offending riders, and having them crushed. This was the case on the Tweed coast earlier this September, when five teenagers were arrested for reckless driving and exceeding speed limits. The bikes in question were impounded and destroyed. There have been local reports of police chasing and tackling young e-bike riders. One local parent told *The Echo* that, ‘ever since the police crushed a local, illegal e-bike, other kids have gone off picking themselves up a similar bike.’

Mullumbimby man took five guns from reno ceiling

Emma Setterfield-Smith with Mia Armitage

A 41-year-old man charged with possession of unregistered firearms is to serve a Community Corrections Order after appearing in the Mullumbimby Local Court last week. Phillip Scott Johnson, who the court heard has lived in Mullumbimby for several years, pleaded guilty to possession of five unregistered firearms. Police arrested him in late October as part of a week-long police operation investigating criminal groups and carrying out raids related to the trade of suspected illicit tobacco and vape products.

Officers said they found the guns when carrying out a search warrant at Mr Johnson’s home on 25 October. The accused man told police he had taken them from a roof cavity on a property that was being renovated and that he’d had the guns for a while. The court heard he had rifles, but didn’t have any pistols, meaning each of the five counted offences were considered below mid-range. The court ordered a six-month immediate conditional release from 3 December and surrender of Mr Johnson’s firearm licence. He was also sentenced to a 12-month Community Corrections Order.

Orange hoppers to drive-in cinema

Byron Shire Council has funded three projects to activate public spaces around the Shire in 2026. The projects offer a program of free site-specific activations. Hoppers by choreographer Kelly O’Meara, is set on a sandbar in the Brunswick River on 3-4 January. It will feature bright orange space hoppers, beach

games, and more. The second project is the Understory Wonder Trail in Mullumbimby, it will run from February to March and will explore the Arboretum at Heritage Park. April will see a one night only drive-in cinema at the Cavanbah Centre. For more information: www.byron.nsw.gov.au/CPS.



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Locals take action against climate change at Newcastle's Rising Tide

Marion Riordan

What is Rising Tide? It's ordinary people doing extraordinary things. The successful blockade of Newcastle coal port stands as the largest act of civil disobedience in Australia's recent history with around 8,000 people taking part. It is created by people like you and me. Over the four days most people I met were taking enormous risks, or giving extraordinary time and effort to this event.

Rising Tide is unique in its fine-tuned organisation without being centralised or controlled top-down. People are given strategic support to act in diverse, self-initiated, and surprising ways. On-water training includes kayaking in 'buddy systems' and grouping into pods to penetrate lines of water police. Training also covers what to expect from arrest, detention, and the legal consequences, so people are very well-equipped to decide on their personal actions.

This year Rising Tide's 'guided freedom structure' helped spawn new spontaneous actions. A small



On the waterway at the 2025 Rising Tide action in Newcastle. Photo Gemma

group decided to swim into the channel from different directions (including a four kilometre swim upstream). Police seemed to be caught off-guard as swimmers reached the shipping channel causing the shutdown of all ship movements for 24 hours. Another brave team chose to lock themselves to coal-loading machinery for six hours, again catching police and port security off guard. This extended the port closure by another whole day. All-up the blockade prevented 13 tanker loads. People may not realise that Newcastle is the world's largest coal port exporting 15 million tonnes per month.

Pearl Whitfield a graduate from Mullumbimby High School said, 'I've spent most of my life feeling helpless in the face of the crushing climate crisis. This action has given me drive and purpose and made me realise that it's not too late to save this beautiful planet'.

Pearl was part of the main action in a flotilla of around 300 kayaks. She paddled out into the shipping channel with 50 others and seven police boats gave chase. Pearl stayed out there 'singing and chanting' and evading police for as long as possible.

'I don't regret getting arrested and intend to do it again because this fight is



Local activist Benny Zable at Rising Tide action 2025. Photo Zeb

not going to be won unless people like us take action,' she said.

Get involved

'So, if you want to get involved there's a local Northern Rivers hub (go to the Rising Tide website: www.risingtide.org.au). This movement gives you hope, giving up and accepting a burning planet is letting these big corporations win'.

Mullumbimby local and former Byron Shire Councilor, Duncan Dey, was also at the blockade in the role of boat driver for the safety team. He stepped out of that role to become boat driver for a group called People of

Faith who had agreed, like he had, to be arrested.

'With a deaf government this is one of the ways in which people can speak up,' said Duncan.

Duncan drove the boat out into the waterway exclusion zone where police stopped them but arrested only the skipper, Duncan.

'The crew of seven People of Faith were very disappointed not to be arrested,' said Duncan.

Shay Salmon, a teacher from Lismore, partnered with her daughter to do a marathon six hours paddling each day of the protest. She says what keeps her coming back each year is the frustration

she feels as our existential crisis is met with 'ignorance, apathy, and denial in the general community'.

Growing numbers of people from Lismore come to the blockade each year. She says 'this is not only because we have had direct experience of climate change but we have already shown what "people action" can achieve in the Bentley blockade'.

At the 'Protestival' I joined the Northern Rivers hub. It is a group of strong, resourceful people, many of whom are also central to the Save Wallum campaign.

The Rising Tide movement is more than the Newcastle blockade. The plan ahead is for decentralised hubs to continue to take necessary action to keep the climate crisis front and centre and impossible to ignore. Despite the rhetoric, Australia is a big player in global CO₂ emissions. Worldwide renewable energy is expected to grow more than four-fold from next year on. It would be economic insanity for us to miss this boat. Let's hope that stopping a few boats and the international notoriety helps Australia to finally get on the right boat going in the right direction.

Seatbelt Detection Cameras are in operation.

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On your mark, get set, write!

The Echo and Creative Mullum's Short Story Competition is off to a great start with submissions so far in both the over and under 18-year-old categories. Local legend, Marika Bryant, was so fast off the block to enter the competition that we have reproduced a taste of her short story 'Time Out Of Sorts'.

Get writing this festive season

Everyone is invited to submit a story of up to 500-1,500 words with the hook 'Hitchhiker'. The story hook is a writing ignition device to ensure that stories submitted are new and that they have a unique thematic emblem. The hook can be buried in a sentence, far off in the distance, it could be the name of a band playing at a pub, or it could be the mainstay of your story! We have an adult category and a youth category for 18 and under with first prize for the adults of \$1,000, and

'Time Out Of Sorts'

I put my hand out. I don't like doing that, asking for a hand-out. Need it this time, not just folly. Would anyone stop? Standing on the side of the road, so many things rattling around in my brain. Time out to think? Ha. I'm thinking of all the times I didn't stop for those obviously in need: nobody chooses to be on the road alone. Or do they? How did I get into this position, of needing a lift from any random person who might display kindness. Did I, in a similar situation? Do I actually deserve a lift? From anyone? Questions and more questions. Getting hotter now and I don't have a hat. Perhaps I should move to the shady spot, a bit further up the road. Will they see me? Do I look like a risk?

- Excerpt of short story by Marika Bryant

Read Marika's full short story online at: www.echo.net.au.

\$500 for the youth category sponsored by Create Art Studio. There will be a host of other prizes for finalists who will be invited, if selected, to present their story in a live storytelling performance at our very first Mullum Moth hosted by Mandy Nolan and Creative Mullum, on 1 April, 2026. Stories will be judged by author Alan Close, Echo big boss Simon Haslam, and comedian and writer, Mandy Nolan, and is open to anyone in the Northern Rivers. Each writer is able to submit up to, but no more than, two entries. Stories can be submitted by visiting www.creativemullum.org.au/writerscomp and entries are open now and close on 28 February, 2026.

Mullum community groups robbed

Mullumbimby Community Gardens, the ReForest Now nursery, and The Mullum Food Coop were broken into and robbed again last week. This is the second time in the last month. The last robbery saw the loss of the Community Garden's tools and this theft saw \$350 stolen from the Food Coop. There was also the costs of changing the locks and

now the additional costs of putting in cameras and other additional security. 'We have been fundraising and working hard to receive grants to improve our space, located just inside the gate of the Community Gardens at the end of Stuart Street,' Food Coop member Prem Mali told The Echo. 'It is not just the financial impact that it has on us, but

this kind of behaviour hits hard in the hearts of our volunteers and members.' Donate If you would like to support these organias-tions drop in, check them out online and if you can contribute to the Mullum Food Coop, their details are: BSB - 154110, Account number - 100121369.



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Echo

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

Housing boost for Northern Rivers with 112 new social homes

The Minns government says it's building more homes, more quickly in the Northern Rivers, delivering 112 new dwellings across Alstonville, Casino and Lismore, as part of \$6.6 billion of investment into social housing, delivering 8,400 new homes across NSW.

Buyback auctions end year on high, says govt

The NSW Labor government say it has exceeded its target of selling 42 flood buyback houses before Christmas, after 60 people attended the last auction in Lismore on Wednesday.

Old Bexhill Bricks Quarry to be assessed for future parkland use

Funds to investigate the old Bexhill Bricks Quarry to see whether it can be transformed into a family-friendly native parklands have been announced by NSW Lismore MP Janelle Saffin.

Virtual fencing legislated by NSW Government

A new 'AgTech' option to manage livestock via collars or neck bands that use GPS technology has been announced, with the NSW Government saying it will enable farmers to 'better manage their stock and to side-step the cost of hard fencing'.

New containment rules for deadly white spot syndrome

New control orders have been announced for white spot syndrome, which is a highly lethal and contagious viral infection which can kill prawns and other crustaceans within days.

Wanted man arrested in Ballina

A man faced court last Thursday charged with 36 offences following a police operation. Police said in a statement, 'The man was wanted in relation to several incidents alleged to have occurred in the Ballina and Mullumbimby areas between October and December 2025'.

www.echo.net.au

Gamilaroi artist Kelly Tierney fundraiser Dec 19

The Murwillumbah community is invited to come together on Friday, 19 December from 6pm at the M|Arts Precinct for a special fundraising event to support Kelly Tierney, a respected Gamilaroi artist, mother, grandmother, and long-time cultural leader.

Co-organiser Belle Arnold says, 'Kelly has spent decades contributing to the Northern Rivers through her visual art, murals, weaving, screen printing, and her work as a teacher, lecturer, and women's domestic violence worker'.

'She and her sons have also danced with the Kids Caring for Country Dance Group for the past 16 years, becoming familiar faces at



Kelly Tierney. Photo supplied

cultural events across the region.

Rare condition

'Kelly was recently diagnosed with a rare degenerative condition that

has affected her mobility, speech, and ability to create artwork. Funds raised on the night will help her family purchase a wheelchair-accessible van, enabling her to stay connected to

community, Country, and cultural life.

Line-up

'The event will be held at the M|Arts Precinct, Murwillumbah, from 6pm until late, featuring performances by Kids Caring for Country Dance Group, Kinship Doobai Dancers, Watersong Sisters, Robyn Green, Cristabelle Blue, Damien Becker (Spoken Word), JK47 and Steve Spacek.

'Raffles, art prizes, and ticket sales will go directly to Kelly's GoFundMe campaign, with donations welcome for those unable to attend.

'All proceeds support Kelly Tierney's wheelchair-accessible van fund', adds Belle.

Second man accused of murder near M'bah

A second man is charged with murder in relation to a fatal shooting at a property west of Murwillumbah earlier this month, police said on Sunday.

The incident on 3 December at Eungella left a 41-year-old man dead and two others injured. Police said a man had shot the pair before fleeing with an accomplice.

Soon afterwards, a 45-year-old man was allegedly struck by a ute and taken into police guard in hospital.

Police arrested 36-year-old Mark Gary Brown the next day and charged him with murder.

The 45-year-old man has since been extradited to NSW and charged with one count each of murder, and shooting with intent to murder.

Lismore council's final 2025 meeting – what was decided?

Some of the big items voted upon at Lismore City Council's last meeting of the year included reaffirming their position on water security and a submission to the Far North Coast Regional Water Supply Project, as well as finalising their Property Portfolio Strategy, which includes plans to relocate staff into the flood-prone CBD.

Deputy Mayor, Cr Jeri Hall, and Cr Jasmine Knight-Smith (Labor) gave their perspectives to their online followers after the December 9 meeting.

Cr Hall said, 'Even though the agenda wasn't as large as usual, the meeting still went for around five hours'.

Property Portfolio Strategy

Cr Hall wrote, 'Some very interesting stats were presented to Council'.

'Did you know Lismore City Council (LCC) owns three houses (averaging just \$115 a

week in rent), 12 cemeteries, two caravan parks, and 92 vacant lots? No? Well, now you do'.

Cr Knight-Smith wrote, 'I didn't vote for this, even though prima facie it's excellent and needed'.

'The document included a sneaky section deferring to the GM the move of Council to the CBD.

'I believe this is regressive and unhelpful.

'Council staff need to be safe and dry, away from disaster epicentres, to coordinate clean-up, evacuation centres, and information dissemination.

'Moving to the CBD will be expensive and slow; that money would be better spent in the CBD.

'Good points: tiered decision-making framework (function, affordability, optimisation), property reserve fund for reinvestment and sustainability.

'Staff did a great job, but I could not vote for it in its current form'.

Bexhill farm experience DA

Cr Hall wrote, 'Council approved the establishment of a farm experience premises (periodic use as a campground) and the installation of a new on-site sewage management system in Bexhill. This site will be used to facilitate camps for young people from around the region'.

Cr Knight-Smith wrote, 'Christian youth farm experience camp (up to 16 days/year). Opposition from neighbour on valid grounds, but social benefit too great to ignore. Conditional consent. With new OLG reforms, may be last DA before Council. Unsure if perfect outcome, but happy overall'.

Water security

Cr Hall wrote, 'This one was a doozy. The motion was to reaffirm LCC's current position on water security and submit it to the Far

North Coast Regional Water Supply Project, as well as request that DCCEEW and Minister Rose Jackson undertake further and more effective consultation with councils and the community. This quickly became a big debate about the Dunoon Dam'.

Cr Knight-Smith wrote, 'Served no purpose except to create dam/no dam division'.

'Reaffirmed a 2022 stance, posed no new info, advocated nothing of note. Dog-whistling exercise'.

Whian Whian Falls – safety and security

Cr Hall wrote, 'The Whian Whian community has been dealing with major issues at the falls for years'.

'This motion supported the community and requested that Rous County Council help remediate some of the problems they're facing, including parking, bins, signage, and general site management.

'Inclusion of an interhalls representative on the Village Advisory Group (LVAG).

'This is a positive change to the membership of LVAG and will serve as an important conduit between our villages and their community halls', she wrote.

Cr Knight-Smith wrote, 'Collaborate with Rous for carpark/signage and promote traffic calming for safety and amenity'.

Cr Knight-Smith also posted her views on undetected water leak policy, NORPA MoU, monthly finance report, standing street shared path, code of conduct statistics and weeds motion.

She wrote, '[My] original motion was stronger, but the final version was: Council write to Rous County Council requesting stronger compliance/enforcement of weed management under *Biosecurity Act 2015*, targeting properties with significant infestations (e.g., tropical soda apple)'.

Ballina and Jali councils sign partnership

Mia Armitage

Ballina Shire Council says it finalised a partnership agreement with the Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council earlier this month.

The agreement, made on 1 December, recognises the Nyangbul people of the Bundjalung nation as the First People of the Ballina Shire, saying they are collectively acknowledged as the

traditional custodians of the area's land, waters and sky.

The agreement includes the Ballina Shire Council engaging an Aboriginal cultural projects officer, but doesn't state a deadline.

Nyangbul inclusion in Council planning

It says the Ballina Shire Council will engage with Jali at the concept stages and

beginning of Council works or development proposals, to ensure cultural sensitivities and opportunities are understood and factored into scope at the planning and design phase.

The cultural, economic and social wellbeing of the Aboriginal community and the Nyangbul peoples' ongoing connection to Country is to be prioritised in developing local strategic plans,

growth management strategies, economic development plans and other initiatives for the shire.

The partnership has three key parts, as directly quoted from the document:

Firstly, commitments from both parties to approach engagement from a relational basis in a consistent and meaningful way to achieve agreed outcomes.

Secondly, a framework to

identify, understand and protect Nyangbul cultural values, both tangible and intangible, in the Ballina Shire.

Thirdly, outlining how commitment to the partnership will translate to key decision-making and day-to-day operations.

The partnership was signed by the Ballina Shire mayor and the Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council chairperson on 1 December.

Support Afghan artists fleeing the Taliban

Aslan Shand

In 2021, Sara Gloede joined the call by local filmmaker and paramedic Ben Gilmour to help write humanitarian visa applications for a list of 50 artists at heightened risk from the Taliban, called Project 50.

‘This followed the high profile provision of visas to an Afghani women’s soccer team,’ Sara told *The Echo*.

‘As part of that process, I was linked with journalist and actress Krishma Obaidi, and actor and director couple Sabz Sakhizada and Hamid Ehsas (they make rom-coms and horrors!). Writing humanitarian visa applications is quite an intimate process, as you ask people to tell their most difficult experiences.

‘Krishma, Sabz, and Hamid all made the decision to flee to Pakistan in order to register with the UN in the hope of resettlement and to reduce the threat from the Taliban.’

Krishma continues to present news to Afghans via the Kabul News TikTok channel challenging Taliban



Krishma Obaidi presenting on kabul.news22. Photo supplied

censorship. Despite repeated assaults and threats, Krishma continues her work, believing in the power of media freedom.

Actress Sabz, currently expecting a baby, and her husband Hamid, a respected Afghan director, actor, editor, and producer – best known for his film *Ruthless Father* – are also at risk due to their public profiles and outspoken views.

Sara and her husband have continued to support all three Afghans however, Pakistan has begun expelling Afghan refugees without visas and has made the cost of visa extensions very high – USD750 for six months.

‘The UNHCR has expressed concern, urging



Poster for film *Ruthless Father* with Sabz and Hamid Ehsas. Image supplied

Pakistan to exempt vulnerable Afghans from deportation,’ said Sara.

‘Given the heightened risk Krishma, Sabz and Hamid face because of their media activity, it is critical they remain in Pakistan – but support is needed to cover their visa costs.’

Can you help?

Northern Rivers for Refugees has provided initial support, but ongoing assistance is urgently needed to help these individuals remain safely in Pakistan while awaiting humanitarian processing. You can donate at: www.givenow.com.au/ safety or contact Sara at saragloede@yahoo.com to offer ongoing support.

Illegal camping action needed

Alison Drover

Vehicles are illegally parking and staying overnight all over Byron Shire. Van boots propped ajar, legs dangling out, a surfer watching a movie or scrolling their iPhone. Washing and bed linen is draped across a windscreen in Lawson Street. Soiled toilet paper litters streets. Parking spots are even used to renovate vehicles!

Byron has a serious homelessness issue yet separately, an out-of-control free camping and illegal parking problem.

Council provides no overnight on call support service. Both Council and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) defer incidents to the Tweed-Byron Police who are routinely unable to attend.

Social media, influencers, ‘free travelling networks’ along with Byron’s long-standing absent Destination Management Plan (DMP) and strategy has helped cultivate the notion that in Byron you can do as you please.

Byron looks shabby and

unclean and while travellers willingly pay for a campervan for six months, or tickets to Bluesfest, they skip on the cost of accommodation or camping. The proliferation of ‘vanlifers’ is deterring those visitors that will pay.

Free camping fire

Free camping also poses huge environmental risks. In 2023 huge tracts of nature reserve and wildlife were burnt from Tyagarah to Brunswick Heads as a result of a fire started by illegal campers.

Ironically, as Byron Council proceeds to trial with a Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP) it hasn’t got a parking strategy – yet the success of the plethora of new accommodation, hotels, and restaurants will all depend on people being able to park, and turnover spots.

Shannon Bennett’s \$10 million plus new dining precinct at Belongil is going to need some serious parking consideration. The important details appear to be left to be worked out at a later date.

Parallels can be drawn

between places like Ikaria in Greece and Byron. They both share ‘no funded or formal tourism strategy’ yet are tourism hotspots. Ikaria’s visitors surged as a result of Netflix’s acclaimed *Blue Zone* documentary and it is now experiencing the same issues as Byron with community and business trying to scaffold the growth path forward with resistance from councils.

A scorching, peak visitor, summer looms – where is our locally-made, vibrant, visitor education marketing strategy cocreated by our filmmakers, artists, and personalities that addresses the importance of ‘respecting and protecting Byron, and paying to stay’?

Questions posed during the SEP consultation regarding illegal parking and compliance have been left unanswered. Police will be further stretched. Community frustration is building as they are left to literally pick up the toilet paper. There is no such thing as free camping – we are all paying for it.

The festive season isn't always easy, and that's okay

Whether you've had a tough year or endured some recent setbacks, it's okay to pause and reach out for support.

Looking after your mental health and wellbeing doesn't mean making big changes. Often, it can start with something simple like checking in with yourself, or someone you care about.



For more information to support your mental health and wellbeing, visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/support or call the Mental Health line on 1800 011 511.





Echo
The Byron Shire Echo
Volume 40 #28 • December 17, 2025

Reflections on Bondi attack

I for one am reeling. I am overwhelmed with sorrow and grief for the murdered and their families, friends, and communities. It is a time, above and well before all else, for supporting them – no community or religious group should be killed or live in fear no matter their beliefs, customs, or even allegiances. Children, Holocaust survivors, religious leaders all have had their fundamental right – to life – abridged by a father and son on a mission. Because they were Jewish. No more, no less – just because of their faith.

And in this initial period, I know what it is not time for. It is not time to blame Albanese for failing to do what Netanyahu or some in the Jewish community demanded. It is not time to stifle criticism of Israel under guise of stopping antisemitism. It is not time (yet) to investigate the possible failings of our intelligence services in failing to anticipate and stop this. It is not time to ban protests and shy away from our international obligations. It is not time to shy away from democracy with overreach laws.

It is also not time to claim false flags, or Mossad involvement, or preach ‘whatabout Gaza’, or Sudan, or anywhere else for that matter. I love many in the Palestinian movement and they have said many compassionate things in the face of this violence but before they start to orate about historic morals or immediate comparisons please take a breath and say that right now Jewish lives matter. Just that. Unequivocal. There will be time for deeper lessons later.

That this should happen in the shadow of Christmas is both a blessing and a curse. It reminds us to be grateful for our families and our friends. To love unconditionally and hold our children, parents, family, and friends close in the tightest hug they can bear. To answer honestly and brutally when asked ‘how are you’, and to ask that question back and listen intently. It also leads us to question faith in any external god-force that could prevent this, but chooses not to. Good.

And perhaps, no matter what your beliefs, it is time to phone or email that Jewish friend, acquaintance, or even stranger and say, ‘I am so sorry for your loss. I stand with you for peace’. Can we just sit with that for a moment?

I will spend some time today meditating. In a garden just below the law school where we planted 35 trees in memory of each victim at Port Arthur because one of our students, Jim Pollard, was murdered there. The trees are huge now, and their shade welcome. There is a lesson in that too. I will reflect on how I can do better in this stormy sea. Perhaps I can be kinder, less didactic. Hate less, taste more. Grimace less, cry more.

May we rise above this horror and national shame to be a better and stronger country. Where there is less dispute and more conversation. Less hatred and more compassion.

And as we drive into Mullumbimby, let’s dip our lid to the LOVE sign.

Because that is who we are.

Guest editorial, David Heilpern

■ David Heilpern is a former NSW magistrate and is now Dean of Law at Southern Cross University.

I’m dreaming of a kind Christmas

D riving around Byron Shire I’ve been oohing and ahing at the stunning display of poincianas and native Illawarra flame trees this year. There have been more flowers and intense colours than I’ve ever seen before.

Everything seems to be flowering more intensively. Even the cicadas sound louder. The number of sharks chasing huge schools of fish in the bay even made international headlines and a friend in the UK kindly wrote suggesting I stay out of the ocean.

Is all this abundance some kind of stress-induced flourishing before an ecological collapse, or have there just been ideal growing conditions for some species?

What’s in front of our eyes can sometimes be deceiving when we lack the wisdom of observation over many seasons. Despite the profusion of flowers for instance, there do not appear to be many bees or insects around to pollinate them.

I was trying hard not to be too grinchy, but it must be said it has been a tumultuous year in many ways with tectonic shifts taking place, literally and figuratively. So many people’s lives have been upended by ongoing wars and climate-related disasters. Many have died prematurely and there will be generations of traumatised people as a result.

The geopolitical situation is tense. In the wake of America all but tearing up the NATO alliance, the heightened spectre of world war, like the ones previous generations fought, was raised by NATO’s Secretary General, Mark Rutte. He is warning that Europe is Russia’s next target and they need to prepare for war.

In the shifting global order, and emergence of spheres of influence and bloc-based powers, Australia’s strategic alliances are also being tested. Some would argue we’d be better off distancing ourselves from America and tearing up the AUKUS pact, but that isn’t on the cards. It is a conversation we need to have as the Indo-Pacific sphere of influence shapes up and we prepare



Tech bros have turned us into ‘cloud serfs’ by intensifying our dependence on their services while they mine our data.
– Jo Immig

to host US and UK nuclear-powered attack submarines rotating through Australia from 2027.

Perhaps like the rest of nature we’re also in a kind of shock-induced state, reeling from such global events, as we arrive at the baubles and Bing Crosby end of the year in what seems like a blink of an eye.

I had to laugh when I arrived for a recent medical appointment – I thought I’d been teleported to the north pole. The waiting room was entirely decked out with giant images of snow-covered mountains, trees, and log cabins with people sitting inside around a fire clutching hot chocolates like they were warding off frostbite. There was even a life-sized cardboard fireplace recreated under the counter, complete with red flames and orange logs and Santa paraphernalia.

The incongruity of the scene with the outside temperature nudging the mid-30s, was enough to induce a menopausal hot flush. Maybe they couldn’t afford air-conditioning and were using the power of suggestion to keep us cool?

Surreal incongruences might be an ongoing theme I’d suggest. It’s that time of year when we perform ‘happy families’ while many people are quietly dying on the inside from grief and loneliness and holding their breath waiting for the whole thing to be over.

It’s also the consumption month, when our eyes are often bigger than our bellies, and our desires grow increasingly out of sync with our wallets. Many have mentioned to me ‘they’re not doing presents this year’ because of tight budgets and a feeling of wanting something more meaningful.

Capitalism really seems to have finally shot itself in the foot. We’ve never had greater access to so much stuff, yet wealth inequality means most people can’t afford it. Many can barely afford to live and pay for the basics right now.

In the true spirit of Christmas, let us be sure to spread love, inclusion, and acts of kindness to those that feel even more isolated and disconnected at this time of year.

Meanwhile the global economy is sliding into what economist and former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis has described as technofeudalism. Competitive markets are giving way to private ‘cloud fiefdoms’ run by big tech corporations. You know their names, the ones sponsoring Trump’s gaudy ‘ballroom’ addition to the people’s White House.

These tech bros have turned us into ‘cloud serfs’ by intensifying our dependence on their services while they mine our data. We’re becoming so digitally embedded we depend on them in the same way medieval peasants depended on feudal lords for land and protection.

Now that we’re standing at the precipice of AI inveigling its way into all facets of our existence, things are about to get a lot more intense. AI will change everything, even calling into question the nature of reality.

In the battlefield of our imaginations, we’d be well placed to meditate and better understand our minds and build constructive narratives for the type of world we want: one we where we help others and find joy through togetherness.

■ Jo Immig is a former advisor to the NSW Legislative Council and coordinator of the National Toxics Network. She’s currently a freelance writer and researcher.

Echo
The Byron Shire Echo
Volume 40 #28 December 17, 2025
Established 1986 • 22,000 copies every week

www.echo.net.au

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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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Volume 8 ~ 2025-2026

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Mullum parking fines part II

To Scott Hyams (Mullum parking fines, *Echo*, 10 December) – I too have been in receipt of such a parking penalty at the intersection of Whian and Dalley streets.

But mine is a good news story.

I wrote to the NSW Department of State Revenue (the collector of the money) and two state ministers (roads, and local government) and Byron Shire Council.

Yes, it took lots of angst, time and the wisdom of friends, but the outcome: no penalty, the matter is closed.

The parking officers conscientiously do their job, photographing wheels on the edge of the ‘footpath,’ but out of the driver’s view, on a very regular basis – a point confirmed by the adjacent householder and nearby medical practice.

Ah but wait – aside from the problematic path design there is dropped vegetation, deep potholes to avoid, no curb or guttering and certainly no signage.

Byron Shire Council is the entity responsible for maintaining the verge, I am told.

Statistics bah! Any evidence of this situation changing? Err, no. Because it is individuals who are penalised.

It takes time to write letters to those responsible, but in this instance, it is the best action. Collective voice can lead to change. There is no room for complacency. Shut up? Then cough up.

Julia Stewart
Repentance Creek

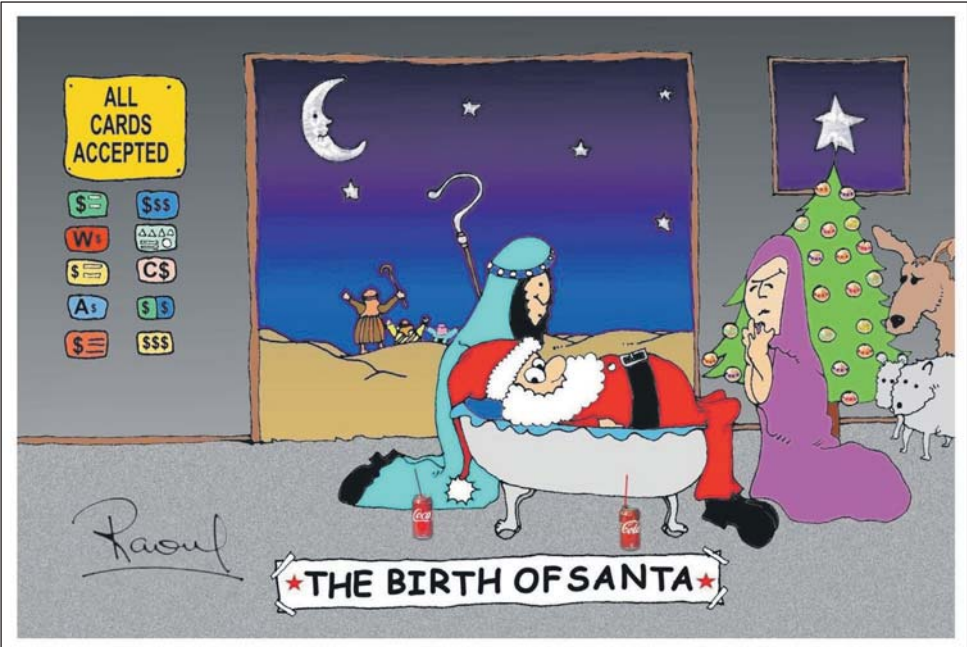
Planning alerts

With the NSW government now allowing developers to bypass councils for large housing projects, it’s more important than ever for Byron Shire residents to stay informed and speak up about developments near them.

I urge everyone to sign up for free email alerts from Better Planning Network at planningalerts.org.au and select Byron Shire Council.

These alerts let you know about every new development application in our area, so you can check the details and decide whether a project is suitable for our community.

If a proposed development is too big, too dense, or inappropriate for our streets, environment, or infrastructure, please make a formal submission to Byron Shire



The image of Santa that we recognise and relate to was first drawn by the German cartoonist Thomas Nasp in 1862. The image was redrawn by the American illustrator Haddon Sundblom in 1931 for the use as advertising for Coca Cola. Cartoon by Raoul

Council or the state planning authority. Let them know why it’s not right for this location – whether it’s traffic, overshadowing, loss of trees, or pressure on schools and services.

We can’t rely on Council alone to protect our unique Byron lifestyle.

By signing up to Better Planning Network and speaking up on development applications we can help ensure that growth happens in a way that respects our community, our environment, and our future.

Suzie Deyris
Byron Bay

Imbalance in disaster funds

The NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) Deloitte report *Natural Hazard Impacts in the Northern Rivers* estimates almost \$7 billion in losses from the 2019 bushfires, 2022 floods, and Cyclone Alfred in 2025.

Still, the *State Disaster Mitigation Plan 2024–2026* channels 97 per cent of disaster funding into response and recovery, leaving just over three per cent for reducing the risks themselves.

The imbalance says everything.

Imagine what could be achieved with meaningful investment. Zero emissions in the Byron Shire and Northern Rivers – a good start?

Anne Stuart
Adjunct Research Fellow,
Griffith University
Mullumbimby

Shared spaces

Thanks to George Graham’s letter last week for his reminder that the

stormwater drain emptying into Clarkes Beach is not suitable for swimming – E. coli bacteria, yuck!

But I can’t agree with blocking it. Other beachside residents seem to thrive near this rivulet of ‘fresh’ water, regardless of human pollution.

Red-capped plovers run vigorously along the damp edges of the drain, the pied oystercatcher’s chick hides in a clump of seaweed as it builds up the energy for its first flight, the vulnerable species of beach stone-curlews are successfully raising their chick nearby, the little black cormorant swims in the murky water looking for a feed, a whimbrel from Siberia does a fly-by looking for a resting place, while a pair of Caspian terns with distinctive bright red beak blend in with the resident crested terns and silver gulls.

Sharing our beach with the birds is such a delight. Let’s continue to work on improving the water quality through protecting our wetlands and let more birds thrive.

Stroma Lawson
Byron Bay

Byron’s NRRT funding

The funding application process for the Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) within our Byron Shire has seen significant hold-ups, owing to a lack of simplicity in what the funding is requested for.

Does Byron Shire Council (BSC) want its NRRT between Mullum and Byron to be on formation, or beside it?

‘On formation’, it would be on the existing 131-year-old rail line.

‘Off formation’ is an

entirely additional design, construction and environmental complication, and a wildly expensive request that unnecessarily thwarts any chance of an expedited and successful outcome.

The vast majority of people in Byron Shire have recognised this needless complication, and its resultant obstruction in obtaining their NRRT within their lifetimes.

To progress past this obstruction must require our largely ‘progressive’ Council to gain urgent clarification within itself, and then in turn, with the state and federal funding departments.

We, the people of Byron Shire, wish BSC to urgently address this last vestige of obstruction towards gaining the greatest people-powered transformational infrastructure of our time.

Tim Shanasy
Byron Bay

► More letters on next page



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Letters to the Editor and cartoons

Send your letters to the Editor: 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.

Off formation

Last week, Byron Shire Council debated whether to apply for a grant for the design of the rail trail between Byron Bay and Mullumbimby.

This led to a confused and chaotic discussion about whether the trail should be built 'on formation' replacing the tracks, or 'off formation' alongside the tracks.

This confusion seriously impairs Council's ability to get grant funding for the rail trail within Byron Shire.

Some history – at the August 2023 meeting, Council resolved that it:

a) Proceeds with the planning, approval process, and preparation of an application for funding to implement on-formation rail trails from Mullumbimby to Crabbes Creek and from the old Byron Bay station, through Bangalow to Booyong.

b) Reiterates Council's ongoing support for multi-use of the rail corridor between Byron Bay and Mullumbimby.

This allowed Council staff to apply for a federal government grant to design and construct the rail trail from Mullumbimby to Crabbes Creek and a short section from Bangalow to the Bangalow Industrial Estate. This grant is yet to be determined, despite the original date of

determination being over 12 months ago.

It's important to realise that much of the Byron to Mullum section of the railway corridor traverses wetlands or floodplain. After any big rain event the land either side of the railway embankment is under water. There are several locations where the railway line bisects high value vegetation and threatened ecological communities. Council has done a vegetation study that confirms this.

Any off-formation rail trail would need to be constructed either in, or above (i.e. a boardwalk) these wetlands. This would be wildly expensive, environmentally damaging, and completely unnecessary, because there is a perfectly usable railway embankment that's been there for over 100 years.

It's time to end this confusion and for Council to pass a new resolution to build the rail trail 'on formation' between Byron Bay and Mullumbimby. The trains are never coming back, and to spend money recklessly, in the hope that they will, is wasteful and irresponsible – and only results in further delays. This community has waited too long already.

David Michie
South Golden Beach



This is a Qld-registered Falcon station wagon, which has been parked and slept in for six months in Cowper Street, Byron Bay.

Byron Shire compliance officers were contacted a month ago about this vehicle.

The vehicle breaches the parking conditions. The compliance department stated their compliance department officers will not deal with the occupant, as he is 'homeless' and 'antisocial'. They also stated the police would not get involved for the same reasons. What message does this send?

Alan Dickens
Byron Bay

Paddock love

After reading your *Echo* article about The Paddock Project, I decided I would stop procrastinating and actually turn left on the way out of Mullum and visit.

I'm glad I did.

The people working there, many with disabilities, are friendly, and make everyone feel very welcome, including dogs.

I know one young woman with special needs who works there and she says it

has given her life meaning.

What a joy it was to discover I could buy freshly picked organic veggies and mixed leaves at a great price.

And the seedlings I bought were generous and thriving, and cheaper than anywhere else.

They have a food van if you're hungry or need a coffee fix and they even have sustainable cups and mugs. It seems everything has been thought of to provide a special, sustainable

shopping experience.

I also bought some Christmas presents from their quaint little shop which were much nicer than anything I could have bought that is manufactured in China.

I left feeling uplifted and calmer. I'm definitely going to their Wednesday afternoon curry and jam session.

I'm so impressed. Well done, Karen and crew.

Magenta Appel-Pye
Mullumbimby

Byron's nightlife

There's nothing democratic about councillors ignoring 90 per cent of submissions opposing the so-called 'Special Entertainment Precinct' (SEP) in Byron and voting against the wishes of the community.

On New Year's Eve in 1993, the mess hit the fan in Byron when large numbers of drunken youth rioted in the streets.

It was the community that stood up and volunteered their time and energy for many years to organise events so that everyone could celebrate New Year's Eve safely in the town, while others were enjoying the holidays with family and friends.

When Council voted in favour of the festival site at Yelgun, again the community,

who knew the site was a disaster waiting to happen, was forced to take the issue to the Land & Environment Court, and won.

Despite the court ruling that the development was not suitable for that site, the state government ignored the court's ruling and the community's concerns, and changed the law to allow the Planning and Assessment Commission to approve the development.

The developers then sold 51 percent of the business to Live Nation, who are being investigated in the US for their monopolistic practices.

If businesses are struggling despite two million visitors, they're not providing what people want. No SEP will change that. Or perhaps people who have money to spend don't want to spend time in a crowded, expensive, over-promoted tourist area.

Locals in tourist hotspots around the world are protesting about the destruction of their community and valuable culture and heritage.

The community has not been calling for a SEP.

They have been saying loudly and clearly for decades that they want to enjoy and protect the beautiful place we all live in. They're happy to share with respectful visitors,

► Continued on page 19



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What was behind that shark frenzy?

Dr Colette Kerry

Over the course of last week, extraordinary numbers of large sharks and dolphins feasted on bait balls along Tallow Beach at Byron Bay. Why?

Long-time locals and devoted surfers from the area have never seen anything like it.

Incredible drone footage showed sharks and dolphins feeding together, herding the bait balls into the northern corner of the beach.

The typically crowded surf spot was empty as tourists and locals watched the natural spectacle from the shore.

A unique set of conditions

Anyone who regularly goes in the water in Byron Bay, or anywhere along the NSW coastline, knows that water temperatures can change quite a bit, not just over the seasons, but from day to day.

The two main factors are the East Australian Current (the EAC) and coastal wind-driven upwelling.

Made famous in the film *Finding Nemo*, the EAC is an oceanic Western Boundary Current; a type of current which flows along the western boundaries of ocean basins and redistributes warm water from the tropics towards the poles, regulating global climate.

The winds over the tropics and subtropics are predominantly from the east, so warm tropical water is pushed up against the eastern sides of continents, and this water ‘escapes’ in a strong jet that flows from the equator towards the poles.

In the south Pacific Ocean, warm tropical water flows from north to south along the east coast of Australia.

Sometimes the water flows straight down the coast like a jet, sometimes it gets stronger and wiggles (‘meanders’), and sometimes it becomes unstable and turns away from the coast, pinching off large spinning bodies of water.

These oceanic eddies are the ‘weather systems’ of the ocean.

When the EAC moves away from the coast, cold water comes up from depth or from the south, and beachgoers notice cooler water.

Most NSW beachgoers know that the water gets cold when the northerly wind blows and, while upwelling is a common phenomenon, it is poorly understood by many.

People often ask, ‘Why is



Sharks feeding on a bait ball at Tallow Beach, Byron Bay. Photo www.soniafriedrichphotography.com

the water so cold in summer?’ and, ‘Why doesn’t the north wind blow warmer water down from the north?’

Well, if the world wasn’t spinning, wind blowing from north to south would push the surface waters from north to south.

But because the earth is spinning, northerly winds push the surface waters towards the east (to the left of the wind in the southern hemisphere, the opposite in the northern hemisphere).

So, along the NSW coastline, winds from the north, most common in spring and summer, push surface waters offshore. Colder water comes up from depth to fill the void.

Water from depth is not only colder, but also richer in nutrients, so upwelled water is sometimes greener and murkier.

What was different about early December 2025 in northern NSW was that we had a strong and anomalously warm East Australian Current that was close to shore (up on the continental shelf), and we had strong coastal upwelling.

This mixture of very warm clear water (the EAC) and nutrient-rich upwelled water is the perfect nursery for baitfish.

Varying ocean temperatures are the norm off NSW, as the winds are variable and the EAC is always swirling and changing.

We see this from maps of Sea Surface Temperature (SST), that has been measured from space since the 1960s, revolutionising weather and ocean forecasting.

With decades of satellite data, we have a good idea of the ‘average’ temperatures off northern NSW for this time of year.

The extreme bait ball and shark activity off Byron Bay happened when the EAC was 2–3°C warmer than average, exceeding the 90th percentile.

Yet close to shore, the temperature was cooler than average.

The wave buoy off Ballina

and a fishing vessel (part of the emerging Fishing Vessels as Ships of Opportunity Program) measured 20–22°C water close to shore, with the EAC just a few kilometres offshore measuring 27–28°C.

This stark temperature front brings warmth, light and nutrients together enhancing productivity (phytoplankton and zooplankton growth) and concentrating prey and predators.

Local surfers, young and old, were itching to get back in the waves.

UNSW’s South-East Australia Forecast System (SEA-COFS) predicted the strong EAC to continue over the following week, although the bait balls cleared after four to five days. The SEA-COFS system brings the Global Mercator Ocean Model into the NSW region to capture processes on the continental shelf and close to shore.

Our research shows that over the last 30 years, the EAC is shifting poleward.

This means warmer water is penetrating further south, more often.

Waters off southern NSW and Tasmania are warming at two to three times the global average.

This warming has impacted kelp forests, causing mass devastation by transforming ecosystems from kelp-dominated to urchin-grazed, increased diseases in oysters, and boosted algal blooms, impacting fisheries and local biodiversity dramatically.

Extreme marine heatwave events provide insight into the potential future impacts of climate change.

Off northern NSW, this shift could possibly mean more warm temperature extremes in the EAC.

■ Byron Bay surfer, beachgoer, and expert oceanographer Dr Colette Kerry leads the ocean prediction team in the UNSW Coastal and Regional Oceanography group.

■ First published by UNSW Science.



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► Continued from page 16 but want to feel safe in their towns again.

Do councillors think it's their job to make/change rules to favour big business?

After decades of inappropriate development, mass tourism and mass festivals, it's very obvious they've added very little in the way of benefits to the community.

Despite the billions that go into the state government's coffers every year from land tax and stamp duty from expensive local real estate, plus GST, we're told by the minister that unless Byron ratepayers agree to the SEP, they won't provide funding for the infrastructure and services needed for two million tourists! Sounds like blackmail.

If politicians and councillors continue to ignore the concerns and needs of the community, and force unwanted developments on them, with disastrous consequences, ratepayers may have to ignore rate notices.

Louise Doran
Ocean Shores

Curious about SEP

The results of Council's own community consultation clearly showed overwhelming opposition to establishing a Special Entertainment

Precinct (SEP) in Byron Bay.

Two main arguments have been used to justify proceeding. First, we are told the NSW government will fund lighting, transport and other measures if we adopt an SEP.

Should Byron really be required to extend liquor trading hours – potentially worsening existing problems – in order to receive infrastructure funding the government promised back in 2014?

Funding should follow sound economic development and tourism planning, not be tied to increasing a problem and then offering to fix it.

Second, supporters claim a SEP would 'cut red tape' for cultural activities.

But the 2023 Cultural SEPP already does this allowing temporary events without development consent, expands outdoor dining, permits unlicensed venues to trade later during special events, and increases patron capacity and entertainment options at existing venues.

We are told to 'be curious' and that the community doesn't understand the SEP.

So let's ask: will precinct management plans mean more or less noise after

10pm? Will extended alcohol trading reduce or increase late-night crime?

Given most restaurants and accommodation in town are now licensed venues (11 are already allowed to trade past midnight) – will the SEP simply lead to even more venues and more liquor licences?

Vicki Henricks
Byron Bay

Have your say on SEP

Last week's letters was again filled with very well composed questions and expressions of dismay with the controversy surrounding the Special Entertainment Precinct (SEP).

Submissions have been presented, public rallies, letters and estimations of public dissent have reached numbers of 90 per cent not in favour of the precinct.

Yet it was passed by Council into the next stage of the development application (DA). Unbelievable!

Yet the residents are not up in arms (so to speak), of their democratic expressions of disapproval for this very divisive DA.

Also included in the very same issue, a number of very well expressed articles and letters concerning gender-based violence, and

domestic violence, and the numbers cited in our shire are extremely unsettling.

Yet our councillors are in a majority to extend liquor licences beyond 12am to 2am.

We all fought hard to prevent Woolies and Dan Murphy's from coming into town because of the alcohol availability and its ramifications.

The next Council vote will be crucial.

Have your say in this urgently, there is much more at stake than what has been shown to us.

Write to Council, flood them with letters and distressing phone calls. Vote no.

Savaad Churcher-Wells
Byron Bay

Painting the town

I suspect that one day, Daniel Hend will have a statue in Mullumbimby, probably with his back to you and words on his T-shirt saying 'please don't talk to me, I'm working'.

He really paints the town red.

And uses lots of other colours as well. His perspective of the barn on the right of the IGA mural is wonderful.

Larry Hoofs
The Pocket



GIVE to GUS

2025 CHRISTMAS APPEAL

PART 3

Gus's journey continues. After weeks of intensive care, this once tiny 2 gram Feathertail Glider has reached an important milestone in his recovery.

Now stronger and more alert, Gus has graduated from his incubator pouch into a larger enclosure. With this next step came a crucial test, learning how to hunt for himself. One quiet night, watched carefully under a red light, Gus suddenly leapt across the enclosure and caught a moth. In a single swift movement, he devoured it. Against the odds, Gus keeps proving his strength. But his journey back to the wild is still unfolding.

Follow Gus's story each week and scan the QR code to help give him and other native wildlife a second chance at life.

Donations over \$200 receive a FREE plushie!




nrwh.com.au/givetogus

Extra Christmas bin collections



**BYRON
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

There will be extra wheelie bin collections for households in the Byron Shire again this year.

For two weeks from Monday 29 December to Friday 9 January all wheelie bins can be put out weekly for collection.

This includes red, yellow and green bins for urban households and red and yellow bins for rural households.

People should put their bins out the night before their normal collection day and make sure the lid of the bin is closed.

The Byron Resource Recovery Centre will be closed on all public holidays, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day.

More information

🌐 www.byron.nsw.gov.au

☎ 1300 652 625 – Resource Recovery hotline

www.byron.nsw.gov.au



Lady Golfers raise money for those needing help



(L to R) Byron Bay Lady Golfers (BBLG) committee members Katie Wilkinson and Pam Woolcott, presenting a \$2,000 donation to Maddie Powell, Assistant Manager at Fletcher Street Cottage; with Beryl Main of the BBLG committee; Kerri, a volunteer at Fletcher Street Cottage; and Damian Farrell, Manager at Fletcher Street Cottage. Photo supplied

The Byron Bay Lady Golfer's (BBLG) held their annual two-day tournament in November at the Byron Bay Golf Club and raised \$2,000 to donate to Fletcher Street Cottage.

'The weather was fantastic and course conditions could not have been better,' BBLG president Pam

Woolcott said.

'The tournament was a huge success with golfers competing coming from as far away as New Zealand'.

The annual tournament was sponsored by local businesses with numerous raffle prizes donated from local businesses.

The money raised was

donated to Fletcher Street Cottage's Women's Space Project.

The project assists women in crisis helping them feel safe and supported in a caring environment while providing care for victims of homelessness, domestic violence, and financial distress, in our area.

Nimbin junior athlete best in nation for the third-year running

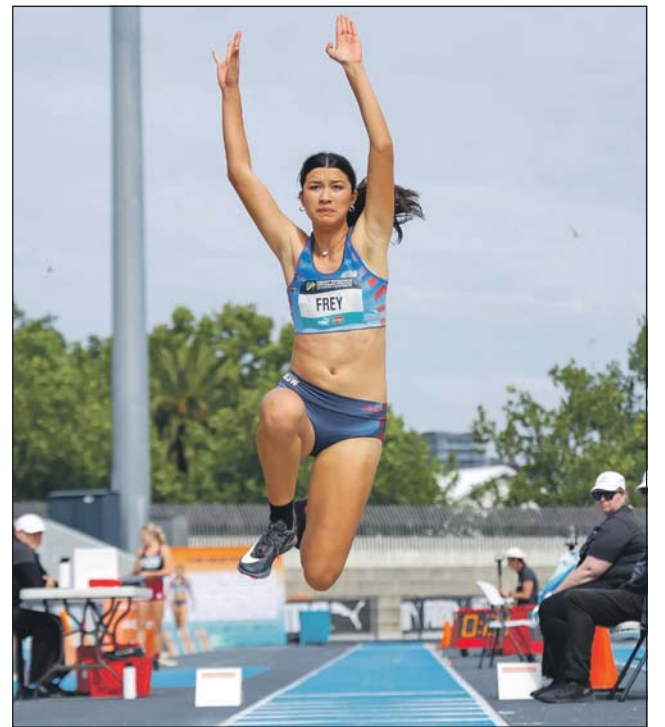
Nimbin Central School student Mikayla Frey has won her third national title in a row, competing in the U17 triple jump at the Australian All Schools National Athletics Championships held in Melbourne earlier this month.

Mikayla dominated the field, with 80cm separating her and the next-best competitor. By winning the event, she successfully secured her third consecutive National All-Schools title, having won the title the previous two years in a row.

Her jump of 12.69m currently ranks her in the top ten in the world for the under-17 age group (athletes born in 2009), for triple jump.

'Competing for NSW in Melbourne against the best athletes in the country, and winning gold, was such a surreal and amazing feeling,' Mikayla said.

'I'm honestly stoked with my results. Jumping a huge personal best and winning my third consecutive Australian All-Schools triple jump title is something I'm incredibly proud of achieving. It really made all the hard work and effort I put into training



After winning the National gold in the triple jump, Mikayla competed in the U17 long jump and placed fifth in Australia. Photo supplied

for this event worth it.

'Leading into this championship, I had the struggle of balancing the demands of Year 12 HSC studies with consistent athletics training, which was definitely a challenge for me, but made my success feel even more rewarding.

'With this being my last National All-Schools competition, after recently graduating from high school, it was such a special, exciting and emotional experience for me.'

Mikayla is now set on qualifying for international competitions in 2026.

Bangalow Tennis Club takes out top three grades at the NET League tennis finals

The NET League tennis finals for 2025 took place at Mullumbimby Tennis Club last weekend and saw the Bangalow Club walk away with wins in the top three grades.

The day welcomed more than 100 players, families, and spectators.

On court, the standard of tennis was exceptional across all divisions. Bangalow Tennis Club won the A, B, and C Grade titles.

Individual honours were also well deserved. Jack Cox (Bangalow) was

named Season's Most Valuable Player, remaining undefeated throughout the competition.

In B Grade, Miles and Ollie Field were recognised as Best Juniors, also completing the season unbeaten, an exciting sign of the depth of junior talent emerging in the region.

One of the standout moments of the day was the A Grade doubles final, where James Toyne and Jack Cox (Bangalow) faced Andrew Bates and Thibaut Jouanneau (Byron Bay) in



Just some of the hotly-contested doubles action from the weekend finals. Photo supplied

an epic battle that drew widespread praise from spectators and players alike,

highlighting just how strong the standard of tennis is in the region.

The celebrations extended beyond league play with the Australian Open One Point Slam, a fast-paced and entertaining format that added extra excitement to the day.

The event was won by Mullumbimby Tennis Club head coach Olivia Rich, who graciously conceded her place in the state finals to Bodhi Smith. He will now have the opportunity to compete for a substantial prize pool for his club and, potentially, earn a spot at Melbourne Park to

face Carlos Alcaraz.

NET League is set to expand in 2026, with plans to introduce three dedicated junior divisions. The league is aiming to grow participation beyond 300 players.

The next NET League season is scheduled to commence in late February.

A big thank-you goes out to everyone who attended, supported their clubs, and contributed to a fantastic finals day. It was a memorable occasion and one the league is excited to build on in the years ahead.



**YOU ARE INVITED TO
CHRISTMAS AT THE HUB**

SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER, 10am
Family Carols with Santa and a BBQ

CHRISTMAS DAY, 9am
Short service followed by morning tea

There will also be a free shop operating out of the Hub from Wednesday 17 December to Christmas Eve, 9am until 6pm. Closed Sunday and Monday.



**At The Hub Baptist Church,
Cnr of Bindaree way and
Rajah Road next to K-Hub**

Head to The Echo's Service Directory for all your professional trade services

The Byron Shire Echo's Service Directory is a comprehensive listing of trades and services. If you're working on your home or space and need a job done, find a local tradie quickly and easily here. Pages 44 to 47 of this paper.

- Air Conditioning
- Automotive
- Blinds
- Bricklaying
- Carpentry & Joinery
- Cleaning
- Concreting
- Driveways
- Earthworks/Excavation
- Electricians
- Fencing
- Garden & Property Maintenance
- Guttering/Roofing
- Handypersons
- Landscaping
- Locksmith
- Painting
- Pest Control
- Plastering/Rendering
- Plumbing
- Roofing
- Septic Systems
- Solar
- Tiling
- Tree Services
- Window Tinting and much much more!

Echo

In the paper each week and online at www.echo.net.au

Service
Directory



Also online here

The Things People Say

People have said some crazy shit about me, but the other day a friend told me a friend of his had advised him not to vote for me in the last election because I was in the Illuminati. How bizarre. I am a member of the Greens and the Bangalow CWA, but that's the extent of my covert memberships. One wants to tax billionaires and end coal and gas. The other makes awesome cakes. Neither really seems poised for the secret society status of the Illuminati. Neither are on track to world domination. I wish they were. Imagine a future with housing and scones for all! Sweet!

I had to google Illuminati - which I guess is the first sign you're not in the Illuminati. There was so much weird stuff it gave me a headache. I couldn't read it all. To be honest, I didn't understand it. Something about the 15th century and stonemasons and the New World Order. I'm familiar with New Order. They had a hit song called 'Blue Monday'.

But as for overlords trying to control world affairs - it feels a bit far-fetched. Or, totally insane. I am a Mullumbimby mother of five. I don't even know how I would fit the Illuminati meetings in. I'm pretty busy as it is. I can't even make it to parent-teacher night.

So in a nutshell, without all the batshit crazy stuff, 'The Illuminati is a conspiracy theory about a secret society that controls the world. Some believe they have infiltrated global economies, politics, technology, media, entertainment, and science.' Hey, I'm flattered that someone out there considers me to be part of the global elite. But I still haven't managed to get elected in a regional seat. I still put up my own posters for gigs. I'm not elite. I'm not controlling anything. I can't even toilet train my dog. Let alone develop and implement a plan for a New World Order.

Newsflash: Those people kind of exist. The elite who control us. But they're not behind some shadowy veil. They're people like Musk and Zuckerberg and Bezos.



Newsflash: Those people kind of exist. The elite who control us. But they're not behind some shadowy veil. They're people like Musk and Zuckerberg and Bezos.

us to follow to our future. They write the scripts. They are the hands pulling the strings, writing the code. It's not the Illuminati. It's worse. It's free market capitalism. And we're addicted. As the cost-of-living crisis tightens its pincer grip on the world, with record homelessness and a rising sense of hopelessness, Musk is on track to become a trillionaire in the next decade. That's obscene. In my opinion, that's world domination. And it's no secret. It's happening in full view. I'm just a 57-year-old woman on an exercise bike at 5.30am every morning, the only thing I am trying to dominate is my BMI. Apparently it started because I was giving an Illuminati hand sign in



a photo. I think it was some sort of finger placement on my face. It made me nervous about touching my face in public. Or picking my nose in the car. And why would you want to give a hand sign? That seems like primitive tech. If you're working with the Illuminati, wouldn't they have a WhatsApp group? Secret hand signs are so 15th century.

I often wonder what it would be like if I really had the power to create this mythical New World Order. Well I'd definitely stop logging, and we'd stop coal and gas, and I'd stop this insane house hoarding, and this incessant need for wealth. And women wouldn't need botox because they wouldn't feel judged about their age and men would stop killing us, and we'd hug it out and the hugs would be consensual. And the world would be quieter, and kinder, and fairer and greener.

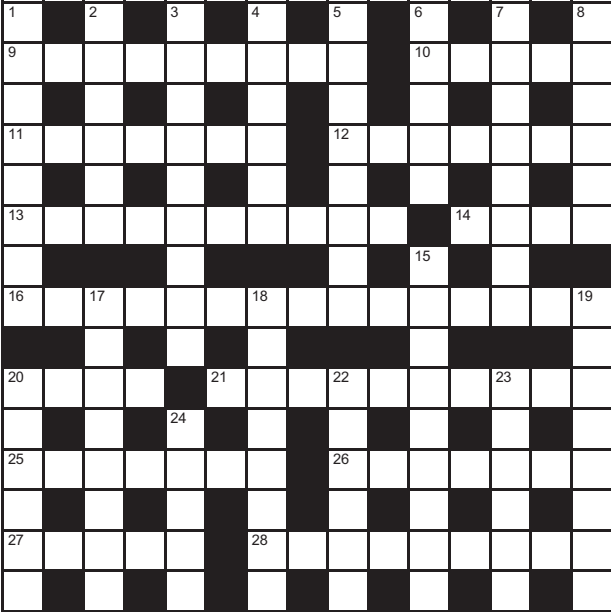
I often wonder why is that scary? Have we become so completely socialised by greed and violence and power, that we no longer trust peace or justice or love?

Oh, and apparently I'm also a Satan worshipper. FFS. I'm a feminist. I'm not worshipping any dude.

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.

Crossword by Stephen Clarke

#86



Cryptic Clues

ACROSS

- 9. Rioters outside Times driven crazy by strong brew (9)
- 10. Precisely fitting around screw cap? Here's how! (5)
- 11. Contend with footballer at inspection (7)
- 12. Yeast rudely stuffed in to make pastry (7)
- 13. Crazy denials spread about leading characters in union office (10)
- 14. Self-satisfied smirk's beginning to appear on face (4)
- 16. The sure thing! (8,7)
- 20. Musk's name ruined at Christmas! (4)
- 21. Bit player with something by Banksy is on the outer (10)
- 25. Spooner's greeting Simpson lad, Pat (2,5)
- 26. Release of family member not finalised by insurer (7)
- 27. Mussolini latches onto Nazi leader, the fool! (5)
- 28. Bilbo mixed gin and tonic iced starters - requirements for musical performance (9)

DOWN

- 1. Given expert recording misses Oscar, head of Dreamworks must step in (8)
- 2. Moreover, everyone grasps three points (2,4)
- 3. Cast iron ovens finally adapted to produce pastry (9)
- 4. Wild dogs at men's celebration (4,2)
- 5. Dish made with cream and eggs, when unfinished, also known as a Greek meal (8)
- 6. Gawk at hero appearing on Echo (5)
- 7. Slam medic unfairly for widespread outbreak (8)
- 8. Street festival is over in prison camp (6)
- 15. Blend of a Scotch I'm using as a digestive (9)
- 17. Carte blanche to discharge an operative (4,4)
- 18. Trouble country lacking capital to make a contribution (8)
- 19. Mysterious spell cast over island is ... (8)
- 20. Lightweight who's perfect? (6)
- 22. Burma goes wild over Beethoven's fifth presented in dance (6)
- 23. Old president gets about again - I should be going (6)
- 24. Happy to quaff mackerel and eel entrees with meaty flavour (5)

Quick Clues

ACROSS

- 9. Strong espresso shot with less water (9)
- 10. Bread browned by heat (5)
- 11. Act of watching or observing (7)
- 12. Layered pastry with filling (7)
- 13. Having false beliefs (10)
- 14. Self-satisfied and superior (4)
- 16. The word 'the' (8,7)
- 20. Christmas or birth (4)
- 21. Outside institutional walls (10)
- 25. Memorise completely (2,5)
- 26. Remove fastening device (7)
- 27. Slow learner (5)
- 28. Essential instrumental parts (9)

DOWN

- 1. Supplied or furnished (8)
- 2. Also or too (2,4)
- 3. Crescent-shaped pastry (9)
- 4. Male pre-wedding celebration (4,2)
- 5. Greek layered casserole (8)
- 6. Look fixedly (5)
- 7. Worldwide disease outbreak (8)
- 8. German prison camp (6)
- 15. Digestive aid medicine (9)
- 17. Unrestricted authority (4,4)
- 18. System of levying charges (8)
- 19. Three dots punctuation mark (8)
- 20. No person (6)
- 22. Latin ballroom dance (6)
- 23. Former US President (6)
- 24. Having strong flavour (5)

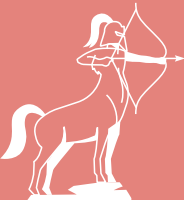
Last week's solution #85



If you would like to provide any feedback to Stephen Clarke about his crosswords please email: crosswordfeedback@echo.net.au

STARS BY LILITH

As this week's solstice marks the longest day of the southern hemisphere year, Mars in business-like Capricorn gets seriously stuck into the pre-Christmas countdown...



SAGITTARIUS THE ARCHER

ARIES: Listening rather than talking will get this week's best results. If you feel like you're caving-in under holiday responsibilities and obligations, don't make them a chore. Take the weight off. Lighten up. Mars has you pumped for taking care of festive details, but keep it fun - obsessing will only get others offside.

TAURUS: Now December's in its major spin-cycle, maintaining inner harmony's essential for dealing with this week's seasonal rock 'n rollercoaster. Mars moving from active to strategic, recommends lessening pressure by choosing quality over quantity in everything, as in picking the best, forgetting the rest and saying 'no' when necessary.

GEMINI: This week needs a concerted effort to direct thoughts, talk and action towards finding solutions rather than adding to the general pandemonium. Think twice (second nature for Geminis anyway) about buying sprees. Stick to a list. Keep receipts. Prioritise. Accept that some things just won't get done.

CANCER: From feisty new moon on 20 December onwards, Mars in your opposite cardinal sign on the astro-wheel is the red planet's best energetic placement for last minute gift shopping. During which, refuse the frantic scramble, the mad rush and dash, by adopting your personal astrological speed: Cancerian cruise control.

LEO: When this week's summer solstice marks your planet ruler's move into goalsetting mode, with an added stimulus-package from activator Mars, it's worth giving yourself the odd moment out of festive busyness to start thinking about what personal avenues of opportunity are exciting you most for the coming year.

VIRGO: Another verbally vivacious week with high accident ratings, widespread impatience and temper flares, so best select four letter words that are helpful, like calm, cool and chill. With only a few more sleeps to the main event, this week Mars offers a more helpful, objective, less stressy perspective.

LIBRA: This week wants results and progress, has zero patience with being kept waiting, could feel like a minefield of push and pressure. It calls for your most fabulous juggling act to balance its contradictory mix of arguments, goodwill, financial restrictions and excessive expectations, best done by clear, concise communicating.

SCORPIO: This week's astral lineup suggests not pushing too hard, moving too fast or spreading yourself too thin. With over-committed, potentially under-funded holiday schedules approaching burnout, zigzagging plans and arrangement alterations make this week prime time for interpersonal turbulence. Your magic password if it all gets too much? Enough.

SAGITTARIUS: When annual new moon in Sagittarius on 20 December turns a fresh page for your coming astrological year, maintain a wide-angle viewfinder and recommit to stepping out of your mental comfort zone and making each day an adventure from now on - which is, after all, your essential Sagittarian mission.

CAPRICORN: As Capricorn Annie Lennox sang: *Everybody's looking for something*, and this week's difficult people need space and patience, the easier ones want acknowledgement and appreciation. Activator Mars arriving in your sign, the energiser planet's happy place, stimulates your natural desire to do, be, and offer your best.

AQUARIUS: During annual seasonal mayhem, Mars in traditional, structured Capricorn calls for a compromise between honouring old traditions and inventing new ones, blending the best of the past with present necessities. Realistic appraisal, strategic planning and relentless self-awareness are your best friends this week. Plus that keen eye for the unusual buy.

PISCES: Fun, trouble, love and money: this week juggles them all. Everyone's talking, but who's listening. Are you? With more spin than substance in the current communication mix, your call's discernment: as in choosing worthwhile over wasteful, establishing fact from fabrication and separating wishful thinking from what's practically possible. Good luck.

MULLUM

SHOP LOCAL

This Christmas!

Santa is coming to town on Friday!

20x
\$100
vouchers
to be won!



SANTA IS COMING!

Santa will be coming to town this Friday 19 December, at midday. Look out for the fire truck! Santa will be available for photos at the Mullumbimby Newsagency at around midday.

SHOP LOCAL & WIN!

Mullum Shop Local is still on so remember to shop locally for Christmas and support the local economy. Take some time, take in the music on the street, grab a coffee, or lunch, and peruse the many gift options and services on offer – like homewares, jewellery, massage, food, drink, pets, fashion, arts, health, herbs, hardware and handicrafts, and much much more.

WEEK 3 WINNERS

Mayor Sarah Ndiaye helped Mullum Chamber stalwarts Jenelle and Gerard draw this week's lucky winners.

Seb – shopped at Dino's IGA

Mathew Griffin – shopped at Stewart's Menswear

Cass Emanull – shopped at Mullum Mac

Filip Gubica – shopped at The Source

James McCormack – shopped at James Hardware Mitre 10

James, pictured with Scott at Mitre 10, was actually one of the first ever Shop Local winners back in 2014!



An initiative of the Mullumbimby Chamber of Commerce and proudly sponsored by The Echo

MULLUMBIMBY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

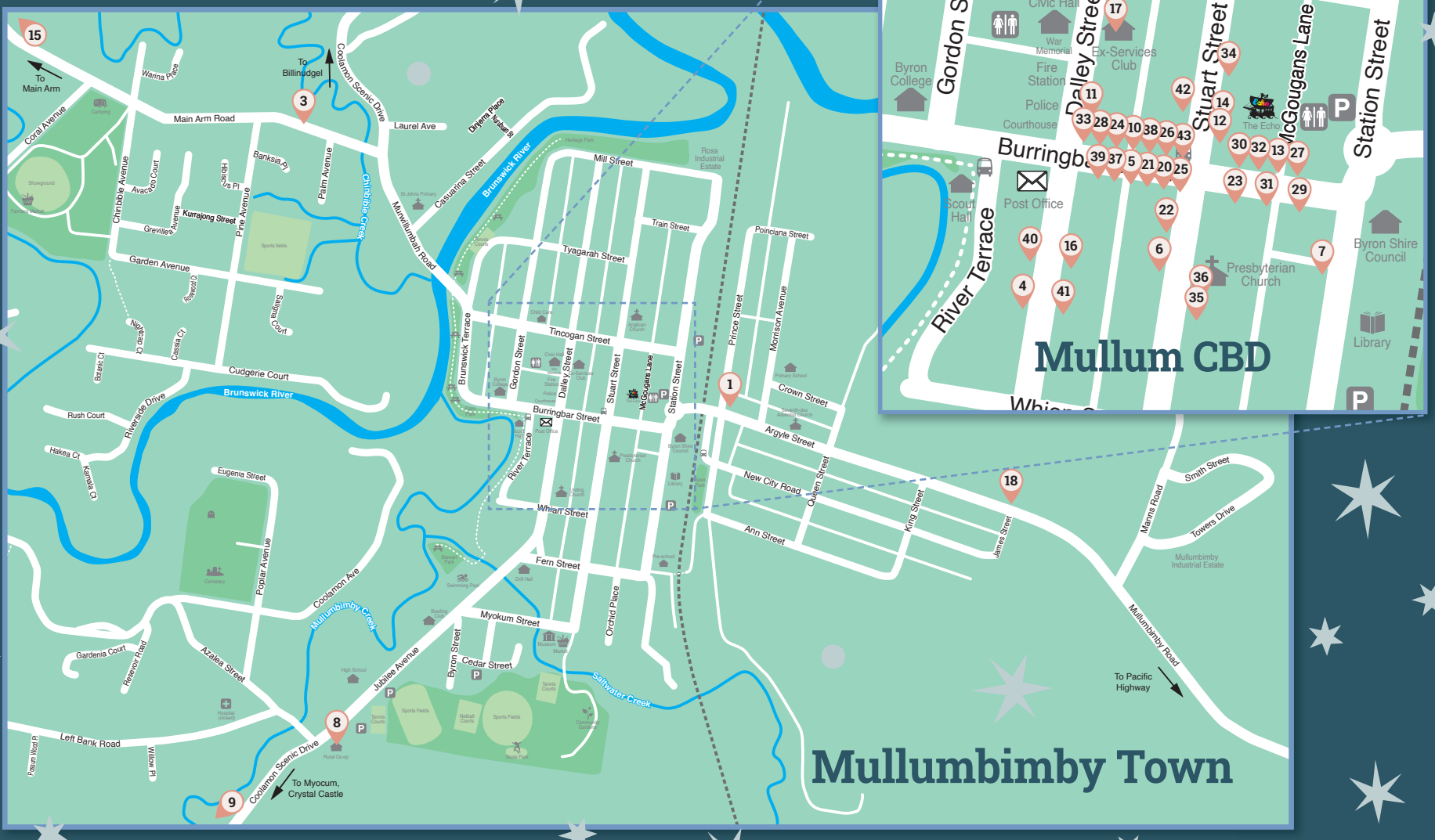
Echo

MULLUM

SHOP LOCAL

PARTICIPATING STORES

Shop local & win!



AUTO, TYRE & MECHANICAL

- 1 Carsburgs
- 2 Liberty Mullumbimby
- 3 Main Arm Mechanical
- 4 Mullumbimby Tyrepower

BOOK STORES

- 5 The Bookshop Mullumbimby

EQUIPMENT, HARDWARE & SUPPLIES

- 6 James Hardware Mitre 10
- 7 Mullumbimby Hire & Sales
- 8 Mullumbimby Rural Co-op Society
- 9 Wards Landscape Supplies

FOOD & BEVERAGES

- 10 Baker and Daughters
- 11 Byron Bay Pork and Meats
- 12 Devine Quality Meats
- 13 Dino's IGA Mullumbimby
- 14 Hooked & Cooked
- 15 Main Arm General Store
- 16 The Mullumbimby Chocolate Shop
- 17 Mullumbimby Ex-Services Club
- 18 The Paddock Project
- 19 Paséyo
- 20 The Patch Cafe
- 21 Radiance Oolong Tea House
- 22 The Source Bulk Foods Mullumbimby
- 23 Sushi Co

GIFTS & CLOTHING

- 24 Amore Mullumbimby
- 25 Bodypeace Bamboo Clothing
- 26 Hemp Culture
- 27 Madame Butterfly
- 28 Made In Mullum
- 29 MockingBird Supply Co
- 30 Stewart's Menswear
- 31 Templem Florist

HEALTH

- 32 Craig Watson Soul Pattinson Chemist
- 33 Mullum Advantage Pharmacy
- 34 Mullumbimby Comprehensive Health Centre
- 35 Mullumbimby Optometrist

HOMEWARES & ELECTRICAL

- 36 Bridglands Betta Electrical
- 37 Linen House
- 38 Mullum Instyle Living

MUSIC

- 39 Son of Drum

PET SERVICES

- 40 Mullumbimby Pet Shop
- 41 Mullumbimby Vet Clinic

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- 42 Mullum Mac
- 43 Mullumbimby Newsagency

Good Taste

Eateries Guide

BILLINUDGEL



Rosefina's Mexican

Thursday/Friday open from 4pm to late
Happy Hour 4pm to 5.30pm
Saturday 12 to 2.30pm, 5pm to late
Sunday 12.30 to 8pm

8/10 Wilfred St, Billinudgel
www.rosefinas.place

Rosefina's is going street-style with BBQ tacos for Sunday lunch

BANGALOW



Bangalow Tuckshop

Open: Tue for dinner
Wed to Sat for lunch and dinner
43 Byron Street, Bangalow
bangalowntuckshop.com
hello@bangalowntuckshop.com.au
[@Bangalowntuckshop](https://www.instagram.com/Bangalowntuckshop)

Where good food and good times bump into each other and decide to stay for a drink. They've taken modern Aussie cuisine, given it a cheeky spin, and packed it with the best locally sourced produce the Northern Rivers has to offer. Whether you're a local or just passing through, Tuckshop offers a dining experience that feels both special and familiar at the same time.

BYRON BAY



Three Blue Ducks

Located at The Farm
11 Ewingsdale Rd.
(02) 6190 8966

Open every day from 7am.
Mon-Thurs: breakfast & lunch
Fri-Sun: breakfast, lunch & dinner

Delicious new winter dinner menu, live music 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:
Every day (except Wednesday)
from 6:30am to late

14 Lawson St, Byron Bay
(02) 5642 0149
[@rocabyronbay](https://www.rocabyronbay.com.au)
www.rocabyronbay.com.au

Latin fusion all-day dining

Come and try our new summer menu. Savour our chargrilled anticuchos, indulge in fresh ceviche & oysters, or elevate your night with the Roca dining experience. Pair it all with a classic Pisco Sour or our best-selling Hot Like Papi cocktail.
COMING SOON: Roca Cabana - our brand new pool bar in the heart of Byron Bay. Follow us to find out more [@roca.cabana](https://www.instagram.com/roca.cabana)



Forest Byron Bay

Open 7 days
Breakfast: 7.30 to 10.30am
Lunch on Verandah from 12 to 3pm
Dinner: 5.30 to 9pm
crystalbrookcollection.com/byron/forest

Rainforest views, farm to table dining and a menu showcasing the best of Northern Rivers produce. Forest Byron Bay offers fresh, seasonal dishes and crafted cocktails.
Unwind with Golden Hour, 4 to 6pm Tuesday to Saturday, or enjoy house-made pasta with wine for Pasta Thursday.



NO BONES

Kitchen + Bar.
11 Fletcher Street,
BYRON BAY
0481 148 007

Celebrate Christmas at No Bones! Enjoy a vibrant five-course holiday banquet filled with festive flavours and indulgent dishes. Gather your loved ones and let us make your holiday one to remember.

Book via our website and celebrate the season.
www.nobones.co/whats-on



Lord Byron Distillery We have something for everyone...

Distillery & Tiki Bar
Open 10am-5pm
Tuesday to Saturday.
4 Banksia Drive, Byron Bay
lordbyrondistillery.com.au
(02) 8646 4901

- Distillery Tour and Tasting
 - Gin Distilling Class
 - Cocktail Classes
 - Open Friday Nights
- Book Online**



Main Street

Open for takeaway daily,
12 midday until dinner.
Menu, more details -
[@mainstreet_burgerbar](https://www.instagram.com/mainstreet_burgerbar)
18 Jonson Street
(02) 6680 8832

Open for takeaway daily, 12 midday until dinner.

Menu and more details
[@mainstreet_burgerbar](https://www.instagram.com/mainstreet_burgerbar)
'Make a meal of it'
Add chips and a drink, just \$5.



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-5pm daily

Views, Brews, Cocktails, Beats, and Eats!
Live Music Friday, Sunday.
Bookings essential.
Head to lennoxpizza.com
Follow on Insta: [@lennoxpizza](https://www.instagram.com/lennoxpizza)

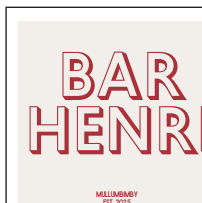
MULLUMBIMBY



Bacco Wine Bar

Opening Hours: Wednesday - Sunday
Opening times: 3pm - late
Happy Hour: 3 - 5pm
Email: bacco.mullumbimby@gmail.com
Phone: 0434 450 415
Instagram: [@bacco.mullumbimby](https://www.instagram.com/bacco.mullumbimby)

Your favourite new wine and charcuterie board bar in Mullumbimby. Italian aperitivo in true enoteca style. Buon cibo. Buon vino. Buon amici.



Bar Henri

Opening Hours:
Wednesday to Friday & Monday:
3pm - late. Tuesday: closed.
Saturday & Sunday: 8am - late
20 Burringbar St, Mullumbimby
(02) 6684 2306

About Us: Family-owned and French-inspired menu, we serve locally-sourced produce alongside a selection of natural, minimal-intervention wines and carefully curated cocktails.

Enjoy live music and entertainment in the heart of Mullumbimby.

MURWILLUMBAH



Olivewood Bistro

Located at Murwillumbah Golf Club
Open Lunch Monday - Sunday
Dinner Tuesday - Sunday
Call: (02) 6672 1799
www.murwillumbahgolfclub.com.au

We warmly welcome Olivewood Bistro to Murwillumbah Golf Club.

Locals know Le Ping and Simone from their time running 'White Olive' where they built a strong reputation for excellent food and warm hospitality.

WILSONS CREEK



Threeways of the Valley

Wednesday - Sunday 8am - 3pm
(kitchen closes at 2pm, drinks & treats till 3pm) Saturday Evenings Pizza Nights 4:30pm - 7:30pm Friday Specials 4:30 - 9pm
See website for upcoming events.
10 Huonbrook Rd, Wilsons Creek
0421 054 484 | www.threeways.store
[@threeways_of_the_valley](https://www.instagram.com/threeways_of_the_valley)

Nestled in the lush Wilsons Creek rainforest, Threeways is a vibrant, family-friendly cafe where nature, nourishment, and community meet. Enjoy seasonal, seed-oil free food, all-day breakfast, woodfired pizza nights, and upcoming Friday events. With Wi-Fi, gluten-free options, and space to relax or play, there's something for everyone.

CATERING



Celebrations Cakes by Liz Jackson

lizzijackson@gmail.com
0414 895 441

Gluten free and special dietary needs catered for.

Good Taste Deal of the Week

Christmas at No Bones

Celebrate the festive season at No Bones Byron Bay, where good vibes meet great food.

Gather your favourite people and indulge in conscious dining - a plant-based feast created to nourish body, soul and planet.

Thursday, 25th December
Two seatings available:
12:00 - 2:30 and 3:00 - 5:30pm

11 Fletcher St, Byron Bay



Christmas is coming early at Byron Farmers Market!

Byron Farmers Market will hold its Christmas market on Tuesday, 23 December this year so you can stock up on the freshest, locally-grown produce, and all the trimmings for your festive table.

Market manager Tom Carey said the market date was changed from its regular Thursday, to the Tuesday before Christmas, due to Christmas Day falling on a Thursday this year.

‘We decided to hold the market on Tuesday, 23 December this year instead of Thursday so everyone can shop just prior to Christmas and then just kick back on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day,’ Tom says. ‘The market will still be held at its usual time and place, that’s 7am to 11am at Butler Street Reserve, but on the Tuesday.’

As well as the usual wide range of fresh, local produce, Tom says the bakers and specialty makers at the market have been working hard to bring a limited run of festive fare for the silly season.

‘Sequel Bakery will be making fruit mince



Fruit mince tarts - Will at Sequel Bakery. Pure beeswax candles - Beez To You.



tarts again this year and Sunflour Canelé has a limited-edition gingerbread canelé available in December, which is hard to resist! Our local food artisans also have gift packs on offer, including Rainforest Foods, Grumpy Grandma Olives, Church Farm and Chloe Smith’s homemade chutneys, jams and bottled Christmas treats.

‘Tanya Grace, from Beez To You, has also embraced the Christmas spirit by adding festive decorated, and tree-shaped candles to her mix of pure beeswax candles. And

Marianne from Soul Food Byron Bay is making raw vegan Christmas fruitcakes and specialty packs.’

Tom says that Christmas Day is the only day the market won’t run over the Christmas and New Year period: ‘Apart from the Tuesday Christmas market, we will be open as usual every Thursday morning in Byron, including New Year’s Day, and every Saturday morning in Bangalow.’

‘On behalf of all our farmers and producers, I’d like to wish our customers and community a Christmas filled with great food and good health!’

■ Byron Farmers Christmas Market will be held on Tuesday, December 23 from 7am to 11am at Butler St Reserve (and closed Christmas Day) and will also be open as usual on New Year’s Day on Thursday, January 1. Bangalow Farmers Market will be open every Saturday from 7am to 11am in Piccabeen Park.

Lord Byron Distillery strikes gold at Sydney Royal Easter Show



The Lord Byron Distillery crew celebrating with some of their prize-winning Doublewood pure single rum.

Lord Byron Distillery has added another major accolade to its growing list of achievements, taking home a prestigious gold medal at the Sydney Royal Easter Show for its latest release: the Pure Single Rum Doublewood. The award recognises excellence in craftsmanship, flavour and innovation, shining a spotlight on one of Byron Bay’s most dedicated and sustainability-driven producers.

The winning spirit is a locally-made ‘pure single rum’ crafted from molasses sourced entirely within the Northern Rivers. The region produces an impressive 1.7 million tonnes of sugarcane each year and holds the distinction of being the first region in Australia to grow sugarcane (1874)—heritage that continues to support local farmers and the broader agricultural economy. This connection to local cane makes the rum distinctly regional, reinforcing Lord Byron Distillery’s commitment to sourcing ingredients close to home.

After fermentation and distillation on site, this limited release rum has been matured for a total of six years. Four years in an ex-bourbon cask developed warm notes of vanilla, caramel and toasted oak, before being transferred into an ex-Pedro Ximénez sherry cask for a further two years. This ‘doublewood’ maturation builds layers of dried fruit, raisin, spice and richness,

resulting in a complex Australian rum that clearly impressed judges at this year’s Sydney Royal Easter Show.

Located in the Byron Bay Arts & Industry Estate, Lord Byron Distillery has earned a reputation as one of the country’s leaders in sustainable spirit production. The family-owned operation is a zero-waste distillery running entirely on renewable energy.

The distillery has also become a popular attraction for locals and visitors. Guided tours take guests behind the scenes to see each stage of production, from tasting raw Northern Rivers molasses to barrel-aged spirits. Tastings showcase a select range of products, while hands-on gin-making and cocktail masterclasses offer a fun, immersive experience.

The gold medal win marks an important milestone for Lord Byron Distillery and further elevates the Northern Rivers’ place in Australia’s craft spirit’s landscape. With its Pure Single Rum Doublewood now recognised at a national level, the distillery continues to prove that world-class spirits – crafted with care, local ingredients and a deep commitment to sustainability – are being made right here in Northern NSW.

■ Top Tip: don’t miss a visit to the cellar door and experience their world-famous Pina Colada served in a frozen pineapple!

Burgerlesque: Top Pub in Mullum lifts food game



Just some of the tasty treats being served up on the new full bistro menu at the Top Pub in Mullumbimby.

Mullum’s iconic Courthouse Hotel, now renovated, under new ownership and known as the Top Pub, has now made yet another improvement in its food offering to include some of the most-cherished dishes of German-trained culinary artist Raffael collected from his years working in kitchens throughout the world. And amazingly, he’s also an ‘art’ artist as well, the founder and creator of Lume Gallery in Byron’s A&I Estate.

His quirky festival food caravan Burgerlesque, has expanded its gourmet burger menu into a full bistro menu, including pub classics, for a pop-up (at least until June), under Raffael, whose professional journey began at the world-renowned Hotel Traube Tonbach. This iconic establishment, celebrated for its deep culinary heritage, provided the foundation for his skills and work ethic. Immersed in an environment defined by precision, tradition, and creativity, he developed a passion for food that would shape the early years of his career.

After completing his apprenticeship, Raffael ventured out into the world, eager to broaden his horizons and refine his craft. He worked in

kitchens across several continents, gaining hands-on experience in Canada, England, and Australia. Each destination offered its own culinary influences, ingredients, and cultural perspectives, enriching his understanding of global cuisine and further deepening his relationship with food. In 2006, his travels ultimately led him back to Australia, where he chose to settle and build the next chapter of his life.

For the past 20 years, Raffael has also followed another deeply-rooted calling – the desire to work as an artist. This passion guided him into a diverse creative life filled with experimentation, design, and craftsmanship. He founded and curated Lume Gallery in the heart of Byron Bay’s Arts & Industry Estate, transforming the space into a home for contemporary art and community. Alongside curating exhibitions, he immersed himself in his own artistic practices: designing and manufacturing high-end leather accessories under the label Lohmann Leather, and creating distinctive lighting installations crafted from soft metals and hand-blown glass, which he showcases under the handle Raffaellohmann.

While his artistic career flourished, Raffael never fully stepped away from the hospitality world. The rhythm of the kitchen and the joy of serving food remained a constant thread throughout his life. Eventually, this thread drew him back into the industry, inspiring him to combine his culinary background with his artistic sensibilities. This fusion resulted in the creation of Burgerlesque, which quickly became known for its creativity, quality, and personality—much like the man behind it.

Recently, Raffael was invited to bring Burgerlesque into the iconic Courthouse Hotel, now known as the Top Pub, in Mullumbimby as a pop-up kitchen.

Embracing the opportunity, he expanded his offering beyond his celebrated burger menu to include a full bistro menu. The new selection features classic pub favourites alongside some of his most cherished dishes collected from his years of global culinary experience. This collaboration will continue at least until the end of June, giving locals and visitors alike a perfect chance to enjoy his food in a relaxed, welcoming venue.

■ The kitchen at the Top Pub now operates seven days a week, serving lunch from 12pm to 2.30pm and dinner from 5pm to 8pm. With Raffael at the helm, it’s a moment worth making the most of.

BYRON BAY PORK & MEATS BUTCHERY



Come in and see our friendly staff for a choice of local, grass fed, organic & free-range meats. All antibiotic and hormone free.

Mon–Fri 6am to 5pm / Sat 6am to midday
70 Dalley St, Mullumbimby | 6684 2137

Bimbi COFFEE SHOP

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





FESTIVE SEASON

Christmas Services...



HOLY SPIRIT AND ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PARISHES

The Christmas season brings news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Only with the JOY-filled HOPE offered by Jesus Christ, is there truly Christmas!

Yet, as we experience the world with all its extraordinary-beauty, its challenges and opportunities, joy-filled hope may not be so soon recognised in our hearts.

Christmas reassures us that even in the midst of personal and many other destabilising aspects

of social and economic affairs, His peace and His harmony can be heartfelt in our communities. May that joy-filled hope remain with you forever,

And may the New Year 2026 bring many exciting opportunities to serve one another. Happy birthday Jesus, you show us your Light!, Fr David Gilbey, Pastor.

Holy Spirit Catholic Parish: St Finbarr's, Byron Bay and St Kevin's Bangalow.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC PARISH
BANGALOW/BYRON BAY

Christmas Eve
24th December

St Kevin's Catholic Church,
Deacon St,
BANGALOW

St Finbarr's Catholic Church,
50 Tennyson St,
BYRON BAY

Christmas Day
25th December

St Finbarr's Catholic Church,
50 Tennyson St,
BYRON BAY

St Kevin's Catholic Church,
Deacon St,
BANGALOW



Byron Bay Parish Office: 6685 6260



St John's Catholic Parish Brunswick Valley



Christmas Mass Times 2025

Christmas Eve
5.30pm: Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Brunswick Heads
7pm: St John's Church, Brunswick Valley

Christmas Day
8am: St John's Church, Brunswick Valley

Enquiries: 02 6684 2106



ANGLICAN PARISH OF BYRON

Anglicans are supporting a growing movement promoting peace throughout our communities. The Anglican churches of All Soul's Bangalow, St Martin's Mullumbimby and St Paul's Byron Bay will be displaying banners promoting 'Peace on Earth'.

Luke Chapter 2, tells of an angel announcing to shepherds the birth of a Saviour, then a crowd of angels proclaim the coming peace on earth. Problems can some times seem so huge that we don't know what we can do.

Seeking ways to know peace in ourselves is a good start. This creates potential for peace to flow through our families, communities and beyond. Our prayer is that we may share a sense of hope which fosters peace and love for all peoples.

With every blessing, Byron Anglicans

BYRON BAY SERVICES CLUB (BBSC)

The Bistro is the heart of BBSC - offering an inviting atmosphere paired with exceptional food. Whether you want a quick bite or a leisurely meal, their menu has something for everyone. Each dish is crafted with the freshest ingredients by their exceptional Head Chef, Teaghan Peddie, and his team of dedicated staff. Highlights include mouthwatering steaks, juicy burgers, fresh salads, and ever-changing weekly specials to keep patrons spoilt for choice!

The Bistro's spacious, light-filled setting and the team's commitment to providing the best service and a friendly 'home away from home' atmosphere makes BBSC the perfect spot for both casual get-togethers and special occasions.

Indulge in the outstanding flavours and enjoy an unforgettable dining experience.

132 Jonson Street, Byron Bay

02 6685 6878

www.byronbayservicesclub.com.au



Celebrate Christmas with The Anglican Parish of Byron

Christmas Eve 24th December 6pm

*'Family Christmas Extravaganza'
All Souls' 1 Ashton Street, Bangalow*

Christmas Day 25th December

7.30am St Thomas'
21 Fingal Street, Brunswick Heads

9am St Martin's
38 Stuart Street, Mullumbimby

9am All Souls'
1 Ashton Street, Bangalow

9am St Paul's
14 Kingsley Street, Byron Bay

A promotional graphic for a Christmas Eve Seafood Raffle. It features two large, detailed illustrations of cooked prawns on either side of the text. The text is set against a light background with a green border. At the bottom left, there is a small yellow sun icon.

Christmas Eve...
SEAFOOD RAFFLE
\$1,750 worth of Seafood!
25 x \$70 Trays!
DRAWN: 6.30pm
Perfect for Christmas Day

A promotional graphic for a live performance by the band The Feramones. It features a photograph of the five band members standing together on a stage, smiling and posing for the camera. The background shows a crowd of people at a concert.

THE FERAMONES
SATURDAY 27 DEC: 7pm LIVE & FREE

A promotional graphic for the Byron Bay Services Club. It features a yellow sun icon on the left and the club's name and contact information on the right.

BYRON BAY SERVICES CLUB
02 6685 6878 | Jonson Street, Byron Bay
www.byronbayservicesclub.com.au



CACTUS HILL

Christmas has arrived at Cactus Hill, the first in their new home, the Bridglunds Building in Burringbar Street, Mullumbimby

Cactus Hill is fully stocked with the usual gems as well as a few other exciting brands exclusive to Cactus Hill. Pop in to grab some thoughtfully curated table decorations. Or, perhaps it's time for a tableware restock or a cushion shuffle up?

As always, they have what you know and love, the Perfume oils, the Izipizi and home candles for ambiance and fragrance. If your house doesn't need anything else then spoil yourself, your family or friends. If nothing else then call in just to say and say hi to Saffron, Bianca and Ann for a chat or styling advice.

Bridglunds Building at 69 Burringbar Street, Mullumbimby
@cactushillproject

ARCAA STORE

Arcaa's Byron Bay store is the place to find something truly special for her. Alongside their signature ready-to-wear, the store is home to gifts designed for summer living; towels, hats, jewellery, bags, shoes, sunglasses, incense and more. Each piece chosen for its quality, and timeless appeal, making it effortless to find a gift she'll love anytime.

If you're not quite sure what to choose, Arcaa's friendly retail team is there to help curate the perfect piece. And for the woman who prefers to choose for herself, their Gift Cards are an easy, thoughtful option.

Located in the heart of the Byron Arts and Industry Estate, Arcaa offers a relaxed shopping experience and a beautiful selection of gifts for the season. Your go-to destination for considered, elevated gifting.

4B/11 Banksia Drive, Byron Bay
arcaamovement.co
@arcaamovement

The perfect gift...

- DESIGNER FURNITURE •
- CHRISTMAS GIFTS •
- DECORATIVE OBJECTS •

TEXTILES, ACCESSORIES AND ART

Curated in collaboration with local and international artisans.

Visit us at our new location
Bridglunds Building
69 Burringbar Street,
Mullumbimby



02 5643 9333
 home@cactushill.com.au
 cactushillproject.com
 f @cactushillproject

cactus hill



ARCAA.

Gifts For Her.

Come visit us in store:
4B/11 Banksia Dr, Byron Bay NSW 2481
@arcaamovement
arcaamovement.co



The perfect gift...

BYRON BAY CHOCOLATE CO

The Byron Bay Chocolate Co. was founded in 1985 by husband and wife team David and Carole O'Connor and for more than 30 years their family has poured their hearts and souls into every single chocolate made, using only the highest quality, freshest ingredients. The quality of their product has ensured their long-term success.

From humble beginnings, the Chocolate Co. has grown rapidly over the years, enjoying sweet success and a loyal customer base locally and globally. From the very beginning, all chocolates have been, and continue to be, handmade with love at their small family factory in Byron Bay.

Chocoholics throughout Australia and all around the world look forward to the next time they can indulge in these delicious sweet treats!

02 6685 8062
byronbaychocolateco.com.au
 @byronbaychocolateco

Australia's Finest Chocolate-Coated Fruit & Nuts



**A GREAT COMBINATION –
 CHRISTMAS AND BYRON BAY CHOCOLATE CO!**
OVER 30 DIFFERENT FLAVOURS TO CHOOSE FROM
AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING LOCAL STORES
www.byronbaychocolateco.com.au
 02 6685 8062 @byronbaychocolateco



BYRON BAY CAMPING & DISPOSALS

Your one-stop shop for Christmas and your next outdoor adventure.

If you need sleeping bags, tents, workboots, knives, lighting, kitchenware, stoves, mattresses, rainwear, snorkelling and fishing gear – they have it!

Byron Bay Camping & Disposals is a locally-owned-and-operated family business of over 40 years. Located in the Byron Bay Arts and Industry Estate, with plenty of parking available.

Come in and meet the team. Their staff will give you friendly, expert advice, no matter whether your next adventure is a campout, bush school, fishing trip, multi-day hike, or you need Christmas present inspiration.

1/1 Tasman Way, Byron Bay
0439 212 153
www.byron-camping.com.au
theteam@byron-camping.com.au

The perfect gift...

THE ISLAND LUXE FAMILY

A family that shares a passion for travel... for the road less travelled, seeking beauty and inspiration in nature's artistry and architecture.

A love of finding old and antique objects characterised by their imperfections; fabrics and textiles that stand the test of time; art and curiosities that tell a story.

An aesthetic rooted in a timeless simplicity and a belief that we can experience a holistic sense of the world, and ourselves, through restraint and making considered choices for the way we curate our lives.

The Island Luxe ethos redefines luxury, reminding us that space with imperfections shows that nothing furnishes more beautifully and luxuriously than the spirit and the soul, and creating an immersive and transportive experience that mirrors our emotions when we travel.

Island Luxe
62 Byron Street, Bangalow
info@islandluxe.com.au

Island Luxe Tribe
1/11 Marvell Street, Byron Bay
tribe@islandluxe.com.au



PHONE: 0439 212 153
SHOP 1/1 TASMAN WAY,
BYRON BAY NSW 2481
WWW.BYRON-CAMPING.COM.AU
THETEAM@BYRON-CAMPING.COM.AU



ISLAND LUXE

*We wish you
a wonderful festive season*

TO ALL OUR CUSTOMERS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO 2026, AND BRINGING
YOU NEW AND EXCITING COLLECTIONS.

MAY YOU HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY.

ISLAND LUXE TEAM

WILDBILLY BOOKS & BRUNSBOOKS

The seaside bookshops WildBilly Books in Byron and BrunsBooks in Brunswick Heads are two vintage-style coastal book havens, where magic becomes something you can hold in your hands. Both stores offer a beautifully created blend of mostly recycled, but also a selection of the latest literature. Believing books deserve more than one life, both stores welcome your pre-loved favourites in return for credit toward the recycled collection. Whether you're a devoted collector, or a leisurely beach-day browser, BrunsBooks and WildBilly Books invite you to linger, wander, and discover stories as timeless as the tide. Visit instore for Christmas mystery gifts, beautiful gift wrapping and lovely accessories that are the perfect accompaniment to a good book.

WildBilly Books: 11 Fletcher Street, Byron Bay
BrunsBooks: On Fingal Street, opposite the school
0493 355 719

SON OF DRUM

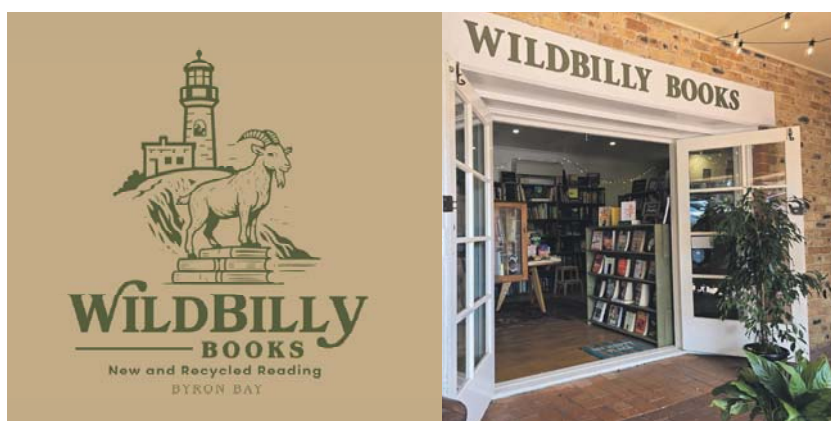
Treat your earholes this Xmas with a gift from Son of Drum Musical Instruments in Mullumbimby! Their latest range includes all sorts of folk and world instruments, tribal percussion, beautiful chimes and sound healing items, and plenty of fun stuff for the kids, so they've got everyone covered, from grommets to grannies! And if you're no muso, no problem; get moving instead with some fun toys such as glo poi, fire staff, juggling balls and more. And of course they've got all the strings, accessories, onstage and recording gear you need, so get down to 31 Burringbar Street, Mullumbimby and sort yourself out!

02 6684 1742
Shop 1/31 Burringbar St, Mullumbimby
sonofdrum.com.au

The perfect gift...

FESTIVE SEASON

Beachside Book Havens for Summer reading needs.



A hidden gem, tucked away at 11 Fletcher Street, 50m down from Byron Surf Club and down the paved pathway.



Fingal Street, Brunswick Heads.

son of drum Musical Instruments

Taste with your ears!



Ph. 02 6684 1742
Shop 1/31 Burringbar St
Mullumbimby NSW 2482

www.sonofdrum.com.au
@son_of_drum_store



VAE MEDICAL AESTHETICS

This festive season get event-ready with Vae Medical Aesthetics in Newrybar. Vae offers Broad-Band Light and Moxi Laser, cosmetic injectables, bioremodelling/biostimulating treatments, Rejuran (salmon facial), SkinPen Microneedling, PRP treatments, and Healite LED packages. Vae is a doctor-led-and-owned clinic offering considered and evidence-based skin treatments and rejuvenation in the beautiful Byron Bay hinterland.

Book in today with one of their lovely female GPs; Dr Jemma Buultjens, Dr Kate Allan and RN Emma Walker.

www.vaemedicalaesthetics.com
@vaemedicalaesthetics
16 Old Pacific Highway, Newrybar
0422 639 013

GIVE THE GIFT OF ADVENTURE

Better by Bike can help you get outdoors, with sales on fat-tyre e-bikes and Giant bikes, both catering to different riding styles. They even have pre-loved Ampd Bros offering quality at a friendlier price point. What matters most is finding something that gets you outside.

Gift vouchers offer easy flexibility, they can fund a rail trail adventure for someone curious about e-bikes, or contribute toward a new bike whenever they're ready to commit.

Behind every sale sits 30 years of riding knowledge. They're a team of local bike enthusiasts who've navigated countless trails and understand what bikes work for different riders and terrains.

Whether you're buying for yourself or someone else, the real gift is time spent exploring. Call to find out more!

0408444858
betterbybike.com.au



vae MEDICAL AESTHETICS

A doctor led and owned skin, laser and cosmetic clinic

Get your skin summer ready with our team

We offer Broad Band Light and Moxi Laser, cosmetic injectables including volume, bio-remodelling / bio-stimulating, anti-wrinkle, PRP treatments, hydrafacial, chemical peels and Healite LED packages.

We are offering complimentary skin consultations for the month of December!

Book in today with one of our lovely female practitioners; Dr Jemma Buultjens, Dr Kate Allan and Emma Walker RN.

0422 639 013 • info@vaemedicalaesthetics.com
www.vaemedicalaesthetics.com @vaemedicalaesthetics
The Harvest Precinct, 16 Old Pacific Highway, Newrybar.



UNWRAP EPIC ADVENTURE THIS CHRISTMAS!

\$400 off Fatboy e-bikes, offer ends Dec 30. Plus Giant bikes for the whole crew.

- Fatboy, Ampd Bros & DiroDi fat-tyre e-bikes
- Snag a used Ampd Bros for \$1,995 ⚡ only 4 left!
- Giant & Moustache bikes for kids & weekend warriors
- Gift vouchers for e-bike hire - a taste of adventure!

CHECK OUR RANGE: BETTERBYBIKE.COM.AU

BIKE SERVICE & REPAIR SPECIALISTS

All bikes serviced by riders who know their stuff. 30+ years & fat-tyre experts. Bookings essential.



0408 444 858
Murwillumbah Railway Station
Open 7 days





BYRON BAY RURAL FIRE SERVICE SANTA RUN

The much-loved annual Byron Bay Rural Fire Service Santa Run is back, bringing festive cheer from Suffolk Park to Byron Bay and returning to finish at the fire station in Gaggin Park. Families are invited to line the streets and join in the fun as Santa rides the fire engine alongside our dedicated Byron Bay Rural Fire Service volunteers, spreading joy, waves, and holiday spirit throughout the community.

With several scheduled stops along the way, there will be plenty of opportunities for kids to meet Santa, snap a photo, and say hello to the crew who work so hard to keep our community safe. This wonderful family event has become a highlight of the season - an uplifting celebration of community connection, local heroes, and the simple magic of Christmas in our region.

See ad below for times and locations.

Byron Bay Rural Fire Service SANTA RUN!

Santa will be doing his yearly run with our wonderful Byron Bay Rural Fire Service volunteers on Sunday December 21st. Come and say hello at one of the stops along the way between Suffolk Park and Byron Bay, starting and finishing at the Fire Station in Gaggin Park on Alcorn Street.





HAPPY SUMMER SEASON

Enjoy your holiday, or splash out on the greatest gift of all, a wholesome experience with your loved ones. A hot air balloon flight with friends, family, or staff is not only a magical moment but also healthy, outdoors, and educational.

Learning the physics of flight whilst floating in the air across the Northern Rivers at sunrise is a special occasion not to be missed. Included is a delicious breakfast at the iconic Three Blue Ducks restaurant, the cherry on top of a great morning out!

Book your journey at
www.balloonaloft.com

GIVE THE GIFT OF CIRCUS

This summer, give your kids the gift of strength, confidence, and creativity.

Spaghetti Circus Term 1 2026 enrolments **NOW OPEN!**

All ages. All abilities. All skill levels.
 All fun.

Classes for everyone:
 Preschool (2-5 years) - parent & child bonding:
 Community (5-12 years) - skills, confidence & friendships.
 Somersault teens (13+ years) - flip, fly & find your crew.

Adults - because kids shouldn't have all the fun!

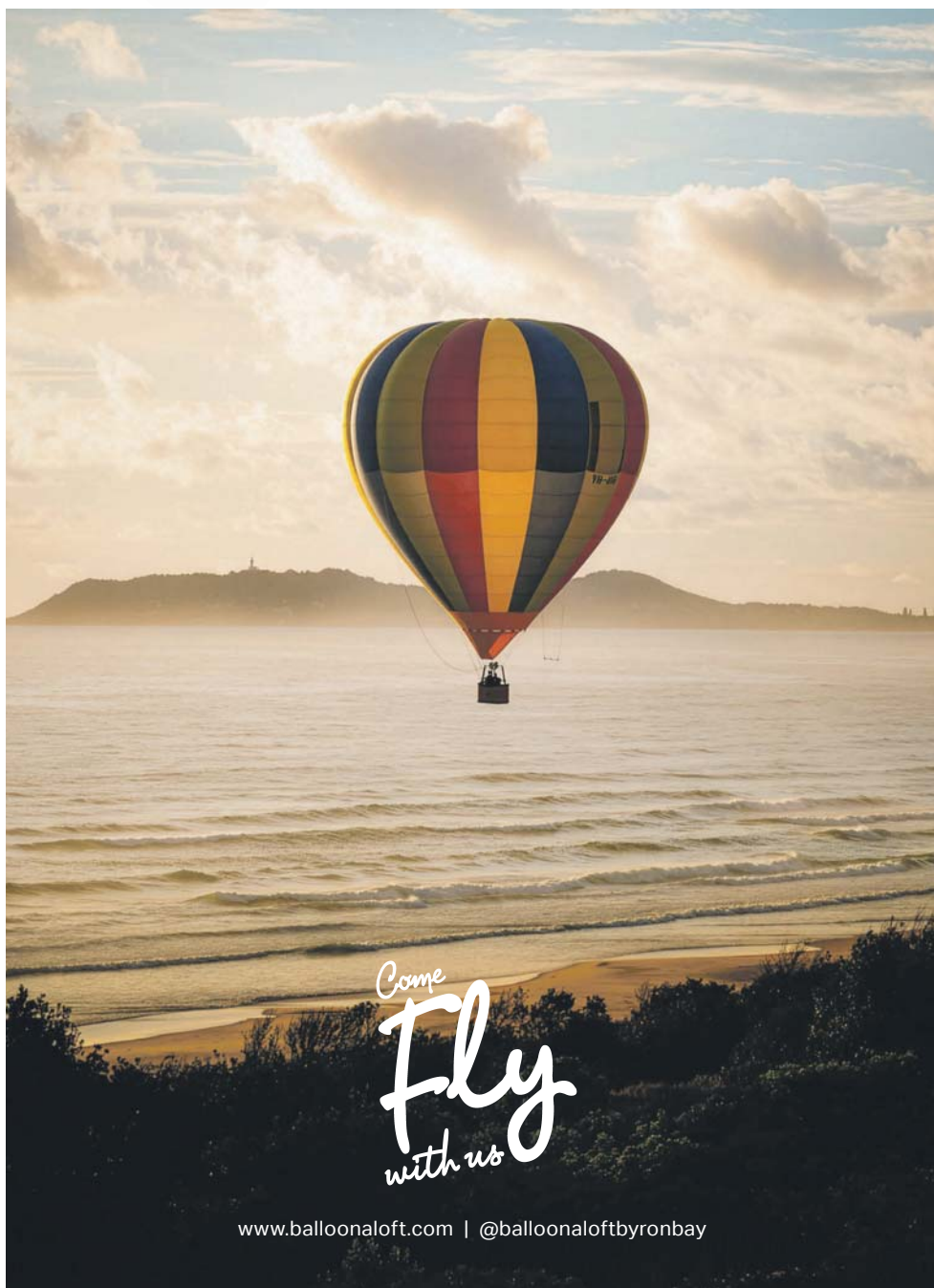
EARLY BIRD: Save \$30 per class - enrol by 26 January.

Not ready to commit?

Holiday Workshops: 27-29 January 2026 (ages 4-14).

Open Day: 31 January 2026, 9:30am-2pm (\$5 per session)
Spaces limited.
Term 1 starts 2 February 2026.
Book: www.SpaghettiCircus.com
(02) 6684 3038
Mullumbimby Showground

The perfect gift...



Come Fly with us

www.balloonaloft.com | [@balloonaloftbyronbay](https://www.instagram.com/balloonaloftbyronbay)



GIVE THE GIFT OF CIRCUS

www.SpaghettiCircus.com

MULLUMBIMBY SHOWGROUND

FESTIVE SEASON

WATTLEBEE BABY

Beautiful essentials for bump, baby and beyond

Wattlebee Baby is the Northern Rivers only boutique baby store with everything in one place. Families can explore a curated range of maternity wear, postpartum care, baby clothing, feeding essentials, prams, cots, car seats, toys and gifts.

As a local family-owned business, they proudly support Australian and Northern Rivers makers and choose products that are practical, beautiful and future focused. Wattlebee Baby was created to give local families a trusted place to find the essentials they need close to home.

Shop 8, Ballina Central, 44 Bangalow Road, Ballina
0412 061 002
@wattlebeebaby
www.wattlebeebaby.com.au

STONEKIN STORE IS NOW HERE IN BYRON

Stonekin's first store is officially open. Discover their full collection of organic cotton underwear, now available to explore in person. Try on the pieces, feel the fabrics, and explore the fits that have shaped our brand. Visit in store for 10% off your first purchase.

The space reflects their ethos: thoughtful design, natural materials, and comfort without compromise.

Stonekin Store is open and the team looks forward to welcoming you in store soon.

Mon to Fri: 10am to 4pm
Sat: 10am to 1pm
2/97 Centennial Circuit, Arts & Industry Estate
02 6680 7667

The perfect gift...

Wattlebee Baby

From Bump to Baby and Beyond

HOLIDAY SPECIALS

Maxi-Cosi Bonus Gift

Buy any Maxi-Cosi car seat or capsule before 15 December and receive a free Maxi-Cosi mirror. Safe travels start here.

Uppababy Stroller Offer

Purchase any Uppababy stroller before 20 December and get a free Uppababy bevv cooler. Perfect for summer family adventures.

Christmas Giveaway

Spend \$100 in store before 20 December and go in the draw to win our Christmas giveaway. Winners drawn 22 December.

1st Prize:
Mother's Choice Adore Car Seat

2nd & 3rd Prizes:
Gift hampers

Gift Vouchers The perfect gift when you don't know what to give!

wattlebeebaby.com.au @wattlebeebaby

Shop 8 Ballina Centre Shopping Centre • 44 Bangalow Road, Ballina

Byron Bay Store Opening

Men's & Women's Organic Cotton Essentials

2/97 Centennial Circuit
Byron Arts & Industrial

Holiday opening hours
 Mon - Fri / 10am to 4pm
 Sat / 9am to 12pm

stonekin

health & healing



Bangalow Headache Clinic

At Bangalow Headache Clinic they treat headaches and migraines, jaw pain, clicking, grinding and locking, as well as vestibular disorders and dizziness.

Physiotherapist Michael Hayward has done extensive studies and exams, in both Australia and Europe, involving the head, neck and jaw. He has completed advanced vestibular competency training with the Northern American leaders in this area.

At Bangalow Headache Clinic they quite often find an overlap between headache and dizziness and/or headache and jaw problems.

If you experience jaw pain, locking or clicking, headaches, migraines or vertigo, call them on 0475 757 510
72 Byron Street, Bangalow
www.bangalowheadacheclinic.com.au



Santos Organics

A Social Enterprise with Heart and Integrity

Since 1978, Santos Organics has been more than a health food store - it's now also a 100% not-for-profit social enterprise dedicated to nourishing people and the Planet. Every purchase directly supports local farmers, environmental projects and community wellbeing initiatives, ensuring your shopping choices create positive impact.

What truly sets Santos Organics apart is its unwavering commitment to ethics. Every product is carefully reviewed and approved by an in-house ethics and research specialist, ensuring that it meets the highest standards of sustainability, fairness and integrity. And with its vibrant cafés, a curated natural apothecary and free in-store naturopathic consultations, Santos Organics makes conscious living simple, affordable and deeply meaningful.

Open Mon to Fri 8:30am-6pm
Sat 8:30am-5pm and Sun 10am-4pm
105 Jonson St, Byron Bay
Unit 3, 7-17 Brigantine St, Byron Arts & Industry Estate, Byron Bay
51/53 Burringbar St, Mullumbimby
santosorganics.com.au

Study for a life of health, healing, and purpose with subsidised places available

Support your wellbeing and step into a more purposeful path with Byron Community College. Applications for certificate courses are closing soon, with subsidised places available across Permaculture, Individual Support, Mental Health, and Visual Arts. Each course is designed to foster connection, resilience, and holistic healing.

The College is also welcoming Expressions of Interest for Massage Therapy and Community Services, with subsidised places available for eligible students. These pathways are ideal for those drawn to nurturing others and contributing to healthier, more supported communities.

Begin the new year with intention and explore study that aligns with health, healing, and personal growth.

For more information or to apply, phone (02) 6684 3374 or visit byroncollege.org.au

This training is subsidised by the NSW Government. RTO: 90013



Starlight Festival

New Year, new energy, new possibilities. This January 1-4, the Starlight Festival returns to Bangalow, celebrating three decades of community, connection, and conscious living. From its humble beginnings at the Byron Surf Club in 1996, Starlight has grown from a grassroots gathering into one of the region's most beloved wellness festivals, now welcoming visitors from around Australia and beyond.

Across four uplifting days, experience yoga, sound healing, breathwork, workshops, and nourishing food, all designed to inspire wellbeing, curiosity, and inner transformation. Explore wellness markets, connect with local healers, have a Tarot reading, and share the journey with friends and family with two-for-one entry Thursday and Friday.

Begin 2026 with intention and step into peace, purpose, and possibility at the Starlight Festival.

Tickets are \$40 and are available at the door or online: starlightfestival.com.au

Dr Sam Gartland

Dr Sam Gartland is a UK-trained doctor, whose practice of medicine has been profoundly influenced by his own recovery from multiple sclerosis (MS). His area of interest is Lifestyle Medicine, a lifestyle approach centering on plant-based nutrition. Sam's new practice, Life Medical Mullumbimby, offers Lifestyle Medicine consultations that address the causes of disease alongside GP services, skin-checks and natural therapies.

Sam also holds a Masters in Sports Medicine. He has worked with Premier League and 'A' League football clubs and has been published in Sports Medicine literature. He has been a retreat facilitator for Overcoming MS and is a co-author of the *Overcoming MS Handbook*. Sam is committed to empowering others with the skills and knowledge to optimise their health.

Life Medical Mullumbimby
02 6680 2486
113 Stuart St, Mullumbimby
www.lifemedicalmullumbimby.com.au



byron healing

byronhealing.com.au

Byron healing is a go-to website featuring informative and entertaining articles on health and wellbeing. It features a host of practitioners and businesses in the industry, offering a range of modalities and services across the Northern Rivers.



Upcoming byron healing client events

AHC33822 Certificate III in Permaculture

Held by: Byron College
Date: 3 February 2026 – 2 December 2026
Time: Tue & Wed 9am – 3.30pm
Address: Mullum campus, 6/8 Burringbar St
Booking contact: (02) 6684 3374
customer@byroncollege.org.au
www.byroncollege.org.au

CHC43315 Certificate IV in Mental Health

Held by: Byron College
Date: 2 February – 26 August 2026
Time: Mon & Wed 9am – 3pm
Address: Mullum campus, 6/8 Burringbar St
Booking contact: (02) 6684 3374
customer@byroncollege.org.au
www.byroncollege.org.au

CHC33021 Certificate III in Individual Support Ageing and Disability

Held by: Byron College
Date: 27 January – 1 July 2026 or 14 July – 16 December 2026
Time: Tue & Wed 9am – 4pm
Address: Mullum campus, 6/8 Burringbar St
Booking contact: (02) 6684 3374
customer@byroncollege.org.au
www.byroncollege.org.au

CUA31125 Certificate III in Visual Arts

Held by: Byron College
Date: 3 February – 29 July 2026 or 16 June – 9 December 2026
Time: 9am – 4pm
Address: Mullum campus, 6/8 Burringbar St
Booking contact: (02) 6684 3374
customer@byroncollege.org.au
www.byroncollege.org.au

CHC42021 Certificate IV in Community Services

Held by: Byron College
Date: TBC
Time: TBC
Address: Mullum campus, 6/8 Burringbar St
Booking contact: (02) 6684 3374
customer@byroncollege.org.au
www.byroncollege.org.au

HLT42021 Certificate IV in Massage Therapy

Held by: Byron College
Date: TBC
Time: TBC
Address: Mullum campus, 6/8 Burringbar St
Booking contact: (02) 6684 3374
customer@byroncollege.org.au
www.byroncollege.org.au

Compassionate Communication Foundation Training

Held by: Empathy Catalyst
Date: 9 – 11 January 2026
Time: 9am – 4.30pm
Address: Byron Community Cabin
Carlyle St, Byron Bay
Booking contact: www.empathycatalyst.com/
compassionate-communication-foundation-training
withsingingheart@hotmail.com
0422 032 619

Find Your Voice:

A Magical Healing Experience

A transformative afternoon exploring voice, healing, and emerging therapeutic approaches.
Held by: Tania de Jong at
Mind Medicine Australia
Date: 3 January 2026
Time: 2pm
Booking contact:
https://starlightfestival.com.au

The Latest on Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies

A transformative afternoon exploring voice, healing, and emerging therapeutic approaches.
Held by: Tania de Jong
Mind Medicine Australia
Date: 3 January 2026
Time: 5pm
Booking contact:
https://starlightfestival.com.au

Ask Me Anything: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Psychedelic-Assisted Therapies

Free online webinar with Professor David Nutt (UK), one of the world's leading researchers in psychedelic science. Learn how and why psychedelic-assisted therapies work, hear the latest research and clinical directions, and participate in an open Q&A.
Held by: Mind Medicine Australia
Date: Wednesday, 25 February 2026
Time: 7 – 8.15pm
Booking contact:
https://events.humanitix.com/mind-medicine-australia-free-webinar-ask-me-anything-everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-psychedelic-assisted-therapies-with-professor-david-nutt-uk-2026

Qigong & Meditation Weekend with Shirsha Marie

Practices which cultivate life-force and deepen the heart-mind
Held by: Heart Mind Centre
Date: 17 – 18 January 2026
Time: 9am to 5pm each day
Address: Sangsurya Retreat Centre,
Byron Bay
Booking contact: 0400 558 181
info@heartmindcentre.com.au

Articles



Teens prefer suntan, in spite of cancer risk

David Lowe

New research from The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) has revealed half of teenagers say they'd prefer to look suntanned, with a quarter falsely believing a suntan will protect them from skin cancer.

Dermatologists say it's an alarming finding, with Australia facing one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world.

The National Child Health Poll surveyed more than 1,400 Australian parents as well as one of their children aged between 12 and 17 about tanning, sunburn and their knowledge of sun safety.

Key findings

- Almost three quarters (72 per cent) of teens report being sunburnt at least once over a six-month period, with close to half (44 per cent) burnt multiple times.

- Pro-tanning attitudes are common among teens, with half (49 per cent) saying they prefer to look suntanned and one in four falsely believing a

tan protects them from skin cancer.

- The majority of teens (60 per cent) did not use adequate sun protection when outdoors during peak UV times.

- only one in four teens (22 per cent) know how to tell when sun protection is needed, with just five per cent aware that when the UV index is three or more, sun protection is necessary.

Unaware of risks

Dr Anthea Rhodes, Paediatrician and Director of the National Child Health Poll says the research found the majority of teens aren't properly protecting themselves from the sun, and may be unaware that they are increasing their risk of skin cancers.

'We know there's a lot of trends on social media that highlight tan lines and even promote sunburn, and teenagers might not fully understand the risk tanning or sun exposure can pose,' Dr Rhodes explains.

'That same slogan still rings true – there's nothing

healthy about a suntan, it's your skin's response to harm from the sun.'

Ten minutes, ten years old

It can take as little as ten minutes for a child or teen to suffer skin damage from the sun.

'While it's not common to see young children with skin cancer, it sadly does happen in children as young as ten,' explains dermatologist Dr Susan Robertson.

'Teens may think skin damage isn't something that will affect them until later in life, but we know that's not true. Even one severe sunburn in childhood is enough to increase your lifetime risk of skin cancer,' said Dr Robertson.

This is why all five forms of sun protection – not just sunscreen – are important any time the UV index is three or more.

What to do

Emma Glassenbury, Head of SunSmart at Cancer Council Victoria said even on a cloudy or cool day, it's

important to check the free SunSmart Global UV app and plan accordingly.

'We recommend keeping a wide brim hat, sunnies, and sunscreen near the door, ready when you leave the house. Pack covering clothing to throw on over bathers or during outdoor activities and seek shade wherever possible.'

'Summer is a great time to be outdoors, but we want everyone to do so safely,' Ms Glassenbury said.

If you or your child is sunburnt, make sure they stay hydrated and try simple measures like a cool compress to relieve discomfort. In more severe cases, they may benefit from pain relief medicines like paracetamol or ibuprofen.

If severe blistering develops, or there are signs of heat stroke such as headache, nausea or vomiting, seek urgent medical review.

The National Child Health Poll is funded thanks to the support of the Good Friday Appeal.

■ First published on
www.byronhealing.com.au.

Big tobacco tantrums lead to dirty ashtray gongs

David Lowe

British American Tobacco's (BAT) efforts to roll back taxes on tobacco, reframe regulation and rehabilitate its image has earned it this year's Dirty Ashtray and Exploding Vape Awards, presented by the Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH) and the Australian Medical Association (AMA).

It's the first time both awards have gone to the same organisation.

ACOSH and the AMA said the honours were awarded to BAT for its role in a 'brazen resurgence' of tobacco industry interference in Australia's public debate.

AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen said BAT's win in the Dirty Ashtray category recognises the scale of its highly polished campaign to pressure Australia into lowering cigarette taxes.

'Through media appearances and commentary, BAT executives have reframed strong tobacco control as the cause of illicit trade while portraying tax cuts as a

public good – claims at odds with independent evidence, but consistent with long-standing industry playbooks,' Dr McMullen said.

The company's simultaneous win in the Exploding Vape category highlights the aggressive promotion of its so-called 'smokeless' strategy, including vapes and heated tobacco products, under the banner of harm reduction.

A central pillar of this strategy is BAT's Omni™ report, released in 2025 and promoted as a major scientific assessment of the evolution and harms of so-called 'smokeless' tobacco products.

BAT has described Omni™ as 'a platform for a necessary societal conversation founded in evidence... a manifesto for change and a mandate for action'.

But ACOSH CEO Laura Hunter said 'BAT sold Omni™ as a serious scientific review. Our analysis shows it's a curated sales document dressed up as evidence'.

■ First published on
www.byronhealing.com.au.

Volume 40 #28
17 – 23 December, 2025
Editor: Eve Jeffery
Editorial/gigs: gigs@echo.net.au
Copy deadline: 5pm each Thursday
Gig Guide deadline: 5pm each Friday
Advertising: adcopy@echo.net.au
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seven

seven days of entertainment

Getting ready for fun in 2026

In the blink of an eye, we've arrived at the final weeks of 2025 at **Brunswick Picture House** – and they bid farewell with the last three shows of their **Cheeky Cabaret Christmas** season this week – **Thursday to Saturday**, before the launch of what is officially the biggest summer season program ever!

We all know summer in Bruns is pretty hard to beat, so it's only fitting that there is another jam-packed January, all in air-conditioned comfort!

Flying straight out of the gate from **January 2** is the smash hit show **Bruns Does Burlesque** which returns dripping with pure glamour for an all-new bumper three-week summer run, until Sunday, January 18. What better way to start 2026 than with one of the Shire's hottest shows? Don't miss out, with discounted tickets available for **Preview Night**.

Brunswick Picture House is the official home of comedy in the Shire and once again, their January lineup will leave you rolling in the aisles as some of the superstars of Australian comedy descend to Bruns with all new shows, including **Dave Hughes, Tommy Little, Celia Pacquolo, Geraldine Hickey, Lloyd Langford** and **Josh Thomas** – you'll be the first in Australia to hear these jokes before they take their shows on the road – **Friday, January 9 to Saturday 31**.

If you miss out this week on the final **Cheeky Christmas** shows, fret no more as **Cheeky Summer** will return with an all new cast from **Thursday, January 22** for another blazing three-week run.

And never forget about the little ones as the all-ages, family friendly **Lil' Cheeky** returns for one summer show on **Saturday, January 17**.

So much to choose from, and the ideal way to get your Christmas shopping out of the way – **Golden Ticket gift vouchers are available now!**

Tickets for all shows at brunswickpicturehouse.com.



TOMMY LITTLE

'Good things might come to those who wait, not for those who wait too late.'

– Grover Washington Jr.

On this day in 1999 Jazz saxophonist Grover Washington Jr. suffered a fatal heart attack after performing on CBS's *Saturday Early Show*. He was 56.



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THUR
18 DEC

Front Bar: Dan Hannaford 6pm + DJ Quando 9pm
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BACKROOM: **BABE RAINBOW**

FRI
19 DEC

Front Bar: Erin Shay Duo 6pm + DJ Yazmin 9pm
Duelling Piano Bar 8pm
BACKROOM: **COLBEY ALBUM LAUNCH**

SAT
20 DEC

Front Bar: Kane Muir Trio 6pm + DJ Jamie Lowe 10pm
Duelling Piano Bar 8pm
BACKROOM: **COG**

SUN
21 DEC

Front Bar: Ole Falcor 5pm + Vinyl Sundays 9pm
Duelling Piano Bar 9pm
\$15 MARGIS & SPRITZERS ALL DAY

MON
22 DEC

BACKPACKER MONDAYS
Front Bar: Jerome Williams 6pm + DJ Renee Simone 9pm
Duelling Piano Bar 9pm

TUES
23 DEC

Front Bar: Marshall Okell 6pm
DJ Oren Selectra 9pm
Duelling Piano Bar 9pm

WED
24 DEC

Front Bar: Kane Muir Band 6pm DJ Davi Bangma 9pm
Duelling Piano Bar 9pm
BACKROOM: **ORPHANS XMAS**



SUN: \$15 MARGIS & SPRITZERS ALL DAY

Eclectic Selection

What's on this week



The Drill Hall Film Society presents **'Silents Night'** – the screening of a variety of silent black and white films with a fun piano accompaniment, as well as a couple of surprises and Christmas fare to end the year. Something different and special for film aficionados.

Wednesday 7pm at The Drill Hall Theatre, Mullumbimby. \$10 at the door for non-members.



Jamie Ashforth has been a stalwart of the local music industry for the past 30 years, playing guitar, slide guitar, and harmonica. His diverse range of music features a selection of his original songs, interspersed with blues and roots covers.

Sunday at The Rails, Byron Bay. Free show.

Sunset Assembly is music to move you slowly, a gentle dance through dub, downtempo, balearic,

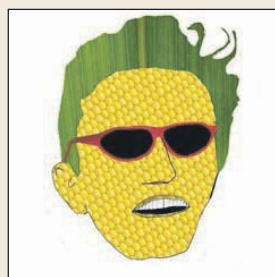
soul, leftfield, ambient, organic house, and global grooves. It flows like a tide – expansive and unhurried, sometimes carrying you forward in gentle waves. Music without borders, DJs playing outside their boxes.

Friday from 4pm at The Citadel, Murwillumbah. Tickets \$24 at cunningstunts.com.au.



Federal Blues Inc. (FBI) was formed by a group of residents from the village of Federal, with a shared love of the blues. Its members include ex-pat Canadian **Tommy Cuyler** on guitar and vocals, **Soren Carlbergg, Steve Foster, Martin Muller** and **Derek Armistead** playing a mixture of originals and blues classics.

Sunday from 2.30pm at Ballina Blues Club, at the Ballina RSL Boardwalk. Free show.



Jordy Corn & Disco Dad are turning up the tempo, bringing the best in house, dance and deep house to the dancefloor. Expect big grooves, big energy, and a whole lotta

boogie. Whether you're dancing, or vibing – this is the place to be when the sun goes down. It's loose. It's loud.

Saturday from 9pm at the Australian Hotel, Ballina. Free show.



Pink Zinc is a vibrant collective of musicians rooted in Byron Bay – known for their infectious blend of rock, pop, funk, and soul. Typically assembled as a dynamic four-piece ensemble, **Pink Zinc** thrills audiences with classic rock anthems, funky grooves, and soulful ballads, setting the stage on fire and getting everyone on their feet.

Sunday from 2pm at Saltbar, Kingscliff. Free show.

The funnest family day out of the year, to kick the silly season into gear, **Club Chaos** with **Hotmess** is a family-friendly show, ripe with absurd performance, interactive games, drawing exercises, costumes and play, followed by music from everyone's favourite designer duo **The Versace Boys**.

Saturday 2pm at Federal Hall. Tickets from \$25 + bf humantix.com – kids under 3 are free.



seven days of entertainment

Get your wiggle on

Summer Wiggle – Solstice Tribe Connect, will be rocking the **Arts Factory** on **Saturday from 6pm until midnight** with two monumental stages of top shelf tunes powered by **Crystal Grid** production wizardry.

The Tek-House Temple 'Icon Stage' will host internationally-celebrated producer **DJ Taya**, the legendary **Pob**, REL booty shakin' queen **Daddy Issues** and **Fraktek** – Fractal Faerie's tek-house project.

The Bass Garden 'Fig Tree Stage' will feature groundbreaking First Nation psy-bass act **Gindajah** (The Boy of Many Colours), UK's **VortX** with her genre-bending bass-heavy shmuak + avl-ninjas (Sub-Culture founder) **Ausar** and **Dubstyla** (Audio Nerd).

The Arts Factory has been buzzing with epic productions lately, and Crystal Grid are the in-house production team. They've been doing spectacular events on the north coast for 20+ years.

They're taking this **Summer Wiggle** to the next dimension with indoor and outdoor stages with LED screens, intelligent lighting, tubes, lasers, projection mapping, fire and dance performers, temple decor, live painting – it's going to be next level!

Dress up theme is Anime. Tickets are \$42 + bf/gst @ Humanatix or \$50 on the door (if there's any left).

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seven days of entertainment

Still growing momentum

With decades in their wake, spanning chart successes, touring with icons of the scene and growing an evergreen fanbase, Sydney-hailing rock trio Cog’s momentum has never waned, withstanding industry shifts, morphing technology, and a hiatus – all without ever losing their trademark vigour.

Recently ticking off a largely sold out and extensive Australian tour, along with releasing some of their material for the first time ever on vinyl. In 2025 the trio

ascended into a brand new chapter, unveiling their first new music since 2019 with a brand new single, ‘Walk The Line’.

Cog dazzle with buoyant soundscapes, oscillating guitars, driving drumwork, and fluid basslines alongside the ever-commanding vocal stylings of **Flynn Gower**.

An immediate Cog classic with its raw yet blissful dynamic shifts, ‘Walk The Line’ finds the trio – vocalist Flynn, bassist **Luke Gower** and drummer **Lucius Borich**, in their most assured form to date, while also brandishing real-world undertones as Cog reflect on the realities of life as a musician in 2025, as well as looking to what may come next.

Saturday, 8pm at The Northern, Byron Bay.

CINEMA



A Rental Family for Christmas Day

Across the globe, cinemas are unleashing their blockbuster offerings on Christmas Day, with the likes of Jack Black in *Anaconda* , competing with the, already released, *Avatar 3: Fire and Ash* . There is also a heartwarming, witty and poignant film on its way, **Rental Family** is a delightfully warm watching experience directed, co-written and produced by Hikari (*Beef*, *37 Seconds*).

Already being dubbed by critics as ‘the feel-good movie of the year’ (*CGMagazine*), the crowd-pleasing dramedy is powered by the infinitely endearing Academy Award-winner **Brendan Fraser** (*The Whale*, *The Mummy*) in another career-high comeback performance.

Set against modern-day Tokyo, an American actor Phillip Vanderploeg (Fraser) lives in Japan, where he constantly searches for a solid acting job following his success in a toothpaste commercial. He struggles to find purpose until he is offered an unusual gig: working for a Japanese ‘rental family’ agency, playing stand-in roles for strangers. Phillip, desperate for funds, takes the job as the company’s ‘token white guy.’

As he immerses himself in his clients’ worlds, he begins to form genuine bonds that blur the lines between performance and reality. Confronting the moral complexities of his work, he rediscovers purpose, belonging, and the quiet beauty of human connection.

Beautifully balancing humour and heart, and boasting a supporting cast that includes Emmy nominee **Takehiro Hira** (*Shogun*), **Mari Yamamoto** (*Pachinko*, *Monarch: Legacy of Monsters*), **Akira Emoto** (*Lovers Lost*, *Shin Godzilla*) and brilliant newcomer **Shannon Gorman**, *Rental Family* is bursting full of charm that will nourish your soul.

Rental Family screens from December 25 at **Palace Cinemas, Byron Bay**. palacecinemas.com.au

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New ads will be placed at end of section.
Contact: 6684 1777 or adcoppy@echo.net.au



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- Much of the power is provided by 6.6 kW solar panels and a 13.4 kWh Tesla battery.
- Parking under house for several vehicles.
- Larger shed is equipped with sorting/packing racks, has a cool-room.
- The smaller shed just east of the house has room for vehicles and a ride-on mower.




Price: \$2.7M ONO
For more information contact
Phil Schmidt on 0410 456 495

3-7 SHIRLEY STREET, BYRON BAY



Approved Beachside Development Site in the Heart of Byron Bay

9 3 6 
2301M²

- DA-approved beachside development site for 21 luxury serviced apartments
- 2,287m² amalgamated holding with wide 47.5m frontage in R3 zoning
- Prime Byron location, just 100m to the sand and moments to town
- Current income from three fully let homes returning \$144,300 p.a.

PRICE | \$12.5M
OPEN | By Appointment



Paul Prior
0418 324 297



Sharon McInnes
0408 659 649

325 RIVERBANK ROAD, PIMLICO



Exceptional Riverfront Living: Space, Privacy & Endless Potential

4 2 2 6 
5 ACRES

- Freshly painted, as new home on 5 acres
- Open plan living and dining areas with high ceilings and large windows framing the water views
- Fabulous covered outdoor entertaining area, inground pool, sheds and vegetable gardens
- Dual occupancy opportunity with 2 separate entrances

PRICE | \$1.335M - \$1.399M
OPEN | Sat 20th Dec 2 - 2:30pm



Sharon McInnes
0408 659 649

166 LIGHTHOUSE ROAD, BYRON BAY



Ayindi - Architectural Luxury with Panoramic Ocean Views

4 2 3 6 

- Prestigious elevated position above Clarks Beach and The Pass with 270° views and access to The Pass via a private path
- Designed by architect Philip Corben, featuring refined contemporary interiors, American Oak flooring, bespoke joinery and luxe finishes
- Covered deck with bi-folding shutters, integrated BBQ and enclosed garden with heated, mineral plunge pool
- Located in the 365-day short term holiday letting zone with strong rental income potential and own website

PRICE | Contact Agent
OPEN | By Appointment



Su Reynolds
0428 888 660



Renee Schofield
0400 028 594

43 LYCHEE DRIVE, ROSEBANK



77 Acre Macca Farm with Modern Home, Pool and Views

4 2 2 2 
77AC

- Elevated hinterland estate with sweeping valley views and a modern family homestead
- Productive macadamia farm with 4,200 mature trees, large dam and 64ML irrigation licence
- Generous indoor spaces flow effortlessly to wide verandas and an expansive entertaining terrace
- Sparkling 12-metre pool

PRICE | Contact Agent
OPEN | Sat 20th Dec 10 - 10:30am



Helen Huntly-Barratt
0412 332 232

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SHOWROOM FOR LEASE

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

4/1 Boronia Place, Byron Bay Arts & Industrial Estate

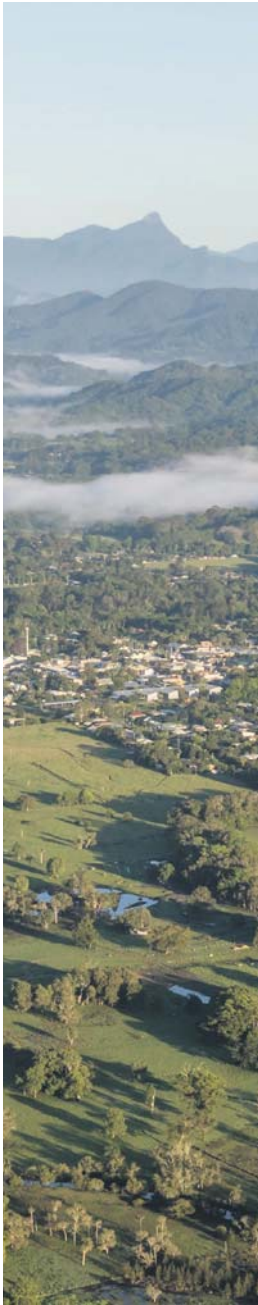
A beautifully designed, light-filled showroom in Byron Bay's sought-after Arts & Industrial Estate is now available for sublease. Crafted with natural, refined finishes, the space offers an elevated environment for creative or boutique businesses.

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- Ground-floor showroom
- Airy mezzanine ideal for office or studio use

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0429 622 147



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We would like to thank everyone for their support throughout 2025. Our office will close from 12.30pm on Thursday 18 December 2025 so we can regroup, refresh and recuperate to be back on deck at 9am on Monday 5 January 2026.

02 6680 8522

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QUALITY LEGAL ADVICE



Open For Inspection

DJ Stringer Property Services

- 2104/18-20 Stuart St, Tweed Heads. Sat 10-10.30am
- 1091/14-22 Stuart St, Tweed Heads. Sat 10.30-11am
- 1444/6-8 Stuart St, Tweed Heads. Sat 11.15-11.45am
- 1/42-44 Thomson St, Tweed Heads. Sat 12-12.30pm

First National

- 1452 Kyogle Road, Uki. Wed 12.30-1pm
- 4 New City Road, Mullumbimby. Thurs 11.30am-12pm
- 8 Banksia Place, Mullumbimby. Fri 9-9.30am
- 5/7 Cooper Street, Byron Bay. Fri 10-10.30am
- 103 Paterson Street, Byron Bay. Fri 11-11.30am
- 134 Dalley Street, Mullumbimby. Fri 12-12.30pm
- 2/50 Armstrong Street, Suffolk Park. Fri 12.15-12.45pm
- 14 Rush Court, Mullumbimby. Fri 1-1.30pm
- 5/7 Cooper Street, Byron Bay. Sat 9-9.30am
- 2/122 Lighthouse Road, Byron Bay. Sat 9-9.30am
- 8 Banksia Place, Mullumbimby. Sat 9-9.30am
- 14 Rush Court, Mullumbimby. Sat 10-10.30am
- 21 Excelsior Circuit, Brunswick Heads. Sat 10-10.30am
- 43 Lychee Drive, Rosebank. Sat 10-10.30am
- 2/50 Armstrong Street, Suffolk Park. Sat 10.30-11am
- 9 Nargoon Court, Ocean Shores. Sat 10.30-11am
- 134 Dalley Street, Mullumbimby. Sat 11-11.30am
- 1452 Kyogle Road, Uki. Sat 11-11.30am
- 2/6 Keats Street, Byron Bay. Sat 11.30am-12pm
- 787 Corndale Road, Corndale. Sat 12.30-1pm
- 325 Riverbank Road, Pimlico. Sat 2-2.30pm

Harcourts Northern Rivers

- 16 Dolphin Drive, West Ballina. Sat 9.15-9.45am

- 2/11 Westland Place, West Ballina. Sat 10-10.30am
- 275 Signata Road, Pimlico. Sat 10.45-11.15am
- 412 Bagotville Road, Wardell. Sat 11.30am-12pm

Mana

- 1/21A Balemo Drive, Ocean Shores. Wed 11-11.30am
- 237 Tweed Valley Way, South Murwillumbah. Wed 2-2.30pm
- 10 Gin Gin Crescent, Ocean Shores. Sat 9-9.30am
- 1/21A Balemo Drive, Ocean Shores. Sat 10-10.30am
- 25 Flinders Way, Ocean Shores. Sat 10-10.30am
- 14 Yamble Drive, Ocean Shores. Sat 11-11.30am

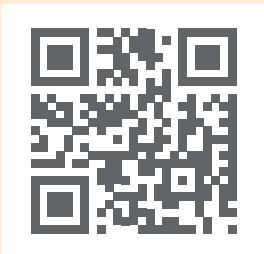
Ruth Russell Realty

- 148 Stuart Street, Mullumbimby. Sat 11-11.45 am

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The Echo mourns with the victims, families, and friends after Sunday’s attack on a Hanukkah celebration in Bondi. No one should ever feel threatened or unsafe as a result of their faith, their traditions, their religious celebrations, or their identity. The Echo stands with our local Jewish community calling for tolerance and acceptance of all in our multicultural country and condemns violence and hate speech that undermines our country and the world.

Byron Writers Festival audio vignettes 2025 podcast series continues with a highlight session, Gina Chick in conversation with Mel Bampton to discuss Gina’s spellbinding memoir *We Are the Stars*. Get to know the real Gina Chick, inaugural winner of *Alone Australia*, and the story of her extraordinary, indomitable life at: <https://tinyurl.com/3btdppwn>.

Are you thinking of expanding your family this festive season? With over 78,000 dogs and 37,000 cats registered across NSW this year who are in need a loving forever home, you can adopt a four-legged friend into the family from council pounds and shelters. To adopt a pet contact your local council (www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/local-government-directory) for information on council pounds, or visit an approved rehoming organisation.

According to figures supplied by House You, new ABS data shows house hoarding is accelerating the housing crisis. The data shows that property investors now control 40 per cent of all new



The Echo is once again being reused, reread, and recycled with Echo ads making a debut at the fantastic Mullumbimby Public School Art Show last Wednesday where students dazzled with dance routines, singing, drama, displays of sculptures, photos, and art works of various mediums. On the topic of creative and innovative reuse of The Echo Backlash even got in trouble from its neighbours last week when they saw a pile of Echos in a puddle and dutifully picked them all up. They then received a hilarious text telling them that their neighbour had been asking friends and family to keep their well-read Echos so that they could reuse them to fill a massive pot hole outside their house that ‘has got so big that cars go through it and go for a wild ride’! They had seen a segment on how newspapers could be used to help stop erosion and thought they’d put the theory to the test. Photo supplied

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The Buttery acknowledges and pays respect to past and present Traditional Custodians and Elders of this Nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

home loans and are buying homes six times faster than first home buyers; 30 per cent of Australian homes are investment properties.

China’s strangulation of democracy in Hong Kong is well and truly marching ahead as Lai Chee-ying (known as Jimmy Lai), one of the fiercest critics of China’s anti-democratic controls under China’s President, Xi Jinping, was convicted of three charges of offences endangering national security. According to reporting by the ABC, ‘Supporters of Lai, including countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, say the charges are politically motivated and designed to silence one of the region’s most prominent pro-democracy activists.’

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